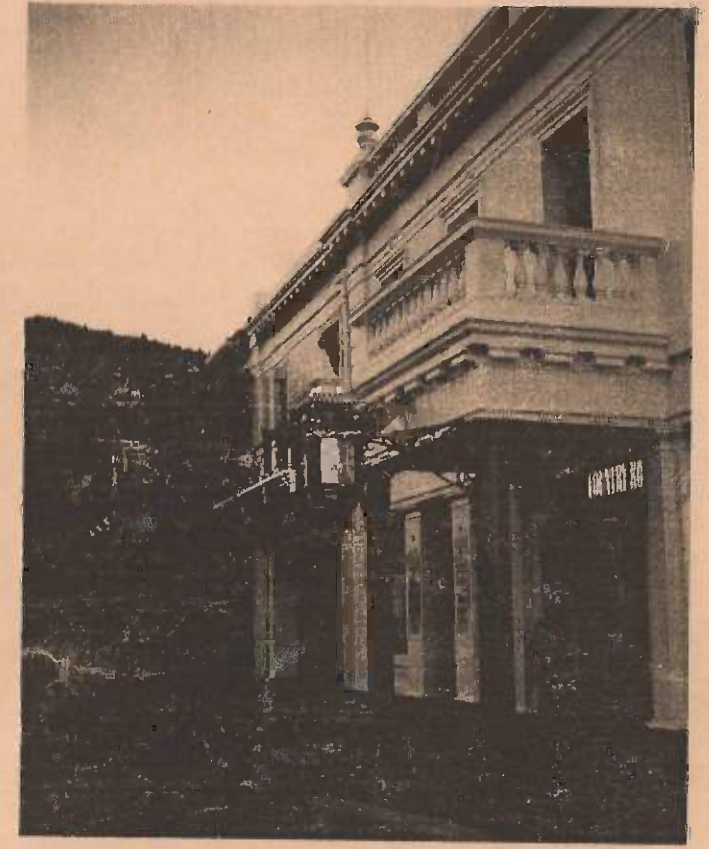


The Queenstown Courier



The Official Publication of the Queenstown & Districts Historical Society

Published by
Queenstown & District Historical Society (Inc.)
Queenstown

Aims of the Society

- 1 *That we use our power to advise, concerning the saving of historical aspects of the district.*
- 2 *Preservation of and education in all aspects of historical research and interest.*

General Information

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Secretary:	Jocelyn Robertson	442 1468
Treasurer:	E. C. (Peter) Mills	442 7930
"Courier":	Duncan Wilson	442 7385
Trips:	Cicely Morrison	442 1744
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The Courier Acknowledgement
 This issue has been produced by staff at the
Lakes District Museum.
 Their quality work is hereby acknowledged

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| Annual Subscription | \$10 per person or family |
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| Life Membership | \$100 per person |

The Courier is included in the subscription.

All correspondence and accounts should be addressed to the Society's permanent address -
 PO Box 132, Queenstown.

Queenstown and District Historical Society
President's Report 2001

This past year your Society has again been engaged in many worthwhile projects.

The Society with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and the Queenstown Lakes District Council jointly funded an archaeological survey of the Skippers Road. This was carried out by Peter Petchey who produced an excellent illustrated report identifying areas of historical importance that must be protected from further desecration. A copy of this report was given to the Lakes District Museum.

Ray Timmins under the umbrella of the society, with his advice to the developers was instrumental in preserving some aspects of Eichardt's Hotel during its restoration and refurbishment. The result is heart warming.

With funding of \$10,000.00 from the Queenstown Lake District Council, Karen Boulay organised the planting of 20 trees in suitable locations within the area. A summary of these plantings is printed in this Courier.

The sawn timber from the great oak tree on Frankton Road has now been sold. Some of this money will go towards a replacement oak tree and plaque. This is on a site on the Frankton walkway prepared by the Queenstown Lakes District Council who are also donating a seat and a rock for the plaque.

At this point it is pertinent to say that consideration is being given to the allocation of funds for the on-going placement of plaques in significant areas and possibly the expansion of the museum's

microfilm library.

The historic Ballarat Street bridge has now been repaired after a somewhat protracted decision making process. The Society was instrumental in initiating this and worked alongside the New Zealand Historic Place Trust and Imtech. We must record here our thanks to Peter Hamsby of Imtech for his tolerance and consideration.

The Rees Prize for the best historical essay from pupils of participating secondary schools continue to be promoted. This is a monetary prize to the pupil of each school whose work is judged the best.

We had five trips or functions during the past year:

- Half day at Gibbston.
- Christmas BBQ at the Wakatipu Yacht Club.
- Half day at Millbrook.
- Two day tour of the Catlins.
- Day visit to Gore and district.

All well worthwhile, informative and enjoyable.

Many thanks to all who helped organise these functions and to Malcolm Boote the trip co-ordinator.

Our small sub-committee considered and made several submissions on planning matters during the year.

We are finding that more frequently we are having a cross-over with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust who have the statutory authority. Naturally at times there is a divergence of opinion and concern over the decision making process.

Planning Issues 2001

The Society engaged the services of a solicitor to advise on the ramifications of the Judicial Review of the planning process in the granting of a consent for over-building the Forrester's lodge in the Queenstown Historic Precinct. It was decided not to go ahead with this because of the possibility of an unsatisfactory result and of other legal processes.

However on our behalf the Parliamentary Commissioner of the Environment reviewed and gave a critical report of the Council planning decision process.

The Society also made public critical comments expressing our concern.

Opus International, on behalf of Transit New Zealand, are working on design options for bridging alternatives of the Kawarau River at Frankton. It is fair to say the present form of the structure of the Kawarau Dam could be under serious threat.

The Society's present position is that it will oppose any alterations to the structure.

The proposed development of the Post Masters' House in Arrowtown is also causing some concern with the developers dealing direct with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, Dunedin. He is asking for the Trust's support for a variation to the Covenants already on the property to allow for changes to the building façade, grounds and picket fence. At this stage there seems to be little thought of consultation with local interests. All involved must remember a large group of Arrowtown residents, a few years ago, attended a council meeting in a successful bid to save the Post Masters' House.

Some of these submissions and activities - e. g. : the development over the Forrester's Lodge - by their very nature have been controversial and divisive. I believe this tends to paint a negative picture of the Society with scant attention being paid to the good things that are being achieved.

We should always consider our position in these matter and keep in focus the aims of our Society.

Finally I would like to express my sincere thanks to the executive and committee members who have willingly undertaken many jobs and given great consideration to matters affecting the Society. Their support of me during the last three years has been immeasurable. Also our thanks to Mr. Ted Strut for the continued use of Hulbert House for our committee meetings.

Rupert Iles
President

N. B. : the Financial Statement for the year may be found in the centre of this Courier.

Tree Planting Project 2001

TREE PLANTING PROJECT, 2001

Following the demise of the Historic Oak Tree on Frankton Road, QLDC made \$10,000 available for the planting of trees for future generations to enjoy. The success of this project is outlined below.

Twenty trees were planted in all. They varied a little in price (this basically depends on how long they take to mature in the nursery - some being slower and therefore pricier, although these tend to be longer living trees).

Location and types of trees:

- One Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) on the Shotover/Brecon Street Reserve (D. P. designation 238).
- One Oak (*Quercus robar*) and two Limes (*Tilia tomentosa*) on the Glenda Drive/S. H. 6 corner.
- Three Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) at the Sunshine Bay playground.
- Three trees went into the Queenstown Gardens: a Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica Riversii*); a Weeping Beech (*Fagus sylvatica Pendula*) - a more unusual specimen which will become both an historical tree and a point of interest in the gardens; and an Acer negundo Violaceum which is a Box elder form and has very attractive red tassel-like flowers in spring before leafing out.
- Five trees in St Omer Park. A Caucasian Fir (*Abies nordmannii*) - unusual and typically slow growing, but will be of

heritage value) replaces the Douglas Fir recently felled, next to the Steamer Wharf. Three Lime, or Linden, trees (*Tilia x europaea*) have been planted amongst the large poplars as replacements (the poplars are already dangerously rotted inside and desperately need to be removed before they come down of their own free-will). And one other Broad leafed Lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*) by the toilets at the One Mile.

These plantings involved two to three men taking several trips with trees from the nursery. Topsoil needed to be brought in for some areas and tidy-up of excess soil was required on all sites, so there was a bit more labour needed than first expected. All trees have been staked, to their individual requirements, with two metre tanalised stakes, wire and hose or hessian tie. Slow release fertiliser has been added to each tree, which should be enough extra food for a two year period. A bark mulch was applied to reduce weed competition and retain moisture about the root ball which also leaves it all looking quite respectable.

Lake Shipping and Daniel McBride

By Alan De La Mare.

On Christmas Day, 1862, two young men trudged into Skippers Point. They were brothers Frank and Daniel McBride. Frank was 27 and Daniel 23. They were to play an important part in the early days of the Wakatipu.

The McBride family came from Fairhead, Ballycastle, County Antrim. Both had come to New Zealand after emigrating to Australia, Frank in 1855 and Daniel in 1858. There, in Victoria, they were engaged in sawmilling until the gold discovery at Lawrence prompted them to try their luck in New Zealand.

They followed the gold trail to Lawrence, Waitahuna, Dunstan, Fox's and finally the Shotover. Gold had been discovered at Fox's and the Shotover river only a few weeks earlier and the brothers were in the right place at the right time as being in the van of a rush was the only way to strike a rich claim. The brother did not stay long on the Shotover and presumably the rich strikes that many made in this area eluded them.

They quickly saw that there would be a big demand for timber and with James W. Robertson, who was later to be the first Mayor of Queenstown, formed a syndicate to establish a sawmill at the Greenstone River at the Head of the Lake, the nearest source of standing timber. The syndicate, known as J. W. Robertson and Co., also included John McBride, a cousin; Thomas Hicks and J. C. Patterson. The demand for building timber was tremendous and the sawmill was an immediate success bringing riches to the members of the syndicate.

As the access to Queenstown from the east was confined to mere tracks most goods arriving in the area came by small ships on the lake. Sailing ships were slow and always in danger from squalls driving through the deep valleys surrounding the lake. Most goods and passengers were carried by a ragtag collection of small steamers whose service and comfort left much to be desired. It was a lucrative trade and the Robertson syndicate realised that there was an opening for a large steamer with good cargo capacity and passenger comfort and speed.

The Antrim

Their answer was the *Antrim*, a wooden paddle steamer designed locally and built at the slipway at their mill. Construction started in March 1868 and the vessel was launched in October. It was constructed of local red beech and totara. The vessel was sailed to Queenstown where the engine and paddles were installed. The *Antrim* made its first voyage under steam on New Years Day, 1869. She was 82 feet in length and had a speed of 8 knots. It had a large cargo capacity and provided reasonable comfort for passengers. The venture into ship owning proved to be very profitable and combined with sawmilling made the syndicate members very wealthy. It also introduced them to the business of ship owning, an entirely new activity to them, and two of the syndicate, Daniel McBride and Thomas Hicks, retained their association with lake shipping for over thirty years.

The profits from the business enabled the syndicate to expand their operations. Wharves were built at Kingston and Queenstown, and a timber yard at the Queenstown wharf which also stocked the many items needed on the *Antrim* including such things as groceries, linen, crockery etc. A flour mill was established at Frankton and extensive land purchases were made rurally and in the surveyed towns. A proposal to start a woollen mill at the One Mile was abandoned when the Queenstown Borough Council succeeded in an appeal against the water right as the stream was needed for the town water supply.

The success of the *Antrim* did not pass unnoticed and soon another partnership of John R. Williams and George Archer was planning to place a rival vessel on the lake. This vessel, the *Jane Williams*, later named the *Ben Lomond*, was built in Dunedin of Lowmoor iron, the components being carted to Queenstown where the ship was constructed on the waterfront to be launched on 10 February, 1872. The vessel was a screw Steamer, 83 feet in length with a speed of 9 knots. It provided accommodation for 100 passengers and had a cargo capacity of 25 tons.

There was sufficient business to keep the *Antrim* and the *Ben Lomond* occupied, particularly as the primitive early steamers were either pensioned off or returned to Dunedin from whence they had come. However the completion of the railway to Kingston in 1878 promised increased business, particularly in the tourist trade, and prompted some local businessmen to venture into ship owning, an activity they had no experience of.

A company, the Wakatipu Steam Navigation Company Limited, was registered in August 1878 with a capital of £10,000 made up by 2000 shares of £5 each.

Those signing the Memorandum of Association seeking registration were:-

• James Douglas, surgeon, Frankton	50 shares
• Michael J. Malaghan, merchant, Queenstown	50
• William Tily Smith, storekeeper, Macetown	50
• Alexander Boyne, ironmonger, Queenstown	25
• William Jenkins, merchant, Arrowtown	25
• William Paterson, runholder, Lake Hayes	25
• Robert Wilson, merchant, Dunedin	25
• John Hare, merchant, Invercargill	10
• George M. Ross, Manager of B. N. Z., Queenstown	10

James Douglas became the chairman of the board, a natural choice as he had been practising medicine in the Wakatipu since 1862 and was held in high regard by the entire community not only for his medical skills but for the part he played in public affairs. He gave his time and talents to many organisations in the area and in most cases served as chairman or president. The manager was Lewis Hotop, the local chemist, who was probably chosen not because of his experience in running ships but because his shop was very close to the wharf. He was later replaced by one T. S. Dixon.

Some 150 people subscribed for shares but the majority were small holdings of ten shares or less, some as small as two, representing an investment of £10. The list of shareholders represented a cross section of the Otago and Southland public and included some familiar names, including:-

- Julien Bourdeau, storekeeper, Skippers Point.
- Philip B. Boulton, Lake County clerk who was later convicted of embezzling county funds.
- Frank C. and Charles C. Boyes, runholders of Kawarau Falls Station.
- Robert and William Boyne, merchants of Queenstown.
- Richard Bryant, hotelkeeper, Kinloch.
- John Butement, runholder, Glenorchy.
- Frederick Daniel, who was Mayor of Queenstown and chairman of the Lake County Council at the same time.
- Frederick Evans, manager Bullendale Mine.
- Albert Eichardt, hotelkeeper, Queenstown.
- Hugh Finn, solicitor for the company, Queenstown.
- Bendix Hallenstein, merchant, Dunedin.
- John Jopp, hotelkeeper, Arrowtown.
- Kincaid McQueen, builders of the vessel.
- James Menzies, runholder Wyndham and first Superintendent

of Southland Province.

- Robert Pritchard, later Mayor of Arrowtown.
- William Warren, proprietor of the *Lake Wakatip Mail*.

One rather unusual one was the Wakatipu Hospital subscribing for 5 shares. A surprising name included was that of James W. Robertson, principal of the syndicate which owned the opposition *Antrim*, particularly as he had been dead two years!

The Mountaineer

An order was placed with Kincaid and McQueen of Dunedin for a paddle steamer to be called the *Mountaineer*. It was much bigger than the *Antrim* or *Ben Lomond* being 125 feet in length and had a speed of 9 knots. Passengers were catered for in comfortable and extensive accommodation. The vessel was assembled in Dunedin, dismantled and reassembled at Kingston. It was launched on 11 February, 1879. It had cost about £7,800.

The *Mountaineer* was brand new, had been expressly built for the job, and could steam from Queenstown to Kingston in two hours. It should have creamed off a large share of the business offered but did not do so. The passengers and freight previously carried by the *Antrim* were now shared by the three major vessels on the lake. In its first years to 15 July, 1879, the company made a loss of £464.5.10. In the next two years the losses were £924.19.4 and £442.17.7. It was reported the company was over manned and mis-managed. Another factor was some 16% of calls on shares remained unpaid and some 200 shares were not taken up.

The continual losses could not be sustained and in August, 1881, the shareholders voted in favour of voluntary liquidation. J. W. F. Geisow was appointed liquidator and the *Mountaineer* was sold by auction in a mortgagee sale for £2,400. The purchaser was Charles McQueen, the builder of the vessel.

Mr McQueen took over the running of the *Mountaineer* and the net

result of the liquidation was a substantial loss of the shareholders, a cheap vessel for McQueen and three vessels still competing for the same amount of business. The advent of the *Mountaineer* had an effect on the *Antrim's* revenue but J. W. Robertson and Co. had other business activities, mostly in timber, which enabled the syndicate to survive the competition. The effect on Williams and Archer and the *Ben Lomond* made their operation marginal and the death of John Williams in 1881 complicated their position as he was experienced in shipping.

In 1882 the partners in J. W. Robertson and Co. decided to liquidate the business. James Robertson had died in 1876 and his wife, with seven children to care for, probably wanted his estate wound up. Thomas Hicks, who had been captain of the *Antrim*, wanted to retire. He probably had had enough of standing on the open deck steering the vessel in all weathers. Frank McBride had a hankering to go farming. The decision resulted in an enormous clearing sale as the company had acquired a wide range of valuable assets. There were two farms at Frankton of 625 and 311 acres, a number of smaller holdings in the Queenstown area, a lime kiln, a sawmill at the Head of the Lake, over 80 town sections mostly in Queenstown, extensive live stock, the stock of the business at the steamer wharf ranging from timber to groceries and finally two vessels - the *P. S. Antrim* and the *S. S. Venus*. The *Venus*, which had originally been named the *Victoria*, had been brought over from Australia as deck cargo to serve as a ferry on the Otago Harbour. When gold was discovered it was carted to the lake early in 1863 to become one of the ragtag steamers which served on the lake in the early days of the rush and was now getting past its use by date.

In an auction sale over three days many of the assets were sold and Daniel McBride bought the *Antrim* for £1,950 and the timber business operated from the steamer wharf. It appears he also purchased the *Venus* and thus acquired the shipping and timber

interests which had been the backbone of the syndicate. He retained the name of J. W. Robertson and Co. and his brother Frank and Thomas Hicks probably retained a financial interest. Frank bought the farm at Frankton of 625 acres at £8 per acre and later he acquired additional farming property at the Head of the Lake and on Queenstown Hill. Details of his career are contained in an article in Courier No.60.

Soon after the dissolution of the partnership J. W. Robertson and Co. purchased the *Ben Lomond* from Williams and Archer thus controlling all the major vessels on the lake except the *Mountaineer*. The two companies continued in competition until the inevitable amalgamation took place to end their cut throat competition, no doubt hatched by McQueen and Dan McBride. The vehicle for the amalgamation was the Lake Wakatipu Steam Shipping Co. Ltd. formed in 1885. the capital of the company was £13,000 divided into 520 shares of £25 each, 440 being fully paid up and with 80 shares unallocated.

The shareholders were:-

- James Douglas, surgeon who had been chairman of the short lived company of 1878. 66 shares
- B. R. Baird, a farmer of Lake Hayes 66
- Kate Mason, of Paradise. The wife of William Mason, a prominent architect and first Mayor of Dunedin who then retired at the Head of the Lake. 66

Charles McQueen, owner of the *Mountaineer*, of Dunedin

66

Thomas Hicks, a partner in the original J. W. Robertson and Co.

66

- Daniel McBride, owner of the *Antrim* and *Ben Lomond*. 66
- Edward Thomas Wing, master mariner and Managing

Director.

22

- George Gibbs, described as a clerk of Queenstown. 11
- * James McNeil, a meriner [sic] of Queenstown. 11

Edward Thomas Wing was probably brought in to head the company to allay the fears of the community at one company controlling all the lake shipping. He was born at Russell in 1842 and had a long association with ships and shipping. His father, Thomas, master of the *Deborah*, was known for his skill and knowledge of the New Zealand coast and had been chartered to take Frederick Tuckett and his party on their voyage to purchase the Otago block in 1844. Edward Wing followed a sea fairing career like his father and had commanded several ships of the Union Company. As managing director Wing occupied a prominent and influential position in the community as life in the Wakatipu revolved around shipping. Wing played a leading role in many Queenstown organisations including membership of the Queenstown Borough Council.

The first two years of the new company were not very successful but since the advent of gold dredging in the 1890's and the increase in tourism this turned around. In doing so the company incurred criticism from the community who complained about the service. The sailings were not slotted in to suit the rail timetable and having to overnight at Kingston when travelling to Dunedin involved extra time and cost. The alternative which was available for a period, of catching a steamer at the early hour of 5 a. m. was not very popular either. But it was the freight rates which drew the most criticism. For example coal was carried by rail from Stirling, near Balclutha, a distance of over 120 miles, to the rail head for 8/11d per ton, but cost 10/-d per ton by steamer to Queenstown. Changes were made from time to time to provide a more convenient time table but there was little relief in the freight rates which affected the cost of

many items in common use. One result was a deputation from the Lake County Council to the government seeking some relief. The deputation met Richard Seddon, the Premier, who was no lover of big business or monopolies, and received a sympathetic hearing. He indicated the government might eventually be forced to place a vessel on the lake to introduce some competition.

Soon after, in 1899, the company proposed the formation of a new company to take over the assets and liabilities and the operation of the shipping service. The new company stemmed from an agreement between the existing company and Harry Shrimpton, a solicitor of Dunedin. It is hard to understand the logic of the move but no doubt the success of the company encouraged outsiders to want some to the action and it was an opportunity for the existing shareholders to realise on their shares in full or in part and on their terms. It was a device common in the gold mining industry where promoters floated a company placing their own value on the assets which was paid for by the subscribing shareholders.

The new company was named the Lake Wakatipu Shipping Co. Ltd. with a capital of £35,000 in £1 share, 15,000 allotted to the vendors, 5000 reserved for future issue and the balance of 15,000 offered for public subscription. the assets were listed as :-

<i>P. S. Antrim</i>	£2,500
<i>S. S. Ben Lomond</i>	£3,550
<i>P. S. Mountaineer</i>	£7,250

Bank deposits of	£6,300
Freehold property, jetties, slip, book debts, ship stores etc. totalling in all:-	
	£25,000

The prospectus included a certificate from the auditor that profits

for the last four years had been:-

1896	£2646.13.1
1897	£2916.6.8
1898	£3276.10.6
1899	£3831.4.5

With the reconstruction of the company Charles McQueen ceased to be a shareholder, an interest he had held since the building of the *Mountaineer*, and B. R. Baird's shareholding was in the name of a trust. Messrs. Douglas, Mason, Hicks and Dan McBride took a smaller percentage of the total shareholding but still retained 50%.

The directors were:-

James Douglas, Daniel McBride, Graham Dick Baird, Thomas Hicks, Harry Shrimpton and Edward Thomas Wing. Virtually the same old team.

The company came into existence on 1 July, 1899, but it did nothing to overcome the criticism of the company by the community. The criticism aroused the government as it began to take an active part in tourism with the establishment of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts. In 1901 the government commissioned a report by J. Faris of the Railways Department. Mr Faris made a detailed examination of the service provided and its cost. He interviewed many local people and produced a lengthy report which was unfavourable to the company. In an accompanying report by L. F. Whitcombe, Railway District Traffic Manager at Invercargill, indicated radical changes were necessary to make the company's service acceptable and if this was not forthcoming the government should take over the company.

QUEENSTOWN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Statement of Receipts and Payments for the Year Ended 30 September 2001

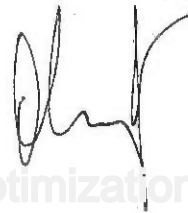
2000	Receipts	2001	2000	Payments	2001
12157	Bank Balances Fwd	10729.60			
2921	Subscriptions	2774.80	95	Subscriptions	95.00
280	Donations	150.00	0	Grants and Donations	650.00
			166	Postage and Tolls	
0	Grant from Trustbank	0.00	0	Advertising	79.02
0	Timber sales	5431.50	673	Printing, Stationery, Typing	451.61
			0	P.O. Box	62.50
0	Sales of Couriers	0.00	1586	Couriers	1610.94
3363	Trips	909.43	0	Trips	0.00
1392	Luncheon	15.05	1405	Luncheon	0.00
			50	Prizes	0.00
60	Sundry	24.00		Lawyer	1417.50
658	Interest	635.63	5667	Mural	0.00
			207	Gifts and Vouchers	0.00
			252	Sundry	245.70
			10730	Bank Balances Closing	16057.74
-----		-----	-----		-----
20830		20670.01	20830		20670.01

Bank Balances @ 30 Sep 2001

Current Account	499.45
Term Deposit Westpac T	8761.75
Term Deposit Westpac T	5431.50
Term Deposit Bldg Socy	1365.04
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	16057.74

Auditor's Statement

I have examined the financial records of the Society which in my opinion have been properly kept. I have obtained the information and explanations I required. In common with other similar organisations, control over income and sundry donations prior to its being recorded is limited, and there are no practicable audit procedures to determine the effect of this limited control. In my opinion the financial statements presented above give a true and fair view of the financial activities of the Queenstown and District Historical Society for the year ended 30 September 2001.



D. Warrington BCom CA

The pressure was on the company and in September 1902 it offered to sell to the government the entire undertaking, excluding reserves and book debts, for £30,000. The government, having valued the company's assets at £8,000, excluding the reserves and book debts, made a counter offer of £15,000. Eventually this offer was reluctantly accepted effective from 3 November 1902 when the service came under the control of the Railways Department.

This dated marked the end of Daniel McBride's association with shipping on Lake Wakatipu. It had started with the building of the *Antrim* in 1868 and of the partners in J. W. Robertson and Co. He was the only one to retain an active interest until the sale to the government in 1902. Moreover from 1882 to 1893 he had operated the timber yard and associated activities from the steamer wharf.

In 1899 he came out of retirement to buy from the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Co. Ltd. the Kawarau Falls Station. The property was not in a flourishing condition but Daniel, with the help of his son John. P. McBride, turned the station into a profitable venture.

On the 31st of December, 1913, Daniel suffered a serious accident when he was thrown from a vehicle he was driving. For a period he appeared to recover from his injuries, but his condition deteriorated resulting in his death in early March 1914. He was aged 74.

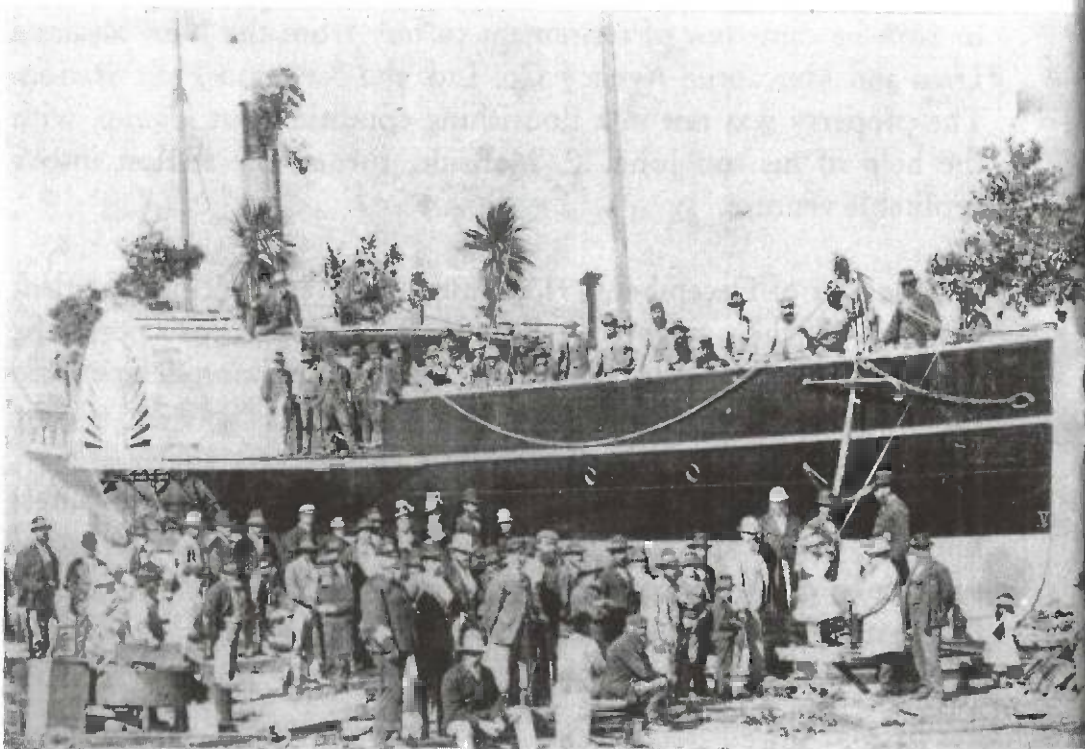
During his lifetime Daniel McBride had, besides his business interests, played an active role in public affairs and given practical support to many local organisations including membership of the Queenstown Borough council.

Sequel:-

The *Antrim* was taken out of service early in the twentieth

century and dismantled. Its engine is now used to haul ships up the slipway at Kelvin Grove.

- The *Ben Lomond* remained in service until 1951 when it was gutted and scuttled in the lake.
- The *Mountaineer* was withdrawn from service in 1932 and sold to Walter Peak as a house boat. In 1941 it was sold for scrap to make munitions.
- In 1912 the government launched the *T. S. S. Earnslaw*, a vessel of 50 metres, with passenger accommodation for 1000 and a cargo capacity of 100 tons. It is still operating and is owned by Fiordland Travel Ltd.



P.S. Mountaineer.

Strange Happenings Up In The Arrow

The Doctors House near Arrowtown - Jim Childerstone
by Jim Childerstone

The doctor's house near Arrowtown has recently been sold. Since Grandpa William B. O. Ferguson died forty years ago, and the practice with him, the house has had several owners.

It has been rumoured that it housed a resident ghost, not that I have ever come across the spectre described by an actress during a function ending the T. V. series "Hunter's Gold".

Local contractor, Ray Dennison, thought there was one. At least his kids did when renting the place in the early '70's. Old locals, such as the late Alex Hamilton, always reckoned there was some mystery around the old home. Even while Dr. William Bertram Ochiltree Ferguson was still in residence with Grandma Flo, and German born dispenser/housekeeper Justine Waldmann. My grandfather bought the practice in the early 1920's after a session in South Westland as locum for Dr. Tichelman and the sale of the Hakataramea practice.

During World War One, Grandpa, with Doctors Tichelman and Harrison, ended up swimming for eight hours in the Aegean Sea after the hospital ship *Marquette* was sunk by the German navy. They survived. A lot of nurses and Gallipoli wounded didn't. The Germans thought the vessel was carrying ammunition. Grandpas did not talk much about his war years in the Dardanelles and later in Belgium. But at some time he came across Justine whose father was reputed to be a famous German composer. Anyway she ended up as part of the family, firstly at Hakataramea, and then Arrowtown. She was a strange lady, and us youngsters were both intrigued and somewhat scared of her. In the old house her domain

was the kitchen and dining area. Grandma had the middle section, and the doctor the front sitting room. Locals only knew Justine as the housekeeper.

The old villa style house had a somewhat dilapidated look about it in the 1940's. The old folks could not claim to be gardeners. Hidden from the road by a mixture of mature broom, elderberry and a variety of shrubs, the place definitely had a spooky feel about it. I still remember arriving at the back door as a 12 year old with some veges from our garden late one evening to be confronted by Justine's exceedingly white face peering out of the kitchen window. Her eyes were an unnatural pale blue. I had been reading Bram Stoker's "Dracula". I could not get back on my bike fast enough!

The doctor commanded a certain amount of respect from his older patients. His most effective prescription was two fingers of whisky in a large glass tumbler. He was also recognised as a good horseman. At one time he got around his patients on horse back. He also had an unusual hobby.

He used to breed game fowls. And they were not bred for eating. Once a year he would load up the old Vauxhall with a crate of his favourite birds and with Uncle Kim head for the Omarama pub where publican D. Woods was ready with his birds. This was highly illegal, but the pair, with some locals in the know, headed for the pit somewhere near the Ahuriri River bed. Complete with steel spurs the roosters often fought to the death. Or until one of the owners decided to call it quits. It was rumoured big money went on the winners. Like a pound (sterling) or two.

By 1955 Grandpa lost his driving licence. He was 90 years old but still insisted on visiting his few remaining patients. They were all nearly as old as he was. Various locals were conscripted to drive him on his visiting days, as well as to Queenstown to pick up

prescriptions from Wilkinson's pharmacy. Uncle Kim and myself were regularly conscripted (the doctor was a wartime captain). Joy Wilcox, Wendy Minshall and Dorothy Martin were regular drivers. Although getting a bit tottery he still managed to get around his patients until 1960. A year later he died.

Justine remained in the house on her own until her death in 1967. Grandma died in 1950.

My mother sold the house plus acreage shortly after to a Wellington based film producer for around \$7,000, who (we were told) let it off to the crew involved with producing "Hunter's Gold".

In 1973, after two years in the Solomon Islands, my wife and I met a girl in Auckland who had acted in the series. She recalled a function at the house towards the end of filming. The celebrations took in the back half of the house. At some stage the girl decided to take a look in the front room, which had hardly been touched since the doctor had departed. She remembers seeing a white haired old man in a waistcoat and striped trousers standing by the fireplace holding a tumbler of whisky. On returning to the party she inquired who the old fellow was. "What old fellow?" was the general response.

Since then the old house, built in 1901 and added to later with part of the old hospital in 1918, had undergone major renovations by a variety of owners, including two families from the U. S. A. One former owner, artist Graham Brinsley and his family, does not admit to having any encounters of a ghostly kind. But he had been aware of previous strange goings on, such as creaking timbers and things being moved around unexpectedly.

To satisfy curiosity I was contacted by a Wellington ghost-buster, a

lady medium, either years ago, who wanted to do some research into some of the supernatural happenings. I doubt I was much help during the interview, not having experienced any spooky happenings during my few visits to the "Doctor's House" in later years.

I was told the lady did "make contact" with who ever had been putting the frighteners into previous residents and it was reputed to have since departed into the great unknown. Something about a Chinaman who was owed some money, and a tunnel being dug under the house in search of a gold seam.....!

Since William Fox found the hidden valley of gold 140 years ago, and blackbirder Bully Hayes got up to some nefarious deeds, there are some strange stories yet to be told in the Arrow.



Who Discovered Gold In The Arrow?

Arrow Gold discovery - Jemma Montagu -Memorial Essay

by Jemma Montagu of Otago Girls High School

A Prize Winning Historiographical Essay Written For The W. G. Rees Memorial Prize 2001.

In the chaos that goldfields presented, and the atmosphere that went along for the ride, it is simple to see how the truth in a controversial issue such as the first discoverer of gold in the Arrow River may easily become distorted. There is one thing that all the sources I used agree on: that it was *either* Fox, a well-known local miner, the McGregor/Low party of miners or Maori Jack, a young, half-Maori local (also known as Hatini Whiti or Anthony White). I choose to argue that the earliest discoverer of gold (of any description) in the Arrow River was Maori Jack.

I studied seven sources of different historiography, and five of these argued that Maori Jack found gold first. I find this a fairly solid argument in itself - the differing ages of these sources indicate a mix of modern and primary information agreeing.

Only two sources disagree with the fact that Maori Jack discovered gold first - and there are notable flaws in the research of these two sources. The first source is Glasson's "The Golden Cobweb" (1957) P47-51. The major peculiarity with this book is that even though it is written in 1957, it doesn't mention anywhere Maori Jack. This indicated that the book has not been researched as thoroughly as it could have been. The other reason that I found the authenticity of the source dubious is that the justification of its assertion of Fox as the earliest discoverer is slightly odd. It uses several pieces of evidence that are probably debatable, such as early reports referring to diggers "looking for Fox". This cannot be strictly said to support

Glasson's statement, only to emphasise Fox's dominance on the goldfield. Another similar incident is where Glasson suggests that because McGregor and Low never challenged the "assertions that Fox was the first on the Arrow field", then Fox must be the earliest gold miner. This is obviously somewhat presumptuous.

The other contradicting source was written by Miller in 1973. This source is unreliable because it appears to contradict itself. It claims that McGregor/Low discovered gold in the Arrow River first; yet in the same chapter it tells how Low "readily admits that Jack told him he had found fine gold in the Arrow". It then continues in the piece but seems to avoid the topic of Maori Jack. It also speaks about Pykes' views on the subject. Miller argues that Pyke (1887) and Rees (as a primary source) claimed McGregor/Low to be the first discoverers, yet on consultation of Pyke's writing, it is clearly stated that Pyke believes Maori Jack as the first discoverer, with supporting quotes from Rees.

However, the other five sources I referred to declare Maori Jack as the first discoverer of gold. There are some differences in the explanation of how McGregor and Low, and later Fox came to hear of the area, but essentially they all argue that the three parties arrived in that order.

One of the causes I feel could lead to discrepancies in this issue is that Fox showed obvious dominance. It has been unanimously argued that Fox assumed the role of "commissioner" at the field, and jumping claims incurred a penalty of fighting Fox himself. The fact that not a single claim was jumped suggests Fox's control of the situation¹. Fox also appears to have remained quiet for his own benefits (e. g.: having the advantage of first pick at the gold), rather than for Rees's, who owned the land and whose lambing season was about to begin². These two pieces of evidence hint that Fox was of strong character and

it can possibly be assumed that Fox would not argue should a member of the town declare him the original discoverer of gold on the Arrow River.

At this point in time, somebody finding a payable goldfield would receive a sum of money from the Superintendent of the Provincial Government. Considering the racial relations in New Zealand in 1862, it may also be possible that giving away a large amount of money to a young "half-caste" Maori boy would not have been looked upon as favourably as it may be in our day and age. This, however, is mere speculation and it also assumes that the Superintendent came to hear of Maori Jack (which may or may not be the case).

Another manner in which the truth may become distorted is that in this kind of circumstance - a goldfield becoming increasingly busy with miners and various people going about - it is very simple for the truth to become exaggerated, or turn into what is called today "an old wife's tale." Facts turn into stories turn into yarns turn into tall stories and so the story goes, in this context: nobody is there to write the facts down and record the truth until later. In this way Fox's achievements could have been embellished.

In conclusion, some of the ways in which the truth of this matter, who really discovered gold on the Arrow River first have been discussed. It has also been shown that Maori Jack is the obvious discoverer, as a result of sound information supporting this, and flawed, contradictory information against it. The argument that should perhaps be debated next is: How did McGregor and Low's party really find out about Maori Jack's discovery - what led them to the Arrow River?

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Closeburn Station - Margaret Buckham

Closeburn Station

by Mrs Margaret Buckham (née McGrath)

In 1874 Donald Angus Cameron of Glenfalloch Station, Nokomai, bought Closeburn Station from the Kirkpatrick brothers (Thomas and James). The homestead is situated at Wilson's Bay, Lake Wakatipu, about seven miles from Queenstown towards Glenorchy directly opposite Walter Peak Station.

Closeburn was run by a relative of D. A. Cameron until his eldest son, Ewen, managed it from 1891 to 1898 when he left following the death of his first wife Mary (née McGowan), who died in Frankton Hospital on 1st January, 1898, having her second child. From 1898 until 1903 Peter McCormick, who had been head shepherd at Nokomai, took over the lease of Closeburn and eventually owned that station after marrying Catherine Cameron, the eldest daughter of D. A. Cameron, in 1904. They had three children, two daughters (Margaret and Catherine) and a son (Archibald). They also gave a home to niece Margaret McGrath, the daughter of Mrs McCormick's younger sister who died in the 1918 influenza epidemic.

After the death of Peter McCormick on 3rd July 1936, Archibald managed Closeburn for his mother and sisters and eventually sold it to Mr Ray Key of Mt. Creighton Station in 1951. It has passed through several different owners and several sections have been sold and holiday houses built on what use to be paddocks for crops.

Closeburn was stocked with about 4000 merino sheep and a few cattle and was in the possession of the McCormick family for a total of 48 years.

Raymond Richard Timmins:

Sparky To The End.

by Mike Lynch

Indefatigable. It's not a word you hear much nowadays, but it might well be used to describe Ray Timmins, historian, electrician and general irritant of injustices on the body politic, who died in Queenstown on the 5th July 2001.

"Unwearying and unremitting" is what the definition says. And that's just what Ray was. Born in Dunedin in 1928, he was the archetypal Southern Man. Kings High School, Dunedin then down to Clinton, where his father was a police sergeant. Apprentice electrician in Roxburgh at the time of the dam, he qualified - - - and hit the road. This wasn't the normal OE though, but as electrician to Wirth's Circus, with which he had family connections. Nowadays, it's perhaps hard to recollect just what an operation a circus was in those days, and Wirth's was one of the biggest - - - lions and tigers, dwarves and fat ladies; special trains to transport the company through Australia and New Zealand.

Ray took a quiet delight in describing those days - - - down to his especial affinity with the often erratic animal tamers, and their sometimes very erratic beasts, along with the wonderfully Heath Robinson electrical infrastructure around the Big Top and side-shows. From there back to Balclutha, as an electrician, involvement in local drama productions (where he met future wife Rona), even trips to Wellington to stage-manage and light the Capital's fledgling professional theatre.

Then a stint in Wanganui, and 24 years as Chief Electrical Inspector in Invercargill, including 17 years running night classes for apprentices.

Retirement to Queenstown in 1988, and his teeth totally into local Historical Society and Historic Places Trust affairs. Some of his fellow committee members still fondly feel the scars.

For Ray simply wouldn't let go. Society President Rupert Iles, in a fond tribute at the funeral, talked of his "speaking at length in a wonderfully analytical manner, and being difficult to swerve for his facts." But eventually he might concede, albeit graciously. Beyond that, he applied endless hours to the countless Resource Consent applications which challenge the protectors of heritage in Queenstown.

The Society gave him life membership nearly two years ago. At the time Ray was already quite ill from the cancer that was to take his life. But he kept on right till the end, attending meetings throughout the country, and never scared to storm against perceived injustices. He also kept up a lifetime's work with the N. Z. Electrical Institute, as President Allan Blee said at the funeral. He was national president by 1971, organised conferences in Dunedin and Invercargill. He was on national committees for Standards regulations and examination boards, initiated a national linesman's training scheme and wrote and lectured much on matters electrical. He was duly honoured with institute life membership in 1991, and then the industry's highest honour, the Marion Smith Citation, last year. "We called him the Red Devil," said Allan Blee. "He would simply carry on, regardless of the popularity of the issue." But Allan paid fond and personal tribute to a man who was an unpaid help-line for problems besetting a rapidly changing industry - - - an advocate for the safety of all, and a campaigner for those at risk.

Ray's final work, and one which he almost got to see complete, was to oversee the preservation of one of New Zealand's first electrical systems, used in Queenstown's newly renovated Eichardt's Hotel.

Project manager Wayne Foley is full of praise for his heritage liaison work on the whole building.

Queenstown, these days a town with fewer unsung battlers, will miss him.

Ray is survived by wife Rona and two sons. John (Dunedin) and Allan (Australia).

Members Please Note:

- **Subscriptions**:- If there is no invoice inside the front cover of this issue, your subscription is paid up to 30 September, 2002.

- **E-mail facilities**:- Members who have this facility, are reminded to contact Malcolm Boote at mandpboote@actrix.gen.nz or phone 442 0004.

- Central Motorways Ltd. Alexandra are offering a 5 day trip called "Molesworth Experience" on 19 February, 2002, cost \$495 per person. Members interested please phone direct for details and booking to 0800 487 488. The Society have worked closely with Central Motorways on many of our trips and other members have really enjoyed this rare opportunity.

• The following documents are available for perusal by any interested members, from the late Ray Timmin's files:-

- Letter and photos re Rees paintings.
- Queenstown Police Station site - subdivision battle, 1995.
- Gold dredging.
- Photocopies of photos from the Hocken Library.
- History of Skyline.
- QLDC resource management issues and options document (a sort of mini district plan) 1993.
- Draft Kingston Foreshore Management Plan, 1995.
- One Mile Creek power station restoration proposal, 1993.
- Proposed District Plan - Historical Society input into Heritage items.
- Archer cottage and Evatt bungalow battles.

Field Trips 2001/2002

2001

Sunday, November 25 Half Day on Crown Terrace.

Sunday, December 9 Picnic/BBQ (venue to be advised).

2002

Monday, January 21 Day to Roxburgh and District.

Sunday, February 17 Day to Naseby and Ranfurly.

Monday, March 18 Half Day Queenstown.

Midweek, April Evening meeting (other details to be advised.)

Members will be advised of further details by phone, fax or e-mail.

Front Cover Illustration:

Eichardt's Hotel - Exterior and ground floor restoration completed mid year 2001 - photograph 22 July 2001