

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.*

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Secretary:	Jocelyn Robertson	442 1468
Treasurer:	E. C. (Peter) Mills	442 7930
"Courier":	Duncan Wilson	442 7385
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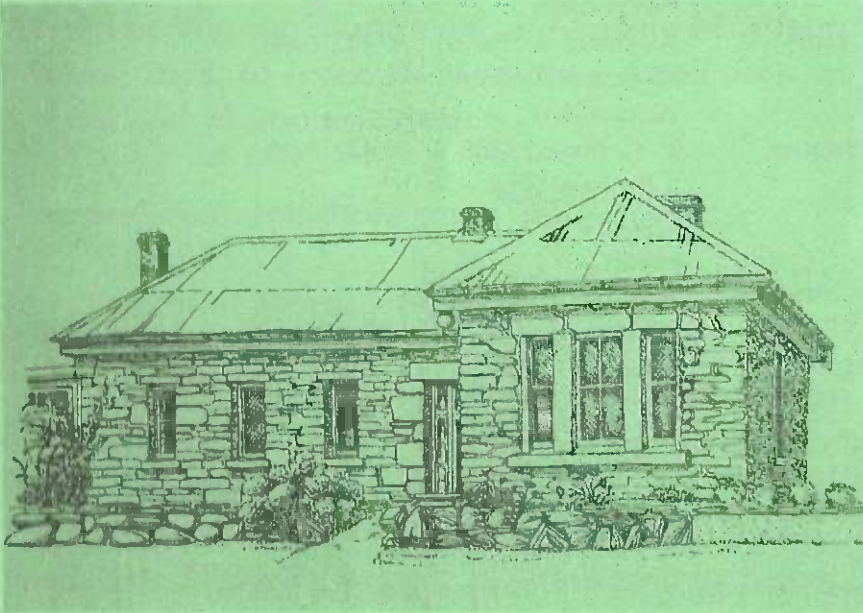
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PO Box 132, Queenstown

The Courier Acknowledgement
This issue has been produced by staff at the
Lakes District Museum.
Their quality work is hereby acknowledged

The Queenstown Courier



The Official Publication of the
Queenstown & Districts Historical Society

HISTORY AT OUR FRONT DOOR.

We are fortunate to live in an area with so much history, of people, for the most part good but some not so good, of buildings, events, and activities from the earliest settlement days. We are also fortunate to have in our membership, people who are interested and willing to organise outings and research the facts on buildings, people and features which all make good listening and viewing for our local members. One such outing was arranged by the 'trips' committee, of John Heenan, Wendy Ellingham and Cicely Morrison on 18 March 2002, to seven sites within a small area on Hallenstein and Melbourne Streets.

The sites and commentators were:

- ◆ The Transit of Venus site, by Rupert Iles.
- ◆ St Joseph's Catholic Church, by Mike Lynch.
- ◆ The Hallenstein Street Water Race, by John Heenan.
- ◆ Philip Waldmann's house, the corner of Hallenstein and York Streets, by Malcolm Boote.
- ◆ Frederick Daniel's house, 47 Hallenstein Street, by Cicely Morrison.
- ◆ 66 Hallenstein Street, by Ray Clarkson.
- ◆ Hulbert House, on the corner of Hallenstein and Ballarat Streets, by Ted Sturt.

And recorded as follows:

The Queenstown Courier

The Official Publication of the Queenstown and District Historical Society
Sixty Eighth Issue - May 2002

Officers of the Society:

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TRANSIT OF VENUS - 1874

Observatory and site Melbourne Street, Queenstown.

by Rupert Iles.

This memorial site is on what was, in the 1870's, known as the Eastern Terrace and in May 1957, in the New Zealand Gazette, it was declared as being reserved for historical purpose and the Queenstown Borough Council to control and manage.

It is obvious from the photograph that this would be about the whole site and if it had not been for the efforts of David Clarke, the area, to some extent, may have been swallowed up by the Millennium Hotel development.

From here on 9th December 1874 an American expedition, led by Dr C. H. F. Peters, observed the Transit of Venus. Simultaneous observations were made around the world to gather data to accurately determine the distance of the Earth from the Sun. Another transit occurred in 1882 and there will be another one in June 2004.

The weather on the day of the transit was cloudy and rainy with intervals of sunshine, but observations were made and Dr. Peters declared they were satisfactory. The inclement weather defeated other observation elsewhere in New Zealand.

Dr. Peters and his party overcame the hazards of travel to arrive at this remote spot on the 16th October, 1874, with all their scientific equipment and building materials. They stayed exactly three months. The photograph shows the buildings and surrounding stockade along with six persons, which was the number of the scientific party. When they departed they left the observatory standing and the Oregon timber was later used for door frames and window sashes. The government later bought the site. During

their stay in Queenstown the members of the party were entertained by leading citizens with J. W. Robertson, who was a senior partner in the steamer *Antrim*, including them on a picnic cruise with members of the Masonic Lodge. This plaque, commemorating the event, was put in place mainly due to the efforts of Mrs Sarah Salmond and was unveiled by her around 1947/48. Mrs Salmond (née Cockburn) was born at Cockburnspath, Scotland in 1864 and arrived in Queenstown in 1873.

The plaque reads:

*FROM THIS SITE A TRANSIT OF THE PLANET VENUS
ACROSS THE SOLAR DISC WAS OBSERVED ON 1874
DECEMBER 9 BY AN AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC
EXPEDITION WHICH CAME TO OTAGO IN THE SHIP
"SWATARA"*

Dr. Christian Heinrich Friedrich Peters was born in the province of Schleswig in 1813 and after an extensive career in Europe and the Mediterranean, emigrated to the United States in 1854. Dr. Peters' career and accomplishments are too extensive to list in this forum but suffice it to say he obtained his doctor's degree in 1836 having studied mathematics and astronomy. For some years he was Director of the Trigonometric Survey of Sicily. He took sides against the government when revolution broke out in 1848 but fled to France in 1849 and then proceeded to Constantinople where he became proficient in Turkish and Arabic languages. Dr. Peters was an accomplished scholar, and had great linguistic attainments. He even published a scientific paper in Turkish!

The first of his zodiacal charts was published in 1882. The zone observations which form the ground work of these charts

number over one hundred thousand.

Dr. Peters was elected an associate of the royal astronomical society in 1879. He died in 1890.

References:

Hearts of Gold J. D. Salmond

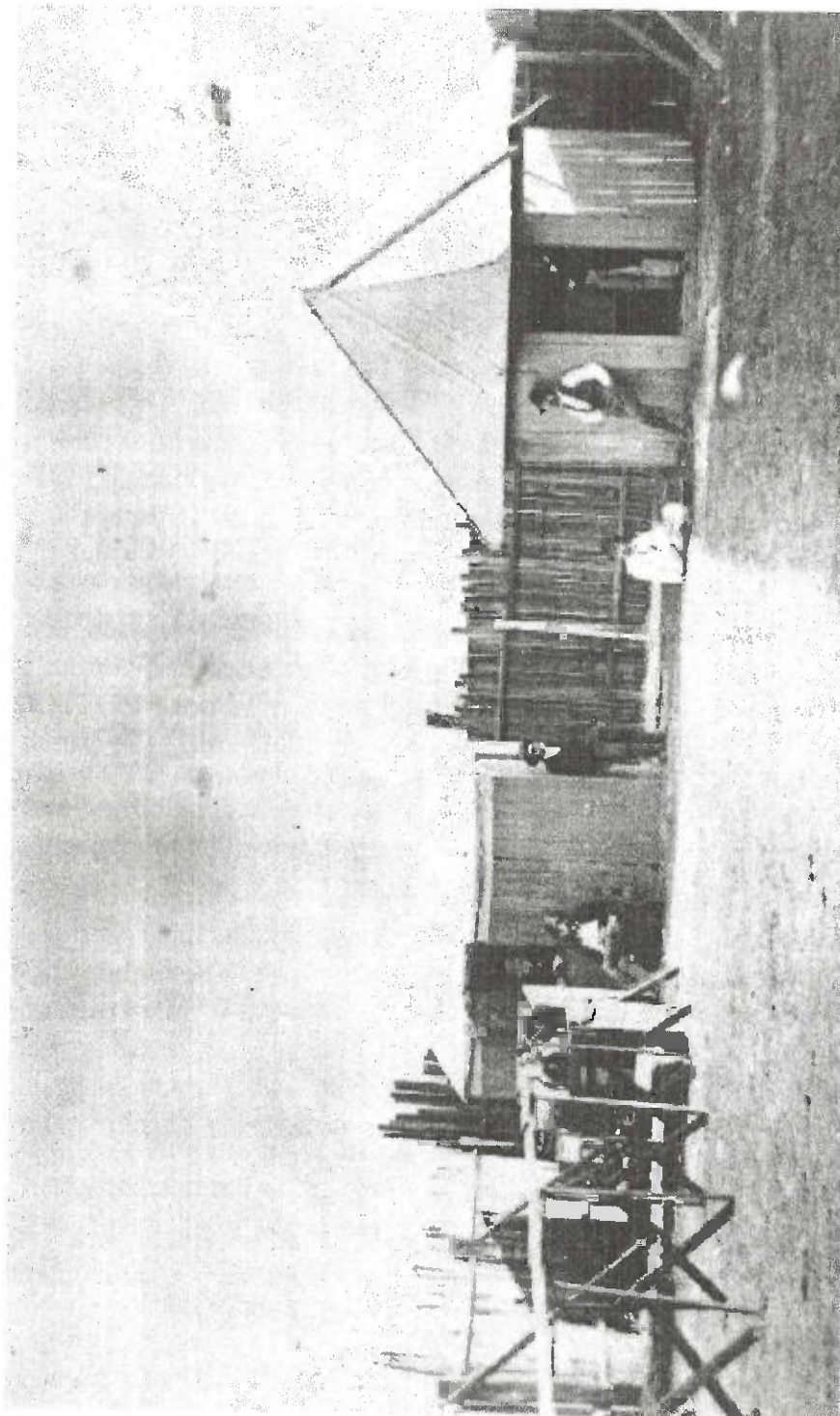
Golden Days Lake County F. W. G. Miller

A. J. De La Mare

The Queenstown Courier Issue No. 9, Page 18 Marigold Miller

Lakes District Museum

Mrs Joyce Dagg.



Transit of Venus 1874, New Zealand, Dr. C. H. F. Peter's station.

ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH and nearby convent.

by Michael Lynch.

The gold rushes brought the Irish to Queenstown. By 1873, when the parish became autonomous from Invercargill, there were reckoned to be 656 Catholics in the district.

The first church, St. Mary's had been built 10 years earlier. It was sited in Church Street, down from the present Anglican Church. This served until 1883 when, with the arrival of Dominican nuns, the school-church of St. Joseph's (on the site of the present convent) was opened. This was a two-storey, boarding establishment, open to both Catholics and non-Catholics.

The present church in Beetham St. was opened in 1898. It was designed by Dunedin architect F. W. Petre, built of stone quarried near Arthur's Point and timber from round Glenorchy. The cost of labour was £1118, the real cost being offset by considerable voluntary labour. The parish history notes the ecumenical co-operation involved.

The history goes on to note the changes in the church and school structure over the next 100 years. The population of Queenstown has risen tenfold, but attendance's at church by locals have perhaps decreased by a similar amount. By contrast the roll at the school has mushroomed - to the extent it is now taking over the former convent. The nuns suffered acute recruiting problems over recent decades, and the last two sister have recently moved to Arrowtown. The school, again with a considerable roll of non-Catholics, is now solely staffed by lay teachers.

A hundred years ago the local priest spent a considerable time on horseback, holding services at place as far-flung as Cardrona, Bullendale, Glenorchy and Nokomai. No longer.

STONE LINED WATER RACE 18 Hallenstein Street

by John Heenan

This water race was constructed circa 1871 to supply water to the brewery established on Marine Parade, and no doubt property owners alongside the race would also use the water. This remaining exposed section runs through Margaret Templeton's property.

Both the bottom and sides of the channel are lined mainly with rounded water-worn rocks probably used to ripple the flow and with slight stepping also to slow the flow of water to prevent scouring.

The supply of water came from springs on commonage ground above Hallenstein Street on an area designated on an old map as a water reserve which meant it was an area set aside for the procurement of fresh water.

The race was probably used until a piped supply from the One Mile stream was installed to supply the town. This occurred after the big fire in Ballarat Street supposedly caused by Philip Waldmann. Attempts to control that fire with a bucket brigade from the lake was hopeless. It was then realised that a good water supply was required for fire fighting and domestic purposes.

After the stone race became redundant it became more of a drainage race, and when the Templetons settled in Hallenstein Street in the 1950's the race still passed through several properties below them and still carried water. Flooding became a problem caused by changing land use and ground cover on the commonage and, during heavy rain caused some property damage. The Council, by using a dye, established the source of the water, cut off the race, and built a drainage line taking the flow along Hallenstein Street across Frankton Road to Leary's Gully (now Paddy Burton Memorial Park).

All the property owners on the line of the stone race, except the

Templeton's, had the race filled in. The Templetons preserved their fifty metre length, and later Margaret applied for a Historic Places Trust classification. Further to that Margaret was responsible for the placement of a rock and plaque on her Hallenstein Street frontage to designate the entry of the race to her property. Now the public can view the race over the timber fence behind the rock and plaque. Margaret deserves to be commended for preserving this historic relic.



The plaque in Hallenstein Street.

Nil Desperandum 2 York street - Malcom Boote

NIL DESPERANDUM

2 York Street

by Malcolm Boote.

Nil Desperandum was the name given to this house by one of Queenstown's best known characters.

The house was built in 1877 by Philip Waldmann, a German stonemason who had been in Queenstown since the mid 1860's. Note the signs of a craftsman - the 23 inch thick walls.

Waldmann opened a grocery and confectionery shop in Ballarat Street in 1880, just about the time when the gold miners were leaving the district as the amount of gold being found fell away. The story of his leaving town in the early hours of the 23rd of January 1882 and subsequent burning down of his shop together with eight other shops and several other buildings, in fact most of the north side of Ballarat Street, followed by his arrest in Dunedin is one which can wait 'til another time.

Immediately attention was turned to his wife's house by the insurance agent covering the claim for the shop. He brought police to the house and they found a trail of matches, candles, paper waste, manuka scrub, a tin of tar and a bottle of kerosene all in the back room.

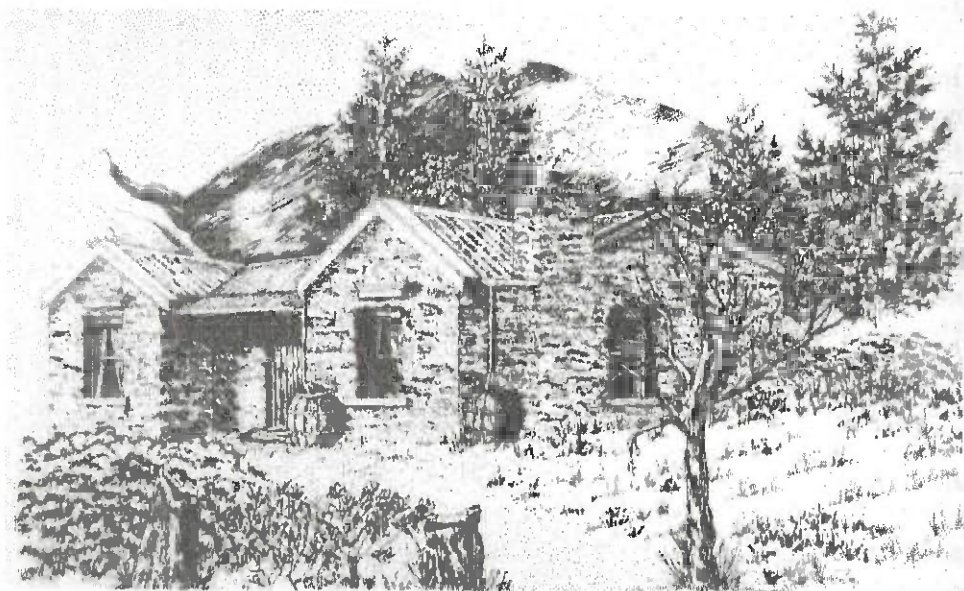
Waldmann was tried in Dunedin in April 1882 for "feloniously and maliciously attempting to set fire to an unoccupied house at Queenstown." He was sentenced to seven years imprisonment for attempted arson. The sentence was not related to the Ballarat Street shop but his house, the charge relating to the shop had been withdrawn!

After Waldmann's conviction his wife sold the house, still with the patch of tar in the back room. Waldmann's stonework is preserved but major alterations have taken place. The house layout is typical of the mid 19th century, all the best views are from the bedrooms and living was at the back, at least that's the sunny side.

In 1911 the house was bought by John and Peggy Salmond, they had six children. John was a well known builder and he added the rear and side

extensions. He also built the Bath House, in Queenstown Bay. John was also an elder of the Presbyterian Church as well as a Borough Councillor. The Salmond's son, John, became lecturer in divinity studies at Otago University and held high position in the New Zealand Presbyterian Church. Salmond Hall in Dunedin is named after him and Salmond Place, above Hallenstein Street in Queenstown, is too.

Bill and Kirstie Sharpe bought the house in 1976 from Mary Salmond, who laid the foundation stone of St Andrews Church in Stanley Street. The weather board extension on the side was built in 1980 by Michael Wyatt, it was his first private job in Queenstown. The Sharpes sold the house two years ago. The new owner, Andrew Young, would like to retain the house with its historical connections as it is, we must be thankful, a great note to finish on.



Sketch from *Cinctet of Gold* by J. S. Murray

Frederick Daniels stone House - Cicely Morrison

FREDERICK DANIEL'S STONE HOUSE

47 Hallenstein Street

by Cicely Morrison

This house was built about 1874, and its first owner was Mr Frederick H. Daniel.

Fred Daniel came from England to New Zealand in 1861 in his early twenties and eventually arrived in Queenstown to run an auctioneering business. He served a term as Mayor of Queenstown in 1878 and was also chairman of the County Council. His prosperity seems to have waned as he sold the property in a mortgagee sale in 1893 and left the town.

Some time later it was turned into a small maternity hospital. The house at this time looked very fine from the street, but was actually built in two stages. The original cottage was only the left hand end of the present building, with the front door positioned at the existing middle window, not unlike the design of McNeill's cottage in Church Street, but with the stonework rather uneven and the stones larger.

About ten years later the south wing was added to include the entrance hall and large sitting-room. From the street the extension looked most impressive, but at the back it was a different story, as the room behind the sitting-room was never built even though there was a fireplace built and a new chimney. The reason for this uncompleted extension was probably financial.

The house is now owned by Jo and Steve Weir and is operated as a guest house. Inside you can still see the original outside wall, and lovely stone fireplaces, but the rear of the building is now, of course, finished and the result is a very attractive dwelling.

66 Hallenstein street -Ray Clarkson

66 HALLENSTEIN STREET

by Ray Clarkson

This small, white, unobtrusive cottage at No. 66 Hallenstein Street has had an interesting ownership and history. It is even rumoured to have been, originally, a shepherd's hut on Rees' station, though dates of land titles make this controversial. With a central core of a small double cell schist building it has had architecturally sympathetic wooden additions over the years depending on the needs of the inhabitants. In the early 1950's the cottage was damaged by fire and was then extensively rebuilt.

It is one of the earliest buildings in Queenstown. The land, with an area of one acre and 36 perches, was first registered as a Crown grant on the 10th June 1871 to Nelson L. Thompson, a stonemason of Arrowtown. It seems likely that Thompson, because of his occupation, erected the small stone building because when the land, plus two more quarter acre sections, was sold to William McKibbin, labourer, of Crown Terrace in April 1875 for £164, mention is made of buildings.

In 1880 William McKibbin, who now listed himself as a farmer, along with Henry and John in partnership became the new owners then for £300, they sold to James McKibbin (not a bad investment over four and a half years especially as two sections between Malaghan and Turner Streets were not included.). However, the arrangement did not last long because seven months later James McKibbin had sold the property to Louis De Beer, merchant, of Queenstown (there is a very interesting connection between the De Beers and the Hallenstein family). Unfortunately, Louis De Beer died in January 1887 aged 43 of congestion of the lungs, but his wife Rosette continued to occupy the property until 1908, in all a period of 28 years.

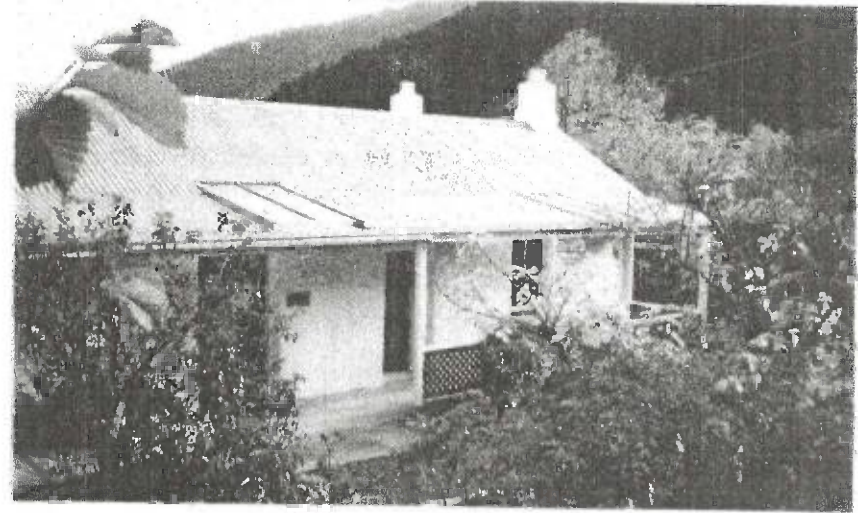
I find it interesting that between 1887 and 1981 the cottage had a succession of female owners - Mrs. M. P. Ashworth, Maria Davies who between 1917 and 1930 sold off several sections along Hallenstein Street; Miss Mary Louise McKibbin, a daughter of an earlier owner who bought the property now reduced to 986m²; Miss Jenny Thomson who

owned the property from March 1934 to February 1974 before selling to her niece Mrs. Lorna Chisholm.

Miss Thomson, a registered nurse who named the cottage *Kaiweka* came to Queenstown with suspected tuberculosis and also to care for her sister Mrs. Margaret Gilkison, another T. B. patient. The dry air of Central Otago was regarded as a suitable treatment for this serious complaint and many people moved to the area in an attempt to cure the condition.

As an aside, Hugh Roxburgh, when he was a teenager, recalls driving his grandfather, Mr. John Thomson, to Queenstown and because of the latter's reluctance to travel round the new lake road, the car was put on the *Earnslaw* for the last part of the journey.

Today the cottage is well looked after and still has that wonderful, unobstructed view over Queenstown Bay and Lake Wakatipu towards Walter and Cecil Peaks.



Kaiweka 66 Hallenstein Street. Photograph taken on the 18th March 2002.

A HISTORY OF *HULBERT HOUSE* 1888

by Ted Sturt

Hulbert House, sometimes known as *Tutuila*, is the large Victorian villa that sits so well at the top of upper Ballarat Street, Queenstown. Flanked by two large Lime (Linden) trees it commands excellent views across the town, lake and mountains beyond.

It is regarded as a unique example of a Victorian villa typical of that built for the upper middle class and the only one remaining in the area. For this reason it is registered as a historic building under the District Planning Scheme, and classified by the Historic Places Trust with a protective covenant.

This large seventeen room villa was built in 1888 for Horatio Nelson Firth who was clerk to the court of the resident magistrate and receiver of gold revenue over the period 1884 - 1901.

H. N. Firth was born at Market Drayton in Shropshire in 1842, the youngest son of a family of thirteen children, whose lineage from the 16th century is recorded in *Burkes Dictionary of the Landed Gentry* under Firth of Hartford Lodge. Obviously a man of means, he arrived in the colony in 1862 and spent years in the Marlborough province.

Believed to be one of the first Freemasons in the Nelson area, by 1867 he had courted and married a most handsome Irish lady, Catherine Mary O'Sullivan, whose forebears were as distinguished as his own.

It is not yet known how the Firths spent their years, but in 1878 he was first recorded as clerk to the court in Havelock, Nelson, and assumed his official duties in Queenstown in 1884. He also

became most active in the affairs of St Peter's Anglican Church, both as a lay reader and vicar's warden.

H. N. Firth very quickly acquired four acres of land on the Eastern Terrace and for his house site purchased sections one to six in block twenty just above the town. These sections are most desirable and were granted by the Crown in 1871 to Messrs. Malaghan, Pascoe, Crofts and Richards for the princely sum of £3.10s each.

In 1888 H. N. Firth instructed Mason and Wales, architects of Dunedin, to design a villa residence 'fit for a gentleman' and an agreement was entered into on 29th November 1888 with John Salmond, master builder, to build the present villa residence. By good fortune the original sketches and drawings of the house are held on file in the architect's office and kindly provided by them to the present owner. From the first sketch plan it does suggest an earlier stone walled building on the site, but this is something for further research.

The villa is most soundly constructed and built on stone piers and foundations, then framed up with red beech and red pine, milled at the head of Lake Wakatipu. John Salmond assisted by Thomas Luckie, a shipwright, built extremely well - the six foot two inch studs being morticed and tenoned in the six foot four inch bottom plates, with all framed intersections being cross-bolted. These two craftsmen have left their mark for all time together with an 1886 Victorian 'bun' penny deliberately placed behind a dado moulding in the wall panelling.

The joinery and finishing work were first class, with imported marble fireplaces - the walls and ceilings finished in lath and plaster with fine plaster cornices and centrepieces. Much of the

joinery had panels of glass with gold leaf work and in the entrance foyer still stands the glass screen, acid etched with the family crests of the Firth and O'Sullivan families, complete with motto *Deus Incrementum Dedit*.

God had certainly given increase because by now the Firths were blessed with issue, namely Ella, Maud, Oliver, Thomas, Ethel (Myna), Kate, Vida, Scipio and Joseph, who lived and entertained with their family in a very grand manner. We hear that when little Annie Mulholland worked in the kitchen Kate Firth married a Mr Raymond and a red carpet was laid from the front steps to the gated entrance in Ballarat Street. Vida Firth married a lawyer named Thompson who suffered from amnesia - one day he did not return home and was neither seen nor heard of again.

At the beginning of the 20th century the family's good fortune seems to have changed. Horatio, in his capacity as receiver of gold revenue, was subjected to audit in 1901 and later charged and convicted of embezzlement of gold revenue amounting to £700 sterling. He was sentenced to one year's hard labour in Invercargill gaol - despite a strong plea for clemency from the Queenstown Borough Council acting on a well supported petition from the local community.

H. N. Firth was not listed in *Wises Post Office Directory* for 1902 and from 1901 Catherine Mary Firth was advertising *Hulbert House* as a guest house. She was said "to provide accommodation of the first order in Queenstown and to be most attentive to the requirements of her visitors". Mrs Firth continued to provide accommodation, in the best tradition of her family's reputation for hospitality, until the family sold the property and left for Wellington in 1910. It was owned briefly by William Royston Ambler and sold immediately to Patrick McCarthy, the well-known proprietor of the *Mountaineer* establishment, who lived there for a while with his wife and

daughter. Patrick McCarthy is known to have acquired a great deal of the Firth family silver, and he finished his days working in billiard saloon until his decease in 1924. His trustees sold the property to Elizabeth McFarlane, who at first operated a private nursing home, but later continued to take paying guests.

Mrs McFarlane had a great love of Robert Louis Stevenson and she renamed the house *Tutuila* after the island in the American Samoas - according to Samoan mythology, Tagalea, the Creator, made the island of Tutuila as a "place of rest for the Gods" and this is the meaning of the name which is not inappropriate for such a guest house.

In 1928 she remarried and became Mrs Thompson - William Thompson, better known as 'Mulga Bill' from his Australian origins, is well remembered in town, for his great repertoire of recitations of wide choice and richness.

In 1937 Mrs Thompson sold the property to Miss Mary Salmond, the daughter of John Salmond the original builder, and Sarah (née Cockburn) of Arthur's Point, who produced a most distinguished family. Miss Salmond, who had spent 30 years as a missionary in India, at first used the property as a holiday home, letting rooms with kitchen facilities.

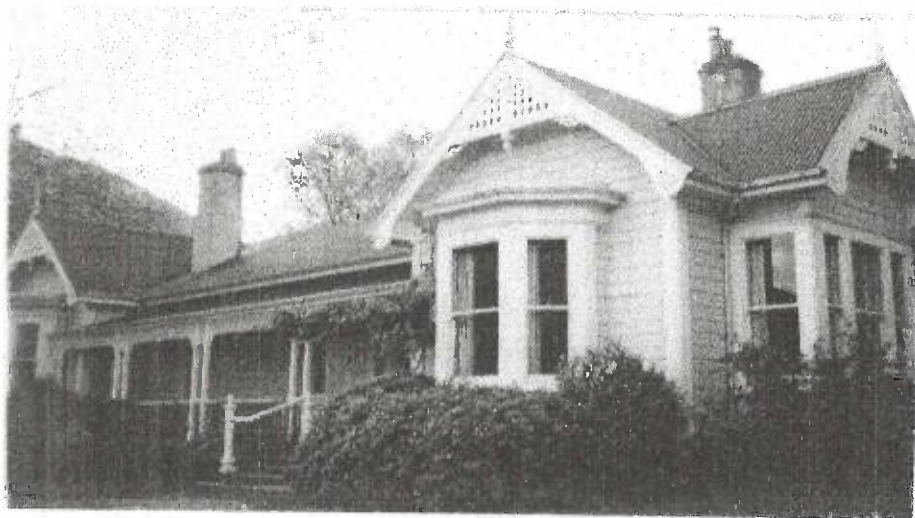
In 1942 the Archerfield Girls' School of Dunedin leased the house during the Japanese scare. Headed by Miss Black, cooked for by Miss Beard and with head girl Pat Shand, the twenty-five girls concerned - from preparatory to sixth form - remember their stay with mixed affections. With lessons in the morning, most afternoons were free to walk the town in groups of three.

After the war the house was leased for a period to the

Southland Hospital Board as a maternity home - confinements were very short since the delivery room was the servants' bedroom - the coldest room in the house. The nursery was the first bedroom on the left of the hall.

In 1948 Mary Salmond sold the property to Mrs Hazel Grant, who operated a guest house, until 1964 when it was taken over by the Salvation Army and continued to run as a guest house with strong Christian emphasis. From 1968 Mr Harry Ashurst owned the property which he renamed *Lake View Lodge* and it changed hands again in 1971 to Alex Arnott of Queenstown.

O'Connells Hotel, later the Vacation Hotel Group, acquired the property in 1972 and used it as a staff hostel until the sale of the property to the present owner in March 1981, and after extensive and ongoing restoration, the property re-opened in 1984 as a small bed and breakfast inn, in order to finance its continued maintenance and conservation which has been recognised at local and national levels.



Accountancy in Queenstown - Cliff Broad

ACCOUNTANCY IN QUEENSTOWN

by Cliff Broad

Although Queenstown had its bookkeepers from the earliest days, accountancy was a product of the 20th century.

Various Invercargill and Dunedin accountants paid occasional visits to Queenstown from time to time, as needs dictated. One such was a 'crib owner' Charles Francis of Invercargill.

I started working for Charles Francis in January 1948, and that year I accompanied him to Queenstown where a few days work was necessary. We stayed in his crib in Kent Street. We had no mechanical aids, but I had previously worked in a bank so was no stranger to long columns of figures which had to be accurately added.

We were always up and on the job early, and after calls on clients during the day, we would still be hard at work after dinner. Charles Francis was a kind and considerate boss, but I remember him telling me that the mountain air refreshed him, while I was nearly falling asleep at nine or ten at night whilst struggling to mentally add those figures.

Clients I can recall were the Transport Company, Hensman and Inders building business and camping ground, and Ian Hamilton's milk delivery and dairying operation (his cow shed and paddocks were near the junction of Gorge and Robins Roads).

After a couple of years I was considered capable of coming to Queenstown to do work on my own. Sometimes I stayed with the Hensmans at Mountain View, and sometimes with Mr and Mrs Jock Keen, whose home had a room (where I worked) with

a view right down Ballarat Street.

In 1959 I acquired a crib, and from that time for about ten years I worked regularly from there. It was not unusual to arrive with my wife and children on a Friday evening to find a client or two waiting almost on the doorstep. At that time Queenstown had only one bank, the Bank of New Zealand, and one solicitor, Bart Sheehan, but still no resident accountant.

The first accountant to set up practise was Cowan and Morton, with Bruce Morris as practise manager, in February 1964.

My own firm's practise had expanded steadily. In 1969 Hylton Hensman, who had such unbounded faith in the future of Queenstown, guaranteed the establishment of our branch. We started a branch office with Barry Thomas as branch manager. His total staff was a part-time office girl. We practised under the name Harrington, Giller, Broad and Christie. For myself I was pleased to see the end of 21 years of coming to Queenstown and having very busy weekends and whatever other days that could be fitted in. The firm grew quickly and steadily. It now practises as McCulloch and Partners.

Queenstown now has many accountancy firms, legal firms and all the major banks have branches here.

Queenstown Post Office - Malcom Boote

QUEENSTOWN POST OFFICE

by Malcom Boote

There has been publicity regarding the Queenstown Post Office redevelopment, so I feel that it is my responsibility to explain the Society's position.

Most Queenstown citizens thought the Post Office was safe when owned by the Government. Perhaps because of this the building was not included as a heritage building in the District Plan, nor registered with the Historic Places Trust.

However, Ngai Tahu subsequently purchased the site from the Crown as part of the Treaty settlement, together with the police station and the court house. Ngai Tahu have plans to redevelop the site, which will include the demolition of the Pig & Whistle, the post office and the Stanley Street Telecom building (the courthouse is sacrosanct). These plans have not been publicly released, but your committee believes many of our members, and in fact the wider public, would be aghast to hear the Post Office, a Queenstown icon, was to be lost.

The committee has explored all options to try and give the locals a say on this development. It has submitted a request to the Historic Places Trust for registration of the post office as a heritage guiding, and met the QLDC to discuss the logistics of the council putting a heritage order on the building.

However, the proposed development complies with the District Plan, and registration would not necessarily prevent demolition. It is also a lengthy procedure.

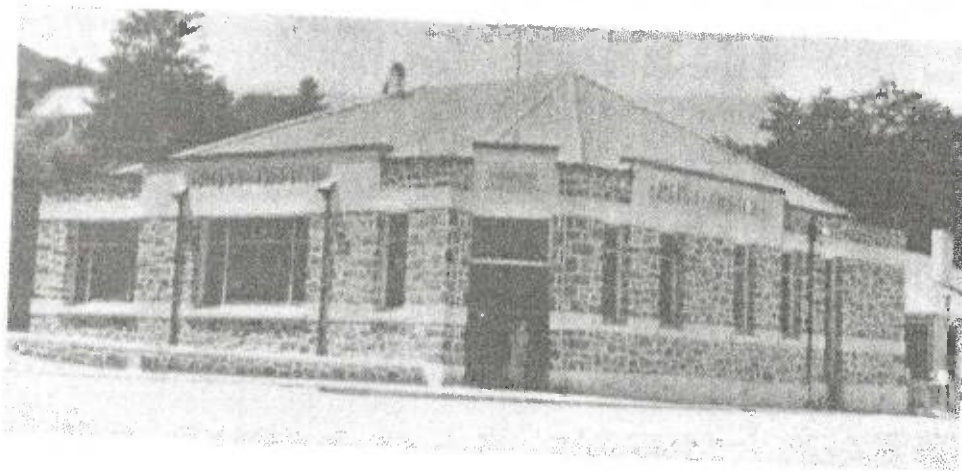
On April 20th the QLDC issued a certificate of compliance to Ngai Tahu confirming redevelopment plans comply with the District Plan and permitting demolition of the Post Office.

The Society has since met with QLDC and Ngai Tahu, their planner and architect, and was shown detailed plans for the site - which involve four three-storey buildings. The Society made it clear the priority was to protect the courthouse area, save the Post Office building, and suggested that plans be released to public view and that the resource consent be publicly notified.

The Society will proceed with the HPT registration application for the Post Office and push for the history of the site to be recorded if demolition is inevitable.

The story of the Post Office is included below: this award winning 1938 building was the fourth post office on the site, the first from 1863 to 1870, the second with house attached from 1870 to 1895 and the third from 1895 to 1938.

Who are we to pass judgement on the qualities of the award winning 1930's building against the buildings of today?



QUEENSTOWN POST OFFICE

by Mike Lynch

The construction of Queenstown's present Post Office is a quirky story in itself. It was built in 1938, designed by notable Invercargill architect E. R. Wilson, and merited an award from the Institute of Architects that year.

Wilson got the job because of the rush of public construction at the time meant Government architects just weren't available. But he fulfilled the commission - to use the maximum amount of local materials. In this case it was timber from the head of the lake and an innovative use of local stone in the cladding.

Stonemasons Jack Routledge and Bill Smoothy found a rare and giant rock of green and hard glacial greywacke in the lake near the end of the Gardens (they had chipped away at the Scott Memorial rock first to test their source). They blasted and broke up the rock, and with considerable labour turned it into the facings for the new building. The unusual white pointing came from Stewart Island sand. It was design never seen before, and needed innovative construction.

The story of the building was considered sufficiently memorable to be recorded on a plaque inside the Post Office. Unfortunately, the plaque went missing when the building was gutted and the roof modified in the late 1970's.

But the façade remains, and with it the low-rise open space that has long been something of a taonga in central Queenstown.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SKIPPERS ROAD

compiled by Ray Clarkson

By the end of 1862, the gold prospectors who had been working their way along the Otago rivers had reached the Wakatipu, and the promising discoveries which they had made led to a very rapid increase in the population. The rush was on, and all its associated activities quickly developed. When Thomas Arthur and Harry Redfern, shearers employed by W. G. Rees, found considerable quantities of gold near present day Arthur's Point on the Shotover miners flocked in. They quickly moved up the river valley working the gorges and beaches.

Communications were dangerous and difficult. Supplies were packed in on miners' backs - time consuming and slow. Soon profitable businesses developed - shopkeepers, grog shanties, and pack routes developed naturally as men and horses wore tracks. In June 1863 the *Lake Wakatipu Mail* estimated that two thousand people were at Maori Point - Skippers Point. C. W. Wright, mining surveyor, estimated 4116 in the Shotover area. The quantity of stores needed was huge. The Provincial Government which was concerned about the safety of miners was quick to provide tracks. Workers were readily available to help with the construction.

In March 1863 a meeting in Bracken's Hotel to consider the best means of opening up a safe bridle path to Skippers was held. A committee was set up, money was collected; a route was to be inspected and plans to be drawn up and tender to be called. There was an approach to the Provincial Government to reimburse the diggers. Businessmen tendered for the contracts for the track which was let in July 1863 and was to follow the eastern bank of the Shotover River between Arthur's Point and Maori Point.

The track which was developed was, in many places, steep and dangerous and the attempts to deal with the great rocky bluff immediately before Deep Creek very difficult. The track went above this then descended by a hazardous zigzag which was almost impossible for

transport other than packhorses. This narrow track, high above the river provided the only access to the claims and shanty towns which sprang up, for nearly twenty years.

As easily won gold petered out, the population declined, but the demand for better, safer communication continued. Mining methods changed, machinery was introduced and large equipment organised by influential companies. With the development of quartz mining at Bullendale, matters came to a head. In July, Mr. Aspinall proposed a dray road to Skippers. This triggered a petition and gained the support of Fred Evans, the manager of the Bullendale mine.

The Council decided that a dray road should be formed from Arthur's Point to Bell's accommodation house at the bottom of Long Gully, and that the government should be asked for a grant. The Council moved quickly and by the end of the year a grant of £3000 for the Arthur's Point - Deep Creek section, and £3400 for Deep Creek - Skippers section had been made.

In February 1883 the work was split into four sections:

Section 1	Arthur's Point to the Saddle
Section 2	The Saddle to Deep Creek
Section 3	Deep Creek to Maori Point
Section 4	Maori Point to Fishers (opposite Londonderry Creek.)

Tenders were sought for section 1, 3 and 4, but only that of £1923 for section 1 was accepted. In August 1883, with government approval the work on section 1 commenced and was completed thirteen months later. A tender of £1660 for section 3 was accepted in September 1883 and this work was carried on contemporaneously with section 1. Then a ten of £1749 was accepted for the fourth section that finished opposite Skippers Point. this section was completed in July 1885. Some nine and a half miles had been completed leaving almost six miles (the most difficult section) to be

done. Skippers was still reliant on pack horses. The Council decided that because the zigzag was the main problem area, it should be tackled next. Although it would have been logical to start section 2 at the Saddle and work towards Deep Creek, the Council considered it essential to eliminate this nightmarish section. This work required a separate contract for a two mile section of road where ten chains of solid rock would have to be blasted through. The Government approved the suggestion and the Council accepted a tender for £3800.

The section, now known as Pinchers Bluff and the Devil's Elbow, needed a platform for the road to be blasted out of a sheer face which rose about 600 feet out of the river. The task was a daunting one, involving hand-drilling and explosives. Men were lowered on ropes to be suspended like flies on a wall as they carried out endless hand-drilling into the hard rock face. The work was hazardous and difficult and there were accidents and close calls. Tourists who today stop on this part of the road to peer cautiously over the edge to the river far below never fail to admire the tenacity and courage of those who laboured here over 100 years ago.

The road around the zigzag was finally completed in October 1886. However, the section from the Saddle to meet the new road at the zigzag remained as a pack track. A shortage of government funds saw this unsatisfactory state of affairs continue for another two years. In November 1888 a contract for section 2 for £3733.6.7 was let. The road to be formed was far from the river and consisted mainly of a long descent of almost three miles down Long Gully, with a drop of approximately 1300 feet. Today, anyone who stands at the top of the road watching it snake away to finally disappear at the bottom of the valley far below, is in for a spectacular sight. John Maher employed about forty men, but found constructing the road a tougher job than he had expected. Shortly after finishing he was declared bankrupt. With this section finished the road from Arthur's Point to Skippers Point was completed. Seven years on, fifteen miles of narrow road had at last been constructed. Forcing a road through this precipitous rugged country with modern equipment would not be easy, but with the primitive gear

available at the time it was a wonderful achievement. On many steep faces a road platform could only be achieved by building a rock wall from the nearest foundation area below the road. Dry rock walls, some quite extensive, are still evident today. The workers also laboured under extremely difficult climate conditions.

In 1890 the road ended at the fragile bridge at Londonderry Creek. The road had no sooner been completed than clamour from the quartz miners at Bullendale began. A site was chosen for a new bridge in a spectacular position. Three hundred and sixteen feet long and set approximately 300 feet above the river, it would span a gorge with sheer rock walls on both sides. After lengthy negotiations a tender of £3244 was accepted and construction started in March 1898. The bridge was opened on 29 March 1901 by the Minister of Mines.

The road and bridge in recent years have continued to provide access for tourist projects. Because of its hazardous and scenically grand nature Councils have been conscious of promoting safety. In 1896 cycles were prohibited on the road. In 1906 motor vehicles were prohibited. In 1915, R. M. Patterson, a prominent runholder, drove his Buick into Skippers. This was not legal until 1918 when cars were permitted from 7pm to 8am. In 1926 restrictions were dropped. After that time it was customary for prospective motorists to ring from Eichardts to the Long Gully Hotel and vice versa to warn traffic.

References:

- The Shotover River* by A. J. De La Mare
- The Golden Cobweb* by H. A. Glasson
- Golden Days of Lake Count* by F. W. G. Miller

ONE MILE POWERHOUSE

by Malcolm Boote

The Society became involved in the project to restore the powerhouse when vandals created so much damage that demolition was a serious option by QLDC officials. With a high degree of lobbying from Mike Lynch, Karen Boulay and Rebecca Reid (HPT, Dunedin) the council called a meeting of interested parties and a working group was formed to put together a usage and restoration plan.

Responsibilities were allocated:- Ownership and management plan to Mac Properties representing QLDC as owner of the site and building. Restoration of the building to Jackie Gilles, local heritage architect. The Historical Society took on the task of tracing equipment to rebuild a static display as near as possible to the original 1924 hydro-generating equipment.

The building is on a council owned reserve, future ownership rests finally with QLDC, but a trust similar to that owning Williams Cottage is a strong possibility. It is hoped that after restoration a permanent commercial use would be found for the building in the space remaining. There have been several expressions of interest already.

I took on the job of finding suitable equipment to create this display and have been ably directed by Alan Blee, a Society member with vast experience in the power generation business, who, with others, has created a collection of stationery engines at the Station Museum in Clyde. Progress made to date is largely due to Alan's knowledge, experience and contacts.

Since commencing a country wide search of over 35 museums and restoration societies, Alan's group have offered the original Boving pelton wheel turbine, removed from the One Mile in 1965 when it was converted to diesel power. This has been a great inspiration as it is in excellent condition. After much correspondence and several visits, we have traced equipment that would replicate the original alternator,

governor and instrumentation. This search covered many hydro schemes where old equipment was being or had recently been removed. Sites included Kumara on the West Coast, Monowai, Omarama, the Teviot schemes and Arapuni and Palmerston North.

The interest shown by almost everyone approached has been remarkable and we are encouraged with many offers of equipment of similar vintage. Finding this was made easier by the records held at the Lakes District Museum, Arrowtown, where microfilm of the Lake Wakatipu Mail of 23rd September, 1924, record the official opening of the Queenstown Borough Council scheme. This included an accurate description of the installation with details of the equipment. It also recalled that the new power scheme replaced the acetylene plant which disintegrated in one mighty bang on 23rd June, 1923.

Further progress will be reported in future edition of the Courier. I feel that it will take many months to bring a scheme as ambitious as this to fruition. If any member or reader can offer practical assistance with electrical knowledge please contact me, we will need all the help available as restoration of the equipment and installation approach.



"Opening of One-mile Creek power scheme, 1925" from *Let There Be Light*.pg 109

THE SALE OF QUEENSTOWN

by Allan De La Mare

When the news of Thomas Arthur's rich claim at Arthur's Point together with the equally rich claims of William Fox and others at the Arrow became known it travelled down the gold fields to Dunedin with almost lightning speed. All miners dreamed of being in the van of a new discovery and having a prime chance of striking it rich and the news drew them like a magnet. In a few months the population of the Wakatipu increased from a score to at least ten thousand and the commercial centre of the activity was Queenstown Bay.

As the miners passed through into the back country seeking a claim a shanty town sprang up around William Rees' homestead established by those seeking to cash in on the rush by supplying the miners needs. All trades and professions were represented with hotel keepers and store keepers prominent.

As they arrived each one sought a vacant area in what they saw as a good position immediately taking possession by squatting and quickly setting up business. Time was money. With the early arrivals came the police, the Resident Magistrate and his staff and probably some of the Provincial Government's surveyors. These officials probably marked some road lines to provide some order in what could have been chaos. Vincent Pyke, Secretary of the Gold Fields, whose job it was to make the Gold Fields Regulations work, was probably party to these decisions.

With a sizeable town sprouting up on Queenstown Bay the need to survey the area was urgent and a party of government surveyors commenced this work. Their office and quarters were on the bank of Horne Creek about the present position of the reception of the Garden's Park Royal Hotel. Their job was difficult as Ballarat, Beach and Rees Streets were occupied by buildings or tents cheek by jowl. They had no option but to survey each section in accordance with the area occupied by the persons in possession. As a result instead of having a conventional survey with most of the sections of the same size almost

every section in these three streets had a different road frontage. As generally only the street frontages were occupied the surveyors managed to standardise the depths of the sections except along the waterfront where this was not possible. Many of the sections were tiny with most having a street frontage of little over 23 feet. In Rees Street most sections had a depth of about 60 feet.

While this work was proceeding Rees made a bid to acquire the land on which Queenstown was established. Under the depasturing licence issued to the Rees partnership was the right to freehold 80 acres around the station homestead after a proper survey had been completed and provided the Waste Land Board was convinced the land was not required for public use.

As a substantial town had already been established on Queenstown Bay and unlike most goldfields towns showed prospects of being permanent, the Waste Lands Board in February 1863 had no hesitation in declining the Rees application for pre-emptive right to the land. Later in the year the depasturing licence for the land in the Wakatipu area was cancelled and the only avenue left for Rees was to claim compensation for the loss of his lease from the Provincial Government. He did so and the matter was finally settled in 1864.

The Waste Land Board was without doubt correct in that it was in the public interest to retain the ownership of the land in the governments hands and the residents had made it very clear they would prefer to be beholden to the Provincial Government than one individual, no matter how much he was respected.

The work of the surveyors was difficult as they had to run their survey lines through a busy town and having to tailor make the sections to suit the needs of the occupiers. Some problems arose. It was found the Methodist Church was in the middle of Ballarat Street. Luckily it was flimsy and not a long term problem. In Lower Beach Street and in parts of Shotover Street many buildings encroached partly, and in many cases completely, on the road line. It is not

known how this problem was resolved but as all the buildings were small with some of canvas the proper street line was achieved in time. To this day some sections in Upper Beach Street impinge further on to the road line than others, but probably this is not due to the original survey. However it is easy to see, even now, some very narrow sections, a hangover from the 1863 survey.

During 1863 the surveyors produced a plan of the town and on it was shown all existing buildings and the occupiers name. This plan is a valuable record of the early town and illustrates a typical mining shanty town.

Having disposed of Rees' claim and a survey virtually complete the Provincial Governments next step was to sell the land and the responsibility for this fell on W. H. Cutten, the Commissioner of Crown Lands. It was a difficult job with over 500 sections available for sale, with no uniformity of size and about one third occupied. Probably the same situation had been experienced at Lawrence and Clyde but Queenstown was bigger and the sale of an occupied town was no easy task. The Provincial Government at first indicated all sections would be sold by auction but when this news became known there were angry meetings in smoke filled bars where it was made clear that the occupants were adamant that those in possession should have first right to purchase at an agreed price. They argued that they had pioneered the town by setting up their businesses and it would be inequitable for them to have to compete against newcomers for the properties they occupied and had developed from scratch.

As a result of the opposition the government did a U-turn and announced that pre-emptive rights would be granted to occupiers at the rate of ten shillings per foot frontage. When Cutten left Dunedin he knew the pre-emptive offer had taken the heat out of the debate but the occupiers were still not happy. On Monday 18 January, 1864, Cutten and Vincent Pyke met the stropky occupiers in the Queenstown Court House to hear concerns and to decide now the sale would be conducted.

The main objections raised by the occupiers was that a sale price based on street frontage meant those with deeper sections were paying much less per square foot than those with shallower sections. Another complication was that whereas the pre-emptive price was for foot frontage the survey plans on which the sale was based was in links. Apart from the surveyors few knew that link was 7.92 inches and the different measures brought confusion.

The meeting was hardly harmonious and the *Lake Wakatip Mail* described it thus:

“the affair seemed like a board of guardians in dispute, a meeting of creditors who object to accept a penny in the pound or railway shareholders meeting when no dividend was forthcoming.”

Cutten, probably concerned he might be stuck in Queenstown for a long time, closed further discussion by declaring the pre-emptive rate of ten shillings per foot frontage would remain and the only change would be an additional half crown per foot for corner sections. The decision made Cutten's job relatively easy as the price of all the occupied sections was settled and the sections to be sold by auction would probably not involve much competition.

Having settled the terms of sale it was immediately started that day and continued on the following day, Tuesday. Vincent Pyke assisted in the sale by acting as treasurer. On the Thursday the sale of sections at Kingston was held involving some fifty sections and the Queenstown sale was completed on the Saturday. Cutten was, no doubt, happy to have a difficult task satisfactorily completed and would be pleased to leave Queenstown and a lot of grizzly townspeople.

Most of the occupiers seemed to be content to purchase the land subject to the pre-emptive right but some more affluent obviously bought on a speculative basis. J. W. Robertson, who was to be the first Mayor of Queenstown, led the charge by buying almost forty

sections. His partners in the sawmill at Kinloch between them bought another eleven, which showed selling timber was profitable. Bendix Hallenstein and Michael Mallaghan, both substantial merchants, bought nine and thirteen respectively. John Bathgate, manager of the Bank of Otago, who was in the town overnight just prior to the sale, was impressed enough to buy eleven sections. John Hyde Harris, the Superintendent of the Province bought three sections and W. H. Cutten managed to sell himself one.

W. G. Rees paid £51-15-0 for the two sections on the corner of Marine Parade and Church Street, the site of his home and associated storage buildings. He paid £23-0-0 for a section beside the Masonic Lodge which was probably for beaching his boats. Finally he bought a section on the south side of the mall about half way up the block and the future site of the Forester's Lodge, which has been dealt with in a very unsympathetic manner in recent times. His total outgoing was £94-10-0. The section occupied by the Queens Arms Hotel, now Eichardt's, was sold to his partner Hugh Bracken.

The sale enabled the town to be established in a permanent form and gave freehold and security to those who up to then had been squatters. It was an important milestone and it is difficult to follow the logic of the *Lake Wakatip Mail* which described the sale as "the sacking of Queenstown".



Lakes District Museum staff and committee members gave the public a cheery greeting during a free open house during the Arrowtown Autumn Festival.

THE HERITAGE OAK - FRANKTON WALKWAY

On 21st of May guests were welcomed to the site of the new oak tree by Malcolm Boote, these included QLDC Mayor Clive Geddes who spoke about the new standard of Frankton waterfront set by the Society with the layout around the new tree, he invited Bruce Hamilton, our long standing 'tree expert' to unveil the plaque. All those involved in the project were thanked including neighbours, Frankton residents, councillors, Society members, arborist David Finlin, John Jarvis of Transit New Zealand and Dean McDonald of Lakes Contract Services. The Society was determined not to allow the great tree to be forgotten and we are grateful for everyone's support.

The plaque reads:

This Oak (Qercus Robar) was planted by Queenstown and District Historical Society and the Queenstonw Lakes District Council in September 2001. It replaces the 125 years old, 35 metre high Heritage Oak felled in June 2000 after storm damage. It was near the former Antrim Arms Hotel on the Frankton Road directly above this site.

The oak tree on the Frankton Walkway is in addition to the fifteen Heritage trees planted by the Society around the district, see the article in issue number 67 of the Courier.

The next issue of the Courier will contain the story of the plaque on the lake side of this rock, namel

The Society will also be involved in a QLDC initiative that will allow additions to the protected features in the District Plan. If anyone has any suggestions of buildings features or trees that should be included please contact Ray Clarkson or Karen Boulay.



Unveiling the plaque on Tuesday the 21st of May, 2002. From left to right, back: Queenstown Lakes District Mayor Clive Geddes, Queenstown Historical Society President Malcolm Boote. Front: Dorothy Hamilton, Bruce Hamilton.

Front Cover Illustration:
Sketch of the 'Stone House', 47 Hallenstein Street, by Audrey Bascand.