

The Queenstown Courier

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.

Officers of the Society:

President: Malcolm Boote

Vice President: Karen Boulay

Past President: Rupert Iles

Secretary: Jocelyn Robertson – phone 4421 468

Treasurer: E.C.(Peter) Mills

Other committee members:

Mike Lynch and Karen Boulay (**Courier**)

John Heenan (**trips**)

Ray Clarkson (**submissions**)

Elizabeth Macdonald (**submissions**)

Margaret Templeton

Brian Bayley

Barbara Hamilton

Colin Cassels

Verona Cournane

Annual subscription: \$10 per person or family

Corporate membership: \$50 per annum

Life membership: \$100 per person

The Courier is included in the subscription

**All correspondence and accounts should be addressed to
P.O Box 132, Queenstown**

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The Queenstown Courier

Summer 2005

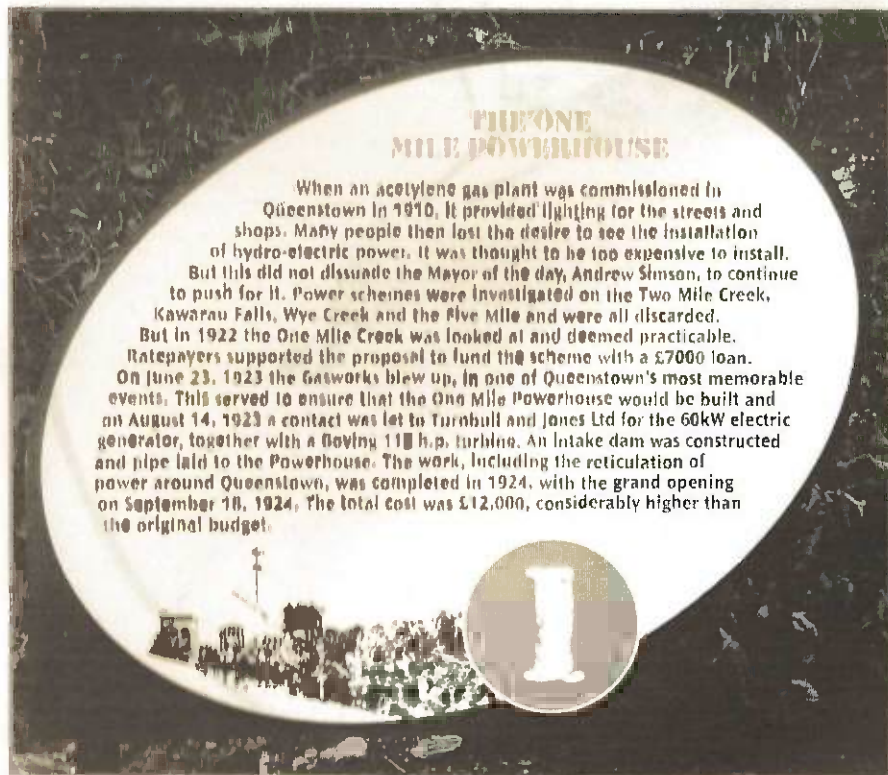
Issue No. 73



Francis Rees drawn by William Rees - 1858

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*One of the display panels at the Powerhouse. see story page 24.
More on the Powerhouse opening in the next issue.*

Ngai Court decision

A LOST CASE, BUT NOT A LOST CAUSE

Sorry about the delay in bringing out this "Courier" issue:

We've been hanging on waiting for a judicial decision about the awarding of costs in the society's courageous but sadly abortive High Court battle to preserve Queenstown's Courthouse precinct in the face of the planned Ngai Tahu development.

But the wheels of justice turn exceeding slow. The Queenstown Lakes council has magnanimously decided not to pursue costs against us, (There would have been mutterings if it had). However, we have been waiting since last year to find out just how much financial utu Ngai Tahu might decide it thinks it deserves.

Notwithstanding, as the President says in his report, our liability is limited, and members – who have already given fulsomely to the case – need have no great fear of further drain on their pockets.

As for the case, as Malcolm again says, it was a hard-fought and prolonged attempt to state a point of principle, and safeguard one of the few remaining shards of heritage in Queenstown. That the judge didn't see it that way still puzzles the members who sat through the hearing.

We were handicapped more than somewhat by the delays in hearing the case. These meant that the first counsel engaged had an overseas holiday to take when the case was on. Another counsel was briefed at short notice but, because of the protracted hearing, he too found he had holidays scheduled during the final submissions and could not appear. It was left to committee member and town planner Elizabeth Macdonald to do the job a lawyer should have been doing. She deserves high praise for soldiering on when the scales were stacked against us.

Mike Lynch

QUEENSTOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PRESIDENT'S REPORT
November 2004

The report last year talked of a busy but frustrating year; 2004 has been all of that but had a seriously disappointing end. The year was dominated by the hundreds of hours of time invested in the Court proceedings, and the negative results have had a devastating effect. I look to the future to turn the Society's priority to areas where we can be more effective in serving members and community interests.

The Society's appeal to the Environment Court against the QLDC decision to grant planning consent to Ngai Tahu for their development on the Courthouse and Post Office site was rejected by Judge Sheppard, confirming that the effect on the precinct was "minor". Ngai Tahu has submitted a cost application to the Court for an unspecified 'reasonable contribution' towards half of their \$ 144,000 total costs. QLDC has not sought costs.

One must question the motivation of Ngai Tahu in making this claim. After declaring an annual profit of \$26.6 million for the year, the claim cannot be due to a shortage of funds. Is it just a hands-off warning, or would Shakespeare have thought that this was merely Shylock seeking his pound of flesh? They may need reminding that the community including our members will have to get behind the development of this site as their tenants and customers. The Society will contest the claim.

The Society ran a responsible case, basing its appeal on the District Plan and HPT protection of the Historic Precinct. Historic Places Trust acceptance and sign-off of the proposals worked against us at the final call. The judge was not critical of the evidence or presentation made by the Society. Ngai Tahu rejected attempts by the Society and QLDC to settle the case by mediation. Costs incurred by the Society have been quite staggering; to date, proceedings have cost a total of \$ 41,256. This was met in part by a grant from the Ministry for the Environment of \$22,500. At the end of the hearing the Society did not have sufficient funds to meet the balance of costs incurred. Imagine how much worse things could have been if Elizabeth Macdonald had not given her planning advice free. Our thanks to Elizabeth for the hours of dedication to this cause.

One Mile power House restoration

Your committee initiated an appeal to members and friends to make up the sum needed to pay our legal advisers and expert witness. As noted in the Treasurer's report, the membership made a tremendous response, and our healthy financial position today is temporarily restored. Now we are in the hands of the Court again. We are indeed fortunate to have such support from our members, and I thank you all for coming to the aid of the Society.

As a Registered Incorporated Society, individual members are not financially liable for the actions of the Society. During the year tax and duty exemption were confirmed and the Society was granted donee status by Inland Revenue, this means that members can claim 33 1/3 % rebate on all gifts and donations over \$5. A condition of this status is that all surplus funds will be returned to the Community; needless to say that is a fundamental clause in the Society's objectives.

Ray Clarkson, Elizabeth Macdonald and Karen Boulay, our planning sub-group, have continued with their onerous task. Redevelopment of heritage sites in Queenstown and Buckingham Street, Arrowtown continues to be of concern. The Royal Oak decision was disappointing and puzzling, where the Commissioner criticised numerous aspects in the proposal and in particular the glass and metal canopies but still give the project approval. In November local MP David Parker talked to members about the heritage aspects of the Resource Management Amendment Bill. The Society continues to participate in the quarterly heritage meetings held jointly with QLDC and Historic Places Trust.

After three years spent fundraising and searching for equipment of the 1920s, the Trustees of the One Mile Powerhouse Restoration Trust are delighted to be very close to completion of restoration of the building and installation of the equipment. Major landscaping and improvement of the creek, access, parking, and signage are nearly completed thanks to Paul Wilson and QLDC. The planned opening in early 2005 will add an important addition to the heritage and educational assets of the district. Old photographs and stories of the Powerhouse and area would be still be welcomed for use in the display area.

The Society's publication "Historic Sites of Queenstown: a walking guide," has been well received by visitors to the area. The Society has committed funds to follow up the guide by placing high quality plaques on all the sites and buildings included in the guide, cross-referencing to the guide. Owners' permission will of course be sought.

The same principle will be adopted with the Wakatipu Trails Trust as it adopts and opens new routes. The Society has allocated funds and intend to mark historic sites and events, where appropriate, for the benefit of those using the trails. The Crown Range summit cairn and plaque joint-venture with the Wanaka historical group is a perfect example of the quality of service to visitors.

The Rees Prize, for the best historical essay from pupils of participating secondary schools continues to be promoted. We had two essays during the year, pupils from Mount Aspiring College and Otago Girls High School each received a \$75 award. We aim to publish prize-winning essays in the Courier magazine.

Two editions of the Courier under the new editorial team have been published and I wish to complement Karen Boulay and Mike Lynch on a very professional job, so good that the ODT have chosen to use the individual cemetery stories in their Saturday magazine section. Members are encouraged to contribute any articles of historic interest for future issues.

Another superb programme of trips was organised by John Heenan, and Cicely Morrison. Visits to Bannockburn, and Skippers, Christmas lunch at Glenorchy, great days at the Queenstown cemetery and at Macraes, which was ably led by ex-headmaster Pat Paulin. The Spring lunch was followed by a fascinating talk by Maxine Alterio on the early days of Arrowtown Hospital. Thanks again to John, we look forward to another exciting programme in the months to come.

There are now 73 members on the Society's e-mail list and we would like to hear from anyone else who can be added. This method beats the telephone notification system we have run for years and is a far more reliable and a quicker means of keeping in touch.

The Society continued its participation on the Museum board. Thanks are due to our representatives Jocelyn Robertson and Cicely Morrison. \$3000 has been pledged to purchase equipment for the archives room which part of the planned expansion.

A warm welcome is extended to new members, I am sorry however to see the continuing stream of members leaving the area for quieter places to reside. I would like thank treasurer Peter Mills for the splendid job done in a very difficult and testing year. Also secretary Jocelyn Robertson and of course to the whole Committee for their dedicated support. I make a special mention of two members not seeking re-election, it is a sad loss that Colin Wilson is leaving the district, his support will be missed. There is a tinge of sadness that Cicely Morrison is standing down after 13 years of stalwart service. She has promised to be on hand to give help and advice when needed, but her knowledge and experience will be hard to replace. Thanks and good luck for the future to Colin and Cicely.

You will note that every social event and field trip organised and enjoyed by members is self-funding. The Society has pride in feeding back to our community all our surplus funds. This has resulted over the years in tens of thousands of dollars of support for heritage projects in the district.

We look forward to survival and another stimulating year in 2005. Remember, history begins today.

Malcolm Boote



Sir George Grey Comes to Queenstown

by Alan De La Mare

The Queenstown Borough had only been in existence a few months, and had hardly started working on the elementary local body problems such as roading, clean water, fire fighting and the most immediate of all, keeping the streets clear of horse dung, when advice was received that the Governor Sir George Grey was to visit in March, 1867.

What prompted Sir George's visit is not known, but he must have had some compelling reasons as his journey; travelling mostly by saddle horse, and being accommodated in primitive hotels, was no picnic.



The Borough took the usual step in matters such as Vice-Regal visits and convened a public meeting to decide on the form of the reception. It might well have not bothered, as everyone present had different ideas. No less than nine motions on welcoming arches were recorded, and it was decided that ten addresses be presented. In any case after the meeting the Borough itself decided what to do.

The Wakatipu part of the tour started on March 1. The Governor was accompanied by Major Richardson and R. Campbell (members of the Legislative Council), Major Grey (Aide de Camp), the Rev. F Thatcher (secretary), Captain Hope (R.N.) and Commissioner Branigan (Police Chief for Otago).

The Governor was escorted into Cardrona by miners on horseback, where he had a cold lunch in a tent. In the afternoon, as the party reached the foot of the Crown Range, it was joined by Charles Houghton (Otago Provisional MP), and Lowther Broad (Arrowtown Warden and R.M.). Fifty horsemen accompanied them into

Arrowtown, where the Governor was accommodated at the Warden's house. The town was gaily decorated with greenery and flags. The Governor was greeted by applause by the enthusiastic residents.

That night the Governor dined with Warden Broad and was addressed the next day by H.C Richmond. Before departing, he inspected the Criterion quartz claim.

At Lake Hayes the party was joined by more horsemen and a carriage of four horses, which the Governor declined to ride in, having eyed the road ahead. At Frankton, where the locals had erected a triumphal arch decorated with farm produce, he made a visit to the hospital and inspected the flour mill.

At the entrance to Queenstown, Sir George stopped at the school to be greeted by Mr Brown, the schoolmaster, and the pupils. After an enthusiastic reception by the residents, the Governor retired to the Warden's house while the rest of the entourage were accommodated at the Queen's Arms Hotel. At three o'clock they attended a series of loyal addresses at the Town Hall. They were first from the Mayor and Councillors of the borough, followed by one from the miners signed by Robert Johnstone, Joseph Crofts, J.R. Perry, G. Adams and A. Southberg. Next it was the turn of the Masons, signed by D. Weaver, Worshipful Master and Wardens J. Douglas and R. Millett. Last came the Foresters, signed by M. Fraser (Chief Ranger), M. Burns (Sub Ranger) and J. Pasco (secretary). The Governor replied to each address.

In the evening the party was entertained to a banquet in the Masonic Lodge. The attendance was about 40, somewhat smaller than expected, and the newspaper report severely criticised the catering.

Sunday was a day of rest and church-going, made possible as the Governor had a clergyman on his staff; the nearest other Anglican clergyman was in Dunedin.

Monday was a chance to view the scenery via two small steamers up the lake. The main vessel was 'The Expert', a slow and uncomfortable former Dunedin ferry. William Rees acted as host. Lunch was had at Bob's Cove and the Governor viewed the sandstone deposits near the Cove on the return to Queenstown. The official party left at 6pm for the Boyes brothers residence at Kawarau Falls, where they dined and spent the night.

On Tuesday the entourage left, riding down the south side of the Kawarau River to cross at Owens Punt. As he rode away, listening to innumerable fulsome addresses, all of which required appropriate reply, he might have been thinking that returning to deal with the troublesome Maori problems in the north would make a welcome change.

But you can't have a party without paying. At the next Borough Council meeting the reported cost for the event was one hundred and seven pounds.

Footnotes:

The Governor's secretary, the Rev Frederick Thatcher, was born in England in 1814 and had trained as an architect. He came to N.Z. in 1841 and practised his profession. He worked closely with Bishop Selwyn and designed some of the churches Selwyn is associated with, and still exist. The best known is the Old St Paul's, Wellington. He returned to the UK in 1868, where he was again associated with Selwyn. He died in 1890.

Peter Bristow - obituary

OBITUARY

PETER BRISTOW (1960 - 2004)

Peter was a highly respected archaeologist who worked widely throughout New Zealand and overseas. He worked in places such as the Strathcona Archaeological Centre and the famous Native American site "Head Smashed-In Buffalo Jump" in Alberta, which is a World Heritage Site. Peter had a long interest in the history of Otago. His masters thesis was a study of the archaeology of the Chinese and European goldminers in Central Otago. He also undertook field research and historic site surveys on a wider range of places throughout New Zealand.

Peter Bristow was an integral part of the Otago DOC Conservancy. His nickname was "Encyclopedia," due to his remarkable ability to recall facts and figures on the spot. He was known and loved for his easy-going approach to things, and his dry and wry sense of humour.

He will be missed.

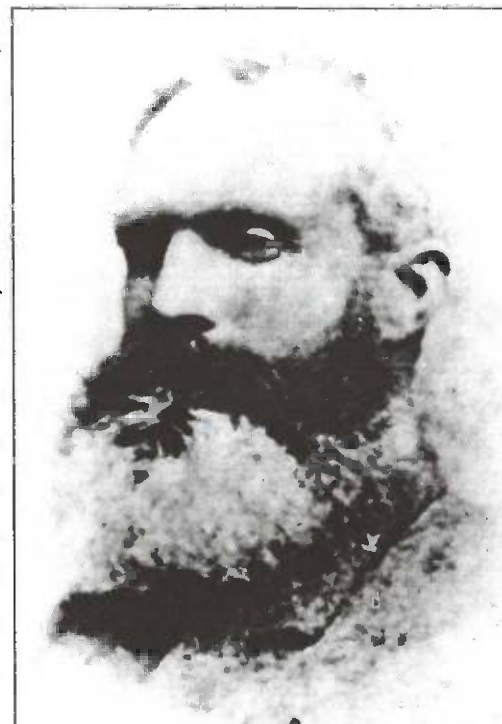
(Contributed by DOC staff)

William Gilbert Rees - Rare glimpse

RARE GLIMPSE OF A RARE PIONEER

It is often said that families don't take enough notice and care of their history. However, we are lucky there are individuals who are the exception.

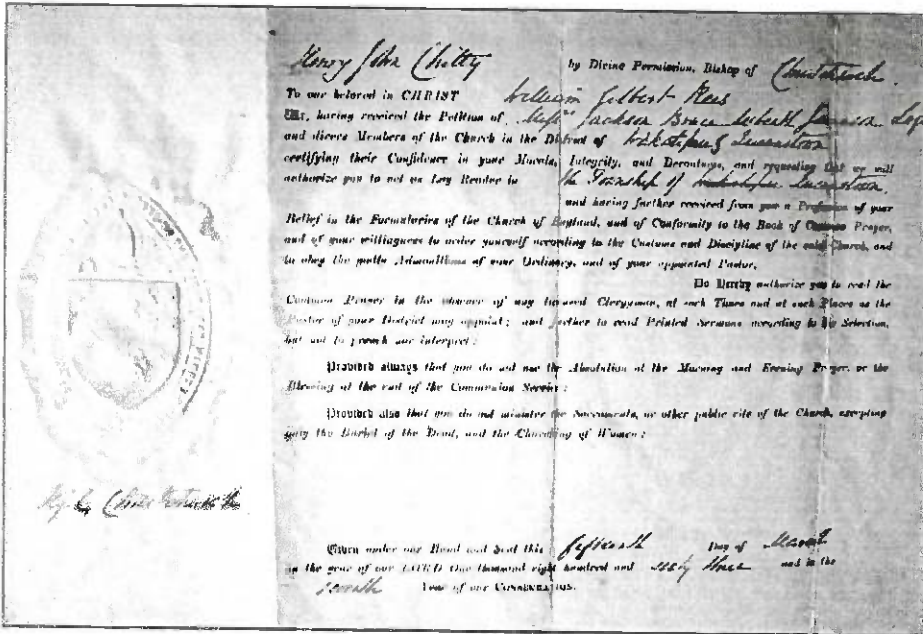
William Gilbert Rees, by common consent the "Founder" of Queenstown, and pioneer of the Wakatipu, has a great granddaughter who is more than keeping the family flag flying. At her home in Waikanae she has a virtual museum of Rees memorabilia – sketchbooks (for he was a more than competent artist), documents, artefacts.



We went up there to get some record of it, and the result is a glimpse of Queenstown's past that has not been previously published. It ranges from the poignant sketch (cover) of the young, sleeping, pregnant and very prone to sea-sickness Francis Rees (after whom Frankton is named) on board ship in 1852 coming to New Zealand, to the handsome testimonials presented to Rees when he quit the district, a somewhat embittered man. It is said he had a pastoral kingdom within his grasp, but the irony of gold, and his own rectitude, was his undoing.

Thank-you Rosemary Marryatt for both preserving these, and so enthusiastically sharing your family's past – and our past -- with us.

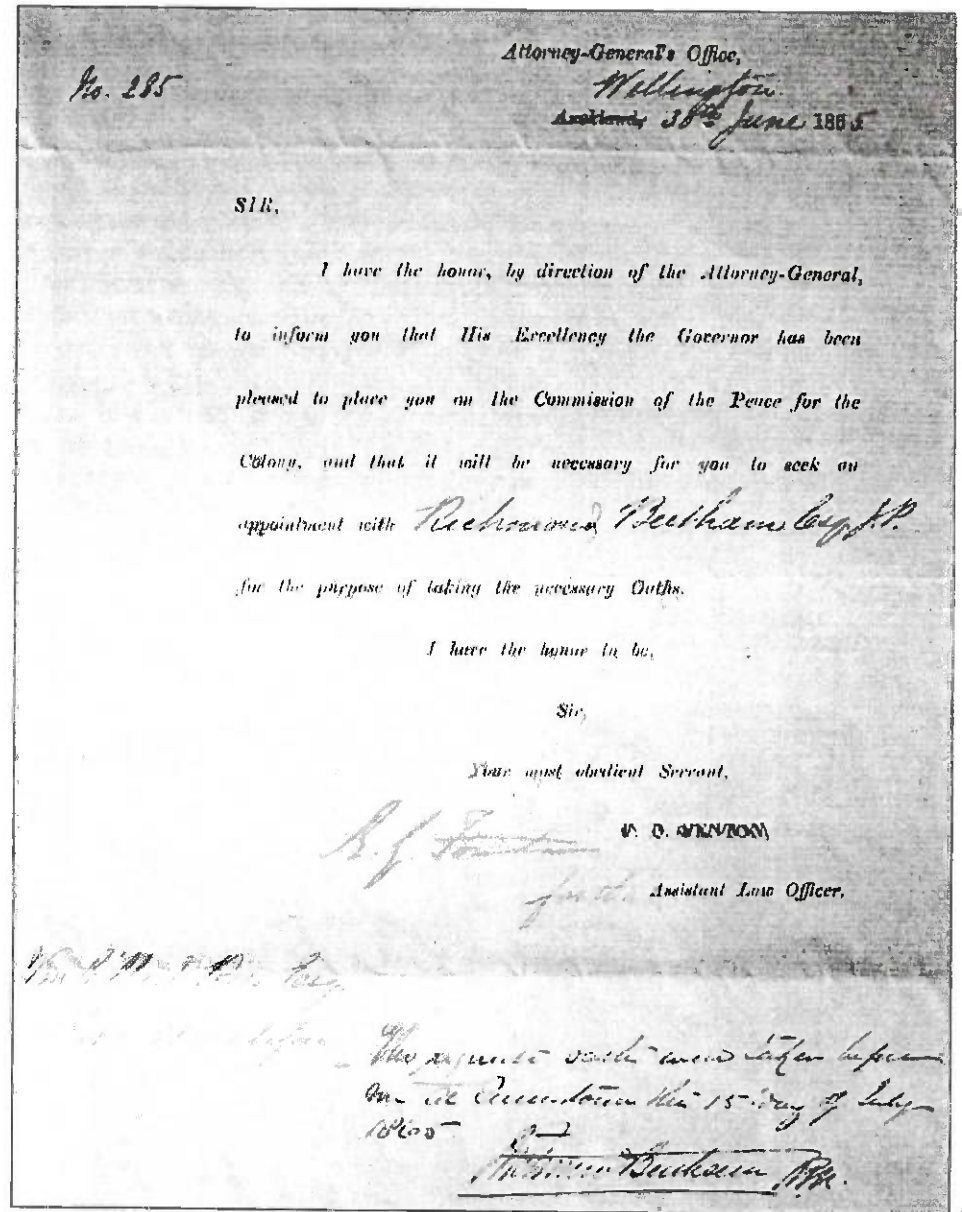
(For further information about Rees, and his times, readers might well refer to "King Wakatip" by G. J. Griffiths (pub. John McIndoe).



Rees was a pillar of the community. The Anglican Church Lay Reader's licence awarded to him in 1863.

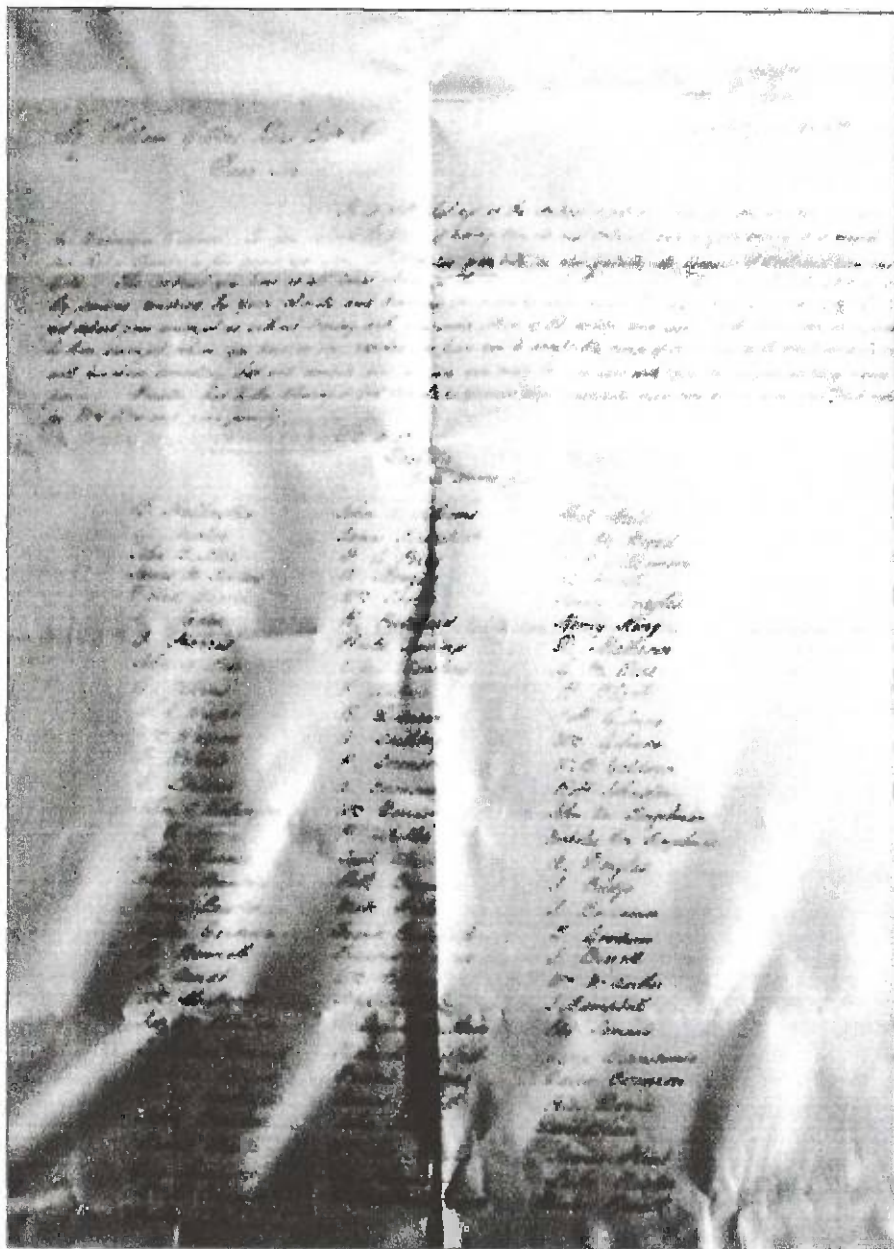


Great grand-daughter Rosemary Marryatt with the scales on which Rees must have weighed many an ounce of gold.



The Commissioner of the Peace certificate granted to Rees in 1865.

Below & Opposite page: The presentation address given to Rees on his departure from the Wakatipu in 1867. It is of a real historical value because it lists the names of 90 of the key Queenstown male residents of the time.



Queenstown Lake Wakatipu
New Zealand
23rd April 1867

To William Gilbert Rees Esqr. J.P.

Dear Sir

It is with feelings of the deepest regret we learn you are so soon to leave the Wakatipu district. To you belongs the honour of having been its first Colonist and to your energy it is mainly due that a Country a few years ago alone in its native grandeur is now yielding its treasure of Wood and Corn and Gold. The interest you have at all times shown in the welfare of the District cannot be too highly estimated and the services rendered by your charity and kindness too warmly appreciated by us. Desirous that you should not depart from amongst us without bearing with you some token of the esteem and respect with which you are regarded by those amongst whom you have so long resided we pray you to accept this purse of Sovereigns with which we hope you will purchase something that will remind you wherever you may be you have with you the kindest wishes of many friends. Trusting that by the Blessing of God health happiness and prosperity may ever attend you with our best wishes for Mrs. Rees and your family.

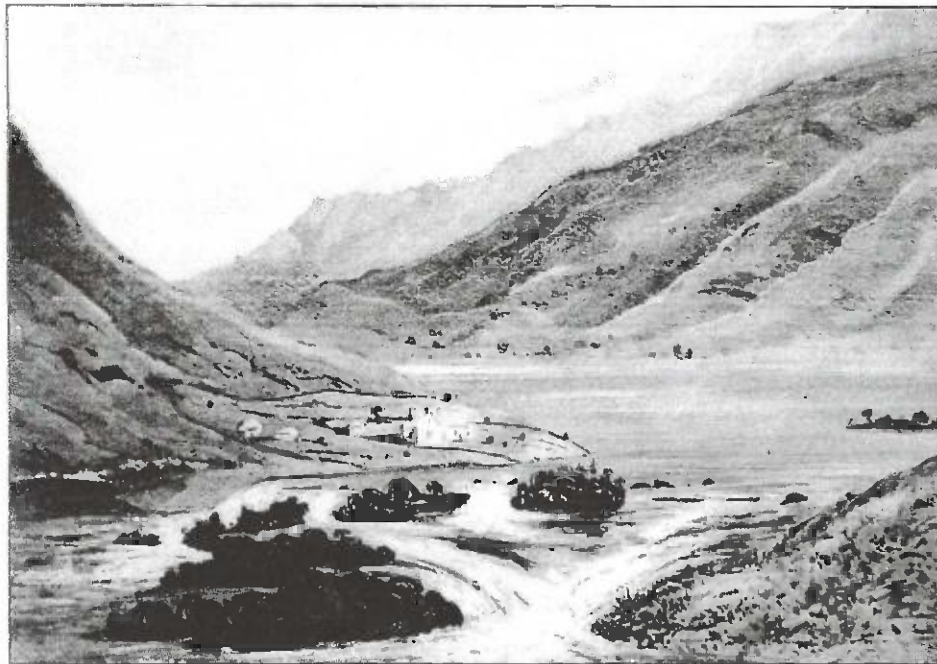
We are Dear Sir

Your sincere friends

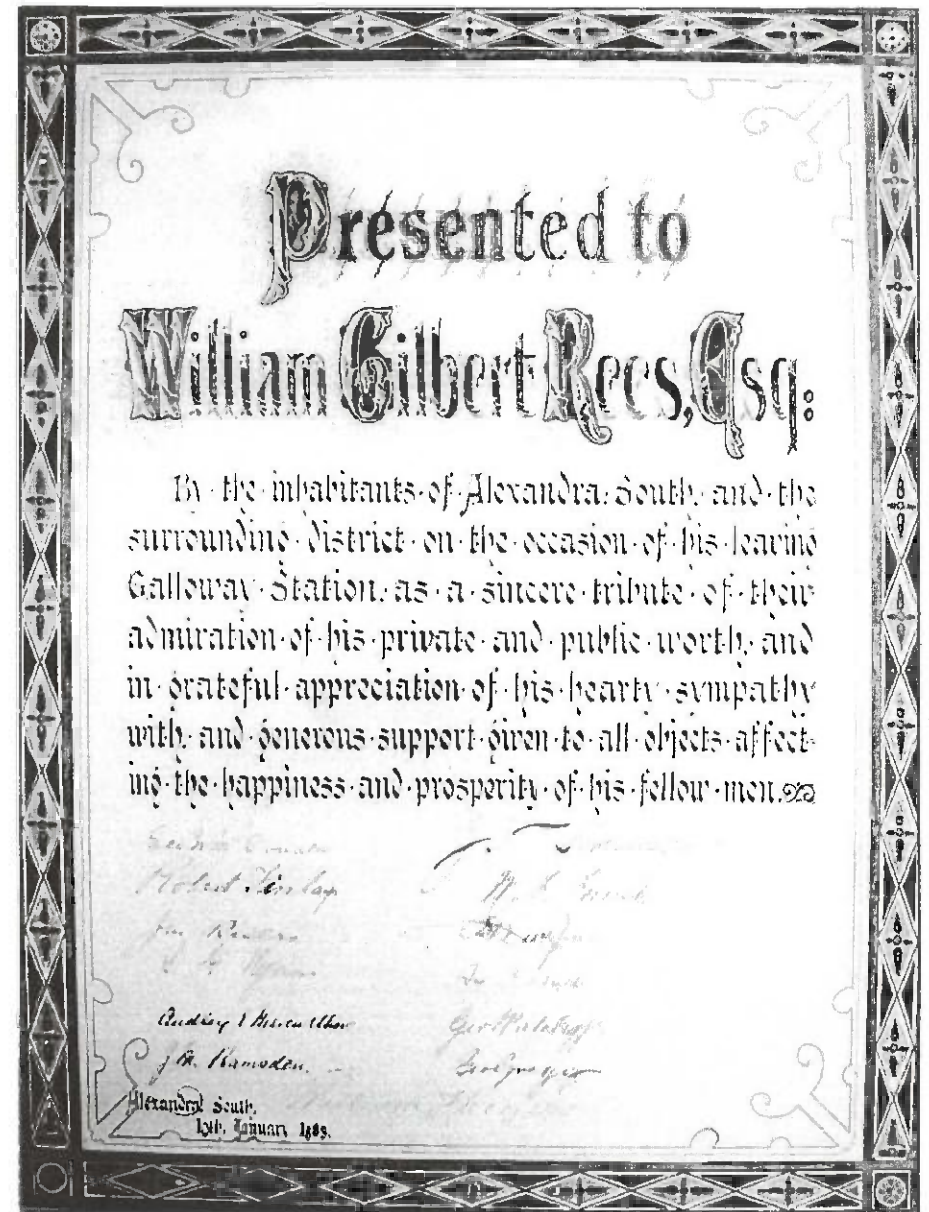
B. Hallenstein	Wm. McConachie	Wm. McAllister
G. Archer	Charles Lobustin	Thos. Newman
John B. Kerr	John R Williams	Alexander Brown
James McKinlay	James Kirkpatrick	Ferd. Falk
David Weaver	F.G. Percy	Lowther Broad
C. Naden	A. Menzies	C.R. Williamson
I. Harris	Wm. Scoles	Ed. Perelle
John H Kerr	R. Pritchard	James Douglas
G. Atkins	Charles Jennings	Henry King
W.C. Wright	Egbert Sansbury	D. Matheson
Wm. Warren	P. Antonie	G.M. Ross
F. Roberts	R. Duncan	R. Black
C. Lorimer	A. Southberg	Robt. Johnston
John S Worthington	P. Sorenson	John von Tunzelman
I.R. Perry	A. Sorenson	Nicholas von Tunzelman
John Turner	Wm. Davidson	A. Douglas
Arthur Kennedy	P. Miller	I. Bridge
James Lawton	Saml. Stewart	I. Bordeaux
Walter Gardiner	Patk. Brennan	T. Goodwin
R. Bennett	Mark Fisher	I. Birrell
H. Arndt	Frank Birtwhistle	W.N. McArthur
W. McHardy	Francois H. St Omer	I. Campbell
las. Wm. Robertson	Wm. Fitzgerald	Edwd. Samuels
D.G. MacDonnell	John Smith	George Branscombe
Charles Boyes	Richmond Betham	David Cameron
Robert Anderson	Richard Millett	Peter Doyle
John Braiden	Frank Boyes	David Blair
Frank Foster	James Guelett	James Flint
George [unclear]	John [unclear]	Luke Preston
		Edw. [unclear]



The silver tea service bought with the purse of Sovereigns presented to Rees on his departure. It is still in the safekeeping of the family.



The Kawarau Falls homestead, painted by William Fox some time before 1867. The original is now in the Alexander Turnbull Library.



After the Wakatipu, Rees went on to manage big stations in the Waitaki Valley, but by 1875 he was back in Central Otago, managing the Galloway station, near Alexandra. Again, he was a key figure in the community, and a passionate cricketer. When he left the district in 1883 the locals bestowed this handsome illuminated address.



Sketch of Francis Rees, drawn by William Rees - 1858

FRancis Rees- Portrait

TRIPS

It is sad to report that two trips from the current programme have had to be cancelled at the last minute due to lack of support. Both excursions were planned to go into Central Otago, November to Naseby and Febraury to Moa Creek and Poolburn. After the sucess of the January trip to Arcadia and Paradise this is a major disappointment as a large amount of preparation and planning have to be completed prior to each event.

Your committee will have to consider what our policy will be for future years. All trips are organised on a pay as you go basis. Support seems to come for the local trips around Queenstown and district and it is very difficult to find new places to visit.

If any one has any bright ideas, or views on what is wanted, please call any committee member.

John Heenan (*trip organiser*) and Malcolm Boote (*president*)



Photo taken on the Macraes village and goldmine trip

NEXT TRIP March 20 or 21 – Afternoon at Arrowtown Cemetery;
talks about residents, Sunday or Monday

SNIPPETS

HISTORIC BATTLES

Queenstown heritage stalwart Marygold Miller writes from retirement in Blenheim to correct a date in the last Courier, where we said the Malaghan family contributed in the 1930s to save the town's historic Malaghan Library and Courthouse. In fact, she says, it was in the 1960s.

At the time the Queenstown Borough Council had plans to demolish the old stone Library, and get rid of the stone bridges and the Trees of Justice. The plan was to replace all with a chrome and glass library and generally modernise the corner.

This, she says, was when she arrived in Queenstown and immediately set about leading a fight to prevent this. Thus the Queenstown and District Historical Society was formed, circa 1962.

She managed to involve the Press all over New Zealand engendering wide support, including the Maori in the form of a haka on the site.

Eventually the supporters managed to push for a referendum of Queenstown ratepayers, which came out firmly in support of conservation of these historic icons.

The Malaghans (with a grant to build new stone additions to the Library) and the Historic Places Trust did what they could to help and there is a plaque on the Courthouse reiterating the building's significance.

NEVER ON SUNDAY

As a means of preventing the playing of cricket on the Recreation Ground in Queenstown on Sundays, the Borough Council has referred the matter to the Police. The local cricket club has now resolved to disallow all play on that day, and to keep the cricket material locked up.

"Otago Daily Times" 7.11.1904

Environment Court appeal account

ENVIRONMENT COURT APPEAL ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS	total	this yr	last yr
Environment Grant	22500.00	22500.00	
Auction	2100.00	2100.00	
Appeal Donations	26001.44	25816.42	185.02
	50601.44	50416.42	185.02
PAYMENTS			
P Beavan	9000.00	9000.00	
T Oxnevad	16283.85	12825.80	3458.05
T J Shiels	15467.20	15467.20	
Sundry	311.90	273.59	38.31
	41062.95	37566.59	3496.36
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS	.9538.49	12849.83	-3311.34

CONTINGENT LIABILITY

On 25th September 2004, the Environment Court disallowed an appeal made by the Society against a planning decision, made by Queenstown-Lakes District Council, concerning a building consent application made by the Ngai Tahu Property Group Ltd under the Resource Management Act. The judgement by the Environment Court created a contingent liability for the Society in that it created the contingency that the other parties involved in the decision could apply for costs to be awarded against the Society. The amount of the contingency could not be determined at balance date.

EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO BALANCE DATE

The Society's solicitor has advised that Ngai Tahu has made application to the Environment Court for costs to be awarded. (Neither QLDC nor the Society have made similar application to the Court). He advises that Ngai Tahu's position is that its total costs are \$144,000. It seeks a "reasonable contribution" to 50% of that figure. The Society's cash assets at 30 September 2004 totaled \$21998. Should the Environment Court award costs against the Society which were in excess of the Society's ability to pay, the Society would be technically insolvent at that point.

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 Incorporated for the year ended 30 September 2004.

D. Warrington BCom CA



QUEENSTOWN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

**Statement of Receipts and Payments
for the Year Ended 30 September 2004**

2003	Receipts	2004
16218	Bank Balances Fwd	7750.03
3382	Subscriptions	3000.00
300	Donations	25.00
	Sundry receipts	31.40
872	Trips	1236.02
114	Luncheon	
728	Interest	348.44
	Qn Historical Book Sales	530.22
	Ngai Tahu Appeal Receipts	50416.42
21614		63337.53

2003	Payments	2004
50	Subscriptions	
	Subs. Grants and Donations	850.00
277	Printing, Stationery, Typing	381.93
63	P.O. Box	62.50
3	Bank Fees	42.55
1775	Couriers	1490.46
	Trips	
	Luncheon	23.75
	Hall Hire	84.00
125	AGM & Meeting Expenses	113.05
	Bronze Plaques & Signs	452.74
75	Prizes	150.00
5000	Power House Trust	
3000	Qn Historical Book	
3496	Ngai Tahu Appeal Payments	37566.59
	Sundry	122.00
7750	Bank Balances Closing	21997.96
21614		63337.53

Bank Balances @ 30 Sep 2004

Current Account	918.97
Term Deposit WestpacT	4838.41
Term Deposit Bldg Socy	1614.80
Term Deposit Bldg Socy	6000.00
Bonus Saver A/c	8625.78

A STITCH IN TIME

Queenstown is best noted for its wholesale development, sometimes at the cost of the relatively few remaining heritage buildings that tell us about the town's rich history. Controversy has been common as the past gets destroyed

But February 25 marked a success story, with the opening of the town's renovated and re-equipped sixty-year-old Powerhouse on the One Mile Creek. It has been a four-year saga, involving goodwill and generosity all over Otago and Southland – and lots of hard work.

The Powerhouse (replacing an explosive and eventually exploded acetylene-gas plant) was opened by the Borough Council in 1924. But within a couple of decades it was struggling to cope with increased demand. It was closed down twenty years later, and the generating equipment removed and dispersed.

The supply dam, now gravel-filled, is still there 150 metres higher up the creek. But for forty years the simple but stylish Powerhouse building sat empty and increasingly derelict. Four years ago it was so damaged by vandalism and arson that the Council was thinking that it might be safer to pull it down.

But a group of locals, initially from the local Historic Places Trust branch and the Historical Society, thought otherwise. They got the Council and the Lakes District Museum behind them, cleaned the place up, and pondered what degree of preservation was possible.

With the impetus of Historical Society Chair Malcolm Boote (who adopted the project as almost a crusade) a Powerhouse Restoration Trust was set up, including Council staff and local professionals. Cash was tapped from the Central Lakes Trust, the Lotteries Grants Board, and the two local Historic groups, a conservation architect was hired, along with an enthusiastic builder, and the Powerhouse was on the way to being preserved.

But this left the question of what to put in it. And that's where the work really started. Malcolm Boote (and Alexandra electricity historian Alan Blee) toured and touted the country to try and source period generating equipment.

That they have succeeded is tribute both to their tenacity and the generosity of power companies all over the South, museums in Arrowtown, Clyde and

Dunedin, and even irrigation companies in Arrowtown and Roxburgh. They were all pestered and petitioned by Messrs Boote and Blee, and all got behind the scheme willingly.

The Council came in again by organising the clearing and landscaping of the creek-side below the Powerhouse, and the Mondrian hotel company up the hill pledged to maintain the reserve in perpetuity. Northern Southland Transport got on board to help with the difficult job of getting the likes of two-tonne generators installed inside the Powerhouse.

Now after four years of co-operation, and unusually for Queenstown nary a dissenting word, the Powerhouse is due for opening as a static display.

It tells us a lot about local history, and power generation. Former supervisors and workers at the Powerhouse will be there for the opening. At least one of them said he was thrilled to see the restoration project completed in his lifetime.

