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## People and Post Offices

Our cover picture makes the link between Alan Cooke’s article on early post offices in the district and other articles about people for whom the post offices were particularly significant:

John Augustus Miller, who was the local correspondent for the *Otago Witness*, *Otago Daily Times* and other newspapers from 1868 to 1903.

Janet Sangster who was the postmistress as well as the teacher at Macetown from 1890-91 where the tiny post office played a part in her courtship.

Cover: Thanks to the Lakes District Museum (LDM) for use of the historic pages and the photo of J.A.Miller; and to Nancy Croad, family historian, for the photo of Janet Sangster.

Montage by Marion Borrell

# PIONEER TEACHERS OF THE WAKATIPU: THE SANGSTER FAMILY

By Danny Knudson

Pioneer teachers in the Wakatipu coped with isolation, Spartan buildings, minimum teaching resources, irregular attendance by children, demanding expectations from parents, and unreasonable arrangements imposed by the Southland Education Board. Some teachers were of modest scholarship, untrained in their profession; they endured hardships, and several succumbed to intemperate living. However, rising above these shortcomings were some dedicated professionals who taught to the satisfaction of school inspectors and the wider community, helping to provide a strong foundation of education for their pupils. Four such pioneer teachers in the Wakatipu came from the Sangster family: Margaret, Janet and her son Beresford at Macetown, and Lewis at Bullendale and Skippers. Their experiences reveal the realities of teaching on Wakatipu goldfields.

This article might have been entitled 'Pioneer Sangsters Teach the 3 Rs', but that would be misleading because it is not about 'reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic.' The 3 Rs in this story are 'remote, remarkable, and ridiculous.' Let's meet some the Sangster family.

Lewis Beaton Sangster (1836-1915) and his wife, Isabella née Murrison (1836-1894) together with their two-year-old daughter, Margaret, arrived in Invercargill in 1863. (Family research by Mrs Nancy Croad) They may have been attracted to Southland by the discovery of gold, or they may have decided to relocate following the death of their infant son in Scotland. Lewis and Isabella had a further seven children born in Southland between 1864 and 1878. Three of them became teachers on the Wakatipu goldfields.

## Macetown School

The original Macetown School opened in 1870 under Mr David M. Scott from Queenstown.

Note the absence of a chimney. The school was unheated in the first four winters.

This building deteriorated and school was transferred to the Macetown hall.

*LDM, EP 1532*



Macetown was a gold mining settlement about ten miles up the Arrow River from Arrowtown. Two trails linked the towns, one over Big Hill, but this high route was closed by snow in winter conditions. Between 1881 and 1885 an alternative road was constructed following the Arrow River. This road avoided the snow problem but it was treacherous in icy conditions.

Macetown consisted of two settlements; Lower Macetown, where the bakery was established, was about a mile downstream from the main settlement which had buildings on both sides of a wide main street. By the late 1860s, there were sufficient children to warrant a school. The Otago Education Board sanctioned the idea and provided £140 towards the cost of erecting a building on the understanding that the local community would contribute a similar amount to complete the project and pay for the teacher's salary. The school opened in a small building 22 feet long and 14 feet wide, clad with weatherboards. There were two windows on each of the long walls and a bell was erected high above the entrance door.

No trained teacher applied for the job, but the School Committee was pleased to appoint David M. Scott, a tall, portly gentleman who had been an assistant at Queenstown School. Twenty-one pupils enrolled when the school opened on 7 February 1870. Until 1878 when education became free, families paid fees, one shilling a week for each of the first two children, two shillings and sixpence for three children, and three shillings a week for four or more children from the same family. In the first year Mr Scott taught without a blackboard, and the classroom remained a freezing chamber for the first four winters before a stove was installed. Scott resigned in 1876 and was succeeded by a series of three male teachers each of whom stayed about one year.

In 1880 no teacher was prepared to apply for the vacancy and the school remained closed for several months while the School Committee searched for a suitable candidate. In desperation, Joseph Needham, an elderly miner with long white whiskers, was persuaded to take the job. Needham read stories to the children and did his best to prepare them for examinations set by school inspectors during their annual visits. It did not help that the teacher had to make do with local clay rather than chalk when writing on the blackboard. Pupils' attendance was another problem. In the spring quarter of 1885 the school was open on 96 half-days. However, one boy was absent for 46 half-days, another was absent on 43 occasions, and a third boy missed 73 of the 96 half-days. Around that time one lad was absent for six consecutive weeks, and when he eventually returned to school he was given the strap for being absent so long. (Knudson, p.15)

Most of the pupils in the senior classes failed the inspectors' annual examinations. In 1888, all six children in Standard Three and above failed. The school was operating poorly. One year later Needham was informed by the Southland Education Board (established in 1878) that he must sit examinations to become a qualified teacher. Joseph Needham had no intention of doing this so he promptly resigned after ten years in the job.

### **Remote Teaching: Janet Sangster**

Finding a trained teacher prepared to be Needham's successor was a challenge for the Southland Education Board and Macetown School Committee, but eventually a promising applicant emerged; Miss Janet Sangster was a 22-year-old who had completed a four-year training course as a pupil teacher at Invercargill Park School from 1886 to 1889. Macetown at that time consisted of two hotels, the Alpine and the Macetown, two general stores, a bakery, a blacksmith shop, a scholl which by then was held in the community hall and

several stone cottages occupied by miners and their families.

Macetown was Janet's first appointment as a teacher and she was warmly welcomed when she arrived to reopen the school on 10 March 1890, ending a long Christmas holiday break of eleven weeks. Parents were pleased to know their children would now be taught by a trained teacher. One of Janet's pupils was Anne Hudson who later became dux of Otago Girls' High School, won a University Scholarship, and as Mrs Crisp became Headmistress of a girls' boarding school in Sydney. Mrs Crisp remembered Janet: *She was a lovely young girl with black curly hair, and beautiful white hands that I wished my sun-tanned fists could be like. I asked my dad how I could make my hands like Miss Sangster's. 'Dip them in a flour bag,' was the sensible reply.* (Thompson, p.53) Classroom desks were long enough for five or six pupils who sat on forms. Mrs Crisp recalled the cold winters at Macetown: *Our slates were icy cold in the winter. Winter was a fearsome time for schoolchildren. In spite of the little stove in the middle of the room, we were frozen – fingers and toes.* (Ibid.) Problems occurred with handwriting when ink froze in the inkwells.



**Macetown school pupils taught by Janet Sangster in 1891** *LDM EP 0308*

The curriculum included reading, handwriting, written expression including grammar, spelling and arithmetic. Other subjects were history which focused on the kings and queens of England, and geography in which children learned compass directions from the names of mountains surrounding Macetown. In science, pupils had object lessons in which they named and described scientific equipment such as bellows used by blacksmiths. Drawing involved making accurate pencil sketches of common objects such as a chair. Girls had one more subject than boys, namely sewing.

One of Janet Sangster's greatest dreads was visits by school inspectors. Children shared her fear. Inspectors came twice each year, once to examine pupils to determine who would pass to the next standard class, or fail and be forced to repeat the same programme for another year. The other annual visit was known as a surprise visit when inspectors called unannounced to check on the quality of teaching, discipline, coverage of all subjects, and the condition of the school, its buildings, grounds, equipment and furniture. Fortunately for Janet and her pupils it was difficult for inspectors to make a surprise visit to Macetown. As soon as an inspector reached Arrowtown the telephone ran hot as schools within a day's ride were tipped off.

Early on 10 April 1891 Inspector George Braik rode out of Arrowtown like a sheriff in search of cattle rustlers. Janet was warned by Mr Schmidt, the German grocer, who saw him riding past. That morning most of the Macetown kids were playing at Kerr's pond, down by the Arrow River. The fun was fast and furious, lasting well after nine o'clock. As soon as Janet received Mr Schmidt's warning she sent a boy racing down to the pond to collect them. Everyone ran to school at once. (Ibid.) By the time 'Sheriff' Braik rode into town, stabled his horse and refreshed himself with tea at the 'saloon' known as Elliott's Macetown Hotel, the pupils were heads down, working on their lessons, business as usual. If Janet had been caught starting school late there could have been a price on her head in the form of instant dismissal. But Braik never discovered the late start and in his examination report for Macetown he wrote: *The school is worked by a very good timetable.*

Miss Janet Sangster was a well-read young woman and something she missed at Macetown was opportunity for scholarly discussions, that is until she found that Mr Beresford Ritchie, Manager of the Premier Gold Mine, a major local underground quartz mine and crushing plant, shared her interest in literature and poetry. Beresford was 25 years older than Janet, but the two enthusiasts met frequently to talk about Milton's *Paradise Lost* until in the course of time they discovered 'paradise found' in the company of each another. One day after school two pupils, Anne and Willie Hudson, were waiting to collect mail from Janet as the Macetown postmistress when they located her talking to Mr Ritchie in a small room behind the classroom, and the friendship was no longer a secret. Janet and Beresford Ritchie married in 1891 and settled in a stone cottage opposite the school.



Beresford and Janet Ritchie, nee Sangster LDM EP 0568

As soon as she was married Janet felt obliged to resign from teaching. There was no regulation about this but social mores dictated that wives normally vacated teaching positions in favour of men or unmarried women teachers. For example, Miss Janet McKinnon had been teaching at Bullendale before she married a local, John Barnett. Mrs Barnett resigned, but when no other teacher was available for Bullendale, she was persuaded to stay as teacher. At Macetown Janet Sangster's resignation was accepted and she was succeeded by a sequence of two unmarried women then Mr Joseph Kilburn.

Janet and Beresford Ritchie had a family of five boys and two girls, the first four boys being born at Macetown. Janet's interest in teaching seemed to be a dominant gene: their oldest son, Beresford Junior, became a teacher; William, their fourth son, had two sons who became teachers; so did both of Janet's girls, Isabell and Ruth.



**Macetown in 1897. The school is the tall building with a porch. Janet and Beresford Ritchie lived on the hillside opposite the school. (Painting by Graham Brinsley)**

### **Remarkable Teaching: Margaret Sangster**

Janet Ritchie's older sister Margaret was born in Scotland in 1861. She trained for teaching in the pupil teacher system at Invercargill District High School. As a very bright youngster Margaret began the four-year course at age 12, completing the programme at the remarkably young age of 16 in 1877. Before certification she then had to spend another year in training to reach the minimum age of 17. Margaret began her career at Invercargill South School (1879-1882) before being appointed head woman teacher at Oamaru District High in 1883, a senior position for an inexperienced teacher. In 1888 she transferred to Wyndham School and later was appointed head of the secondary department at Clifton School. Reports of her teaching included a comment from Inspector Peter Goyen: *Miss S. maintains good order and*

*instruction and teaches with fair skill and great vigour.* (Otago Teachers' Register, Vol. 2, p.1067) Otago Senior Inspector Donald Petrie reported: *Miss Sangster taught a small class in S4 [Standard Four] in a very creditable manner. Her pupils are careful, orderly and attentive.* (Ibid.) These comments are unusually positive given that Goyen and Petrie were known for their severe remarks.

Janet undoubtedly told Margaret about Macetown and how responsive the community had been to its teachers, so in 1899 when Mr Kilburn left Macetown School, Margaret applied for the vacancy. She was a strong contender because of her reputation earned while teaching in district high schools, and she was appointed. Many teachers based their classroom management on firm and even harsh methods, using an abundance of corporal punishment. Margaret Sangster, though, earned respect and admiration for her understanding approach with children. Inspectors noted that she used up-to-date teaching methods especially with junior pupils, and she was praised for her kindly manner. One inspector even recorded that pupils looked on Margaret as their guide and friend. She taught at Macetown from 1899 until 1905 when she transferred to Tokonui School in Southland. (AJHR 1878-1907)



Margaret never married. She may have made a decision to remain single in order to pursue her successful career in teaching, but that possibility cannot be confirmed. Her grading of D1 meant she measured up to city teachers. The D classification entitled her to undertake university study, and the assessment of 'one' indicated that inspectors had accorded her the maximum possible grading for efficiency as a teacher. She died aged 46 in October 1907 while teaching at Tokonui School.

### **Ridiculous Teaching Demands: Lewis Sangster**

The teaching experiences of Lewis Sangster, younger brother of Margaret and Janet, is nothing short of tragic. When he left school in Invercargill Lewis became a blacksmith. However he suddenly appeared as a teacher in a new school at Waimumu in 1888. The Southland Education Board often found it difficult to staff small rural schools, and when that happened untrained adults were approached to accept appointment. Perhaps the Board asked Lewis knowing that his two sisters were teachers. Lewis proved satisfactory and he was granted a licence to teach. He remained at Waimumu for five years then returned to his former job as a blacksmith.

Lewis next emerged in the ranks of teachers at Upper Shotover, the official name for the school at Skippers. In 1895 the Upper Shotover School Committee found it difficult to attract a teacher and the school remained closed from July to late October when 28-year-old Lewis Sangster was persuaded by the Southland Education Board to take the job. Lewis reopened Upper Shotover School, commencing a fateful sequence of events. To understand what occurred it is necessary to turn attention briefly to the school established at Bullendale about six miles up Skippers Creek.





Houses clustered on the hillside at Bullendale

LDM EL 2170

Families at Bullendale received permission to open a school in 1890, although residents had to find a suitable building and pay much of the teacher's salary. At the beginning of 1897 the teacher at Skippers Reefs, the official name of the school, resigned and locals sought permission from the Southland Education Board to appoint a successor. The Board had other ideas, though, and decreed that both Upper Shotover School at Skippers and Skippers Reefs School at Bullendale would become half-time schools. (SEB Minutes 1897, p.41) Half-time schools were established as a cost-saving measure when attendance was low at two neighbouring schools, and one teacher was appointed to teach at both schools.

So, Lewis Sangster was expected to teach three days a week at one school and three days a week at the other. Under normal circumstances it was demanding to teach at two schools, but in the case of Bullendale and Skippers, it was ridiculous. The journey between the settlements took more than three hours of tramping and the track crossed and recrossed Skippers Creek about 86 times each way. Mrs Glennie described the journey. *The approach to Bullendale from Skippers Point was up six miles of shingle rough-age in a deep gorge between towering hills and mostly through the waters of the creek which was built up from other branches until a waist-high volume was often the result. This was the only means of access.* (*Queenstown Courier*, No.18, pp.2-3) In winter the tussock was hidden beneath deep snow and Antarctic water flowed in Skippers Creek. Both school committees wrote to the Southland Board protesting at their schools being reclassified as half-time, but the Board confirmed its decision.

Beginning in May 1897 Lewis Sangster walked and waded, snow-raked and skated, slid and slithered between the two schools twice weekly through winter storms and spring floods until December. To make matters worse, the School Committee at Skippers assumed that Lewis could live at Bullendale where there were more pupils and visit Skippers as necessary, so the Committee rented out the school residence. Lewis objected and the antid

Committee was instructed by the Education Board to terminate the lease so that the residence was available for their teacher. Lewis was compensated financially for having to teach at two schools. In 1896 he received a salary of £60 for teaching 15 children at Skippers, but the next year when teaching 9 pupils at Skippers and 16 at Bullendale, he received £131.



Skippers Creek LDM EL 0965

Judging by inspection reports, Lewis was an effective teacher. When he taught at Upper Shotover full-time in 1896, 11 of the 12 pupils in Standard One and above were examined and passed. Inspector George Braik reported: *The school has passed a very good examination and their written work is exceedingly neat and careful. Manners and discipline are quite satisfactory.* This was one of the best inspection reports written by Inspector Braik. In 1897 when Lewis was teaching half-time at the same school, children were less successful. Four of the eight senior pupils passed. Braik reported: *Four of the pupils have shown themselves weak in arithmetic and three of these in geography. In other respects the school has passed a very satisfactory examination, a number of the copy books and drawing books and exercise books being indeed very creditable to the pupils. Conduct and manners are exceedingly good.* (Upper Shotover Examination Register)

Meanwhile at Skippers Reefs School, Bullendale, in 1897 when Lewis taught half-time, 9 of 12 pupils. Pupils in the infant classes were not examined. Inspector Braik reported: *The pupils are very weak in arithmetic and and [sic] they show little or no drawing. In other respects too, their work is below average. While this is so, there is not wanting signs of better things to come. The unsatisfactory nature of the results is doubtless very largely due to the changes of teachers and consequent interruption of the school work. Conduct and manners are entirely satisfactory.* (Skippers Reefs Examination Register) Lewis must have been an effective teacher when his pupils acquitted themselves this well in an inspector's examinations, given that pupils had lessons just three days a week from May to December.

After seven months of journeying between the two schools, Lewis Sangster left Bullendale/Skippers in mid-December for Christmas holidays with his parents in Invercargill. He was suffering from pleurisy at the time. His illness may have been compounded by alcohol. He died in Invercargill Hospital on Christmas Eve 1897. His death certificate records that the cause of death was “Determiner Trauma – One Week.” A coroner’s report was prepared. (Coroner’s Report. Death Register Folio No. 2268/1897) Lewis’s death notice appeared in *The Southland Times* on 28 December 1897, and on Thursday 30 December the *Lake County Press*, Arrowtown, reported: *Mr Sangster, teacher of the Skippers Point School died in Invercargill the other day. We have not yet heard the cause of death. Deceased was quite a young man and an excellent teacher.*

The *Lake Wakatip Mail* of Saturday 1 January 1898 recorded: *Within the last few weeks death has also removed another young man from our midst in the person of Mr Loius [sic] Sangster, who went to Invercargill for his holidays, and died on Christmas Eve at the early age of 28 have heard [sic] no reliable account of his illness, but understand that he was suffering from a bad bout of pleurisy.* Lewis had become a popular and respected figure in the communities of Skippers and Bullendale and he was sadly missed.

The Board had failed to appreciate the treacherous, unforgiving track between Skippers and Bullendale. Skippers Reefs School had 14 pupils in average attendance, and Upper Shotover School had 21, but each school was declared half-time. Other schools with smaller rolls in Southland were permitted to retain full-time status in 1897. For example, Millers Flat School at the foot of Coronet Peak had 12 pupils, and Kingston had 11, yet these continued as full-time schools in spite of the fact that teachers there could have reached a neighbouring school more easily than Sangster could journey from Skippers to Bullendale and back throughout winter.



**Upper Shotover School and Mt Aurum homestead (left). Lewis Sangster travelled to and from Bullendale in conditions like this. (Dave Marsh)**

Unfazed by the death of one of its teachers, the Southland Education Board appointed a successor to continue Lewis Sangster's work at both Skippers and Bullendale, Miss Jessie Reid, but she declined to take up the appointment. Understandably, she refused to negotiate the journey twice each week between the two schools wearing attire typical of a professional lady. Miss Reid's objections to the employment conditions apparently meant more to the Board than the death of Sangster, and it agreed to appoint a full-time teacher at each school provided that both school committees guaranteed to pay their respective teachers a minimum of £70 per annum. (*Lake Wakatipu Mail*, 21 January 1898) The Board eventually confirmed the appointment of two full-time teachers, Miss Margaret Clark at Bullendale and Miss Agnes Gray at Skippers. Miss Gray had been a pupil teacher at Lower Shotover School. She took up the position at Skippers in April 1898 after the school had been closed for four months awaiting the Education Board's solution.

### **Return to Macetown to Die: Beresford Ritchie (Junior)**

To complete the story of Sangsters as pioneer teachers in the Wakatipu, attention returns to Macetown where circumstances for Beresford Ritchie (Junior) contrasted sharply with those of his late uncle, Lewis. Whereas Lewis was required to face too much demand as a teacher, Beresford Ritchie did not face enough.

Beresford Ritchie (Junior), first-born son of Beresford and Janet Ritchie née Sangster, grew up in Macetown and set his heart on following in his father's footsteps by becoming a miner. He was a capable lad who succeeded in passing the Proficiency examinations at Standard Six and spending a further successful year at Macetown School in Standard Seven to qualify for university study. With his parents' encouragement, he entered the University of Otago School of Mines. Unfortunately, in to the damp climate of Dunedin he developed life-threatening asthma and a doctor suggested he return home because he was likely to die. Back in the dry climate of Macetown he recovered.

In 1910, Murray Blathwyt, the teacher at Macetown, resigned and another hiatus occurred as a successor was awaited. Finally, in desperation, the School Committee persuaded Beresford Ritchie (Junior) to accept the position, thus becoming the third Sangster to teach at Macetown School. By 1910 gold mining in the area was in serious decline. The old quartz mines and stamping batteries were running down and families were moving away. The school roll reflected the decline. In 1902, the school roll was 31, five years later it was 23, and by 1914 there were just nine pupils on the roll. (Knudson, p.28)

One of Beresford Ritchie's unusual experiences at Macetown occurred during lunch time on a winter's day. He walked across the road from the school for lunch with his mother, leaving pupils to keep warm by snuggling close to the classroom stove. Beresford's younger sister, Ruth was wearing a woollen skirt which caught fire. One of the boys ran across the road calling for the teacher. Beresford raced back and rescued Ruth by rolling her in the deep snow outside.

By 1916, Beresford taught only three pupils, Isabell, David and Ruth, being his younger brother and sisters. Understandably, the Southland Education Board closed the school. So Beresford Ritchie, the last teacher at Macetown, continued his career in education, teaching in rural schools in Southland where he died in 1955.

At the start of this article, reference was made to the Sangster family teaching the three Rs; remote, remarkable and ridiculous. Janet Sangster endured living in a remote settlement where winters were cold beyond imagination. She became a dedicated teacher, wife and

mother of seven children. Margaret Sangster was a remarkable teacher, admired by her pupils and graded highly by inspectors. She was a dedicated teacher who died in office at Tokonui, aged 46. Lewis Sangster deserves to be remembered for his determination in teaching at two schools with a three hour arduous walk between, in a ridiculous arrangement imposed by his employer which led to his premature death. And his nephew, Beresford Ritchie, did not have enough pupils to teach at Macetown when the settlement wound down. Together, the Sangster family of teachers in goldfields Wakatipu established an honourable record of which their descendants can be justifiably proud, and the four pioneer teachers created a heritage of exemplary service as role models for later educationists in Otago and Southland.

**Children at play in the main street of Macetown. The cottage occupied by Beresford Ritchie's parents is on the hillside above the Macetown Hotel.**  
(LDM, EL 0362)



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# WAKATIPU POST OFFICES 150 YEARS AGO

By Alan Cooke

The recent sorry saga of the missing mails at Queenstown at least serves to remind us that there is a whole rich field of postal history in the Wakatipu, much of it still to be explored. A timely reminder as this year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of our first post offices.

Reference books list six post offices as opening locally in the first half of 1863: Shotover River from 22 January, Arrow River from 3 February, Sandfly Bay, Franktown (as it was then spelt), Queenstown from 1 April, and St. Johnstown from 4 June.

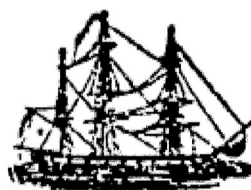
## Research Problems

There are some difficulties with post office research. Many are caused by two historic fires: the first when most of the Head Office records were destroyed as the General Post Office in Wellington burnt down in 1887; the second accounting for virtually all records in the Post Office Archives store when it also burnt down in 1961. Fortunately there are other sources, but also gaps, so there is uncertainty about the dates and locations, or even the existence of some early offices. Nevertheless much information survives in secondary sources, and this enabled the first comprehensive list of offices to be published in 1967 as a 148-page appendix to *Postage Stamps of New Zealand*, Volume III, with asterisks denoting items of doubt. One such indicates ignorance of the closing date of the Sandfly Bay Post Office. Another concerns the given date of 1864 for the opening of the Kingston Post Office, the relevance of which will soon emerge.

## Where was Sandfly Bay?

Regarding Sandfly Bay, reference books are clear as to the opening date, 1 April 1863, but give 1 July 1868 (with an asterisk) as the earliest date its closure could be established, because of its absence from the 1868 first edition of *The Post Office Guide*. Its location is given in a later comprehensive list of post offices as Elfin Bay, and the reason for its existence is stated to be gold mining. This has never seemed entirely convincing to researchers, and in the October 1983 edition of a postal history periodical *The Mail-coach*, R.M. Startup, updating his own listing of known post offices, provided a solution: Sandfly Bay was not Elfin Bay; far from it, it was Kingston. After lengthy research by Startup and others, the vital clue had been found in the Dunedin Public Library archives. A correspondent to the *Daily Telegraph* of 14 February 1863 had written: *This place has three names, 'Sandfly Bay', 'King's Town', and 'St. John's', after St. John Branigan who laid the township out. The latter appears to be the most popular name.*

Further research now endorses that Sandfly Bay was Kingston. There are several references, one an advertisement appearing on page 4 of the *Southland Times*, 27 March 1863:



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### SANDFLY BAY, WAKATIP LAKE.

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**T**HE pinnacle SWIFT,  
will leave this end of the  
Lake Daily, carrying goods and  
passengers.

For Freight or passage, apply to  
**J. BIRRELL SANDS & Co.**

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Earlier advertisements for the same firm give its location as *Sandfly Bay, Wakatip Lake; and Tay-street, Invercargill; and Sandfly Bay, Kingston*. Perhaps the most conclusive is a Dunedin C.P.O. notice appearing in the *Otago Daily Times* of 3 April 1863:

**MAILS TO LAKE WAKATIPU.**

**N**OTICE is hereby given that Mails will be made up at this Office on Wednesday, 1st April proximo, at 4 p.m., for Sandfly Bay, Queenstown, Franktown, and Arrow River, and thereafter every Wednesday and Friday, at 4 p.m.

Return Mails from these Districts will be delivered at this Office every Tuesday and Friday Morning, on and after the 10th.

**ARCHIBALD BARR,**  
Chief Postmaster.

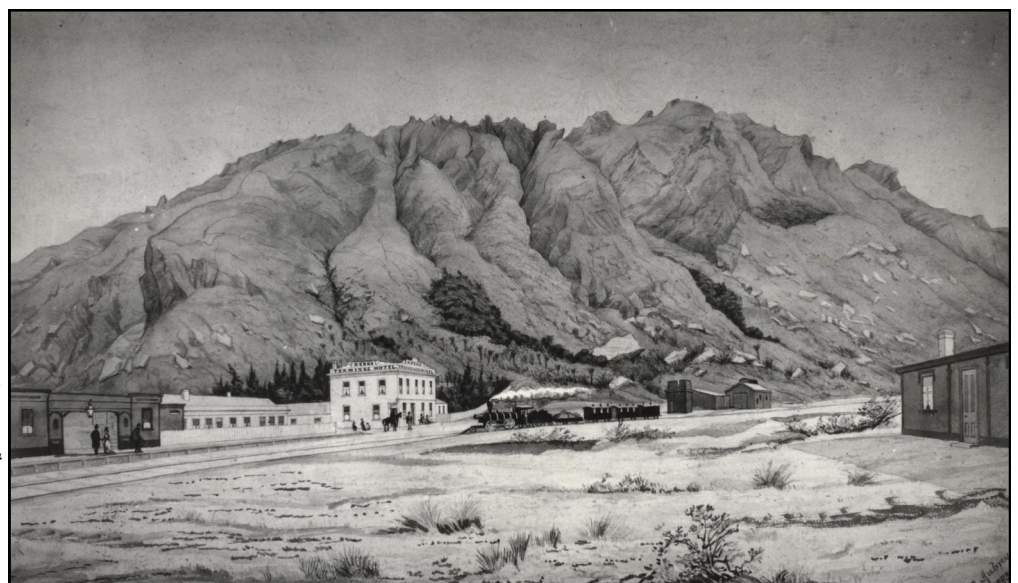
Chief Post Office,  
Dunedin, 27th March, 1863.

Accepting Sandfly Bay as Kingston's original name, Startup updated his listing to:

1 April 1863      *Sandfly Bay opened, Richard W. Daniels postmaster*  
4 June 1863      *St. Johnstown, Dennis McKenna, storekeeper; appointed postmaster*  
1864              *Name became Kingston*

So, two of our original listings of post offices become no more nor less than previous names for the Kingston Post Office. Startup continues the list of postmasters down to 1878. In that year, the post office was operating in the Terminus Hotel with John Kerr, hotelkeeper, being the postmaster as well. On 10 July the railway line opened from Invercargill and the railway station was built. And in 1878 the hotel, post office included, burnt down. On December 1 of that year, the office was moved into the new railway station, and Mr J.N. Anderson appointed postmaster. Many years later in 1966 a standalone Post Office was built not far from the main highway; today postal services continue in the Kingston Café and Bar.

Kingston including the Terminus Hotel by Christopher Aubrey  
LDM EL 1436 Lakes District Museum



## Was there a Shotover River Post Office?

The opening on 22 January of a Shotover River office is listed in *Postage Stamps of New Zealand* Volume III p.651, but there is no tangible evidence it ever existed. No closing date is given, only a footnote: *In all probability the name of the Post Office became Franktown on April 1, 1863.* 'In all probability' indicating the uncertainty of the record, for nowhere else in Volume III is it mentioned, its location is unknown, no mention appears in contemporary newspapers, and mail notices as late as April clearly do not know of it. Only the Volume III listing and later lists which copied it exist. The absence of any other evidence makes it extremely likely it never existed at all, except on paper. Even the supposed opening date, before that at the Arrow River, lacks credibility. In the *Otago Witness* of 28 March 1863 we read, *There is a rush at the Shotover but nothing particular at present is known of it. The location is Wilson's Point.* No post office there, clearly. And a reference below will show no post office at Frankton before April - certainly not in January. The conclusion becomes inevitable: there was no Shotover River Post Office.



## Arrow River Post Office First

With no Shotover River Post Office, the Arrow River Post Office was clearly the first official government post office in the Wakatipu. The appointment of its first postmaster, James Macauley, is notified in the *Daily Southern Cross* of 18 February 1863, quoting the *New Zealand Gazette*, and validating the February opening date. But less than two months later on 11 May another *Gazette* notice gives us *Sydney Johnstone Dick to be postmaster at the Arrow River.* Why another postmaster at the Arrow River so soon? What happened to James Macauley?

A headline from the *Southland Times* of 3 April 1863 says it all:

### ***SUICIDE OF THE POSTMASTER AT THE ARROW RIVER. - THE INQUEST.***

The details justify an article of their own, but not here, not now, although it should be noted in passing that it was Dr James Douglas, hastily summoned, who broke into the locked room where the body was found. The inquest finding was of temporary insanity.

The Arrow River Post Office continued for just on 25 years under a succession of postmasters, with James Henry Birch M'Kean succeeding Dick, to be followed by Ferdinand Falck by September 1864. It was not until 1 December 1887, or 1 January 1888 - sources differ - that it officially became the Arrowtown Post Office. Either way, this was many years after Arrowtown became known as such, and more than 20 years after it became constituted as the Borough of Arrowtown in 1867; but this is why it was only from 1888 that the name *Arrowtown* can be found on a postmark. It is worth noting that *Queenstown* cannot be found on a postmark either until 1871; up until then it had only the two obliterations shown below, marked 20 and 25, and no framed datestamp. Arrow River P.O. was also issued with obliterations numbered O8 and O80, using the unusually early named postmark shown above as a datestamp. (I have an original, dated May 1863. These framed datestamps were the first of their kind (PSDA), issued in 1862.)



The opening of the offices at Queenstown and Franktown on 1 April 1863, along with Sandfly Bay/Kingston, is anticipated by a notice in the *Otago Witness* of 21 February 1863: *We direct attention to an advertisement calling for the carriage of the mails to the following places.*

1<sup>st</sup> – *Between the Post Office at Waiwera and the South End of Lake Wakatipu.*

2<sup>nd</sup> – *Between the south end of Wakatipu Lake and Queenstown and Franktown.*

3<sup>rd</sup> – *Between Franktown and Arrow River.*

4<sup>th</sup> – *Between Dunstan and Lake Wanaka. Tenders for the above will be received at the Chief Post Office, Dunedin, up till the 7<sup>th</sup> of March.*

So, hire contractors to carry the mail, establish offices to receive it, appoint postmasters, and we have a mail service. All very straightforward – or was it? Not quite, apparently!

### Mail Woes and Confusion

#### THE LAKE COUNTRY. (FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.) QUEENSTOWN, 6th April, 1863

The following letter has been anticipated by later advices, but it contains items of interest not mentioned in them.

The greatest grievance on the table is, our post-office arrangements. They are so incomplete as to be causing serious loss and inconvenience. The mails due *via* Kingston, on Tuesday, the 31st March, have not arrived as yet on Tuesday, the 7th April. The mail service, *via* the Dunstan and Crown Range, is, we all believe, closed. For any stray copies of the *Daily Times*, we are either indebted to Rowley, or some other private source, the latest dates by post being the 26th, which was through other channels with that of the 27th, delivered here on the 30th March, exactly eight days ago. The post office service as at present conducted, is not only a perfect misery to those employing it, but a disgrace to the managers. How not to do it, is the evident policy pursued. Queenstown, now the most permanent, and by far the largest depot in this part of the country, has not the sign of a post office. The Arrow has a government establishment, but fourteen miles and the Shotover lie between the two places. The mails from Dunedin *via* Kingston, are to be taken to Frankton, but it seems there is no one appointed to receive them, and that the mail contractor whose duties commenced on the 1st April, and who had the required coach and horses ready, will take them and convey them to the Arrow—to which place after passing by our door, we must go for them. No mails have come, however, but the steamer is earning contract money—*says* the mails; the coach is following suit. And, taking everything else into consideration, it may well be asked if the force of blundering could go much farther. Frankton, which it was intended to benefit, will have the pleasure of seeing its letters landed upon its beach, and then have to follow chase after them, and cover eighteen miles of ground, before they can be distributed at the place which they first reached. By way of Liversgill, letters have several times lately come to hand quicker than by the post; and the knowledge of this fact ought to awaken an *esprit de corps* of the post-office service, if there is any. If Queenstown was only a month or two old it would be different, and allowances might be made, but it is not so, and hence the angry scornful tone people assume here about the subj-ct.

An appended letter in the same edition, sent by Cobb and Co coach and dated 7<sup>th</sup> April, adds: *Since the above was written the Expert arrived with mails of 1<sup>st</sup> April, and Messrs Hill and Smithers took charge of it. The steamer proceeded on to Frankton, but did not take on the Arrow portion of the mail. This shows bad management and creates confusion, but is not attributable to anyone here.*

So at the beginning of April, there was no post office at Frankton since ‘*there is no one appointed to receive them*’ (the mails). Nor was there one at Queenstown; although when the mail arrived on 7 April, Messrs Hill and Smithers managed to keep it there. It is clear the mail carrier was in place by then, but of postmasters there is no mention in spite of the *Daily Southern Cross* of 18 May, quoting a *General Government Gazette* of 11<sup>th</sup> May giving us ...*Sydney Johnstone Dick, to be postmaster at the Arrow River, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1863... Henry Hill, to be postmaster at Queenstown,,from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1863; James Thompson, to be postmaster at Franktown from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1863....*

Why, then, on 7 April, were Messrs Hill and Smithers needed to keep it in Queenstown? Were the appointments of Hill and Thompson retrospective? Why else was there no James Thompson acting as postmaster at Frankton? A later *Gazette* notice (already quoted from the 7 September *ODT* as appointing M’Kean to Arrow River, and Dick to Queenstown) adds to the uncertainty surrounding the beginnings of the Franktown P.O. by giving us *Edward Riley to be postmaster at Franktown from 5 May 1863.*

### **Today**

These first four early offices, Arrow, Kingston, Queenstown and Frankton, survive today in their different forms. Two more, had they survived, would also be marking their sesquicentennial: Arthur's Point and Maori Point. Both opened in the September of 1863 and lasted into the 1900s. Others followed from 1864 on. About them, and those already mentioned, there is much yet to be told – postal history is far richer than the bare outline above. And since then, many have come, and many gone, each with its own story to tell. Few remain.

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# PORTRAIT OF ELIZABETH MELDRUM-GRANT-HANSEN 1852-1927



**By Rosslyn Munro, her granddaughter**

Elizabeth was born in Tomintoul in Scotland, not far from Balmoral Castle in Banffshire. She was 16 when she set out for New Zealand on the *Heswig Bride* ship (some reports say it was called *Schleswig Bride*) arriving in Port Chalmers. She travelled to the Wakatipu and worked for the Humphries family who lived at Frankton on the site where her great-grandson Bill Grant farms today. The building is still there and is used for storing hay.

Three years later in December 1871 she married Robert Grant, a fellow Scot from Arbroath, a town in Angus. She was 20 and Robert 32. They were married at the Humphries' home, and she and Robert farmed Crown Grant land at the northern end of Lake Johnson, calling their home Minaltrie Farm. The chimneys from that residence are still standing. According to memories passed down through the family, Elizabeth was homesick for Scotland and used to stand at the front door looking towards Coronet Peak in the direction of her homeland thinking of her family there.



**Grant Farm 'Minaltrie'.  
Near Lake Johnson.**

In 1877 when she and Robert had three children, Isabella, John and Mary with another expected, tragedy struck: Robert's ploughing team bolted, dragging him, and he was killed at Cherry Farm in Hansen Road. Robert Junior was born the next year. So there Elizabeth was with four little children and a farm to run.

This photo taken several years later shows (back) John and Isabella with (front) Robert Jr and Mary.



In August 1879 Elizabeth married Christen Hansen who had the adjoining farm on the southern side of Lake Johnson (right), and moved to live there. Looking from his farm today we can see the stand of huge pine trees where the Minaltrie farmhouse was. Christen's farm was called Rotoiti Farm, presumably because it contained the 'small lake'.



With Christen she had seven more children: Jim, Elizabeth, Christen, George, Peter, Charles and William. Eleven children seems a huge family nowadays. She must have been pleased that all her sons stayed in the district and took up farming. And she must have been broken-hearted when her youngest, William, died in action in France in 1918 during World War 1. He was only 23.



**Elizabeth and Christen Hansen** *LDM EP 0278*

In 1927 Elizabeth died aged 75. Christen died six years later aged 83. They and Robert Grant senior are all buried in Frankton cemetery.

Their legacy lives on through their descendants, and through the names of Hansen and Grant Roads. The farm is still in the family today, owned by Linley Hansen, widow of Elizabeth's grandson Murray. Elizabeth's great-grandson Bill Grant owns Cherry Farm in Hansen Road where Robert Grant senior was killed those many years ago and which Robert junior later bought. Other descendants are scattered throughout the world but many still live in the Wakatipu basin.

In May 2014 the family will be holding a reunion where more stories will be told of Elizabeth, Robert and Christen and their lives spent farming near Frankton.

# JOHN AUGUSTUS MILLER, Gold-Miner and Journalist, 1833-1903

By Marion Borrell

*Adapted from a presentation of 'People From Our Past' at the Arrowtown Autumn Festival 2013.*

John A. Miller's grave in the Arrowtown cemetery lacks a headstone. This seems appropriate as back in his day all newspaper reports were unmaed, so he was just 'Our Arrow Correspondent' or 'From Lake County'. His reports were mainly for the *Otago Witness*, a weekly paper published in Dunedin, and he wrote them from 1868 until his death 35 years later. He also wrote for the *Otago Daily Times*, the *Southland Times* and the local newspapers.

But to go back to 1833, as his obituary in the *Otago Witness* relates. His parents lived in Hamburg, but they didn't want their child, if a son, to be conscripted into the German armed forces. So just before he was born they shifted to Heligoland which, strange to say, was British then, even though it's just thirty miles from Germany. It consists of two flat islands with an area of just two-thirds of a square mile - tiny. So John Miller was British and received a liberal education, then became an apprentice in the trade of sail- and tent-making – useful skills to have in the colonies, as it turned out.

When he heard of the Australian gold-rush John was seized with the desire to try his fortune and arrived in Victoria in 1856. In his search for the precious metal he learnt as much as he could about geology and mining. Upon news of the Gabriels Gully goldfield, he came to Otago and soon to the Arrow where he stayed, making his home at Coopers Terrace, just fifteen minutes walk up the river near where the first gold had been discovered about five years before. There he built his wooden cottage with rather a ostentatious doorway in the stone wall around the garden. Some people called it 'the German castle'.

John Miller worked as a miner, first in the river, then in sluicing and quartz mining, as the technology of gold-mining changed. In the 1880s he became the manager of the Golden Link mine beyond Macetown.

He was of a studious disposition - geology, of course, and the English language, and literature, and biology, and art. He wrote a book on mining which was published in London and New York. And for light relief he wrote stories such as 'A Colonial Maiden – A Story of Lake Wakatipu'. We can imagine the heart-rending plot. These were serialised in the *Otago Witness*.





A reporter has to be in the thick of the action, and he was. He reported everything from the weather – including the dreadful flood of 1878 – to the ups and downs of the gold returns, and the usual petty ructions and shenanigans in the Borough Council or the Hospital Committee. He recorded personal misfortunes and tragic deaths. Once he was almost too close to a piece of action. This was in December 1885 and he duly reported it in the *Otago Witness*:

Last Monday William Fletcher, a well-known miner of Arrowtown, had a narrow escape from instantaneous death. Working in his claim at Swiper's Gully with his mate, John A. Miller, a stone weighing at least half a ton fell from a height of about 15 feet, out of the face of a paddock from which a drive was just about being opened out. The stone, which was sitting upon a bed of clay, had been sounded only a short time before and found quite solid, and when it fell it came away without giving the slightest warning of any kind, knocking both Fletcher and Miller down, landing clean across the former's legs. Miller was soon upon his feet, and with the strength which excitement gives upon such occasions rolled back the stone and liberated his mate from his dangerous position. Considering the size and weight of the stone and the height from which it fell, the escape may well be called miraculous, Fletcher getting off with a rather severe bruise on his left knee, which will prevent him from resuming his work for a number of weeks.

We know that reporters are supposed to be unbiased, which can be tricky in a small community. But the rest of the time John Miller certainly expressed his opinions and had the energy to follow them through too, especially for the advancement of Arrowtown when successive governments evinced little interest in the welfare of the district, and the Arrow seemed isolated even from the rest of the Wakatipu. So it was over to John and like-minded residents to make a noise. For example, in 1868 they established the Arrowtown Library – a place dear to his heart - and he was on the first committee. Then there was the Arrow Miners Association which he founded in 1872. And, no, that wasn't a social club: they were a pressure group, almost political agitators by the time they were combined with other associations throughout the country; they put pressure on governments on all matters pertaining to the welfare of mining folk, including limiting Chinese immigration. At the same time two newspapers, no less, started at the Arrow and John made sure that the Miners Association's views were publicised in their pages.

So the Arrow community was John Miller's home and his cause. No family, no headstone, but no matter. His stone walls around his property under the poplars at Coopers Terrace have recently been cleared of blackberry and other invaders thanks to the work of Jan Morrison, the Arrowtown Village Association, DOC and volunteers rallied by Fran O'Connor of Nomad Safaris, including some Society members. The Historic Places Trust oversees all work there.



But John Augustus Miller's main legacy consists of all those anonymous newspaper reports which researchers still use, especially through the National Library's website [www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz](http://www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz). It's a wonderful source of first-hand information about 'People From Our Past'.



## HISTORICAL CUTTINGS: MINER'S LETTUCE, *CLAYTONIA PERFOLIATA*

The second of occasional notes by **Rita L. Teele**, enthusiastic amateur local botanist

Probably encouraged by wet weather last spring and disturbance of soil alongside the track, a large patch of miner's lettuce, *Claytonia perfoliata*, appeared alongside the Arrow River – fitting timing on the 150th anniversary of the discovery of gold there.

According to *Hortus Kewensis*, the 1811 catalogue of Kew Gardens in London, the Scottish naturalist Archibald Menzies discovered this plant in western United States in 1794 and brought seeds back to Kew. It is likely that 1794 actually refers to the date that plants were grown at Kew. Menzies was a naturalist and ship's surgeon on George Vancouver's round-the-world voyage on *The Discovery*, and in his journal of 7 May 1792 he mentions this plant growing along Puget Sound in current day Washington state:

*A little before noon the Fog dispersd... we walkd along shore... In this walk I found growing in the Crevices of a small rock about midway between the two points a new Species of Claytonia & as I met with it no where else in my journeys, it must be considerd as a rare plant in this country. I namd it Claytonia furcata & took a rough sketch of it which may be seen in my collections of Drawings.*



The drawing he made has been lost. The species name that he assigned, '*furcata*' meaning 'forked', was probably changed by the botanists Donn and/or Willdenow to "*perfoliata*".

The genus name, *Claytonia*, was designated by Linnaeus in 1753 in reference to a flowering plant, *Claytonia virginica*. Clayton was a botanist in Virginia (1694-1773) who had sent many American plants to the famous botanist, Gropius, in London. It is unlikely that Clayton ever saw *Claytonia perfoliata* because this species is native to the western United States. It was first described in a book in 1796 when John Donn (1758-1813), curator of the Cambridge University Botanic Gardens, included it in his *Hortus Cantabrigensis*. Its distinguishing feature is a circular leaf about 2.5 cm in diameter that is centrally perforated by slender stems that carry one to several small white-petaled flowers, hence the descriptor '*perfoliata*'.

*Claytonia perfoliata* was so important a source of Vitamin C that the British planted it in Cuba and later in Australia. An early 19th century article notes that this plant was well-established in Cuba by 1811, and 'spontaneously growing' in the Botanical Gardens of Paris. By the mid-nineteenth century it was being sold by seedsmen as a salad green/potherb. The miners of the Californian gold rush, probably educated by Native Americans of the area, knew that eating this plant prevented scurvy, hence the common name of 'Miner's Lettuce.' If you cross the bridge that leads to Tobin's Track then turn right and walk downstream, you may find that the plants have self-seeded at the top of the second hill.

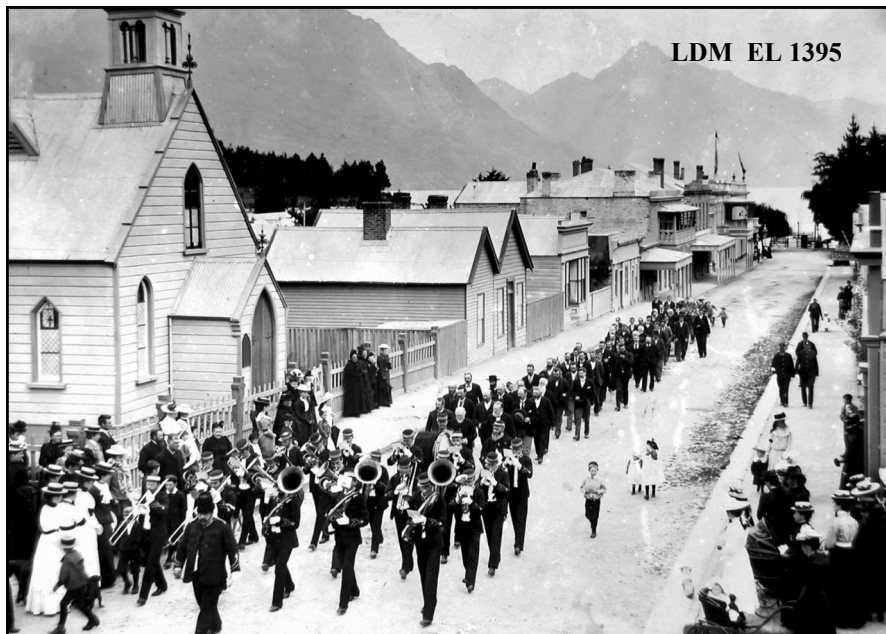
Thanks to John Steel from the Department of Botany at the University of Otago who identified the plant from photographs.

# BACKGROUND TO THE 2014 CALENDAR, JANUARY TO JUNE

## January: Lower Ballarat Street in 1901

By Joan and Alan Cooke

It's 26 January 1901. Queen Victoria, after reigning for 63 years, has died, and this procession is on its way to the Anglican Church for a service.



There is an account of that day, in the *Otago Daily Times*:

### LAKE COUNTY.

January 26.—The sad occasion for mourning the demise of Queen Victoria the Good, the Noble, was duly and reverently observed in every part of the district. At Queenstown and Arrowtown numerous flags were flying quarter-mast, church bells were tolling their mournful dirges, and everything spoke of deep sorrow for the loss that had fallen upon mankind the world over. Nor was private demonstration behind in expressing itself. Business premises were closed by common consent for the day, and every social function was postponed or suppressed. Mr R. Pritchard, merchant, Arrowtown, has draped his store in sombre black, and other signs of mourning are observable. Divine service was held in the Anglican churches, and further services are announced to be held in all the local churches tomorrow.

Princess Alexandrina Victoria was born on 24 May 1819, and succeeded her uncle, George IV, on 20 June 1837. She was 18. This is what she wrote in her diary:

*I was awoken at 6 o'clock by Mamma, who told me the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham were here and wished to see me. I got out of bed and went into my sitting-room (only in my dressing gown and alone), and saw them. Lord Conyngham acquainted me that my poor uncle, the king, was no more, and had expired at 12 minutes past 2 this morning, and consequently, that I am queen.*

Her coronation was a year later. Two years after that she married her cousin, Prince Edward. In the next seventeen years they had nine children, Victoria, Albert Edward, Alice, Albert, Helena, Louise, Arthur, Leopold, and Beatrice.

It is said some of the Irish miners who had flocked here in 1862, mindful of their own Queenstown back home, named our infant settlement also after her. In *Golden Days of Lake County* p.58 Fred Miller recounts a story of how the town was named over an anvil on New Year's Day 1863, although how much the tale has gained, or lost, in the retelling is hard to say. What is certain is the report dated 5 January 1863 in the *Otago Witness* which simply records: *The township on the lake was christened, at a public meeting held for the purpose, 'Queenstown'.*

The town was mushrooming. Runholder William Rees's claim for pre-emptive rights over the area was refused, and early in 1864 Queenstown was surveyed and its sections auctioned. On its first day the auction realised almost all of the £10,000 granted to Rees in compensation for his land.

In our photo the procession is passing the Presbyterian Church on the corner of Ballarat and Camp Streets. The Presbytery of Otago bought the site on the first day of that 1864 auction: Section 1, Block 1, Town of Queenstown. When the church was built in 1870 the *Otago Witness* called it *an elegant and commodious structure, built of wood, with seating for 150 worshippers*. Total cost? £360. In front of it, you can see the ladies waiting at the corner for the procession to arrive; and some mothers with prams across the road. And are those black armbands on the girls' white summer frocks? It is not recorded what the band was playing on this occasion, but at earlier similar occasions, it usually played the *Dead March from Saul*, so it's likely it did so here. Alan De La Mare in *Wakatipu's Golden Days* pp.102-3 gives a fuller history of the town's brass band.

Between Then and Now. Turning Lower Ballarat Street into a mall, an idea circulating in the Borough Council in 1970, was enthusiastically endorsed by a Ministry of Works planner and architect, Mr Einhorn, and the decision was taken to go ahead with it. I hate to think how many years it would take nowadays to get resource consent, clearance from archaeological authorities, appeals from interested parties (so-called 'stakeholders'), public consultations, financial arrangements, and so on – but in those days they made considered decisions, then just did it. And I have no doubt it was because they chose Councillor Marygold Miller to work with Mr Einhorn that it was completed so soon. For by July of 1971 work was well under way, and by September, the waterwheel was being installed at the near end. We had a mall.

## Sources

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*Golden Days of Lake County*, F.W.G. Miller, Whitcombe and Tombs, 1949

*Wakatipu's Golden Days*, A.J. De La Mare, Lakes District Museum, 2000

## February: Frankton Airfield in the Early 1930s

By Jules Tapper

As we look at this photo several things are very interesting. First, the visit of a light biplane from the Otago Aero Club to do some local joyride flights is obviously a fairly major event, judging by the size of the crowd relative to the size of the community at that time. Note the good clothes worn. New Zealanders were very air-minded people from the start of aviation, with, for example, Richard Pearce



building and flying his own plane possibly just before the Wright Brothers but certainly not long after them. Secondly, New Zealand was just shrugging off the effects of the great Depression and to spend even a few shillings on a joy-flight would have been a reasonable expense. We were certainly keen to experience flight!

Some readers may have flown in or know of the famous Tiger Moth which was a major training aircraft into the 1950s. The aircraft in the picture is its predecessor, a Gypsy Moth. Over 850 were built in several countries including 536 in the UK. Most de Havilland aircraft up until the 1930s were completely made of wood with linen covering, finished with nitrate dope. This particular aircraft was one of the new metal fuselage models and designated the DH60 M with the M for metal differentiating it from the earlier wooden-framed machines.

Engines over this type ranged from 100 to 120 horsepower with the later versions being the DH manufactured Gypsy model which ended up being extended to 130 horsepower in the Tiger Moth. Cruising speeds however did not change all that much and in all Moth types were in the 85 to 105 miles per hour range; only takeoff and climb performance figures improved, but fuel consumption went up. Note the chap standing on the engine cowling with a four-gallon tin of fuel emptying it into the fuel tank which provided a gravity feed to the motor. Sir Geoffrey de Havilland was a keen lepidopterist (or expert in moths) and thus many of his aircraft were named accordingly – Gypsy Moth, Moth Minor, Puss Moth, Hornet Moth, Leopard Moth and Fox Moth.

The photograph was taken just in front of where the two half-round hangars on Lucas Place now stand. Driving past these building you will note a small stone building in between. This is the remains of the original grandstand for the racecourse on the south western part of the existing airport. Early aircraft used to land on the racecourse. After the racecourse was decommissioned, several short grass runways were constructed on its surface.

In 1963 the Mt Cook and Southern Lakes Tourist Company run by entrepreneur and tourism pioneer Harry Wigley persuaded the local Borough Council of the time to extend and consolidate the southwest- northeast orientated grass runway and seal it so that medium-sized aircraft such as the DC3 and HS 748 could commence operations into the area. Prior to this, Southern Scenic Air Services, which later merged with NZ Tourist Air Travel and Ritchie Air Services, had conducted scenic flying, joyrides, commercial back country work, topdressing and rabbit poisoning in the area. There was also a scheduled run to Dunedin in various smaller aircraft such as Austers, Proctors, Dominies, Islanders and latterly light turbine 14 to 20 passenger aircraft such as Nomads and Twin Otters. Since those days many other operators have merged and been taken over in the area, while Mt Cook Airline, the company started by Sir Harry Wigley's company, has morphed into Air New Zealand national operations.

I first flew into this area from Dunedin in April 1962 with three friends (who paid for the aircraft hire) and I have been continuously flying from the airfield over the last 51 years in various types of aircraft, helicopters and gliders. I have seen many changes, many for the better, but I miss the summer gliding camps we used to enjoy from a base close to where the photograph was taken; we soared in the area but mainly up the front of the Remarkables where on a strong westerly wave day it was quite possible to climb to a great height. Good old days.

## **March: Kinloch - Accommodation and Wharf**

### **By Neville Bryant**

Richard Cogar Bryant was born at St Ives, Cornwall, in 1823 and qualified as a ships' captain at the age of 19. In 1852 he sailed to New Zealand. Early in the gold-rush he arrived in Dunedin and was asked to become the first Harbour Master and Policeman of Queenstown, which he accepted. One of his duties was to take the gold from Queenstown to Kingston. Anyone who was in jail at the time was used to row a whaleboat to Kingston and



back while Richard sat in the back to watch over the gold. He never lost any. It's said that his strategy was to carry a loaded gun and warn that anyone who moved out of line would be shot. After the first time he carried out the threat, he had no further problem - but maybe that's a legend.

When Richard Bryant with his wife Mary went to Kinloch in 1868 he built a house and used a front room for a bar. The house was made from pit sawn timber and wooden shingles on the roof. He then built a larger house and called it The Glacier Hotel after a large glacier in the mountains now known as Bryant Glacier. They used heart red beech and totara which was bought for 10 shillings per 100 feet. Copper nails were used, and he never used a 2 ½” nail where a 4” would go instead, and 3” x 2” timber was replaced by 5” x 2”. These measures have contributed to the longevity of the house. Iron was too expensive for the roof when wooden shingles were handy and reasonably priced. A tree no less than 4 feet in diameter was used, as only the heart was required. A beam of 10” x 4” was cut out, and with a shingle knife – a blade with a handle fitted at one end - a man would cut a shingle roughly 10” x 4” x ¼”. The roof has a steep gradient to shed heavy snow. Richard would never serve enough alcohol to make a man drunk, and would always close at 10pm. Alcohol was never served from The Glacier Hotel.

In 1873 at the time of the census the settlement at Martins Bay on the West Coast needed to have the census papers delivered. Richard Bryant walked over with the papers, got them signed, and then returned to Kinloch.

The Bryants have been in tourism continuously for over 150 years. Richard started by cutting tracks and planting gardens, the remnants of the cherry garden can still be seen. When the fire in January 1887 destroyed the beech forest around Kinloch, he started treks on horses to the Routeburn Valley. These trips then progressed to horse and buggy, then to cars in 1927 and finally to buses from 1941 to 1971 when the bridge over the Dart River was opened, allowing the public to use their own transport. The only remaining bus, called Remarkable Experience is still being used for tourist trips in and around Queenstown by Neville and Margaret Bryant.

In the 1970s and later, the Bryants' house was used frequently by Southland schools for their field trips. All the children have very fond memories of their times catching fish and learning about the bush and the many secrets.

From very early on the hotel has been used by trampers for a bed, hot baths, hot food and hot fires. These trampers would have hiked either the Caples, Greenstone and or Routeburn tracks. The tracks are still some of the most spectacular walks in the world, and are becoming more popular every year. The Glacier Hotel was sold in 2000 and the name changed to Kinloch Lodge, providing accommodation and a restaurant.

The *Antrim* paddle steamer which can be seen in the photo was built in 1868 on Pig Island near Glenorchy with timber from the J.W. Robertson & Co sawmill at Mill Creek, just south of Kinloch. The timber was 2 ½” red beech carvel planking in the hull below the water line, and the wooden blade paddlewheels were built by Kincaid & McQueen of Dunedin. It had a service speed of 8 knots and could carry 36 tons. When the *Antrim* first went to Kinloch there wasn't a wharf so the life-boat was used to ferry people and produce from boat to shore. The engine and boiler of the *Antrim* are still used today at the Kelvin Heights slipway where the *TSS Earnslaw* has her annual service.

The wharf at Kinloch was built in 1870 and is still in good repair, but the *Earnslaw* does not tie up there now. In 1999 a major flood raised the lake level, and the action of the southerly waves lifted off most of the decking. These have all been replaced and the wharf is now used by smaller boats, and is also a popular with fishermen and with children who enjoy jumping off it into the lake.

## April: Buckingham St, Arrowtown, 1902

By Denise Heckler

School children, Borough dignitaries and citizens have assembled in the main street to celebrate the end of the Boer War. Six local men had travelled to South Africa to fight from 1899; fortunately all six returned.

On the near right of the photo is the Bank of New Zealand built in 1875. Since 1955 it has housed the Lakes District Museum.



*LDM EL 1211*

Beyond it is George Roman's butchers shop; what cannot be seen is his bakery which was below the road.

The next shop with its familiar roofline was built about 1880 as the premises of a tailor, Mr Stoddart. In about 1908 it was divided in two by Len Adams with one half becoming a sweet shop and the other half a saddlery. Today it is the Golden Nugget giftshop.

Beyond this and difficult to see are the original stables which were owned by John Jopp who was for many years the proprietor of the Royal Oak Hotel. They were demolished in 1910 and replaced with the building we know as the Coachman's Mall.

Beside it is a building which was described at the time in the street map as a store, dwelling and sheds belonging to Henry Graham. It has become the Day 'n Night Foodstore.

The original Athenaeum Hall beyond was a wooden structure built in 1878. It burnt down in 1931 and was replaced with the more solid building we use today.

On the far left of the street we see the Royal Oak Hotel. The original hotel on the site was built in 1863 and the first Arrowtown school was located within the hotel precinct. The Jopp family began a 45 year association with the Royal Oak from 1885 to 1930. The hotel burnt down in 1924 but was replaced.

Near us on the left are the Post Office with its flag, and a glimpse of the original Postmaster's house. The first post office was included in the Postmaster's house until a separate Post Office was built in 1882. This is the one in the photo. Unfortunately it was poorly constructed, and was described as 'thoroughly rotten' when it was demolished in 1906. Its successor, built in 1915, was threatened with closure in 1995 but was saved when it was purchased by the Museum which continues to operate it for the benefit of the community and enjoyment of many visitors.

The Postmaster's House was an attractive building but it burnt down in 1906 and was replaced with the well-maintained villa that is in use today as a restaurant.

Looking at the crowd, we see that the celebration of the end of the Boer War was a formal rather than a joyful occasion. The custom of street events was resurrected in 1985 with the annual Arrowtown Autumn Festivals.

## May: Macetown in 1897- a painting by Graham Brinsley

By Danny Knudson

Macetown, 15 kilometres from Arrowtown, owed its existence to the presence of gold, first found in 1862 by William Fox at what was later called the Twelve Mile. Once diggers had recovered the alluvial gold from the Arrow River and its tributaries, men turned to underground reefs of gold-bearing quartz rock. Quartz-crushing activity sustained Macetown from about 1876 until around 1916 by which time the town was largely deserted.



This painting by skilled artist Graham Brinsley (2002) is based on a photograph of Macetown in 1897 when between 150 and 200 people lived in the town. Those who wandered along the main thoroughfare, High Street, at that time would have found several notable buildings which are shown in the painting. At the entrance to the town on the left of the road were stables and a buggy shed owned by William Smith, a local storekeeper. Smith's house and store were located at the top of the rise into the town. Smith operated a bakery built to the left of his house. On the opposite side of the street were two miners' cottages, the larger of which was owned by Mr Clayton. Past Smith's house the street curved to the right to avoid the town well, a handy source of water much closer than the Arrow River.

Continuing to identify buildings on the left side of the street, the largest building was the Macetown Hotel operated by Mr Elliott. Across the street was the Alpine Hotel with its stables and sheds behind. The two pubs were similar; one offered whisky and gin, the other served gin and whisky. Bulk supplies of beer were too difficult and expensive to cart to Macetown.

Next to the Alpine Hotel was the hall, the social centre of the town where meetings, card evenings, church services, concerts, dances and formal balls were held. Dancing was very popular, attracting people from as far afield as Cardrona, Gibbston and Queenstown. Dancers also came from Skippers, journeying by foot or horseback across the shoulder of Advance Peak, the snow-covered mountain dominating the northern skyline. Dances normally started with a concert featuring musical items, recitations and readings, all generously applauded. Presentations over, it was time to clear the floor, tune the violin, warm up the banjo, and let the dancing feet fly. Children who arrived with their parents were left to curl up and sleep as Mum and Dad danced on until daybreak.

Next to the hall was the second Macetown School. For details of the original school, see the article earlier in this magazine about 'Pioneer Teachers'. The first school building deteriorated and was replaced by a new school in 1895. From then on the first school was



used as a playshed, an essential facility in which many children learned about human biology. Alongside the two school buildings was a little cottage 18 feet by 10 feet erected as a teachers' residence.

One of the smallest buildings in the town, sandwiched between the old and new school, was the post office, opened in 1865 as Twelve Mile Post Office. When Miss Janet Sangster was appointed teacher at Macetown in 1890 she was expected to be the postmistress as well. See the earlier article regarding this building and her courtship.

The buildings beyond the hall on the right hand side of the street were mainly miners' cottages, although the odour in this suburb was embellished by the presence of a slaughterhouse and butchery. One notable residence opposite the butchery was occupied by twelve carefree miners who lived and worked in a collaborative arrangement. They were known as the Twelve Apostles, so called because of their number, not because of their pious behaviour. They mined industriously enough until they had accumulated sufficient funds for a drinking binge in Arrowtown where there was plenty of beer available. Amongst the Apostles were a couple of dedicated gardeners who created small plots in which to grow potatoes, carrots and other vegetables.

Around Macetown timber was in short supply. Coal was carted from Arrowtown, but most families also burnt dried cow-pats known as 'buffaloes'. Children were sent to roam the hills collecting them. When a visiting school inspector, checking the pupils' general knowledge, once asked, 'What is a buffalo?' he did not expect the answer, 'Please, Sir, they're cow shits.'

## **June: Laurel Bank Guest House, Queenstown**

**By Marion Borrell**

Elegance, decline, relocation and rejuvenation—the eventful story of this substantial villa. It was built in 1892 on the corner of Stanley Street and Frankton Road specifically as a guest house. The 'proprietress' was Mrs Mary Boyd Boyes who ran it until 1920. Originally it had five guest bedrooms but was soon added to—an indication of its popularity as tourist numbers increased. The embellishments of finials and wrought-iron coronets over the bay windows (very Queen Victorian) proclaimed its quality, while the spacious grounds and wide views stretching from the Remarkables right around to Bob's Peak contributed to its appeal to the many visitors who stayed.



In 1920 Mrs Boyes retired, and the house was sold 'as a going concern...with furniture, effects and piano, ten guestrooms and hall...acetylene gas and other conveniences.' After additions, it was reopened by Mrs Marion Davies and continued its reign as a boarding house.

However, in time and under a succession of owners its condition declined, and it ceased being a guest house. In the 1980s it became a staff hostel and then was divided into flats. Deterioration seemed inevitable, and by the early 2000s it was dilapidated and uninhabited.

Just as it seemed that it would be removed and/or demolished in 2006, a local couple, Sheena Haywood and Stephen Brent, undertook the ambitious



project to shift the house to the country, on a terrace below Ladies Mile. The anxious journey ended well, and two years of meticulous renovation and refurbishment have resulted in a splendid restoration. The couple won the environmental and heritage category in the QLDC Heart of the District Awards in 2007.

They are kindly hosting the Society's annual picnic in December when we'll be able to admire this rejuvenated Victorian beauty.



**Credits:** Postcard G.H.B. Series 33, courtesy of Robert Taylor; photos by Sheena Haywood

*Ralph Hanan, Marion Borrell and Danny Knudson with the 2014 calendar outside St Peter's Church.*

*Photo by Sheena Haywood.*



# SOCIETY NEWS

## President's Report for the Annual General Meeting, November 2013

I am pleased to report on a busy year for the Society in which we have carried out the objectives of the Constitution and contributed to heritage protection and promotion. There are several projects in hand which have not yet come to fruition. Our treasurer, Gavin Jack, keeps us well informed and advised. Our membership base remains strong at 240 being 330 individuals, and new people continue to join. We are grateful to our members for their continued participation and encouragement.



### Heritage Protection

Brian Bayley continues to monitor Resource Applications, and it's pleasing to note that few concerns have arisen thanks mainly to the Historic Zones in Queenstown and Arrowtown and the QLDC list of protected features. We did submit regarding the name of the proposed 'Henley Downs' subdivision near Jack's Point as historically it should be 'Hanley', and we await the outcome with interest.

When three precious heritage properties were listed for possible sale in a document prepared by QLDC staff for the Council, we made submissions and attracted media attention even though we believed that it was all a mistake, which it was: the Council does not have the power to sell the Malaghan Library and the Williams Cottage in Queenstown, nor the Buckingham St cottages in Arrowtown. However, the publicity was very beneficial in making Councillors and the public aware of the importance of these properties and history generally – and of the feistiness of the Society in defending of the community's heritage. In the process we have offered a financial contribution towards an interpretive panel outside the Library which we hope to see created next year.

### Publications

Queenstown Couriers: As the Summer 2012 edition was published early to coincide with the 150<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the gold-rush, there has been just one issue in this financial year: Winter 2013 issue 89, featuring articles on medical services in the district. We thank the contributors, Rita Teele and Rupert Iles, and Danny Knudson. Other items are increasingly arising from the speeches given at the Arrowtown Festival and the launch of the calendar. Our thanks to the many writers and presenters who contributed such personal accounts of the past and to Michael Anderson for his careful design. By using a professional printing firm we have been able to improve the colour and quality of the publication.

Calendars: We sold 880 calendars for 2013, but made only \$3600 profit which is a small return for the effort involved, so for 2014 we have raised the price from \$15 to \$18. At the suggestion of our printer, Graeme Hastie of Print Central, we undertook a 'Then and Now' theme which proved to be fascinating and time-consuming to create, and included generous input from a wide range of people. We hope you're delighted with the result and buy multiple copies to use as gifts. Marion Borrell took the lead assisted by Shona Blair, Denise Heckler and Ben Saunders. We appreciate the support of the staff of Print Central. Wonderfully appropriate speakers were found for the launch.

Book: Our current collaboration with the Museum is to edit and publish a book on Macetown's history written by Tony Veitch forty years ago but never published. Marion

Borrell and Danny Knudson are working on this.

### **Community Involvement**

This has increased over the year. Arrowtown Autumn Festival ‘People from Our Past’ presentations attracted 170 visitors and members. We also made presentations at St Peter’s Anglican Church’s 150<sup>th</sup> commemorations and the Otago Goldfield Heritage Trust’s AGM. Mike Lynch guided a class from St Joseph’s School around central Queenstown, and Marion spoke at the Kingston and Districts Historical Society’s AGM. We have offered seed funding to the Queenstown Trails Trust for historical information panels beside the track at Lower Shotover. Besides being our secretary, Jocelyn Robertson continues to serve as our representative on the Lakes District Museum Board. When we offered to assist the Wakatipu Heritage Trust we were asked to chair a Think-tank of the various heritage conservation trusts in the district in order to share experiences and know-how. In addition, Marion has just been appointed to the Trust.

### **Communication with the Public**

Website: Marion maintains our website, and its usefulness especially to students has been enhanced because John Borrell has scanned our archive of *Courier* magazines dating from 1965 so that they can be read on-line.

Smartphone App: In a new and exciting undertaking, we are being the supporting organisation for a smartphone app which Anthony Mason is going to develop. At first the focus will be on central Queenstown, enabling people to access information about the history of the town on their phones. In time the depth and breadth of coverage of the ‘mobile guidebook’ can be increased. It’s a major project which will take us well and truly into the age of connectivity. Ralph Hanan is the committee member working with Anthony on this.

### **Eight Activities for Members**

Once again we have had eight activities between August 2012 and May 2013 including trips to Arranmore Farm and the Frankton Boatshed, to Clyde and to the two transport museums at Wanaka airport. The presentations at the calendar launch, the launch of the *Courier* in May, the Autumn Festival and the AGM were well attended and warmly received. Our annual picnic was at Reidhaven, Jack Reid’s house in Arrowtown where Jack shared his great knowledge. Thanks to everyone who contributed to these activities.

The Committee has been harmonious and supportive, assisted by many people both members and non-members. Altogether, the Society is in good heart, and looks forward to another active year protecting and promoting our heritage today – for tomorrow.

### **Marion Borrell, President**

#### **Activities for Members, August 2013 – May 2014**

<b>25 August, Sunday:</b>	Launch of the 2014 Calendar, Arrowtown Presbyterian Hall
<b>19 October, Saturday:</b>	Day Trip to Clyde
<b>10 November, Sunday:</b>	AGM, launch of the Summer <i>Courier</i> , and guest speaker
<b>15 December, Sunday Noon - 3pm:</b>	Picnic at Laurel Bank
<b>1 February Saturday:</b>	Day Trip by 4WD to Carricktown
<b>23 March, Sunday 2-4pm:</b>	History of Queenstown Gardens at the Bowls Pavilion
<b>Arrowtown Festival:</b>	‘People From Our Past’, probably Friday 2 & Sunday 4 May
<b>25 May or 1 June:</b>	Sunday, Launch of the Winter <i>Courier</i> and something else

**QUEENSTOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2008 INC.**

**Statement of Receipts & Payments**

**for the year ended 30 September 2013**

	<u>NOTES</u>	<u>30 SEPT 2013</u>	<u>30 SEPT 2012</u>
<b>TOTAL OPENING BANK BALANCE</b>		<u><b>21,411.42</b></u>	<u><b>15,092.31</b></u>
<b>PLUS RECEIPTS</b>			
Activities Income		122.70	1,200.00
Project Income		1,823.56	1,420.00
Membership Subscriptions		5,100.00	5,465.00
Donations		177.00	690.00
Other		314.50	207.00
Interest Received		598.57	817.64
Calendar Sales	1.	10,339.00	15,486.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<u><b>18,475.33</b></u>	<u><b>25,285.64</b></u>
<b>LESS PAYMENTS</b>			
Activities Expenses		258.80	1,155.00
Project Grants & Expenses	2.	115.90	6,445.35
Subscriptions		60.00	165.00
Printing & Stationery		17.70	30.97
Postal Expenses		577.56	336.58
Courier Magazine		4,955.58	4,000.05
Meeting Expenses		338.75	351.34
Sundry Expenses		472.96	203.69
Calendar Expenses		5,441.30	6,278.55
Honorarium	3.	500.00	-
Miscellaneous Equipment		463.74	-
<b>Total Payments</b>		<u><b>13,202.29</b></u>	<u><b>18,966.53</b></u>
<b>TOTAL CLOSING BANK BALANCE</b>		<u><b>26,684.46</b></u>	<u><b>21,411.42</b></u>

<b>REPRESENTED BY:</b>	<u><b>30-Sep-12</b></u>	<u><b>Interest</b></u>	<u><b>Principal</b></u>	<u><b>30-Sep-13</b></u>
ASB Current Account	7,285.20			11,959.67
ASB Fast Saver Account	2,447.13	73.23		2,520.36
SBS Bank Term Deposit 7-1	5,862.00	259.12		6,121.12
SBS Bank Term Deposit 6-3	5,817.09	266.22		6,083.31
	<u><b>21,411.42</b></u>	<u><b>598.57</b></u>	<u><b>-</b></u>	<u><b>26,684.46</b></u>

*These Financial Statements should be read in conjunction with the Notes to the Financial Statements and the Auditor's Statement.*

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- The Society is incorporated under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908.
- The Society is also registered as a charitable entity under the Charities Act 2005.
- This report is exclusively for the use of members of the Society.

### GENERAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- The Society adopts a cash basis of accounting.
- There have been no changes in accounting policies.
- Accounting policies have been applied on a basis consistent with previous years.

### PARTICULAR ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- The Society is not registered for Goods and Services Tax.
- As a registered charitable entity, the Society is exempt from Income Tax.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### 1. Calendar Sales

• 2013 Calendar	7,067.00
• 2014 Calendar	<u>3,272.00</u>
	<u>10,339.00</u>

#### 2. Project Grants & Expenses

Principal Grants paid by the Society during the year were:

- Books for Queenstown and Arrowtown Libraries 115.90

In addition, commitments to the following projects have been made:

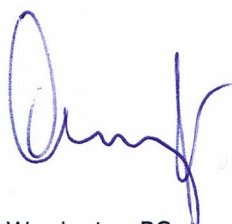
- To Queenstown Trails Trust for signage at sites of historical interest along the trail 2,000
  - To Queenstown Lakes District Council for signage at the old Queenstown Library 2,000
  - 50% contribution towards the printing costs of a book on Macetown, in partnership with the Lakes District Museum 6,000 (approximate)
- 10,000

#### 3. Honorarium Paid

The Board voted this year to pay an annual honorarium of \$500 to the Board Chairperson as a contribution towards the personal costs incurred in fulfilling this role.

### 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 2013.



D. Warrington BCom

# LAKES DISTRICT MUSEUM & GALLERY PRESENTS

NOVEMBER 1, 2013 - FEBRUARY 23, 2014

ALDRIN, TERESHKOVA, WOODS, ALI, DICKENS, TWAIN,  
SPRINGSTEEN, EASTWOOD, CLOONEY, JORDAN, SCHIFFER,  
MCCARTNEY, CLAPTON, JACKSON, THE EAGLES, TOLSTOY,  
BUSH, PELE, REAGAN, LINCOLN, TSAR NICHOLAS, WRIGHT  
BROTHERS, EARHART, HILLARY, SCOTT, CHURCHILL,  
RODMAN, PAQUIN, HUNTER, BAX, BRADMAN,  
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HEPBURN AND MANY  
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# Queenstown & District Historical Society 2008 Incorporated

*Our Heritage Today - For Tomorrow*

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**Honorary Solicitor: Graeme Todd**

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Individual or Family Membership: \$25 a year

Corporate Membership: \$50 a year

Life Membership: \$250

*The Queenstown Courier is posted to members.*

*Correspondence and accounts to: PO Box 132, Queenstown*

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