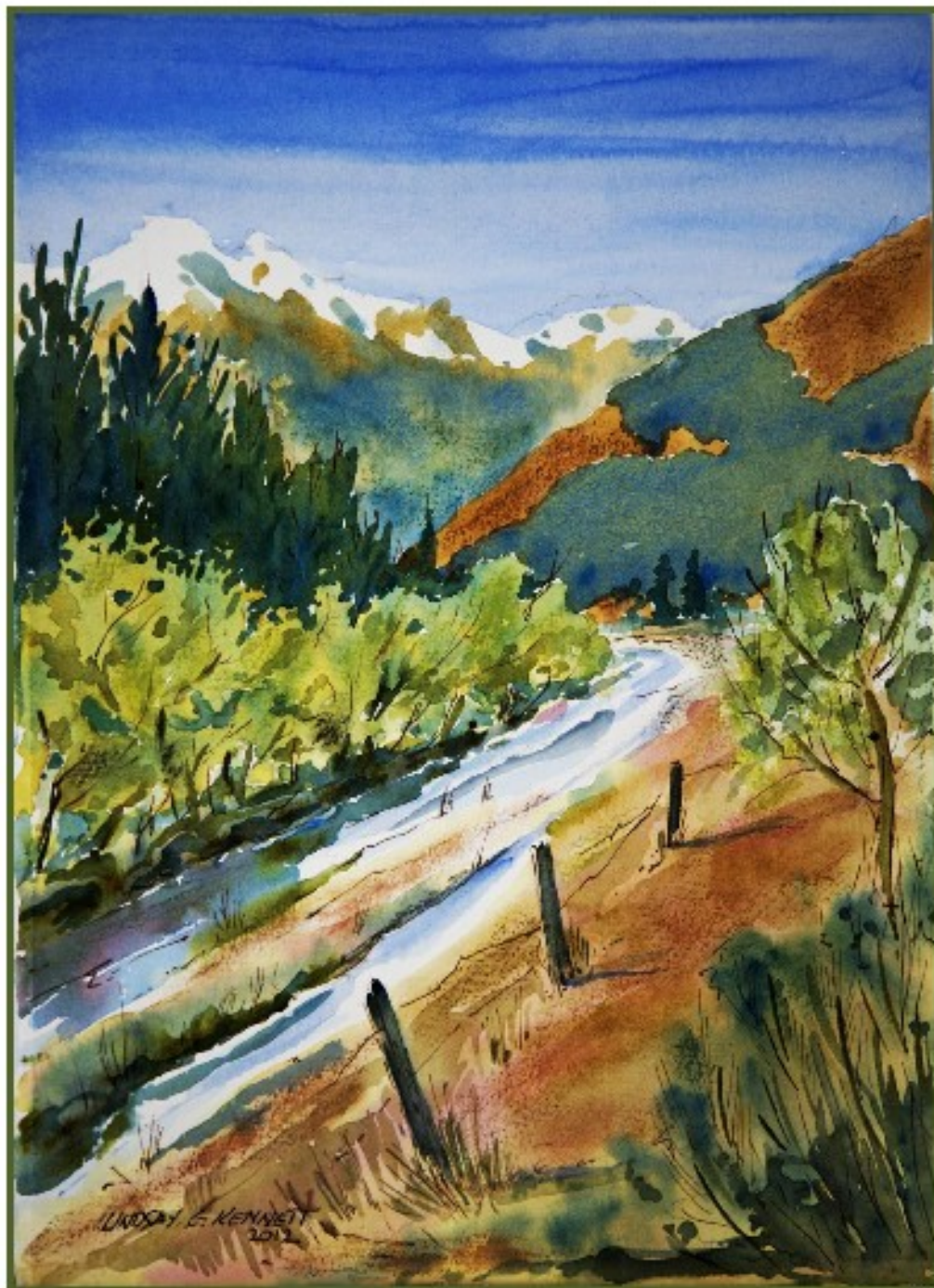


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**Precipice Creek, Rees Valley
Watercolour by Lindsay Kennett, 2012**

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Contents

Page 3: Queenstown Gardens: a Cultural and Environmental Treasure for 150 years

Page 9: Celebrity English Writer Anthony Trollope Visited Lake Wakatipu in 1872
- He Came, He Saw, He Commented By Marion Borrell

Page 13: Paradise and Glenorchy Sent Forth a Milliner – Why? How? by Hilary E. Hunt

Page 19: Historical Cuttings. The Missing Tree On Buckingham Street
By Rita L. Teele, Anne Maguire and David Clarke

Page 23: The Kawarau Falls Dam and Bridge by Ray Clarkson (reprinted)

Page 27: Arrowtown Remembered – Jack Reid reminisced in 2006 (reprinted)

Page 32: First Elections in Queenstown and Arrowtown - A Tale of Two Towns
By Marion Borrell

Cover Illustration

Precipice Creek, Rees Valley. Watercolour by Lindsay Kennett in 2012. Reproduced by kind permission of Jessie Leef. Photographed by Carlos Biggemann.



Queenstown Gardens in the 1870s with new trees and walks visible. Can you also locate the rock which now holds the Captain Scott memorial, the Lake Lodge of Ophir and the stone library?

QUEENSTOWN GARDENS

A Cultural and Environmental Treasure for 150 Years

Compiled by Marion Borrell mainly from information presented by Dr Neil Clayton, a specialist in environmental history, as evidence to the Environment Court in the 1990s on behalf of the Wakatipu Environmental Society Inc.



Geology

To start at the very beginning: this peninsula is part of the moraine left by the ice stream which came down the gap between Ben Lomond and Bowen Peak. Mingled in the sand and gravel are large rocks called 'erratics' including the large greywacke rock which now has the Scott Memorial on it – in early pictures looking like a wart on the nose of the peninsula. During the last glaciation, the peninsula (such as the photo opposite) was submerged under 45 metres of water.

Maori in the Wakatipu

From early Maori times members of Waitaha, Kati Mamoe and Kai Tahu passed through the Wakatipu on visits to gather for food and pounamu (greenstone) at the Head of the Lake. One route came up the Kawarau and past here. The records in whakapapa (genealogies) show that some six generations before European contact there was a Kati Mamoe settlement at Queenstown Bay, and it is inferred that defences from Kai Tahu attack would have been constructed on this peninsula with its wide views in all directions. The place was probably named Te Kirikiri, meaning 'gravel place', in accordance with the geology of the peninsula. In the early 18th century a young woman named Haki Te Kura lived here and is famous for swimming across the lake. There was no Maori settlement when the first European explorers reached the lake in the mid-1850s, nor when William Rees and Nicholas von Tunzelman came in 1860 and took up land for sheep-farming.

Founding of the Park

The gold rush began in 1862 and it soon became apparent that Queenstown would be a permanent settlement. In 1864 the Otago Provincial Council with the Queenstown Improvement Society called a public meeting ‘for the purpose of selecting and deciding [among other things] upon a site to be set aside as a public recreation ground.’ So, from the outset, the community expressed its wishes. The meeting was held in the Queen’s Arms Hotel which had been Rees’s woolshed and later became Eichardt’s hotel. At its first meeting after being elected in 1866, the first Municipal Council selected the Queenstown peninsula to be the public reserve. The Provincial Council agreed, and the park was born in 1867. It is of great credit to that first Council that it created reserves for almost the whole of the Queenstown Bay foreshore around to One Mile Creek.

Historical context for civic parks

The concept of the park as a place purely for recreation appears to have been introduced into England with the Norman Conquest. Parks were private reserves owned by the royalty and aristocracy, and used mainly for deer-hunting. (Think of Robin Hood or Henry VIII.) This changed in the early 1600s when King Charles I decided that Hyde Park, which was one of several royal parks on the outskirts of London, was to be opened to the public free of charge.

Now we jump a century and a half. In the second half of the 1700s there grew up in the Western European mind the concept of enjoying Nature and Landscape for their own sakes - the Romantic Period. English people travelled in search of the charm of the Swiss Alps or their own Lakes District.

As urbanisation accelerated during the Industrial Revolution, public walks and parks were created around industrial centres. One noted landscape architect, John Loudon, wrote that in a public garden, Art should imitate Nature but not be mistaken for it. The layout should consist of one main walk through the park and a few subsidiary walks. The park would display specimen trees and other plants within a lawn setting – the Arboretum concept. Many of us have visited gardens on this model in Britain and elsewhere. This philosophy was put into operation throughout the British Empire. In New Zealand the surveyors of towns and cities set aside public open spaces, town belts and parks, and this practice was embedded in Acts of Parliament in 1854 and 1862. The designation of Queenstown Peninsula as a recreation reserve was done under these Acts. In this way, public gardens and reserves have become part of our cultural landscape which we all take for granted.

Establishment of the Gardens

When William Rees arrived at Queenstown Bay in 1860 the peninsula seemed bare to the European eye. It did not contain any of the native beech trees which one imagines once grew here before fires – natural and man-made – destroyed them. According to our local botanical expert Neill Simpson, the vegetation probably consisted of shrub-land such as bracken, matagouri, speargrass, tussock and coprosmas, while around the tarn which is now the pond there would have been sedges, flaxes and perhaps toitoi. The early settlers didn’t much value these native species.

The initial design was drawn up by the Wakatipu District Mining Surveyor, W.C. Shanks, with a gravelled main walk from a Park Street entrance, and meandering

pathways five feet wide leading off it – very much in Loudon’s style. Realising that the site is exposed to wind from several directions, the designer included a mixture of hardy species in groups and specimen trees. A plantation reserve was established on the slope between Park Street and Horne Creek.



1880 by Marianne North, botanical artist, oil on card. Note the first plantings of exotics in the Gardens and foreground detail of native vegetation.

(©The Board of Trustees, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London)

In 1867 the Council spent £20 on trees, and two English oaks were planted adjacent to Park Street, one by the Mayor James W. Robertson and one by Mr

McConnochie, the nurseryman. A plaque beside the gates commemorates this. The residents set about planting exotic trees enthusiastically with what the *Lake Wakatipu Mail* called ‘arbormania’. Many residents donated trees and shrubs which they could plant them themselves wherever they chose. So many were planted that in later years considerable culling was needed. I guess we’ve all found this on our own properties.

Council ordered 190 trees and shrubs from Tasmania: 50 **poplars**, 6 horse **chestnuts** and 6 Spanish chestnuts, 12 **larches**, 50 **willows**, 12 **hollies**, 50 **sycamores**, 12 **alders**, 50 **blue gums**, 12 **black wattles** and 50 assorted shrubs. In 1868, 550 trees were planted. Some of these remain for us to admire. Seven notable trees from those early plantings are protected in the District Plan.

F.W.G. Miller in *Golden Days of Lake County* comments that the creation of the Gardens ‘was probably the first step taken in establishing Queenstown’s future as a tourist resort, though it is probable that nobody at that time envisaged the future that was in store for the township.’

Tourism and Iconism

One notable early tourist in 1872 was Anthony Trollope, the popular English novelist, whose travel writings were widely read. When he came here he considered the alpine landscape to be similar to the Swiss scenery so beloved by European travellers. An account of his visit forms a separate article in this



1914 with Bows and Tennis Pavilion (LDM EL2184)

magazine. The Wakatipu’s international image was being created.

Tourism was encouraged by the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts which was established in 1901. It promoted the Gardens through flowery language and charming photos.

A delightful example of tourist promotion from 1922 was produced locally by George H. Davies who owned The Tourist Depot in Queenstown. His booklet entitled *Wakatipu's Scenic Glories*, is strong on adjectives as well as facts. It tells of *'the splendid croquet lawn, superb bowling green, and two spacious tennis courtsIt seems as if some Magic Carpet has transported the visitor to fairyland....[There are]*

enchancing walks, shady nooks, sylvan retreats, rose plots, rockeries, and shimmering lily pond.... There are sequestered bowers where lovers may sit and tell the tale that is as old as the Garden of Eden and as fresh as the morning dew. ... The overarching trees entangle their merry laughter, and the smooth lake reflects the happy faces of those who feed the greedy



ducks. The soft witchery of leaf and bough, the ever-changing lights on the surface of the water, and the nameless sounds of bird and breeze act as a gentle tonic to the tired brain and jaded nerves.' And so it goes on to describe the sunsets. No wonder we locals are all so relaxed!

Under the management of the Department of Tourism and Health Resorts, the Gardens were developed further. The main gate was shifted to its present position and provided with the double-carriage gate and pedestrian gate which we see today. The natural pond



was reshaped to make it suitable for skating and a water-line was put in to provide for a fountain. Tree plantings were thinned to improve views; on the lake shore more native plants were added; and all structures were painted sage green to make them less conspicuous.

Encroachments and Threats: 1960s onwards

We now come to the era of the Historical Society which was formed in response to a 'development culture' in Queenstown when historic buildings and even the Gardens came under threat.

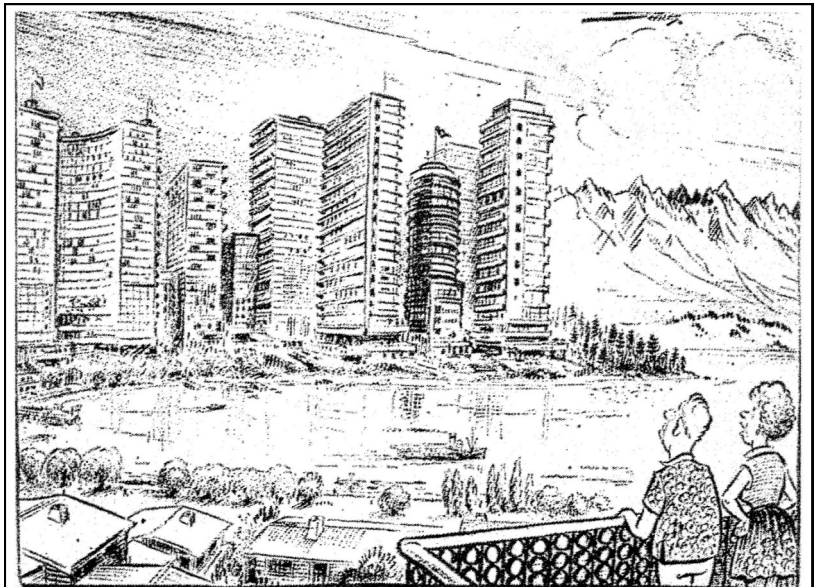
The Ice-skating Rink

An ice rink and a swimming pool were proposed by entrepreneurs as private commercial enterprises, and were supported by the Borough Council. The area where the ice rink now is was subdivided off, and this was done without going through normal processes of the Town and Country Planning Act. So, without any independent scrutiny, public recreation land was to be used for private ventures. Negotiations took place with commercial interests and the Government, and the Council raised a loan to help finance the rink which opened in 1966. But far from being a financial success, it was a liability which needed on-going propping up by the Council. The ice rink company struggled on until 1979 when it was liquidated. The building burned down the following year. A new company built the replacement in the mid-1990s and further upgrading has been done in that area since, including the skateboard park.

More botanically, in the 1960s the formal rose garden was created with 850 rose bushes.

'The Pub in the Park'

In the late 1960s, Sir Harry Wigley of the Mt Cook and Southern Lakes Tourist Company proposed building a high-rise hotel on the reserve between Park Street and Horne Creek, and he approached the Government. The Borough Council with Warren Cooper as Mayor supported the plan, but faced determined opposition from residents. Ailsa Smeaton and Margaret Templeton founded the Guardians of the Park Street Reserve which rapidly gained membership and support across New Zealand. Their objective was of course to retain the reserve as public open space, in keeping with the intentions of the town's first council. Over the next 15 years there was a series of Town and Country Planning Tribunal hearings and court actions. Harry Wigley and partners withdrew in the early 1970s. Then the government Tourist Hotel Corporation took up the idea and tried again for consent to build a hotel on the reserve. The Guardians again sprang into action, eventually taking the matter to the High Court. Despite support for the hotel from Mayor John Davies and the council, the proposal was eventually defeated in 1986.



"Which are the Remarkables — the chain of mountains, or the chain of hotels?"

Cartoon by Sid Scales, *ODT* 10 April 1971

It is clear that those who opposed the hotels were driven by a belief in the **cultural, iconic and environmental significance of the park**. Those champions had to have stamina, and to them we owe the preservation of the Park Street Reserve. In a wider context we can see that the timing of these disputes coincided with such environmental campaigns as Save Manapouri and Save Aramoana, which demonstrated how public opinion was evolving.

After 1983 administration of the Gardens was transferred from the Tourist Department to the Department of Lands and Survey then to the Department of Conservation, until in 1990 control was passed to Queenstown Lakes District Council. A Management Plan, drawn up in 1989, protected the park from large-scale developments, and the Resource Management Act 1991 provided mechanisms for the public consultation.

Since that time other proposals have been put forward about building the swimming pool here or having other commercial activities. We can thank the now-defunct Wakatipu Environmental Society and still-functioning Guardians (Friends of the Gardens) for their vigilance. The 2011 Management Plan spells out how the park may be used. In 2013 it was suggested as a site for a convention centre, but that proposal would have created another furore. A new Management Plan is currently being drawn up, and we will make submissions if necessary when it goes to public consultation.

Conclusion

From the outset, Queenstown people valued this public park, and we are the beneficiaries of their far-sightedness. Over the last 150 years the Gardens has become an essential part of Queenstown's image. It is now over to us to continue to protect our public reserve, and to promote its history.

Main Source: Dr Neil Clayton

In April 2015 Neil was made an Honorary Life Member of the Queenstown and District Historical Society in recognition of his services to the Society of which he was President for four years from 1975, and of his on-going efforts to protect the history of the district.

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Further Reading

For information about the memorials to Haki Te Kura, William Rees and Robert Falcon Scott, see Issue 91 of the *Queenstown Courier* which can be found on our website under 'Courier Index', searching for 'Queenstown Gardens.'

CELEBRITY ENGLISH WRITER VISITED QUEENSTOWN: ANTHONY TROLLOPE 1872

He Came, He Saw, He Commented

By Marion Borrell

The novelist Anthony Trollope was a Bill Bryson of his day, and this caused locals some suspense. As the *Lake Wakatip Mail* put it, ‘Such a



distinguished tourist as Mr Trollope must be looked upon as a good authority, and we shall anxiously look forward to his opinion of the residents and the scenery of this land of lakes and mountains’. Would they be delighted or humiliated?

Trollope was one of the Victorian era’s most famous novelists. Though less famous than Dickens, he was much more prolific, writing 47 novels, and is best known now for his ‘Chronicles of Barsetshire’ series. He was a very experienced traveller as his job for many years was to travel by train around parts of England and Ireland improving the postal systems, and he is credited with the invention of the pillar box. He wrote many of his novels while on trains. Unfortunately, there were no trains here.

He was commissioned by his publisher to visit Australia and New Zealand in response to the increased interest in travel from the public, some of whom might consider visiting or migrating to the colonies on the new faster and more comfortable steamships. This was the audience intended for his travel book. At the age of 56 he set off for the southern colonies.

Trollope and his wife Rose landed in Bluff in the winter of 1872, which proved to be an unusually cold season. He wrote that travelling in New Zealand was ‘uncomfortable’ as their portmanteaus could not come with them overland but were shipped on to the next port. He left Invercargill by coach accompanied by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, ‘with great misgivings as to the weather, but with high hopes.’ The road was ‘fairly good’ for an unsealed country road. After a night at an inn, they reached Kingston and caught a steamer. Rain began in earnest and the temperature plummeted. He later wrote: *We could feel that the scenery around us was fine, that the sides of the lake were precipitous, and the mountain tops sharp and grand, and the water blue; but it soon became impossible to see anything. We huddled down into a little cabin, and endeavoured to console ourselves with the reflection that, though all its beauties were hidden from our sight, we were in truth steaming across the most beautiful of the New Zealand lakes. They who cannot find such consolation from their imagination for external sufferings had better stay at home. At any rate they had better not come to New Zealand in the winter.*(*Otago Daily Times* 19 June 1873)

The next day the visitors, hosted by the Resident Magistrate Richmond Beetham, took a trip up the lake in the steamer *Jane Williams* (later renamed *Ben Lomond*). Trollope reports: *It was a bright clear cold day, with the temperature at freezing point from morning to evening. There were two ladies in the party for whom cloaks and opossum rugs were very necessary. I myself spent a great part of the day within the genial influence of the funnel. But I enjoyed it greatly. I do not know that lake scenery can be finer than that of the upper ten miles of Wakatip – though doubtless it can be much prettier. The mountains for the most part are bare and steep. Here and there only are they wooded down to the water's edge – and so much is the timber in request for*



fuel and building, that what there is of it close to the water will quickly disappear. ... One set of peaks after another comes into view. They are sharp and broken, making the hill-tops look like a vast saw with irregular gaps. Perhaps no shape of mountain-tops is more picturesque than this. ... The mountains themselves, however, do not look to be as big as the Alps. ... But the effect of the sun shining on the line of peaks was equal to anything I had seen elsewhere. The whole district around is, or rather will be in coming days, a country known for its magnificent scenery. (LWM 9 July 1873)

No doubt the residents were gratified by his praise, and encouraged by his prediction that tourism would flourish.

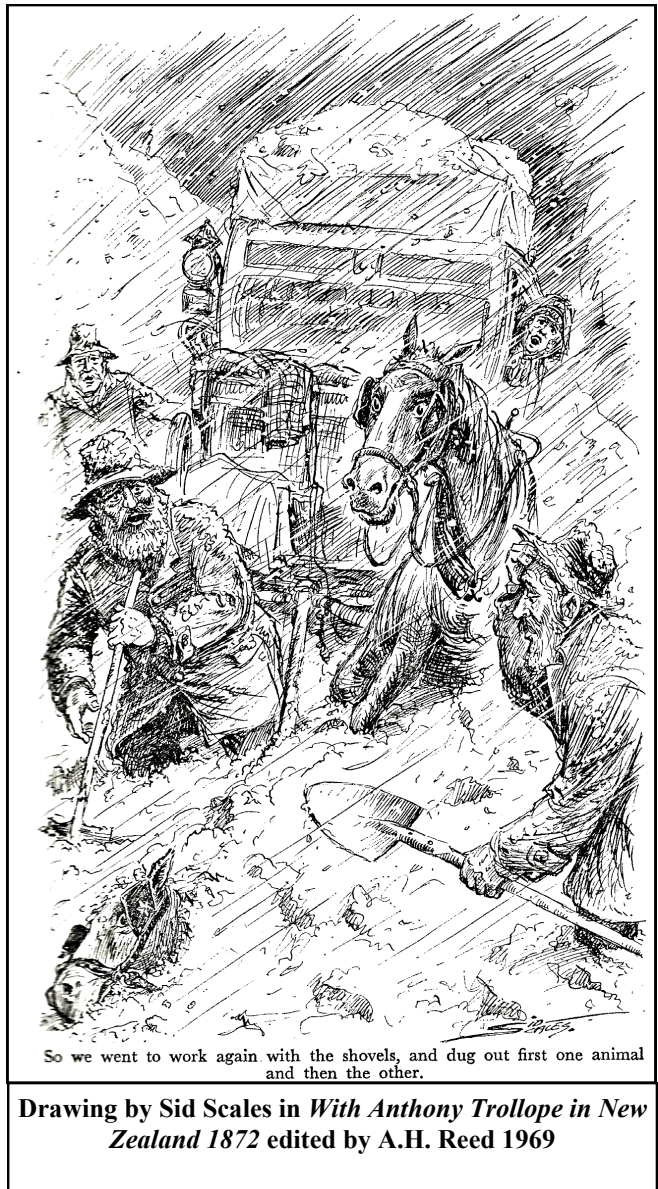
Perhaps not so enticing to tourists from Europe was his description of the town which at that time had about 2000 inhabitants: *It is built close down upon the water, and is surrounded by mountains – on all of which the snow was lying. There are many towns so placed in Switzerland, and on the Italian lakes – which in position this New Zealand mining borough much more closely resembles than anything at home; but the houses, and something in the fashion of the streets, the outside uses and bearings of the place, declare it to be unmistakably English. The great drawback to ... travelling in New Zealand comes from the feeling that after crossing the world and journeying over so many thousand miles, you have not at all succeeded in getting away from England. When you have arrived there you are, as it were, next door to your own house, yet you have a two months barrier between yourself and home. (LWM 9 July 1873)*

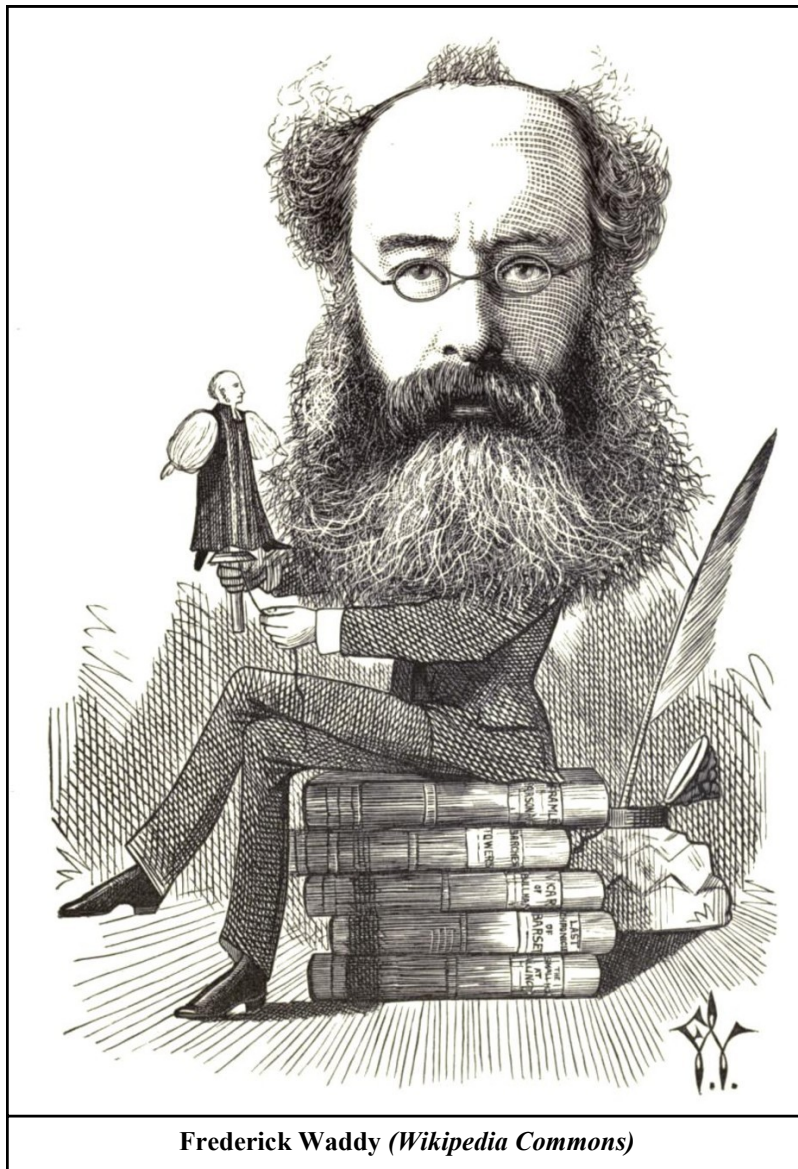
We hope that he was satisfied with his accommodation in Queenstown which was more substantial than some inns he encountered. In his book he provides an anecdote about a corrugated-iron hotel somewhere on the road from Queenstown to Clyde: *Every word uttered in the house can be heard throughout it as though through a shed put up*

without divisions. And yet the owners and frequenters of these iron domiciles seem never to be aware of the fact. As I lay in bed in one of these metal inns on the road, I was constrained to hear the private conversation of my host and hostess who had retired for the night. 'So this is Mr Anthony Trollope,' said the host. The hostess assented, but could gather clearly from her voice that she was thinking more of her back hair than of her visitor. 'Well,' said the host, 'he must be a ___ fool to come travelling in this country in such weather as this.' Perhaps, after all, the host was aware of the peculiarity of his house, and thought it well that I should know his opinion. He could not have spoken any words with which at that moment I should have been more prone to agree. (LWM 25 June 1873)

The remainder of his journey to Dunedin occurred in the most severe blizzard conditions the locals had known. The male passengers had to walk for miles in the snow, and the coach from Lawrence became stuck in a cutting at Waitahuna. 'Shovels were procured, and for two hours we all worked up to our hips in snow.' Trollope remarked that he was 'more at ease with a pen than a shovel'. Later the coach became stuck again. Mrs Trollope, who was a very large lady wearing a crinoline, had to walk down a snowy hillside. Fortunately she was of an imperturbable disposition. Trollope and the coachman, having disconnected the horses, guided the coach down by hand. They reached Dunedin fourteen hours after leaving Lawrence – and found that their luggage had not yet arrived by sea from Invercargill. Oh the trials of travelling!

After visiting Canterbury, Marlborough and Nelson, Wellington, Taranaki and Auckland, Trollope made general observations about New Zealanders. Regarding their literary interests, he was complimentary, indeed, pleasantly impressed. He had expected hardworking colonials to have little time for reading good books, but he found that *in every house in New Zealand he had been in, he not only found some of his own works but many of the works of Thackeray, Dickens, and other authors of eminence in all walks of literature, and he had become convinced that on a population basis the colonies had more warm patrons of literature than even the old country, with all its riches. (LWM 30 October 1872)*





Ah, well, we can't prevent snowstorms, but it seems that in most respects our celebrity visitor came, saw, and approved.

Sources

Lake Wakatip Mail and *Otago Daily Times* accessed via PapersPast
www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz www.nzhistory.govt.nz

A.H. Reed (ed) *With Anthony Trollope in New Zealand 1872*, illustrated by Sid Scales, A.H. and A.W. Reed for the Dunedin Public Library, 1969

PARADISE AND GLENORCHY SENT FORTH A MILLINER - WHY? HOW?

By Hilary E. Hunt

Lindsay Kennett, born in 1928, spent his first two years of life on Rees Valley Station, which at that time couldn't have been bleaker. Lindsay's father Thomas and his two brothers had taken over the lease of the station hoping to become sheep farmers, but their timing was wrong, as the Depression spread its tentacles of poverty as far as New Zealand. The brothers just couldn't make a go of the station and when the Scott family returned and wished to take back the lease, the Kennett brothers were pleased to let it go and find new jobs. Thomas became a scheelite miner, his second brother went to become the chief rabbit control officer for Central Otago, and the eldest brother went to farm near Five Rivers.



Back view of the cottage at Paradise where he lived from 1930-33

(Lakes District Museum)

Lindsay's family then moved to Paradise and lived in a tiny cottage with barely basic amenities, yet he was a contented child, and following the lead of his mother and older brother Lawrence, they lived day by day quite happily. Father spent his week at the mine and rode home on a pony each weekend. He was always sure of a warm welcome, being much missed during the week.

Lindsay went to school with Lawrence, not because he was old enough (he was just three) but because he would have been so lonely without him. The school was just a hut with nothing resembling a school about it, and the teacher, Miss Heffernan who was unqualified to teach, was a good-hearted girl who thought the children, only three or four of them, should start something resembling lessons. Lindsay remembers sitting on the floor and not particularly enjoying this thing called school.

In 1933 a small house became available in Glenorchy and the family moved there for the next seven years. During the Depression the compulsory starting age for school was six years, but Lindsay was enrolled anyway. The school he now went to was larger but still not very hospitable and certainly not equipped in any way like a modern school. The teachers all came from Dunedin and stayed only a year although some seemed to enjoy their year more than others.

All of the teachers had their own quirks and obsessions. One teacher arrived one day wearing a blue satin fishtail evening dress. This is a figure-hugging style and the fabric alone was unsuitable for the old school room, let alone the style. Lindsay remembers she slung a jacket over her shoulders and told the children her other dresses were in the wash. This was a fashion statement Lindsay never forgot because even as a seven-year-old he knew this wasn't quite right; he just thought she wanted to wear the dress to show off. As we wrote the book in 2016, I asked Lindsay to sketch the dress as he remembered it, so the sketch was completed then.



Another teacher had a wind-up gramophone and very few records, but she had one of brass band marching music. She played this regularly, drilling the children to march smartly. Actually this was appreciated by the class in winter as it warmed their bodies up before the wood stove added a little heat to the room. Most of the children walked to school in their hobnailed boots, some clutching hot water bottles under their coats to help in the bitterest weather.

In warmer weather picnics were one of Lindsay's favourite events and it probably was one of those community activities which everyone entered into with great enthusiasm. The mothers made every effort to produce their best baking and each lady seemed to have their specialities even though they were cooking on wood stoves with fluctuating

temperatures. The new school year in February always began with the school picnic to which all the children and parents were invited. Buses and cars brought people from outlying stations and children with governesses who lived far out in the back country. Mr Haines who owned Camp Hill kindly opened his garden for the sports and picnic. The grounds were large and very well treed, so an ideal spot. The food for the picnic was set up under the shady trees near to his house, and he supervised the kettles boiling water for tea.



Camp Hill Picnic 1930.

Lakes District Museum EP3859 f

Races were organised and everyone took part including the parents. The ladies raced and wearing their hats. Judging by the pictures, the ladies loved the races, probably a moment of freedom from daily chores. The social aspects of the whole day must have been so valuable for everyone. Lindsay remembers those events with great clarity and affection, carrying his love of picnics to the end of his life.

Lindsay felt his out-of-school activities were far superior to school time, and he played truant whenever he could to follow his free spirit and to avoid the subjects he didn't enjoy. He was certainly not a weakling wanting to avoid the rugged terrain; he hiked and scrambled all the time up slopes and tracks which would be rejected by many youngsters today. He developed a love of the scenery, its shapes and moods, its colours and its shading,



Lindsay and Lawrence wading in Diamond Lake, 1937

all facets of the area which he later wove into his paintings such as the one shown on the cover of this magazine.

Lake Wakatipu was one whole entity which was loved and feared. Great for messing about in, frightening when in a boat tossed about in a storm, but useful as the connecting passage between farm stations, Glenorchy and Queenstown. Parents told their children of the catastrophes which had happened on the lake, hoping to instil a sense of respect for the water, but there were always more accidents and deaths reported. Lindsay told stories of his own trips on the *Earnslaw* or *Ben Lomond* steamers. The children always hoped the *Earnslaw*, the larger of the two boats, would arrive when they were taking a trip, but the boats were sent according to how many passengers and how much freight would be loaded. When sheep were being carried it was usually the *Earnslaw*, with the sheep on the top deck, and anyone who could put up with the smell and animal noise could ride free on the lower decks. Lindsay's mum sent the boys on these free rides if it was school holidays and they were going to stay with relatives outside Queenstown. However Lindsay also told of a frightening ride on the *Ben Lomond* when a wild storm blew up.

Glenorchy was isolated so the small town developed its own personalities and its focus points. Mr Macfarlane the Postmaster had one of the first telephones so he was very important. His wife looked after Sunday School and also gave cookery lessons to the children and pressed recipes on them to take home. The hotel was the gathering place for all, and often where visitors stayed and the school teacher lived. The visiting clergy, salespeople and tourists congregated or stayed there.

When radio came to Glenorchy the sets were battery-operated, so they were sparingly used to preserve power. The impact this had on Glenorchy residents was huge: the outside world invaded their privacy, and they listened in awe to news casts and children's programmes alike with rapt attention.

Dances, school concerts, and celebrations all took place in the garage which was transformed with decorations made by everyone. There was nothing missing in Glenorchy which local ingenuity couldn't fix.

Fashion was important to the women, who read the newspapers and magazines which made their way into the community. Also visitors to town arrived wearing their best clothes, so there was the daily example of what others were wearing in the outside world. Lindsay would have had only school clothes, but he was fascinated watching visitors as they walked down the gang-plank from the steamers, and drew what he saw. Lindsay knew he just wanted to draw, and he knew this was a bit odd in a little boy, but he had determined this was what he wanted and nothing was going to stop him, so this was where it all began.

As a child, the life Lindsay had was all he knew, so 'normal' to him was living in a rough and wild country with few creature comforts. He didn't complain, because the

other children lived in the same way and his family life was loving and supportive. He had an uncomplaining character which he maintained all his life.

The family moved to Dunedin in 1940 so that Lawrence could attend high school. This was another turning point for Lindsay who eventually attended Art School. There his talents were recognised and developed, leading him to discover fashion illustrations, then window-dressing, and he moved to Wellington. He began making hats, self-taught but motivated by his artistic talents and desire to succeed. His move to Auckland saw the beginnings of his successful millinery business, his career spanning 40 years, and a very varied and productive life.

He returned to Dunedin for his retirement which lasted for 26 years and saw the beginning of yet another career. Lindsay returned to his love of watercolour paintings and more fashion illustrations. He was much in demand as a speaker not only about hats and his career but also about his early life.

The New Zealand Government asked Lindsay to develop a workshop for women in Niue who made their living weaving straw hats. The object of the workshop was to change the hat designs into modern day fashionable styles, not just plain sunhats. This idea appealed to Lindsay so he accepted this challenge and enjoyed it very much.

Lindsay visited the Arrowtown and Glenorchy areas as often as he could, as he felt very at home there. During one visit he met David Clarke from the Lakes District Museum. They enjoyed each other's company and that was the start of the idea to mount an exhibition of Lindsay's work at the museum. 'A Life in Art and Fashion' was opened in 2011 and stayed by popular demand for three months. The exhibition included examples of each aspect of Lindsay's life. Lindsay donated two of his pillbox style hats, one to be raffled at the opening and one to be raffled over the duration of the exhibition. Jocelyn Robertson (the Historical Society's secretary) was one of the lucky winners and is seen with Lindsay placing the hat on her head for the first time. The hat suited her so well.

Lindsay had joined the Otago Arts Society and exhibited some of his water-colours with them, and he continued painting and drawing until the end of his life. Often he painted the landscapes he had always admired around the Glenorchy district, such as the one which graces our cover. He also loved to paint flowers particularly roses.



Paintings, fashion illustrations which were black and white pen and ink drawings, sometimes with a colour wash, plus all his remaining hats are Lindsay's legacy to all of us.

Lindsay never stopped being a local boy; he identified himself with Paradise, Glenorchy and Dunedin all his life.

Lindsay is warmly remembered in his biography, *A Passion for Fashion - The life of Lindsay Kennett master milliner*, as told to and written by Hilary E. Hunt.



Lindsay photographed by Carlos Biggemann in 2014



For sale at the Lakes District Museum
(\$60.00)

For mail-orders, email:
info@museumqueenstown.com
or phone 03 4421824

HISTORICAL CUTTINGS

The Missing Tree On Buckingham Street

By Rita L. Teele, Anne Maguire and David Clarke

The avenue of trees on lower Buckingham Street is beloved by townies and tourists. It is an iconic green colonnade that is anchored by the Mary Cotter tree on the corner of Buckingham and Wiltshire Streets. But one of the original trees is remembered only by its offspring. This is the story of that missing tree.

Alexander Innes began planting trees in Arrowtown in 1867. He was a Scot who had passed through Victoria, Australia, before coming to New Zealand in 1863. Employed by Bendix Hallenstein as a salesman in Queenstown, Innes continued to work for him when he moved to Arrowtown. Land in Arrowtown was available, and Alexander Innes acquired all the sections on Block XII, (Merioneth Street to Camp Lane) excluding section 5. This section was owned by the Jopp family, whose stone house still remains on the corner section at the intersection of Merioneth and Hertford Street.

Innes quit his job as salesman and poured all his efforts into creating an orchard on his land. Having exhausted his savings, it seems that being elected to represent the district in the Provincial Council was his financial salvation. He later became Mayor of Arrowtown. Not only did he contribute trees to the town that we assume came from his property, he created the Arrowtown Town Seal before his death in 1882. (*Lake Wakatip Mail*, 15 December 1882)

The following is from *Lake County Press*, 29th October 1891:

THE TREES OF ARROWTOWN TO THE EDITOR

Sir, - The beauties of tree-planting are exemplified, in the hitherto treeless region of our Borough of Arrowtown. Many years ago some 60 trees were planted on either side of Buckingham Street, from the corner near the Post Office to the end of the Police-camp. These trees consist chiefly of sycamore, elm and ash. The trees on the southern side were the gift of the late Alexander Innes, Esq., who was mayor of the town as well as a member of the old Provincial Council of Otago. The trees form a perfect avenue for 300 yards and are, without exception, the most beautiful row in Otago. They are admired by all tourists. One in particular (a Scotch mountain ash, commonly called the "red rowan") is a perfect beauty, and is just opposite the Corporation offices. Many tourists and travellers have obtained berries from its branches and have raised young trees therefrom. It is one of the most symmetrical trees in the street, and is generally admired. I think that if the rest of the streets were planted like this street, it would add great beauty to the town.

- I am etc.,

PLANT A TREE

The rowan tree is also mentioned in the *Otago Witness*, 2nd March 1893: 'Conspicuous amongst the trees is a genuine rowan tree, which attracts universal notice. The trees were the gift of the late Mr Alexander Innes, at one time M.P.C. [Member of the Provincial Council] for the district, and are likely to perpetuate his memory for an indefinite time. While on the subject a word of praise is due to our portion of young colonials for leaving the trees unmolested....'

But why was a single rowan tree included with the ash, elm and sycamore trees that line Buckingham Street? We believe that Alexander Innes, a Scot by birth, added a rowan tree as a salute to his homeland. The rowan, *Sorbus aucuparia* is a sacred and beloved tree in Scottish folk tradition. Although it is not in the ash family, it is frequently called 'mountain ash', especially in Arrowtown where it thrives amid the mountains.

According to Wikipedia, *Sorbus aucuparia* is composed of the Latin words *sorbus* for 'service tree' and *aucuparia*, which derives from the words *avis* for "bird" and *capere* for 'catching' and describes the use of the fruit of *S. aucuparia* as bait for fowling.

Frequent entries in old South Island newspapers mention musical performances of Lady Nairne's 'O'Rowan Tree' that were applauded by teary-eyed audiences. The Scottish poet, John G. Smith, who had emigrated to New Zealand, frequently included the rowan in his poetry that harkened back to the 'Auld Countrie'. The following is an excerpt from one of Smith's poems that were published in *The Southland Times*.

SONG – THE AULD COUNTRIE

By JOHN G. SMITH

How's a' the folk at hame, i' the Auld Countrie?
 Are their leal hearts aye the same, i' the Auld Countrie?
 Do the flowers as sweetly blaw
 Round ilka cot an' ha',
 As when I left them a', i' the Auld Countrie?

Is my hame the hame o' yore, i' the Auld Countrie,
 'Mang the green wuds o' Lintore, i' the Auld Countrie?
 Are the rowan trees aye there,
 Wi' their blossoms white an' fair,
 An' their berries rich as' rare, i' the Auld Countrie?

Rowan trees were available for purchase from Tokomairiro (now Milton) in 1866 as noted in an advertisement from the *Bruce Herald*:

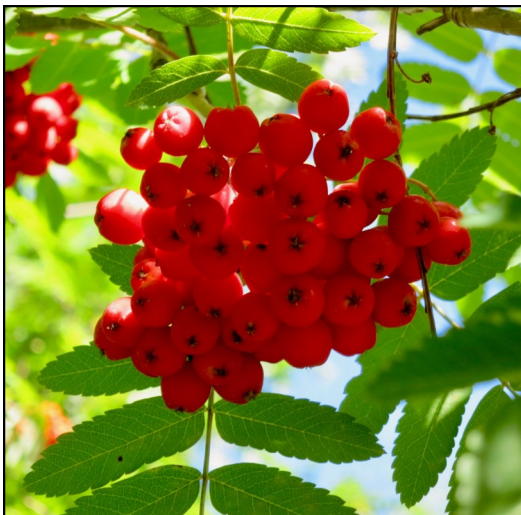
<p>50,000 THORN SETS, 17s 6d per 1000 10,000 Forest Trees—Ash, elm, beech, sycamore, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, rowan trees, &c. 2,000 Firs (Scotch) 500 Filbert nut trees 2,000 Ornamental and flowering shrubs 3,000 Fruit trees, apples, pears, plums, cherries, &c. Gooseberry and currant bushes, rhubarb roots 100 Varieties of bulbs—Tulips, cro- cus, &c. Gardening and Agricultural Seeds. The above are all of the best quality, and at lowest prices. H. WHITE, Nursery and Seedsman, Tokomairiro.</p>
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The rowan tree has mythic roots. In ancient stories, Hebe, goddess of youth, lost her magic chalice of ambrosia to demons. The gods sent an eagle to retrieve the cup, but in the altercation, drops of blood with eagle feathers fell to earth. The feathers became the rowan leaves, and the blood, the berries.

In Norse mythology, the first woman came from a rowan tree.

The berries of vibrant red are marked by a pentagram at their base. The colour red and a five-sided shape are a double dose of symbolic protection.

In Scotland, a rowan was often planted near a gate or front door to ward off witches. In the Highlands, folks were warned against removing or damaging a rowan tree.



What befell Luke Preston in Arrowtown in 1905 was an eerie reminder of the magical properties of the rowan tree. Here is F.W.G. Miller's account from *Golden Days of Lake County*:

‘In front of the council chamber was a much admired rowan tree but in April 1905 there came a terrific gust of wind and the rowan was split in two with a dreadful crack. Mr. L.H. Preston, the town clerk and a former mayor, was first out of doors when he heard the crack and was in time to see the tree split. Sara Cotter (Mrs. McBride, of Queenstown) and Mr. W. Selby, the tailor, next viewed it. Selby came over to Mrs. Cotter's after it was all over and said: “I do feel sad over this accident. If it had happened in England, the townsfolk would be looking for a death in twenty-four hours.”

Next afternoon Preston was up the Crown Terrace with his two little girls, Lucy and Gwen in a buggy, and going down the incline to Alf. Millar's farm the britchin broke, the horse bolted and Preston was killed. There was no brake on the buggy and no way of pulling up the horse. The girls were uninjured. Their mother was in Gore at the time and kindly neighbours looked after the children until Mrs. Preston returned the next day.’ (The details of the accident were published in the *Otago Daily Times*, 2nd May, 1905.)

We know that the rowan tree was not completely destroyed as there was an account in *Lake County Press*, 26 January, 1911, as follows:

‘The trees in Lower Buckingham street are looking their best just now, the rowan opposite the Council Chambers, being particularly attractive-so much so indeed that a number of tourists the other day could not content themselves with admiring it. They pulled several branches off. We warn visitors against this practice; there is a by-law prohibiting it.’

What we don't know is whether the two photographs below, (courtesy of Lakes District Museum), that show a partially damaged tree (undated) and then a tree stump in front of Council Chambers (circa 1950s) relate to the original rowan tree. We would like to think that is true but the newspaper articles, cited above, suggest that the rowan tree might have been on the *opposite* side of the street where, as of this writing, there is also a gap. Miller's account of the tree being ‘in front of the council chamber’ is non-specific as to the side of the street.



Whatever the exact location, descendants of Alexander Innis's early gift are likely to be some of the rowans that contribute to autumn colour in the town and on the hillsides. We are left wondering what happened to the person who had the task of felling the original rowan tree on Buckingham Street.....

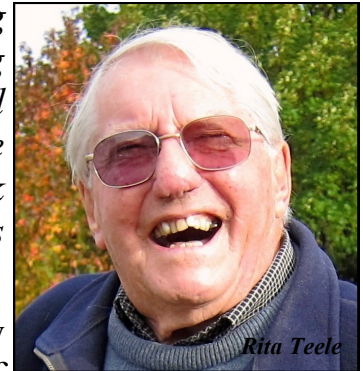


KAWARAU FALLS DAM AND BRIDGE

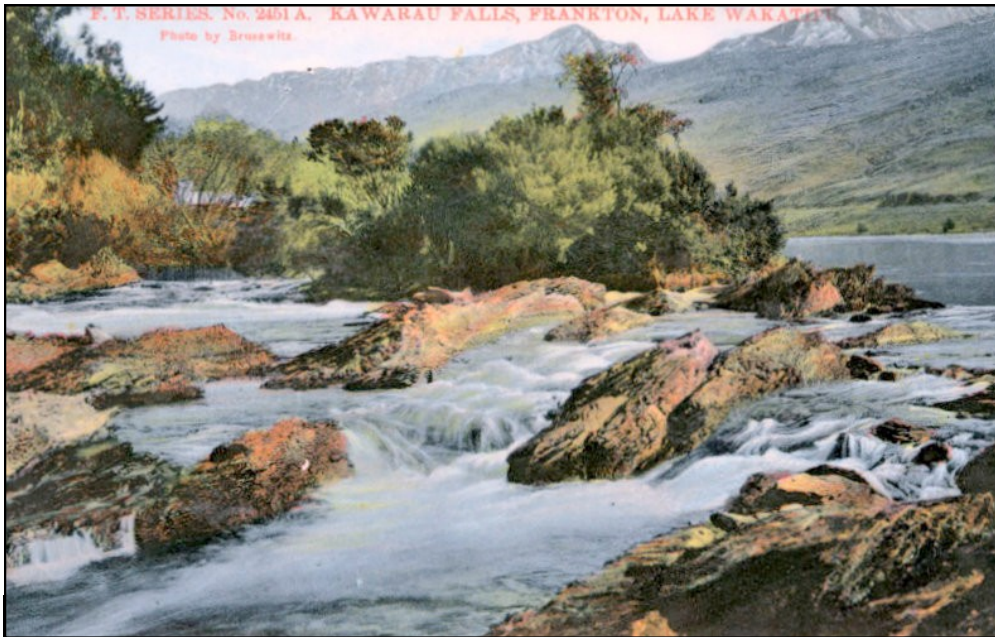
By Raymond J Clarkson

First published in Issue 56, 1996.

Ray was president of the Society from 1992-1995, and during 20 years on the committee had many roles including organising trips, editing the Courier and initiating the calendars. He died late in 2016. In grateful memory of his huge contribution, we republish this slightly edited article from. It was the text of a talk Ray gave during a field trip he organised to five historic bridges in the Wakatipu area.



The dam at Kawarau Falls is situated where the single narrow outlet of Lake Wakatipu corresponds with a shallow depth of water and easy access to the eastern slopes of the lake with its more gradual slopes. The Falls, which registered an eight-foot drop at the time the bridge was proposed, were at the third and most recent outlet of the Lake. They had developed either as a result of a weakness in the containing rock or because of earthquake action.



Kawarau Falls, hand-tinted postcard by Henry Brusewitz Lakes District Museum

Human habitation came with a small Maori settlement, then the establishment of William G. Rees's second homestead when he shifted his farming base from Queenstown. The settlement of Frankton was established with a church, the Lakes District Hospital, and the Brunswick Flour Mill.

It was the incredible speed of mining operations which threw emphasis on the outlet of Lake Wakatipu. The rivers of Central Otago had been immensely rich in gold deposits, yet only their beaches and edges had been worked. What riches must lie in the beds as well! Gold discoveries breed enthusiasm, optimism and incredible flights of imagination.

In 1867 when the Kawarau River was very low, rich un-worked gold deposits were exposed. Schemes were suggested for lowering the river even further. Into this scene came Julius Vogel and the genesis of the dam. Vogel was editor of the *Otago Witness* and the *Otago Daily Times*, and the Parliamentarian responsible for the ‘think big’ railway ideas of the 1870s. He was a persuasive figure who had considerable influence when his novel *Anno Domini 2,000*, containing the remedy for NZ’s economic troubles — the damming of the Kawarau River — was published in 1889. It seemed a logical solution. This idea was not beyond comprehension to the gold-seekers, exposed as they had been for many years to coffer dams, tunnels, dredges, races and sluicing schemes always promising much and down-playing the chances of failure.

In 1911 Mr Daniel McBride, the run-holder of Kawarau Falls Station whose homestead was on the south side of the lake outlet, offered to contribute a considerable sum towards the construction of a bridge at the Falls. However, the Lake County Council said that the estimate of £3,200 was too high and they would not contribute, so the idea lapsed. But by 1922, despite greatly increased costs, the Council reconsidered and decided to go ahead with the scheme.

This action may have been the catalyst for the next action. In 1923 E.J. Iles, an engineer well known in Central Otago and gold-mining circles who had already in 1920 suggested damming the Kawarau River, combined with a group of businessmen to propound a scheme to carry this out. Their successful lobbying resulted in widespread interest in a dam and as a result the Public Works Department stopped work on the bridge they had begun.

It is very interesting to read the ‘Kawarau Gold’ booklet (45 pages, well illustrated) published by the Kawarau Gold Mining Company, and intended to supply information to potential investors. This most persuasive, enthusiastic, and imaginative document puts forward the Company’s project in glowing terms. All obstacles are easily countered, and Mr Iles’s plan, simplicity in itself, would result in incredible riches being available to the 84 claim-holders and shareholders, and would also benefit the nation. The Company’s proposals were further strengthened by being endorsed by the Government engineers. Scepticism vanished before the mass of evidence in support of the scheme and the research papers of Professor Park of Otago University whose survey in 1907 was frequently quoted. As far as future developments were concerned, the sky seemed to be the limit. A dam was also to be built on the Shotover River, and the crowning achievement was to be the damming of Lakes Wanaka and Hawea, thus drying up the Clutha River.

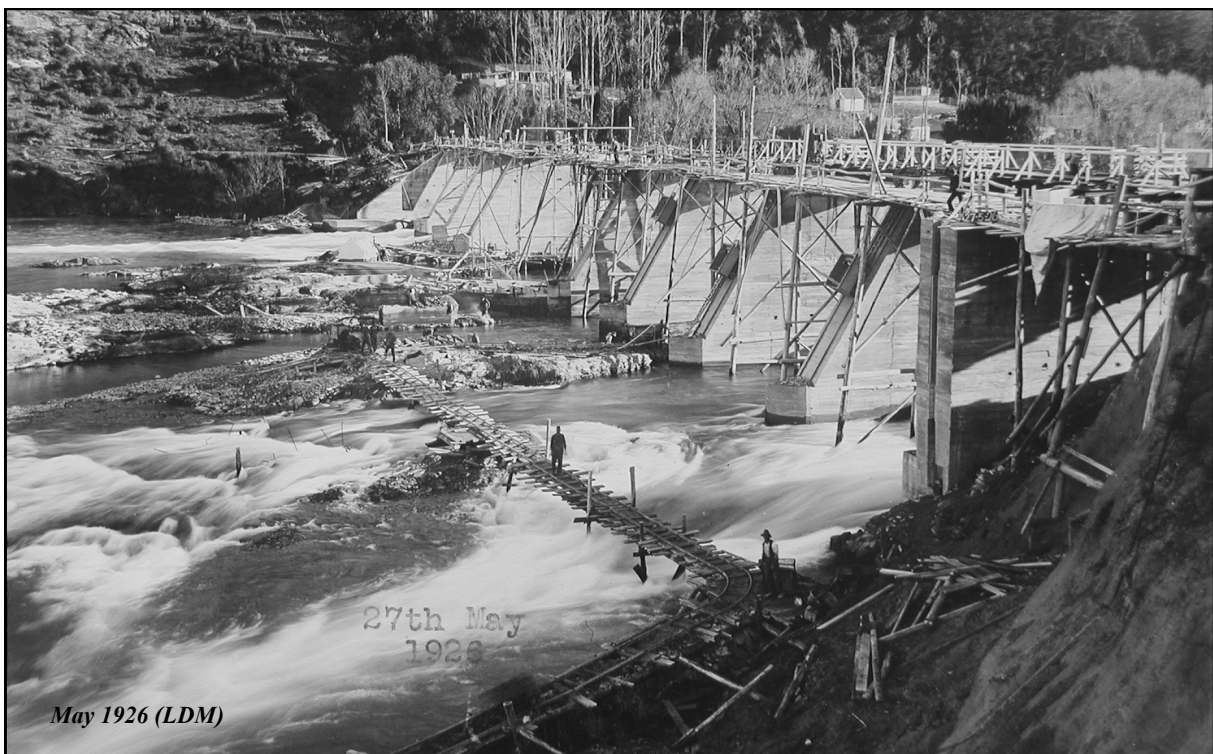
After a year of hearings, submissions and arguments, and the objections from local bodies downstream, in January 1924 the licence for the dam incorporating a bridge was granted to the Kawarau Gold Mining Company. So much for Daniel McBride’s modest proposal for a bridge. Thus the ideas of a bridge and a dam serving different purposes had become one. The Public works Department and the Lake County Council were relieved of any financial obligation. No wonder they looked favourably on the venture. So did the Dunedin Stock Exchange.

The bridge was to be 480 feet long by 12 feet wide and 35 feet above the water. It was to be supported on steel girders and eleven concrete piles.



On 22 November 1924 G.J. Anderson, Minister of Mines, fired the first shot before a large crowd. All the speeches reflected the high regard in which the Company were held and great financial optimism. The recently started bridge piers were demolished and work began on the estimated three-month £30,000 project.

The work-force of 100-200, many of whom camped on the Frankton Racecourse and in the grandstand, augmented the Queenstown economy and the fortnightly payday was a particularly riotous time in the town. However, the over-runs were almost of Clyde Dam proportions. Engineer Iles left the project, which was not completed until August 1926 and cost £100,000. This blowout was disastrous to the Company's future plans.





Opening Day crowds 1926

LDM EL2852

In addition, the dam simply did not work as a gold-mining venture. When the gates were lowered, the water level went down only slightly due to back-flow from the Shotover River, and little gold was won. The only winners were any original investors who had been wise enough to sell their shares when demand was high, and the Government which acquired a free bridge.

And so was constructed one of the strongest road bridges in the country. For ten years it led practically nowhere other than to Mr D.J. Jardine's Kawarau Falls Station. Controversy over the construction of the road from Kingston raged between the Queenstown Borough Council, Lake County Council, Southland Progress League and the Government. The problem arose over construction methods for the road. Because of depression times the aim was to employ the maximum number of workers and the minimum of machinery. It was not until the road opened in 1936 that the potential of the bridge could be realised.

With the demise of the Kawarau Gold Mining Company, the dam became the property of the Kawarau Dam Board in Wellington. Today [1995] Transit New Zealand controls the road over the bridge and the Electricity Division of the Ministry of Energy controls the bridge and the dam.

Sources

Kawarau Gold Mining Company, *Kawarau Gold*

Knudson D A, *The Story of Wakatipu*, Whitcombe & Tombs, 1968

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

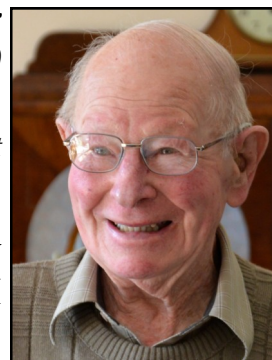
Lakes District Museum Archives

ARROWTOWN REMEMBERED

Jack Reid Reminiscenced in 2006

First published in Issue 77, 2006

Jack was a former Arrowtown Mayor and descendant of a pioneer family. With his acute memory of Arrowtown from about 1930 onwards, he was a generous resource for historians. He died late in 2016 aged 95. We republish this edited article as an acknowledgement of Jack and his support of the Historical Society.



Jack in 2015
(Rita Teele)

I was born in 1921, and my memory has recorded only a few occasions or events until perhaps 1927 or 1928. From that time on I can recall most of what went on in the district, from a child's perspective, especially those events and matters that affected us and our friends.

Gold

Much earlier in the district's history, gold-mining had largely given way to farming, though a few men had continued with their search for gold, and gold was still a fairly common topic of conversation amongst my parents and the friends. Why did the rich finds in the Arrow peter out at Big Beach [below the town], and where had the river with its heavy gold deposits flowed after reaching there? Downstream, the gold recovered was only a fraction of what was found at Big Beach and upstream. There seems no logical answer. Possible theories were discussed, but no convincing answers emerged.

My brother-in-law sank three shafts in our property, directly in line with the river's flow, but without success. I think all he proved was that the river hadn't flowed through our place, for he got no gold and there were no river wash-stones. That was during the Depression years of the '30s when a few ounces of gold would have been most welcome.

Family and Farm

My grandparents had immigrated to New Zealand from the Orkney Islands in 1864 to join those early gold-miners, and though I don't think they found riches, they must have had some little success, for they were eventually able to buy some land of their own and commence small-scale farming. Grandfather was listed as a dairyman originally, but he was able to acquire adjacent land as it became available until he achieved his goal of owning his own farm. That outcome would



Reidhaven in 2012 with dairy on the right
(EL7235 Lakes District Museum)

have been highly unlikely had the family remained in the Orkney Islands. The property was just out of Arrowtown, and was my father's farm as I first remember it.

Like most of the neighbouring farms, it was not a large property, and like them also horses were the source of power for most farming operations.

There were very few tractors around in those days. Mr Jack Butel of Willowbank had one of them and he used to cut firewood for folks on his portable saw-bench. He also had a chaff-cutter and was frequently in demand for that purpose. He was a returned soldier from World War One and was a victim of poisonous gas, from which he suffered for the rest of his life. Sadly, he was not the only victim among those who returned from that conflict, but he was the worst affected that I knew. He was a clever, inventive man too, and was often called on for his largely self-taught skills.

Most of the farms that I remember were mixed farms. Ours was typical, I suppose. We kept five or six cows which were hand-milked, although I think nine or ten had been the herd a few years earlier. We also had about 200 sheep. Some of our milk went to the Co-op Dairy [in Speargrass Flat Road] and the rest was sold from our licensed dairy across from our back door. Cream, eggs and home-made butter were also sold from our dairy which retained its licence until after W.W.2.

Cropping



Stack-building

(EL4150)

Crops were usually the main activity of the district's farmers. Chiefly barley, oats and some wheat. Fine grass seed such as mother-seed white clover, timothy, ryegrass and fescue were also grown. Barley was the main crop, grown under contract for Speights Breweries in Dunedin.

I sometimes went to Dunedin with my father when he took samples of grain from the different paddocks to Speights' office. Mr Adams, the buyer, would open the little sample bags one by one, check for seed brightness and colour, and try each one in his little sieves. Even as a kid I noted that the top price he offered (five shillings a bushel) always seemed to be for a line with the smallest number of bags in it, and the sieve always seemed to let through a few smaller grains (seconds). The largest lot of bags seemed to have some discoloured grain, and he would drop the price to 4/6 a bushel. The farmers had little choice but to accept whatever the buyer offered, as I was told that Speights could import any shortfall they needed from Australia at an even lower price.

Speights was very particular about how the grain was harvested also. The crop had to be cut by the reaper-and-binder at exactly the right time to ensure its best condition, and the sheaves stoked, before being stacked for a minimum of six weeks. Harvest was a very busy and labour-intensive time. My father was quite expert at estimating the number and sizes of the stacks of sheaves required to contain the amount of crop in each paddock. He built the stacks, either round or oblong, after stepping out the size he estimated would hold that paddock's crop, and he very seldom got his stack sizes wrong. With luck the last dray-load of sheaves would finish up as a miniature stack beside the perfectly symmetrical main stack or stacks. The district looked really special with the stacks of grain, mainly barley, dotted over the countryside. Stack-building was an art form.

Birds and Bird-Nesting

Small birds were always a problem in grain-growing areas, being very fond of grain. The Lake County Council paid 3 pence a dozen for birds eggs, (and for the heads of small birds), and bird-nesting was one of the sources of schoolchildren's pocket money. Most kids were fairly expert at tree-climbing, and at robbing birds' nests of eggs or heads or both, which they then sold to our school's head-teacher, Mrs Rose Douglas, who broke and buried them in the school's gardens.

In the late afternoons huge flocks of starlings gathered at Butels' farm trees and made a tremendous chattering noise for about half an hour before sundown, after which they flew over to the sycamore plantation above our racecourse paddock (now known as Butel Park) for the night. I remember seeing a hawk attacking the rear of that great echelon of starlings, and the leaders turned and with them the whole echelon attacked the hawk. The last I saw of it they had the hawk nearly at ground level along Malaghan Road, before returning to roost in the sycamore trees as usual.

Roads and Transport



Arrowtown-Queenstown Road July 1934 (EL6484 LDM)

The district's roads at that time were always very dry in summer, and the few cars that used them were followed by clouds of dust. Tour buses were more of a rarity, perhaps one a day, but when one came along it was customary for everyone to wave. The harvesters in the paddocks, usually stripped to the waist, always returned the waves of the passengers and vice versa. Cars and buses passing on the road used to frighten the sheep which ran to the other end of the paddock. Horses too were alarmed by the unfamiliar noise, and it was common practice for the driver or someone else to get out of the dray or other vehicle and stand at their heads to reassure them when a car came past.

In winter the roads were very different. After a frosty night they were just about as hard as concrete – very heavily rutted concrete. The steel tyres of farm dray, buggies and carts cut deep ruts in the road which froze at night and could prove a trap for bicycles etc caught in them. Once the frost had thawed, probably late morning or afternoon, the roads just became a soggy mess. That process kept on repeating, and was sometimes further affected by falls of snow. The gravel used to build them up was either dug from gravel pits or was river gravel, and it was soft schist stuff which was soon ground into dust.

Rabbits and Hawthorn

Rabbits have long been a pest and the bane of many a farmer's life. Often when a farmer was at his busiest he would receive a demand from the rabbit inspector saying that his rabbit population was too high, and immediate action was to be taken to rectify the situation – or else! That was before the days of Rabbit Boards, of course. I was surprised at the number of men who gave their occupation as 'Rabbiter' in the Council's rating records during the Depression of the '30s.

Another unwelcome demand for action came from the Post & Telegraph Department requesting immediate action to cut back hawthorn hedges which were interfering with telephone or telegraph lines. Hawthorn hedges enclosed most of the paddocks on our farm and on those of our neighbours, and the high hedges were probably the bane of Mr Donald Gray's life as his job was to keep all the lines in working order.

Bread and Meat Deliveries

Mr George Romans was the butcher here for many years. His son Reg helped in the shop and he employed bakers to make the bread. Wattie Jones used to deliver orders on horseback round the town. Wattie was probably the tallest man in the district. He was 6ft 8inches. When he stood in our doorway he could rub his head on the frame above. He carried his wares in a very large basket which he steadied on the pommel of his saddle. On reaching our gate he used to call 'YIP' in a loud voice, and someone would go out, collect the bread and/or meat and pay for it. I don't expect to see that kind of delivery from local trades-people again.

Another unforgettable sound constantly heard was Mr John Jenkins' hammer on the anvil as he shod the district's many horses. The two quick tap-tap sounds at the end of the anvil work each time must have been his trademark.

Schools and Music Lessons

On leaving the Convent School, in 1929, I think, for the Public School, I did not go to the stone school [in Anglesea Street] first as it was being upgraded at that time. A new heating system was being installed, ventilators were fitted, and other desirable improvements done. School activities had been transferred to the Parish Hall in the

former Wesleyan Church of 1904 [on the corner of Berkshire and Wiltshire Streets, recently restored].



I was then in Standard 2 and my teacher there was Miss McLees. On my two music lesson days each week at the Convent, I was strapped for being late for school. Sister Fehin was paid to teach me until 9am, which she faithfully did. No matter how fast I ran to the Parish Hall, I could not arrive there in time for classes. I complained to Mum about this, and I was excused having to go to music lessons after that. I think that may have been the end of my future great musical career. Sometimes I wonder how talented I might have become. Sometimes.

Now in 2006, when I turn back the clock nearly 80 years to the 1930s, I am struck by the tremendous changes that have taken place. Arrowtown is continuing to grow, and space is already appearing to be a restrictive factor for future expansion.



Buckingham Street in 2014

FIRST ELECTIONS IN QUEENSTOWN AND ARROWTOWN A TALE OF TWO TOWNS

By Marion Borrell

First published in 2016 as our blog on www.queenstown.com.

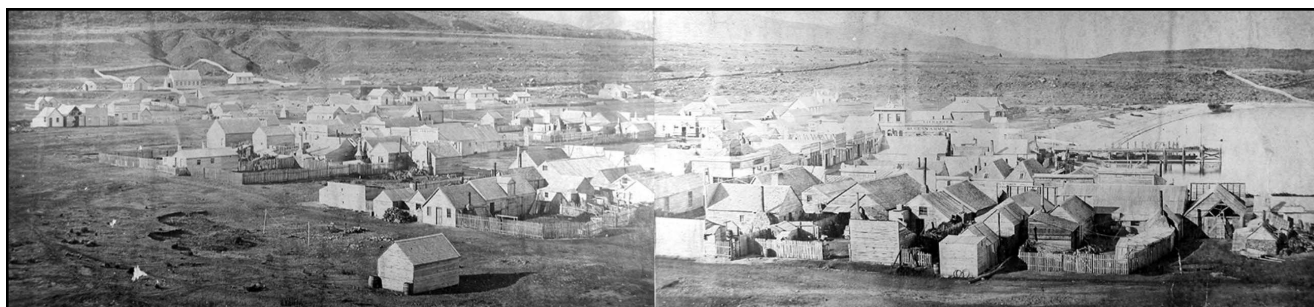
All photos are courtesy of the Lakes District Museum.

The gold rush in 1862 created new settlements where the action was. Queenstown clustered at the bay where boats from Kingston landed. Arrowtown's shanty town was close to the river and the gold.

After several years the inhabitants petitioned the Otago Provincial Council to create boroughs, Queenstown in 1866 and Arrowtown in 1874. This meant that they could run their own affairs through mayors and borough councils. The first elections were major events which created strangely different situations.

Only men who owned land could vote. That was tough luck for the large proportion of the male population who were gold-miners or farm labourers not landowners. Women who owned land in their own names could not vote until 1879.

Courteous in the Queen's Town, 1866

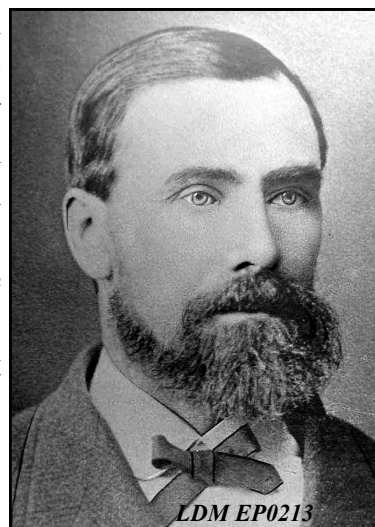


Queenstown about 1867

LDM EL0092

The process for nomination for mayor was that lists of supporters put open letters in the *Lake Wakatip Mail*, petitioning in their favoured person to agree to be nominated. Those petitioned then responded in the newspaper. It is said (but not confirmed) that leading businessmen, James W. Robertson, right, and Bendix Hallenstein, having both been petitioned, tossed a coin to decide which of them would stand for mayor and which for council rather than compete with each other. Hallenstein then declined nomination for the mayoralty, and supported Robertson. (Hallenstein became the second mayor in 1872.) Another candidate, D. G. MacDonnell, withdrew from the race in favour of William Fuller, thus leaving two contestants. This was all accomplished in a most gentlemanly and transparent manner through the newspaper.

Polling day sounds more like a sports event than an election. The polling booths were at two hotels, Eichardt's Queen's Arms and McLarn's Prince of Wales, with a room in each set aside for secret voting. Rival groups of supporters campaigned and thirsts were quenched at the bars. The *Lake Wakatip Mail* reported: 'Both parties exerted themselves



to the utmost. Bets were freely made and a considerable amount of money changed hands. Though feeling was so strongly imported, everything passed off remarkably smoothly, almost wonderfully, as the election had verged into consideration of the personal qualifications of the candidates.‘ The result was J. W. Robertson 40, W. Fuller 29. Mr Fuller was more than gracious, stating that he ‘rejoiced in his defeat.’ The councillors were elected two weeks later, and the new borough was off to a strong start.

Chaotic in Arrowtown, the Wild East, 1874



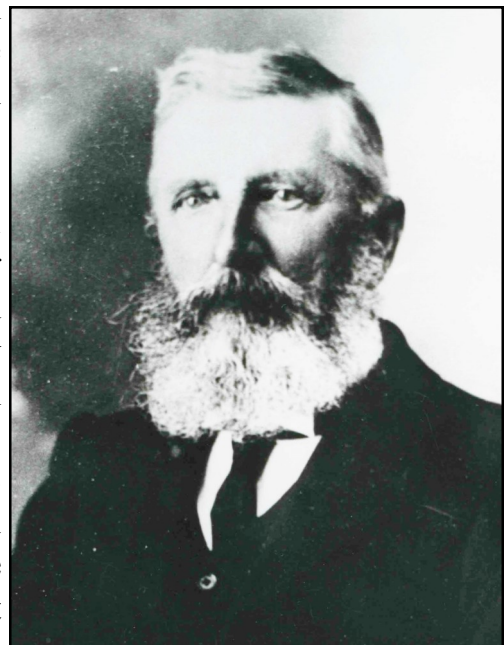
Arrowtown in 1875. Note the mining in the foreground near Bush Creek, Tobins Track and the Catholic Church.

LDM EL0063

Even the process of having Arrowtown declared a borough was difficult as there was dispute over where the boundaries of the town should be. Doesn't that sound familiar? One meeting dissolved in disorder. The borough was eventually formed in 1874.

The first mayoral election campaign was marked by personal attacks from both sides, and resulted in a dead heat between Samuel Goldston and Robert Pritchard with 30 votes each. A second vote was required, and Goldston won by 42 to 41. (Pritchard was elected a councillor, and served as mayor in 1875 and 1876.)

It immediately became apparent that the first council had little knowledge of meeting procedure or governance. Even appointing a Town Clerk proved contentious as their first appointee, James F. Healey (my great-grandfather), promptly asked for a rise from £15 to £25 plus a percentage of rates and other fees collected. This was granted, but there was a public outcry, and it was found that the council had not abided by the legislation. The job was re-advertised with the pay and conditions Healey sought, but he was not appointed. (Oh dear, but two years later he did become Town Clerk.)



James F. Healey, briefly first Town Clerk.

LDM EP1263

Public dissatisfaction with the council continued. The reporter for the *Lake County Press* described behaviour at a meeting as ‘disgraceful’ including ‘personal abuse and insinuations of selfish, mercenary motives It would be wearisome and anything but edifying to reproduce all the nonsense and abuse indulged in during a three hour sitting.’ The mayor left one meeting when all the councillors disagreed with him on a minor matter. They carried on without him. In fact, the council had become so unruly that the Sergeant of Police was asked to attend future meetings to keep order.

We are grateful that our 21st-century mayors and councillors hold dignified and productive meetings for the benefit of us all.

Sources:

Lake Wakatip Mail and *Lake County Press* accessed from PapersPast, www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz.

Clayton, Neil, ‘A stormy start at Arrowtown’, *Queenstown Courier* Issue 15 1975



It is appropriate that the Museum is built around the original Bank of New Zealand. While originally a repository of gold, the Bank now is the repository of information on the region's past.

Become a Member of the Museum

Membership subscriptions assist the museum to collect, present, protect and preserve the history of the Wakatipu district.

Benefits of membership include:

- Free entry to the museum
- 10% discount on retail purchases
- Members evenings and special events
- Invitations to exhibition openings
- Museum newsletter posted or emailed twice a year

Membership Categories

- Individual \$20
- Student \$10
- Couple/Family \$30
- Life \$200 (life memberships are for individuals)

Membership forms can be downloaded from our website or collected from the Museum.

Donations of Items

If you have artefacts of local historical interest – papers, photographs or objects – which you would like to donate, please contact us.

We appreciate receiving local photographs which we scan and return.

Address: 49 Buckingham Street, Arrowtown

Phone: 03 4421824

Email: info@museumqueenstown.com

Website: www.museumqueenstown.com

Queenstown & District Historical Society 2008 Incorporated

Our Heritage Today - For Tomorrow

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

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Our Heritage Guide for
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www.queenstownhistoricalsociety.org.nz