

# THE QUEENSTOWN COURIER

SUMMER 2023

Issue No.110



**Harvesting oats at Lake Hayes circa 1905  
on the farm later named 'Threepwood'**  
*(Lakes District Museum)*

PUBLISHED BY THE QUEENSTOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.  
[www.queenstownhistoricalsociety.org.nz](http://www.queenstownhistoricalsociety.org.nz)



## CONTENTS

Page 4	History of Threepwood Farm, Ladies Mile, Lake Hayes to 1910 by Jennie Henderson
Page 11	Robert Lee - Mining Entrepreneur and Irrigation Innovator by Rob Lee
Page 16	The Rabbit 'Nuisance' in the Whakatipu compiled by Marion Borrell, main source <i>The Sparkling Waters of Whakatipua</i> by Florence Mackenzie, published in 1947
Page 21	Arrow Quartz Reef and Criterion Mining Company by Marion Borrell
Page 23	Tobins Track and the Tobin Family by Marion Borrell
Page 25	<u>The Mary Cotter Tree panel, Buckingham Street, Arrowtown</u> Mary Cotter's Family - Their arrival and life in early Arrowtown in the 1860s by Tony Hanning Alexander Innes – Some Background Information by Tony Hanning
Page 29	Queenstown & District Historical Society Annual Report 2023 by Marion Borrell
Page 32	The Historical Society and Heritage Protection - Observations by Marion Borrell
Page 34	Lakes District Museum and Gallery Shop
Page 35	Historical Society Information

**Cover:**     **Harvesting Oats at Lake Hayes circa 1905,**  
on Robert McDowell's farm which was later renamed 'Threepwood'.  
*Photo courtesy of Lakes District Museum, Arrowtown, ref EL5150.*

The photographer from the New Zealand Tourist Department has captured the rural life in the Whakatipu, with the sunlight gleaming on the grain heads and cut stalks. Imagine the smell of the mown oats. Nearer the lake, where now we walk on the trail, we can see that the sheaves have been stooked to continue ripening, like the sample on the left.

I wonder how long it took to reap and bind this thick crop. And how many horse-hours and man-hours were needed throughout the process of tilling, sowing, reaping and binding, stooking, carting, stacking, threshing and chaff-cutting, in order to make fuel for the horses so that they could do the work.

In this case we know who the man is: Alex Grant. He was born at Grandview Farm where Quail Rise is now, and became a shepherd and farm manager. After he married Henrietta (Ettie) White, they lived in her family's cottage opposite the showgrounds. Alex moved around to various farm jobs, while his family mainly stayed at Lake Hayes. They would have been pleased that he was working close to home this time.

# **History of Threepwood Farm, Ladies Mile, Lake Hayes, to 1910**

**By Jennie Henderson**

Printed in 2005 in the Archaeological Assessment for Threepwood by P.G. Petchey of Southern Archaeology and in the Conservation Plan by Jackie Gillies. Used with permission of the author and the landowner.

## **Introduction by Marion Borrell**

### The creation of farms in the 1860s

Before the discovery of gold in the Arrow River, William Rees's huge pastoral leasehold run included the flat land from Frankton across to the Arrow. The first sheep were driven overland from the coast in January 1861, and shepherds were stationed at a hut near Lake Hayes.

The goldrush from late in 1862 brought large numbers of people into what was then an almost uninhabited and isolated area. As many of the first gold-seekers and business people moved on after several years, others remained. Settled communities began to develop, and the demand for farmland grew.

A formal survey took place in 1864, including a plan for close subdivision between the Lower Shotover River and Lake Hayes. The plan shows along Ladies Mile, 25 sections on the north side, of about 8 acres each with about 500-metre frontages right next to the road, with more sections beyond them as far as the hill, and others on the south side. (1864 survey of Block III Shotover District, S.O. 1497.) This makes an interesting comparison with QLDC's current Te Pūtahī Ladies Mile Masterplan for residential development of that area.

### Threepwood Farm Buildings

In 1864, just two years after the discovery of gold, the surveyor G.M. Barr's 1864 field-book (F.B. 158) shows two buildings near the lake. These are probably the existing stone woolshed and stable. If so, they are among the oldest remaining agricultural buildings in the district and were still used until the late 1900s. The cottage nearby was probably built in 1865, completing a farm group. The continuity of use of the property as a farm and the survival of some key buildings make this an historically and archaeologically significant site. (Petchey)

The homestead when it was built in 1909 was notable for its prominence. It was and still is a finely detailed timber-clad building with wide weatherboards and contrasting trim. The double bay villa with wide veranda and decorative mouldings is imposing, and would have stood out in the open landscape, being very visible from across the lake. It would have been one of the largest in the district, and represented a considerable social advance compared to early days on the farm. (Gillies)

Today, Threepwood's cluster of homestead, farm buildings, residences, trees and the Robert Lee Memorial is classified as a Category 2 Protected Feature in the QLDC District Plan. The current owners have restored the exterior of the homestead while recreating the interior as their family home. They are in the process of conserving and repurposing the stable and woolshed as residences.

## The Stable



The stable in recent times with an enlarged opening for machinery (*Photo: Jackie Gillies*)

The stable originally had eight timber stalls. The south wall had a fireplace and window suggesting a living-space. The upper floor, accessed from the hillside above, was lined with thin iron, presumably to keep rodents out.

## The Woolshed



(*Photo: Lakes District Museum EL5152*)

This photo (probably from the early 1900s) shows the long stone woolshed, the chaff cutter (powered by horses walking around the whim), oat-stacks and the chaff house to the right. Oats and chaff grown on the property fuelled the horses to do their work on the farm. (See cover photo.) Across the lake on the far left is the site of the showgrounds.

## Excerpts from History of Threepwood by Jennie Henderson

### The Marshall Family at 'Hayes Lake Farm' circa 1864 to 1882

William Teal Marshall was the first known occupant and the builder of the stable, woolshed and cottage. Some sources suggest that he came via the Australian gold fields and settled this land with an agricultural lease under the Gold Fields Act. He named the farm 'Meadow Bank Farm' though it seems to have been popularly known as 'Hayes Lake Farm'.

His wife Mary Marshall had a difficult start to her time in New Zealand. She had emigrated from Scotland in 1860 as Mary Colville, with her husband William and their six children (the oldest born in 1850, the youngest in 1859). In 1864 William was drowned in the Shotover River below the current Lower Shotover Bridge when driving a mob of cattle across with his sons aged ten and thirteen. He was aged 34. At that stage Mary had seven children, the youngest being three months old.

The following year Mary married William Marshall. With him she had at least two further children: Alexander and Alice attended Lower Shotover School in the 1870s.

In 1872 William Marshall was granted freehold title under the Otago Waste Lands Act of 1866. He also served the district as the pound-keeper of the Shotover Pound, which was situated at Lake Hayes, possibly on his property.

Mary's children from her first marriage grew up in the Arrow district. The oldest, David Colville, started a butchery in Macetown, and James Colville owned a butchery and bakery in Arrowtown. In 1881 James sold his business, and with his wife and family left for America. The Marshall family went with them and settled in Las Vegas, New Mexico, where these photos were taken soon afterwards.



Mary with her daughters Elizabeth and Alice, and possibly James



William Marshall

The following February the *Arrow Observer* received a letter from James, singing the praises of their new home:

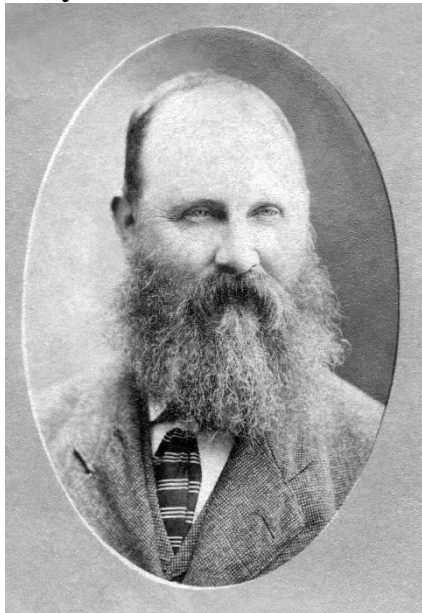
*Myself and family are enjoying all the pleasures of the world in the beautiful Far West .... I have settled down here, and it was a good day for me when I left the Arrow .... This is going to be a fine country, and Las Vegas a great city. There are ample resources in*

*the shape of gold, silver, iron, copper and oil, and it is the finest grazing country that you ever saw. ... I am in the butchery business again, and am doing well; killing 20 head of cattle, 25 sheep, 10 hogs, and 2 or 3 deer or antelope weekly. For this I get the money as soon as it is sold .... There are 8,000 people here now, but we expect fully 20,000 by the spring.*

Also in February 1882, a notice appeared in the *Lake Wakatip Mail* advertising for a new pound-keeper to replace William, and the sale of his Lake Hayes property to John Butement was announced.

### **John Trotter Butement at ‘Avalon’ 1882 to 1887**

The Butement family came to Dunedin via Australia. They had followed gold around the world, but upon arrival in Dunedin in 1861 John and his brothers took over a soda-water manufacturing business. In 1866 they sold the business and John invested in Run 346 (North Station) near Glenorchy. He expanded his holdings over the next decade, and by 1874 he ran over 40,000 sheep on almost 140,000 acres.



John and Mary  
Butement

(LDM EP06677&8)



In 1882 John Butement bought the Marshalls' farm privately before an auction which disposed of the remainder of the farm's equipment and livestock. He extended the property by also purchasing a few hundred acres from neighbours Bendix Hallenstein (of Thurlby Domain) and local doctor James Douglas (of Douglasvale). He renamed his farm 'Avalon'.

By this time, however, Butement's grand pastoral empire was threatened by the government's determination to break up the large estates to assist smaller farmers. The economic viability of his runs also suffered with the drop in wool prices and the growing rabbit problem. Butement made 'Avalon' his home base and had intended to build a homestead at Lake Hayes, but in 1887 the economic impact of the rabbits forced him to surrender his leases to the Crown.

John Butement's eldest son, Thomas, wrote of the extent of the rabbit problem:  
*Even out on the farm we had at ... Lake Hayes ... which was wire netted to some extent and all neighbours were supposed to be waging war on any rabbits within their*

*boundaries, at one time my father let out a contract to a rabbitier to set to work on our place. He was getting 600-800 rabbits per week by trapping.... (Chandler p.41).*

Due to the rabbit plague there were no buyers when the entirety of Butement's freehold came up for auction in 1888, including the 905 acres he then held at Lake Hayes. After relinquishing his land to the NZ Loan and Mercantile Co. Ltd, he left the district. The local paper recorded his leaving:

*Mr J. Butement, an old and respected resident, for many years run-holding at the Head of the Lake, and latterly residing at Hayes Lake, took his departure this afternoon for pastures new. A number of friends met him at the wharf to bid farewell and wish him success in his future career. We understand that Mr Butement intends to visit Victoria with his family. (Lake Wakatip Mail 1 June 1888)*

'Avalon' remained in the hands of the NZ Loan and Mercantile Company until 1896.

### **William Reid and Robert McDowell 1896 to 1910**

In 1896, the *Lake County Press* ran the following notice:

*A BIG PURCHASE – Messrs Reid and McDowell, of Macetown, have purchased from the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Co. 700 acres of farm land at Lake Hayes, Arrow, at £3 10s per acre. (2 May 1896)*

William Reid and Robert McDowell were business partners and brothers-in-law. They ran a well-known carrying business out of Macetown, and also ran the Macetown General Store. McDowell, who was to manage the Lake Hayes property for the pair, was born in Ireland in 1856 and came to NZ in 1875. He established a carrying business with Joseph Hunter in the early 1880s in Macetown. In 1884, Robert married Sarah Whittlesea, a Victorian woman who had followed her family to the area. Sarah's half-sister, Mary Jane Smith, had earlier married William Jenkins, owner of the Macetown store and butchery. William Reid worked at this store for Jenkins, and married Sarah's identical twin sister Jane Whittlesea on the same day that Robert McDowell wed Sarah. Reid soon became a partner in McDowell's carrying business, and they expanded their storekeeping in both Macetown and Arrowtown. The pair made a number of purchases in the area besides the Lake Hayes farm – in 1902 they bought the Wakatipu Flour Mill which was at the Arrowtown end of the lake beside Speargrass Flat Road.

The McDowell family moved onto the Lake Hayes farm probably in 1899. They lived in the stone cottage by the lake, which is noteworthy when one considers that Robert and Sarah had 12 children, with seven already born when they shifted to the lake. The family recalls the upper rooms in the stone house being used as bedrooms, with four people to a bed, while the boys slept in the lean-to at the back of the cottage.

A much larger homestead was finally completed in 1909 – see them lined up outside in the central photo. The local paper reported: *It is a very capacious building, containing some sixteen rooms. The interior arrangements are thoroughly up-to-date in every detail, and particular attention has been paid to sanitation. The house is, moreover, to be lighted by acetylene gas. (LWM 23 February 1909.)* At this time Queenstown had only just decided to install gas but it was not yet available. Clearly McDowell was an innovative member of the community, and in a comfortable financial position.

Cottage (c1865) and house (1909)



Some of the McDowell family at the cottage (*LDM EP3334*)  
and below all lined up at their new spacious house in 1909. (*LDM EL5453.*)



The homestead was built by Mr Blue from Invercargill using beech milled at Kinloch. [It is thought to have been designed by the Dunedin architectural firm Mason & Wales - Editor.] The McDowell children and grandchildren recall Chinese servants being employed on the property or in the homestead, and believe that the rooms at the rear of the house were used as dining areas for the hired staff.



The McDowell family at Threepwood. Note the rabbit-netting. (LDM EP3329)

Robert McDowell was a significant member of the Arrowtown community, as was his partner, William Reid. McDowell served on the Arrow Hospital Committee and was a member of the Frankton Hospital Trust, as well as being heavily involved with the local Presbyterian church. Reid was a founding member of the Lake County A & P Society, and served on the Lake County Council for 28 years.

In 1910, Reid and McDowell dissolved their partnership. It may be that, as the sons of each family grew older, there was little desire for a shared business. The Reids took over the Wakatipu mill and the McDowells took sole ownership of the Lake Hayes property. Soon afterwards, Robert decided to seek pastures new. A buyer was not far away in the person of Robert Lee. The McDowell family moved to Invercargill and later to Dunsandel.

For the next phase of Threepwood's history, see the next article about Robert Lee. The history of the farm after 1912 will be published in a future issue.

#### Main sources

Newspapers: *Lake Wakatipu Mail*, *Arrow Observer* and *Lake County Press*

Descendants of the McDowell family

Chandler, Peter, *Land of Mountain and Flood, A contribution to the history of runs and runholders in the Wakatipu*, Queenstown & District Historical Society, 1996.

## **Robert Lee – Mining Entrepreneur and Irrigation Innovator**

**By Rob Lee**, his great-grandson, who speaks for him in this monologue, presented at 'People from Our Past' in Arrowtown in 2023

Born in 1849, I grew up with my five siblings at Threepwood Hall, our family farm in Northumberland, a stone's throw from the Scottish border. Farming was in my blood and I seemed to have a knack for breeding prize-winning black-faced sheep, winning over 100 competitions.

My father George had interests in farming, saw-milling, and mining coal and lead. He was one of three men who established England's largest coal mining business, the Ashington colliery. I took a keen interest in mining and learnt a great deal from my father.

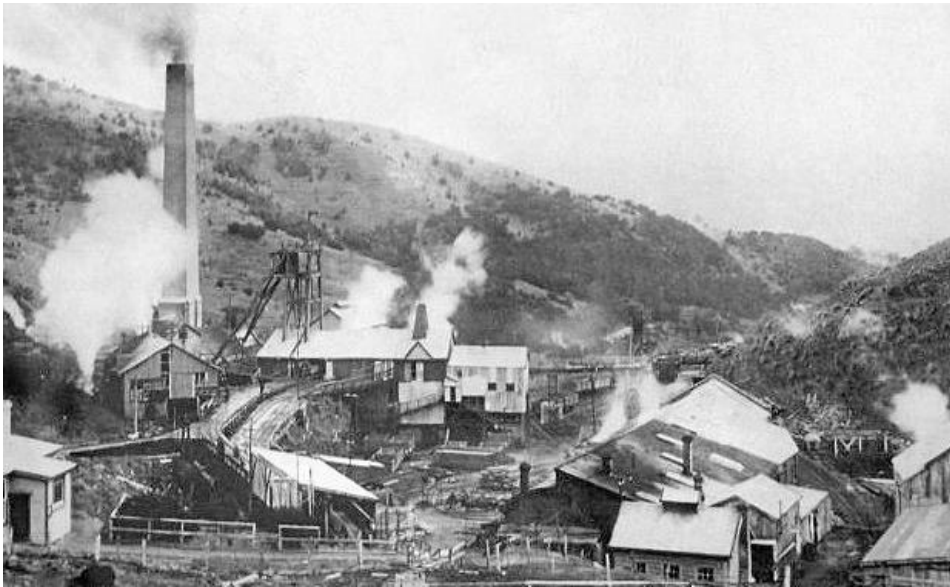
I soon married the lovely Ellen Johnson, five years my junior. I had some health issues and the climate in the north of England was not conducive to a good recovery, so, with reports of exciting opportunities in the colonies, we made the decision to move across the world to New Zealand, arriving in early 1881 at Port Chalmers. We travelled throughout the region, then I purchased land both at Taieri and on the Otago Peninsula, and oversaw the farming there for a number of years. We built a large house on the hill above Andersons Bay in Dunedin and lived there happily, raising our family of four sons and one daughter.



William, Robert Sr, Leo, George, Ellen, Mary and Robert Jr in the mid-1890s

A yearning for new challenges and the obvious opportunities around Otago drew me in, with coal and gold mining at the forefront of my mind.

Kaitangata in South Otago had grown up around a coal field started in 1858. 20 years later and 2 years before we moved to New Zealand, a disastrous explosion there killed 34 good men. Some changes were needed, including building a new mineshaft. I was able to provide some advice and the Castle Hill mine near Kaitangata was opened.



The Kaitangata Mine in 1914. (ODT 5.2.2019)

An English syndicate owned the mines, and I was sent home to England for a year to float one company to combine several mines, establishing the New Zealand Coal and Oil Company, becoming its Managing Director. Kaitangata and Castle Hill were coal mines and Orepuki was mined for shale deposits to produce oil, paraffin wax, tar and other by-products.

My interests expanded into gold and Scheelite mining, and I became a director in a number of companies in the Otago region. I was a founder in the Glenorchy Scheelite Mining Company, along with my friend, George Reid, who was the mine manager.

My sons Robert and William both followed my interests and became mining engineers.

In 1906 William, aged just 23, entered the Kaitangata mine to check on a reported fire and to investigate ways to improve the ventilation. Along with another man, Fred Anderson, he was overcome with black damp gas and had to be rescued. A heroic effort saw many brave men put their own lives in grave danger to pull Bill and Fred from the mine, and a number of them were overcome too and had to be rescued themselves.

As manager of the mine, I was there at the time and was among the crowd as William was carried out. Until that moment I had no idea that he was there, thinking he was in Dunedin preparing to leave for a tin mining operation in Malaya. Sadly, Fred had perished but there were signs of life in Bill. Dr Fitzgerald worked to revive him for what seemed like an eternity but was ultimately unsuccessful.

I was utterly devastated and never let go of the feeling of personal responsibility for their deaths. In hindsight I suspect I never fully recovered from the trauma of seeing my beloved son pass away in front of me, then travelling home to tell his mother.

I made the decision that something useful had to come from Bill's death and to give something back to the community of Kaitangata which had opened its arms so warmly to me. Collaborating with the usual authorities and local decision-makers, I was comforted by contributing to the building of a small hospital in Kaitangata which would be sufficient for the requirements of the place for many years to come.

Over time I became more and more involved in various mining pursuits in the Central Otago area, and in 1904 I moved from Dunedin to Queenstown.

I had great faith in the Shotover as a gold-producing field and invested a good deal of capital into both quartz mining and sluicing. I was part of a syndicate working a claim at Monk's Terrace at the Sandhills on the Upper Shotover, about 5 kilometres beyond Skippers. The claim gave good returns. We made plans to divert the Shotover to expose the river bed but never made the attempt.

Another venture I undertook was the re-opening of the Achilles mine at Bullendale. This mine had earlier been known as the Scandinavian and then the Phoenix mine, which you might have heard of. Unfortunately, the yield proved insufficient and it had to be abandoned after some years.

In 1910, I bought from the McDowell family the 800-acre Lake Hayes Farm bordering the southern end of the lake. Just the year before, Robert McDowell had built a 16-room homestead on a raised site looking north over the lake. It was handsome, with magnificent views across the lake, particularly on still days when it mirrored the mountains.

I took possession just before the Christmas of 1910 and renamed the farm 'Threepwood' after my home back in England. I'm pleased to know the name has endured.



The Battery, Achilles Mine, Bullendale 1895  
(Watercolour by Laurence William Wilson.  
Ref B-174-005 Alexander Turnbull Library)

The soil on the farm was friable and fertile, but with no natural water sources on the farm, rabbits in plague proportions and the hot dry summers, I knew that irrigation was going to be crucial for its success. So I immediately set about designing a way to bring water.

There were, of course, plenty of streams and rivers nearby, but none on the farm, which, at that time, reached from Bridesdale Farm (now Lake Hayes Estate) near the Kawareau River, across Ladies Mile and up Slope Hill.

Irrigation systems rely on gravity to move water from one place to another and, as I intended not only to irrigate the flat land on the farm but to get water up onto some of Slope Hill as well, the water needed to travel downhill initially, then also have the force behind it to head uphill again. This required considerable height for the source, and after some exploration, the only viable candidate became Boundary Creek on the Remarkables. As Boundary Creek flows into the far side of the Kawareau River, this added somewhat of a challenge.

My design for the scheme, almost three miles in length, included a combination of water races, flumes and iron pipes. A flume is an open channel constructed with timber which maintains a much more consistent flow of water than a simple channel or ditch. Pipes were also used, including a section 110 yards long on suspension ropes across the Kawareau River.

This was to be achieved without the benefit of such things as you would be so used to today - motorised transport, diggers, helicopters. But I was determined that it could be done. I was 61 years old by now with some ongoing health issues, and I wanted to ensure that my son Leo, a passionate and talented farmer, would take over a viable farm.

My application for the licence to build the scheme included my estimate that it would take approximately nine months to build and cost £4,000. I think we came close. Reports at the time described the scheme as probably the largest private irrigation undertaking in the country. I don't know the truth of that but it certainly challenged all of us involved in its design and construction.

I was aware of the daily traffic along Ladies Mile, and that with a new full-length bridge soon to be built over the Shotover River, the animals would no longer have easy access to water as they crossed the river. My small contribution was to include a water-trough on Ladies Mile, fed from the new irrigation scheme. My design included a V-shaped trough to ensure as many horses and bullocks as possible could be watered without unhitching them, and an overflow trough below for dogs and sheep.

I'm sad to report that I didn't live to see the water flowing onto the farm. I understand it was successfully completed a month after my death and am pleased to know that made a great difference to the farm for my son Leo. I believe that it was used as an example to persuade the authorities to invest in irrigation schemes in the district and thus became a catalyst for the later building of the Arrow Irrigation Scheme which is still in use today.

### Epilogue by Rob Lee

After Robert's death, the Kaitangata Company decided to erect a memorial, originally favouring a band rotunda at Kaitangata. His family preferred something at Lake Hayes and a memorial cairn was built on Ladies Mile beside his water-trough, where the irrigation pipe crossed the road.

With the irrigation in place, Robert's son Leo successfully farmed there for 25 years or so. The combination of flat land, fertile soils, a hot summer and the addition of a reliable water supply, meant that the cropping potential of the land was excellent. Leo, a keen gardener, planted most of the trees around the homestead, including an extensive fruit orchard and established walnut groves nearby. Many of those trees are still healthy and producing fruit today. Leo's son Allen was my father, and I spent many childhood holidays at Lake Hayes. And now my wife Janie and I have somehow managed to buy a little piece of Threepwood and we live just over the hedge from the beautifully restored homestead. I jokingly refer to myself as a fourth generation Lee on the farm.

### Final words about Robert Lee

Facts and figures are relatively easy to come by, but the essence of a person is a little more elusive. This extract from the vicar Rev. H. Packe's words at his funeral may give some insight into how Robert Lee was viewed by others:

'He was a great leader because he had not only profound knowledge but also great goodness. No one ever came to him without being benefitted, no one spoke to him without feeling he was addressing one of God's nobility. Those who had to deal with him knew that he had a strong will, but it was governed by right reason. He would listen to others but he would also listen to his own conscience.'



The restored memorial beside Ladies Mile in 2023

## The Rabbit 'Nuisance' in the Whakatipu

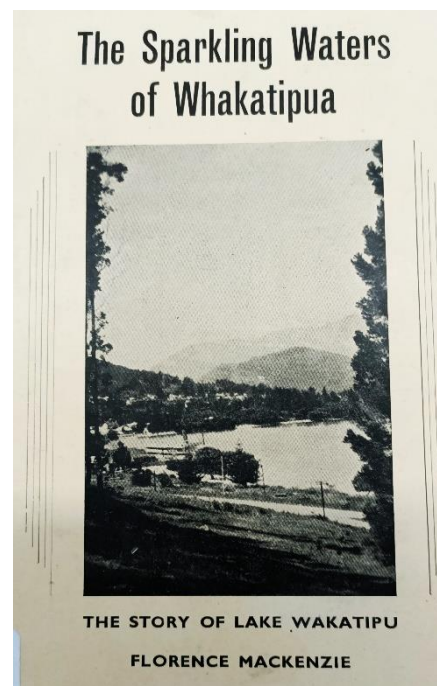
Compiled by Marion Borrell

Whoever named the 1876 'Rabbit Nuisance Act' can't have lived in the Lakes District or Central Otago. 'Nuisance' indeed! Plague, more likely! Here, the well-known expression 'being run off one's land by rabbits' captures the situation better with the image of a farmer being chased by a horde of giant rabbits. They resulted in starved sheep, destroyed livelihoods and ruined lives.

### Background

It is said that the first rabbits here were released by William Rees on the Queenstown Gardens Peninsula, and others at Twelve-Mile Creek. Perhaps his motivation was nostalgia for 'Home' or for sport. It isn't known whether these rabbits survived. Later arrivals spread up from the south or were brought here.

*The Sparkling Waters of Whakatipua* by Florence Mackenzie (née Campbell) is the source of the next information. The book, published in 1947, is of historical significance in itself. Florence had married John Mackenzie (son of Hugh) in 1930 and lived at Walter Peak Station. Besides, her information about rabbits draws heavily on her father-in-law Hugh Mackenzie's diaries and writings.



### From Early 1870s to 1947

In the early 1870s the first pair of rabbits was seen close to the Mt Nicholas Station shearing shed. The shearers were given half a day off to watch them play. Two years later the place was overrun with them. This was the start of the hard times on the land, and the runholders who imported rabbits ran the risk of being ruined within two years.

The rabbits ate the pasture right down to the roots and killed the plants completely. In the absence of natural predators, they bred prolifically. In addition, sheep-stocking rates were very high on some runs. Without enough feed for their sheep, runholders and farmers couldn't make a living.

Rabbits multiplied throughout the district. In October 1879 the Rabbit Nuisance Board met at Frankton at the Antrim Arms Hotel and agreed that steps be taken towards the extermination of rabbits, that a fund be raised by contributions from landowners in proportion to the area they each held, and that the district be declared a Rabbit District under the Act.

Rabbits! Rabbits everywhere! The rabbits thrived on the virgin land. As a result, all the fine natural grass in the low country was eaten out. The rabbit, of course, was not to blame entirely. The disastrous practice of burning fern and scrub in hot weather helped to ruin the country. It is easy for us to be wise after the event, but it should have been

obvious that when the steep mountain country was burned bare and left without natural vegetation it would be impossible to establish or protect young grass plants.

Under these conditions many runholders had to abandon their runs, for no backer or stock firm would lend as much as five pounds to men in this condition. Those who hung on tried every possible method of killing the rabbits. In October 1876-9 it was reported that oil of rhodium (which is distilled from rosewood) was used with phosphorus poison. A few drops in a bag of prepared phosphorus were sufficient. The sweet smell attracted the rabbits to the poisoned ingredient. This proved efficacious. One man reported that he had picked up four hundred of the 'nuisances.' In many cases warrens had been crammed to the mouth with dead rabbits. But this poison had one fatal drawback: it killed the sheep too.

Then poisoned wheat was tried, and this proved a mixed blessing. On one station three hundred sheep died with the first poisoning, and all sheep-farmers reported heavy losses. Also, there was great anxiety concerning the wholesale destruction of game, for at this period wild bird life and game were plentiful. By 23 June 1881 local residents complained of rabbits making sad havoc in the gardens among the flowers and soft-wooded shrubs. Fruit trees were attacked and ring-barked and much damage was done.

On 9 November 1882 the good news was received that thirteen ferrets had been imported by the Government for rabbit-destroying purposes. They arrived at Port Chalmers and were sent up-country.

When all else failed and the runs were left derelict, and the Government for several years put on gangs of men who were paid a contract price of several hundred pounds. In addition to this, the men got the skins to sell. A rabbitier needed a good horse and a pack of dogs. The dogs varied from retrievers to greyhounds; the retrievers carried the poisoned rabbits or rabbits killed by dogs, while the greyhounds, being faster, were kept solely for running down the rabbits and killing them. However, no greyhound could be trained to carry the prey and bring it to the rabbitier as the retriever did. The target for the day was one hundred rabbits, having securing which the rabbitier went home to his camp. In the summer the dogs were used to run down the rabbits. Winter and spring were set aside for poisoning operations. A pound a hundred was paid for the winter skins, and as the fur was good it was considered a satisfactory price. In summer, station owners subsidised in most cases, paying ten shillings a hundred.

When summer rabbits were caught, the skins were brought back to the homestead block. One penny a skin was paid. At one time station owners decided to pay that amount on tails or ears brought in, but that did not work. If one runholder paid a rabbitier for the two ears, the same man could sell the tail to another runholder. There was nothing to stop him but his own honesty, hence the demand for a full summer skin to be produced.

Four to six rabbitiers worked in a team. The skins were tied up in bundles of twenty, and a hundred and fifty bundles went to the bale. The bale containing three thousand was then shipped direct to Europe. In those terrible days 104,000 skins were pressed – a winter's work – and sent abroad, from a high-country station.

Even so, not enough rabbits were being killed to keep them down.

---

### LAKE RABBIT DISTRICT.

---

**P**UBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Trustees of above District have, in accordance with Section 13, of "The Rabbit Nuisance Act, 1880," made a Rate of One-seventh of a Penny per Acre, for the year 1881, and that the same is to be paid in one instalment, not later than the 15th day of AUGUST, 1881, at the Collector's Office, Queenstown.

F. F. C. HUDDLESTON,

Secretary and Collector to the

Lake Rabbit Trustees.

Queenstown, July 19th, 1881.

---

### RABBIT SKINS! RABBIT SKINS!!

---

**W**e are commissioned to buy a large quantity of RABBIT SKINS. Highest price given and cash on delivery. Where it is inconvenient for parties to come to town they can rely on getting full price and fair treatment, and immediate payment by sending skins direct to us.

WILSON, TAINE & CO.,

Auctioneers,

Invercargill.

---

LOCAL AGENTS—F. H. DANIEL & CO.

---

When rabbits took possession of the low country [such as the Arrow basin and Lower Shotover], the landowners had to find ways and means of destroying the pests, trying trapping, fumigating and poisoning. Eager rabbiters became proficient in the art of trapping, while other trappers went in for wholesale rabbit-farming, which was a crime.

To the rabbits belong the blame for the wholesale destruction of game in the Wakatipu district. Ferrets, weasels, stoats, cats and poison were all used with the purpose of exterminating rabbits, and by these means native game life and many species of birds have now been killed off. The rabbits also ruined thousands of acres of the best pastoral land in New Zealand, and once the natural vegetation was ruined, erosion quickly set in.

And so today (written in 1947) we still struggle to destroy the rabbits.

A final thought: It is not the number of rabbits taken off the ground that counts, but the number left to propagate.

**After 1947**, we turn to **Tommy Thomson of Earnslaw Station**, printed in *Queenstown Courier* 55, 1995 pp.5-10.

When I took over Earnslaw Station in 1947 I found that rabbits swarmed on the flats and even invaded up the near mountain sides to the 4,000ft level, devouring virtually every blade of grass as it grew. The tottering sheep flock of 3,300 diminished by the hundreds each year no matter what we did. We thought about rabbits day and night for years. But this was all nothing new to the farming community. They had known it all their lives. An Act passed in 1949 made Rabbit Boards mandatory. There has been a continuous running battle with rabbits ever since. Even the new Glenorchy Rabbit Board got nowhere until the miracle of larvicide (really a poisonous tear gas) was shown to be the answer. You poured a little into each burrow and filled the entrance with a spade. The entrapped rabbits died forthwith, so the Board embarked on a crash larvicide programme throughout the district and farming's greatest scourge was beaten: grass began to grown.



Jack Dagg with rabbit skins at Cliften Farm, Wharehuanui, under Coronet Peak . (LDM EL4164)

**Frank Mee** was the runholder of The Branches station from 1954-59. This extract is from *Skippers, Triumph and Tragedy*, by Danny Knudson, published by Danny, Lakes District Museum and QDHS, 2016

Farm animals at The Branches had to compete for food with unwanted pests. Rabbits were the worst. There were tens of thousands of them. The Rabbit Board became active, and so did Frank. He tidied up the road so that he could truck in about 50 tons of carrots in three-ton loads. There was a fair bit of shovelling to do, but after feeding the furry pests twice, it was time for the kill. Arsenic was added to the bait, killing 50,000 rabbits

in one night. Frank estimated that about half a million were killed in 1955. That controlled the problem for a while, but the rabbits never disappeared altogether.

**Some Nationwide Information** from *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, Editor-in-Chief Gordon McLaughlin, David Bateman, 1986, pp 998-999.

In 1873, 33,000 skins were exported; in 1877 nearly a million; by 1882 more than nine million; and by 1894 more than 17 million.

A significant trade developed in canned and frozen rabbit meat. In 1894 25,000 frozen carcasses were exported to Britain. The business grew quickly, and in 1900 6.5 million carcasses were exported. Over 99% of this trade came from Otago and Southland.

Even in the late 1940s, rabbit skins and carcasses were being exported in the millions.

Ten rabbits could eat as much pasture as one ewe, which meant that the 20 million plus rabbits killed in 1945 would have eaten about the same amount as two million sheep.

The first truly effective control began in 1947 with the Rabbit Nuisance Amendment Act. It required rabbit boards to adopt a 'killer policy' i.e. their priority was to kill rabbits, almost regardless of cost. The trade in rabbits and skins was to be phased out. With the spread of hydatids among wild rabbits, a campaign to reduce the popularity of the meat among locals was successful. The changes cost more than one million pounds a year but this was more than covered by the increase in sheep production. The introduction of aerial poisoning and 1080 were highly successful in controlling rabbits from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Historical Society members will be familiar with more recent events – the user-pays policy in 1984, the disbanding of the Rabbit Boards in 1989, and in 1997 the illegal introduction of rabbit haemorrhagic disease (RHD) previously known as rabbit calicivirus disease (RCD).

### **Conclusion**

This article has focussed on the huge damage done to the agricultural industry by the rabbit 'nuisance'. In addition, the damage to the environment and native flora and fauna has been immense. Much less significant but still worth pointing out is that rabbiting provided vital employment in rural areas. Small-scale hunting and trapping put meat on tables, and the sale of skins was useful income for many families in hard times.

Rabbits are still a pest requiring constant effort to 'manage', and especially in drier areas where rabbits thrive, the battle is far from over. An Otago Regional Council Rabbit Inspector visited properties around our place in Dalefield recently. [Editor] I'm pleased to report that we and our neighbours do enough work with fencing, poisoning, gassing and shooting to keep rabbit numbers low – but never eliminated.

### **Additional Sources:**

Chandler, Peter *Land of the Mountain and Flood: A Contribution to the History of Runs and Runholders of the Wakatipu District*, Queenstown and District Historical Society for the Hocken Library, 1996

*Stories of Wakatipu: Courier 100* Compiled by Danny Knudson for Q&DHS, 2018

*Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand* [www.teara.govt.nz](http://www.teara.govt.nz)

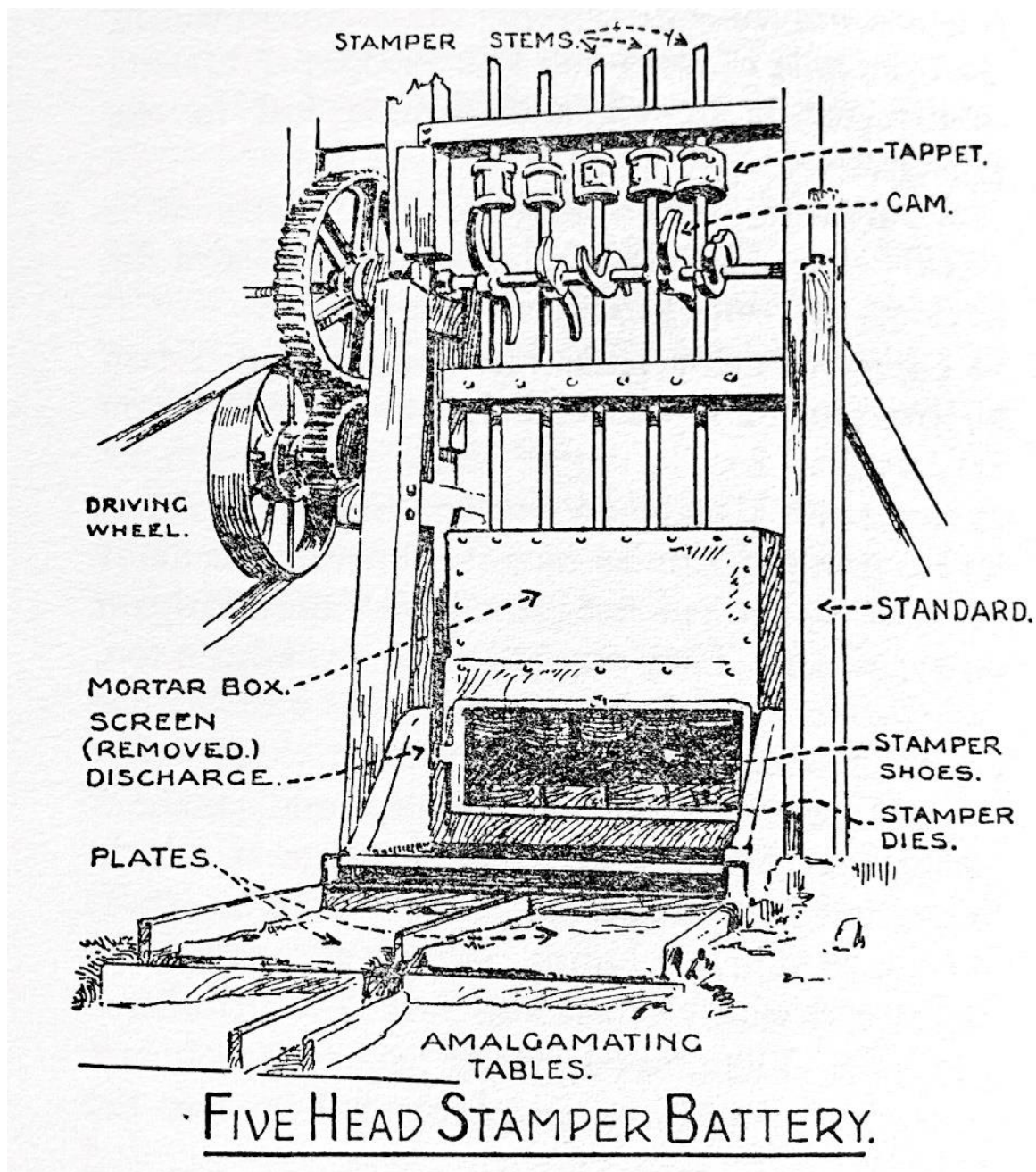
## For Two Panels beside the Arrow River Loop Track

### Arrow Quartz Reef and the Criterion Mining Company

By Marion Borrell

You are standing above a gold-bearing quartz reef - a layer of quartz rock. It was discovered in 1864 and was one of the first quartz reefs found in New Zealand. The Criterion Quartz Mining Company was formed with 240 shares at £10 each, and they were in strong demand.

A shaft was dug to a depth of about 40 metres, and a large dam was created to power machinery including a five-head stamping battery to crush the rock and extract the gold.



(Drawing by I.L. Idreiss)

### **‘Who’d a Thought It!’**

The story goes that William Scoles, the mine owner, ‘seeded the mine’ by placing some gold near the entrance. Then he showed the Mayor, the appropriately-named Samuel Goldston.

The Mayor exclaimed, ‘Who’d ‘a thought it!’ But was he actually tricked, or was he being sarcastic? Would you have been tricked? Later, in 1866 the name ‘Who’d ‘a Thought It’ was used by a different company.

Before long the Criterion Mine’s stampers became clogged by blue clay. The mine was uneconomic and was closed in 1867. The battery was a valuable piece of equipment, and was sold to a company at Bendigo near Cromwell. Parts of it can still be seen at the ‘Come in Time’ mine in Thompson’s Gorge Road.

The Arrow Reef’s gold was still tantalisingly in the ground. Hopes remained, and new mining companies were proposed from time to time. In 1896 the new Criterion Gold Mining Company was revived and dug ‘promising’ new leads – they always said that! However, none were successful and the mine was abandoned by the end of the century. The shaft here remained open, surrounded by a fence, until the 1940s or 50s when explosives were used to fill it in.

Would you invest your money if a new company was established now?



This photo is divided in two in order to enlarge it.

Left:

Looking down on the Criterion Quartz Mine in about 1900. Note the tunnels and tailings bordering the river.

Right:  
The footbridge at the top right connected to Tobins Track.

*(Photo: Lakes District Museum  
EL0824)*



## **Tobins Track and the Tobin Family**

**By Marion Borrell**



Arrowtown from Tobins Track about 1915 showing the old footbridge and ford  
(*Lakes District Museum EL1257*)

### **The Tobin Family**



Thomas Tobin (LDM)

In 1874 Thomas Tobin won the contract to form the road from this ford up to the Crown Terrace in order to improve the important route between Arrowtown and Cardrona.

Thomas, who was an Irishman, had migrated to Victoria. He came to Otago at the start of the gold-rush in 1862 and settled at Macetown. In 1865 he married Letitia Nash who was also from Ireland.

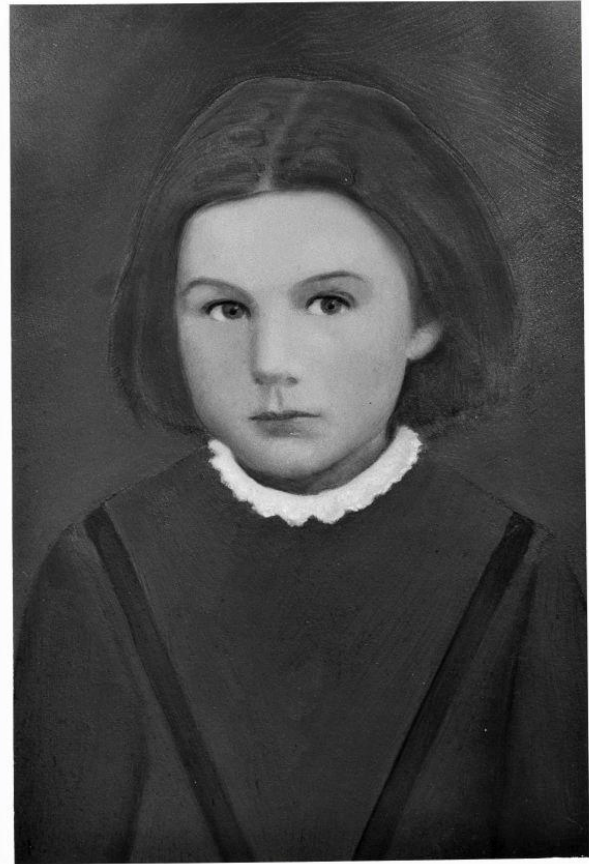
In 1874 they shifted here with their three young sons. Thomas built a stone cottage a short distance up the track where there is now a monument. The ruins of the house can be found above the road. They had five more children, four girls and one boy.

The road was well-used and people would often call in at their house. In the winter of 1882, after eight years of road-building and maintenance, Thomas caught pneumonia and

died aged 51, leaving Letitia with eight children. Sixteen-year-old Martin took over his father's job.

More misfortunes were to befall them: a few months later, young Tom, aged 15, was drowned while swimming in the Arrow River. Then in 1886, when the river was in high flood, Mary, aged 14, was also drowned when attempting to cross on a temporary plank. She had only a single wire to hold onto. Despite attempts by a neighbour and her brother Pat to rescue her with a rope, she was swept away. In 1900, Martin was also drowned, in a mining tunnel at Skippers Point. He was 34.

Pat Tobin became the editor of the *Lake County Press* in Arrowtown. After the cottage by the track was destroyed by fire in 1910, he bought a house for his mother in Merioneth Street. Letitia died nine years later aged 87, after living in the Arrow District for 55 years.



Mary as a young child (LDM)



Letitia Tobin with her daughter Annie (LDM)

# The Mary Cotter Tree

PLANTED  
1867

## PLANTED 1867 - THE FIRST OF THE AVENUE

Two-year-old Mary Cotter, after whom this nearby sycamore tree is named, lived with her early gold-mining family in a house on this corner section of the reserve known from the 1860s until the 1930s as "Cotter's Corner", but now more commonly, as "The Library Corner."

Mary's Irish born father, Richard Cotter, arrived at the Arrow with William Fox and party in 1862 but returned to Australia in 1863 to bring his wife, Frances, and two young children out to the Arrow with him after learning that an infant son had drowned.

Their first canvas-roofed dwelling on the lower river terrace was destroyed in a storm which led them to build here on higher ground. Several of their family of ten made the Arrow and Lakes District their long-term home.

When the trees were being planted in 1867, little Mary Cotter was told that if she danced around the sycamore tree outside her house it would be named after her. She danced around the tree, and, more than 150 years later, it continues to be known as "The Mary Cotter Tree".



Image (left above): The Mary Cotter tree with Mary's parents, Richard and Frances Cotter, outside their residence ca. 1900. Photo courtesy of the Cotter family.

Image (right above): Mary Cotter at age 23, 1890. Photo courtesy of the Cotter family.

## PLANTING OF THE AVENUE IN 1867 - ALEXANDER INNES

Scotsman Alexander Innes, a local orchardist, made a generous donation of the trees on this southern side of the avenue.

Alexander had emigrated to the Wakatipu in 1863 from Victoria Australia where he had been a storekeeper.

Well-educated and civic-minded, he became Mayor of Arrowtown in 1874, and member of the Otago Provincial Council 1874 - 1875, representing the Lakes electorate alongside Bendix Hallenstein.

He was instrumental in the establishment and management of the Arrowtown Public Library, and as an accomplished seal engraver, he was responsible for designing the Arrowtown town seal.

Alexander was a life-long prohibitionist and member of the Good Templars Golden Arrow Lodge.

After a period of ill-health, he died in Arrowtown on 11 December 1892 aged 52 years. This beautiful avenue remains as a tangible legacy to his generosity and foresight.



Image (left above): "SPEED WELL ARROW" ABC Seal (Arrowtown Borough Council) Designed by Alexander Innes, from April 15, 1874. Photo Courtesy of Lakes District Museum

Image (right above): Richard Cotter (left) and Alexander Innes (right). Illustration by Mary Cotter, Grand Niece of Mary Cotter.



At the Historical Society's AGM in November 2023, our member Tony Hanning introduced us to his newly published book for children, *The Mary Cotter Tree*, illustrated with water-colour paintings by Mary Cotter. (Advertised in *Courier 108*)

He asked if the Society could facilitate the creation of an information panel about Mary Cotter and Alexander Innes, and the planting of the avenue of trees in Buckingham Street in Arrowtown. The panel was written by Tony Hanning. Queenstown Lakes District Council will pay for it, and it will soon be installed soon.

Some wording from the panel:

### Planted in 1867 – the First of the Avenue

Two-year-old Mary Cotter, after whom this nearby sycamore is named, lived with her gold-mining family in a house on this corner section of the reserve known from the 1860s until the 1930s as 'Cotter's Corner', but now more commonly as 'The Library Corner'. When the trees were being planted in 1867, little Mary Cotter was told that if she danced around the sycamore tree outside her house it would be named after her. She danced around the tree, and, more than 150 years later, it continues to be known as 'The Mary Cotter Tree'.

Scotsman Alexander Innes, a local orchardist, made a generous donation of the trees on this side of the avenue.

The photo on the left shows Mr and Mrs Cotter, some years later, outside their house. The leafy branches of the well-grown 'Mary Cotter Tree' are above them.

More information about the Cotter family and Mr Innes is printed on the next pages.

## Mary Cotter's Family

### Their arrival and life in early Arrowtown in the 1860s

By Tony Hanning

An edited reprint from the Appendix to *The Mary Cotter Tree: The Planting of Buckingham Street Avenue, Arrowtown 1867*



Both of Mary's parents, Richard Cotter and Frances Emily Cahill, were born in County Cork, Ireland, but met and married in Ballarat, Australia in 1856 when Richard had embarked on life as a gold miner and Frances as a shop assistant. Frances was with her brother Patrick at the time. Richard had served as a cabin boy on a ship to San Francisco in 1849 before spending time on the Californian goldfield, and then in Australia.

When news of the good gold strikes in Central Otago reached the Australian goldfields, Richard decided to leave for there with a small group of his workmates to try their luck. Frances and their three young children, Patrick, Ellie and Richard, remained behind where they had suitable accommodation and the company of Frances' brother and his family.

One of the party to leave for New Zealand, Bill Fox, was short of funds so Richard paid his fare for him. That was the same Bill Fox (William in the history books) who led the party and became famous for his gold strike in the Arrow. For a number of years, the township that sprang up was known as "Fox's" and later as Arrowtown. Richard and one or two others of the party were tasked with throwing miners off the scent of where Fox had his successful claim, so they camped up on the Crown Terrace. However, it wasn't long before Fox was tracked and the major rush began.

In early 1863, Richard received sad news by mail that his little boy Richard (aged 1 year and 8 months) had drowned in Australia on 5 December 1862. He left immediately for Dunedin to catch a boat back to his family. On 9 March 1863 the *S.S. Gothenburg*

left for Melbourne with gold and passengers. R. Cotter was listed with 90 ounces of gold.

Later that year Richard and Frances left Australia, travelling to Port Chalmers on the *S.S. Gothenburg* with their two young children, (Patrick 6 years and Ellie 4 years), to settle in Arrowtown. They walked the journey from Dunedin to Kingston alongside an open dray carrying their belongings. Frances was several months pregnant.

At first they lived in a canvas-roofed dwelling on the river terrace. That is where Thomas (Tom Cotter) was born on 15 February 1864. Although the Cotters had missed the big flood of July 1863, on 1 December a heavy storm hit the town and the outer coverings of Cotter's house and Melody's Hotel nearby were torn to pieces. Spencely's Store was a complete wreck. Soon afterwards, like others before them following the big flood, the move was made to higher ground where buildings became more substantial and permanent. The Cotters build their new home on the corner of Buckingham Street and Wiltshire Street, known today as the library corner.

Richard continued his mining interests throughout his life. He died on 2 August 1920 aged 89. Frances died on 12 March 1914 aged 79. Together they raised a family of ten, including the first wee Richard who drowned in Australia. The children of the "Mary Cotter Tree" were the older ones of that big family.

In 1890, at the age of 23, Mary married Peter John Shea of Port Chalmers. They moved to Devonport where PJ(Jack) was chief engineer for the Northern Steamship Company. He died suddenly in 1914 aged 48. They had two sons, Peter J, and P C Carson Shea. Mary died in Devonport in 1949 aged 83.

As the writer of the story (Tony Hanning), my grandmother was Mary's sister, Sarah, and their brother Tom was the great-grandfather of the illustrator, Mary Cotter. Like many with Arrowtown connections, we have grown up with the story of the Mary Cotter Tree.



Buckingham Street in 1890s showing Cotter family businesses. (LDM EL0672)

## **Alexander Innes – Some Background Information**

The trees on the southern side of the Buckingham Street Avenue were donated by Alexander Innes in 1867.

He was born in Glasgow in about 1830 but removed to Edinburgh when quite young where he was apprenticed to an uncle, the only seal engraver in Edinburgh at that time. Alexander was of quick and keen intelligence. He received a liberal education that stood him in good stead when he emigrated to Victoria Australia and took up work at the town of Ovens as a goldfield's storekeeper, either on his own account or as a foreman to the well-known firm of Mathieson Brothers. While there he competed successfully against seventeen others to design and plan the Beechworth, Victoria, Town Hall.

Along with many other emigrants, Mr Innes came to New Zealand from Victoria in 1863. He arrived in Queenstown where he was engaged as a salesman by Mr Bendix Hallenstein. When Mr Ching's business in Arrowtown was bought by Hallenstein, Mr Innes became a member of the new branch. He soon acquired substantial property in the town which he converted into an orchard and left his old employer so that he could concentrate on his own business. The venture was not as successful as he had hoped, but he involved himself in the affairs of the town and district to the great benefit of all.

In 1874 and 1875 he was elected, with Mr Hallenstein, as Member to represent the district on the Provincial Council. He served as Mayor of Arrowtown, and he was instrumental in having the Public Library established, to which he gave invaluable service as Secretary and Librarian. In keeping with his early career, he was the designer of the Arrowtown Town Seal, and that of several other towns in Otago.



Arrowtown Borough Seal 1874  
'Speed Well Arrow'  
(LDM N1513)

He was a life-long prohibitionist and a member of the Good Templars Golden Arrow Lodge. He was ailing from Bright's disease for some time and died of heart failure in Arrowtown on 11 December 1882 aged 52 years. The Rev. D. Ross conducted the funeral service in the Presbyterian Church, Arrowtown, and at the graveside. A large crowd of friends and citizens attended his funeral.

# **Queenstown and District Historical Society (2008) Inc.**

## **Chairperson's Report for the Annual General Meeting**

### **November 2023**

For the year from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023

By Marion Borrell

Written 15 October 2023

We have had a steadily busy year continuing the Society's work to protect and promote our local history and organise activities for our members. This has been our 57<sup>th</sup> year.

Our membership numbers are stable at about 180 memberships and 250 individuals. Our largest source of income is subscriptions, and we thank members for their support. Those with long memories will realise that subscriptions were last raised in 2011. Meanwhile official inflation has been about 33%. For this reason, the Board will propose to the AGM that the cost of subscriptions be raised.

### **Promotion of Local History**

#### **Publications**

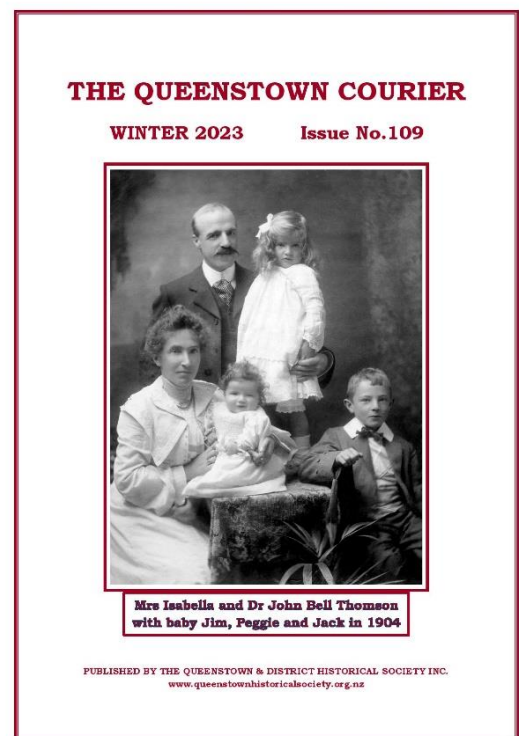
- *Queenstown Courier Issue 108* with articles by Jim Sullivan, George Budd, Sue Burnet and Marion Borrell.
- *Queenstown Courier Issue 109* with articles by Patricia Rainey, Noel and Carolyn Beggs, Alfred Duncan, Marion Borrell, Hilary Capper and Tony Hanning.
- Our website was visited 3,000 times in the past year.
- *Historic Places in Queenstown* brochure: with the influx of visitors to the district, many brochures have been distributed.
- *Edith Cavell – A Bridge and Bravery* by Danny Knudson: 100 more copies have been printed.
- *Stories of Wakatipu Courier 100* by Danny Knudson continues to sell well at the Museum.

#### **Historical Panels Project**

Since 2018 we have created eleven information panels in widespread locations. The one at Butlers Green, Arrowtown, seen in *Courier 109*, was installed this year. The latest will be at the Mary Cotter Tree in Buckingham St, as Tony Hanning requested at our last AGM.

Noting that some older signage is in poor repair, we have undertaken to restore the Julien Bourdeau sign near the Skippers Road saddle.

Board members are working on several more such projects and restorations. We acknowledge the collaboration of QLDC Parks and Reserves staff, and QLDC funding for some panels.



## **Activities and Events from September 2022 to May 2023**

In September members contributed about 40 artworks for an exhibition, 'Local History Through Artists' Eyes', spanning a long period with great variety.

In October we had a whole-day trip to Matakau, Drybread and Cambrians with guides Ross Naylor, Dr Peter Petchey, Professor Hallie Buckley and Bob L. de Berry.

At the AGM, Tony Hanning introduced his book, *The Mary Cotter Tree*, and Ben Teele demonstrated new digital technology being used by archaeologists.

In February we visited Otarehua, being guided through the Hayes Engineering Works during an operating day, and going on to Gilchrist's Store and the Golden Progress Mine.

In April we held 'People from Our Past', encountering Alfred Duncan (Ross MacKenzie), Helen Southberg (Cheryl Collie), Elizabeth Meldrum Grant Hansen (Kirsty Sharpe) and Robert Lee (Rob Lee).

In May we were given a tour of the Lakes District Museum by staff members David Clarke, Jane Peasey, Amanda Viana and Jo Boyd to see the refurbished displays in the restored building and the expanded archives facilities.

All events were well-attended. Our thanks to the many members and friends who contributed and assisted.

## **Heritage Protection**

We continue to monitor Resource Consent Applications for any involving heritage matters and we keep an eye on heritage sites. (Further explanation is on page 32.)

We supported QLDC's decision to decline the application for an unusual 'Olive Leaf' building at St Patrick's Church in Arrowtown. Our reasons are that it was contrary to the Residential Arrowtown Historic Management Zone and would detract from the church which is a listed heritage building. When the proponents appealed the decision in the Environment Court, we supported QLDC. The Court has declined the appeal. We hope that this long process is now finished.

## **Community Involvement**

- Lakes District Museum: The very close relationship continues. Pauline Lawrence is our representative on the Museum Board. The archivist, Jo Boyd, is a member of our Board, and Denise Heckler contributes to the educational programme.
- Whakatipu Heritage Trust: Marion Borrell is a trustee.
- Queenstown Grey Power: We gave a talk about the history of Frankton at their AGM.
- QLDC's Arts, Culture and Heritage strategy: Some Board members attended the first meeting about the heritage strategy, and Pauline Lawrence has attended a subsequent meeting.

## **The Board**

The Board members are Marion Borrell (chairperson), Denise Heckler (deputy-chairperson and secretary), Ray O'Callaghan (treasurer), Patrick Beehan, Jo Boyd, Ed Elliott, Barbara Kerr, Pauline Lawrence, Colin Macnicol and Fran O'Connor.

Ray is retiring as treasurer but remaining on the Board. Barbara and Ed are not standing again. We thank them for their contributions.

We welcome expressions of interest in joining the Board.

## Trip to Matakanui, Drybread and Cambrians, October 2022



Denise Heckler, Professor Hallie Buckley, Dr Peter Petchey & Pauline Lawrence  
at Drybread Cemetery



Cambrians School (1885), and (below) an attentive class for Bob L de Berry



# Queenstown & District Historical Society and Heritage Protection

## Observations by Marion Borrell, 2023

Our mission is to promote and protect our local history.

As the Annual Report shows, the promotion of history takes most of our time.

### Heritage Protection from the Founding of the Society

In 1962 celebrations were arranged for the centenary of the discovery of gold, with many community organisations involved. This event engendered much enthusiasm for the history of the district.



The stagecoach in the procession. Note the Courthouse which adjoins the library. (LDM EP4406)

It therefore seems strange that shortly afterwards, in 1965, the Borough Council decided to demolish the stone library building and replace it with a new administration block and library. Also in 1965, the Historical Society was established, and immediately found itself leading a campaign that went nationwide and resulted in two referendums before the Council withdrew its plans.

Thereafter, the Society continued to be very active in protecting many buildings in the district. A full account of the first 50 years can be read in *Heritage Alive: Queenstown and District Historical Society 1965-2015* by Danny Knudson, published by the Society. Copies are available at the Lakes District Museum and from our Board.

### Heritage Protection Now

In the 2020s our role is not usually as a campaigning group, for four reasons:

- \*Compared to 1965, there is much more protection through the Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, and the Resource Management Act with its resultant local body regulations and processes.
- \*We are invited to take part in consultations on QLDC policies and plans.
- \*The value of local heritage is more widely recognised by property owners, developers, businesses and the community in general.

\*In 2002-4 the Society took an appeal to the Environment Court against the Council's approval of Ngai Tahu's plans for the Queenstown Post Office site, and lost. Since then, the Society's preferred courses of action have been to engage with owners and to use the processes available without initiating legal action.

Our role is to support the statutory bodies (Heritage NZ, QLDC and DOC) by:

- \*Writing submissions about proposals before these bodies.
- \*Informing them of any issues concerning local historic places.
- \*Monitoring Resource Consent Applications to QLDC involving historic sites and submitting to support or oppose relevant applications.
- \*Providing written support for funding applications by the Museum and the Whakatipu Heritage Trust.

### **Priorities for Protection**

#### **\*Heritage NZ – The List**

We are consulted about and support local applications to be added to The List.

#### **\*QLDC District Plan's Inventory of Protected Features**

### **Criteria for taking action**

- \*Protection of listed heritage buildings.
- \*Historical significance, rarity and visibility of heritage buildings.
- \*Compliance with regulations.
- \*Pragmatism e.g. properties must be fit for purpose or re-purpose.
- \*Realism about what the community needs and what the Board can undertake.

The Old Library today, housing the Citizens Advice Bureau





lakes district  
**museum**  
**& gallery**  
arrowtown

**VISIT OUR VIBRANT SHOP for BOOKS, ART & CRAFTS**

## Perfect for Presents



**49 Buckingham Street, Arrowtown 9302, 03-4421824 [www.museumqueentown.com](http://www.museumqueentown.com)**

# **Queenstown & District Historical Society 2008 Incorporated**

## ***Our Heritage Today – For Tomorrow***

### BOARD OF THE SOCIETY

#### *Chairperson*

Marion Borrell      marionborrell@hotmail.com      0211433861

#### *Deputy Chairperson and Secretary*

Denise Heckler      hecklerdenise@hotmail.com      0211097149

#### *Treasurer*

Ray O’Callaghan      rayocallaghan07@aol.com      02102856973

#### *Committee Members*

Patrick Beehan      ppbeehan@gmail.com      0274972503

Jo Boyd      riverleaphotography@gmail.com      0274205013

Ed Elliott      edwin@elliottarchitect.com      0272276888

Barbara Kerr      bdkerr@outlook.com      0272297244

Pauline Lawrence      paulinelawrence3@gmail.com      02102625382

Colin Macnicol      macnicols@xtra.co.nz      0274376902

Fran O’Connor      franiam@xtra.co.nz      0272209821

Honorary Solicitor    Graeme Todd

Correspondence to P.O. Box132, Queenstown 9348

Email: queenstownhistorical@gmail.com

Bank account 12-3405-0021065-01

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS are under review

Individual and Family Membership

Paid Life Membership

Queenstown Courier is published twice each year.

Editor and designer: Marion Borrell

Photo-restorer: Bob Cranfield

Produced with the assistance of the Lakes District Museum.

Printed and supported by Print Central, Queenstown.



[www.queenstownhistoricalsociety.org.nz](http://www.queenstownhistoricalsociety.org.nz)

