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Kinloch Sawmill at the Head of Lake Wakatipu, 1882
By John H. Gibb
The paddle steamer is the 'Antrim'.

Reproduced courtesy of Lakes District Museum, item S0003

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Cover: **Kinloch Sawmill at the Head of Lake Wakatipu, 1882**
by John H. Gibb, 1831-1909

Thanks to the Lakes District Museum. The painting hangs above the reception desk.

John Gibb was born near Glasgow. He trained as a landscape painter in oils and watercolours, especially selecting maritime and river scenes.

His first wife died in childbirth along with the baby. He later married his cousin. In 1873 three of their daughters died of scarlet fever, and in 1876 the family emigrated to Christchurch with their three sons. Gibb established his studio and home near the corner of Barbadoes and Worcester Streets. He taught students and made painting excursions around the South Island. From 24 December 1881 to 9 January 1882 he stayed at Kinloch, sketching and painting.

He was a founding member of the Canterbury Society of Arts when it was formed in 1880 and continued to exhibit his many works there until his death. He exhibited wherever possible, showing works in Auckland and Wellington from the early 1880s as well as sending paintings to many international and inter-colonial exhibitions. By the 1880s Gibb was regarded as New Zealand's major professional marine painter.

(Source: Wikipedia)

Hicks Cottage c1867 – From Derelict to Reconstructed and Revitalised

By Marion Borrell

Old School Road, downstream from the Lower Shotover Bridge, used to end in a farmyard where this cottage stands. Now, the farm has become the residential estate of Shotover Country, and the Queenstown Trail continues along the paper road beside to the cottage. In 2023 the nearby trail-counter recorded 86,548 movements of walkers and cyclists. Quite a transformation from its longtime isolation. What would become of the derelict cottage that hadn't been lived in for at least 100 years?

The cottage in 2012

In about 2016, to reduce further degradation, the owners and developers of Shotover Country, the Stalker family, had some repairs made to the chimney, the frame supported, the outside of the walls covered in plywood, and new guttering installed. Then the cottage awaited a champion.

History and significance:

The cottage was probably built by Thomas Hicks who owned the land from 1867 and whose biography is recorded in the next article. It has a category 3 heritage listing in the District Plan. It's notable for being one of the oldest surviving dwellings in the district – now about 155 years old - and for its wooden-shingled roof which has fortunately been covered with corrugated iron for most of its life. Hicks was a member of the J.W. Robertson and Co syndicate which established the sawmill at the Head of the Lake, so the timber would have come from Hicks's own mill.

The Heritage Impact Assessment by Robin Miller in 2020 described the cottage as having one room, about 6x4 metres with unlined walls. Its former iron-clad lean-to on the back had collapsed. It was in 'very substantial disrepair and structural disorder',

which perhaps in colloquial terms means on its very last legs. Therefore, the only means of rescuing it was by ‘deconstruction and reconstruction, retaining such of the heritage fabric (roof framing and shingles, wall framing and chimney stonework) that remains in serviceable/usable condition’.

Reconstruction

In 2019 the current owner, John Hudson, a builder originally from Northern Ireland, bought the section, became the champion of the cottage and engaged an architect. Having finished building his own house, in 2022 he took up the challenge of restoration, salvaging and incorporating as much as possible of the original materials. This involved lifting off the roof and putting a new corrugated-iron roof over it. A concrete slab was poured, and the rotten walls and framing were replaced. The chimney was deconstructed and rebuilt over a steel frame using the original stones by stonemason Mike Proctor. The interior has the shingled roof exposed as its ceiling. Sacking hanging from the rafters, which may have been used to divide the space into ‘rooms’, has been retained. Rimu sarking from a nearby building lines the walls.

John Hudson’s parents from Ireland and his dog Frankie.
The Queenstown Trail is through the fence on the right.

The result honours the past while meeting the building standards of the present, creating an attractive little cottage. It is now used as visitor rental accommodation.

Sources

John Hudson, the owner and builder
‘Hicks Cottage Wakatipu, Heritage Impact Assessment’, Origin Consultants Ltd, 2020
‘Hicks Cottage, Wakatipu Heritage Trust Report’, by Alexandra Neems, 2014

The 154-year-old wooden shingles uncovered before the new roof was added.

The interior showing the ceiling battens, shingles, sacking and rimu sarking on the right wall.

Thomas Hicks: From Farm Boy to Miner, Captain and Businessman

Compiled by Marion Borrell

Major source: A.J. De La Mare in the *Queenstown Courier* Issue 61, 1998

Hicks's rags-to-riches story is surely what every gold-digger hoped for, but it didn't happen without difficulties and hard work. Born in Cornwall in 1827, he went to school only to the age of nine then became a farmhand. After eight years on the land, he moved to coal-mining for three years. In 1849 aged 22 he migrated to Adelaide. Soon afterwards he sailed to the Californian goldfields, but returned to Australia.

In 1853 he was at the Ballarat diggings but after three years he was 'dead broke', having been unsuccessful in 'deep sinking' which is driving shafts deep down to prospect for reefs. He left and took up bush work. In 1862 the discovery of gold in Otago drew him to various Central Otago diggings – Wetherstones, Dunstan, Nokomai, Nevis and Alexandra. At last fortune smiled on him. He came first to the Arrow and then settled in Queenstown early in 1863.

With some capital in hand, he joined the syndicate of J.W. Robertson and Co to mill timber – red beech and tōtara – near the mouth of the Greenstone River. The syndicate consisted of J.W. Robertson who became the first mayor of Queenstown, Thomas Hicks, brothers Daniel and Frank McBride and their cousin John McBride, John Patterson and James Whitbourne. They opened their mill in August 1863. Machinery was imported from Victoria and the mill was powered by a 30-foot water-wheel. Timber was in great demand as Queenstown and the district developed, and the mill proved to be a profitable venture. The painting on the cover of this magazine shows the mill in 1882.

With the timber business prospering, in 1868 the syndicate decided to build a paddle steamer to transport their products to Queenstown. The ship was built near Kinloch to a design by a local resident, John Turner, who was naval architect from England. It was launched by Miss Ellen McBride, a sister of John McBride, with the name the *P.S. Antrim*. Its first voyage under steam took place on New Year's Day 1869. The *Antrim* was 25 metres long and had a speed of 8 knots. It was wood-fired and had an almost insatiable appetite for fire-wood. Its cargo space and reasonable comfort for passengers made the vessel very profitable. After a time, Thomas Hicks became the captain, becoming expert in the idiosyncrasies of the ship as well as the lake with its squally weather. According to F.W.G. Miller (p.210), when coming to a wharf, the captain had to stand on top of the paddles and shout directions to the engineer. Captain Hicks clearly led an active live. (Further information about the *P.S. Antrim* is in the next article.)

The syndicate of J.W. Robertson & Co expanded its operations, owning wharves, warehouses, farms, and the Brunswick Flour Mill at Kawarau Falls. It was a dominant contributor to the development and prosperity of the district. In 1883 the company was wound up and sold its many assets in a great clearing sale which included two farms at Frankton, a lime kiln, the sawmill, over 80 town sections, and two vessels – the *Antrim* and the *Venus*. At this stage, Hicks retired as captain at the early age of 56, but retained an ongoing financial interest in the replacement company, the Lake Wakatipu Shipping Co. Ltd.

Family: In 1870 Hicks married Ellen Theresa McBride, the sister of his business partner John McBride. He also became related by marriage to his partner J.W. Robertson who married Ellen's sister Mary. They were the daughters of Alexander and Sarah McBride of Bridesdale, Lake Hayes, who had emigrated from Ireland, following their sons John and Hugh to the district and bringing their five daughters.

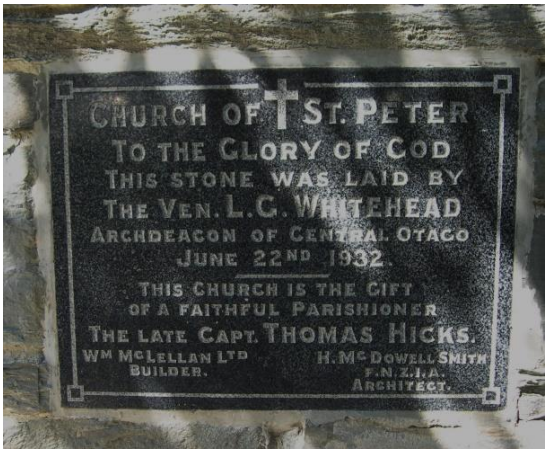
Ellen (left) and Thomas (right), probably with younger members of the McBride clan *(LDM EP2070)*

Thomas and Ellen had no children, but the McBride-Robertson-Hicks family was close-knit. Ellen died in 1901 aged 55, and Thomas in 1911 aged 84. It is noted in his obituary in the *Lake Wakatip Mail* (12 December 1911) that during his final illness, 'he has been most devotedly cared for and nursed by his nieces and nephews.'

The Cottage: One of J.W. Robertson & Co's purchases in 1867 was Block III, Shotover District, which includes the section where Hicks Cottage stands. Hicks himself may have built it. Tony Hanning suggests, 'It is possible that Hicks Cottage was where Thomas and Ellen lived when first married as it is in fairly close proximity to the McBride estate and not far from Frankton. Boat transport from Frankton was a regular means of travel prior to the development of the road along Frankton Arm.' In 1871 Hicks built an elegant wooden house in Queenstown, designed by F.W. Burwell, in Beach Street immediately opposite J.W. Robertson and Co's timber yard. He lived there for the rest of his life.

Public Life and the Anglican Church: Hicks took a prominent part in public affairs. He was a member of the Wakatipu Hospital and Queenstown Cemetery Trusts and of the Masonic Lodge. He was on committees for the Public Library, the Cricket Club, the Boating Club and the Jockey Club. He was a Lake County Councillor and a generous parishioner at St Peter's Anglican Church. Among the bequests he made to local organisations, he left £1,500 towards a new church to be built of stone or concrete, with the proviso that the work was to commence within 21 years or the money would revert to his beneficiaries (who were all Catholics). The current stone church was begun just in time in 1932.

The church and plaque today



In his 84 years of life, Thomas Hicks travelled a long way in distance and circumstances from his humble rural beginnings in Cornwall to become, as described in his obituary, 'a truly honoured member of the community' of Queenstown.

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The Paddle Steamer *P.S. Antrim*, 1868 - 1920

An excerpt from ***All Aboard – The Ships and Trains that Served Lake Wakatipu***, by **R.J. Meyer**, published by the NZ Railway and Locomotive Society, 1980. Pages 21-23. Available at local libraries.

The first of a long-lived series of New Zealand-built lake steamers eventually to become part of the NZ Government Railways system was the wooden paddle steamer *Antrim.* Built to carry cargo and a limited number of passengers, she was designed by Mr John Turner, an English naval architect living in the Wakatipu District. Three shipwrights, Thomas Luckie (who was trained in Dundee), Mr Dawson and Mr John Macdonald were engaged to go to the Greenstone Sawmill, situated about two miles down the lake from Kinloch, to build the *Antrim* for Messrs J.W. Robertson and Company, the mill's owners.

A slipway was built, and timber – red beech, tōtara and matai – was brought along a 2½-mile wooden tramway from the lower slopes of Mount Bonpland and from Bold Peak. These timbers were used to construct the paddle-wheeler's hull. Below the water-line 2½-inch thick red beech was used and above that tōtara planks of the same dimensions completed the hull. Matai was used for the decking.

Construction started in March 1868, and on 28 October the vessel was launched.

The *Antrim* made her first voyage under steam on New Year's Day 1869. She reportedly showered her passengers with sparks that ruined many dresses and suits. So, to prevent a recurrence of this, a spark-arrester in the form a balloon stack was fitted to the funnel. This ungainly appurtenance did much to mar the steamer's otherwise fine looks.

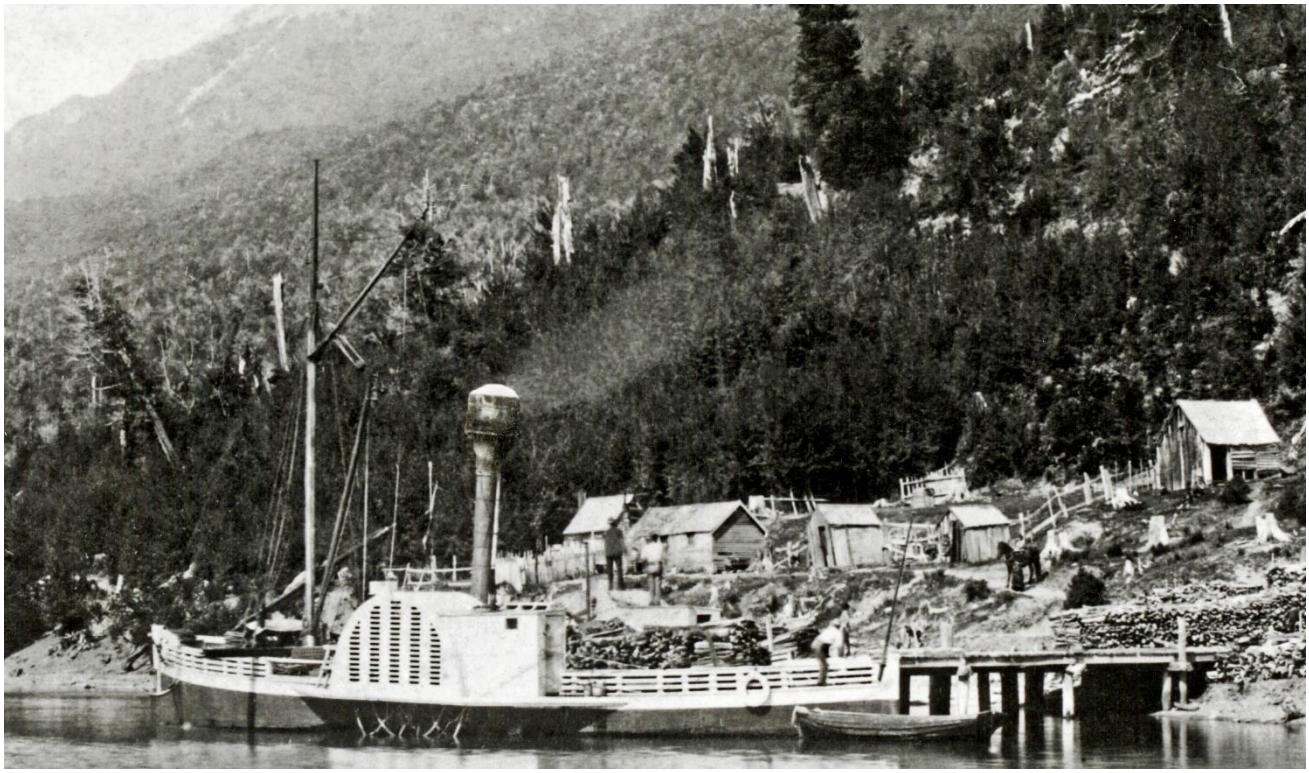


Photo showing the balloon stack smoking at Kinloch in 1870 (*EL0723*).

In 1894 the ship was converted to coal and the bulbous funnel-top was removed.

It was in the conveyance of passengers and cargo that the *Antrim* made her mark. She earned good money for her owners with the capacity to carry as many as 800 bags of grain along with the necessarily large supply of firewood for the boiler. From Invercargill goods were taken on the Oreti Railway to Winton, then transferred to wagons for conveyance to Kingston. From there, the *Antrim* would take cargo on to its destination.

Before many lakeside settlers had wharves built it, was common practice to take the vessels as close in to the fine shingled beaches as possible and then to place a few planks between the steamer and dry land to get people and goods ashore. The increased traffic when the Antrim was placed in service led to the erection of landing sheds and stores at Kingston and Queenstown and a new jetty at Queenstown by 1871.

Interview with Thomas Luckie, shipwright, builder and maintainer of the *Antrim*

In an interview for the *Lake Wakatip Mail* in March 1918, 50 years after the *Antrim* was launched, Thomas Luckie, one of the builders, recalled events in great detail. Regarding the day of the launch he said:

All the people from Glenorchy side came over … and some of the people from Queenstown including the editor of the *Wakatip Mail*, Mr Warren, Mr Frank McBride, 'Daddy' Robertson and Captain Hicks – all of these being members of the company. I might say that I was in her when she took the water. There was a strong breeze blowing from the Rees River and we had no easy job manipulating her, it being the intention to cross the Lake to load. She was only drawing 18 inches so the helm had very little effect. My 'crew' were principally tyros at the game, so in a sense I anticipated 'rocks ahead'.

The vessel gradually got driven down to the vicinity of the Islands before she picked herself up [with sails well set]. At last she got to the Greenstone, when she did well and gradually got abreast of the sawmill which was situated about 2 miles below where Kinloch now stands. We then proceeded to load her up with posts, rails and firewood, and also a lot of sawn timber left over from her construction with which to build a wharf for the company at Queenstown. This was piled 5ft high above her sides.

Paterson then took charge and trimmed her sails the wrong way I might say, so that she couldn't get out! He called out to me, 'Why don't you go out?'

'Because,' said I, 'you have trimmed her to go in.'

Paterson looked a bit perturbed but replied, 'You go and put her in trim then, and take charge.'

Eventually we set out for Queenstown, masts and sails creaking and high hopes dominating our hearts. When we sighted the township, flags were flying and crowds lined the shores of the bay in eager expectation of our coming. What a jollification there was in celebration of the event!'…

We discharged our cargo of timber into the Company's yard and next day got the pile-driving apparatus rigged up preparatory to starting the wharf. … 'Daddy' Robertson asked me to set up sheer legs for handling the boiler and engines, which had come by road via Shotover from Dunedin. Mr McDonnell of Arrowtown wagoned them through. … The boiler and engines in place, the decking was put in and the *Antrim* made ready for commission by New Year's Day.

Rebuilding: I rebuilt her twice. First at the Greenstone and seven years later on at the slips at the end of the Park. The last time we ribbed her with kauri. At my suggestion she was also covered above the water-line with zinc, which has made her last twice as long. Sea-going timber vessels are usually covered with copper.

Those were great days, and in more ways than one they tested a man's grit. I could tell you many a good story.

Final Days

After the *T.S.S. Earnslaw* came into service in 1912 there was much less work for the *Antrim*. She became a 'reserve' vessel and was allowed to fall into some disrepair. Her final mission of mercy probably took place in September 1916. While the *Earnslaw* was under repair, the *Ben Lomond* suffered a broken drive shaft at the Mount Nicholas jetty, and the end with the propeller attached fell into 16 feet of water. The *Antrim* sailed to the rescue and towed the *Ben* back to Queenstown.

Finally in 1920 the *Antrim* was broken up. The engine, however, was installed at the slipway at Kelvin Grove. Over 150 years since it was made in Dunedin, this engine is a protected heritage object, and can be seen at the slipway where it is still in use, including for hauling up the *Earnslaw* for her annual maintenance.

A scale model of the *Antrim* (1in:4ft) is displayed in The Boatshed Café at Frankton.

The *Antrim* in Queenstown Bay, in her later years with standard funnel *(LDM EL4526)*

All photos in this article are courtesy of the Lakes District Museum.

Mary Boyd - WW1 War Bride

Monologue written and presented by **Jo Boyd**, her granddaughter, for 'People From Our Past' in 2022.

Mary (sometimes known as May) Drysdale Boyd was born in 1897, at Hartfield, Blantyre, Scotland. She looks to be a teenager in this photo.

Disclaimer: Although the following story is based on some fact, it is also based on family folklore handed down, which may or may not be entirely accurate. There's also a sprinkling of filler here and there. Also sadly, I'm unable to reproduce the broad Scottish accent so you will just have to use your imaginations.

It is 1930 and I'm now 33 and pregnant with my sixth child. I'll call him Dougal, but my husband, Duncan McKenzie Boyd, he'll go and change his name on the birth certificate to Irvine, after the river in Darvel, Scotland from where he hails. He's a very stubborn man that Duncan. But we all called the bairn Dougal for all of his life anyway so it made no matter to me.

Duncan had come to NZ in 1911 and was soon living at Frankton. In July 1918 he had joined the New Zealand troops and travelled to England to fight in the first World War but contracted the Spanish Flu on the ship. He ended up with other troops holed up at Camp Sling in Bolton, Wiltshire. So he never got to fight as the war ended all the troops were sent to the same camp to await passage home. It took a long time for the authorities to organise themselves, and in the meantime there was mutiny among the troops. At this point, Duncan took the opportunity to go AWOL and went to Scotland, where he proposed to me and we married on the 21st of June 1919.

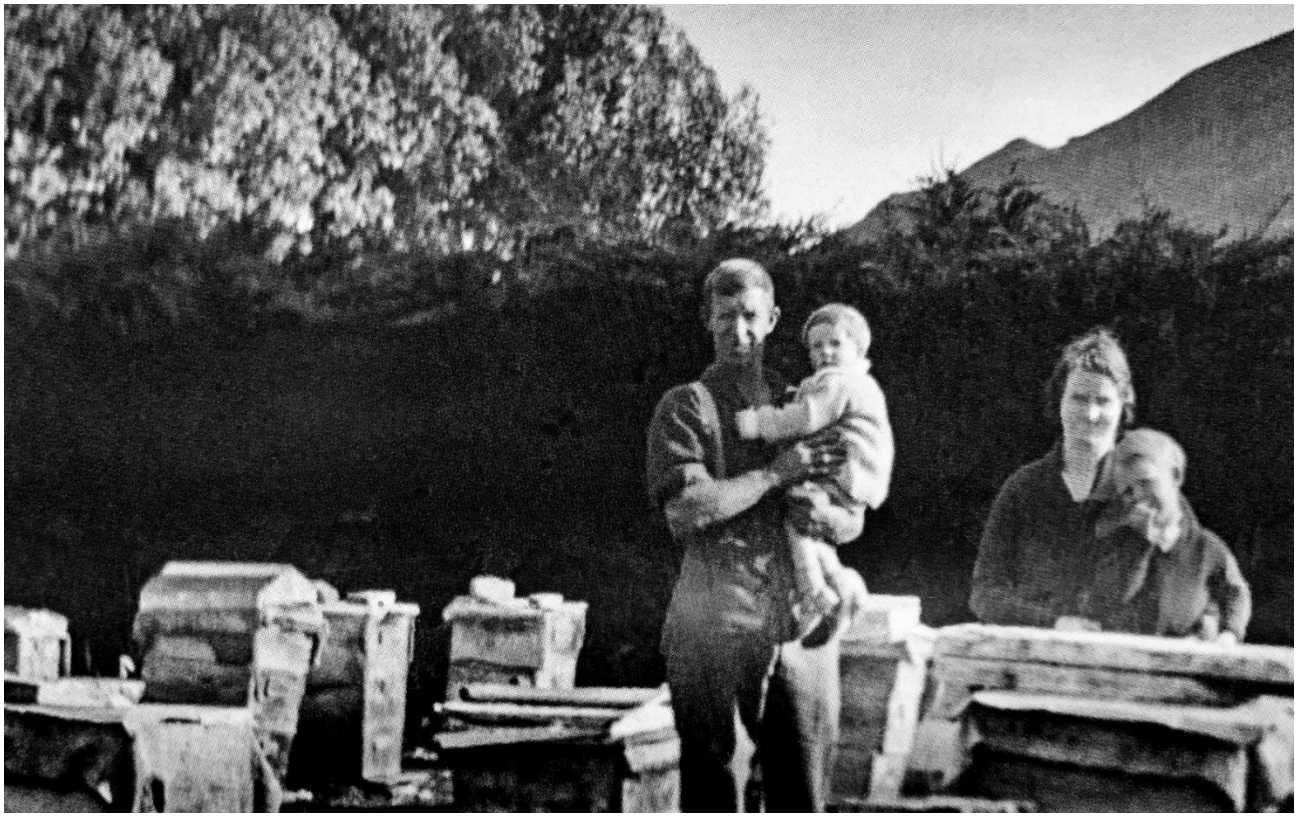
My maiden name is Boyd too. Duncan and I are first cousins. This was not quite acceptable to some members of our family. Luckily it hardly mattered as we soon set sail for New Zealand and lived near Frankton for the rest of our lives. I do miss home and my Scottish family though.

Duncan's father John came from Scotland to live with us in his retirement. His wife Margaret had died in 1911. All his six sons had previously emigrated to New Zealand. He spent some time living with four of his sons in the North Island before coming south to live with us. He passed away in 1922 and now rests in peace in the Frankton cemetery.

1930 is a tumultuous year for us. We live on a farm in the Coneburn district, on the south side of the Kawarau River at the foot of the Remarkables. Our eldest, son Jock, is a great help on the farm before and after school even though he's only 10 years old. I'm kept busy with Mavis (8), little Duncan (7), ever cheeky Gordon (5), and Hector (3).

Duncan gained the farm via a ballot when he returned from the war. The land is riddled with rabbits, so the sheep don't stand a chance. It's impossible to make a living from it.

Haymaking. Note the army hat, the scythe and the horse-drawn hay-stacker.



At the beehives

Duncan keeps bees, so sales of honey help, and our garden is a godsend to feed the bairns. We grow grain on the farm, which provides some stock feed but Duncan has another cunning use for it.

Wash-day is once a week on Saturday. I heat the water in the copper by lighting the fire beneath in the outside wash-house. It takes all day, bringing each load of washing to the boil before rinsing and wringing and hanging. Some days the boys have to stay in bed until the washing is dry because they only have a couple of changes of clothes, so if they dirty them all there are consequences! As there are very few trees about the landscape, everyone for miles around can see the smoke from the chimney and know it's wash-day Saturday. There aren't too many secrets you can keep around here.

Trouble was, there were some other days when the chimney occasionally produced smoke, and those in the know knew it wasn't extra washing being done. Duncan had dug a basement directly below the wash-house where he had installed a home-made still. This is where some of the grain produced on the farm came in handy. Making moonshine is surely a Scottish right no matter what country you happen to be living in! The still shared the same chimney as the wash-house but had to be used on non-washing days.

The trouble started when a local chap, badly inebriated, was caught by the local policeman. When asked where he got his illicit drink, he dropped poor Duncan in it. The next thing we knew, Duncan had been charged with illegally producing and selling alcohol. On circumstantial evidence alone, for god's sake! Meanwhile Duncan had thrown the entire still in the river and it was never found by the authorities – nor the basement discovered.

So, all because of the flappy mouth of one drunk, we lost the entire farm. It was auctioned off, but not before Duncan had the kids hide things in the neighbouring gully, like handy bits of wire and posts. This situation was an unimaginable shame for us in the community. And me, with another bairn on the way! Thankfully, at the auction no one would buy Molly the horse, as the local folk knew that she was the only means Duncan had of earning a living as a musterer.

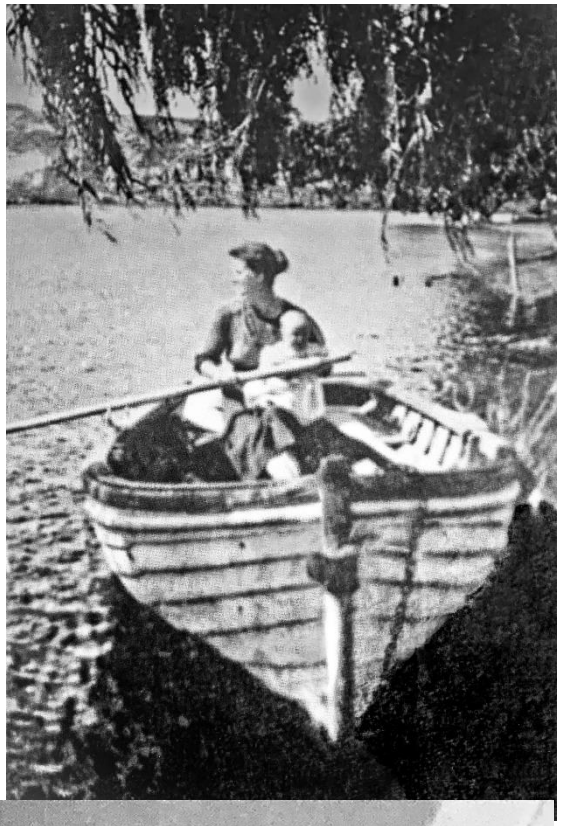
Duncan and his team about to go mustering

Duncan is resourceful, I'll tell you that. He set about restoring the old shanty down by the river on the neighbouring property where he first lived when he came to New Zealand. The 8 x 1inch red beech boxing timber, which had been salvaged from the river while the Kawarau Falls Bridge as being built, proved very handy. It seems Duncan had some mates in the bridge-building crew. He lined the tiny two-roomed cottage with them. No insulation of course, just the coal range to keep the winter cold at bay. There isn't much room, certainly not for our six children, but we have cots set up on the semi-open porch and some in a couple of rough huts alongside, and we manage somehow. It's pretty hard in winter when the snows drift into the porch.

There's no running water in the house, so the copper is set up on the river's edge. The long drop is out the back amongst the gum trees, and beyond that sit the bee-hives. I'm setting up my garden – I get a lot of joy from my flowers and I'm determined to have it stretch from the cottage right to the river's edge. My wee bit of solace in my drudgery of an existence.

Getting to School

Jock and Mavis first attended school at the Lower Shotover School. I would row them across the Kawarau River and they would walk to school - along the river banks, over the Shotover bridge near the river mouth and up to the school house. It was a long day for wee ones.



This year,1930, there is a new 'school bus', Jack Dagg's Hudson car, which takes the children, including my wee Duncan into the Queenstown School. This is a very exciting development for them, although they must first walk a mile over the paddocks, crossing Muddy Creek to get to the White Cottage where the bus stops and turns around. And do it all again on the way home.

From left: Cap Jardine, Katie Kavanagh, Joyce Hansen, Mal O'Connell, Mary Wallace, Alan Hansen, Duncan Boyd, Joan O'Connell, Evan Hansen, Mavis Boyd, Jock Boyd, Arthur Wallace, May Kavanagh.

Mary's garden in spring with daffodils and blossom

The completed family in 1935:
Back: Jock, Mavis, Duncan jnr.
Middle: Mary, baby Heather, Duncan holding David
Front: Hector, Dougal and Gordon.

Epilogue by Jo Boyd

Grandma Boyd was an elderly woman when I knew her. She had moved out of the farm house at Boyd Road by this time and resided in a newly built home provided by her eldest son, Jock, on Edgar Street in Queenstown.

She enjoyed her end of years in comparative comfort with a lovely view of the town. While there, she created yet another wonderful garden of which she was especially proud. You would always get a tour whenever visiting.

I remember she was also a great baker, seemingly never without shortbread and fruitcake in the tins to go with a good strong cup of tea and a natter, with the knitting needles always at the ready for yet another jersey for the many grandchildren.

Duncan had died in 1953 and is buried in the Frankton Cemetery.
Mary died in 1975 and lies at rest in the Queenstown cemetery.

How Christianity Migrated to the Arrow

Introductory talk by Marion Borrell given at a Society meeting in St John's Presbyterian Church hall in October 2021 before we had an architectural tour of the church and St Paul's Anglican Church.

Three years ago we had a meeting about 'Our Emigrant Ancestors – why they left.' This talk is about something many of them brought with them.

How many of you know that your ancestors brought Bibles or other religious books with them when coming to NZ? We can imagine parents giving Bibles to their departing sons and daughters, and praying that they would be safe from harm and evil influences. It's likely that many of the first colonists here had Bibles and strong links to a church-going past. (See next article about a local family's Bible.)

Now that we have the religious books packed, we can board the ship. Immigrant ships were melting pots of diversity. Whenever people spoke, their languages and accents revealed where they had come from. They all learned a great deal about other people from other places as they endured the close confines of shipboard life, and death. Here is a story I heard from my sister-in-law, a Presbyterian minister in South Auckland, about her parish's first minister. It starts a bit like a bar joke. Four clergymen, Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist, set sail for NZ in an immigrant ship. They ministered to their flocks, took turns leading the Sunday services, and conducted rather many funerals. Afterwards, the Presbyterian minister said that what he learned from this experience was that when they pray, Catholics and Anglicans kneel, Methodists stand and Presbyterians sit. The differences are of posture not faith.

What happened on arrival here? Some of the young men who rushed to the Arrow may have been trying to break away from the constraints of their upbringings, being more interested in finding gold than finding God. One version of life at the Arrow in the first two years that we often hear about is of claim-jumpers, brawlers, grog, brothels and the lack of Sabbath observance. The *Otago Witness* newspaper's reporter in January 1863 wrote: *'The night is one continual scene of fighting and screaming. I myself saw a knife drawn from a sheath last night, and heard till an early hour this morning an infernal saturnalia.'*

On the other hand, Sergeant-Major William Bracken credited Bill Fox with keeping order in the first couple of months before the police arrived. Fox was a powerfully built man and good boxer. The Otago Mounted Police officers had been recruited from the Victorian goldfields, so they already knew the troublemakers who had made the same journey. Although they were very poorly equipped, the police did what they could in this outpost of the colony. The place may have been rowdy, but it wasn't entirely lawless.

Less obvious than the noisier miners would have been the folk who in their tents and huts were reading their Bibles and saying their prayers. Stevan Eldred-Grigg in his history, *Diggers, Hatters and Whores: the story of the NZ Gold Rushes* (Random House 2008) relates that two men at the Arrow were jeered for praying aloud in their tent. But maybe, just below the brash exteriors, those mockers might have had a Christian layer.

Eldred-Grigg includes an incident told in Arthur Dudley Dobson's *Reminiscences.* Dobson, a surveyor, went into a bar on the West Coast with a Catholic priest: *When we arrived a lot of Irish diggers were having a spree. They were half drunk and fighting, some in the bar, and some outside. Father Larkin walked into the bar-room, took off his hat, and exclaimed in a loud voice, 'Peace be to all here.' Instantly every man dropped to his knees, and there was dead silence. Father Larkin then pronounced a blessing, and the men rose.… Everyone welcomed him at Canoe Creek.*

The first goldfields warden and resident magistrate, Richmond Beetham, who was based in Queenstown from 1863, was a devout Anglican and a lay-reader. When he left the district in 1876, he stated, *'I have formed a high opinion of the miners of the district. I believe that upon the whole a nobler, more manly, and more hardworking class of men does not exist.'* So, there was some religion about, even in a goldrush.

The next stage at the Arrow:

After the two years in the rivers, many diggers departed, many to other goldfields, and the town's transition to permanent settlement began. More families came, and the residents threw their energies into creating a proper town. Christians gathered in their denominations. Cottage services were held in homes by lay people. For a significant number of Arrowtowners, the routine of worship continued.

Visiting priests and ministers came from time to time, holding meetings in any large enough place, such as the school, the courthouse and the library hall. In 1868, the *Lake Wakatip Mail* reported: *Arrowtown has had quite a plethora of clergymen lately…. the Rev Mr Grainger, Church of England; the Rev Mr Campbell, Presbyterian (who, however, comes here once a fortnight); and Father Martin, Roman Catholic. So the spiritual weal of the good folks here is by no means neglected now-a-days.*

After a committee meeting of the Church of England, it was reported that already £200 had been pledged towards the engagement of a permanent minister. In 1869 the Reverend Richard Coffey became the first vicar of the combined Queenstown-Arrowtown parish, living in Queenstown and travelling to take services here. Also in 1869, the first permanent Presbyterian minister was appointed, the Reverend Donald Ross, who resided at Frankton and also came here. (See the next article about him.)

1869 was a busy year. Sections in Arrowtown became available. The congregations each acquired several, and fundraising began to build churches.

What a huge effort! The *Lake Wakatip Mail* and *Lake County Press* advertised these events and reported afterwards. For example, from 1871 there is a report of a Bazaar for the Church of England building fund, held in the Arrowtown Library Hall. Some of the ladies from Queenstown and Arrowtown who ran the stalls were named – 'Mrs Coffey and Betts from Queenstown, and Mesdames Perrelle, McHutchison and Welsh, while Mrs Perkins had charge of the refreshment department, consisting of tea, coffee, and a liberal supply of other good things of this life. Over £70 was raised, despite the unfavourable weather. (It was May.) In the evening a ball was held for the cause in Messrs Feely, Healy and Moran's hotel.' Judging by the reports of these fundraising events, every congregation assisted the others, as well as supporting events for the schools, the library, the hospital and every worthy cause.

GRAND CONCERT!

AT MACETOWN,

To be given by the

ARROW PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

(In aid of the Building Fund of St. Paul's Church, Arrowtown)

On the Prince of Wales' Birthday

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1872.

To commence at 8 o'clock, p.m.,

in Mr Resta's Building.

—o—

PROGRAMME:

FIRST PART.

1. "God Bless the Prince of Wales."
2. "Murmur of the Shell" - Mrs Watson
3. Instrumental Duett, with variations— Messrs Evans and M'Leav

---

Presbyterian Church Bazaar.

A BAZAAR

In aid of the Building Fund of the Presbyterian Church, Arrowtown, will be held in the

LIBRARY HALL,

on

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,

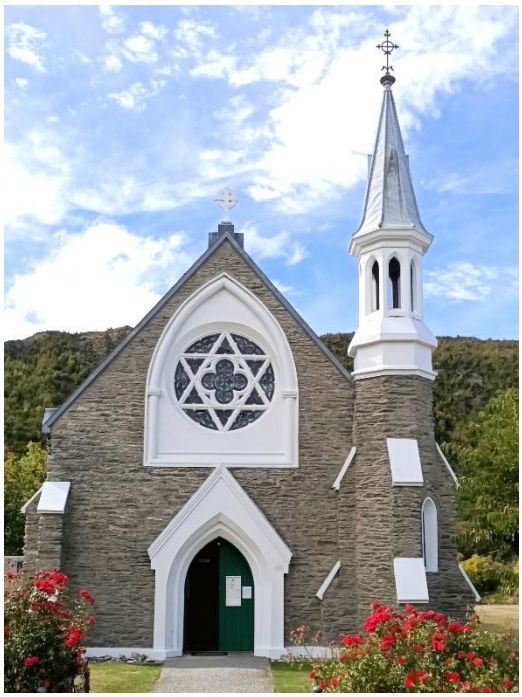
December 26th and 27th, 1873.

CONTRIBUTIONS in Ladies' Work, Fruit, Poultry, or Farm Produce will be thankfully received by any of the following members of the Ladies' Committee:—Mrs Evans, Mrs Marshall, Mrs Mackay, Mrs Paterson, Mrs Reid, Mrs Watson, Mrs Ewan Cameron, and the Misses Paterson.

This fundraising energy in those first few years would also have contributed to a sense of community spirit and local identity. On a personal note, my four maternal great-grandparents were early members of St Paul's and St John's. The English couple may have met through their church. My grandmother and grandfather, being the first generation born here, were brought up in the two denominations and met in the melting pot of Arrowtown.

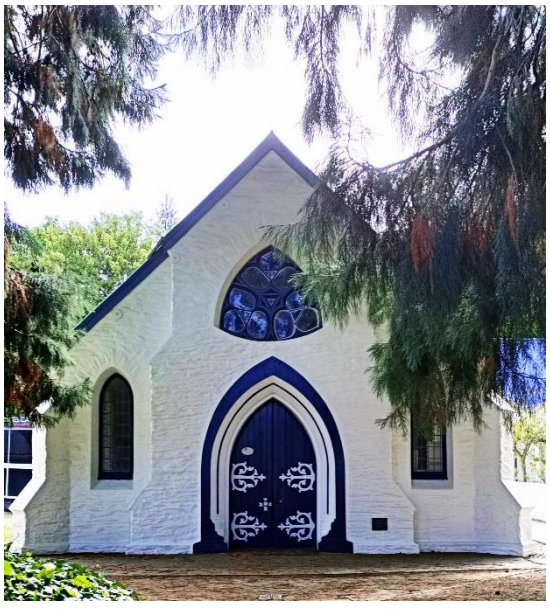
Beautiful and distinctly different churches were built on cakes and pickles, crotchet, vegetables, farm produce, fairs, concerts and dances. The Anglicans were the first to open their church, St Paul's, in 1871, built by Mr Turner of Queenstown. The Catholics' St Patrick's and Presbyterians' St John's opened in 1873, both designed by Frederick W. Burwell who was also the secretary of St Peter's Anglican Church in Queenstown.

All three churches, now over 150 years old, continue to be places of worship for their congregations and are heritage-listed buildings treasured by the whole community.



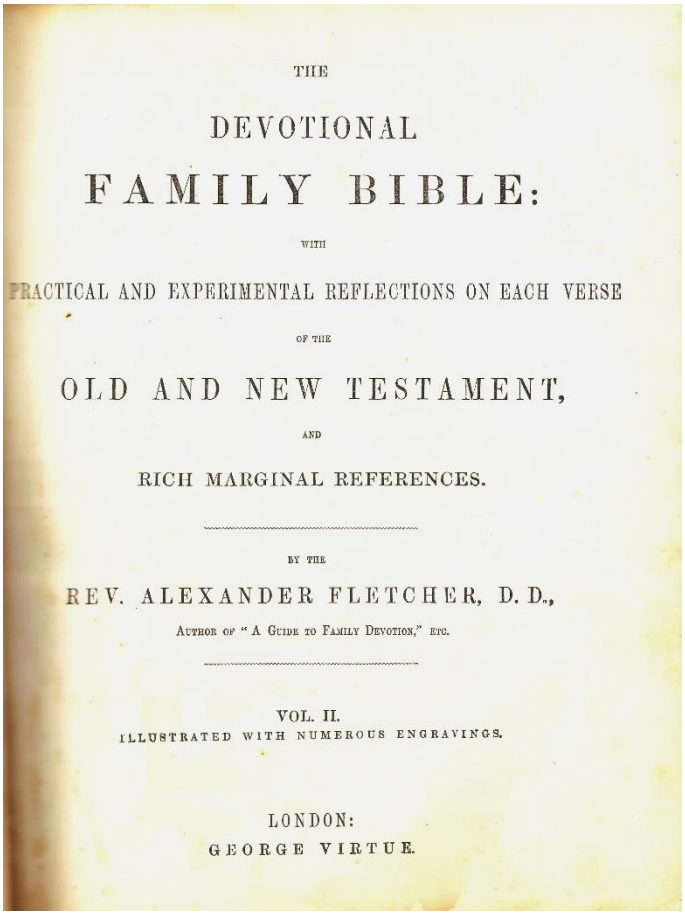
St Patrick's

St Paul's



St John's

The Hansford Family's Bible



THE

DEVOTIONAL

FAMILY BIBLE:

WITH

PRACTICAL AND EXPERIMENTAL REFLECTIONS ON EACH VERSE

OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT,

AND

RICH MARGINAL REFERENCES.

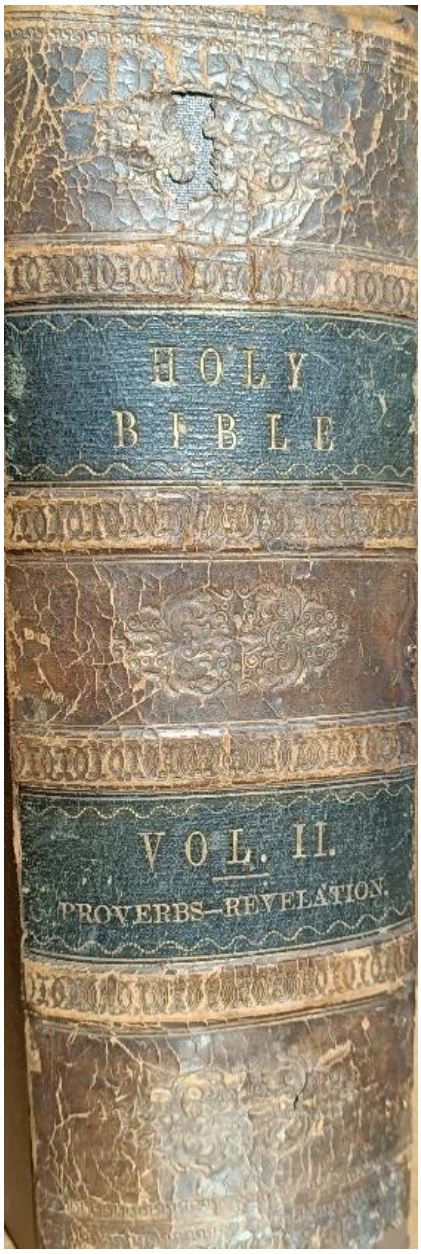
BY THE

REV. ALEXANDER FLETCHER, D. D.,

Author of "A Guide to Family Devotion," etc.

VOL. II.
ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

LONDON:
GEORGE VIRTUE.



This venerable Bible in two large volumes, with its evocative engravings, learned notes and lessons, arrived in the Arrow district in 1874.

It had been given to Annie Hansford Duke Stone (born 1856) by her grandparents before she left England.

In Volume II the flyleaf (opposite) records the marriage of Annie's grandparents, Thomas James Hansford and Ann Duke in 1823, and the birthdates of their eight children. They brought up Annie and her sisters after their parents died.

In 1871, Annie (aged 15) and her sister Elizabeth (13) travelled unaccompanied from the Isle of Portland in Dorset to Port Chalmers, following two uncles, an aunt and their eldest sister Sarah who had already arrived, as had members of the wider clan.

On the voyage, Annie met David Scurr, whom she married in Arrowtown in 1874, as is recorded on the flyleaf of Volume I. They lived at Cardrona which was part of the Arrow district then. Their children were christened in St Paul's Anglican Church.

In time, the Bible was passed down to her great-grandson, Ray O'Callaghan of Arrowtown. There are numerous other descendants in the Queenstown-Lakes area.

This Bible and the many others that came on immigrant ships from the Old Country demonstrate the continuity of Christianity in the homes of early settlers.

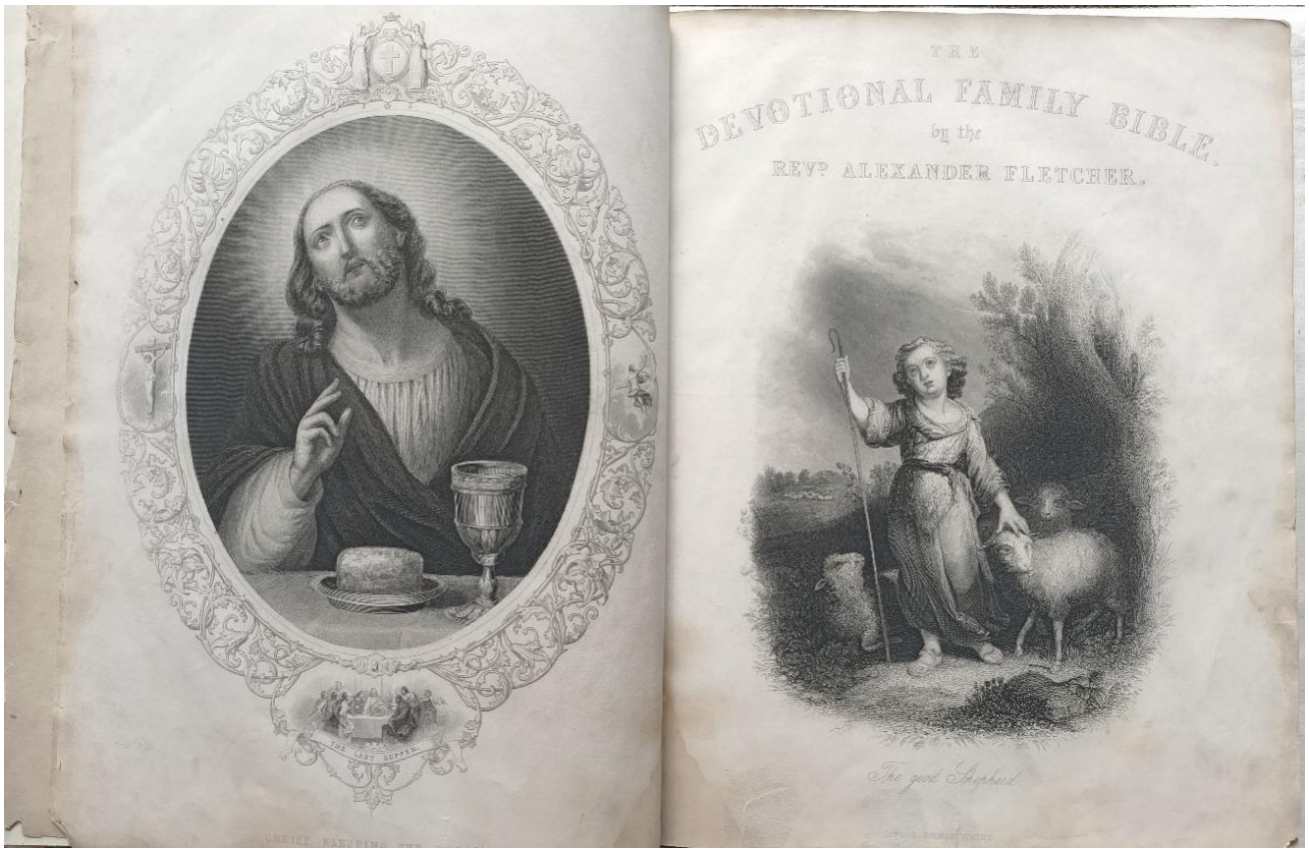
Tho' Sa' Hansford Born March 30 the Year 1802
Ann Duke Born May 30 in the Year Lord 1802
Tho' Sa' Hansford & Ann Duke was Married May 10
in the Year of our Lord 1823

Names and Ages of their Childern

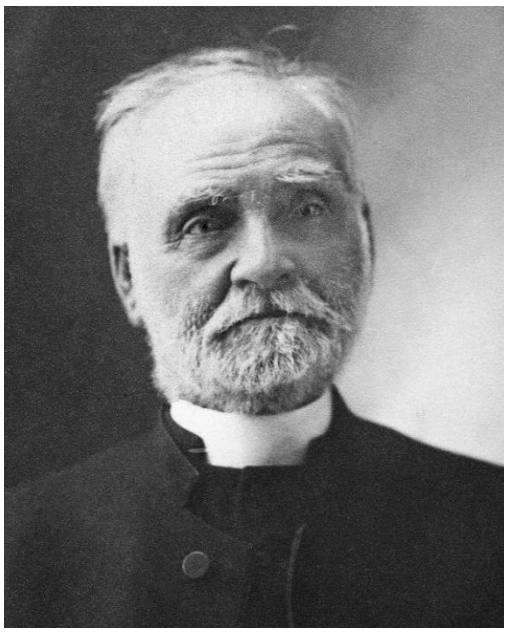
1 Julia Ann Duke Hansford born April 8 the Year 1825
2 William John Duke Hansford born June 18 the Year 1826
3 Tho' Sa' Hansford —— born May 22 the Year 1828
4 George Duke Hansford born April 7 the Year - 1830
5 Charlott Duke Hansford born July 7 the Year 1832
6 Harriott Duke Hansford born March 15 the Year 1835
7 Elizh Sa' Hansford — born April 9 the Year 1839
8 Joseph Sa' Hansford born Dec 19 the Year 1842

Children Deceasd

William John Duke Hansford Died Sept 10 the Year 183
Charlott Duke Hansford Died Sept 6 the Year 18



The Reverend Donald Ross, Presbyterian Minister 1868-1891



Monologue written by Marion Borrell for 'People From Our Past' 2024

Note that Donald Ross's words have been used as much as possible and the source material is detailed, some some creative licence is involved in ascribing words to him. The occasion is his final service in Arrowtown in 1891.

Blessings on this gathering. What joy it is to me to be invited to this sacred place, this steadfast stone church, these noble trees, and a congregation of people of this district.

I have been asked to describe to you my life as a clergyman serving here from 1868 until 1891. I trust that my words will provide some interest and benefit for you.

As I look back to my humble beginnings in Ross-shire in Scotland, it is clear that the hand of the Lord guided me in to this place where I served Him for the most vigorous 22 years allotted to me. I had studied Divinity in Glasgow and Edinburgh and became a Gaelic scholar. Once ordained, I ministered on the Isle of Lismore in Argyllshire for six years. Then, when at a meeting in Glasgow, I heard the call from the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland for ministers to come to them, as they had great needs in their new country.

With my new wife, Jane, I set sail in 1868 and reached Port Chalmers. Soon after, I came here to the Wakatipu, for a two-month trial – a trial to see whether I would suit the people here, and whether the place and people suited me. This place among the eternal mountains. These people, themselves all newly arrived, who had come to seek gold in the swift rivers or in the commerce of the towns that were being formed.

I came by coach over increasingly rough roads to Arrowtown, then by horseback fording the Shotover River to reach Queenstown. The mountains pressed close in to the lake. The town itself appeared very raw, with small buildings and tents lining the few streets and scattered beyond. The people were young and busy, and boats plied the lake. Above and beyond these human endeavours towered the sharp mountains where the hand of the Creator seemed still to linger.

And here, at the uttermost reaches of civilisation, were people in need of God's succour and salvation. At once I set my hand to the plough – or rather, my body in the saddle.

I preached my first service in the Queenstown Wesleyan church as there wasn't a Presbyterian church. The congregation numbered about 40 parishioners.

Then I rode to Skippers. On the way I visited diggers in their huts or working their claims, and gave them God's blessing. A goodly number attended my service and gave me a hearty welcome.

My next destination was Arrowtown then on to Bracken's Gully up the Arrow Gorge. Darkness had fallen by the time my guide and I reached the vicinity. We couldn't find our way, so stopped and coo-eed. Finally, a man came carrying a colonial lantern as they call it – an upside-down jar with a lighted candle inside. And that's when we discovered that my horse was standing on the edge on an old mineshaft overgrown with grass. Surely Providence had saved me. With grateful hearts we were taken to Mr White's house, where there were 28 miners representing eight nationalities and as many languages awaiting us. After the service, as there were no beds available there, we rode back through the darkness to Arrowtown.

Surely, I was guided. And so it came to pass that when the parish asked me to accept their call, I did so, knowing full well the challenges of my far-flung parish. It was my mission for more than 20 years.

And far-flung it was:

The distance from Queenstown to Nevis via Doolan's Pass was 38 miles.
Hawea and Wanaka (known then as Pembroke) were 50 miles via Cardrona.
Skippers 22 miles and further to Bullendale and The Branches.
Moke Creek was 10 miles.
Glenorchy 35 miles, and all except this last one were accessible only by rough roads or mountain tracks.

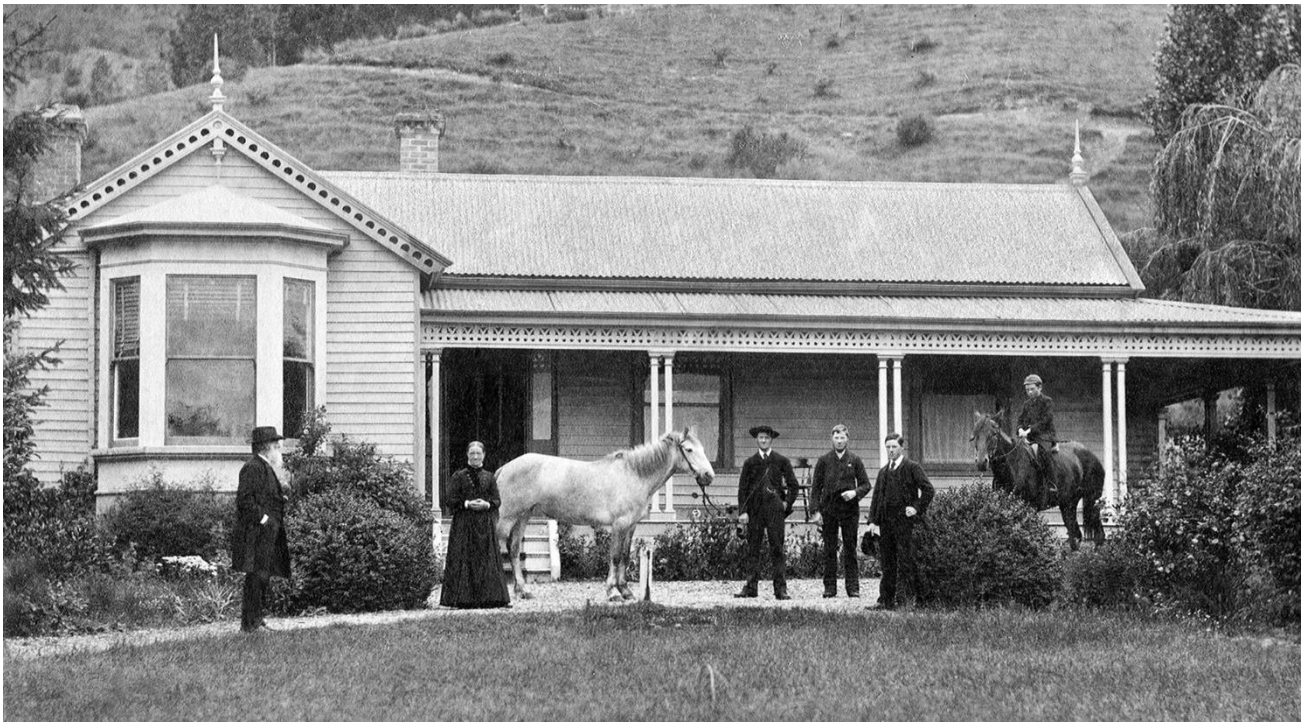
In addition, I preached at Macetown, Maori Point, Bullendale, Bracken's Gully, Gibbston, Crown Terrace, Millers Flat, Greenstone, Paradise, Sunnyside, Beach Bay, Twenty-five Mile, and Kingston. Sometimes I was rather late for the service, but always the welcome was warm.

Usually I spent four days each week travelling. I'm told I covered about 5000 miles each year. Always keen to be at the next gathering, exhorting my flock from the pulpit. I relished every opportunity to speak the Gaelic with the many Scots miners. And also with Father John McKay, the Catholic priest, who was a Highlander.

At Bullendale there numbers of Welsh miners. On a calm day, what a joy to hear 'Guide me O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim in this barren land' echoing across the valley when the Welshmen opened their lungs.

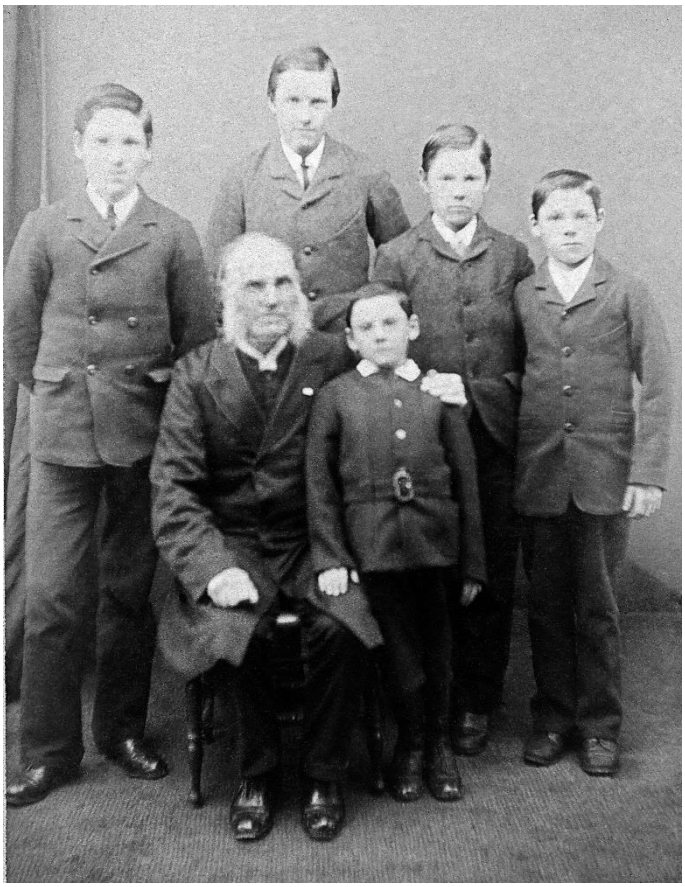
In Arrowtown I preached in the Courthouse until St John's church was built in 1873. Several years later an unusually large vestry was added. This included a bedroom - thoughtfully set up, spotless and adorned with flowers. I would ride over on Saturday afternoon, then after a dinner and evening with one of the parishioners, I could spend a peaceful night there and rise refreshed for the next day's journeys and services.

At first it seemed to me that Frankton was the most central location for the manse, and I persuaded the Presbyterian leaders of this. A manse was therefore bought for us in Southberg Avenue. It was not far from the Frankton church which was built to be the courthouse but not used as such because the main town was located at Queenstown. Unfortunately, Frankton was rather isolated for my family with only one other dwelling besides the hospital, and I was often absent. One evening a naked man jumped through an open window into our living-room. He was a mental patient from the nearby hospital and his attendants soon arrived, but it was an unsettling event for my wife.



At the Queenstown manse in about 1889 with horses Roderick and Jennie. *(LDM EP1422)*

Jane with John (5) and Charles (3) in 1878 *(LDM EP1408)*



Donald with Young Donald, Henry, Edward, John, and Charles in 1885. *(LDM EP1471)*

Another disadvantage of Frankton was the distance I had to ride home from Queenstown on Sunday evening after a day of travelling from church to church. In 1878 the manse was sold and a replacement was bought in Queenstown, in Melbourne St.

During my twenty-two-year tenure, the congregation and the churches grew. In 1870 the Queenstown church was built on the corner of Ballarat Street and Camp Street, just across the road from the Post Office. It was named St Andrews. Other churches were built at Millers Flat under Coronet Peak in 1871, and Arrowtown's church of St John in 1873.

Throughout, my beloved and resourceful helpmeet, Jane, cared for our home and our children. We were blest with five sons – Henry, Donald, John, Charles and Edward. Jane managed to feed and clothe us somehow on my modest stipend.

Of vital assistance to me were my horses. Indeed, the horse is one of the noblest of God's creatures. In Scotland I hadn't had to ride very often, but here I spent much of my time in the saddle. My horses were my strong and sure-footed companions. Polly was my first and my best. When she became too old for the work, I was sorry to sell her, with her foal at hoof. The new owner was a racehorse trainer. He named the foal The Young Parson, and he became a fine galloper. Roderick was the second. At 16 hands he towered over me. He gave me good service until 1885 when I was given a buggy. Roderick objected, and one day in Queenstown he nearly knocked down the veranda of the post office to express his disapproval. He was replaced in the shafts by Jennie**,** a willing little cart horse and thoroughly good-natured. Alas, during a service in Arrowtown, when she was in the horse enclosure, she started galloping around on the icy ground. She fell, broke a leg and had to be shot. Immediately I had the problem of two more services to take that day. But while I ate dinner at the Royal Oak hotel, my host rallied support and bought me a horse named Minnie. She was waiting in the shafts by the time I had finished my meal. You can imagine how surprised my boys were when I arrived home, and how sad we all were to have lost dear Jennie.

To give you an idea of my journeys, I have an account of one in a letter I wrote:

I was away from Queenstown travelling and preaching for a week, visiting such places as Cardrona, Albert Town, Pembroke and Wanaka West station. I got lost on my way to the last-named on Cattle Flat; got bogged in the Matukituki River, and nearly lost my good horse Polly. The flood came down and kept me prisoner at West Wanaka Station for two days. After that I ventured across the river, nearly swimming, and returned homewards via the Motutapu, following that lonely, desolate river near the base of Advance Peak, climbing the mountain, coming down on the Macetown side in the dark, stumbling in the creek and over diggers' wing-dams. At length I reached Macetown when people were finishing supper. They sent out the bellman, mustered the people and I preached in the school. I then slept in the school, feeling very tired and hoping that my troubles were over. But lo! when I awoke and looked out, the ground was covered with a heavy fall of snow.

As I was making my way to Arrowtown next morning (a Saturday) the snow was melting fast, and the many river crossings were deepening so much that only with difficulty I got through the last two crossings. I reached the Bank of New Zealand, where

my friend, Mr McKay was, as wet as if I had just been pulled out of the river, but truly thankful to get through it all, and to be home in time for Sunday.

By 1891, I was almost 60, and even with the use of a buggy where the roads allowed, I was finding the travelling tiring. With my health less robust, I realised that I should continue my work in a less arduous location. At first, I visited my sister in Sydney for a rest, then on my return I resigned.

During 22 years I had:
baptised 630 children,
taken 120 burials,
married 129 couples
and received 112 young communicants into the church.
But more important than such numbers was the unmeasurable work of spiritual welfare.

Once more I made the rounds of the district, receiving farewell wishes and delivering messages of encouragement to the flock.

In Queenstown the parishioners made me a generous presentation of their donations. I thanked them heartily, and said: Two things cheered me in my work – that every bend and turn of the roads I had travelled, unveiled some fresh beauty to lift my mind with wonder at God's creation. And secondly, the loving welcome and cordial hospitality of the people everywhere. But above all, the work itself was so noble, so transcending in importance that even if I had a hundred lives, I would gladly consecrate them to the same great work of carrying the gospel message to every creek and gully where souls were to be found. Never would I forget the friendly faces and loving hearts that co-operated with me during these many years.

For my final service in Arrowtown I preached on the text from Saint Paul to the Corinthians: *Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.* And so we parted.

After being a relief minister at various places around New Zealand, my family and I moved to Sydney where I worked for the Home Mission Committee.

I was called to the Lord in 1911.

Great Jehovah had indeed guided me according to his wisdom.

I now thank-you for your courteous reception of my reminiscences.

May the Lord protect and guide you too. Amen.

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More Local Rabbit Tales

Continuing the topic from *Courier 110* after the meeting at which we exchanged 'Rabbit Tales' in November 2023.

William Rees's Roles with Rabbits from 1863 to 1897

Rees's great-granddaughter, Rosemary Marryatt, who is a Society member, has written his biography, *A Sheep in My Eye – the story of Queenstown's founder, William Gilbert Rees*, which is available at the Museum. She provides an account of his introduction of rabbits, and also of his later roles in contending with the plague.

'And who assisted with the acclimatisation of rabbits at Lake Wakatipu? None other than Mr William Gilbert Rees! The year was 1863, and Rees, ever keen to supply his growing family with meat protein other than that from sheep or cattle, released a mating pair of rabbits on one of the islands in Lake Wakatipu. Three years later the *Lake Wakatip Mail* reported that 'several times after [having] visited the island and not being able to catch sight of any … he arrived at the conclusion that they had died for want of grass. It turns out the surmise was not correct, for upon Mr Rees landing a few days ago at the same place, to his agreeable surprise he found his labour had not been spent in vain, and after securing a gun, managed to kill seven, besides seeing others.' (Pp 60-1)

Within several years his pleasure in rabbits must have given way to concern.

After leaving Queenstown, he was a sheep station manager on a series of runs in the Waitaki Valley and Galloway in Central Otago during the growing plague. He provided information to the Rabbit Nuisance Select Committee for the 1881 Rabbit Nuisance Act and later amendments including one creating rabbit inspectors.

In 1883 Rees (then aged 55) became a Rabbit and Sheep Inspector, a job involving much travelling to scattered farms and runs. He worked in Otago, South Canterbury, the West Coast and finally Wellington including the Wairarapa.

He retired at the age of 70 from his position as Stock Inspector, having played his part in combatting the rabbits.

The Perils of Making Poison, from the *Southland Times,* February 1895

Frederick Daniel, a former Mayor of Queenstown and Chairman of the Lake County Council, imported from Australia a new recipe for rabbit poison with secret ingredients. He set up business in Invercargill. Almost immediately several workers became ill and one died. They had been working long hours in a shed mixing phosphorous and various other ingredients in an open tub and kneading it into cakes by hand. Daniel had told them to keep their heads away from above the mixture. The inquest found that there were insufficient safety measures (obviously.) Imagine what the reaction of OSH would have been!

Cattle Poisoned and Family Fractured at Lake Hayes

By Marion Borrell from family sources

George H White and his family farmed on Morven Hill above Lake Hayes from 1869. By the late 1890s the rabbits were a plague, 'locusts with fur'. Rabbits broke the family apart. The Government Stock Inspector made complaints about the state of rabbit infestation, so George's two young adult sons, George David and Peter, laid out poison. But some cattle got into the paddock, ate the poison and died. This was a severe financial blow.

Their father – always a harsh parent - was furious and ordered his sons off the property, giving them half an hour to leave. They did, and at first lived across the road in the Warrender Park Hotel which where the showgrounds is now. Then they moved away. Their mother Rachel and sisters kept in touch with them with frequent letters. Peter went goldmining at Waihi in the North Island and died of an infection in 1906 aged 32. George David also left the district and didn't return until after his father's death in 1916.

The rabbits continued to thrive then and now.

A golden rabbit skin caught on Morven Hill, Lake Hayes
by the White sisters, probably in the 1930s.

Reminiscences gathered from oral history recordings. Published in *Speaking of Change – Memories of the Wakatipu 1900-1960*, a booklet published by Lakes District Museum, 1992.

Fergie Heffernan: The rabbit pelts were mostly sent overseas, used a lot in the fur business, they were quite a good export, 7-8 million a year. They put about 400 in the big chaff bag. They had to be de-fatted and wired and dried and packed. They got some quite good cheques too. In the mid-1930s, we'd get about £6 a hundred.

Alec Robins of Lake Hayes: The rabbits were very bad when I came back from the war [WW2]. I remember there was a 70-acre paddock of barley at Kawarau Falls and they ate it down to about 9-10 acres that was finally threshed. You only had to cough and the land moved. There was a sale for rabbits and skins. I was able to keep myself and brighten up the house with the rabbits. In the first year I got 7000 and the second year I got 5000.

Bob Jenkins: I got a job as an inspector for the Lake Wakatipu Rabbit Board and stayed for 25 years until I retired. It was a small board with millions of rabbits. The government was dishing out plenty of money to the farmers in those days so we used to spend it. I had 14 rabbiters. It was mostly blocking holes with cyna gas. In the winter time we did poisoning using carrots and oats.

Ian Brown: We'd feed them 3-4 times on carrots, then leave them for a day so they'd get hungry and eat the strychnine-laced carrots. I remember people used to roll their own cigarettes and smoke after handling strychnine. I often wonder about that. We also used bisulphite. It was dangerous stuff. We had a machine that squirted it into the burrows.

Bob Jenkins: When 1080 came in it was great, nearly killed the lot. Rabbits got a bit shy with that. When Popeye Lucas started flying, it was a lot easier. Aerial poisoning took most of the winter.

A Child's View: Josephine Traill, in her memoir, *Child of the Arrow*, relates how her brother invited her to go on his early morning trap-tramp. Her job turned out to be the 'donger' – killing any animals still alive by hitting them behind the ears with a stout stick. 'I turned my back on my brother and tapped the rabbit behind the ears then laid it quietly down on the pile he was already skinning. In the twinkling of an eye, it was up and away over the tussocks, and I rejoiced. I was not invited to join my brother again.'

Rosie Grant, farmer, of Glenorchy. From an oral history in the Lakes District Museum. If you want to get rid of rabbits, you have to do it yourself. Don't bring in rabbiters. They need the rabbits so they can make a living. They won't kill them all.

Cardrona Contribution from Ray O'Callaghan

This informal wooden memorial was placed in the Upper Cardrona Valley by a former rabbiter in the 1950s and remained there for many years. Why would the runholders feel any gratitude to the rabbits for providing their 'prosperity'?

The answer is that because the rabbits had made sheep-farming uneconomic, the runholders were dependent on their enemy, the rabbit, for income from the sale of rabbit skins and carcasses.

After these sales were banned by the 1947 Rabbit Nuisance Amendment Act, the farmers were left in a vacuum, having lost a source of income but they still having to spend time and money killing rabbits.

Mona Macnicol's Rabbit-Skin Rug

During winters in the early 1940s, Archie and Mona Macnicol and their family of Mt Aurum Station migrated from Skippers up the Shotover to live in a two-roomed hut at The Branches to enjoy the winter sunshine and warmth of the more open location.

Mona had access to probably thousands of rabbit-skins. For each rug she selected forty variously-coloured pelts, cured them and made the design. Her stitches are tiny. The patchwork is sewn onto a firm backing to make the 54-inch/140cm square rug or bedcover.

This rug is an heirloom in Colin Macnicol's family, and makes an artistic finale for our collection of mostly grim rabbit tales, begun in *Courier 110*.

Queenstown & District Historical Society 2008 Incorporated

Our Heritage Today – For Tomorrow

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