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On the Shotover Track in Winter

William Mathew Hodgkins, 1883

A stretcher party en route to Frankton Hospital

Collection of Toitū Otago Settlers Museum (1965.62.1)

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Cover Painting: On the Shotover Track in Winter, 1883

William Mathew Hodgkins, 1833-1898, was the father of Frances Hodgkins. He was born in the dockside slums of Liverpool, but the family's circumstances improved and they shifted to Staveley village in Derbyshire.

William became a law clerk in London in the time and circumstances of *David Copperfield*. There he spent time studying J.M.W. Turner's works at Hampton Court and the National Gallery, and in 1859 he worked at the National Portrait Gallery. This painting reveals Turner's Romantic influence in its light, clouds, and fine details.

By 1862 he had arrived in Dunedin, where worked as a law clerk and was admitted to the Otago Bar in 1868. He married Rachel Owen Parker and they had six children including two artists, Isabel and Frances.

His earliest known painting is dated 1862. For the rest of his life, he promoted public art exhibitions and galleries. He was instrumental in the founding of the Otago Art Society in 1875 and thence the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in 1884.

He visited Queenstown regularly from 1873 as the Revising Officer of Electoral Rolls. In 1877 he offered to donate a painting to the Lakes District Hospital for use as an art union raffle to raise funds. In fact, he donated two paintings in 1879, one of the Head of the Lake and one of Dusky Sound.

The subject of the painting on our cover displays his interest in medical services as it shows a stretcher party heading for the hospital at Frankton.

Sources:

Entwisle, Peter, 'Hodgkins, William Mathew' *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of NZ*, 1993, available on-line

Lake Wakatip Mail accessed from PapersPast

Helen Southberg née Craigie 1845 – 1930

Sixty-four years from Bullendale goldmining to Frankton tourism

Compiled by Marion Borrell

Aberdeen to Queenstown in 1866

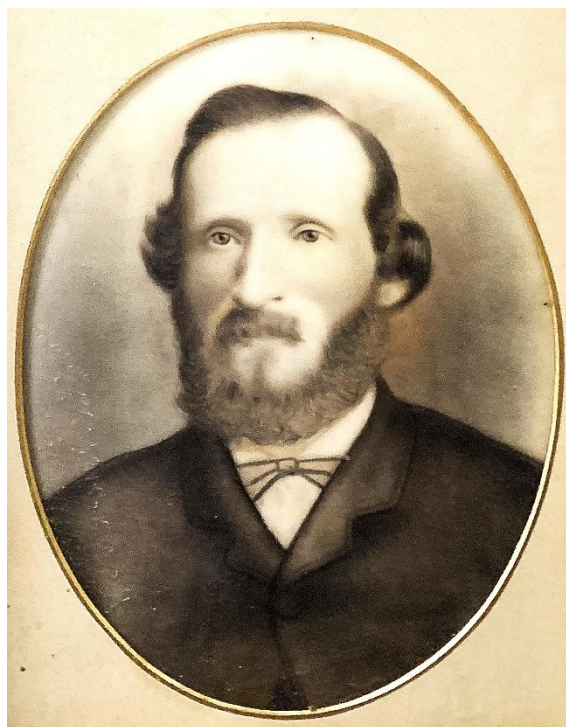
Helen Craigie was born in Montrose, south of Aberdeen, the second child and oldest daughter of James Craigie and Mary Anderson. From the age of 16 she worked in a cotton mill in Aberdeen as a spinner. We can probably picture such a factory with the rows of women tending the machines. When she was 19 her mother died of typhus. Her father had already died, lost at sea when his merchant ship went down with all hands. The six orphans' guardian was their maternal uncle, David Anderson, who had a ship-building business in Montrose.

In 1866, aged 21, Helen departed alone for New Zealand, which seemed a country of hope for her and her brother and sisters.

From Bluff she came to Queenstown by bullock wagon and small boat. It was 1866, and Queenstown was still mainly a 'calico' town. She immediately found work in a hotel, family history says as a dancer or dance partner. The town was humming with life and abounding with bonny laddies making offers of marriage. They were mainly gold prospectors, but how were they as prospective husbands? Helen took her time – nine months – then married Andrew Southberg, who was ten years older. He was already a successful prospector and miner, being one of the discoverers in 1863 of the Scandinavian Reef near the head of the right branch of Skippers Creek, and a founder of the Otago Quartz Mining Co. Ltd in 1866. In their second crushing they extracted 500 ounces of gold from 400 tons of stone.

They married on 7 February 1867, then off she went up the Shotover River on the bridle path – a fitting pun - through the canyon to Skippers, and on up Skippers Creek to the site of the mine.

Like many people who came here, Andrew wasn't quite who he said he was. On the marriage certificate he wrote that he was Norwegian, but his death certificate said Swedish. Since Norway was annexed to Sweden, both might be correct. Family history surmises that he may have been a deserter from the Swedish army or navy who jumped ship in Australia and later came to join the goldrush there. He'd translated his name from Anders Söderberg and stated that he was Norwegian, perhaps so that he couldn't be traced by the authorities.



Andrew Southberg (*LDM EP1315*)

Twelve years up Skippers Creek

Five children were born while they lived there – Mary, James, Andrew Ingram, Clara and Anne.

Bullendale (as it became) was a close-knit village on the steep hillsides above the creek. Andrew's quartz-crushing mine was doing well. Helen and Andrew assisted her brother and sisters to come over from Scotland, and they all married in Queenstown. Her sister Elizabeth married John Aspinall who mined at Skippers Point. It was wonderful to have her so near, just seven miles away down Skippers Creek.

Her daughter Eleanor long afterwards described a visit her mother made to her sister, as it had been related to her:

'My mother's sister had a new baby, and Mother was anxious to visit her. Old Dick the trusty packhorse was saddled, Mother mounted on a side-saddle with her 4-month-old baby tucked up on her knees, and they set off down the Skippers Creek through gravel and water all the way. On the return everything went well until Old Dick thought he'd like a drink. With a tug, he put his head down and in doing so jerked the reins out of Mother's hand and over his head into the water, then he took a step forward putting his hoof through the loop. And there they were, stuck in the stream. The baby was hungry and started to cry. Mother slipped off, clutching the baby, and carried it to the bank and fed it. Whilst doing so she noticed that the rein was buckled to the bridle. So she waded in and freed rein. She managed to climb into the saddle while holding the baby under her arm, and set off for home, just as my father came galloping round the bend looking for them, fearing the worst.'

For an account of living at Bullendale from a child's point of view, see the next article.

The Great Flood of 1878

In September the Great Flood rushed down and swept away the Southbergs' life at Bullendale. Skippers Creek is in a very narrow gorge. Hillsides slipped, forming dams that then burst. The noise was frightful, but that meant the family had warning and managed to escape with the children, clambering up the hillside, holding onto tussocks, even as the ground seemed to slide from under them. A huge surge of massive rocks and trees swept down on their house and over everything. They watched it strike the house, shearing off the veranda and the lean-to and the roof. They saw Mary's tortoiseshell cat clinging to the stable roof as it hurtled downstream. When the water receded, the house was filled with mud and debris. Everything was ruined.

The flood also 'carried away the standings of a large woodshed, also a twelve-stall stable with every article in it, such as saddles, bridles, pack saddles, harness of every description, chaff-cutter etc. and £80 worth of fencing standards and wire, leaving the unfortunate owner with nothing but his bare horses... Their main drive [tunnel], lately made into the claim, has also been destroyed by a large slip. Notwithstanding that so many have suffered by these disastrous floods, I think that his sympathisers will set him on his way again.' (*LWM* 10 October 1878)

The Southbergs were among the worst affected by the Great Flood and they were indeed kindly supported. The *Lake Wakatip Mail* reported that 'donations of over £150 were collected, chiefly by Mr F. Evans, manager of the Phoenix Company. ... As proof

of the estimation in which Mr Southberg is held by fellow-miners in his own neighbourhood we may mention that the employees in the Phoenix Company's claim contributed £41, and those at the New Nugget Company's claim, £16.' (*LWM* 5 December 1878)

To Frankton

Faced with this calamity, Andrew and Helen first moved to Queenstown then bought the former Presbyterian manse at Frankton near the Falls.



Frankton Flat from across the Falls in late 1800s (*LDM EL0177*)

What a change for the family! Although Bullendale was very remote from any town, they did have close neighbours. This photo from across the Falls in c1885 shows that Frankton was almost uninhabited apart from their house with its established garden, the hospital buildings distant left, the miller's house far right, and far away some farms. But wagons came past to the Brunswick Flour Mill beside the Falls until it closed in 1904. One great bonus of the location was the Presbyterian Church which was of great importance to Helen, and later to her daughters.



The house c1890 showing Anne, Elizabeth, Mary, Helen and Eleanor.
(Photo from Pat Sew Hoy) Later the veranda was closed in.

To go to school the children walked across the Frankton Flat and over the partial bridge to the Lower Shotover School. They couldn't cross the river if it was too high, so they kept close eye on the weather. Helen was a staunch supporter of all school activities.

Andrew spent every week back at the mine, working long hours, first to clear the mine of the rocks and debris, then to find the reef and reinstate the battery. He'd bring out 12 or 13 packhorses on Saturday with the gold cakes and return late on Sunday laden with provisions and equipment. Maybe they could recover from the disaster.

They had three more children – Eleanor, Elizabeth and Matilda, making eight altogether, six girls and three boys.

The next disaster

Five years later came another terrible blow. Andrew had sold a claim, but somehow, overlooked a large amount of gold. The purchasers found £1,000-worth. This was hard for Andrew to cope with after his years of toil and recovery after the flood. He became ill with pneumonia and kidney disease. Helen and their daughters watched over him, fearing for his state of mind. But one day in 1887 he evaded them and went into the lake at the Falls. He was 52. At the inquest, 'Dr Douglas averred that there was little doubt deceased was in a state of delirium at the time he committed the fatal act.' (LWM 11.2.1887)

Andrew is remembered as a pioneering quartz miner in the Skippers area, and in the name 'Southberg Spur' which separates the south and north branches of Skippers Creek.

Supporting the Family

Once again there was much sympathy for Helen. She was aged 42 and her children ranged from 3 to 18. There were no social security benefits then. According to the family, Helen did dressmaking.

Here are her three of her nieces, Isabella 13, Helen 11 and Ruth 9 Aspinall wearing blue silk dresses trimmed with velvet that she made for them, c.1889. (*LDM EP1299*) (Imagine sewing all those buttonholes into silk!)

Helen also had the house and well-kept garden just above the Kawarau Falls. With these assets, her daughters and her skills, she eventually established what we would now call a hospitality business.





Launches *Muritai I* and *Thelma* at the jetty, 1920s (LDM EL4558)

Every fine day in the summer, motor launches brought tourists from Queenstown to admire the Falls. Some came from Eichardts (the *Vera*) or McBrides hotels (the *Tilkum*) which ran their own launches. Also, Jock Edgar had the *Thelma* and later the *Kelvin*, and Horace Tomkies had *Muritai I* then *Muritai II*. The passengers would come ashore and walk up to the house and garden for Devonshire tea in the covered-in veranda. Helen ran a good business, assisted by such of her daughters as were at home.

The biggest crowd arrived for the opening of the dam in 1826.



Kawarau Falls dam: crowds on opening day (LDM EL2852)

Note that because the gates have been lowered, the lake is still, creating reflections where there was previously rushing water.

The centenary of the dam will take place in 2026. For an account of its history, see the article by Ray Clarkson, in *Courier* 97, 2017 which can be found in the magazine archive on our website.

Helen and her daughters also had paying guests. One of them, Charles Brasch, the poet and eminent literary figure who was a grandson of Bendix Hallenstein, came with his father and sister for summer holidays between 1921 and 1925 when he was aged 13 to 17.



Charles with his sister and father when on holiday at Frankton.

(Hocken Collections,
Uare Taoka o Hakena,
University of Otago,
MS-099/62)

In the absence of a photo of Helen, we have Charles's perceptive description, here copied from *Courier* 86 quoting from *Indirections: A Memoir 1909-1947*:

Mrs Southberg was an old woman with a strong shrewd kindly leathery peasant face, deeply sunburned and wrinkled; such faces are rarely to be seen now among white New Zealanders. She held herself very erect, moved slowly and stiffly, and was active in a quiet way, presiding over the household although her daughters now managed it. She called and fed the fowls, scattering their wheat from a chipped blue enamel basin with her large strong puffy shiny-backed hands; she even dug a little in the garden. But her daughters dissuaded her from too much activity, laughingly cautioned her, wished her to rest more. I had the impression that she listened with a certain detachment and went her own way. She wore dark clothes, long rough dresses like the drabber kind of butcher's apron during the week, and black on Sunday with lace and spangles and beads or a brooch of jet. Being a little deaf, she spoke as if she had to raise her voice to be heard, in a high-pitched broken tone, shrilly and roughly, and seemed often to be quietly laughing to herself as she spoke.

The Southberg Children

Mary remained at home and died in 1958 aged 89.

James died in 1884 of meningitis aged 13.

Andrew Ingram, after working at first with his father, went to Waihi where he became the manager of a quartz battery.

Clara married a Mr Bruce and moved to Gisborne.

Anne at one stage went to the United States where she worked as a nanny in San Francisco. She returned to Frankton and died in 1963 aged 85.

Eleanor became a pupil-teacher at Lower Shotover School from 1894-1900, then taught at Skippers in 1900-1902, and in various schools around Southland until she retired to Frankton in 1930. She died in 1968 aged 89.

Elizabeth had 'creeping paralysis' (multiple sclerosis) and died in 1953 aged 71.

Matilda died in 1909 of TB aged 25.

Helen's Death: She died in 1930 aged 85, having lived in the district for 64 years. She had outlived her husband by 45 years.

The *Lake Wakatip Mail* afforded her a full and appreciative obituary on 22 July 1930. Here is an excerpt.

'During her long residence at Frankton Mrs Southberg worked hard to make the property the pleasant place that it now is. Moreover, the death of her husband when her family was young occasioned her a heavy burden in their upbringing and education. However, in accomplishing the task she proved herself to be a woman of much industry, energy and resource. Deceased was a most picturesque figure and a striking personality in the neighbourhood. She was much given to good works, which were performed without ostentation.'

Conclusion: Helen had experienced and contributed to the evolution of the district from goldmining to tourism.

Epilogue

Mary, Anne, Elizabeth and Eleanor spent the rest of their lives in the house that was the family's home for 85 years. Ray Clarkson, who visited Queenstown often in his youth, recalled coming from Queenstown on the *Kelvin* to eat strawberries and cream at the Southbergs' house where the Misses Southberg continued to provide for visitors until the 1960s.

Sources

Danny Knudson, *Skippers, triumph and tragedy*, Lakes District Museum and Queenstown & District Historical Society, 2016

Peter Chandler & Ron C. Hall, *Let There Be Light – a history of Bullendale and the generation of electric power in Central Otago*, Otago Central Electric Power Board, 1986

Queenstown Courier articles in issues 76 by LeBerne Iles and 86 by Marion Borrell

Lake Wakatip Mail and other newspapers accessed from PapersPast

Lakes District Museum - photos, documents and artefacts

Aspinall family information in the Lakes District Museum, PL0224

Oral history: Eleanor Southberg interviewed by Marygold Miller and Hugh Miller in 1968, Lakes District Museum

Frankton Boatshed Café, panels about tourist launches

F.W.G. Miller, *Golden Days of Lake County*, Whitcombe & Tombs, 1966

Growing up at Bullendale in the 1890 - 1901



Bullendale's buildings perched on the hillside (Lakes District Museum EL0251)

Monologue as **Margaret Glennie**, presented at 'People From Our Past' in 2019.

Created from an article by Margaret Glennie née Hughes, first published in the *Dunedin Evening Star*, 17 October 1959 and reprinted in the *Queenstown Courier* Issue 18 1976 as 'Bullendale – Prosperity to Oblivion' which can be found on our website.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen in Arrowtown. Thank-you for inviting me to talk a bit about my childhood at Bullendale. Since you're all locals too, you'll already know it was a quartz-mining settlement away beyond Skippers up Skippers Creek under Mount Aurum. Not many people go there these days. I was one of the last to live there, born in 1890 – a Bullendale native.

My memories are still very strong. Because I knew nothing else and nowhere else, my childhood seemed just normal. I'll tell you about this and that, and you can judge for yourself how normal it was.

The only access then, and still today, is by a rough track six miles from Skippers, up the creek - and often in the creek. Everything came on packhorses. In winter it was dangerous with deep snow. The horses had icicles hanging from their mouths and manes.

The winters were severe and falls of snow six feet deep have been known, but four feet was the average during the three months of winter. So, between frosts, thaws and

snowfalls, we lived in almost perpetual snow in the close valley between the hills. It was a wonderful sight after a still, silent night, to wake and behold a glistening white world. Then the brooms and shovels would be out, first to clear the roofs of the weight, then a dig a track to the store and to the neighbours.

Everyone had to store wood for winter fires. It had to be cut and carried from the bush and stacked. The frosts were so severe that wood not under cover would become encased in a block of ice and be of no use at all until spring. Even water left in the kettle on the stove overnight would be ice in the morning. Clothes would hang frozen still on the line for days on end because there were so few hours of sunshine in the narrow valley.

Our route to the school was steep and dangerous – in places just steps in the hillside – and as a result, younger children weren't expected to attend in icy weather. Everyone wore spiked boots, with three one-inch metal spikes driven into the heels. In addition, we pulled old socks over our boots and tied them at the top to give better grip.

But for us kids, winter had its brightness and fun. The skiing grounds were the roads, and these were often a sheet of ice, extending over the bank – but there was mostly a drift of snow to cushion the tumble. We'd slide on tins plates, hoping not to meet any of the old chaps at a corner. I can remember one small boy who tried to go between the legs of one old chap. He got through all right, but the old man came a cropper and he wasn't too polite about it. For sledges we used a slab of wood with a rope through the front, or a bit of tin, or the lid of a billy or of the oven boiler Mum used to boil the washing.

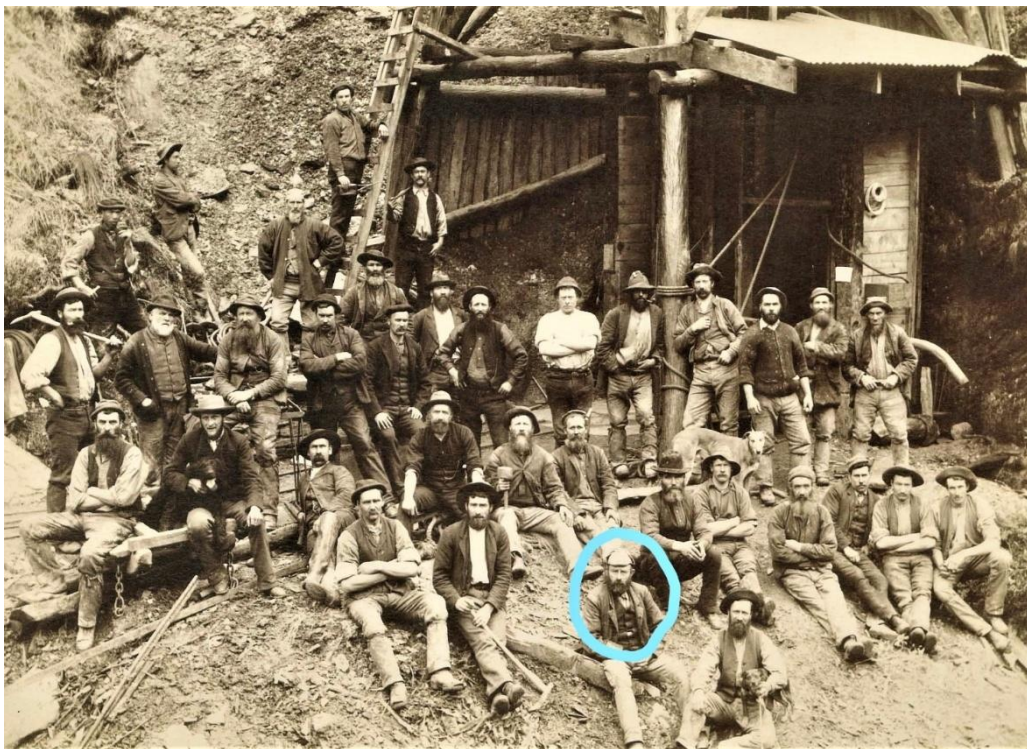


The Achilles mine, Bullendale in 1895
Watercolour by Laurence William Wilson
(Ref B-174-005 Alexander Turnbull Library)

Nature provided many of our needs. There was an abundance of small-fruits – gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries, red and black currants from the early days of mining. They grew wild. I can picture my mother with a pillowslip of fruit on her back, taking the long trek up from her favourite patch, and I often went with her with my bundle. I remember one extra-large patch of raspberries that grew amongst about two acres of Sweet William flowers on the hillside near the mine. That was everybody's garden. There were just two apple trees in the town. Unfortunately, they grew near the huts of some of the bachelor workers. Woe betide the youngsters who watched the colouring of the apples and dared to raid those trees!

Our milk came from goats, and we all fared well on it. The cream of goats' milk doesn't rise to the top as in cows' milk. Did you know that? I can remember my mother milking nine goats and supplying many of the old bachelors with milk. Our goats came when we called. Now and again a herd of wild goats would come down from the hills, headed always by a long-bearded, evil-smelling billy-goat equipped with a pair of horns equal to any emergency. We had to protect our own goats in case they were lured away. I wonder if there are still goats away up there today.

It was a good community, as it had to be when so far from any town. Our homes were built from the bush for free. There were no rates to pay. Women tended each other in childbirth and prepared all the food for the family until the mother was well again.



Workers at the Phoenix (later named Achilles) Mine at Bullendale 1892.

The man in the circle is my father Frank Hughes. (*Lakes District Museum EL0963*)

There was a brotherhood among the menfolk too. If a miner or anyone was injured or seriously ill, the mine closed, and the patient was carried out, sometimes all the way to Frankton Hospital, with as many as 200 men taking part. It must have been a dreadful journey for the patient. (See cover painting)



Bullendale general store and hotel (LDM 2024.45.5)

The focal point of this mountain village was Cotter's Store, which had all the services rolled into one – post and telegraph, grocer, butcher, draper, hardware and the rest. Saturday night was mail night, and the store was crowded. In winter it was often a long wait, and a dark, cold journey from Skippers Point for the hardy horseman and his packages. But everyone waited and gave him a cheer when he arrived. He also brought the *Otago Witness* which was a weekly newspaper and our only source of outside news. Afterwards everyone would light their lanterns – just a clear glass bottle with the bottom cut off and half a candle inserted in the neck. A most effective light it was too.

There was one hotel, and I suppose it met a vital need in that capacity. Of course, I never went there. Although there was no one to police the town, law and order were well maintained. Pay-day was fortnightly, and wages were £7, so family men didn't have much to spend at the hotel. There were seven in my family, and in some families up to ten.

The closure of the mine, and my family's departure

When the Achilles mine closed in May 1901, our secure world disintegrated and a whole way of life with it at Bullendale. My father left my mother Jenny and me and my sister Minnie at home while he went away to work for a mining contractor in Waipori. But the contractor went broke, and Father wasn't paid. He had to use the money he had saved to go to Dunedin to look for work, so there was nothing left to support us nor to pay for our travel to join him. Mother raffled off her precious sewing machine, and then the kitchen stove as well, despite it being the middle of winter. When we reached Dunedin, Father still had no work and nowhere to live!

That was the end of my happy childhood in Bullendale and my first experience in the wide world beyond. How far away and long ago Bullendale seems now.

For more about Bullendale, see *Skippers- triumph and tragedy* by Danny Knudson.

Dot's Little Folk

By Pauline Lawrence

"Dear Dot,

There are five cyclists in this district, but we have no lady cyclists yet. Dear Dot, do you have a bike?" wrote **Belle from Kingston** in 1896. Dot responded, "Dot on a bike - no Belle dear, not yet."

In 1876 the *Otago Witness*, an illustrated weekly newspaper, published its first Children's Column. It provided stories, poems and riddles for young readers. The focus changed in 1886 when Louise Baker was appointed to run the column. She was the first 'Dot'. The name of the column became 'Dot's Little Folk' (DLF) and children were encouraged to write to her. The paper was the first in New Zealand to provide this opportunity for young people and it ran in this format until the paper closed in 1932. During this time there were four 'Dots', including at one point the editor, William Fenwick.

In the first year, children sent Dot 267 letters. By the early 20th century over 2500 letters were published each year. While the majority of DLF were from Otago and Southland, letters came from all round New Zealand as well as from Australia, Great Britain and the United States.

A significant number of letters came from children in the Wakatipu area. Many lived in isolated places and now they had the chance to connect more widely with others their own age. Their letters give us an insight into their lives.

Initially it was younger children who wrote and their letters centred mainly on their siblings, asking for advice, pets, and school (particularly the arrival of the inspectors and exams). Some, however, highlight the **dangers and hardships** they and their families faced.

In 1887 **Ettie Lafranchi wrote from Cardrona**, *"The story I am going to tell you is a very sad one. About a month ago a dear little school mate of mine, called Wilhelmina Mace, met with a very bad, and as it turned out, fatal accident, being burned so badly during her mother's absence that she died. Everybody was very sorry for she used to be such a clever little girl and everyone was extremely fond of her. Her funeral was a very large one. Six of her little schoolmates carried the coffin down to the cemetery, and the rest all marched down behind it."*

Later that year **A. Taylor also from Cardrona** wrote about his schoolmate, *"He took ill on Monday after he came out of school and died on Tuesday evening in his mother's arms."* Again, the children carried his coffin to the grave.

In 1892, **Robert O'Kane, aged 9, from Lower Shotover** asked Dot, *"My little sister wrote a letter to you about how she was nearly drowned. Why did you not publish it?"* Dot replied saying there was a "contemptible man or woman in your district" making up letters impersonating young writers. Dot had asked **Annie, aged 7**, to verify her identity. Her letter was then published. *"I'll tell the little folks about how I was*

nearly drowned. I fell into the river, and I was carried downstream to between four and five hundred yards. Nobody could hear me, but there was a faithful dog that they sent in for me, and he saved me."

In December 1894 **Harry Chard, aged 10, from Sunnyside, Kawarau**, told Dot, *"Since I last wrote to you my little sister Maud died."* And then only six months later, *"Since I last wrote my little brother Richard James has died. My uncle also died. We all liked him very much."*

The same year **Margaret Marr, aged 15, of Queenstown**, began her letter: "I am very sorry to say that my dear little sister, Irene Annie, aged 8 years, died on the 10th inst. from brain fever succeeding influenza. She died quite happy." At this time a significant number of children from across the region were commenting that their schools had been closed, often for weeks, because of outbreaks of influenza, whooping cough, measles and diphtheria.

Harsh weather prompted many letters. In 1888 **Rachel Johnston described life at Skippers**: *"It is nice to live up here in summer but it is miserable and cold in winter. I am going to tell you where we get our fuel for burning. There is no coal about here, so it is mostly wood that is burnt. There are three or four bushes about Skippers, Sawyers', Jennings', and Butcher's about one to three miles away. The wood is brought home by horses. The horses have pack saddles, and there are straps on the saddles which hang down on each side, the wood is tied on with the straps. It is very dangerous to fetch it home as the bush is all on sidelines and gullies."*

In 1890 **Thomas Butler, aged 9, Arrow**, whose family had 12 cows, requested, *"I have to take out the milk in the winter mornings, and it is very cold. Dear Dot, what is the price of small boys' gloves in Dunedin?"* Dot replied that they cost from two shillings upwards. In 1894 **Mary Anne Kinross from Gibbston** also had a request, *"It is very cold up here just now. My brother Tom had a very bad cut on his left foot, made by a chaff cutter. It is nearly all right now. Dear Dot, could you give me a cure for chilblains?"* Dot recommended she soak her hands *"in very hot water until they are almost parboiled night and morning and dry them thoroughly. If on the feet, burn them out on the fire. It is very painful but better than risking the chilblains breaking."*

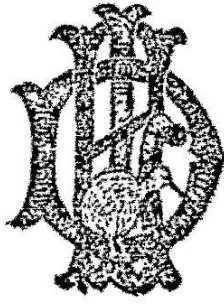
By the turn of the century a number of changes emerged. Teenagers started to fill the column with letters. The column became more interactive as the teenagers began debating social and political issues. DLF members organised groups such as the Literary and Debating Clubs. Members met at social events and visited each other. Many purchased a membership badge, a way of recognising each other when out and about. Via the column they could ask others to write to them privately. Little Folk could remain members until they were twenty. Most writers now also wrote using a pen name.

Jack, a son of Dr John Bell Thomson of Arrowtown, sent his first letter in 1908. He was 11 and in Std 6 at Arrowtown School. He and his friends chose pen-names of heroes from the American 'Deerfoot' book series. Jack was 'Tecumseh', Jack Wilcox

OUR LITTLE FOLKS.

By Dot.

Dot will be pleased to receive short letters from juvenile correspondents on any matters of interest to themselves—short stories of pet animals, descriptions of their favourite toys, their parties, amusements, &c. The letters to be written by the children themselves and addressed "Dot," care of the Editor, and to be published in the page devoted to "Our Little Folks."



**DOT'S
LITTLE FOLK'S BADGE.**

MADE OF STERLING SILVER.
With Two Loops for
fastening on the Hat.

Price, **ONE SHILLING**, in
Penny Postage Stamps.

Orders now being Received.



Dot's Little Folk in 1905 at the Lake County A & P Show held at Ayrburn Farm

Back Row: Mary Needham (Mrs T. McSoriley), Lottie Perriam (Mrs J. Cowan), May Logan (Mrs Marr), Katie Cosgrove, Myra McMaster (Mrs M. Winders), Fan Webb (Mrs J. Shaw), Annie McMaster (Mrs G Hansen), Annie Brodie (Mrs S. Jenkins).

Front row: Jim White, Alex Urquhart (wheelchair), Ruby McMaster (Mrs T Bhimskey), Violet Neilson (Mrs McLean), Annie O'Fee (Mrs A. Wishart), Annie Jenkins (Mrs W. Day), Jean Fisher (Mrs J White). *(Lakes District Museum EP1368)*

was 'Pio Mingo', Alf Wilcox was 'Simon Kenton' and Jim Wilcox was 'Young Wolf'. Jack Thomson's first letter began, *"Up till now I have been afraid to join your page, but one day Young Wolf, a great schoolmate of mine, advised me to write to you. Young Wolf and I frequently go bird-nesting together. We intend going up the hill near our homes some Saturday to rob the trees up there."* A few weeks later Jack wrote that they had *"met with poor success, getting only about ten dozen eggs. Young Wolf intends saving up all his birds' eggs and selling them to get money to buy a ticket for the library, so that he can get a book to read whenever he likes."*

The following year Jack described a trip to the skating rink with one of the Wilcox boys. *"We intended to ride 'Mag' but as she won't double-bank we made up our mind to 'ride and tie'. I got on first with a pair of skates on my back, unfortunately the saddle had no crupper. Well, as soon as I was on, the skates began to rattle, which frightened Mag, and off she went full gallop, bucking all the time. Gradually the saddle slipped up onto her neck. For about two chains of galloping and bucking I managed to stick on, but another tremendous buck sent me on an aerial flight. By good luck I was not hurt in the fall."*

On another occasion Jack rode to Waitiri to see 'Young Wolf'. Mag was reluctant to cross the Victoria Bridge, so Jack led her across very slowly. *"Thinking she was tired, I took pity on her and turned to go back, but no sooner was her head turned than off she went at a gallop right across the bridge, which, being a suspension bridge creaked and swung terribly, and every minute I expected to find myself swimming for my life in the Kawarau River."*

The War Years: Jack and the Wilcox brothers continued to write through to 1914. Dot expressed surprise when she learned that 'Young Wolf' had gone to war. Jack, although underage, also managed to enlist.

'Young Wolf', James Wilcox, died in France in 1916. The previous year his younger brother had written: *"He was the last one left on Gallipoli of the Otago Fifth Mounted 'A' squadron and went through that bayonet charge on August 7 and only got a scratch on one knee from a piece of shrapnel" and that "he was now in a convalescence camp in Luxor."* In early 1916 he wrote: *"We have had long interesting letters about the places my brother has visited and the sights he has seen."*

'Golden Smile', Arrowtown, wrote in 1916 *"Is not this war terrible, Dot! Just think of the thousands of our brave New Zealand boys who are at rest on the shores of Gallipoli."*

The end of the war was celebrated but also brought hardships. 'Veronica' commented *"Glenorchy is a mining district, but owing to the government refusing to buy any more scheelite everything is at a standstill."* **'Soldier Boy'** also noted that in Glenorchy *"Trapping is all the go here now, as there is no work for the men to do. We are going to get only one boat a week now as the shortage of coal has stopped*

them. We all get our bread from Queenstown and by the time it gets here it will be stale."

One of the most prolific and popular writers was **'Boy', James White, from Lake Hayes**. In 1900 'Boy' described his month of camping and rabbiting with his cousin Dick. *"We take day about cooking, and are getting on famously now. We live mostly on porridge, potatoes, and meat, with an occasional variation of meat, potatoes, and porridge. Last night the wind got up and blew down the tent. We managed to crawl from under the wreck, and we didn't look pretty out in the cold in our shirt-tails putting up the tent again."*

Later 'Boy' attempted to cook rice. *"I put in the pot what I thought would give us a good dinner - in fact, filled a good-sized pot. It started to boil all right, but the lid rose up just like a jack-in-the-box. Dick suggested putting a stone on it, but it was no good, so I took out a pannikin full, and spread it on some paper to dry."* He had to repeat the process until he had *"the whole camp decorated with bits of paper containing drying rice."* Meanwhile Dick attempted to make scones. *"He remembered everything except the soda! And they were like indiarubber."* After returning from camping Boy volunteered a list of handy camping tips including taking a cookery book. Dick's suggestion was that campers should *"never forget to take a cook with them."*

'Boy' also contributed to an on-going discussion on gender roles. When 'Jessie C' wrote about having killed and dressed a sheep it sparked much debate about whether this was appropriate for a girl. 'Boy' responded, *"I see there is a war on a small scale going on between your girl and boy correspondents. On the whole I like girls well enough, though boys and girls are sure to differ. Now I object to Jessie C.'s stamp - a girl who is proud of being able to kill a sheep. I think that is very out of place and un-maidenly."*

In 1907 'Boy' had a visit from another frequent DLF writer, **'Harry' from Dunedin**. He travelled by train and then by bike from Alexandra to Queenstown. The trip was not without incident. In the Cromwell Gorge his bike *"took a sudden longing to plunge into the thunderous roar of the foaming waters and of course I had to follow. Over the bank we flew."* Fortunately, he managed to halt his fall but *"deemed discretion to be the better part of valour"* and pushed his bike for some miles. He spent a few days with 'Boy' before riding to Queenstown. He faced another challenge crossing the Shotover as an earthquake had destroyed the bridge: *"The remains of the bridge were there but the rest of it, must by that time, have been floating down the Molyneaux [sic]. I thought my last hour had come, when struggling knee deep in sand and water, I had to lay my steed down to prevent me from sinking further. It was a weary struggle with the Shotover, but I gained the opposite bank and my steed and myself looked none the better for our adventure."*

'Boy's close neighbour and friend was **Robert Urquhart**, whose pen-name was **'Gravel'**. He wrote his first letter in 1886: *"I am a little invalid boy. I have got a big buggy. My sister wheels me."* Dot expressed her sympathy and Katie, his sister, replied

"He was very proud to think you wrote him such a nice answer." 'Boy' explained more. "At a very early date, misfortune met him, and laid a heavy hand upon his tender body...He was paralyzed."

'Gravel' wrote only a few letters but in 1907, 21 years after his first letter, he asked Dot if he might send letters to the page again despite being 27. Dot replied, "It is a very warm welcome indeed, that I extend to you, not only for myself but on behalf of all our band." Immediately many DLF began writing to him personally. He wrote, "this page has been the means of me gaining a number of very nice friends. My comrades bring much bright sunshine into my life." He was always positive despite his difficulties. 'Lavengro' described how difficult his life was: "Do not be afraid that he will be deluged with letters - when you consider his circumstances - imprisoned in a chair all day, and only able to hold certain fixed positions, and that his only recreation is book- reading, letter-reading and letter-writing accomplished under the greatest of difficulties for he cannot see what he is writing until the whole page is finished."

In 1907 'Gravel' wrote that he had "spent Christmas Day at the home of my great chum, Boy. It was one of the happiest days that I have ever spent." Despite all his challenges, 'Gravel' often submitted papers to DLF clubs and in recognition of this he was made a life member in 1908. His mother had died in 1904 and then in 1911 he wrote, "The death of my father has made a great change to my life. I had to leave my old home at Lake Hayes, where I had lived since I was born. I felt it a great deal."

For a while he lived in the district with his sister Jessie and her husband, but the level of care he needed meant that in 1912 he moved to Lorne Farm on the outskirts of Invercargill. DLF friends supported him. "I did not expect to have so many friends to visit me." 'Ptero' from Wallacetown noted, "He came unexpectedly into our midst, friendless and lonely. DLF took it upon themselves to brighten his lot. But oh Dot, the world was full of wonders to Gravel. Bicycles, cars and motorcycles, to Gravel these things were only known by name, so when we introduced them to him, his wonderment knew no bounds." He was taken on walks in the countryside and the town and to visit other members.

Sadly, Gravel contracted pneumonia in July 1913. DLF were asked to send him a card or a letter. But later that month 'Lola' wrote, "It is with deep regret I write to tell you that Gravel died this morning. Never did so frail a body contain so large, so pure a soul, we're richer and wiser for having known him. Truly Gravel was a hero!" DLF raised funds for a small memorial to be placed at Invercargill Eastern Cemetery.

While letters were the central feature of Dot's Little Folk, the friendships and support it gave often lasted a lifetime.

Sources

Chisholm, Jocelyn, *Dear Dot: Letters from a Country Childhood*, 1988

Scott, Keith. *Dear Dot I Must Tell You*, Activity Press, 2011

Otago Witness accessed from Papers Past

Arrowtown District during World War 1

By Denise Heckler

Expanded from the talk delivered after the unveiling of the panel at the War Memorial, 'Arrowtown's World War 1 Casualties' in April 2025. This is a companion piece to the article in *Courier 113* which contains the details of 18 men from Arrowtown borough and Lake County (east of the Shotover River) who are listed on the panel.

In the 1916 census Arrowtown borough had a population of 308. Businesses in Buckingham Street included the general merchant (Joseph Jenkins), two hotels (Ballarat and New Orleans), a chemist, and a butchery and bakery owned by George Romans and Samuel McSkimming which was located below the museum. There was also a saddler and harness maker, a tailor, a garage and carpenter. There was a night-cart man who emptied the sewage into the Arrow River below Tobins Track. The Arrowtown School roll in 1916 was 55, and there was also the Convent School. In the three Lake County schools nearest Arrowtown – Lower Shotover, Gibbston and Crown Terrace - there were 17 more children. The outbreak of war came as a terrible intrusion into this settled community.

War Declared

On 5 August 1914 New Zealand was proclaimed to be at war with Germany automatically because Britain was. This was not a surprise, and response was swift. Within hours the Defence Department called for 8000 men for an expeditionary force. Arrowtown had since 1875 had a volunteer militia, the Arrow Mounted Rifles, from which four men promptly volunteered, and were farewelled with a large valedictory social. The various speakers congratulated the departing troopers on the pluck and enterprise they had shown in volunteering for active service, and at the same time extended their own best wishes for a successful campaign and a safe return.' One of these men was James Wilcox who worked on Graham Baird's farm at Bendemeer. He signed up in late 1914 aged 20 and was killed at the Somme two years later.

The *Lake County Press* on 20 August reported numerous responses to the war, e.g.

*The Lake County Patriotic Fund was set up starting with £200 of council funds, expecting to exceed £1000 in donations. Messrs J. Butel, A. Jopp and J. Radford placed their motor cars at the disposal of the committee. Some of the funds would be used to buy horses to be sent for military purposes.

*There was talk of resuscitating the Arrow Brass Band after several years. 'In these stirring times when patriotic enthusiasm pervades everything, a brass band would be a great acquisition to the town.'

*Mr Tomkies offered to screen a movie in aid of the Patriotic Fund. 'This will probably be shown in connection with a patriotic rally being arranged by the Ladies Committee of the Liverpool Fund.'

This flurry of patriotic fervour continued, with all social activities focused on fundraising for the war effort. Entertainment revolved around dances, rugby games, picnics and musical evenings that were frequently organised by the Women's Patriotic Association (established in 1914), or the Red Cross along with the three Arrowtown churches. Valedictory events continued as further batches of soldiers departed.

ATHENEUM HALL, ARROW-
TOWN.

Friday, 26th May, 1916.

"Hard Times"
Concert and Dance
(under the auspices of the Arrow
Concert Party).

Proceeds will be donated to the
Local Wounded Soldiers' and
Red Cross Funds.

Performers from Cromwell and
Queenstown.

Prizes will be awarded for the most
original costume (lady and gentleman).

Waltzing Competition.
Entry, One Shilling.
(Competitors must appear in "Hard Times"
costume).

Admission to Concert, Two Shillings;
admission to Dance, Sixpence ("Hard
Times" charge). Refreshments free.
Further particulars in next issue.

K. GEDNEY,
Hon. Secretary.

Changes on the Home Front

The local newspapers and Council records show that life went on and decisions continued to be made for the benefit of the community. For example, the Lake County Council and the two boroughs were busy gravelling the roads, particularly in the later

years of the war when the decision was finally made to gravel the roads from Queenstown to Arthurs Point, and Arrowtown to Lake Hayes.

The Southland Education Board asked the Councils for permission for school children to collect grass seed from the roadsides as 'this should bring home to children the need for thrift and preventing waste.' Children were also involved in collecting birds' eggs and heads, which had a bounty on them of three pence per dozen because of the damage the flocks of small birds were doing to crops. On the positive side, farmers were very pleased with the wool prices due to the manufacture of khaki uniforms.

Parliament passed laws regarding drinking in pubs, as war-time measures to 'increase the efficiency of the workforce and thus support the war effort.' In 1916 the Anti-Shouting Law was passed. This meant that people couldn't buy, or even offer to buy, an alcoholic drink for a mate in a pub. If they did, they could be charged – along with the recipient, the barman and the manager! In December 1917 six o'clock closing was introduced.

Military Enlistment in the District

In January 1916 the Military Service Act introduced conscription. All single men aged between 20 and 46 had to enrol and could be called up in the monthly ballots. More than half of those balloted were rejected as medically unfit or exempted for other reasons.

Selected in the first ballot were 19 Wakatipu men, many with familiar surnames: Allan, Atley, Enright, Feehly, Green, Hunter, Jacobson, Jenkins, Jopp, Kennett, Lafranchi, Philip, Race, Ross, Summers, Wilson and Wishart. (*LCP* 30 November 1916)

A Military Service Appeals Board met in Queenstown on 18 January 1917 to consider appeals against enlistment. The policy of the Board was: 'Compulsion should it ever come, may be enforced in a fair and equitable manner.' Most appeals were on the grounds of essential work e.g. farming, scheelite mining, trades e.g. being the only plumber in Queenstown, or because their families (especially aged parents) needed them.

Of the 13 cases heard at that sitting, all but five appeals were accepted, with provisos that the men had to retain their current occupations or family responsibilities, or that they would try to find people to take over their jobs. Subsequent hearings of the Appeals Board seem to be more severe in their decisions.

Provisional Roll of Men on Active Service or Returned, December 1917

This including the whole Wakatipu district was published in the *Lake Wakatip Mail*. There are **97** men.

Glenorchy – 11, Lake Stations: Cecil Peak, Creighton, Walter Peak & Halfway Bay - 4

Queenstown - 22

Frankton - 3, Arthurs Point - 8, Skippers - 4

Arrowtown – 29, Gibbston – 1, Macetown - 2

Lower Shotover - 5, Malaghans (Wharehuanui) - 5, Speargrass - 2, Coronet Peak - 1

In addition, 45 local men enlisted at other centres or even from overseas.

The provisional death toll at that stage was 30. The toll rose further in 1918.

Letters Home were treasured

Private John Smith had worked for Craigs Coachlines in Arrowtown, a business owned by the Jopp family. This letter indicates how strong the community bonds were in the field. It was published in the *Lake County Press* on 4 January 1917. John was later killed at Messines in June.



I am pleased to say that the Huns have not got me up to the time of writing. My brother Charlie, Jack Reid and myself got through the "big Push" without a scratch. I think we were the only Arrow boys who were in the thick of it. ...

The great push was a hot affair, next door to Hades is the only way I can describe it. What made matters worse was the weather. We didn't have a drink of tea for 4 days and never a wash or a shave for 10. What sleep we got was in about a foot of mud. In the front trenches we get everything from rifle bullets up to gas. Some of the 'tear-shells' are very hard on the eyes and are worse than smoke, but we have goggles and gasmasks, which protect us to a certain extent. One feels just like a rabbit, as there are so many ways of killing a man.

We had some great experiences while rushing some of the trenches we took during the "push." It was great to see the Germans running. They never waited for us, and did not give us the chance of a flying shot. Charlie and I are still the Battalion bomb-throwers [grenades]. It is not a bad job when you get used to it.

Chalmers and the Cardrona boys have now joined us. They were lucky to escape the big attack.

We have now seen a lot of France, and I must say it is a beautiful country. The most of the north is undulating, but there are no mountains. We are in a quiet place now and I can assure you that it is a treat after what we have come through. A few of the Arrow boys met last night and celebrated the occasion. Those present included Jack Hunter, Jim Ritchie, A. Baker, Alex McDowall, Charlie and myself.

Hugh Hunter is near here but I have not seen him yet. Dick Cotter was hit but not seriously wounded and was able to walk out of the trenches. Poor Alick Webb had bad luck about the same place... I saw William McKinlay, who was wounded in the hip and ankle. Jim Wilcox and Jack Thomson are doing well with the big guns. [Cable advice has since been received that Wilcox was killed in action.] I met Linton just before the Somme attack, but I have not heard how he got on. [Cable: Linton was severely wounded.]...

I am writing this in my dug-out, and as I have now to go out and do an hour's bomb-cleaning, I must stop.

Grief at news of the deaths

The whole community shared the grief. On the following Sunday, all the churches, regardless of the soldier's religion, acknowledged each local man's death. John (Jack) Boyd Hunter died in December 1917 and on Sunday at St John's Presbyterian Church the altar and organ were draped in black.

On the Arrowtown war memorial there are 18 casualties listed. Three died in 1916, seven in 1917, and eight in 1918. The Edwards family lost two sons within months of each other. The average age was 30 years 2 months. Two were married. In October 1917 there were four deaths, coinciding with the Battle of Passchendaele.

The *Lake Wakatipu Mail* on 30 October 1917 acknowledged 'the number of Wakatipu boys who have passed into the company of those great heroes who, at the call of duty sacrificed all for the sake of the country. Quite literally they have sacrificed their lives on the altar of need.'

Over the course of the war, 65 or more men from the Wakatipu district died, which is thought to be about 1 in 3 of those who served. Many others returned bearing physical or mental injuries. Everyone in the district was affected by these absences, anxieties and griefs.

Peace at last

Lake County Press
14 November 1918

PEACE.

ARMISTICE SIGNED.

On Tuesday morning at about 9.30 the following glad tidings was received in Arrowtown :—

Official : The armistice has been signed by Germany.

As soon as the news was received the bells were set in motion, flags were hoisted on the public buildings and business places, and all work ceased for the day. The school children marched through the town singing patriotic songs, and the greatest enthusiasm prevailed. In the afternoon another procession was formed, and after parading the streets for some time, a halt was made in front of the Athenaeum Hall, where addresses were delivered by Rev. J. Rattray and Mr O. Ross. At 7.30 p.m. a united thanksgiving service was held in the Athenaeum Hall, an appropriate discourse being given by Rev. J. Rattray.

Organised celebrations took place a week later when people came from near and far at 11.30am to watch a ‘Monster Procession’, which wended its way along Buckingham Street and along Centennial Avenue to the Recreation Ground. There were fancy dress costumes and decorated wagons and cars. ‘It was a grandiose affair and presented a spectacle which will long be remembered. The long-time custom of roasting the ox was done to a turn by Mr Webb and there was an abundance of edibles while the Queenstown Brass Band played.’ In the evening a dance was held in the Hall and the building was packed with people rejoicing at the peace.

Home at last

Soldiers were welcomed back and presented with medals as their tours of duty were completed. However, some didn’t return for many months after peace was declared. We can imagine how impatient they and their loved ones must have been. One example, reported in the *Lake County Press* was a welcome-home social held in the Athenaeum Hall Arrowtown in May 1919 for six men from local families – Matthew Elliott, Archibald Baker, George Hansen, James Henderson, John Butel and E.J. Rattray. Some had departed in 1914 – a long war for them. Mr George Romans, the chairman of the Receptions Committee, also acknowledged two who had not returned, James Wilcox and John Smith, and he noted that Private Butel would probably carry ‘an honourable scar to the end of his days.’ Gunner Hansen was congratulated on being awarded the Military Medal. The soldiers, in responding, paid tribute to their fallen colleagues and extended their sympathy to their families. It must have been hard for the bereaved to see their men’s comrades returning.

In 1923 the Monument was erected on Quarry Reserve (renamed Soldiers Hill) and unveiled on King’s Birthday. It was fully funded by donations from the Borough Council, the RSA, sports and community organisations, and individuals. Forty returned soldiers paraded, and the school children too – the same procession as we have now on ANZAC Day.

One speaker was the Member of Parliament, Mr James Horn, who said, that ‘by erecting the memorial, the residents of the district were also paying tribute the relatives of those who had fallen. The monument might fittingly be termed the cemetery of the fallen men whose bones lay in foreign lands, and it would be held sacred by relatives and friends.’

The War Memorial then and now provides a permanent reminder of the disruption and grief caused by the war.



In conclusion: Throughout my research I found much evidence of a strong small community being drawn together by tragedy and the desire to support one another and the soldiers. Community was everything.

Recommending *Arrowtown Audio Tour* app for cellphones

Created by Nick Fifield
Reviewed by Marion Borrell

At our May gathering, Nick, who is one of our members, introduced these audio tours which he has meticulously created. They're designed as self-guided walks with over 2 hours of audio. (Bring your headphones.) They also work well as audio-books, so don't wait until you come here, but enjoy them as virtual tours.

The Buckingham Street has 14 locations, each with photos and story. The Churches Tour goes to 9 locations.

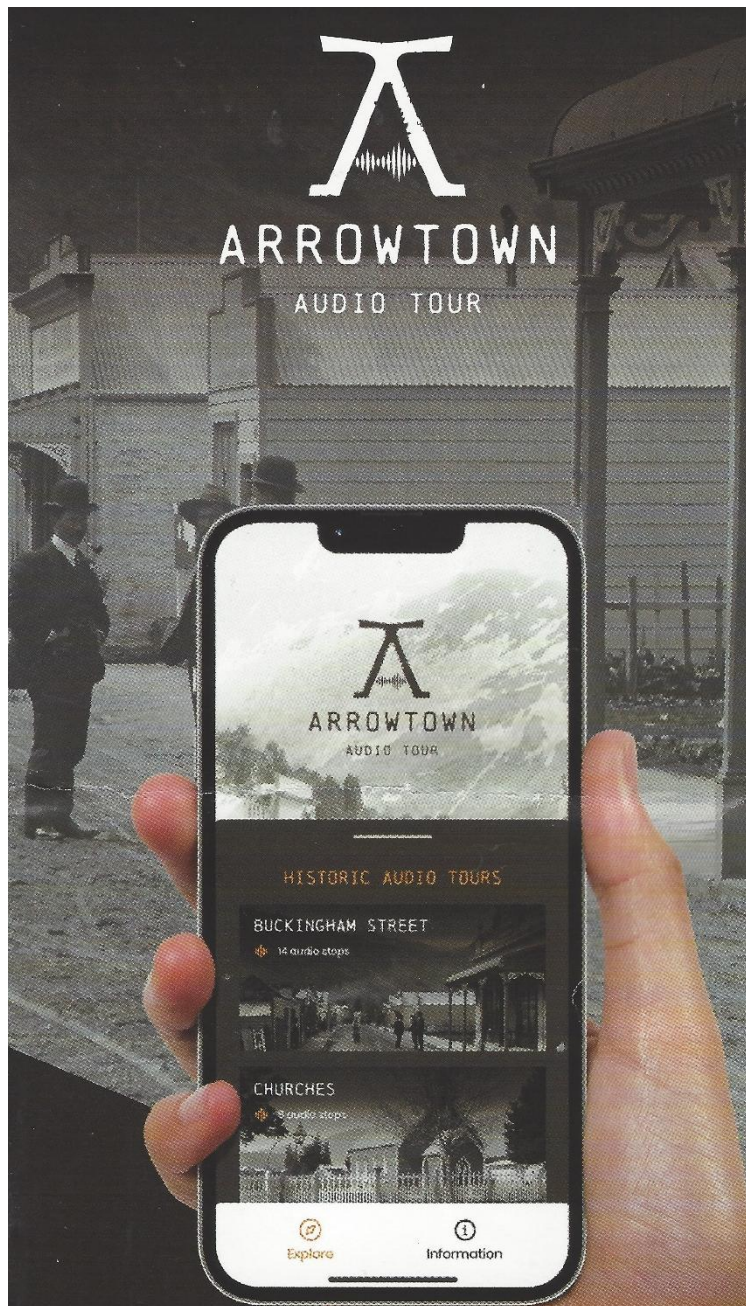
Of particular pleasure is the engagement of speakers from appropriate home countries as the voices of the narrators William Rees, Frances Cotter, William Butler, Rosie Buckingham, Frederick Burwell and Rose Douglas. These accents were the way Arrowtowners sounded before the New Zealand

accent was formed through the mixture of children in schools. The audio also includes some sounds of everyday life which add to the sense of time-travel.

I admire the huge investment of time, thought and money that Nick has made. His research has been thorough. At our meeting he explained the decisions he made and the processes involved – rather different from either a book or a film.

Arrowtown Audio Tours can be downloaded from Google Play and Apple App Store, or via this QR code.

The two tours cost \$15 each tour or \$17 for both.



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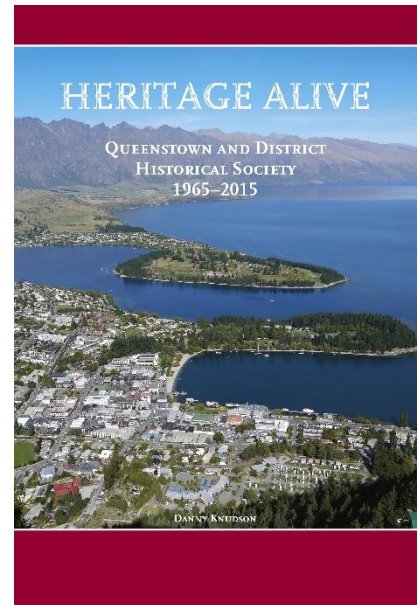
Ten More Years of Promoting and Protecting our Heritage: Queenstown & District Historical Society 2015-2024

by Marion Borrell

This is an addendum to *Heritage Alive*, the history of the Society from 1965 to 2015, which was written by Danny Knudson for our fiftieth anniversary. It behoves an historical society to record its own history, value its legacy – and keep adding to it.

Chapter 17, ‘Communicating and Promoting our Heritage’, covered 2012-2015, being the first years when I was the chairperson. I continued in that role until November 2024.

A celebration of 50 years was held at the Colonel’s Homestead at Walter Peak Station to recall with admiration the efforts our founders and the decades of service thereafter. The book was launched and given to all members. Copies are still available on request.



The recent ten years have been spent continuing the legacy, responding to the huge growth of population and visitors, and adopting new technology.

Heritage Protection and QLDC

This was the initial impetus for the creation of the Society in 1965. There are now more protections through the RMA and the statutory bodies – QLDC, Heritage NZ and DOC. The Society’s role is to take part in the processes, particularly by monitoring Resource Consent Applications for any involving heritage sites. See *Courier 110*, 2023 page 32 for a fuller statement of what we do, much of which is positive, supporting wise proposals and taking part in consultations.

Only once in these years have we had to submit a strong objection and follow it through. A proposal for a community centre, known as the Olive Leaf, at St Patrick’s Catholic Church in Arrowtown had an unusual design that disregarded the heritage classification of the site and the Residential Arrowtown Historic Management Zone’s guidelines. Our response, closely based on our Constitution, was to oppose the application, which was declined by QLDC’s commissioners. When the proponents appealed the decision to the Environment Court, we went to court to support the Council’s position, and the appeal was dismissed in 2023.

Promotion in Print

The *Queenstown Courier* magazine of 36 pages bi-annually is a permanent contribution to local history. Many articles are provided by our members, who are a great resource, or arise from our activities. All issues can be read on our website where they are accessed by researchers as well as the general public. I continue to be the editor and designer.

Stories of Wakatipu – Queenstown Courier 100 by Danny Knudson (2018). With another occasion to celebrate, Danny compiled a wide-ranging history of the district by using extracts from the *Couriers* and referencing many more.

Heritage Alive – Queenstown and District Historical Society 1965-2015 by Danny Knudson (2025)

Skippers - Triumph and Tragedy by Danny Knudson (2016) is Danny's *magnum opus* after decades of research. This glorious book was published jointly by the Lakes District Museum, the Historical Society and Danny himself.

Historic Places in Queenstown – I wrote this brochure in 2018. The printing is paid for by QLDC, and it is distributed free for visitors and locals to pick up from the Museum, libraries and tourist outlets. So far 15,000 have been printed.

'Then and Now' Calendars: I created these photographic fundraisers until 2016. With sales falling while costs increased, they were discontinued.

Other Ways of Promoting Heritage

The website, made in 2011, is our on-line promotion to the world and the route by which new members join. We frequently receive email enquiries from researchers and family historians.

Smartphone App of heritage locations in the district. This was launched in 2015, containing 64 locations accessed through QR codes, each with short and long articles and photos. It worked for several years, then sadly, ceased to function. However, the contents which I compiled, equivalent to a 200-page book, have been an excellent source of *Courier* articles and thus have become available through the website.

Blogs on queenstown.com website: We were invited to contribute short articles about local history for this promotional website. I wrote 24 blogs between 2015 and 2019, then the website editor changed. Many of the blogs have since been republished in *Couriers*.

The Panels Project: Taking the History to the People – 2018 -

In the past the Society installed many plaques on historic places in the district, but now we can make ACM panels with much more information and images, placing them where visitors and residents will see them. The first was in Queenstown outside the former library to greet people to our historic town. Others are in places where there's little other history to be seen, e.g. at Old School Road, Lower Shotover. Between 2018 to 2025 we have made 13 panels and provided the contents for three more.

After we had made several panels, the Queenstown Trails Trust asked for four panels beside the trails with funding from MBIE; QLDC asked us to provide the content for five at Arrowtown; and Tony Hanning, a descendant of the Cotter family, asked if we could arrange with QLDC for a panel about the Mary Cotter Tree and the avenue in Arrowtown.

Many committee members have contributed to this project. In addition, we restored the installation about Julien Bourdeau near Skippers Road turnoff, and persuaded QLDC to renovate the historical panels on the Queenstown Village Green.

Community Participation and Collaboration

This has been a feature of the past ten years. Our major collaboration is with the Lakes District Museum where we have a representative on the Board. We appreciate the support the staff give with our research.

We've presented 'People from Our Past' events to other groups including the Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust, the U3A groups in Queenstown and Cromwell, and several smaller gatherings. Other community groups have asked us to give talks, and we're pleased to oblige. We donated to No Leaf Inc group for their heritage consultant.

The panels project has created collaboration with the Queenstown Trails Trust, QLDC, DOC and the Arrowtown RSA. Through my being a Trustee, we keep in touch with the Whakatipu Heritage Trust and support where we can, such as at the opening of the restored Arrowtown Gaol for which we provided these six 'People From Our Past' involved in Law and Justice.

After a hiatus of several years, QLDC now has a designated Cemeteries and Heritage Officer who is a great resource and colleague. We took part in consultations for the new Creativity, Culture and Heritage Strategy (2024). As a result, the various heritage groups in the wider district have begun to meet to share ideas.



Navigating the COVID Pandemic

During the first lockdown in March 2020 many people were walking and cycling on their nearest trails where our panels provided historical information. As the *Winter Courier 103* was already well advanced, it was published in May as usual. Some of our events were postponed, and one, 'Interesting Old Objects', moved on-line, enabling members living far and wide to contribute. The website was much used by people from many countries as they delved into their family histories while confined at home.

Activities for Members

The pattern throughout these years has been for six activities each season between September and May, four indoors and two trips. Sometimes there have been additional events as opportunities have arisen.

'People From Our Past' presentations of monologues by past residents have helped us to feel close to earlier people. As much as possible we ask descendants or use the person's own words. Since 2015 we have met 34 people ranging in time from Hakitekura to Donald Hay, Frances Rees, Mary Ann Anderson (aka 'the Bull Pup'), Bendix Hallenstein, the Butel brothers, and recent people like Margaret Templeton.

Other indoor events have been on topics to which everyone can contribute a story, photo, object or artwork. Our members themselves are a treasure trove of history. We've had 'Members Sharing Memories', 'What on Earth is that Gadget?', 'Interesting Old Objects', 'Our Emigrant Ancestors - Why They Left', 'Cribbies' Memories', an

exhibition of 'Local History through Artists' Eyes', 'Pastimes for Rainy Days', 'Making Music in the early days' and many more.

Trips have been whole or half days to many heritage sites around the Whakatipu district, Cardrona, south to Kingston and Athol and to Central Otago. We also organised a gathering of 'Local Vehicles with Histories' held at Thurlby Domain.

We appreciate the many experts who have been our guides and the owners of properties who have welcomed us. The photo is of Ken Gillespie at Hayes Engineering at Oturehua.



The Committee

Denise Heckler and I have been committee members throughout the ten years. The numbers on the committee have varied from seven to twelve, and the total over the ten years has been 21. We're fortunate to have so many volunteers taking a turn. The administration has run smoothly, including creating the new constitution in 2024.

The Society Information page in each *Courier* lists the committee members.

The Chairpersons' Annual Reports are printed in *Couriers* and can also be read online.

Updates and Additions to the Committee Lists printed in *Heritage Alive*

Chairperson: Marion Borrell 2012-2024, Kerry Dunlop 2024 –

Deputy Chairperson: Denise Heckler 2014-

Treasurer: Gavin Jack 2010-2021, Ray O'Callaghan 2021-2023, Bev Cason 2023-

Secretary: Jocelyn Robertson 2000-2006 and 2008-2017, Denise Heckler 2017-

Committee Members:

Jocelyn Robertson 2000-2018, Brian Bayley 2005-2017 Danny Knudson 2006-2018, Ralph Hanan 2008-2015, Marion Borrell 2010 -, Denise Heckler 2011- , Anthony (AJ) Mason 2015-2017, Russell McGrouther 2016-2020, Barbara Kerr 2017-2023, Patrick Beehan 2018-2024, Pauline Lawrence 2019-, Ray O'Callaghan 2019-, Jo Boyd 2020-2024, Colin Macnicol 2020-, Ed Elliott 2021-2023, Fran O'Connor 2021-, Shona Blair 2023-, Monika Fry 2023-2024, Kerry Dunlop 2023-, Carolyn Beggs 2024-, Jenny Howitt 2024-

Editor of the *Queenstown Courier*: Marion Borrell 2010-

New Conferred Memberships (formerly called Honorary Life Memberships)

Neil Clayton 2015, Jocelyn Robertson 2017,
Danny Knudson 2018, David Clarke 2022.



Queenstown and District Historical Society Inc.
Chairperson's Report for the Annual General Meeting
November 2025

For the year from 1st October 2024 to 30th September 2025

By Kerry Dunlop

After 12 years of excellent stewardship by Marion Borrell, it has been a pleasure to have succeeded her as chairperson. She remains on the committee and has edited the *Queenstown Courier Issues 112 & 113*. She also organised a very successful 'Medical People from Our Past' event in St John's Presbyterian Hall, Arrowtown in September. About 80 people attended including residents of the Arrowtown Lifestyle Village and the Queenstown Country Club.

Our membership has increased by 10 to 190 memberships and about 260 individuals. Most new members join through word of mouth, others through events and the website.

Our financial position remains strong at about \$40,000. Our largest source of income is subscriptions, while the largest expense is the printing and posting of the *Courier* magazines. As postage has become more expensive, more members are choosing to receive their magazines as email attachments.

Promotion of Local History

Publications

- *Queenstown Courier 112* with articles by Danny Knudson, Ed & Zandrie Elliot, Marion Borrell and Pauline Lawrence,
- *Queenstown Courier 113* with articles by Denise Heckler, Shona Blair, Colin Macnicol, Ray O'Callaghan and Marion Borrell.
- Website: Each month has about 250 visits to 500 pages. It shares our local history, and generates enquiries and some memberships. Thanks to Monika Fry.
- *Historic Places in Queenstown*: a further 5000 copies of the brochure have been printed, paid for by QLDC, for free distribution.
- *Tales of Wakatipu* has been reprinted again and sells through the Museum, as does *Edith Cavell – A Bridge and Bravery*. Both were written by Danny Knudson.

Historical Panels Project: The total installed since 2018 is now 13.

The W.W.1 panel at the Arrowtown War Memorial which provides details of the 18 local men who lost their lives is a credit to Denise Heckler and her research. The Arrowtown RSA paid for the panel and its installation. *See Courier 113 for full details.*

The Mt Aurum Station panels have been installed at the site where the homestead stood, thanks to the efforts of Colin Macnicol. We plan for members to visit Skippers next March. *See Courier 113 for detail.*

The 'Early Days at Arthurs Point' panel at the Edith Cavell Bridge was reskinned to pristine condition after being damaged by tannin runoff from its wooden frame.

Skippers Road signage: Thanks to Fran O'Connor for repairing Wong Gong's sign. To erect it, Fran, Colin and I drove to where Wong Gong lived and had his vegetable garden.

Activities and Events for Members, September 2024 to May 2025

September: The History of Tourism in the district was presented by Amanda Viana from the Education Unit at the Lakes District Museum, and much appreciated.

October: Field trip to heritage sites near Lake Hayes. First to Threepwood homestead which has been admirably restored and refurbished by the owners Justin Crane and Kirsty Mactaggart. Then to the Whites' Fish Smoker. The full story by Marion can be found in *Courier 113* with a drawing of the stone structure by Audrey Bascand. We then visited two historic stone buildings at Bendemeer Bay originally owned by the 'gentleman' Borthwick Baird, and now by Leighton and Jane Kerr.



The first gondolas arrived in 1967

November The AGM and a talk about the Museum's digitisation project by Alicia Taylor. Afternoon tea consisted of 1950s recipes.

March 2025. Trip to Ophir organised by David and Wendy Clarke. We visited their interesting historic home and enjoyed the morning tea that they provided. Then it was a special privilege to look through Blacks Station Homestead (1859). We lunched at Ophir where we viewed the historic buildings including inside the still-functioning post office.



David Clarke addressing the gathering at the heritage Dan O'Connell Bridge (1880)

April: The panel honouring Arrowtown's WW1 casualties was unveiled at the War Memorial. Afterwards at the Presbyterian Hall, Denise talked about life in Arrow district during the war. This has been expanded to become an article in *Courier 114*.

May: 'Frankton over the Years' from pre-colonial times through to the 1950s was explored with a series of talks and photos. Also, Nick Fifield demonstrated the historical app he has created, 'Arrowtown Audio Tours'.



Paul Hansen provided this photo of himself at the grassed airport in 1964 with a Mount Cook Company DC3 and coach.

Heritage Protection

We continue to monitor all Resources Consent Applications to QLDC to check for any involving heritage matters. None have required further action by us this year.

Frankton Cemetery Wall: Several committee members visited the site where the contractors explained how the historic wall will be protected during the major road realignment.

Two committee members attended a meeting at Coopers Terrace (in Arrow Gorge) including Heritage NZ and Arrowtown Village Association representatives to discuss what might be done at the site of this former settlement following Jan Morrison's archaeological work.

Community Involvement

Lakes District Museum: Pauline Lawrence is our representative and provides full reports. This is important as the Museum is a wonderful resource for our Historical Society and for the community.

The Lakes District Heritage Partners group to which we belong has held one 'Heritage Hui' meeting attended by Pauline, Marion and myself, where we learned what all the other heritage groups are doing. More collaboration will be possible from now on.

Arrowtown Lifestyle Village held a 'Good Life Expo' for local groups to promote their activities. Denise and Jenny organised our stall and gained some new members.

The Committee

Our secretary Denise Heckler and treasurer Bev Cason are both very reliable and their work is appreciated. The committee of Colin Macnicol, Marion Borrell, Shona Blair, Caro Begg, Jenny Howitt, Pauline Lawrence, Fran O'Connor and Ray O'Callaghan all contribute to our stimulating meetings. Thank-you Denise for making your home available and for the morning tea.

Thank-you for having me as your chairman for the year. I encourage all members to use our website, www.queenstownhistorical.org.nz. It contains a vast amount of historical information which is easily accessed using the search engine.



Queenstown & District Historical Society Incorporated

Our Heritage Today – For Tomorrow

COMMITTEE

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MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

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