

Presidents Annual report 1988

QUEENSTOWN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 1988

The year has been a busy and satisfying one. Membership numbers 194 comprising mainly families, individuals and some libraries. There has been an increase of 16 in the year with a few losses through members moving out of the district. Further comments on membership are made later in this report.

Our four planned trips were outstanding successes in terms of places visited, information gleaned and response from members, except to the Oturehua area, where distance and cost perhaps restricted numbers, not the quality of what was offered. The Gibbston trip, with Mr Alex Miller again demonstrating his superior knowledge of the area and inimitable style of relating it, was matched by the Sylvan Lake trip with Mr Tommy Thomson and to the Bendigo Mines with Mr Geoff Duff. In addition there were two trips in the Earnslaw, an enjoyable pre-Christmas circuit of two hours and a day trip to the head of the lake to celebrate the Centenary of the Glenorchy School in May, for the purpose of raising funds for a computer for the school. With snow to the lake shore and brilliantly fine weather, the day was nostalgic for many of our older members who had vivid memories of the steamer's servicing runs of yesteryear and a fantasy in scenic terms for all.

To support the 125th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the historic Lake Lodge of Ophir No. 85 on the waterfront on 17th July, about 40 - 50 members attended to inspect the building, the first occasion on which it has been opened to the public, and participate in the tree planting ceremony. (It is understood that the building is the oldest one in New Zealand which was built and is still used for the purpose it was designed.) Later a cup of tea and biscuits were served at the T.H.C. and inspection of the building open to members.

In September fifty people, mostly members, gathered at the Museum in Arrowtown for a slide and video evening. Our long serving secretary Joan Carswell showed selected slides of her recent visit to China and Barry Lawrence slides of local buildings some of which still remain unidentified. The video highlighted the Masonic Lodge celebrations and the Arrowtown remodelled Post Office opening. This was by courtesy of Colin Jack.

In pursuing our objectives in saving historical aspects of the district your committee has been alert and active.

The 'Bathhouse' saga has been settled at last. It is to be restored on its present site and not relocated giving pleasure to both our society and many people in the district. The Historic Places Trust is to be commended on its efforts here, in addition to Councillor Sharpe. A visit from Mrs Lois Galer the regional representative from Dunedin and the New Zealand Acting Director of the Trust, Ms Quirk from Wellington, certainly added weight to the decision for Council to restore the Bathhouse. Other buildings were also inspected during their brief stay.

At present a sub-committee is working at listing historic buildings with the prospect before Christmas, of having trust representatives visit, inspect and pass judgement on them for classification. Although many buildings are already listed in the District Scheme, it is well to have them 'see the light of day' and be classified if of historic merit, as soon as possible in these days of frenetic development in a tourist area.

Restoration of the cemetery stone wall at Frankton for which the society has given a donation to the Council, is to be completed soon. Other renovations needing attention have been inspected and preliminary action taken.

Interest in local historic research continues in sponsorship of the William Rees Memorial Prize Essays. In both Wakatipu and James Hargest High Schools a number of senior pupils contested the prizes.

This sponsorship is invaluable as young people have the opportunity to seek out and record local history. It is hoped that their interest is retained.

'Early Queenstown' the excellent supplement to the Courier 1987 by Mr De La Mare our dedicated and immediate past president has been accepted for publication. In addition a Sydney library requested a copy during the year. Not only is this an accolade for the author but we as a society feel some reflected pride in his notable contribution to our history.

A society logo competition has proved disappointing as a local newspaper has not shown the interest that was anticipated. However from submissions a logo should be chosen.

Planned extension to the Arrowtown Museum has been greeted with genuine satisfaction and the Society should be wholeheartedly behind the project. It is not insignificant that at its recent A.G.M., museum members increased the society representation to the Committee to two. This suggests that our input to that important public body is valued.

Support to the Queenstown Library continues with the donation of 'The Gibbston Story' by Ann Cook, this year.

The Society is grateful to the Southland Trust Bank, for its donation this year and for other years. It is further good news to know that the Bank intends distributing a vastly increased amount of money to community projects in the future.

To return to membership, I believe membership should be even greater. This can be achieved mainly by members passing on by word of mouth the activities of the Society. Many think anything historic is stuffy and uninteresting. We should endeavour to change that notion. With such a rich and varied past in the district and rapidly changing scene, it should be one of our tasks to draw more people into our Society. A large membership has several advantages. First and foremost it is fundamental that numbers of

people, however luke warm or dedicated as individuals, together recognise the significance of the district historically. As a consequence they generate greater interest and awareness in the importance of research, recording and preservation of those things in our cultural heritage which merit it. Much has been done and much still remains to be done. Numerous opportunities offer now. We must not allow them to pass. Mr Colin Jack with his video equipment has responded to our call for recording the changing face of Queenstown and Arrowtown which has been dramatic during the recent rapid developments. Development will continue at varying speeds and we must be prepared to record changes for posterity.

Our Society should have attractions for all, not only for what it stands for but also for the intrinsic appeal through the nature of its interest.

In conclusion thanks are extended to Mr Les McAndrew who made his shop and staff available for bookings for trips and Mr Ted Sturt for use of Hulbert House for committee meetings. To committee members Alan De La Mare and Roma McAndrew go the Society's warm thanks for production of the Courier and keeping up to date the photographic album and scrap books, respectively.

Finally I wish to thank the Committee for its staunch support. During the year, Mrs Mona Hood felt obliged to resign because of restricted mobility and Mr John Lindsay through serious illness was unable to attend most meetings. During their presence, they with the remainder of attending members firmly adhered to the objects of the Society and willingness to serve its members faithfully. I believe the society is in good heart.

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## Gold mining in new Zealand - third part - John A Miller

### GOLD MINING IN NEW ZEALAND

This is the third and concluding part of a long article written by Mr John A. Miller published in the Southland Times in 1886.

Nothing has been said yet about the Phoenix mine itself and its prospects. Like most quartz mines in New Zealand this one is worked chiefly by adits, driven into the mountain spur upon which the reefs - for there is a number of them in this claim - occurs. Considerable distances had to be driven before any payable stone was met with, amounting in some of the adits to more than 400 feet. The low level adit is in upwards of 900 feet, and this is pushed ahead as fast as possible to the eastern boundary of the claim more than a mile from the present face of the adit. Five distinct lodes have been discovered running parallel with each other. The lodes vary from 3 feet up to 22 feet in thickness, and in their longitudinal course often approach each other, without, however, merging one into the other, always carrying a dividing wall between them. The gold occurs in shoots which all dip to the west and is generally found in the greatest quantities on the hanging wall, where there is also, as a rule, a good dip or casing of clay, invariably considered as a good indication. So far as proved all shoots of gold improve in richness as they go down. The course of the lodes is east and west, or nearly so, with a northerly dip of varying angles, so that they must be considered true lodes, as they run across the country both in strike and dip. The lodes underlie, as a rule, about 40 or 45 degrees, but in cases diverge very much from this rule, with the indication, however, that they become much more regular as they descend.

The different levels or adits, of which there are in all six, are connected by passes. The quartz is shot down these passes to the lowest adit, which delivers it at the machine house, so that the stone is never handled after it leaves the face where it is broken out. All the adits are furnished with sheet rails, and near the mouth of the lowest one there is a self-registering weighbridge, which records the weight of the trucks passing over it. This is an important part of the plant, as Mr Evans works the mine upon the contract system. The trucks are calculated to hold 15cwt.

The character of the gold in the different lodes is generally of a coarse nature, but the Promised Land lode which is also the thickest in the claim contains more fine gold than any of the others. From what is known as the main lode a piece of gold weighing 15 dwts was obtained which is phenomenal for reef working. Some of the shoots are upward of 200 feet measuring along the reef and yielding over 1 ozs per ton, the whole width of the reef being taken, but crushings of about 300 tons, taken from different parts of the mine have yielded upwards of 2 ozs per ton, so that the average yield may be put down at rather better than 1 ozs per ton.

About the permanence of these lodes and 'shoots' there need now be no further doubt. They have been traced for a distance of 5 or 6 miles up to the peak of Mount Aurum, 7,322 feet above sea level, in a westerly, and more than two miles in the opposite direction. The spur upon which the Phoenix lodes are found, and which forms one of the ramifications of Mount Aurum, rises about 600 feet above the low level adit. Mr Evans, as already indicated, is now preparing to approach the shoots below the water level of the mine by a shaft, which is already down 82 feet. The dimensions of the shaft are  $1\frac{1}{2}$  by 12 feet, which is considered large enough for hauling and pumping from a depth of 1000 feet. The above is a description in outline of the underground works.

Adjoining the Phoenix on its western boundary is the 'Phoenix Extended', a new company in course of formation with a Melbourne directory and promoters. This company has now been successfully floated, and active work will commence almost immediately. The ground of this company comprises the leases formerly known as the Otago Company, a private concern, which has been working since the early days of the field, and from which some highly payable results were obtained. There is a plant of 4 batteries, of 4 stampers each upon the ground, and in connection with it a valuable water right. As much as 2000 ozs have been obtained for a season's work of 8 months by 6 men, but dissensions in the party induced them to sell out to the new company, who have offered them a handsome figure for the property.

Beyond the Phoenix Extended the ground is marked out for miles but as winter is approaching, nothing has been done to prospect the lode. On the eastern boundary of the Phoenix is situated the 'British American Company', also one of the earliest discoveries on the field, and now held by Mr A. Southberg. From this claim a quantity of stone went as much as 20 ozs to the ton, and Mr Southberg continues to obtain very satisfactory yields from the claim which is favourably situated for being approached at a great range of level, probably not less than 800 feet. The claims mentioned comprise all now in hand at Skippers.

In the Shotover Valley there is the 'Gallant Tip Company', at work a short distance above the junction of Skipper's Creek with the Shotover River. This also is one of the early discoveries, and was known as the 'Nugget and Cornish Company,' having had for a length of time a prosperous run during which it turned out a fair amount of gold. The present Company are putting in a low level adit a little above high water mark of the Shotover River, which will give them something like 2000 feet of backs about the middle of their claim. As the adit is entered on the line of the reef, which the Shotover crosses almost at right angles, this will be at once a highly profitable and permanent piece of work.

Near Maori Point in the same valley is the Maori Point Quartz Mining Company, which also has been taken over by a Melbourne Company now in course of formation. Mr T.L. Pearce, who has been mining in the Wakatipu goldfield in its early days, and who is an experienced mine manager, is acting as local agent for this as well as the Phoenix Extended Company and it is understood will take charge of both mines when work is commenced in them. The Maori Point Quartz claim is a comparatively new discovery, and has the advantage of being situated close to the dray road now making and which will shortly be completed so far as this mine. Five tons of a trial crushing yielded 15 dwts to the ton, and so far as the claim is opened there are good indications of it containing a very payable and permanent lode, which combined with the facilities commanded by the position of the mine, should yield good and

regular dividends, when once properly opened out, and in proper working order.

Mr John Aspinall, a working miner, is also prospecting a reef in the Shotover Valley, upon which he has spent nearly £1,000. Stone showing payable gold has been discovered, but the reef is too narrow as yet, and does not justify opening out upon it. The show in this claim is very good, though some amount of prospecting may yet be required to prove its real value.

Beside the above claims, which comprise all the quartz mining operations at present carried on in the Shotover Valley the industry has also established itself at Macetown, 10 miles distant from Mount Aurum in an easterly, and at the Head of Lake Wakatipu, eight miles off in the opposite direction. The Macetown reefs were taken in hand about nine years ago, and several rather promising successes were met with at the opening of the field, which being rushed by miners, sharebrokers, and speculators, the two latter species of harpies largely predominating soon became 'a centre of busy interests.' Difficulties in the shape of inaccessibility, climatic drawbacks, want of timber, and over-speculation, soon crushed the prospector's spirits, and a collapse as lamentable as the beginning was exhilarating, then ensued.

Ever since the neighbourhood of Macetown was rushed at the end of 1862 it was known that quartz reefs existed upon the highest part of Advance Peak, 5740 feet above sea level but the inaccessibility of the country, and the absence of timber made it sheer madness to think of quartz reefing in these parts at that time, when there existed a pack track only from Arrowtown to Macetown, over a saddle of nearly 4,000 feet above sea level, and which was blocked by snow drifts for three or four out of every twelve months. However in 1875 and the following year, discoveries were made which led to a rush, machinery was erected, and 80 tons of quartz crushed which yielded 3 ozs, 12 dwts per ton. This was taken from the Gladstone claim, and other claims obtaining also payable results hopes in the field rose to a very high pitch. However, before many summers



went by it was found that only the best claims could so survive the difficulties which beset the field, and although about 20 claims were taken in hand, in all of which a considerable amount of prospecting was done, there are only four at work at the present time. These reefs are now made accessible to wheeled traffic, over a route lying up the Arrow River, and which is available all the year round and quite independent of snow drifts, still the climatic drawbacks are such as to seriously interfere with mining, no crushing whatever can be carried on during four or five months in the year, and then again - water being the only available motive power - the dry summer season affects the supply at the great altitude of the Macetown so much as to reduce it to almost nil. Unlike Skipper's, there is not a stick of timber of any description fit for using in the mines nearer than the head of Lake Wakatipu, a distance of nearly 60 miles. The mines so far opened are all so situated that the crushing machinery could only be placed at a considerable distance from them, and the quartz has been carried by drays to the mills. Besides all this there are many other difficulties, all more or less formidable, which interfere with quartz reefing at Macetown.

The reefs here resemble those of Skipper's in all their leading characteristics, and are also worked in a similar manner, and the same may be said of the reefs at the Head of Lake Wakatipu, where there is up to the present only one claim in full working order, i.e., the Invincible Co., which has met with fair success, paying dividends out of very poor stone which averaged only about 10 dwts per ton, whereas the average yield at Macetown may be put down at 1 oz per ton.

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## Macetown history

### MACETOWN

The origin of the following article is not known. It is disjointed but contains some interesting information.

#### A condensed history of the proposed Park

Perhaps it should be noted that on November 6th 1862, the Californian miner Fox and mate William Scholes, left the Arrow Gorge and travelled by way of Coronet Creek across the gap to the Shotover opposite Maori Point; travelled up river to Stony Creek climbing back to Mt. St Just and then returned by way of the rim above the Twelve Mile to the Arrow Gorge with 7 oz.  $17\frac{1}{2}$  cwds of the first gold to be discovered in the Shotover.

From this time onwards, for the next 46 years the area within the park was a continuing battle by determined miners to tame the wild and rugged ridges and gullies of the Twelve Mile and Advance Peak.

There are many monuments within the boundaries of the proposed park.

Where the site of Macetown now stands was the settlement known as "The Twelve Mile" and it came into existence by the end of December 1862 at which time there were 3,000 men in the area from Arrow to Advance Peak. "Twelve Mile" residents collected £75 towards the erection of Frankton Hospital. They also celebrated the marriage of the Prince of Wales; one half ton block of quartz lying in Twelve Mile creek sparkled with specimens of gold all over.

From 1863 to 1875 settlers of the Twelve Mile were busy with alluvial mining only. They dug and cut water races from the head of the Richburn to the Eight Mile, brought water by pipe syphon from Mt Soho across the Arrow to high on Red Hill on the Eight Mile.

Head waters of Deep Creek on the Skippers side were enticed across

the saddle into the head of Scanlans basin to help boost the local flow.

Wooden flumings of 500 ft. in one length were erected across the 12 mile at 60 ft. above stream bed to convey race water for sluicing. Tunnels of up to 260 ft. were carved through ridges just to convey water to races running around hillsides for miles, some projects costing £4,500. Alluvial tunnels were driven over 400 ft. through terraces, some driven 2,000 ft.

In 1875 the Twelve Mile had a Progress Committee.

There were nine named quartz reefs in Scanlans Gully. Eleven named reefs in Sylvia Creek, 26 in Sawyers Gully and 8 on Advance Peak, around 54 in all.

Quartz mining started in the Twelve Mile in 1875, the first lode to be worked being the Tipperary, in Scanlans Gully. First mines to crush quartz were the "All Nations" and "Homeward Bound", the latter being the first to build a battery in the area. It was to become known as the Coffee Grinder. It was to be superceded by yet two other bigger and brighter machines, the last of which still stands defiantly on the edge of Twelve Mile creek today.

At one stage there was a suggestion that a tramway be laid from Arrow to Macetown.

During 1865, a Post Office was opened under the name of the Twelve Mile Arrow. Telephone was installed during 1883 the town now being Macetown. In early Twelve Mile days a Catholic chapel was established because of the great numbers of Irish; it fell to disuse by 1865.

There were six aerial tramways, erected at principle mines and many ground trams. First access to Twelve Mile was by a pack track which started high above the present road.

A public battery was erected on the Twelve Mile creek in 1877, 30 chain above its junction with the Arrow.

Martha Squires fell from the top track some 500 feet to the river in the parapet wall region, it retarded her efforts for the jam making season with a wounded ankle.

Capt. Jackson Barry owned his own claim in Scanlans Gully.

1878 Tipperary erected its own battery.

1893, a 2,000 ft. tunnel was driven from Caledonian Gully to the workings of the mine in Tipperary creek. Miners had to break through to old workings with 10,000 tons of water above. The drive took 2 years 5 months. The Sunrise Mine near the top of Advance Peak erected a new battery at the foot of Advance Creek in 1890 - it was driven by electric power. Shifted in 1906 to Scanlans Creek it is now known as Andersons Battery.

The Maryborough mine high out in Sawyers Gully, operated a 10 head battery driven by a 30 ft. water wheel at the entrance to Sawyers Gully. Purchased by the Premier mine it was extended to 20 head of stamps and driven by electric power.

Tenders were called for a public hall in 1882.

The Premier mine drove 3,000 ft. under Advance Peak from the floor of Sawyers Gully and winched the trucks out by electric power.

For 20 years all supplies were carted over Big Hill by way of Fish Creek; later a new road was opened and cartage costs dropped by 50 - 75 per cent.

The Tipperary furnace still stands in Scanlans Gully. It fired concentrates and was built in 1897. Vandals are starting to pull bricks out of the base.

The All Nations was considered the richest mine in the province. It erected its own small battery which still remains partly above ground in Sylvia Creek today.

This brief history is only a mere scratching of what existed and what actually happened during 46 years of occupation by miners and their families in the Twelve Mile area.

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