

# *The Queenstown Courier*

The Official Publication of the  
Queenstown & District Historical Society

Fifty-Fifth Issue - November 1995

## Officers of the Society

<b>President:</b>	Mr W Rex Austin 171 Fernhill Road	442-8345
<b>Vice President:</b>	Mrs Cicely Morrison 7 Reid Crescent, Arrowtown	442 1744
<b>Past President:</b>	Mr R J Clarkson 37 Lake Avenue, Frankton	442-3681
<b>Secretary:</b>	Mr Ray R Timmins 57 Frankton Road, Queenstown	442-8403
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Mr F M Checketts 267 Fernhill Road, Queenstown	442-6870

## Committee:

Miss J Carswell	442-8478	Mrs M Swan	442-8720
Mrs R McAndrew	442 8474	Mrs M Templeton	442 8312
Mrs E Geary	442 9473	Mrs S Weedon	442 1643
Mr B Hamilton	442 1210	Miss M Dawson	442 9444
Mr E C (Peter) Mills	442 7930	Mr R Iles	442 1976
Mr L W Rogerson	442 1230	Mr DB Wilson (Courier)	442 7385
Mr D Clarke (ex officio)			

Annual subscription \$10.00 per person or family) Corporate Membership  
\$50.00 (per annum) Life Membership \$100.00 per person The Courier is  
included in subscription.

All correspondence and accounts should be addressed to the Society's  
permanent address - P O Box 132, Queenstown

## *Annual Report 1994-1995*

*Presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Society on 11 October 1995  
by the President, Mr R J Clarkson*

It gives me pleasure to present this report for 1994-95 on the activities of your society. Our membership continues to increase, displaying the importance of the aims of the society and the desire of residents and visitors to the Wakatipu to be involved in heritage affairs and to learn more about the history of the Basin.

The Committee has held regular well-attended meetings to attend to the activities of the society and to consider suitable actions on matters referred to it by concerned locals and the QLDC Planning Department. The latter activity has increased greatly in recent years as increased emphasis and the realisation of the importance of preserving the remaining historic character of the Wakatipu Basin has gathered momentum. This heritage can now be seen in two lights – firstly as a duty to retain evidence of the past as a legacy for future generations, and secondly as a direct economic tourist benefit. We are now directly involved and asked to make recommendations on all matters which involve relevant buildings, trees and historic sites which preserve the unique character of our region.

In order to fulfil these functions we have representatives on the Lakes District Museum Board, Queenstown Heritage Trust, Heritage Advisory Panel and Historic Places Trust (local committee). We are able to draw on the help of the Community Advocate when needed. The work involving the Committee in all these activities has certainly raised the profile of the society judging by the number of submissions that we have been required to make. This when we are furthering our aims is good, but some of our other efforts have suffered.

Our plan to stabilise the Sawpit Gully ruins have stalled, the offer of an historical mural for the new Council building, gratefully accepted, awaits the slow construction of the building and the plaque recognising the Plantation Reserve has yet to be placed. The publication of the Peter Chandler papers which should be a high priority of the society has not yet advanced.

On the plus side, substantial donations for the preservation of the Williams Cottage and the purchase of the Arrowtown Post Office have been made. Here I would like to thank the great number of our members who sent in submissions, made private donations and thus had a very important influence in seeing that the cottage, the Archer cottage, the Post Office and the Postmaster's house were protected. School prizes have been provided for worthwhile literary works from senior history students. The registration of historic trees in the Basin carried out by Bruce Hamilton is successfully under way and the continued success of the 'Courier' now widely used as a research source and edited by Duncan Wilson is pleasing. We have been able to supply information and reports to individuals and to organisations which have asked

for our help.

The strength of our society with its large membership and our constant reminder to the Council of our wish to have the heritage of the district preserved have born fruit with the recent release of the District Plan in which Buckingham Street, the main street of Arrowtown, has been marked for a Heritage Precinct as we have been urging and the Marine Parade block in Queenstown including the cottages and St Peter's Anglican Church have been designated a Heritage Precinct thus validating the work of the society and the Queenstown Heritage Trust. In addition to these outcomes the Council, after consideration, has initiated the position of a Heritage Officer recognising the importance of the preservation of the worthwhile old. We hope we can look to the future in confidence that no more will registered trees, buildings and historic sites be removed from our landscape.

Enjoyable and educational trips in the last summer were popular with members and well patronised as was the August lunch at which Frank Haworth was the speaker. These excursions are important for allowing members to visit important heritage items of the district. A varied programme of visits for the coming year is now being prepared and will be published in the next issue of the 'Courier'.

In retiring from the office of President after three years, I would like to say how worthwhile and enjoyable I have found the position working with the authorities and our members. I would also like to thank the willing and thoughtful Committee members who have been very generous in giving up time to implement the aims of the society. Mention should be made of the contribution of Sheila Weedon, the retiring Secretary, Alan de la Mare who filled the job of Treasurer for the year, Dr Alf Poole who is retiring from the Committee and Ted Sturt who has always been most obliging in providing an appropriate venue for our meetings.

QUEENSTOWN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Statement of Receipts and Payments for the Year Ended 30 September 1995

1994	Receipts	1995	Payments	1995
7155	Bank Balances Fwd	9495.01	Subscriptions	92.00
2769	Subscriptions	2520.75	Donations - Arrow Post Office	1000.00
39	Donations	55.00	- Williams Cottage	3155.00
500	Grant from Trustbank	500.00	Advertising	38.75
200	Research Fee	100.00	Printing & Stationery	272.00
			Room Hire	16.00
53	Art Society for P.O. Box		Post Office Box	52.50
43	Sales of Couriers	10.50	Couriers & Postage	1078.36
1792	Trips	3898.00	Trips	3613.49
1305	Luncheon	1220.00	Luncheon	1240.50
0	Williams Cottage	155.00	Rees Memorial Prize	100.00
			Plaque	.00
332	Interest	506.83	Travel - R. Clarkson	.00
			Gifts and Vouchers	21.40
14186		18461.09	Bank Balances Closing	7781.09
				18461.09

Bank Balances @ 30 Sep 1995

Current Account 1848.45  
 Term Deposit 5932.64  
 -----  
 7781.09

Auditor's Statement

I have examined the financial records of the Society which in my opinion have been properly kept. I have obtained the information and explanations I required. In common with other similar organisations, control over income and sundry donations prior to its being recorded is limited, and there are no practical audit procedures to determine the effect of this limited control. In my opinion the financial statements presented above give a true and fair view of the financial activities of the Queenstown and District Historical Society for the year ended 30 September 1995.



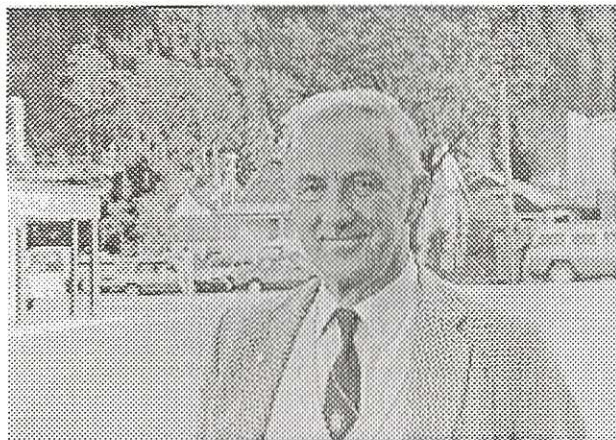
D.G. Warrington B.Com ACA

### *The Head of the Lake*

by T J Thomson

*(A continuation of the essay published in the 54th Issue)*

When I arrived in Glenorchy on the TSS Eamslaw in April 1942 life was very much in the pioneering stage and the people were proud of it. There was no access road but stock tracks had been cut through the heavy bracken fern down both sides of the lake from Glenorchy to Queenstown on the one side and from Kinloch to Elfin Bay on the other. There was a good track from Elfin Bay wharf to Rere Lake and from there on to the Greenstone to connect with both Milford Road and Lower Hollyford. The Routeburn Track was also well established. The latter tracks had earlier been constructed by the County Council with Tourist Department grants and later completed by the Department itself, nudged along by the Gilkison family and other mountain enthusiasts.



Tommy Thomson - Queenstown, 1983

hardness had, as in the 1914-1918 war, become desperately sought after by the allied nations.

In response to urgent British requirements the Zealand Government took an active part in scheelite production by immediately acquiring the Glenorchy Scheelite Companies' mines on Mt Judah and at Paradise and embarking on a crash programme of extraction and treatment of scheelite from both places.

The programme was severely handicapped by the total lack of mine plans. I was given the job of doing a complete and accurate survey of more than three thousand feet of tunnels at Paradise and eight thousand at Glenorchy. A fascinating job, unravelling on plans a labyrinth that up to then existed as a picture in the mind of generations of miners who had worked there since 1884 when the Glenorchy deposit was first mined by Wilson and partners.

Two major problems have always confronted successful scheelite production. The first is the variable demand due mostly to changing international relationships which led to violent fluctuations in price, the second is the capricious nature of the scheelite deposits themselves. Although there are at least four parallel reef formations extending many miles through the mountainous terrain, the scheelite content is incredibly unpredictable despite many assessments by a succession of geologists, some of whom were highly skilled.

Since 1906 the Glenorchy mine which was easily the largest and was probably the richest has yielded about 1,000 tons of good grade scheelite, mostly under the management of George Reid starting 1905, who managed the battery, a facility which cost some Government lots and is still run today by an Association under Ted Barnett. Yet among the 65 or so smaller private claims were some excellent yields despite the short working season and precipitous country. For instance, George Maslin and Jack Tripp, working near the top of Black Peak (6,598ft) around 1916-1918, packed out some 60 tons. Around 1915-1916 Andy Elliot and Huntly Groves drilled a tunnel right through the top of Temple Peak, packed scheelite out in bags to a rocky spur then let the bags slide down a 150ft length of No 8 wire to where they could get it out by packhorse. I visited Mark and John Shaw in 1943 when they were working the same Black Peak mine. I was guided around a shingly ledge by Gordon McLaren who seemed immune to the terrors of the near vertical 3,000ft drop to the Buckler Burn winding far below. The McLaren family were in Mt McIntosh mine, a mile west of Black Peak and named after Scotty McIntosh, a shepherd who had worked on Station in the early 1900s. High on the south side of the Buckler Burn Gorge were several claims such as Mt Larkins, Heather Jack, Bonnie Jean and Boozer all of which were excellent producers at certain stages, but brothers Jack and Dave Wylie working some quite fabulous patches of scheelite in the Heather Jack must have had more hair-raising experience from both unstable underground conditions and on the surface controlling a high pressure sluicing nozzle.

In recent years what in the 1940s was a burgeoning community in the high basins of the upper Buckler Burn has died away to only one steady miner, Neil Gollop, Ted Barnett and Mick Koch having moved to the Rees Valley mine called Davidson's. But the stage has been set for future activity, especially on the McIntosh-Black Peak ridge where the persistence of Gavin McIntyre, who had escaped death by the merest chance when his packhorse fell on him 30 years earlier in the Precipice Gorge, has at last, with the help of his wife Leah, unearthed good scheelite at Shikker's Point.

But Glenorchy's first residents were not miners. They were Alfred Duncan and Geo Simpson, W G Rees' young shepherds who built their earth hut near the present Post Office site in 1860 after droving in the first flock of sheep from Queenstown in what must have been an epic of cross-country droving through utterly trackless country.

I had by 1944 found that the miner's lot in this beautiful but remote place was one

where rare flashes of wealth were followed by a norm of hardship, risk and arduous labour. Yet there were no moans, the community was cheerful and always working for the common good.

If I had always taken it for granted that the farming community was at least reasonably comfortable economically, there was news for me on that subject when we took over Earnslaw Station in 1947.

Rabbits swarmed on the flats and even invaded up the near mountain sides to the 4,000ft level, devouring virtually every blade of grass as it grew. The tottering sheep flock of 3,300 diminished by a hundred each year no matter what we did. We thought rabbits night and day for years. But all this was nothing new to the farming community. They had known it all their lives. J T Butemont who had run 40,000 sheep on an enormous run covering the whole of the Glenorchy side of the head of the lake from 1868 to 1887 gave up eventually because his flock was decimated by the rabbit plague. An Act passed in 1949 made Rabbit Boards mandatory. There has been a continuous running battle with rabbits every since. I was keen on forming a Glenorchy Rabbit Board, luckily just when rabbit destruction became a national issue and Boards became mandatory. Even then the new Glenorchy Board got nowhere until the miracle of larvacide (really a poisonous tear gas) was shown by Stock Inspector Jim Wilder to be the answer. You poured a little into each burrow and filled the entrance with a spade. The entrapped rabbits died forthwith, so the Board embarked on a crash larvacide programme throughout the district and farming's greatest scourge was beaten: grass began to grow.

The rabbits had, in general, not been so bad in the high country of Richardson, Forbes and Humboldt ranges but the snow risks were, particularly in winters like in 1939 when over 1,000 sheep were lost on Earnslaw Run alone.

Help for high country mustering was, and is, perennially scarce, particularly during the Second World War years when Ivan Key alone on his then isolated Mt Creighton run not only mustered his 4,000 sheep but sheared them as well.

Doug Scott, apparently inexhaustible, spent a large part of nearly 50 years camped in his Arthur's Creek hut mustering or boundary keeping his Rees Valley flock. One season, I remember, three of his helpers including me started up his 12 mile face at 6.00am to our various beats one morning only to learn that Doug had already left at midnight to climb nearly 5,000ft through the Reef or Invincible Face so he could be well along the top beat on this part of the Fall muster before we got to our positions. He had worked a full day before leaving without any interruptions for even a quick nap. Then on the following day, after completing the muster about 1.00pm, he drafted off the woollies and helped shear them, then, still without sleep and like the responsible community man he was, attended a function in Glenorchy which went on till after midnight.

Over the Dart Lewis Groves, my father-in law, at Routeburn Station and Huntly his brother at Kinloch had new homes but every stick had come from the nearby beech

forest – Lewis was his own sole builder using timber traded with Cook's who milled timber from around Sylvan Lake. Huntly had his own mill powered by water from Glacier Creek. He and Jack Summers had patiently dragged every log, including some totaras, from the bush and milled them to perfection. It is marvellous what can be done with endless hard work, a sense of humour and hardly any money.

Apart from the single wire telephone lifeline from Queenstown to Glenorchy and on to Paradise, across the unbridged Dart to Routeburn, then from tree to tree as far as Elfin Bay – all maintained by Linesman Donald Gray – the connecting link was the steamer Earnslaw or, rolling alarmingly even on calm days, the Ben Lomond. Full of groceries, farm supplies, livestock and tourists the boat would be met by Dave Knowles at Glenorchy and Harry Bryant at Kinloch, each competing for visitors from almost anywhere to visit Paradise or Routeburn Valley.

Both Aitkens at Paradise and Bryants had been serving tourists since the 1880s. Both treated each tourist like royalty and to both the making of a profit seemed to be avoided like the plague. Sadly but inevitably the Aitkens' wonderful haven had to close in 1943 but thankfully not before I had had the privileged experience of staying with them while surveying the Paradise Mine.

When Lloyd and Muriel Vient then took over Paradise to continue this tradition Lloyd, a born hunter, supplemented their income by hunting red deer in the Dart, Rees, Routeburn and Rockburn. Between Lloyd (5,000 deer) and Darrell the Dago, who among other things split posts in the Dart beech forest, literally thousands of red deer were shot, skinned and the staggering weight of 'green' hides packed through bluffs, bush and mountain creeks. Harry Bryant, the third generation of Bryants to do so, treated every tourist to come off the boat as a special, individual, personal friend. Sometimes hundreds arrived and yet all were taken into the Routeburn where Harry later built the Bryant Lodge from beech saplings out of the bush. There, numerous billies were boiled to provide the famous Bryant billy tea, some of Connie's scones and Harry's special, a stuffed roast leg of venison, that he had climbed 3,000ft into Scot's Basin to shoot the evening before. Harry Bryant at Kinloch and Fergie Heffernan at Glenorchy, driving for Laurie Smith, were almost legendary figures with endless encyclopaedic information for the tourist.

Laurie Smith, whom I first encountered working with Peter Sharpe elevating and sluicing gravel for alluvial gold and scheelite in the Buckler Burn Creek just below the present bridge, could do anything. After taking over Glenorchy Motors he decided it was time Glenorchy had electric power so, in 1949, tapping a water source from Mt Judah, he installed a 15 kvh power station on the Buckler Burn Beach, erected poles he cut from local trees and supplied power to the town. In 1953 he obtained and installed a more adequate 95 kvh station further upstream. This time it was a high voltage supply which though not perfect, did miracles for Glenorchy life. The one man power authority was taken over and replaced by the Otago Central Electric Power Board in 1969 following years of persistent lobbying by Watty Watson, then

Chairman of the Progressive League.

Although the whole of the Wakatipu had leapt forward in 1872 when the railway connection of Kingston to Invercargill was completed and the steamer service had completed the direct link of the whole lakeside, including Glenorchy and Kinloch, this service was steadily becoming a limiting factor to farm development as well as becoming more and more uneconomic.

True, the Earnslaw could, as a special contract, shift 1,500 store sheep to Kingston en route to the Lumsden sales but this involved days of droving and drafting. Cattle transport on the Earnslaw was not very compatible with tourism and it was becoming the norm to drive surplus cattle part of the way to market. It certainly helped me to make up my mind about road access after being involved in a ten-day overland drive of 430 station cattle with Lloyd Veint, Gilbert Koch, Murray McKay, helped by Watty Watson and Tim Te Aika and guided by Jim Gillespie of Elfin Bay. Our route took us via Kinloch, Greenstone, Makarora, Centre Hill to Mossburn then by train to the Gore Sale. After one drive to Kingston railhead when I found that droving a mob of cattle through Queenstown was full of problems from traffic, human beings and house dogs, we settled on droving to Closeburn and trucking to Gore by road by Ray Kay's cattle yards though not without some careful manoeuvring to cope with the protective transport regulations of the time.

If I had been sure that the idea of a road from Queenstown to Glenorchy would be thought of as an unmixed blessing by everyone I was wrong. People are naturally conservative but the main considerations are undoubtedly economic. What would freights be like if the boat was taken off? Eventually economics carried the day when the price of scheelite crashed following the record prices caused by the Korean War which ended in 1955.

A meeting on April 4, 1959 in Glenorchy set alight a plan to speed up the snail's pace of road construction started from the Glenorchy end in 1956 when a Road Committee of six, with me as chairman, was told to start raising money, funding a suitable route then hire someone to bulldoze a road to Queenstown. Though a majority were in favour, others were not sure whether this proposed great leap for Glenorchy was forward or backward. I have since read that much the same equivocation applied to the building of the Queenstown-Kingston Road, the use of cars between Frankton and Queenstown and in recent years we only just got away with the building of the Dart Bridge and the road connection from Kinloch to Greenstone while opposition is still too strong against the final historically sought link to the Hollyford through the Greenstone Valley – again on the basis of supposed economic damage, this time to Te Anau tourism.

However, in the event, money was raised with the help of some outstanding contributions of which Nancy Wetherstone in the Glenorchy store, with an endless succession of raffles, was outstanding. Others like Douglas Badcock's donation, then the late Hugh Miller of Paradise House of a painting of Bob's Cove and donations

from stock firms all helped enormously. The rest was all action. A suitable route was found by mixing the local knowledge of Ivan Key at Mt Creighton and Roy Key at Closeburn, with my surveying knowhow, while miners Dave Wylie and son John blasted rock north of Closeburn and Laurie Smith did likewise north of Simpson's Creek and thanks to the sympathy of my fellow councillors the Lake County had got Darrell McGregor's to blast a narrow road through the precipice at Bennetts Bluff after Robert Hay had bulldozed a track to it from Creighton's wharf.



Tommy Thomson at Sylvan Lake, 6 March 1988

Like at the Devils Staircase on Kingston Road we had a problem section – the one and a half miles Bobstone Bluff section – where we wanted Government grants made for 'backblocks roading' to the County to be spent so the committee hired Jack Gaudian to doze four miles of road from Closeburn to the Bob's Cover rock with his TD9 at a cost of £475.

Then turning to the Glenorchy end where Norrie Groves and Darrell McGregor had completed the County's first road contract started in 1956, the committee hired Ivan Smith with his D6 dozer at £4 an hour. Ivan literally lived on the job to push through the 10 mile gap to Bob's Cove.

Impressed with all this do-it-yourself effort the Hon Hugh Watt, then Minister of Works, listened to our plea and made an immediate grant of \$28,000, the County Engineer's estimate of the cost of blasting a road through Bob's Cove.

Hugh Watts' successor (later Sir) Stanley Goosman, himself a one time back blocks contractor was equally sympathetic and not only agreed to officially open the road on 13 November 1962 but kept the grants to the County coming to upgrade it afterwards.

So suddenly, Glenorchy was accessible by road. A virtual goat track at the start we did find one transport company, Cunningham Transport from Gore game enough to risk life and limb to come and transport our sheep and cattle to market.

Today the Council is still following a programme of steady upgrading of the road which now attracts increasing tourist traffic and with everyone used to driving out or in at any time the really great difficulties of the past have gradually diminished.

Glenorchy and Kinloch now united by road are no longer isolated communities of highly inter-dependent people but the spirit of independence and self help is still there. If, as Doug Scott puts it 'with progress you also lose something' one can only speculate on what it would be like if we were still roadless and dependent on the Earnslaw – without subsidies.

*Early Medical Practitioners of Riverton:*

*The oldest established settlement in either Otago or Southland*

by Rex Austin

**1857-1858 – The First Doctor**

Dr Adams was the very first to set up his shingle in the settlement of Riverton.

He was described as a young man - under 30 years of age and therefore the most eligible bachelor in town. He was fully qualified which was uncommon for that period.

Accounts dating back to those times describe him as smart in appearance, good looking and very dark. He was, what is more, a good 'party' man and that was to prove his downfall.

Following a prolonged party which even for those times was not a record, although the 'party' lasted several weeks – he committed suicide. His body is buried in South Riverton at Talls Point.

**1859-1873 – Dr John McCrystal**

Dr McCrystal arrived in Riverton from India where he was engaged as a surgeon in the British Army. Unfortunately he found a shortage of medical demand; the citizens appear to have been an unduly healthy lot. In order to eke out a living Dr McCrystal resorted to splitting fence posts and cutting railway sleepers.

With his very first surgical case his reputation skyrocketed. At the time it became known as 'the celebrated case of Owen McShane'.

Mr McShane, during a disturbed sleep induced by an advanced stage of intoxication, fell into a fire and seriously burned one foot. Dr McCrystal with no surgical instruments, no operating theatre and no anaesthetic, borrowed a butcher's knife and a meat saw and performed an amputation below the knee. McShane it is claimed, never flinched.

A ship's carpenter fashioned the amputee a wooden leg and Mr McShane lived comfortably for another 20 years. (Mr McShane built Riverton's first goal in 1856, got drunk to celebrate the completion of the work and had the questionable honour of being the first person incarcerated.)

Dr McCrystal married a Mrs Hunt, widow of a boatman who was drowned along with the whole wedding party he was transporting from Bluff to Ruapuke Island. The Reverend Wohlers, the first resident Christian minister was to have performed the wedding service.

Dr McCrystal served the Riverton area for 14 years. In 1873 he moved, taking his medical services to the goldfields at Switzers (Waikaia). It was during his years of service that Riverton advance to the stage of becoming an immigration port. The proclamation was on 3 January 1862.

**1873-1879 – Dr Francis Alexander Monkton**

This man, Riverton's third doctor, was the son of an English solicitor. Monkton served as a surgeon during the Crimean War. He was actually a naval surgeon in the British Baltic Squadron.

Like those who preceded him he found it almost impossible to sustain himself within his profession. He supplemented his income by becoming a carrier, using a bullock and sledge to transport goods.

Towards the end of his five year term the Immigration Barracks were converted into a hospital and Monkton became the first hospital surgeon and the hospital's first Superintendent. He lived a long and fruitful life, finally ending his days at Fielding in 1910.

Joseph Cyprian Fenn 1854 - 1924- Paradise - Clive Geary

Arcadia

*Joseph Cyprian Fenn 1854-1924*

by Clive Geary

Joseph Cyprian Fenn was born at Stotford, Bedfordshire, on 2 October 1854. He was educated at Cheltenham College, passing into Cambridge University soon afterwards. His prowess seems to have been in rowing, where he won the Colquhoun Sculls in 1876 and his 'blue' in 1877 when the race with Oxford resulted in a dead-heat. This is the only recorded dead-heat in the history of the race.

His father, Joseph Finch Fenn 1820-1884, had seven brothers who also attended Cambridge, all eight passing out with high honours. Christopher Cyprian Fenn became General Secretary of CMS (Christian Missionary Society) 1864-94. He was Joseph Cyprian Fenn's uncle.

The family followed the Law or the Church with the exception of John, a brother of the eight mentioned above. He migrated to New Zealand where he lived in York Place, Dunedin with his wife Catherine (Kate) until his early death. In December 1873 William Mason, New Zealand's first architect, married Kate who was then only 30 years old. He was 63.

Joseph's grandfather, also Joseph Fenn, had been a London barrister before giving law up to pursue Church affairs. He became a missionary in the Malabar Syrian Church whose members lived in the Indian States of Travancore and Cochin. Joseph had a brother who attended Cambridge and was called to the Bar in 1885.

Between 1878 and 1881 Joseph left England for Canada, then on to New Zealand where he must have contacted his Aunt Kate and William Mason in Queenstown. However, their contacts were formal, even strained, although at Paradise Mason's land passed through Fenn's.

It would seem that after his first visit to Paradise when still in his mid-twenties he fell in love with the area, its lakes, mountains, rivers and the deep grandeur of the

Upper Wakatipu claimed his fascination for life. He seldom left the place.

From Whitbourns, McBrides and Grants he purchased small holdings in the 1881-83 period. By 1885 Fenn had acquired sizable pieces of land. He had 1,252 acres of freehold with frontage to Diamond Lake and 516 acres of leased land from the Queenstown Borough Endowment 1882-92, in addition to Runs 346B and C of 1,500 acres. He held a licence to run cattle in the Dart Valley.

In his long life at Paradise (over 40 years) he kept to himself entirely, neither seeking society unnecessarily nor needing society to sustain his mental balance. As would be expected he was a cultured gentleman, reserved with a generous nature and a high sense of honour. He never married. The only involvements that did occur are shrouded in mystery or perhaps never took place.

In the first instance it has been written that his father stole his bride-to-be whom he brought to his home while at University. It is reported that between 1878 and 1880 he left home. If this is true, then the marriage was short-lived as Finch Fenn died in 1884. It could well have been that the young woman saw her chance to inherit a sizable fortune.

In the second instance it has been written that Fenn pursued the daughter of David Aitken, the proprietor of Eden Grove. There is nothing to prove this situation, nor is there anything to disprove it. People have taken either side, but there is not a thread of evidence either way, as the assertion has been passed on by word of mouth. Poppy, who was much younger than Fenn is reported as saying that she was not prepared to be a servant to Mr Fenn as she was to people in the Accommodation House. However, it is true that Arcadia was built, whether in opposition to Eden Grove or just to augment visitor accommodation.

Arcadia was built between April 1906 and January 1907. The timber was red beech which was milled from nearby. Tom Bryant from Kinloch was employed to transfer the equipment for milling from Kinloch to Paradise. This was an arduous task as forty foot lengths of shafting had to be transported by bullock carts for several miles to Paradise where the sawmill was to be located.

The builders were Walker & Son from Invercargill. This double-storeyed, splendid and imposing house boasted thirteen bedrooms, with a library, smoking, sitting and dining rooms. In 1911 the house was enlarged with an annexe, increasing the size by sixteen rooms. An octagonal tower was supposed to be added but this never eventuated. Today the house is owned by James Veint, is in good repair and acts as his home.

Fenn never slept in the house but leased it out as an accommodation establishment. Mr and Mrs Storey of Port Chalmers were the first managers before passing it on to Harry Birley and his wife in January 1908. J W Gardiner became the proprietor from 1912. Stable management and prosperity followed, lifting tourist numbers to 400 yearly from 1911-14, which surpassed Paradise House. Following Gardiner came James Watson, 1915-16 and Jas George 1916-19. Arcadia took its name from a Greek

area which was known as a land of rustic simplicity and bliss.

By 1920 Fenn had decided that he must quit the property. He sold to Alexander Reid from Galloway on 25 February, 1920, remaining in his hut as his home beside the Jordan River. His hut is now destroyed.

On Boxing Day 1923 he was taken to the hospital in Queenstown where he died on 3 January, 1924 and was buried at Queenstown Cemetery.

Of his stainless life there seems no doubt. His independent attitude, courtliness and courteous demeanour were part of him to the highest degree. It seems that he read widely from the reports of the books in his but but there is no mention of him having any close relationship with anyone.

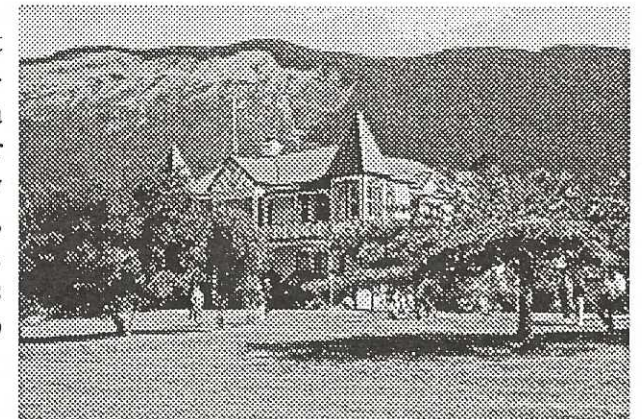
There are some reports of his remarks to various people of which I write of two.

The first occurred when he was driving sheep along the road and they took a different turning from what he had intended. Using sheepmen's language he firmly admonished the miscreants only to find that a carload of young women had heard him. Repentant, he approached the car, removed his hat and apologised, saying it was the only language the sheep knew.

Once again, with a neighbour, Mr Cronin, assisting him with mustering the sheep, he asked that he call off his dog as it was untrained. However Mr Cronin was adamant that his dog was up to the work required. After much unnecessary delay and when order was restored, Fenn remarked vexatiously, "You know Mr Cronin, I would have given five pounds for this not to have happened." "Sure, Mr Fenn," said Cronin with sympathy, "I'd have cut the ....'s throat for half that."

In spite of his almost complete severance from other people, including the burning, unopened, of all correspondence from England, his high standard of honour was maintained. Isobel Maude Peacock wrote a book titled "The House at Journey's End" which captured his lifestyle and placed his name and Arcadia on the list of records. I would think there would not be another recluse farmer in New Zealand with a similar record.

Perhaps his fame is best recorded in his naming of several mountain peaks in his area above Arcadia. They take their names from Greek Mythology - Niobe, Poseidon, Chaos, Minos, Amphion and so on. Fenn's love of the outback is contained in this small group of majestic mountains.



Arcadia 20 March 1989

*James McNeil*  
by Alan de la Mare

James McNeil was born in Comrie, Scotland and although there is some confusion about the year of his birth it was almost certainly 1855. His father, also James, was a carpenter and his mother's maiden name was Catherine Ferguson.

McNeil left Scotland in his late teens having learnt the trade of stone mason. He worked in the Oamaru area for a period going later to Central Otago where he was employed on the building of the Manuherikia Bridge at Alexandra. He came to Queenstown about 1880 and followed his trade in the town until his death in 1920.

One of his first jobs in Queenstown was working for one MacLarn the contractor on the construction of the Ballarat Street Bridge. It is interesting to note there were seven tenders for the job ranging from MacLarn at £288 up to one at £910. McNeil's fellow mason on the job was James Dewar. Later in the year (1882) tenders were called for the Shotover Street Bridge and McNeil, tendering on his own account was successful. His tender was £340 for a stone arch, £222 for iron girders and £205 in wood. The borough Council chose the stone arch and when the creek was piped through the business area in more recent times removing McNeil's bridge proved very difficult.

McNeil left many silent testimonials to his skill. One is the stone wall round the cemetery, another the old County Council building in Ballarat Street. The cottage he built for himself in Church Street still remains, now part of the McNeil's Brewery and Bar Cafe. McNeil married Martha Lester Harper in July 1885 and the cottage probably dates from this time. His bride, a domestic servant, was aged 26 and came from County Monaghan, Ireland. Her father Robert Harper was a farmer and her mother's maiden name was Lester.

McNeil took a prominent part in public affairs. He was one of the original members of M Battery and continued his membership until the unit was disbanded. M Battery was part of the Volunteers and it is not known what their armament consisted of. However, one report of 1887 refers to their big gun dating from Waterloo 1815 which was of course muzzle-loading and weighted 15.5cwt. It must have been a Queenstown Dad's Army and probably the troops were in more danger than any perceived enemy.

McNeil was a keen Mason, joining Lake Lodge of Ophir on his arrival in town in 1882. He held office as Master on four occasions and was still in office as treasurer when he died in 1920. McNeil served several terms on the Queenstown Borough Council and was a member for the South Ward at the time of his death.

McNeil was twice married, the second time to Anne Bella Prior of Owaka. He died on 7 March, 1920 survived by his wife and he left no issue.

*Historic Trees in the Wakatipu Basin*  
by Bruce Hamilton

In 1970 Mr Bob Burstall of Forest Research Institute presented a report of Historic and Notable Trees of New Zealand. Although never published this report is available from the FRI and contains much valuable information gathered over a period of eighteen years of travelling throughout New Zealand fossicking out, measuring and documenting our many notable trees. This is no doubt the most thorough investigation done on the subject and to my knowledge has never been repeated or upgraded. It would be an interesting exercise for some authoritative person to remeasure and record the data of these trees, if only to find out their growth patterns. The following is a list of trees that he has recorded in this area, most of which have now been protected by the local council. Some other trees with a protection order are also included.

**Queenstown**

Araucaria araucana, Chile Pine, Government Gardens, Queenstown, dbh 29in, ht 58ft in 1968. Best of three trees. (Protected)

Abies grandis, Giant Fir, NW America, Government Gardens, Queenstown, dbh 31in, ht 88ft in 1967. Well sited near the middle of the gardens. (Protected)

Abies nordmanniana, Caucasian Fir, Government Gardens, Queenstown, dbh 34in, ht 86ft in 1967. Better of two trees. Excellent stem form. (Protected)

Quercus borealis, Red Oak, N America, Government Gardens, Queenstown. dbh 31in, ht 69ft in 1967. A colourful tree in the autumn. (Protected)

Quercus robur (syn Q. pedunculata), Common English Oak, Europe and Asia. At the main gates of the Government Gardens, Queenstown. Two trees, one planted by Mr J W Robinson, the first mayor of Queenstown and the other planted by a Mr McConnochie, a nurseryman, in 1867. Mr McConnochie and a Mr Powell planted 550 green trees in and around the gardens in 1868 (see F G Miller's 'Golden Days of Lake County'). (Protected)

Quercus velutina, Black Oak, N America, Government Gardens, Queenstown, dbh 27in, ht 50ft in 1960. A very good tree. (Protected)

Pinus ponderosa, Ponderosa Pine, NW America, Park (town end), Queenstown, dbh 50in, ht 150ft in 1968. An excellent tree that was pruned to 30ft in 1955.



Tsuga heterophylla, Western Hemlock, NW America, Park, Queenstown, dbh 39in, ht 120ft in 1968. A very good tree that appears to be in its right environment here. (Protected)

Sorbus acuparia, Rowan, Northern Hemisphere, near the Library, Queenstown, dbh 14in, ht 20ft in 1968. One of the many trees growing around Queenstown and notable for the beauty of the leaves and berries in the autumn.

Sequoiadendron giganteum, Californian Big Tree, Mrs Andrews' section about two miles on the Frankton side of Queenstown, dbh 142in, ht 121ft in 1968. The diameter of this tree is larger than that of any other exotic tree in New Zealand. Age not known but it is doubtful if the tree is much over 100 years old. It may have been planted by the nurseryman McConnochie circa 1870. (Protected)

Castanea sativa, Sweet or Spanish Chestnut, Europe, N Asia and N Africa, near 'Treasure House' Queenstown-Frankton Highway, dbh 35in, ht 47ft, spread 30ft in 1968. A large tree for this far south.

Juglans regia, Common Walnut, Caucasus to Himalaya, near 'Treasure House' Frankton-Queenstown Road, dbh 36in, ht 55ft, spread 60ft in 1968. Good bole to 8ft. About 90 years old. (Protected)

Quercus robur (syn Q. pendunculata), Common English Oak, Europe and Asia, near 'Treasure House', Frankton-Queenstown Road, dbh 53in, ht 100ft, spread 100ft in 1968. Good bole to 17ft. One of the tallest oaks in New Zealand. (Protected)

Sequoiadendron giganteum, Wellingtonia. Two trees known as 'the trees of justice'. Planted by Philip Boulton in the 1870s. Cnr Ballarat and Stanley Streets. (Protected)

Sequoiadendron giganteum, Wellingtonia. Two trees Laurel Bank, Stanley Street. Planted about 1891. (Protected)

Quercus palustris, Pin Oak, Man Street. (Protected)

#### Bendemeer

Acer saccharum, Sugar Maple, NE America, Bendemeer Station, Lake Hayes, dbh 21in, ht 83ft, spread 33ft in 1968. Right front of house. A good tall tree. (Protected)

Fagus sylvatica, English Beech, Europe and Asia Minor, Bendemeer Station, Lake Hayes, dbh 50in, ht 70ft, spread 66ft in 1968. Could be the second largest in New Zealand. (Protected)

Pseudotsuga menziesii, Douglass Fir, NW America, Bendemeer Station, Lake Hayes, dbh 55in, ht 150ft in 1968. In a group of six excellent trees. (Protected)

Sequoiadendron giganteum, Californian Big Tree, Bendemeer Station, Lake Hayes, left front of house, dbh 63in, ht 132ft in 1968. A very good tree. (Protected)

Tilia x europaea (syn T. vulgaris), T. cordata x platyphyllos, Common Lime, Bendemeer Station, Lake Hayes, dbh 41in, ht 73ft in 1968. A beautiful tree on the lawn to the right of the house. This is good country for limes. (Protected)

Tilia x europaea (syn T. vulgaris) T. cordata x platyphyllos, Common Lime, Bendemeer Station, Lake Hayes, dbh 48in, ht 108ft in 1968. Sixty yards in front of the house. A very large tree and tallest yet measured. (Protected)

#### Thurlby Domain

Sequoiadendron giganteum, Californian Big Tree, Thurlby Domain near Arrowtown. (The original home of the Hallenstein family who came to New Zealand from Australia in the early 1860s), dbh 112in, ht 130ft in 1968. One of the very big trees of the species. (Protected)

Cedrus libani, Cedar of Lebanon, Thurlby Domain, Arrowtown, dbh 56in, ht 102ft in 1968. Tallest of this species. Raised from seed sent from Palestine about 1878 by Mrs Arnot. (Protected)

Chamaecyparis lawsoniana, Lawson Cypress, NW America, Thurlby Domain, Arrowtown, dia at 2ft 92in, ht 84ft in 1968. Eleven leaders growing from four to seven feet above G.L. (Protected)

Juglans regia, Common Walnut, Caucasus to Himalaya, Thurlby Domain, Arrowtown, dbh 35in, ht 55ft, spread 70ft in 1968. Probably the best area in New Zealand for growing walnuts. (Protected)

Picea abies (syn P. excelsa), Norway Spruce, Europe, Thurlby Domain, Arrowtown, dbh 29in, ht 84ft in 1968. About 90 years old.

Quercus robur (syn Q. pendunculata), Common English Oak, Europe and Asia, Thurlby Domain, Arrowtown, dbh 46in, ht 95ft, 30ft bole in 1967. Larger of two trees.

Ulmus glabra, Wych Elm, N Europe and Britain, Thurlby Domain, Arrowtown, dbh 33in, ht 100ft in 1968. Forks at 10ft. (Protected)

### Arrowtown

Acer pseudoplatanus, Sycamore, Europe and W Asia, The Avenue, Arrowtown. Known as the 'Mary Cotter Tree', dbh 40in ht 75ft, spread 66ft in 1968. There is a plaque at the foot of the tree. It appears that Mary Cotter, then a small child, stood by as the tree was planted in 1867. (See F G Miller's 'Golden Days in Lake Country') (Protected)

Avenue, Arrowtown. Probably one of the best known and most appreciated avenues of trees in New Zealand. It is just over 100 years old and is made up of three species: Acer pseudoplatanus, Sycamore (one tree sampled had dbh 36in, ht 70ft); Fraxinus excelsior, European Ash (one tree sampled had dbh 30in, ht 70ft); Ulmus procera, Common Elm (one tree sampled had dbh 36in, ht 80ft measured in 1968.) (Protected)

Sequoiadendron giganteum, Californian Big Tree, Presbyterian Church, Arrowtown. Two trees: dbh 93in, ht 143ft and dbh 87in, ht 97ft in 1968. Although younger than most of the larger trees in Central Otago these trees have been a prominent landmark in the town. (Protected)

Sequoiadendron giganteum, Californian Big Tree, Mr Wilfred Cotton's home near Arrowtown, dbh 128in, ht 148ft in 1968. Double leader at 16ft. A very large and tall tree. (Protected)

Abies cephalonica, Greek Fir, The Old Manse, Manse Street, Arrowtown. Identified by Kew (London) as a rare variety of the species. (Protected)

### Arthurs Point

Populus nigra 'Italica', Lombardy poplar, hybrid. Close to a cairn and tablet on Arthurs Point-Arrowtown Road. A small tree about 50ft tall. A plaque on the cairn reads. 'This poplar was erected as a flag-pole by school pupils to celebrate the relief of Mafeking, May 1900.' The cairn was erected by the Malaghan family to mark the site of the Post Office Hotel and Millers Flat School, 1873-1906. (Protected)

### Walter Peak

Acer pseudoplatanus, Sycamore, Europe and West Asia, Walter Peak Station, Lake Wakatipu. Diameter at 4ft, 50in, ht 90ft in 1970. Planted by Philip Boulton circa 1875. The largest yet recorded. (Protected)

Garrya elliptica, Silk Tassel Bush, California, Walter Peak Station, Lake Wakatipu. A bushy tree 25ft high with a spread of 18ft in 1970.

Populus nigra 'Italica', Lombardy poplar, hybrid, Walter Peak Station, Lake Wakatipu, dbh 70in, ht 127ft in 1970. Almost the same dimensions as the tree in Clyde. (Protected)

Pseudotsuga menziesii, Douglas Fir, NW America, Walter Peak Station, Lake Wakatipu, dbh 70in, ht 166ft in 1970. The second tree in a row of five running to the right or north of the wharf. Planted by Philip Boulton circa 1875. This is the tallest of this species yet measured and the second largest in New Zealand at breast height. (Protected)

Quercus robur (syn Q. pedunculata), Common English Oak, Europe and Asia, Walter Peak Station, Lake Wakatipu. Planted circa 1875 by Philip M Boulton, a Lake County Council clerk, dbh 49in, ht 94 ft in 1970. A good specimen of typical form. (Protected)

Taxus baccata 'Fastigiata' Irish Yew, Europe and W Asia, Walter Peak Station, Lake Wakatipu, girth of foliage at breast height approximately 30ft, ht 34ft in 1970. A noteworthy specimen.

### Glenorchy

Cedrus atlantica, Atlas Cedar, N Africa, Glenorchy, Lake Wakatipu, on the site of the original Haines homestead two or three miles from Glenorchy at the head of the lake, dbh 49in, ht 75ft, spread 55ft in 1969. In the early 1880s Mr Haines planted many varieties: pines, cypresses, Araucaria, spruce, prunus, beech, Ailanthus, walnut and others. At 1,100 ft above sea level the trees have been subject to severe winter storms, damage by heavy rain, snow and severe frosts. The present owner Miss Rosy Grant, is a grand-daughter of Mr Haines who established the place. (Protected)

Pinus lambertiana, Sugar Pine, NW America, Camphill, Lake Wakatipu, dbh 24ins, ht 52ft in 1970. Largest in group. (Protected)

Picea smithiana, Himalayan Spruce, Camphill, Lake Wakatipu, dbh 35in, ht 80ft in 1970. A very handsome tree almost as big as the Cambridge tree and several feet taller. (Protected)

Fagus sylvatica, English Beech, Europe and Asia Minor, Glenorchy, about three miles from the head of Lake Wakatipu, dbh 52in, ht 94ft in 1970. Planted 1890. The tallest of this species is not yet recorded.

(This tree has not been found, perhaps someone can advise its location.)

## Indigenous Historic Tree

'Hector's Tree',

Greenstone Valley, Lake Wakatipu

Tree on which Sir James Hector carved his initials about 1866 when he made the first European's trip from Martin's Bay to Wakatipu. He was the first head of the NZ Geological Survey. (Nobody seems to know the exact whereabouts of this tree. We would be grateful if anyone could help us with its location.)

### *Field Trips for 1995—1996*

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 5 November 1995 (Sunday)  | Historic Bridges: Kawarau Falls<br>Lower Shotover<br>Kawarau (Gibbston)<br>Edith Cavell<br>Ballarat Street             |
| 3 December 1995 (Sunday)  | Earnsclough and Pisa Stations including<br>Monte Cristo vineyard near Clyde  |
| 22 January 1996 (Monday)  | South Coast: Round Hill Gold Mine<br>Chinese Gold Museum<br>Wakapatu Cemetery<br>Cosy Nook - Pahia<br>Printz Homestead |
| 25 February 1996 (Sunday) | Gibbston including the Gibbston Winery   |
| 22 April 1996 (Monday)    | Historic Trees in the Queenstown district  |

Note: All trip bookings should be made at the Lakes District Museum in Arrowtown or at Mall Mania, The Mall in Queenstown. Only firm bookings can be accepted and payment made at the time. Any enquiries should be direct to the President, Rex Austin (442 8345) or Duncan Wilson (442 7385)

### *The Courier Acknowledgement*

This issue has again been typed and printed by Susan Milligan at the Southland Education Centre in Invercargill. Her work is hereby acknowledged.