

Published by

QUEENSTOWN & DISTRICT

HISTORICAL SOCIETY (INC.)

Queenstown

Aims of the Society.....

- (1) That we use our power to advise, concerning the saving of historical aspects of the district.
- (2) Preservation of and education in all aspects of historical research and interest.

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SECRETARY :	RAY TIMMINS	442 8403
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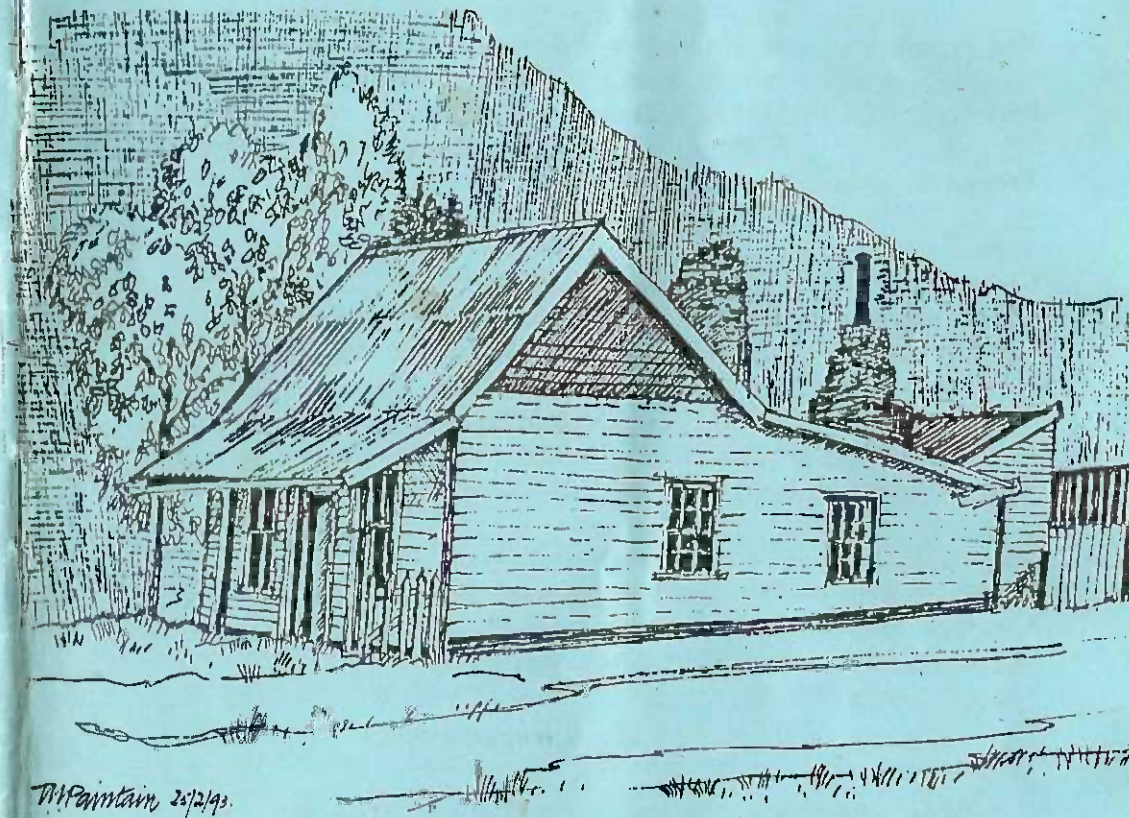
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Issue No 57

The Queenstown Courier



Cover : The Williams Cottage : from a sketch by

Thomas Paintain QSM, Northampton, England, on a visit to

Queenstown in February 1993

The Official Publication of the
Queenstown & District Historical Society

The Queenstown Courier

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Queenstown & District Historical Society

Fifty-Seventh Issue - November 1996

Officers of the Society

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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 1995/96 Queenstown & Districts Historical Society

Once again we have completed a busy and crowded year of activity. This highlights the fact that our aims and objectives are as relevant today as they were at the outset, 30 years ago, when the Queenstown and Districts Historical Society was founded.

"That we use our influence to advise on the preservation of historical aspects of importance and further direct our attention to the educational enquiry of research and the promotion of interest amongst the wider community"

These wide-ranging terms of reference not only prescribe our concern but also illuminate matters which bring us enormous enjoyment, satisfaction and personal pleasure. That is one reason why we grow in numbers, expanding our orbit of interested people. It is truism that the better we understand our past the more we understand ourselves.

This year we have continued to sponsor prizes for historical research at High School level - at James Hargest and Wakatipu High Schools. We are well down the track to publishing a book, a first for our Society. *"Land of the Mountain and the Flood"* is a penetrating insight into the lives and lifestyles of early families of Lake Wakatipu! Talked about for several years it will, in a few weeks, bring to a conclusion thirty years of research undertaken by that noted historian, the late Peter Chandler.

The intensity of District Planning has quadrupled the load on all who realise that as the population expands, greater and greater pressures are applied to what are mostly non-commercial historical features of our community.

We have organised some outstanding trips, and accompanying lectures, which remain a strong feature of involving our fuller membership.

Once again we have enjoyed a well attended winter luncheon and a noted speaker to our audience of 93. The topic, "Victorian N.Z." makes me wonder: will people look back at us in 80-100 years' time with similar interest and amusement?

Our committee numbers 18, including our one ex-officio member who is our guest speaker this evening. That's probably about the same size as the next cabinet, under M.M.P.

So far we have combined well together, keeping our interest high and the end result has been most productive. Much of our success has been due to

the willingness of all to accept delegated duties. My special thanks to Cicely Morrison for her light touch and diplomatic style.

Ray Timmins remains a power-house of energy. In addition to his normal secretarial duties he continues to deeply involve himself in planning matters. He is almost solely responsible for a major change in engineering improvements which removes the exceedingly noxious aspects of a proposed sewerage pumping station and very properly buries it in the bowels of the proposed new car-parking building. He is likewise responsible - with a little encouragement from our group - for the sudden "discovery" by the Police Department that the new Police Station can be built without destroying the public walkway adjacent to Horne Creek.

Duncan Wilson has come up with a "New Generation" *Courier*. The fifty-sixth issue of May 1996 contains a tremendous amount of information and has been acclaimed the most comprehensive yet.

Marie Dawson continues to confound me. She not only wades knee-deep through a mass of detail related to the trips, but actually looks as if she enjoys the task.

All members of the Executive are involved in planning, organising, researching or compiling information. For instance, Joan Carswell and Sheila Weedon restored order out of chaos and transformed our Historical Society records - which, when added to the comprehensive collection already organised by Roma McAndrew, give a clearer comprehensive background in the life of our organisation over the years.

Rupert Illes, Ray Clarkson, Majory Swan, Peter Mills and Bruce Hamilton never falter when asked to do research or give speeches.

Les Rogerson is the financial manager behind our committee of five working on The Book. In conjunction with the Editors, Dr Ray Hargreaves and his wife Cleone and the Hoeken Library, who have housed the research manuscripts and made their facilities, like photocopying, available free of charge. The other committee members are:

Roma McAndrew - Art Director. Roma has designed the very colourful cover which depicts Lake Wakatipu, the surrounding mountains, plus an inset of Glenorchy. It is colourful and striking. She has also drawn some delightful scenes for heading each chapter.

The photographs, which highlight places and personalities, have been selected by Duncan Wilson. The book contains, among others, a striking photograph of Mrs Von Tunzelman, and we believe that this photograph has never been published before - it will be a fitting first.

Bazil Schevrieh has been our cartographer, Bill Taylor our technical

adviser, with myself kept busy delegating and dodging the work - we will have a product out in time for the Christmas market. The printer will complete his job by November 15th. It will be a resounding financial success if each member buys a copy! This book is our tribute to early settlers and marks thirty years of work by our Society.

Always in the background is Margaret Templeton. Always alert, keeping a careful eye on Local Authority matters, Margaret is our Society's senior matriarch and her input over the years has been most valuable.

This meeting marks a turning point for our Treasurer. Mervyn has given notice of his retirement: this year he proposes to move on to new pastures. We certainly wish both him and his wife Shirley well in the future.

We are privileged to acknowledge the distinguished services of two past Presidents - one of whom served as Editor of the *Courier* for many years. Alan De la Mare has made a huge contribution over the years since his retirement and we have been privileged indeed to enjoy the fruits of his endeavours and his company. He has certainly earned the Honorary Life Membership.

Joining Alan, we are also creating a new category of Joint Honorary Life Membership. This goes to Clive and Evelyn Geary. Clive served as President for two terms and Evelyn as Treasurer for eight years. Of recent times poor health has been responsible for their reduced activity, but we shall remember them with great goodwill and affection. They will shortly be returning to Queenstown and the presentation will be made at a mutually convenient occasion.

I thank you all for your support during this last year.

Rex Austin
President

[The Financial Report can be found in the centre pages]

The Little Ships of Lake Wakatipu 1862-1863

By Neil Clayton

The story of railways to, and steam-shiping on, Lake Wakatipu has been well-told by Bob Meyer in his book *All Aboard* (2nd edition, NZ Railway and Locomotive Soc., 1980). Perhaps less well known is the saga the earliest vessels on Lake Wakatipu, when an armada of little ships of all shapes and sizes was hurriedly pressed into service to provide a vital lifeline during the first six months of the Wakatipu gold-rushes of 1862-3

'We understand that a gentleman recently arrived amongst us from Tasmania, Mr. Hamilton, is about to put a steamer on the Wakatipu Lake, in conjunction with the enterprising firm of Messrs. Campbell and Co,' the *Invercargill Times* was pleased to inform its readers. Just one week earlier, in November 1862, a former Californian '49er, Bill Fox, and his party had walked into the Dunstan¹ to announce their breathtaking gold strike at the Arrow River.²

From the earliest days of the rush to the new Wakatipu goldfield, there was an urgent need for tonnage to ship provisions from the foot of the lake to meet the needs of miners streaming onto the Arrow and Shotover diggings. Road access to the Wakatipu was nonexistent. Drays could not be got more than a few miles up the Cromwell Gorge from the Dunstan. On the overland route from Oamaru through the Lindis Pass, wheeled traffic could not cross the Crown Range beyond the Cardrona diggings. Pack horses were tried for a short time over the final stretch between Cardrona and the Arrow, but the high cost of horse-feed and the damage caused to goods made prices prohibitive. In dry weather the route from Invercargill to St. John's (Kingston) at the foot of the lake presented no difficulties for drays and 'American' wagons. But neither vehicles nor packhorses could get beyond the Devils Staircase bluffs, along the rugged south-east shore of the lake.³ The original runholder at the lake, William Gilbert Rees, used a bullock-sledge to drag a 40 foot whale-boat, the *Undine*, to the foot of the lake. For a time it helped to solve his communications problems - getting men, materials and stores in, and wool out, from his home station at the future site of Queenstown. This, and two other vessels, the *Lady of the Lake*, built in Invercargill, and a small boat built at the lake by one of Rees's boatmen, had

been sufficient for the immediate needs of his small pastoral community. When the gold-rush set in at the end of 1862 he had another boat, the 40-tons burthen *Young America*, under construction at the lake, but it was not launched for another month.⁴

Despite the demand at the Arrow and Shotover, in the absence of enough shipping, goods and provisions began to pile up at the foot of the lake. But, probably even before he had left the Arrow to announce his discovery of a new goldfield, Bill Fox had recognised an opportunity to turn his new-found wealth into a solid business venture. From his Californian experience, he was well aware of the major part small steam and sailing vessels had played in getting men and materials from San Francisco into the virtually trackless watershed of the Sacramento River.

Travelling on to Dunedin from the Dunstan, he quickly purchased what the *Otago Witness* described as 'the largest kind of ship's lifeboat'. This he dispatched by wagon to the lake on December 2, 1862. Pulled by a four horse team, it was reported to have travelled by way of Molyneux Ferry (present-day Balclutha) and 'Lake Nokomai', wherever that was.⁵ At the lake she was christened *Wild Irish Girl*. She traded between Queenstown and Frankton, connecting there with another of Bill's ventures, 'Fox's Telegraph Line,' a coach service to the Arrow. A passage in her could be booked at the Boatman's Home. She was advertised to leave the nearby Queen's Wharf, a ramshackle jetty at the head of Queenstown Bay, every morning at '9 sharp.'⁶

Fox's perspicacity was not lost on others. In the meantime the Mr Hamilton mentioned earlier had sent a team of shipwrights, with a Captain Campbell as superintendent, to one of the islands near the head of the lake to build their steamer.⁷ Hamilton himself remained at Invercargill to have the 12 horsepower saw-mill engine he had brought from Tasmania modified for paddles. He was confident he would have his ship constructed within two months at the outside, using native beech sawn on the spot. Her expected speed was ten knots, which, it was supposed, would permit two round trips daily between Kingston and Queenstown. Hamilton was to be proved wrong on both counts, as we shall see.

By now a note of desperation had crept into newspaper articles about the problems of getting goods onto the goldfield. Much of the agitation naturally came from merchants and storekeepers anxious for their profits. In response, two more small boats were sent up to the lake from Invercargill in December 1862. One was described as being a private speculation. The other was reported merely as being sent up by 'the Association', possibly a group of merchants keen to get their wares up the lake.

Back in Dunedin the *Nugget*, a small steamer used to ferry pleasure seekers across the harbour to the Vauxhall Gardens, an arboreal bawdy-house that scandalised the locals, was being cut up for transportation to Lake Wakatipu. The promoters, whoever they were, calculated that the cost of the venture could be easily recouped. The escalating demand for tonnage and the attractions of regular steam navigation, compared to the vagaries of sail on a lake notorious for its fickle winds, would see to that. The *Nugget* appears to have left Dunedin towards the end of December 1862, at about the same time as the modified machinery for the steamer being built at the islands was sent up from Invercargill. Nothing else is known about how she was got to the lake. Once there, however, her owners were reported to be the Wakatip Steam Navigation Company. She appears to have started a regular service on the lake early in February 1863.

On February 13 the *Otago Witness* reported that another Dunedin harbour steam ferry, the *Expert*, had been cut in two ready to be transported on wagons to the lake.

Then came the first recorded drowning involving one of the new lake fleet. Some time during the week prior to February 28, a man named Cousins, said to be an 'Old Identity' in Otago, as distinct from one of the 'New Iniquity' as the miners and their camp-followers were disparagingly known, was lost overboard from the *Nugget*. She was steaming at the time to one or other of the new rushes in the several tributary creeks along the north-east shore of the lake. *'The deceased was, it appears, leaning against the side of the boat and by some means became precipitated into the water. A strong gale blowing at the time rendered all means for his rescue unavailing.'* the *Dunstan News* dolefully announced to its readers. Tragic in itself, this incident signalled the beginning of a series of disasters involving the *Nugget*, and was the first of several drownings in the lake over the next two months.

Some time during the next fortnight the little steamer ran aground on the unlit, unbuoyed reef across the entrance to Queenstown Bay. The exact circumstances of the wreck are not known, but the *Witness* commented that following a change for the worse in the weather *'the efforts to raise the unfortunate Nugget steamer have failed for the present. She is momentarily expected to go to pieces.'*

Then on March 16 another ship's lifeboat, the *Balmoral*, heavily laden, was caught by a squall in Queenstown Bay. Although her three hands tried to lighten her by jettisoning some of the cargo, she capsized. Two of them, Robert Shaw and Nathan Robertson were lost. The third, Archibald McLeod, regained the vessel when she righted herself, and was saved.

The next day, March 17 1863, St. Patrick's Day, universally observed on the goldfields as a public holiday filled with race meetings and sports events, saw the first regatta held on the lake. The *Witness* correspondent marvelled that it was watched by a crowd of 2000 people, when only a few weeks earlier Queenstown had not existed. To add to the triumph of the day, which saw ten commercial sail and pulling boats take part in the various events, the *Nugget* was refloated and hauled ashore 'amid loud cheers'. Her owners expected to have her running again the following Monday but she must have been more severely damaged than they realised. She lay on the beach until she was placed under a court order for debt in early May. She was sold at auction for 410 pounds on May 16, with her gear fetching another 12 pounds 16 shillings. The *Lake Wakatip Mail* opined she might 'again be put on the Kingston berth, or perhaps be tried between this place and Frankton'. But her new, un-named owners must have found the repairs and refitting beyond them and so she passes quietly from our story, a sad end to a pioneering venture.

By this time, the bisected *Expert* had arrived at the foot of the lake. There she was reassembled and underwent trials some time during the last two weeks of March. Her owners, Gibson and Co., were awarded the mail contract for the lake. So this little steamer now rejoiced in the name RMS *Expert* (Royal Mail Steamer). She was fitted out complete with a small cannon to signal the arrival of Her Majesty's mails at Queenstown.

Events followed thick and fast. On March 25 1863 Rees found himself in difficulties with his new schooner, the *Young America*, when her rudder pintles broke. The passengers becoming alarmed, she was steered towards the shore with a long oar and anchored. The passengers were put ashore safely, but the wind chopped round and drove her onto a rocky beach. The cargo was landed, although damaged, and broken planks and timbers were repaired over the next two days. Put back into service on March 28, she was just in time to convey 'forty eager passengers' down to a new rush at the Nokomai in the mountains south of the lake.

Things had really been happening in the boat-building and boat-carting world too. On that same day two more steamers arrived in Queenstown in time to take advantage of the sudden demand for passages to the Nokomai rush. As well, during the last week of March a 40-tons burthen smack-rigged sailing vessel the *Moa*, was 'launched from the stocks fully ready to go upon an inland sea'. Built at Two Mile Creek, just west of the entrance to Queenstown Bay, using beech milled from the bush that still grows there, she was constructed by a party of former miners. They, said the

Witness, 'were accustomed to ship-building'. Altered to cutter-rig, she was used for the passenger and cargo trade between Queenstown 'and other ports on the lake'. The paper also noted that while she was under construction another vessel, the *Constable* had been launched, but nothing else about the latter was reported.

Then at last the steamer under construction at the islands during the previous four months was completed. Christened *Wakatip*⁸ by her owners, she arrived at Queenstown on March 28, presumably with Captain Sinclair in command and certainly with Mr. Hamilton as engineer. Not only was her construction two months behind schedule, but she also proved a disappointment in the horsepower department. She took four hours to come up from Kingston at an average speed of only 6.5 knots compared with the anticipated 10. The problem was probably her boiler, a vertical wood-fired affair. Coupled to her sawmill-engine which turned paddle wheels, it was said to give her only 'one possum power' as the *Lake Wakatip Mail* put it. Built to carry 40 passengers, on her first run down to Kingston that day, 212 miners eager to get to the Nokomai rush were crammed on board. 'The chance was too good to be lost at 10 shillings a head and any number of passengers,' the *Witness* commented dryly.

Yet a third steamer transported overland from Dunedin Harbour arrived in Queenstown during that hectic day - the long, lean and dangerous *Victoria*⁹. Built originally for the Yarra River trade in Melbourne, Victoria, she followed the miners to Dunedin as deck cargo on a sailing ship. She was operated on Otago Harbour for a while before again being cut up and transported to Lake Wakatipu. She too carried miners to the Nokomai rush that last Saturday in March, returning to Queenstown the following Monday with the first batch of Cobb and Co coach passengers to arrive at the lake. They had left Dunedin four days earlier. Before long the *Victoria* came under official scrutiny. The Goldfields Department Warden at Queenstown¹⁰ appears to have decided that the complete lack of railing or bulwarks around the *Victoria's* decks was going to result in an accident, if it hadn't already. She was taken out of service and a rather inelegant wooden 'fence' built onto her. Safe, perhaps, but the ruination of a rather graceful sheer.

Ironically however, the following month, the dangerously low bulwarks on the *Wakatip* were to contribute to another drowning. In the meantime she caused further sensation by going aground on the same reef that had ended the *Nugget's* career. She had been returning from Kingston with a full complement of disappointed miners from the Nokomai. The shrill blast of her whistle at midnight on April 1 (certainly no joke for those on

board) summoned help from the sleeping township.¹¹ Once her passengers were taken off she was refloated undamaged.

While all this was going on the *Expert* had made several trips to Kingston, returning each time without the royal mail, much to the disgust of the *Witness* reporter. He had been fulminating for some time about the inadequacies of the Government postal system. 'Her owners have the mail contract; whatever that may mean, seeing that no mails come by her. We hope to hear her firing her gun two or three times a week, though it lies a useless ornament at present,' he thundered. Finally, on Tuesday April 7 her little cannon was fired for the first time, when she arrived in Queenstown Bay with mail posted in Dunedin the previous Wednesday. She then proceeded on to Frankton, leaving the Arrow mail at Queenstown, whereupon the *Witness* man loosed off another broadside at the Post Office for its lack of system.

Two days later the police escort boat under the command of Inspector Morton was the only vessel to make it back to Queenstown from Kingston in the teeth of a gale.¹² Taylor and Company's boat *Cleystria* was driven ashore under the cliffs at the Staircase. The boat and cargo were apparently lost, although the six hands on board seem to have got off safely. On the following Monday, April 13 there was another fatal accident in Queenstown Bay, when the *Wakatip* was approaching her berth at the boatman's pier. A young man by the name of Joseph Wentworth went overboard and drowned. He was said to have been intoxicated at the time and, coming up from the cabin, he either tripped and fell overboard or walked straight over the low bulwarks. At the subsequent inquest the jury arrived at a verdict of accidental drowning, adding a rider to the effect that it should be compulsory for all steamers trading and conveying passengers on the lake to have one or more life buoys. The *Lake Wakatip Mail* noted editorially:

'In our little trips across the lake we occasionally observe individuals who have evidently been imbibing somewhat freely, promenading the narrow strips of deck in a frightfully unsteady manner. Our first impulse is to look for a lifebuoy. It is only a matter of wonder that accidents are not more frequent on the lake, and provision should be made on board the steamers for the safety of passengers.'

April was certainly not without its excitements. At 7 o'clock on the night of the 28th the reef claimed a third victim. This time it was a large, unnamed whaleboat outward bound for Frankton with passengers and cargo. The latter was jettisoned and later recovered. The passengers - two ladies, a child and two men - were brought off 'all wet to the skin and a few drenched articles of clothing with them'. The whaleboat was later salvaged, only a few

planks being stove in.

During May the gales which had plagued shipping throughout the previous month increased in intensity, claiming three more of the little ships as well as another life. On the morning of May 4 the small sail-boat *Cheviot*, owned by a Mr. Stewart of the Twelve Mile Creek, left there with six miners on board. In company with another boat owned by a Mr. Campbell they headed for Queenstown. Conditions on the lake were described as boisterous. About two miles from the entrance to Queenstown Bay the *Cheviot* was caught by a sudden squall and overturned, throwing the occupants into the water. The men clung to the upturned hull, but one, a German whose name was given as John Baker, lost his grip and sank from sight.¹³ Campbell's boat bore down and rescued the other five, being joined by Rees's *Young America* and the police boat, this time with Sergeant Bryant commanding. That same day Shane and Kerr's vessel, the 7 ton *Helen*, met with disaster shortly after sailing from Kingston for Frankton. The *Witness* reported:

'When just off the beach [she] was struck by a sudden squall and went down bodily with all she contained, among which may be mentioned the new iron safe for the Bank of New South Wales. We are, however, happy to state that no lives were lost on this occasion.'

Two weeks later, on May 16, another occupant of one of the small cargo-carrying sailing vessels plying in the same vicinity had a lucky escape from either drowning or hypothermia. A passenger in the *Victoria*, steaming towards Queenstown in a full gale, spotted something drifting off to starboard. The captain dismissed it as a floating log. The passenger insisted he had seen someone waving. Altering course they found a partially capsized boat with a man clinging to it. *'It appeared he had started with the boat for Queenstown in the morning, by himself, when a squall caught her, and her ballast going over to the lee side, she filled and he had some difficulty in keeping his hold on the exposed part,'* the *Mail* reported. He was picked up and the *Victoria* proceeded to Halfway Bay, where she put in to take on firewood for her boiler. When it came time to leave, the storm had increased to the point where the captain decided to lay up overnight until it had abated. She was joined later that night by the *Expert* and both vessels proceeded up to Queenstown the following day.

So the first six months of shipping on Lake Wakatipu ended in storms and catastrophe. Of the twenty five little ships known to have been plying the lake during this period, three had been stranded, but later got off and another three had capsized. Two were wrecked and another had foundered. In addition to this rather high casualty rate - 36 per cent - five men

had been drowned. But on the credit side of the ledger, thousands of tons of supplies had been transported to the diggings and hundreds of miners had their journeys made easier.

ENDNOTES

¹ In the contemporary argot of the goldfields, the definite article preceded most place names: hence *the Dunstan, the Arrow, the Shotover, the Nokomai*, etc.

² There is no evidence for the legend that Fox's activities at the Arrow were discovered purely by chance and leaked to the world by persons who had followed him. Contemporary accounts are quite clear that, when it suited him to do so, he announced his find to the authorities at the Dunstan.

³ The Devil's Staircase and the Devil's Lumber Box - two of many colourful place names in the Wakatipu - were given in 1861 to an almost impassable stretch of lake coastline by a man named Green who happened to be at the time the champion sculler of New South Wales. (Alfred Duncan, *The Wakatipians*, 2nd edition, 1964, p.34)

⁴ For a biography of Rees, and the vital part played by lake shipping in his enterprise, see G J Griffiths, *King Wakatip*, John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1971.

⁵ 'Lake Nokomai' is unknown to modern cartographers. At that time the interior of Otago had not been accurately mapped. The route taken through what is now Balclutha continued on through what are now the towns of Gore and Lumsden - dry land all the way apart from river crossings

⁶ A popular, but somewhat unreliable, account of the Wakatipu rushes, including some aspects of shipping is contained in FWG Milner, *Golden Days of Lake County*, Whitcombe and Tombs, 4th edition, 1966.

⁷ There is archaeological evidence of pre-European occupation and 'ship-building' at these islands. Maori, who quarried greenstone high up the Dart River, transported it down Lake Wakatipu in totara canoes and reed mokihis constructed at the islands. The Maori name for one of the islands is Wawahi-waka, literally 'to split a canoe.'

⁸ *Wakatip* is a corruption of Wakatipu, itself a corruption of Whakapua, the Hollow of the Giant. Whaka is the South Island dialectical variant of Whanga, a harbour or hollow. (See AW Reed & R Hart, *Maori Legends*, AH & AW Reed, 1972, page 30 for the legend of the origin of the lake.)

⁹ Some accounts suggest the *Victoria* was later renamed the *Venus*

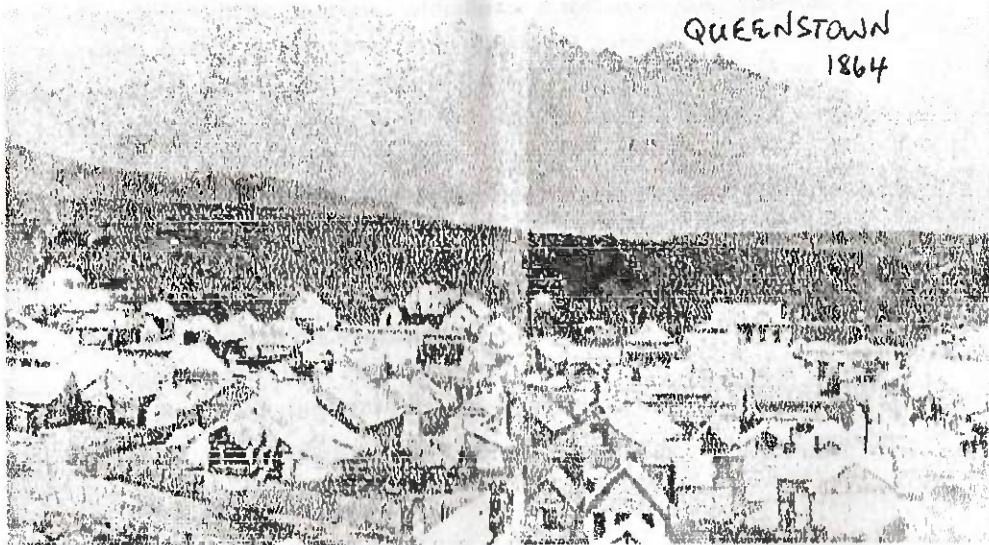
and plied the lake under that name. To date there appears to be no firm evidence for this contention.

¹⁰ In the absence of a harbour-master, yet to be appointed, he was the most senior official on the spot.

¹¹ Use of steamer whistles to raise the alarm was a common practice at Queenstown well into the 20th century, as a supplement to the town's firebell, until the introduction of an electric siren to summon the volunteer fire brigade.

¹² Police escorts were provided for all gold shipments from the goldfields. Usually these consisted of one or two mounted and armed constables as outriders, and a sergeant riding shotgun on the coach or wagonette, with the gold contained in padlocked iron boxes. As no wheeled vehicles could be used on the first stage of the journey out to Dunedin or Invercargill, a sailing boat was used until about the end of 1863.

¹³ Bodies unsupported by lifejackets in either lakes or rivers appear invariably to sink and do not rise again as would be the case in warmer waters. It would appear that the colder, dense water below about 50 metres in the lake suppresses decomposition and the usual build-up of gases in body cavities which usually would bring them back to the surface in a few hours or days. Surface temperatures of Lake Wakatipu, for example, vary between a summer high of 16 degrees C and a winter low of around 8 degrees. Bottom temperatures remain at just above 8 degrees year 'round. (J Irwin & VH Jolly, 'Seasonal and areal temperature variation in Lake Wakatipu', *NZ Journ. Marine & Freshwater Res.*, 4:2., 1970).



Owen Hooper McShane -Riverton - Rex Austin

Owen 'Hooper' McShane

By W Rex Austin

Occasionally in history there are characters who show flashes of the possibility to put their personal stamp on events; and then sadly, it never quite comes off.

Owen 'Hooper' McShane was such a man. Of Irish stock, McShane left his home country and began his working life as a sailor. By the mid 1840's he found himself on Codfish Island, a western sentinel in Foveaux Strait just nearby Stewart Island. The Maoris called it Whenua Hou (The Island of the Wind).

McShane left Codfish with the intent to join John Howell's whaling station at Riverton. Somehow he got sidetracked. He had discovered a method of distilling strong spirits from the edible centres of cabbage trees and he set up his distillery, the first in Southland near what today is the community of Otatara.

So involved did he become in demonstrating the benevolent nature of his brew that before long he developed into his own best customer. Somehow the business failed. He immediately transferred his patronage to Paulin's Tavern in Riverton. Paulin's wife and her sisters were the first white women in Southland in 1842.

It was while McShane was reclining in an advanced state of self-induced slumber that the accident happened. He fell off a bunk. His foot landed in an open fire and before consciousness was restored the damage was such that amputation was the only remedy. A redundant medical doctor was summonsed. He came out of the bush. There was no operating theatre, no equipment and no anaesthetic. The doctor borrowed a sharp knife and a meat-saw from the butcher shop next door. The offending limb was duly dispatched and it is reliably reported that McShane didn't even blink. A ship's carpenter fashioned a wooden leg which was to serve him admirably for several years and he spent a good part of that time searching unsuccessfully for gold.

In 1856 McShane was successful in winning the contract for building the first gaol in Bluff. This was to be his one and only landmark achievement. Celebrating its completion with his usual exuberance he once again trespassed into excess. And so it was that he became the very first to be incarcerated within his own handiwork.

QUEENSTOWN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Statement of Receipts and Payments for the Year Ended 30 September 1996

1995	Receipts	1996
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9495	Bank Balances Fwd	7781.09
2521	Subscriptions	2445.25
55	Donations	106.00
500	Grant from Trustbank	500.00
0	Grant from QLDC (Book)	2000.00
0	Chadwick	100.00
11	Sales of Couriers	10.00
3898	Trips	5107.60
1220	Luncheon	1390.25
155	Williams Cottage	0.00
100	Sundry	150.03
507	Interest	486.78
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18461		20077.00

1995	Payments	1996
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92	Subscriptions	58.00
1000	Donations - Arrow Post Office	0.00
3155	- Heritage Trust	5000.00
39	Advertising	36.90
272	Printing & Stationery	679.58
16	Room Hire	24.00
53	Post Office Box	52.50
1078	Couriers & Postage	1316.28
3613	Trips	4071.38
1241	Luncheon	1430.00
100	Rees Memorial Prize	100.00
0	Book Expenses	89.97
0	Advocate	40.00
21	Gifts and Vouchers	70.00
7781	Bank Balances Closing	7108.39
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18461		20077.00

Bank Balances @ 30 Sep 1996

Current Account	334.37
Term Deposit TBS 077	1730.00
Term Deposit TBS 079	2105.33
TBS Serious Saver	1910.13
Term Deposit Bldg Socy	1028.56

	7108.39

From the information available
I am of the opinion the above
statement shows the finances
of the Society for the year.

D. J. D. Laffan
..... 7. 10 96



Margaret Hazeel McDonald

26/12/1906 - 7/7/1996

[The following is an edited version of the eulogy prepared and read by Mr Ranald (Ranny) McDonald at her service at St Andrews Church in Queenstown on 10 July 1996. Mrs McDonald was a long time member and committee member of the Queenstown and District Historical Society. Ed.]

Margaret McDonald was born in 1906 to parents who were both pioneers in the Queenstown Lakes District. Her mother was born at the Branches and her father came out from Scotland. Both had a farming background, and Margaret was always proud to be connected to the land. She was educated at the Arthurs Point School, and because there was no high school in the district, left school at the age of thirteen, and for this she cried as she loved her school work.

After working at home in the house on the farm until her early twenties, she took a trip by sea to Canada and Alaska with her parents, a trip she valued and talked of often.

Shortly after her return to the district, she met the handsome new runholder next door, and that's where our family began. Life was not easy on Ben Lomond in those days - no electric power but lots of work for very little monetary gain. She soon mastered a lot of the house and farm work - the art of balancing a pack saddle with dog chains - making copious quantities of plum duffs for the mustering team - and cooking in the old stone

cookhouse for the shearers with no electric stove, dishwashers or microwaves. Margaret was a very good car driver, having learnt in her father's 'Model T' Ford (reputed to be one of the first in the district), and actually taught her husband to drive! One of her claims to fame was being the first lady to drive a car into Skippers.

Life continued to be busy with the farm and 'us seven kids'. Six of us went to school at Arthurs Point until it closed, and Mum was the school committee as well as chief fund raiser.

All those early years we went to the Millers Flat church, where Mum often played the organ, from where, she said, she could keep an eye on us from the front of the church. Her life in those days was raising her family, milking cows, and generally supporting Dad.

Another big move in her life was when we sold Ben Lomond in 1950, and moved down to Five Rivers. Mum really missed the mountains, but got on with the job starting a new life in Southland. Her first public service there was to get a petition organised to get electric power to our area. In the meantime she listened to the radio connected to a car battery. Womens Division of F.F. was an outside interest which she enjoyed particularly for the fellowship. At this time more than half the family were attending boarding school in Dunedin, and it was there we enjoyed getting our weekly letters from home. And then indoor bowling was started, a recreation which she enjoyed for more than thirty years.

Another overseas trip, this time to Europe to see their daughter Margaret Ann and Scotland to see where their forefathers came from.

In 1968 Mum and Dad retired from farming and returned to Queenstown and had a house built on a section that Mum and her Mother had previously bought from Ah Gum, an early Chinese gold miner. Settling into retirement and town life was no problem, no cows to milk, no dogs to feed, and no more running out of water! Life for them was a joy, with plenty of bowls, cards, golf, gardening, and entertaining the grandchildren (by now there were twenty-four).

1975 saw an end to a great partnership with Dad passing away, but Mum still kept busy with her various activities, hand crafts, Meals on Wheels, her church and so on.

Four years ago Mum's health began to fail, and so another move, this time to the Frankton Home where she had many visitors and was well cared for by the staff.

Mum loved Queenstown and the mountains regardless of ice and snow in winter - so let us thank God for the life of this farming pioneer.

William Warren
Journalist 1833-1900

By Alan de la Mare

William Warren was born at Royston, England, the son of John Warren, journalist, and his wife Sarah. Warren, like many others, followed the gold trail first to Victoria and then to Otago, where in 1864 he acquired the *Wakatip Mail* in partnership until in 1867 he became the sole owner.

The newspaper, first published in 1863, was firstly a bi-weekly, and from 1867, a weekly. It continued publication until 1947, despite many tribulations, including being flooded in 1878 and destroyed by fire the following year. The paper recorded the life and times of the community for 84 years and the issues which have survived give a valuable insight into the people and history of the area.

Warren took a prominent part in the affairs of the town, serving as Borough Councillor for many years and mayor for five. He was active in the Volunteers movement, forming a Cadet Corps, of which he was Captain. Warren joined the Masonic Lake Lodge of Ophir in 1868, holding several different offices in his long membership. He also took a leading part in the Anglican Church. In 1873 Warren married Margaret Jane Beggs, and there were two sons and two daughters of the marriage. He died on 3 Jan 1900.

His son William David (1874 - 1956) took over the *Wakatip Mail*, carrying it on till he sold to G.D. Cochrane on 30 June 1946. The paper finally closed on 7 February 1947.

William David took over his father's mantle in public affairs as well as in business. He too was active in the Masonic Lodge, being Master on two occasions, and serving 25 years as secretary and 13 years as organist. His record of service to the Anglican Church is unequalled. He held every office in the church, including over 30 years as warden and lay reader. Late in life William married Esther Marion Hotop. There were no issue of the marriage. He died on 4 August 1956.

His sister Margaret Sarah (1880 - 1937), known by all as Daisy, was a music teacher who acted as organist for St Peter's Church for over 40 years. In 1917, when William David was called for army service, a manager for the newspaper was sought. Though her brother had serious doubts, Daisy was given the job. She proved to have business ability and sound common sense, which enabled her to carry out her duties with distinction. After her brother returned from service, she continued to play a prominent part in the operation of the *Wakatip Mail*. She never married, and died on 18 June 1937.

*LAND OF THE MOUNTAIN AND
THE FLOOD*

This book is being published by our Society from the manuscripts and notes written by the late Peter Chandler, and have been held in the Hocken Library Archives since Peter's death. Edited by Dr Ray and Cleone Hargreaves of Dunedin, and printed by Craig Printing Co Ltd in Invercargill this will be a well sought after book on the people, the sheep runs and conditions from early times of the land surrounding the head of Lake Wakatipu.

Present indications are that the book will be available for distribution early in December. Because of the large capital cost involved, the organising committee urges all members to make firm orders of one or more copies at the discounted price of \$25.00 before the books are on sale at retail outlets.

Printing The Courier And Its Sequel

By Alan de la Mare

I took over being responsible for the *Courier* from Mrs Rona McCurdy in about 1981. The only means of printing available was by a Gestetner and this was carried out in Bruce Morris' office by Margaret Byers. It was a skilled job, because the stencil had to go into the typewriter sideways and the first page had to go side by side with the last page, and so on until the whole came together in the middle pages. In addition, the typing had to be even throughout. And of course there was ever the possibility of having a bad day, with the operator finishing up looking like a chimney sweep.

After a few years, Bruce's machine failed, and I bought a second-hand Gestetner to do the *Courier* and another job I had. Margaret continued to cut the stencils in her own time. I took over the job of running them off, and from time to time proved the chimney sweep theory was right.

Then Ray Clarkson appeared on the scene. He said 'Gestetners are old-fashioned, and you can be much more upmarket using photocopying, and at much the same cost'. And he was right. School teachers are pretty clued-up on high technology!

The two Gestetners I owned were out of a job, and taking up space in my garage. Time and again I decided to take them to the tip, and it was only their size and weight which deterred me.

One day, a few months ago, I had a telephone call from Dunedin. For a moment I thought it was the gentleman who advertises 'Dilmah' tea on television. Not being a fan of 'Dilmah', I was relieved and surprised to find it was a Sri Lankan who wanted to buy Gestetners to send to his homeland, where Ray Clarkson's influence had not yet penetrated.

With a view to helping a third world country making a mighty leap forward, and to rid my garage of unwanted gear, I negotiated a very modest price, which became even more modest when the purchase failed to pay the freight to Dunedin as arranged, and it fell to me to do so.

I now have visions of a Sri Lankan happily turning the handle on my Gestetner, and marvelling on the wonders of new technology. I sincerely hope he does not have too many chimney sweep days to sour his happiness!



P. Jopp's wagon loaded with mining pipes at Frankton Jetty, 1899

Relics of the Goldfields - pipes - Ray Timmins *Relics Of The Goldfields*

By Ray Timmins

The most obvious remains in many cases are abandoned iron pipe, some now used for irrigation, garden ornaments, or stock troughs, but most just lie where the mining finished. This piping is not rusting away, but showing every indication of being there for another 100 years.

Where did it come from? On 7th June 1872 Mr Greenbank of Drybread, which was a mining area between Matakanaui and Becks, introduced iron pipe imported from the United States to use on his claim. Until this time, miners had to use wooden fluming and canvas hose to sluice the hills. Now they could work with water with a 200ft head (90 pounds per square inch, or 6.2kP if you like).

To use this higher pressure, special nozzles were imported from the US, and yet in 3 years, New Zealand was a leading producer of sluice equipment, and exporting to the world. The Pelton Wheel, a common source of mechanical power on the goldfields, did not appear until 1884.

*A 'Remarkable' Little
Chain of Mountains*

By Irene Adamson - August 1991

An aesthetically-insensitive tourist at Queenstown once asked "What is so remarkable about the Remarkables?" Well, what is it about this spectacularly rugged mountain backdrop to Queenstown, rising at its highest point to 2324m, which has prompted the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, the Federated Mountain Clubs and others to hammer for (in some cases 20) years, to have 9661ha of this part of the Hector Mountains created a Remarkables Tussock Grasslands Conservation Park?

The concept gained momentum recently when the Conservation Department agreed to sift through more than 15 years of reports on the subject and prepare a case justifying the proposal, for submission to Conservation Minister Denis Marshall.

Another significant factor was the agreement reached recently between Murray Scott, runholder of Loch Linnhe Station, and the department for surrender of the leasehold of 3950ha of his property for inclusion in the proposed park. The other two blocks are 5011ha, formerly part of the Remarkables Station leasehold, and 700ha of the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve, the site of the Mount Cook Company's skifield. The second of these blocks was approved in principle in 1982 for scenic reserve status, but was never gazetted. Most of this high country class 7E and 8 land was surrendered by runholders years ago in exchange for catchment board compensation for more fertile, low country development, largely because of erosion at the higher altitude.

Under the new Conservation Act, large tracts of Crown land and unalienated Crown land with any conservation value had been handed to DOC for guardianship or "stewardship". So the Remarkables, a prime asset in the scheme of things, bear the lowest reserve status at present - stewardship land.

The two phases of the proposal envisaged by the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society are for conservation status to be conferred on the two main stewardship areas first, with the 700ha Rastus Burn investigated for incorporation. If the park becomes a reality, the second phase would include surveying and documenting the scenic and biological values of pastoral leasehold blocks to the east of the park: the aim being to liaise with runholders to consider possible further areas being surrendered from pastoral lease and added to the park.

The department's senior conservation officer (planning) in Dunedin, Donald Paterson, said the report would be open for public comment, but he considered it unlikely to raise many objections as it was not a controversial issue.

Murray Scott of Loch Linnhe had little option but to surrender his block because of an earlier arrangement over the land before he acquired it, but he hopes any management plan will provide terms for better stock grazing than he has at present - only emergency grazing rights. "I believe the ecology has survived in spite of stock grazing and that farming is as important for the country as allowing people to wander round studying natural features, skiing and tramping," he said.

Donald Paterson: "This is the first time in New Zealand a major national reserve based on tussock country has been proposed. Such a park would complement existing conservation parks like Sumner, the Catlins, Craigieburn and others which emphasise examples of native forest types."

Named by Alexander Garvie, a Maniototo surveyor in 1857, the Remarkables is the portion of the Hector Mountains bounded by the left branch of the Wye Creek (south) and the Rastus Burn facing west towards Lake Wakatipu. Their altitudes range from 305m to 2324m (Double Cone) with 75 percent of the area more than 1000m above sea level. In 1908, Professor James Park, an Otago University geologist, claimed they "for a spectacle, that for absorbing grandeur is unrivalled in New Zealand, famed for its alpine scenery..."

A report, prepared in 1977 by the then Lands and Survey Department for the Land Settlement Board following the then Mount Cook and Southern Lakes Tourist Company's application to establish a skifield on the Remarkables, indicates the study team was impressed by Professor Park's quote and appreciated the importance of management and planning decisions if the same description was to hold true in future.

In his book about the Remarkables Station history, "*Shadows on the Hill*," (1978) "Cap" Jardine said the stewardship should not be lightly tossed aside. "For more than a century, the economical use of New Zealand's mountain lands have been under the practical control of the pastoralist, the use of which has left them mostly in good heart - as they were his life and love - something to be passed on to his sons." He also pointed out that pastoralists had no control over many wider influences economically and environmentally, so should not be subject to unnecessary blame for



environmental damage.

However, the 1977 study team's report found the luxuriance of vegetation in the Wye Valley was related to its inaccessibility to wandering stock. On the valley floor, snow tussocks were shoulder-high in contrast to the debilitated tussock vegetation in the Rastus Burn (pre-skifield) and other parts of Central Otago. Generations of merino sheep have roamed those craggy peaks and glacial valleys, able to slake their thirst at some of the 60 small lakes and tarns, while growing the country's finest wool.

The region abounds in interest apart from the obvious scenic qualities - historic, scientific, recreational, bird life, a wide and unique array of flora and fauna including a new, endemic Tortricid moth living on the highest slopes of the Double Cone and found previously only at 2300m above Franz Josef. Because of that rare species of insect, Auckland entomologist J.S. Dugdale said in the 1970s he did not favour extensive development in the Rastus Burn upper basin.

A photographic collection of alpine botanical species is being compiled by DOC senior field officer at Queenstown Neill Simpson, who is making an extensive study of many of the special features of the Remarkables. Mostly devoid of trees, there remains isolated stands of mountain beech forest in the Wye which have regenerated in the last 40 years. It is considered that without fire and browsing pressure it could continue expanding up to its natural treeline, 1000m level in the long term.

A historic feature not fully explained is the many gnarled totara logs lying within a narrow band of a few 100 metres width along the face of the mountains at a height of about 1000m. These Halls Totara, (*Podocarpus Hallii*) have been assessed at 600 years old and were probably destroyed by fire before European settlement.

It is natural the strikingly craggy western face of the Remarkables has posed a challenge for climbers since October 1864 when Government geologist T.N. Hackett led the first party to the summit of the Double Cone. Since the opening of the skifield road there in 1983, the demand for tramping and climbing has increased, with helicopters also playing a significant part in landing parties at high altitudes to enable them to penetrate to more remote areas.

Whatever the outcome of the conservation park proposal, that magnificent schist rock mountain range with its ever-changing colours, is likely to continue its attraction for photographers, trampers, climbers, skiers, botanists and scientists for many generations to come.

*An Article
Taken From The Otago Daily Times*

18 May 1996.

Supplied by Mrs Margaret Templeton



From the files of the Otago Daily Times

Three members of the New Zealand Alpine Club with two friends spent their Easter holidays in climbing the Remarkables. The Lake Wakatipu Mail states that camping one night at an altitude of 8000ft, four of the party climbed the southern peak of the Triple Cone, a by no means difficult task. Later in the day, however, two of the party made the ascent of the Middle Cone, the route chosen being up the precipitous walls of rock which form the eastern face of the peak. This is believed to be the first ascent of this peak, on the top of which there is barely room to stand, while on the Queenstown side there is a sheer drop of nearly 1000ft. The views of mountain scenery enhanced by the mist effects, were marvellously grand. Earnslaw, Aspiring, and other high snowcapped peaks towering above the banks of sunlit cloud that stretched across the island and northwards for fully 200 miles.

[From the Editor: Before the days of the access road to the Remarkables Ski Field, a climb to any high point on the range from the Lake road, although not too technically difficult, was long and tiring, especially on a hot summers day. But to add interest to the above article, the three climbers referred to were Malcolm Ross of Dunedin, Dr Norman Cox of Timaru and W.J.P. Hodgkins of Invercargill. The previous Easter (1895) Malcolm Ross, with Tom Fyfe who made the first ascent of Mt Cook in 1894, attempted to climb the Double Cone, but were forced to retreat owing to the iced-up condition of the summit rocks. The first ascent of the Double (or Triple) Cone however, was made on 21st February 1891, by Malcolm Ross, his brother Kenneth, and none other than Harry Birley of Glenorchy! (Source: NZ Alpine Journal Volume I, 1892)

There have been many ascents of the Remarkables since the turn of the century. On 10 November 1962 I took an experienced deer hunter, but with no experience on steep rock, up a direct route to the high Cone from D.G.(Cap) Jardine's homestead, and were grateful to 'Cap' for providing a paddock off the lake road to park our car! On another scramble with a ten year old son we climbed the high cone by the normal route, with an overnight camp under a rock But now climbers can climb the Cones on a Sunday afternoon from Queenstown !]

Lakes District Museum

A report from Raymond Clarkson:

The membership response to the last notice in the *Courier* was very encouraging. If you would like to support the Museum which is so complementary to the activities of the Society, then get a form and join up. There are many advantages in membership.

The book shop at the Museum, as well as calendars and cards, has a comprehensive stock of all kinds of books concerning the local area, available to members at discount prices. *Wandering in the Wakatipu, The Road to Skippers, Peonies for Pleasure, Wild Flowers of Central Otago, Maori Myths and Legends, The Shotover River and Queenstown Lakes District Touring Guide* just to name a few. Phone the Lakes District Museum, (03) 442-1824 or pick up a form at 49 Buckingham St, Arrowtown and view the current exhibition by Lindsay Crooks in the art gallery.