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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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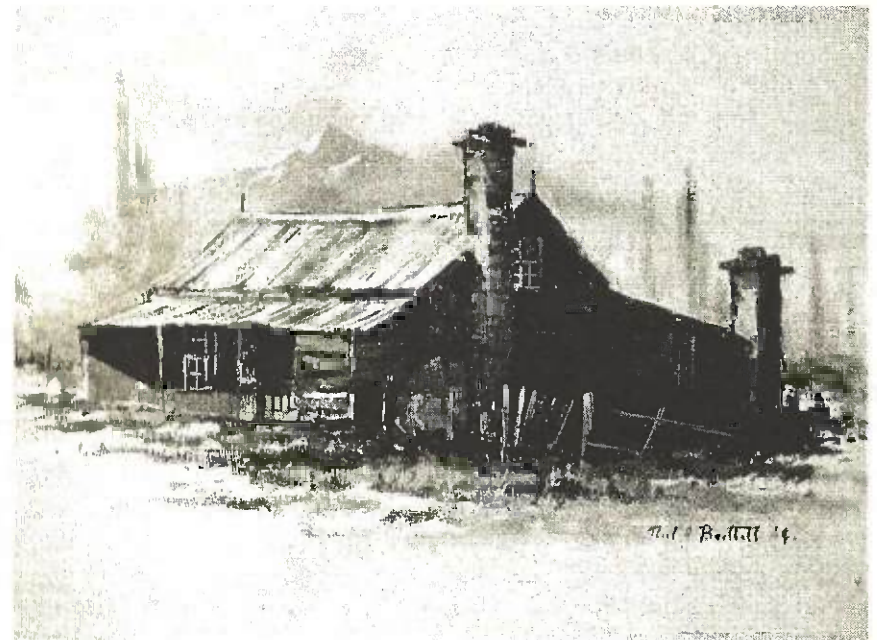
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Their quality work is hereby acknowledged

The Queenstown Courier



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 Society
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 - PO Box 132, Queenstown.

Appeal to the Environment Court

EDITORIAL

President Malcolm Boote has provided the following letter on the present situation on the Ngai Tahu appeal. Members will recall that this land for redevelopment faces Ballarat and Camp Streets, adjacent to the Court House, and also includes the present Post Office building.

Malcolm and others have already done a huge amount of work on the proposal and deserve continued support. The President's letter to members on 11 December, 2002, is also reprinted on the back page of this issue for your information.

APPEAL TO THE ENVIRONMENT COURT

My letter dated 11th December 2002, promised to keep members informed about progress on your Committee's decision to appeal to the Environment Court the QLDC's decision to allow two buildings in the Ngai Tahu Property Group's development to encroach on to the Courthouse historic precinct.

In order to fund this the Society applied to the Ministry for the Environment to meet the major part of the costs, covering legal and architects services to complete the preparation and presentation of our case to the court.

The Ministry for the Environment have made a grant from the legal assistance fund, however the Society could be short of the total required to meet the final costs of the whole process. Accurate figures will not be known until the hearings have taken place, we cannot therefore be sure of the final total. Your committee has however decided to proceed.

The Society's credibility is at stake as the town's heritage has already been seriously depleted and this site is one of the most important heritage and amenity assets remaining in Queenstown. The precinct is also an important part of the character of the town centre. The district plan is intended to protect the precinct, if we are to have any faith in the district plan as a protective mechanism for our heritage we must see that council decisions

adhere to the plan.

The Society have engaged Tony Oxnevad, solicitor and barrister as our legal representative; Peter Beaven, eminent Christchurch architect, as our expert witness in that field and Elizabeth Macdonald, retired planner and Society committee member to present the planning case.

Recently, representation was made to the QLDC to ensure that all options to achieve a settlement through mediation have been followed up and have been exhausted. In the meantime the evidence to support our appeal must be exchanged with all parties by 20th June. The court hearing will follow as soon as the Court timetable permits, this could be at the end of July or as late as next year.

The Society may need your help and when the time is right we will organise an appeal to make up the above mentioned funding shortfall. I will ensure that you are contacted individually when all the facts are known and final figures available.

I look forward to your continued support at this critical time. Please do not hesitate to make contact if you require more information or have questions.

Malcolm Boote
President

3rd June 2003

Visitor to Queenstown 1883 - Wakatipu Mail

A Visitor Looks at Queenstown.

The following narration is an account written by a visitor to Queenstown- taken from the *Lake Wakatipu Mail*, August 3rd 1883.

Queenstown- reminds one of nowhere in particular. Throw in a high church tower, white monastery walls, an olive grove, bare-legged children, and strong colours in the costume of the inhabitants, and it might pass for a little Italian port. Give it a ruined castle, putrid fish heaps on the beach, matter everywhere in the wrong place, and a few quarrelling women in the foreground, and it would resemble some Scotch or Welsh sea-coast village. At the end of its little bay there are a few acres of level ground, and on this the township is built. The streets are very narrow and the town lots small. Space was economised in view of the large population which the early fathers anticipated in the future. That future has yet to come. The mountains are all around; three minute walk and you commence to ascend. The inhabitants abhor and loathe these hills - they would like to possess broad meadows and fertile plains instead of the perpetual heritage of Ben Lomond in their back yard. But they disguise their feelings before strangers, and plume themselves on living at the foot of this particular height - one of many which surround the Wakatipu.

All tourists are impressed with the idea that they must ascend Ben Lomond to witness the glorious panorama of hill and valley, lake, and winding river from its summit. The tourists are impressed accordingly, and hire horses to take them to the "saddle" of the hill, which is considerably more than half way. The summit is 5000 feet above the sea. Bowen's Peak is 500 feet above that.

Having with more or less toil to get to the top, the tourists scamper down as quickly as possible and narrate their experiences in the visitors book at Eichardts. This is an extraordinary record of the opinions of all sorts and condition of men and women from various parts of the globe. It is very amusing to read the extremes to which the cacoethes scribendi leads one's friends. From Sir George Grey, whose name begins the book, to the signatures of the last newly-married couple, there is a collection of nonsense equal to anything found outside a religious newspaper.

The time test is applied to Ben Lomond in a ludicrous manner. Some early tourists started the idea that it was the correct thing to make the ascent in two hours. Since then "the fastest time on record" is being continually noted - 1.58, 1.53, and 1.50. Some of the comic turn of mind write that they made "the longest time on record" and the abstruse calculation made by one Sydney gentleman that instead of 5,000 ft Ben Lomond is 15,000 ft high. The ascent of this mountain seems to exhaust the mental faculties of the visitors, for they say naught of the other attractions of the neighbourhood, but apparently resign themselves to the city luxuries of the hotel, to flirtation and lawn tennis, and to the wanderings on that rocky point laid out as a public reserve with seats in eligible situations to give the best views of the mountains and lake. This is the spot made expressly for the indulgence of that soft sentiment known as spooning, and it must have been set apart for the convenience of visitors, as the Natives are never to be seen there. One looks at the number of shops and stores, and you wonder how the owners live. At times the streets are those of a Spanish American town during the siesta hours. There is no sign of buying or selling, customers there appear none. Occasionally Jones will come out on his doorstep and talk to Smith, and then look up and down to see if Providence will send them a chance stranger, and they retire to their counters to dream of next years crowd of visitors. In this off season the inhabitants live upon each other. A stray tourist, ladies from the back country who are sent by their loving lords to be accouched here, and young married couples have the drawing of the hotel all to themselves, and must find it very dull.

If Queenstown itself does not possess supreme attractions except to those who like the comforts of hotel life or devote themselves to flirtation, it is a splendid entrepot for excursions into the surrounding country or to the head of the lake. The Kawarau Falls, four miles distant, if not equal to Niagara, are well worth seeing. This is the only outlet for the waters of the Wakatipu, and there is power enough there to provide all of New Zealand with electric light. Here is the village of Frankton and the district hospital. In this part of the lake shoals of trout are to be seen. This is the brown species, known as the "Californian", whether correctly or not I cannot say, it is very unlike the speckled beauties of the English streams. . . . Smoked trout is a luxury which settlers around the Shotover appreciate. From Lake Hay [sic] cartloads, I am told, have been taken on moonlight nights to furnish a winter supply.

These New Zealand lakes are the coldest in the world. Here, on Wakatipu, I am told, the same as on the Fraser River, in British Columbia, should I fall overboard I should never come to the surface again, the ice-cold water would kill me. But they say also that I would never reach the bottom, but 50 feet down would be frozen, and so float about, stiff and gruesome, a fearful sight for young trout. "So the old men tell me," and if such be the case, instead of planting one's beloved on the hillside, it would be nice to moor him or her to a buoy in the middle of the lake, and then one could occasionally haul up the dear departed and see how the body was getting on, it would be far better than any system of embalming I have ever heard of! It isn't a very easy thing to get to the bottom of the Wakatipu, in places it is 1,400 ft deep, that is 400 ft below the level of the sea. To these tales of the marines of the Wakatipu I seriously incline as I promenaded the upper deck of the Mountaineer in company with the gallant captain, getting an appetite for breakfast after an early start. Three times a week this boat goes to the head of the lake, doing the sixty mile journey in the same day. The boat starts at 7am but we get a square meal on board as on shore, my only complaint being that the Scotch engineer takes all the porridge. My three companions are very miserable, however. One lady is quite sick, and there is no brandy on board to give her. Wretched Good Templar owner of the Mountaineer, why should you cause people to abuse thee? On the right bank of the Wakatipu there is a well defined track leading to Queenstown. Far different this lake to Manipouri [sic] and Te Anau. The mountains do not come sheer down into the water, but there are terraces, along which it is possible to ride and drive cattle. Steep and rough enough is this road in places, but it is practicable.

The number of homesteads around this lake surprises me. The mountain ranges are all included in the definition of "pastoral land", and bring a rental to the Government.

Sheep live here and thrive, and rabbits also live here and thrive more. In the race for the survival of the fittest the rabbits would win, but for poison and traps. Really they are the fittest animals to occupy these fern covered hills! Life is hard for the sheep here, and hard for the shepherd. Mustering on these mountain heights must be frightful work. The shepherds require to be picked men, sound in heart, and lungs, and limb. They live among the

glaciers, and in the perpetual snow limit. The life of a stock rider in Australia is one of roses compared to that of a shepherd around the southern lakes. But when it comes to the survival of the fittest in race, the progeny of these men will win. Twenty five miles out from Queenstown, on the east bank of the Wakatipu, the Greenstone River flows into the lake. Hence there is a fine stretch of flat table land, and beyond the birch forest grows from the waters edge up the mountain sides to the snow line.

Up the Greenstone there is a charming little lake - a glorious place to picnic in, I am told - access being had by boat from the estuary, the junction of two rivers, the Dart and the Rees. A few miles from this is a round hill - Mt Alfred - separates the two valleys through which the streams run. Earnslaw, 9,200 ft high, is far ahead, but is not visible at present. It is the outpost of the region of glaciers, of perpetual snow and ice. We stop first at Glenorchy, on the east bank; but I go on to Kinloch, three miles across on the other side of the Dart. There is a wharf, a little hotel beside a deep gully, three cottages on a slope in connection with this, and beyond the dark birch forest. It is a charming place, resembling in every respect some scene in North America. I can imagine myself once more on the banks of Burrard's Inlet. Surely that is an Indian shanty there. The three bareheaded, long-haired girls who came from thence to the wharf are as brown as any half-cast in Moodyville. These are well dressed and fed but more ignorant than Indian children near Senator Nelson's saw-mills. They can neither read nor write, have never been to school. They have never been away from here, and are even ignorant as to the nature of lollies. They do nothing but play about, and sometimes "mind the baby". Their father is working in the woods; their mother is the celebrated "female guide". What is to be their fate? Will they become guides for future generations of tourists? I am sorry for these little ones, with their rag dolls, and give them money - which I hope is not confiscated at home - to buy lollies in Queenstown per the steward's agency.

I have one of these cottages all to myself, and after a good lunch proceed to look around. I stroll along the shingly beach. The sun is going down. On one hand the lake, whose cold waters lap the cold stones with a murmur which is fast increasing to a surf-like roar. Swift and strong and noisy, the Dart rushes to join the Wakatipu. The wind is rising, and white-crested waves joyously chase each other over the surface of the lake. Behind me is

the dark birch forest, stretching far up the mountain sides, whose summits are lost in the clouds 8,000 ft above. Before me the giants of the hills are shrouded in the mist which the wind is chasing away. The veil is lifted from the heights, although clouds still hang about the peaks. This is reflected, colour and outline clearly defined, on the bosom of the waters. Anon this changes to the deepest crimson. Looking up to this glory in the sky, I think of the visions which came to the apostle on Patmos. One might indeed develop dreams of heaven from such splendour. Turning for a moment the scene has changed. Lambent flames are playing about the summits, they dart here and there like forks of lightning. They are suggestion of Hades! Whence this strange transformation? A snowstorm is raging 9,000 ft above me around Earnslaw, and Centaur and the Richardson Range. For a few moments the sun has coloured and endowed the flakes with fiery life. Then the veil falls again, a gloom is over the land and water and I retrace my steps to the fire side.

Walking on the shore alone I can imagine that I am on the banks of my ever-to-be-loved Manipouri [sic], returning to the camp to find the chops broiled on the coals, and the billy boiled, Mick watching carefully to keep away any Maori hens of domestic and thieving propensities. But admit that a furnished parlour is better than a canvas covering, and that a blazing fire inside a room is warmer than one outside your tent. Camping out is all very well, I bragged of it at the time, and shall always remember my experiences with pleasure, but I prefer the modest entertainment at the hotel at Kinloch. I don't know that the domestic duck which has been slain for my dinner tastes better than the wild ones I killed myself. The cat enjoys it though... ..

The Visitors Book here, as at Queenstown, is worth reading. By its records it appears that the United States of America has the honour of discovering Kinloch as a pleasure or health resort, the members of the Transit of Venus Exhibition camped here in December, 1874.

There are the names of very many people I know in England. Some there are who have since joined the majority; others who appear yearly to revisit a place where they are so comfortable. There are many allusions to the glacier, many compliments to the hostess and her family, valuable suggestions left by one or two, and testimony to the efficiency of Mrs Craig

as a guide. The amount of bad verse is distressing. I go to the door and look out. I am rewarded at last! All the fog, mist and cloud have disappeared, and the moon illuminates the lake and mountains and sky. I climb the hillside; white waters are dancing below; the heavens are studded with stars, gems which shine and sparkle so near, they seem as if they would fall in a shower on the mountain heights. And the everlasting hills! Every peak now stands out boldly, shadows no longer, but realities, sentinels of power, and majesty which guard this lake. From the dark outlines of the foothills to where, height above height, the monarchs of the ranges shine majestic in their virgin covering of eternal snow, all is clear and distinct, and yet mystic and wonderful. Nor Swiss lake, nor Norwegian fiord can give a grander sight than this. To those who have Norsemen's blood in their veins this scene is a tonic to both body and mind, a stimulus to be up and doing; whilst the idyllic life in the South Seas is an opiate of Lotus land.

I tarry some days at Kinloch - I tarry other days at Glenorchy. At both places one can be equally comfortable, although I prefer the latter, the host being an old Victorian miner, full of information concerning the district, but not by any means a bore. On each side of the lake there are special features of interest. Kinloch is the place of the ferns. Nothing more charming can be imagined than a climb up the paths in the birch forest. Streams from the mountain heights come singing underneath a wealth of foliage. There are bowers where the bush meets overhead, banks of delicate ferns where lovers should listen to the babbling of the waters and the song of the Tui. I sit in one of these fairy nooks fit for Oberon and Titania to hold their court.

From Glenorchy it is interesting to climb the tier of terraces known as "the Bible" and trudge to the cliffs above Buckler Burn and Stoneyburn. The signs of old diggings, and the remains of old camps, show that the goldfinder was here long before the tourist. Grass and fern, and bush is growing over the site of a once busy camp. Nature in a few years will obliterate all traces of man's work. Then I climb up the lovely ravine to a grove of birch trees on the slope of Mount Judah. This climbing is infectious. I go upwards and onwards. And am nearly bushed on my return, as, in attempting to strike a bee-line downwards to the white woolshed at Glenorchy, I find many gorges and cliffs in the road, and have to make considerable detours and put on extra speed to avoid having to camp out in the fern.

Franz William Frederick Geisow finance and insurance agent
- A De La Mare

FRANZ WILLIAM FREDERICK GEISOW

A biography by Alan De La Mare

Franz William Frederick Geisow took a prominent part in the affairs of early Queenstown and his contribution is worthy of recording.

Geisow was born at Frankfort-On-Main in 1832. His father was a doctor and there were eight children in the family. Franz or by what ever name he was know as in Queenstown, received a good education and aged about 20 he moved to Antwerp where for some ten years he was employed in commerce. In 1863 he emigrated to New Zealand landing at Bluff. After working in Dunedin and Greymouth he came to Queenstown in 1866 taking up a position as book-keeper to Bendix Hallenstein. Hallenstein's business empire was rapidly expanding and he needed somebody with ability to look after his clerical and accounting needs.

When Hallenstein moved to Dunedin in 1875 Geisow set up in business on his account as a financial, commission and insurance agent which in modern terms would be described as a public accountant. Amongst many undertakings he was deputy official assignee, secretary of the Wakatipu Hospital, secretary of the Great Northern Dredging Company and in 1890 became Town Clerk, a position he held until his death.

Geisow took an active part in many local organisations. He was associated with the school committee for many years mostly as chairman. He was a pillar to the Presbyterian church both as elder and treasurer for many years. He was a member of both the Masonic and Oddfellows lodges holding office in both in his usual role of treasurer. Geisow served on the Queenstown Borough Council being first elected in 1874 which was a contrast to his being struck off the rolls in 1869 as an alien. In this respect he was in the good company of Lewis Hotop, later to be a distinguished mayor and councillor, and Louis de Beer a prominent Jewish businessman.

In 1871 Geisow married Mary Fraser of Melbourne and they had a

family of four children, the only son Robert was to die to sickness while serving with the NZ Army in France in 1918. It was ironic he was fighting against Germany, the country of his father's birth. The Geisows home was in Church Street on the site of the present Pizza Hut.

Franz died in 1904 aged 72 and Mary in 1907, aged 69.



Franz William Frederick GEISOW
(EP1341 from the Lakes District Museum)

One Mile Power house Project

ONE MILE POWERHOUSE PROJECT

BY MALCOLM BOOTE

A year has gone by since we announced the Society's interest in saving and restoring the powerhouse at the One Mile Creek. In March 2003 the "One Mile Powerhouse Restoration Trust" was formed. Trustees are: Malcolm Boote, Karen Boulay, Revell Buckham, Wayne Foley, Mike Lynch and Gillian Macleod, representing the Historical Society, QLDC, and the Historic Places Trust Queenstown branch.

Applications have been made to various bodies seeking funds to complete the project and the trustees are delighted to have a confirmed promise of \$75,000 from The Central Lakes Trust. This money will go a long way to cover the restoration and safeguarding of the building.

Detailed restoration plans have been prepared by Jackie Gillies, who did major work on Williams' Cottage and Eichardt's Hotel. These plans have been evaluated by Wayne Foley, who was responsible for the restoration project at Eichardt's. Interested heritage restorers / builders are shortly to be sought to complete the building phase, which it is hoped will commence later in the year, when all of the required funding has been secured.

The land, part of the Bob's Peak Reserve, and the building are owned by QLDC. The Council has been totally supportive, without their involvement we could not have made such great progress. The building is unchanged from its original 1924 styling and although quite badly vandalised, it is structurally in good condition.

Once the building work has been completed the trust proposes to install hydro-electric generating equipment to produce a static display or a moving working model as near to the original 1924 installation as possible; to make it secure enough for permanent display, and to record on display panels the history of power generation in the district – dating back to the Goldfields era.

In view of the present shortfall of generating capacity, the possibility of setting up equipment to produce power to be fed into the grid has been investigated. The hydro capacity of the original One Mile installation was severely limited by the supply of water from the creek to the turbine. The scheme became inadequate for the growing population of Queenstown and a diesel powered generator replaced the hydro scheme in 1937. Nothing has changed and the lack of a reliable water supply prevents any thought of restoration of a working hydro scheme today.

Plans and specifications of the original equipment have been generously gifted by Peter Dowling of Pioneer Generation, that, together with information from former employees and operators of the plant, has provided details of the layout and the plant required. Pioneer has also donated equipment for the planned display, including a generator, one of the hardest items to find, which was actually working until a few weeks ago at Monowai.

John Timmins, of The Otago Settlers Museum, son of the Society's former secretary Ray Timmins, has been particularly generous, making a huge contribution to our display of equipment of the correct period. Almost all of the instruments,

dials, gauges, switchgear and the control panels required have been donated from their collection of surplus items that made up the Seacliff collection. Many were originally from the Waipori hydro scheme.

Items still to be traced are a VKA model Boving governor to match the Boving Pelton wheel and a 80/100 KW alternator with exciter. Restoring, transporting and assembling all this equipment, to make a satisfactory display is a daunting task. The equipment which has been gifted is priceless; equipment of the 1920's is rare and the items donated would have cost huge sums to procure. Without the support of various individuals and businesses, this project would not have been financially possible.

The Trust wishes to pay tribute to all those who have given their help to date. It has so far been a really exciting and rewarding process, which is only just beginning. The project has caught the imagination of the people we have asked for help. Anyone who feels they can contribute with knowledge, photographs and tales of the old building, its contents and restoration please do not hesitate to offer your services.

It is unusual to find such an unspoilt, quiet corner of old Queenstown and on completion this project will secure an important addition to the heritage of the district for the benefit of both residents and visitors.

Scheelite - The Rock That Shines

By Darrell McGregor

The Richardson Mountains at the head of Lake Wakatipu are renowned for a white rock known as SCHEELITE. It has been mined by individuals and companies since the turn of this century and has provided locals at the lakehead settlements with a living - of sorts.

It is hard work digging for the ore and even harder trying to get it out and to the market place in the cities. Darrell McGregor, bushman, ex-miner, shooter, contractor and general back-country rousabout explains what scheelite mining is all about -

It was in the spring of 1952, that Jim and I were offered a contract to construct part of a water race to the Wylie brothers, Dave and Jack, who were mining the Heather Jock for scheelite by the underground method.

They were ex-gold miners who had gone to Glenorchy during the war and Dave had managed the State Mine on Mt Juda for a time.

Apparently the block they were working on was expected to run out and the plan was to phase in a sluicing operation not unlike the Bonnie Jean, an adjoining claim on the same reef worked by the Elliot brothers and later by Ted Barnett for many years.

During this period it was difficult to find a claim anywhere that wasn't being prospected or mined. The claim is situated beyond the end of a narrow mountain road up Mt Juda.

Aerial Cable

All the material from here to the tunnel was transported by an aerial cable about three quarters of a mile long, strung across the Bonnie Jean Creek and up on the mountain side in one single span. The weight of the stone being transported down would pull the opposite load up.

Dozens of steel pipes were taken up this way and then sledged by horses for the remaining half mile. Wylies had their own treating plant at the base of the rope-way.

Jim and I went out to look over the locality that we would be working, with Hack indicating what was required, we settled on 18 pounds per chain. We were given from the Larkins Slip onward with the first section from the saddle to Larkins Basin being constructed on wages.

The dam and pipe intake were situated on the saddle which was constructed mainly in solid rock, the material being hauled out by horse and scoop, where we were to spend a week before moving out to the contract.

AMBITIONS

My first impression was one of disbelief that anyone could be so ambitious to accept such a scheme, but Jack's optimism and enthusiasm soon dispelled any doubts.

Camping in the Larkins Hut, we were quite close to the work site. The first section was very slow, going round a rock bluff, as our only means of drilling was with a cumbersome Warsop motorised drill and up till Xmas we hadn't made half wages.

There were nine all told working on the race, with only Dave and one other producing enough scheelite to keep the whole ship afloat.

Fifteen tons had been produced the previous year at an average price of about two thousand pounds, the best season being 23 tons.

One Monday morning after climbing up to the end of the aerial I loaded a bucket up with half a dozen bags of stone that were supposed to be one cwt each, but everyone reckoned that Dave had forgotten what that was and with our weeks' supplies and two cases of gelignite, I let it run.

On reaching about half way the return rope broke with the result that our supplies went flying back down with sparks flying.

GELIGNITE

At that distance it was just possible to see a person at the other end of the cable and I could detect two dots racing down the road away from the point of impact, obviously in fear of the gelignite going up. However everything just splattered, with shirts and socks torn to shreds, with one guy wanting to know who was going to replace his new flask.

At a later date, while moving some of the heavier pipes with too much stone in the bucket, the main cable broke with most of the rope ending up down in the Bonnies Jean among the beech trees.

It took Jack and me a week to splice it together and another week to pull

WHAT IS SCHEELITE?

Scheelite is a heavy tungsten bearing mineral being tungstate of calcium (CaWO_4). It varies in colour from creamy white to greenish grey and has a specific gravity from 5.9 to 6.1. It is difficult to recognise in ordinary light but fluoresces brilliantly under ultra violet light. Scheelite in New Zealand is usually mined underground and is found in quartz reefs or lodes, cutting through the country rock at different angles.

Scheelite is sold and bought on a chemical analysis. The results give the percentage of tungsten oxide (WO_3) and the price quoted is (per unit) pure scheelite and contains 80.6 (WO_3). The average assay from New Zealand is approximately 72 units of which the price is quoted in the Metal Bulletin and generally rules the world price. There are usually traces of tin, copper, gold and arsenic in the analysis.

TUNGSTEN

Tungsten is a very heavy metal, specific gravity 19.3 and is harder than steel with the highest melting point of all metals, 3400 C° and is indestructible. Half of the world's tungsten is used in high speed steels, hack saw blades, hard facing welding rods, acid resisting steels.

Forty percent is consumed in tungsten carbides that are among the hardest substances known, rock drilling bits and machine tools are in this category. High tungsten are used in jet engines and space vehicles. Filaments in electric lamps is a common use, with the wires drawn into gossamer-like fineness of great strength.

it up again. This had set the programme back quite a bit as the battery was unable to work through lack of stone and the pipe work had fallen behind.

Back on the race we were making better progress with some easier ground, but it was still a long way to the creek. We finished in May that year and trudged out in more than a foot of snow as we were working about 5000 ft up.

The following season we returned again, this time with a compressor built on a sledge and driven by a four cylinder petrol Ford engine. Packing the machine as far as the Larkins Basin by horse, we had to carry it for some distance on our backs, one of the pieces being so heavy we could only manage a few steps at a time.

Once set up, progress was very good through the rock sections compared with the previous year, and we went from daylight until dark, with miners across on Black Peak and McIntosh jokingly complaining that they couldn't get any sleep with the continuous rumble around the hills from the blasting.

DETONATORS

At that time with no cordtex, it was common to have up to 40 separate shots going off one after the other with safety fuse and No. 6 detonators. Crimping "dets" to the fuse was done by biting with the teeth as this method was expeditious. On occasions when lighting a long row of shots to form the race we were definitely at risk of losing the hobnails out of our boots as we took off as the first shot went off.

For a few weeks that year there were nine of us camped in the Larkins Hut, which incidentally was tied down, being like most huts on mountain sides at risk of being blown away. Turn about was taken cooking breakfast as there was only room for one to move around easily, so breakfast in bed was in order, and one advantage of nine was your turn didn't come up that often.

WEATHER-WISE

One character who was situated in a top bunk and next to the only window would invariably peer out each morning at daylight and pronounce the day "buggered" weather-wise and we could all have the day off.

Harry Hopgood and his nephew, Mick Koch, were working the Larkins Slip during this time and unearthing some good pieces of scheelite. When scheelite was first found there, apparently it was common to find up to 1 cwt pieces of pure scheelite that had broken away from the main reef above.

There had been quite extensive work carried on both in the slip and tunnelling the main reef, producing in the vicinity of 100 tons. An early snowfall pushed us out for a while, so we went down and gave a hand at the mine.

TREATMENT OF SCHEELITE

The ore is reduced in size by means of a crusher and then sized by screening. The coarse scheelite is taken off by means of a jig. The balance goes through a roll crusher and is reduced to "sand" fraction. This is then passed over a shaking table with ripples, the heavy ore (scheelite) being left behind as a white band. Seconds are reduced to tabling size by stamps. As the ore is reduced in size water carries it through a fine screen to the table. Scheelite is then dried and packed in one cwt bags for shipping.

STATISTICS

On a rough count there are about 50 claims that have produced scheelite since it was first worked around 1898. There has been a total production approaching 3000 tons to the present day.

Mines that have been the major contributors are the Glenorchy or State Lode, 1250 tons; Heather Jock, 275 tons; Bonnie Jean, 250 tons; Larkins, 100 tons; Paradise also worked by the State during the war, 80 tons. Some of the claims are at quite high altitudes, with Temple Peak at 6950 ft being the highest; Black Peak, 6000 ft produced 64 tons; Larkins, 5400; Mt McIntosh, 4800; another 35 tons with Hall and Ross just 200 ft lower, producing 38 tons.

Dave got us to push in a 90 foot cross cut 6'x5' tunnel. It took us just 10 days working 12 hours a day, and although only a short distance from where up to 150 tons of scheelite had been mined, all we unearthed could have been taken out in a wheelbarrow.

UNDERGROUND

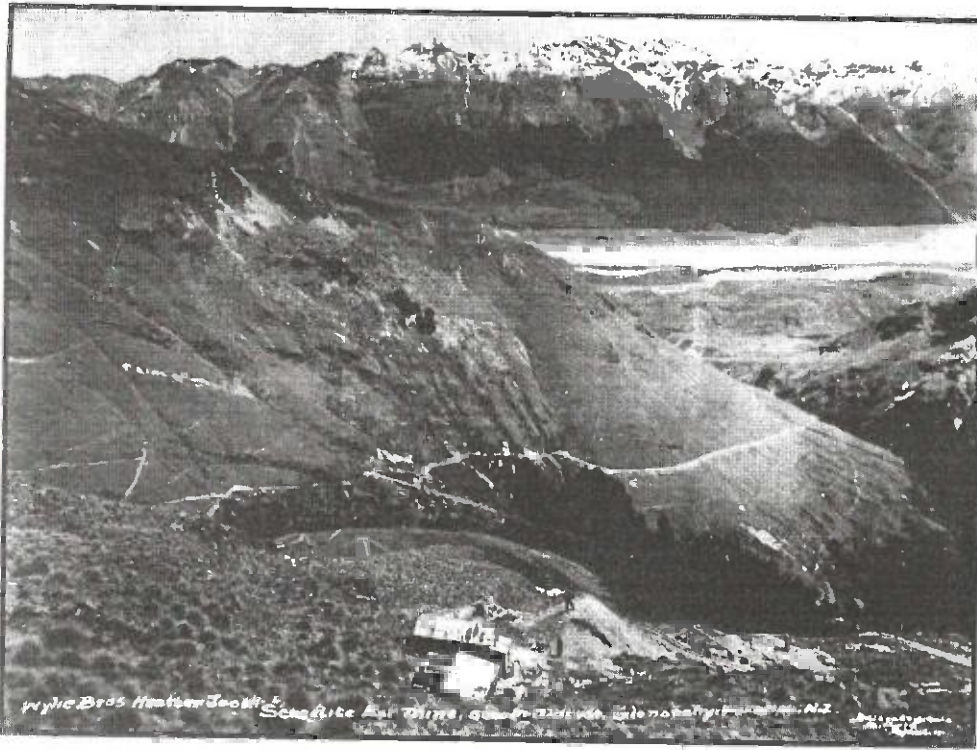
When first struck underground, it is reputed that there was a ton of concentrates being extracted every 48'x6' of tunnel driven. When I first saw the topping being carried out, there is no doubt that this was the case.

Dave would excavate an area under the reef, and when sufficiently large would cover the floor area with sack, then with one single six foot hole with a light charge could drop enough reef to engage a couple of men napping and bagging stone for a week.

It was quite a sight after one of these operations, and seeing the amount of scheelite on the floor always gave the impression that there would be no end to it. After the snow cleared away we carried on until June, but were still a long way off our goal. By this time the race was completed to the Basin, and with the spring thaw there would be sufficient water to run the sluice for a couple of months at least.

It was now becoming apparent that the price of scheelite was going to continue dropping, and in fact continued on a downward spiral until 1958 when it was only £200.00 per ton, the lowest since 1940. The following spring, after getting everything set up with Dave at the controls of the sluicing nozzle, there was apparently too much pressure and, losing control of the pole directing water, he was lucky to escape as pipes started collapsing and the pole spun like a windmill with Dave lying flat on the ground.

Jim and I decided we would have a go ourselves along with Earnie Sharpe, who had a tip head pegged off at the State Mine. Laurie Smith had already put one tip head through the battery with some success.



Looking down to the Heather Jock Mine
EL4549 from the Lakes District Museum.

We went down to Invercargill and bought a Ford Thames truck. My job was to shovel the tip head through a screen on to the truck and deliver it down to the stamps.

In this particular operation everything had to be stamped to fines for tabling. Jim controlled the stamps and Earnie looked after the table.

It was mid-winter and there were a lot of problems with things freezing up. After putting through about 200 tons, it was time to sort out how the exercise was panning out.

There appeared to be a lot of scheelite around in drums and we were quietly happy, and on a couple of occasions Earnie invited us into his place for a "Dog's Nose" before tea. A "Dog's Nose", in case you don't

know, is three nips of gin topped with 10 oz of beer. Well, that's what we got anyway.

Being new to this tip heading, I was introduced to the roaster. All our drums of scheelite had to be fed ever so slowly through this kerosene burning revolving drum at almost white hot temperature. Once started up, it was necessary to keep it going 24 hours a day.

ARSENIC

This process removed all the impurities, the largest of which was arsenic. I am quite sure that should anyone have tried to do this job for any length of time, they would surely have been poisoned.

On one occasion about one o'clock in the morning I opened the door for some reason and an almighty explosion confronted me, knocking me backwards and at the same time burning my eyelashes and eyebrows completely off and part of the hair off my head. Managing to recover from the shock, I stayed on until Jim arrived.

As time went by we could see our parcel of scheelite diminishing by the hour, and with a final run over the table to clean it up we bagged 8½ cwt.

A tunnel in Broadleaf claim faired little better, and then one summer Black Peak realised only about 4 cwt out of country seams.

Later that season Gavin McIntyre, who had packed a compressor into Hall-Rosses, which is on the dark side between Black Peak and McIntosh, asked if we would give a hand to put a tunnel around behind a fault that had produced quite a few ton of scheelite, but after tunnelling well over a hundred feet we couldn't locate any evidence of a continuation.

QUARTZ REEF

Norrie Groves had located scheelite with the ultra-violet lamp in a reef near Sylvan Lake and produced about one and a half tons from two places near the surface. This was a large quartz reef about 100 feet thick. Having "proved the reef" again, I was asked to join in this bonanza.

Drilling for several weeks in extremely hard quartz, we let the whole lot go up at once, expecting scheelite by the dray load - but, alas, nothing.

Years later - 1966, I think - I received a phone call from Dave Wylie asking if I would bring a dozer up to the Heather Jock and remove the over-burden off the reef on a share basis.

By now the aerial was gone and a road had been continued up to the mine by Ivan Smith with a series of switchbacks that even a short wheel base landrover couldn't negotiate without a couple of cuts.

Unfortunately, Dave died suddenly before we were to commence, but John, his son, had been working with him, so was able to continue.

That season we took up a 20 ton machine and, after spending some time starting to remove the over-burden, went down to the front and not far under the surface found five and a half tons of oxidised scheelite.

JAMMED

The following summer a 35 ton machine was used. It was extremely marginal to get this machine up the narrow mountain road, and at one point it became jammed and could not be moved forward or backward. Rock had to be blasted before the machine could continue.

After spending three months bulldozing off a paddock which was where the hut used to be outside the tunnel portal, the reef was exposed, but what was supposed to be largely maiden ground turned out to be a rabbit warren.

However, even with the few pillars that were left behind, 10½ tons were treated, giving an indication of how rich it had been.

We had another half ton bagged, but about midday snow came in suddenly and there was only time to get the dozer down the hill, otherwise it would have been stranded for the winter.

John had had a full-time job carting the stone down the hill in the landrover. Later, when finished treating, I took my seven ton S Bedford and loaded the 10½ ton, which looked very little on the deck.

Someone wanted a 12 foot dinghy taken to Dunedin, so we threw that on top. The load was carted via the Pig Route, some of the hills being a bit icy.

FLAT TYRE

Arriving at the forwarding company depot, someone remembered that one of the tyres was a bit flat. The inside dual was punctured.

Later we went to construct a road to the Larkin's Basin for the Mines Department, following the old water race for quite a distance.

Around 1970 we carried out some dozing on one of the most recent scheelite discoveries called the Silver Dollar, which is high above the Rees and north of the Oxburn, and located by Mick Koch in the early 60's.

We unearthed about five ton, making a total of 14 ton when added to the scheelite that he had tunnelled previously.

It was here, while talking to Mick about five o'clock one evening, I complained of pains in my stomach and by the time I reached the car at the bottom of the hill I was in such pain that there had to be something amiss.

Driving straight home and calling the doctor resulted in my appendix being out by eight o'clock that night.

Ngai Tahu appeal

(Letter sent to members December 2002)

NGAI TAHU APPEAL

Your committee met this week and after careful consideration decided to appeal the decision of the Queenstown Lakes District Council granting resource consent to Ngai Tahu for their proposed development of the Ballarat Street and Camp Street site.

This appeal to the Environment Court focuses on the construction of the new buildings within the Heritage Precinct and the effect that the proximity and scale of the new buildings will have on the historic courthouse building.

The courthouse and the surrounding land is protected in the District Plan as a Heritage Precinct. The courthouse has category one protection under the Historic Places Act. This protection existed prior to the transfer of the property to Ngai Tahu.

Two planned buildings nearest to the courthouse in Ballarat Street and behind the courthouse extend into the Historic precinct by approximately 50% and 33% respectively. Your committee feel this intrusion by three storey buildings is unacceptable and this will be the basis of our appeal.

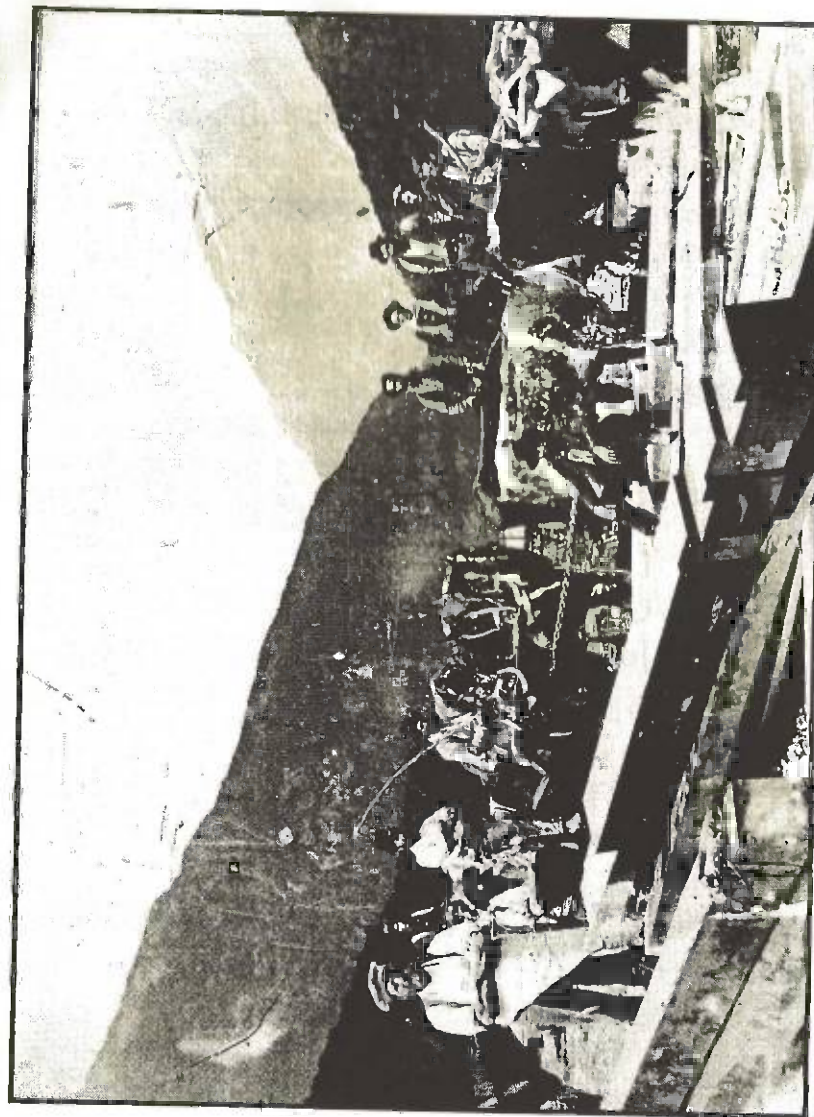
There are considerable costs involved in the appeal process. The Society will be seeking a grant from the Ministry of the Environment's legal assistance fund available to non-profit groups. However there is no guarantee that any or all requests for funding will be awarded. We may therefore be forced to seek support from both our members and other interested parties.

We will keep you informed about developments in this matter. We are advised however that an appeal to the Environment Court can take up to twelve months to be heard.

Malcolm Boote
President

11TH December 2002

McBride Cottage



W. A. Grant's bullock team at the Dart Dredge in 1901.
(EL574 from the Lakes District Museum)

Front cover:
McBride Cottage - near Lake Hayes.
From an original painting by Neil Barlett - Arrowtown