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Arrowtown Post Office Today

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Arrowtown Postal Services - Vital from Gold Rush Times

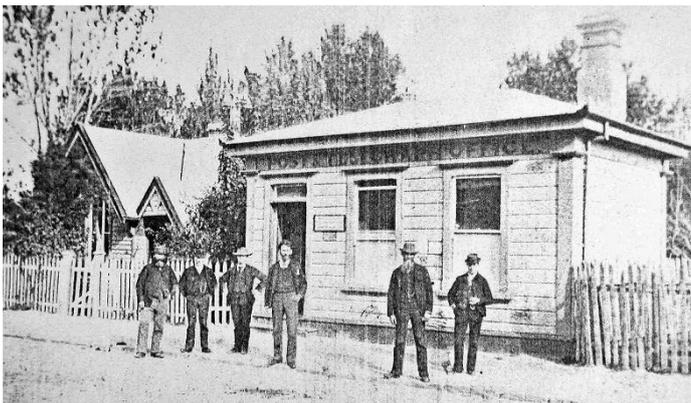
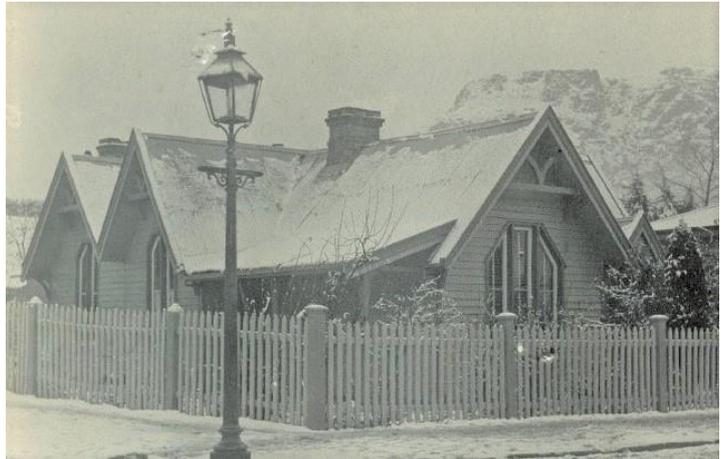
Compiled by Marion Borrell

Premises

In early 1863, within five months of the discovery of gold, the first Post Office in the Wakatipu district was opened in a tent on the beach beside the Arrow River. It was a tough assignment, and the unfortunate first postmaster committed suicide six weeks later due to 'temporary insanity.'

After the great flood in the winter of 1863, the shantytown relocated to its present safer position, and the Post Office operated from rented rooms or stores until this combined Post Office and Postmaster's house (right) was built in 1872.

(Photo under snow c1900, *Lakes District Museum EL0451*)



In 1882 this purpose-built Post Office (left) was constructed. The photo dated 1894 includes John L. Jopp (far left) who was a mail contractor. (*LDM EL0439*).

The 1882 building was replaced in 1915 with the current building (right, photo c1924, *LDM EL5529*) which had its veranda added in 1988.

The first Postmaster's House burned down in 1906 was replaced 1907 with what is now the Postmaster's Residence Restaurant.

In 1991 the Lakes District Museum purchased the Post Office from New Zealand Post to save it from being closed during a nation-wide reduction of post offices.



Threat of Closure, 1865

A new postmaster, Richard F. Williamson, decided within just three days of his arrival that the office should close, and informed the Postmaster-General in Wellington of his opinion.

The residents responded with alarm, holding a public meeting. Their letter to the Postmaster-General reveals their view of the status of Arrowtown. They provide six reasons why the post office should not be closed. (*Otago Witness*, 30 December 1865, abbreviated.)

1. The population of the Arrow district is nearly one-half of the whole Wakatipu Gold Field.
2. Arrowtown is the natural centre of the Wakatipu district. All mail could be despatched through Arrowtown at less expense than through Queenstown.
3. If the Post Office was closed, the residents of this important gold field would be deprived of the benefits of the Telegraph which, in a very short time, will pass through the town. (Telegraph arrived in 1872.)
4. The number of money orders issued is far in excess of any other office in the province in proportion to population.
5. The large proportion of the population of the Wakatipu reside in the Arrow district, and the discovery of most valuable quartz reefs and a deep lead of gold leads us to the almost certain conclusion that ere long the population will be largely increased.
6. The undesirability of having post offices in stores on the gold-fields due to insecurity and lack of privacy.

The outcome: The Post Office was not closed. The postmaster who complained was 'removed' two and a half years later.

Mail Contracts

At first the mail came and went from Invercargill, arriving by boat at Frankton or Queenstown. Later it also came from Dunedin.

Well-known mail contractors were W. Jenkins and W.L. Smith who travelled twice-weekly on horseback, and from 1883 John Lumsden Jopp by two-horse coach with passengers three then four times per week. Messrs Reid and McDowell had the contract in the 1890s, and the Jopp family continued on and off until at least 1915.

Problems with the Mail

The local reporter for the *Otago Witness* (23 November 1878), John Augustus Miller, was eloquent in his complaints: 'The irregularity of our mails continues to cause much vexation, though, thanks to the energetic steps taken by our local postmaster, Mr James Delaney, some rational arrangements have at last been made by which the transit of the Dunedin mails has been reduced from seven days to four. ...When it is considered that during the recent disaster [the Great Flood] some mails for this county were detained for three weeks at Cromwell while the road via Cardrona was open, and that until lately the Arrow mails were impounded for three days at Queenstown, we may well ask, what is the amount of geographical knowledge of Otago possessed by the heads of the postal department?'

James Delaney: Postmaster Beyond the Call of Duty, 1872-1892

Mr Delaney did his best to overcome the deficiencies of the system. He is noted as having worked during the Christmas holidays to ensure that mail reached the main centres in time to catch the ships for San Francisco and Melbourne.

When he left in 1892 after 21 years, he was presented with a purse of sovereigns and a testimonial of appreciation. The *Otago Witness* reported on 10 November:

‘On behalf of the residents of Arrowtown and surrounding districts, we, the undersigned, on the eve of your departure from our midst, beg to testify to the high esteem in which you have been held by all classes of the community during the 21 years you have held the position of postmaster and telegraphist in Arrowtown. We feel that a hearty tribute is due to you for the zeal, assiduity, urbanity, and general kindness which have always characterised you in your official capacity, while as a private citizen we have ever looked upon your conduct as exemplary.

‘We congratulate you on your well-earned promotion to a more responsible and higher position in the civil service, and in the new sphere whither duty calls you we hope that your future career will be carved out on the lines of your past, and that many years of energetic life may yet be spared to you. ... In conclusion we wish you, Mrs Delaney, and family every prosperity in the future.’

A Sentry at its Post

The pillar box was brought from Invercargill after

the Post Office was refurbished in 1988. It had stood in Forth Street since 1906, and had been made in Christchurch by P. and D. Duncan to specifications obtained from London in the 1880s.

The following information comes from an article in the *Otago Daily Times*, 24 December 2018, written by Jenny Longstaff.

Our pillar box’s style is a ‘Penfold’, named after John W. Penfold, an English surveyor and architect famous for his pillar box designs on the 1860s-70s.

The idea for roadside letter boxes for Britain was suggested in 1840 by Sir Rowland Hill, Secretary of the Post Office, who had seen them in Europe. It was not until 1852 (on the recommendation of Hill’s postal surveyor, novelist Anthony Trollope) that a letter-receiving pillar was trialled at St Helier, in Jersey.

In 1855 the first postal boxes for London were erected, but when people complained about their ugliness, the committee of science and art of the House of Lords came up with design - an ornate



box festooned with Grecian-style decoration. In a major oversight, it lacked any posting aperture! (Never give design responsibility to a committee.) More designs were to follow, and from 1866-79 the elegant hexagonal Penfold box became the 'New Standard Letter Box.'

Early Victorian boxes were painted green, to be unobtrusive. Though no doubt the dogs noticed them, people kept walking into them; therefore, from 1874, red became the standard colour. Widespread across England and Ireland, Penfold boxes were subsequently adopted in various British colonies.



Arrowtown's box includes the initials of King Edward VII (ER) on the front. The cap's decorative detail is based on a stylised acanthus leaf, a motif dating back to classical times. Modern popularity of acanthus leaves depicted in architecture and applied arts can be traced to the English Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 1800s, most closely associated with William Morris, the famed English textile designer, artist and writer. Thus we see that our Arrowtown pillar box has a distinguished ancestry.

Whereas kerbside posting boxes are declining in number in many cities and towns, Arrowtown's pillar still stands resolutely at its post, receiving letters, and admiration from visitors.

Long Live Our Post Office!

As methods of travel and communication have continued to change, the Arrowtown Post Office has risen to the challenges. Whereas many other towns have lost their dedicated post offices, Arrowtown has kept this one, thanks to its purchase by the Museum and the support of the public. It is a much-photographed and much-loved feature of Buckingham Street.

Further Reading in *Queenstown Couriers*, available via our website:

'Wakatipu Post Offices 150 Years Ago', Alan Cooke, Issue 90 2013 p.12

'John and Catherine Jopp', Ray and Mary Lines, Issue 64 2000 p.11

'John Augustus Miller, goldminer and journalist', Marion Borrell, Issue 90 2013 p.22

'Celebrity English Writer Anthony Trollope Visited Lake Wakatipu in 1872 - He Came, He Saw, He Commented', Marion Borrell, Issue 97 2013 p.9

Sources:

Lakes District Museum archives

Newspaper reports accessed from www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz

Bradshaw, Julia *Arrowtown History and Walks*, Otago University Press, 2001

'Standing at its post', Jenny Longstaff, *Otago Daily Times* 24 December 2018

Nicholas von Tunzelmann –

His account of exploration and sheep-farming in the Wakatipu

Monologue prepared and presented by David Mayhew at People from Our Past, 2019.



Nicholas Paul Balthasar Tunzelmann von Adlerflug was a cultured and sociable gentleman who enjoyed singing, yodelling, playing the violin, and dancing. He was born in Russia in 1828 and was a godson of Czar Nicholas I.

Fictitious Scenario for the Monologue

It is 1872 and we are in Eichardt's Hotel to farewell the von Tunzelmann family on their departure for New South Wales. We are acquaintances Nicholas has made during 12 years living across the lake, near the Von River and Mount Nicholas which bear his names.

Speech

My friends, it is with sadness I bid you farewell as I and my family leave for fresh pastures in Australia.

Sadness because I still recall the delight in first seeing the magnificent panorama presented to our view when we arrived on the top of the Crown Range: the lake below us and the surrounding mountains. The 'us' I speak of, of course refers to my good friend William Rees whom I met in Dunedin earlier that summer at the end of 1860.

How, you might be wondering, did a native of Russia - born on the Baltic, educated in Germany, Switzerland and England - end up being the sole companion of Mr Rees on his expedition when we crossed the Crown Range?

My being in New Zealand at all was entirely the result of chance. I started working as a foreign correspondent in London, but following an attack of typhus fever was sent to Canada to recruit my health. There I studied medicine, came back to London again to finish my studies, but not finding it to my liking, went through the Royal Veterinary College instead, intending to go out to India in the Cavalry Service. The doctors not approving of India, I went out to Canada again. While there, I got a letter from New Zealand, so I came out here to try sheep farming instead.

Eventually, I learnt of an expedition about to start from Dunedin to explore for pastoral land west of Wanaka and Hawea. So south I went and, because I am a veterinary surgeon and able to shoe a horse, Mr Rees agreed to let me join the party.

Well, what challenges and troubles the unexplored country provided!

Our first attempt at crossing the Molyneux River resulted in the pack-horses being swept down the stream once the strong current reached their packs; one drowned.

The next challenge was to find a way north from up the Cardrona River into the heart of the mountains. The valleys were impassable for horses owing to scrub, timber, speargrass and matagouri. So, we dragged packhorses and hacks up the mountains, but always with the result of having to retrace our steps down to the camp we had left in the morning, often by moonlight.

We reached one such summit only to discover it was an isolated hill - the descent on the other side being steeper than the spur we had climbed. There were peak after peak and deep valleys as far as the eye could reach.

After that episode, there was a grand council of war: all but Mr Rees made up their minds to give it up and return to Dunedin.

Mr Rees came to me and said he meant to push on and asked if I felt inclined to join him, as it was useless for one to go by himself. Having staked everything on coming over from Canada and down from Wellington, I readily consented.

So, we pushed on up the Cardrona River and on the second day took one of the spurs of what Mr Rees called 'the Crown Range'. When we reached the copula, and the glorious panorama I have already described, we realised that our perseverance was crowned with success.

We went down the mountain, crossed the Arrow River, camped, and next morning were struck by the splendid grass which the horses devoured like green oats.

We pushed on to Hayes Lake, through the prickly scrub and speargrass; crossed the Shotover, but not before our horses sank into quicksand, which alarmed me as a new chum; and reached the Kawarau River Falls.

The Falls were a sight worth seeing. Here we found the remains of a sod wall near the beach, very old and covered with herbage, which we thought must have been the site of a Maori battle.

We set out to explore up the lake from Queenstown where we left our horses. It took us four days to get to Bobs Cove, first by a raft made of driftwood and flax-flower stalks, and, when the wind against us strengthened, by walking through a dense growth of fern and scrub. Eventually, we reached a summit above the Cove where we could get a view of the Head of the Lake.

This was the end point of our journey. Mr Rees took observations and made a sketch. I was delighted for I saw there was sheep country on the other side of the lake where the river, afterwards named the Von by the district's surveyor Mr McKerrow, was situated.

Our troubles were not over, however. We set fire to the fern at the beach the next day and started on our return journey. Once on the raft a light breeze favoured us, but also fanned the fire. The flames formed a solid line from the beach to the summit of the range - also a grand sight I shall never forget.

Although we escaped the fire and got back to the horses and then across the Shotover in haste, it was not without consequence for us. Towards morning, heavy rain fell putting out the fire, but a fog caused the smoke to settle down so densely that we could not see many chains in front of us. We travelled slowly that day, and in the evening, to our surprise, came to a place where somebody had evidently camped. When the fog cleared we discovered it was the very place we had left in the morning!

We were very weary by the time we had crossed back to the Cardrona Valley, but were well pleased with what we had found, and intent on taking up the land, Rees on the Queenstown side and I on the far side of Lake Wakatipu. This we did.



Fernhill Station (now Mount Nicholas), the Von River, and The Remarkables in the far distance.

I reconnoitred a route to bring sheep from Invercargill up the Oreti River and through to the lake. Unfortunately, of the 2000 sheep bought over Victoria, only 500 survived the voyage to Invercargill and on to the station. Down by the lake I built a log hut and cleared ground for a garden. The men who helped bring the stock from Invercargill refused to stop with me, being afraid of being snowed up, and having heard of gold being

discovered at Weatherstone's Gully. I was thus left perfectly alone and did not see a single soul for five weeks.

Eventually, Mr Rees' boatman, Bob Fortune, called in having seen the smoke from my place. He gave me news of Mr Rees, the first I had heard since we had parted in Dunedin after our exploration trip.

Mr Rees, on hearing from Bob that I was settled at the Von came over for me in a whale boat, with four or five men, one Sunday. On returning, in time for 6 o'clock dinner, I was delighted to meet Mrs Rees again, not least because, as you know, through her I met her sister, Rose, now my dear wife.

Well you can picture the scene: the cloth was laid; the silver and glasses sparkled on the table; a tureen of steaming pea soup brought in; and smiles all around we sat down to a jolly dinner. The fact that we were neighbours and settled down on the ground we had explored together and gone through so much to achieve, made it the most enjoyable meeting and meal I ever had in my life.

But, sadly, we have not remained neighbours for as long as I had hoped.



Gertrude Rose von Tunzelmann

The sheep did splendidly at Fernhill Station until the scab broke out soon after the diggings started here, and it took us three years before we could get rid of it. An infestation of rabbits didn't help. As our expenses were very heavy, we had to borrow money at high interest, and wool at only 6d per lb soon doubled our debt. Our agents sold the run two years before the lease expired, leaving us penniless.

I got leave to run sheep on the gold-fields at Table Bay near Walter Peak Station, but still bad luck pursued me. Keas attacked my sheep and killed them by scores, so that out of 600 young ewes I managed to put on, only 300 were shorn.

Then, as you know, the gold-field runs were put up to auction at a high figure: the land regulations are not calculated to make farming a success. Nor the high rent, nor the poor returns to be had selling wheat to the Frankton Mill.

My brother-in-law in Australia has asked us to go over there, and my sister has offered to take our girls to educate them. I have decided to start a fruit-growing business.

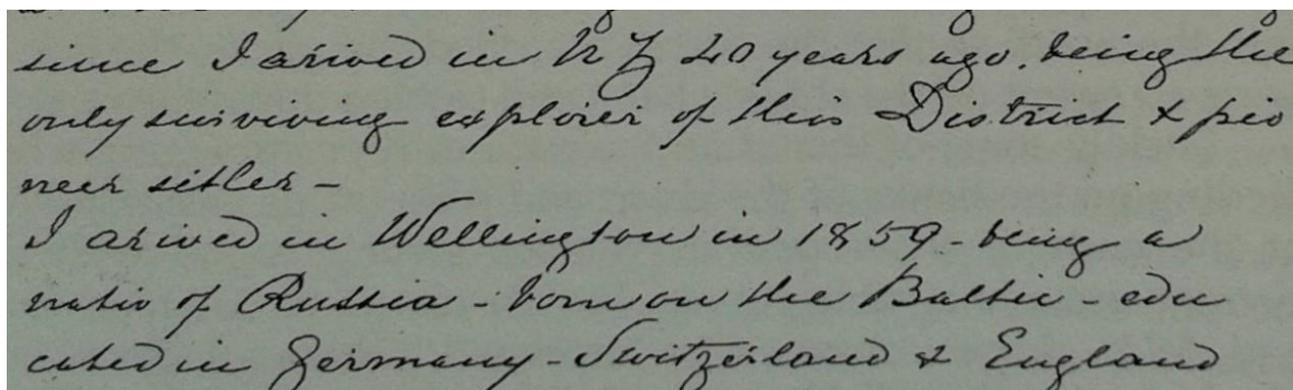
And so, my friends, I wish you all well. Rest assured, despite the hardships endured by my dear family, I am proud of being one of the early explorers and first pioneer settlers in the Wakatipu, and hope one day to return.

Afterwards

The von Tunzelmanns did return after five years, to a small farm across the lake where they lived in financial hardship. Nicholas was for a time the railway station-master at Kingston. In 1900 he died in Frankton Hospital aged 71 and is buried in the Queenstown cemetery.

But let's remember him for his greatest exploit, the journey with William Rees, which he has related so vividly.

Source

A photograph of a handwritten letter in cursive script. The text is written on a light-colored paper and is slightly faded. The handwriting is fluid and characteristic of the late 19th century. The text reads: "since I arrived in N.Z. 20 years ago, being the only surviving explorer of this District & pioneer settler - I arrived in Wellington in 1859 - being a native of Russia - born on the Baltic - educated in Germany - Switzerland & England".

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This letter written by Nicholas von Tunzelmann in 1899 to his Member of Parliament, putting his case for being granted an Old Age Pension. Because he had not been living continuously in New Zealand for the previous 25 years, he was not eligible. He recounts his journey with Rees and his pioneering efforts to farm, as evidence of his contribution to New Zealand. His appeal was unsuccessful. The letter was published in the *Lake Wakatipu Mail* in September 1900 and in the *Queenstown Courier* issues 3 to 8 which can be accessed in full on our website.

All photos are courtesy of the Lakes District Museum.

‘The Inimitable’ Charles Thatcher and Madame Annie Vitelli

Compiled by Marion Borrell

Charles Thatcher and Annie Vitelli were successful itinerant entertainers on the Victorian goldfields. When miners came rushing to the Otago goldfields in 1861, they soon followed. In Dunedin they attracted audiences of 600. They arrived in the Wakatipu in early 1863, just a few months after our goldrush began.



Thatcher performing in the Ballarat Concert Rooms, Victoria, in 1855,
by Samuel Thomas Gill

They had emigrated separately from England to Melbourne in the early 1850s. At the age of 18, Ann Day had married her music teacher. He was a conman named John Whittle who had wisely made his own way to Australia before the courts could make the decision for him. There he adapted his name to the much classier Giovanni Vitelli and set up as a music teacher. After their baby died, Giovanni left Ann, and he died in 1859, conveniently leaving her with the freedom of widowhood to establish her career as ‘Madame Annie Vitelli’.

In 1861 she married Charles Thatcher, who performed in the same troupe, and they became famous – Charles for his satirical songs and Annie for her beautiful singing. Between them they delivered a class act to the rough and the cultured members of colonial society.

Their programme was designed to ‘Make ‘em laugh, make ‘em cry, make ‘em very thirsty.’

Charles quickly sussed out a new town, seeking material for his topical songs about local issues; Annie's emotional ballads and Italian arias revived memories of Home; and intermissions gave the audience ample time to revive at the bar.

In Queenstown they performed at Harry Redfern's Theatre Royal in Beach Street, and in Arrowtown at Bully Hayes's Prince of Wales hotel and theatre. These grandly named establishments were built of wooden frames and calico walls. At the Theatre Royal, patrons who didn't pay to sit on benches, stood on the dirt floor.

When Charles's slanderous songs drove victims to anger, Annie's soothing mediation sometimes calmed them down. But not always. In Queenstown Charles was taken to court by one of his victims after an altercation. When he was fined twenty shillings plus costs, his fans cheered and no doubt celebrated in their usual manner.

The Thatchers must have intended to stay in Queenstown as they soon bought a little house, which would have been a great improvement over living in a tent. They established their own calico hotel in Beach Street and stocked it with imported beverages. And their performances continued in the larger Theatre Royal.

Unfortunately for the Thatchers, the great gale of June 1863 demolished their calico hotel and severely damaged the Theatre Royal. They sold up and returned to the more comfortable climate of Melbourne.

After this they made two more tours of New Zealand. Then their marriage must have ended, as Charles went back to London, and later died of cholera when on a trip to China to collect items for his curio shop.

Meanwhile in Australia, Madame Annie Vitelli reinvented herself as Lydia Howarde. She continued her singing career through the 1870s including touring New Zealand with her own theatrical troupe. If Charles can be described as inimitable, she can surely be called indomitable.

As we know, entertainment in our district has survived and thrived, thanks to our comedians, musicians and actors such as these in the Remarkable Theatre company who presented Charles and Annie at People From Our Past, 2019.



Sue Harcombe (narrator), Blaise Barham (Charles), Jane Paterson (Annie) and Cheryl Collie (pianist)

Sources

Hoskins, Robert , *Goldfields Balladeer – the life and times of Charles R Thatcher*, Collins, 1977

Hoskins, Robert, in *Dictionary of NZ Biography* and *Te Ara Encyclopedia of NZ*

Ganzl, Kurt, *Victorian Vocalists* (Routledge, 2017)

Lake Wakatip Mail, *Southland Times* and other newspapers accessed from PapersPast www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz

Metamorphosis by Charles Thatcher

First performed at the Theatre Royal in Queenstown in 1863

Sung to the tune of 'The Irish Washerwoman.'

Gold's a wonderful thing, what a change it can make,
Who'd have thought we should ever have come to this Lake:
Like magic there springs up a populous town,
And hundreds to get gold are here settling down.
Oh! How it must knock off his perch Mr Rees
To see such a township and buildings like these,
When a few months ago he was here all alone,
And the fact of goldfields near the lake was unknown.

CHORUS:

*But just look around and you'll quickly behold
The magical changes effected by gold.
We keep shifting about, and a fellow's perplexed;
The question is – Where shall we have to rush next?*

Rees settled down here on this nice quiet station;
The Lake was a place then of calm desolation.
He'd cross the Shotover his cattle to find,
But that nuggets were there never entered his mind.
His shepherds here daily unconsciously trod
Over tons of bright gold lying hid in the sod;
And Rees drove his bullocks, and branded away,
Never thinking what money they'd fetch him some day.

The shed you see yonder of stores now quite full,
Was the spot where he sheared and collected the wool;
And the schooner that's made lots of tin, no mistake,
Used to take the wool down to the foot of the Lake.
And Dooley, his man, who went in for a spurt
At the races, and rode in a fine scarlet shirt,
Saw no one – and was just a quiet old cock,
Who branded the calves and looked after the stock.

No Queenstown was formed with its noisy hotels,
And no restaurants with their loud dinner bells;
No Port Chalmers' boats could be seen on the Lake,
But the ducks had it all to themselves, no mistake!
No bellman here shouted as he walked along
That Thatcher was going to sing a new song;
If you told Thatcher then here his time he would spend
He'd have thought you were fit for the famed Yarra Bend. [= crazy]

When St Patrick's Day came, there was no celebration
Of the favourite saint here on this quiet station.
No booths were erected – no Maoris, no Whites -
No wrestling, no vaulting, no races, no fights;
No rowdies at that time were lugged into camp
And chained to a log there their ardour to damp;
No single-stick then was played here, I suppose,
And Bruce at that time had an undamaged nose.

Sergeant Bracken at that time had not left the force,
But was in the blue coat with his baton of course,
Bringing coves to the bar of their country, I vow –
To a different bar though he wishes them now.
If a cove once was drunk Sergeant Bracken, you see,
Collared hold of him, saying 'Sir, just come with me,'
But if lushy, now at their weakness he winks;
He nailed them once, now he supplies them with drinks.

Now Rees has been doing a fine little game –
If in his position p'rhaps we'd do the same –
It's nat'ral for him or any other man
To get for his meal here as much as he can.
There's an old saying, and it's as true as it's quaint,
The Devil is not quite as black as folks paint.
Thatcher rambles about, and he frequently sees
Lots of squatters that ain't half so decent as Rees.

CHORUS



Charles Thatcher
Artist not known

Cass and the Contraband Calf by Charles Thatcher

Sung to the tune of 'There's no luck about the house.'

The butchers here in Queenstown are slaves – mind it's no fiction:
In buying meat from Mr *Rees* they're under great *restriction*.
He's like a Russian autocrat, for when it is his whim,
He stops their meat, and thus you see, they soon get nought from him.

Now they must deal alone with Rees, to this they must agree,
Or *Clements* – Rees's slaughterman – shows them no *clemency*.
A butcher bought a calf elsewhere and came to tribulation;
I'll tell you now how Mr *Cass* got such a *castigation*.

Now Clements goes about the town with such a cunning eye
To see if any butchers here deal elsewhere on the sly;
And he popped into Cass's shop and soon stopped Cass's laugh.
'Hullo! Young man,' says he to him, 'Where did you get that calf?'

Then Cass confessed to Clements how he'd yielded to temptation
And bought it from a rival who kept cows near this location.
He got in such an awful funk and how he did entreat
Him to look over it, and not deprive him of his meat.

Says Clements, 'You've transgressed, it's plain, and I will do you brown;
I'll stop your meat, and you will have no *stake* here in the town.
A warning it will be to you – you've done me, that's the point.
When you've no *beef and mutton*, you will feel quite out of *joint*.

'I'll knock you now clean off your *legs* – mind, I'm not telling fibs.
No *neck and shoulder* you shall have, I'll stop your very *ribs*.
I'll shepherd you; you'll get no sheep from the slaughter-house below.
No *ewe* or *wether* you shall have, *whether* you like or no.

'No *heart* for you, you *artful* Cass!' The butcher's *heart* was wrung.
He seemed quite speechless when informed he shouldn't have a *tongue*.
Chopfallen was he now he learnt he shouldn't have a *chop*.
His *beef* once stopped, he knew he'd have no *body* in his shop.

But Clements has relented now: I went by Cass's door,
And then I found he was supplied just as he was before.
No doubt he softened Clements' *heart* with sad and piteous tones,
Or perhaps he begged his pardon down upon his *marrow bones*.

Source: *Lake Wakatip Mail* from PapersPast, lightly edited.

The Queen and the Pioneering Woman – Queenstown and Frankton

By Marion Borrell

First published as a blog, now reprinted with additions.



Queen Victoria in 1843
by Franz Xavier Winterhalter



Frances Rees in 1858 by her husband
(Courtesy of Rosemary Marryatt)

What's in a name?

In 1862 when the farm station owned by runholder William Rees became the route to the goldfields, miners and businessmen arrived in droves. Fortunately, Rees was very adaptable. He set up a hotel, 'The Queen's Arms' where his woolshed had been, adding businessman and community leader to his farming role. A collection tents and flimsy buildings sprang around his farm base which he had called 'The Camp' – hence the current Camp Street.

The shanty town needed a name.

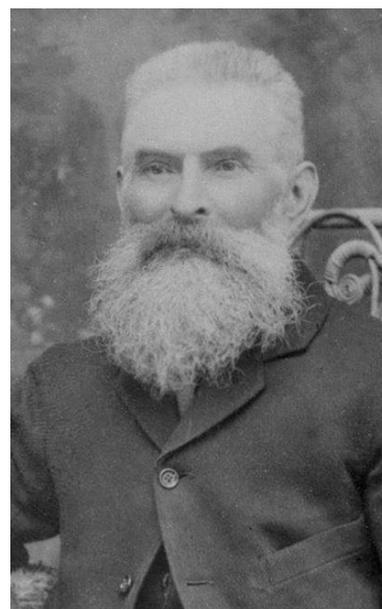
Golden Days of Lake County (pp.57-58) Provides an uncorroborated, handed-down account of the naming ceremony: *On an empty section at the north-east corner of the intersection of Rees and Beach Streets, a blacksmith, R. Black, shod horses in all weathers. A few yards along Rees Street there was a rival blacksmith, James Bridge, and on New Year's Day, following the celebrations of the previous night, the two blacksmiths gathered with some of their cronies and lookers-on in front of the anvil on Black's section. There, under the open sky, Archibald Cameron tinkled the anvil and Black pronounced the name of the lake settlement, 'Queenstown'.*

This account seems rather far-fetched. The *Otago Daily Times* on 6 January 1863 reported a 'public meeting called for the purpose' of choosing a name, but omits any mention of blacksmiths and anvils.

A third version comes from John O'Callaghan (the great-grandfather of Ray) who arrived in the district with William Fox in October 1862. In 1912, he wrote in an article in the *Lake County Press* (16 May) that he himself named the town after Queenstown in Ireland near where he hailed from.

(For more about John O'Callaghan, see the article about by Rita Teele and Taylor Reed in *Queenstown Courier* Issue 98, p.29.)

So, was the name chosen in honour of Queen Victoria, or Queenstown in Ireland? Let's conclude that both are correct because the Irish town was named in honour of Queen Victoria. The Cove – or Cobh in Irish – situated on the Cove of Cork on the southern coast of Ireland, was renamed 'Queenstown' by the British in 1849 after a visit by Queen Victoria. It was a port of departure for emigrants from Ireland. Probably numbers of the local Irish arrivals had left from there. In 1920 the name was changed back to Cobh.



John O'Callaghan
(Lakes District Museum)

Thus, it seems that either directly or indirectly, the town is named after Queen Victoria.

There is nothing controversial about the naming of Frankton by Sir John L.C. Richardson, the Superintendent of Otago province, who chose it in honour of William Gilbert Rees's wife Frances, who was known as Frankie. William first reached Lake Wakatipu in 1860 with Nicholas von Tunzelmann, and soon began setting up a sheep-station based at 'The Camp' at is now Queenstown Bay. About 3000 sheep were shipped from Australia then walked the 300 kilometres from Palmerston, which took about six weeks. At 'The Camp' the first buildings were constructed to replace tents.

Once a wattle-and-daub cottage had been built for the family, Frances came with their daughter Mary Rose, aged almost two. Their baby son, George Manning Rees, just a few weeks old, had died in Invercargill on the way from Dunedin. A month later Frances's brother Gilbert drowned in the Clutha River when bringing milking cows from the coast. Such sorrows were not unusual for women in early colonial times. There were two other women at The Camp, and everyone had to work hard to set up a sheep station from scratch so far from any other settlement.

A sudden change of circumstances occurred when gold was discovered and their home farm became a gold-rush town. William earned the nickname 'King Wakatip' for his leadership in the face of this intrusion, as he maintained law and order and took the initiative in the establishment of Queenstown. The family shifted their farm base to Kawarau Falls.

As Frances's great-granddaughter Rosemary Marryatt writes, 'The transition from a tutor of language in an English boarding school to colonial wife, mother and head of a settler's homestead required physical strength, faith and strong will.' It is appropriate that we have a town named after this pioneering woman.

Where should the administrative centre of the district be?

Opinions still differ over where the district's administrative centre should be located. In 1863 there were no buildings on the spacious, flat area of Frankton. A track from Queenstown ran past to the Lower Shotover River and on to Arrowtown.

Government surveyors drew up townships at Queenstown and Frankton. Where were the hospital, courthouse and other administrative buildings to be located? The Otago Provincial Government, probably on the advice of Vincent Pyke who was Secretary of the Gold Fields, decided on Frankton because it was more central in the district. Tenders were called to replace the tented 'Camp Headquarters' in Queenstown with wooden buildings at Frankton. The contract was let to William Rees to erect buildings for the police, warden's court and gold receiver's office.

Were the decision-makers so far-sighted that they visualised a jampacked Queenstown CBD and a congested road to Frankton? Probably not, however they were certainly thinking geographically.

But not politically. The businessmen of Queenstown did not accept a decision which would send potential customers to a new town at Frankton. They declared that the decisionmakers revealed 'an ignorance of our mining and commercial pursuits...' Deputations were sent to Dunedin to see the Superintendent, and much irritation was expressed on both sides. The dispute was resolved when Vincent Pyke, visited Queenstown and it was made to appear that the decision had been 'purely a mistake'. The Queenstown businessmen had won.

The town of Frankton which had been surveyed was not developed. The Courthouse which had been built there was bought by the Presbyterian Church and shifted to a new site to be their church, as it continued to be until the present church in Ross Street as built in 1959. The Frankton cemetery has been in use since 1863. What had been the Frankton administrative camp became the Lakes District Hospital on the current site of the hospital. With additions it became the hospital seen in this photo.



The first Lakes District Hospital at Frankton (*LDM*)

Otherwise, Frankton remained a farming area with a wharf and a racecourse for many decades. See the separate article about the racecourse in this issue.

In the 1870s the Courthouse, Town Hall and Council offices, and Library were built in Ballarat Street, Queenstown. Their colonial architecture still enhances our tourist-filled town centre.

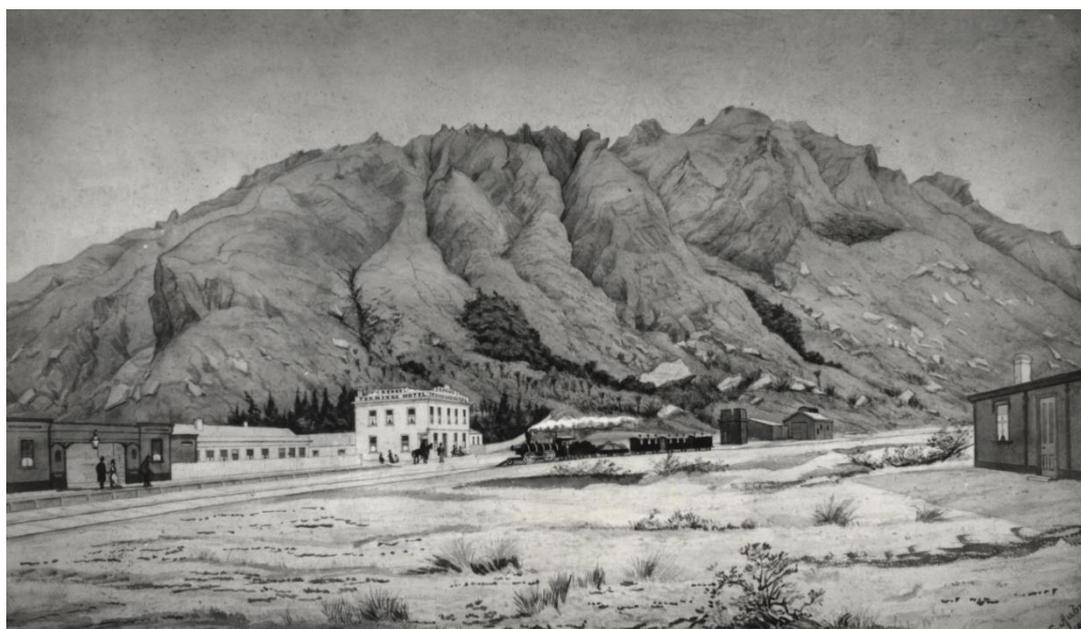
The 2018 Queenstown Town Centre Masterplan includes new offices there for the Queenstown Lakes District Council. Is this the best location? Would Frankton be better? The town named for a Queen, or for a Pioneering Woman?

The Mystery of the Naming of Kingston

This is a rather confusing story as at first names could be whatever someone decided. A correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph* wrote in February 1863: ‘This place has three names, Sandfly Bay, King’s Town (sic), and St John’s The latter appears to be the most popular name.’

When the town was set out by surveyor C.B. Shanks by May 1863 it was named St Johns after St John Brannigan, the Otago Commissioner of Police. However, the post office was called Sandfly Bay in 1863, according to Alan Cooke’s research into local post offices.

Just when Kingston took over as the official name and why it was chosen isn’t known, though further research could be done. Some people have said that it was named after a place in the west of Ireland, being the name of a major landowner Sir Robert King, an Anglo-Irish politician. Would Irish miners have wanted to honour him? Or it could have been after Kingston, Victoria, a goldmining town. Others suggest that it was a humorous or competitive reference to Queenstown. Whatever the truth, it seems that no monarch was directly involved.



Kingston in 1883 by Christopher Aubrey (LDM)

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Frankton Airport: The Racecourse that Grew Wings

By Marion Borrell Improved from first publication as a blog in April 2019



This year the airport has been the focus of community debate over the growth of tourism and future development. Let's look back to its history of racing, worker accommodation and aviation.

Racecourse

In early colonial times, if you were lucky, you owned a horse; if not, you walked. And just as now, some people loved to be competitive. Racehorses were the equivalent of racing cars - perhaps their jockeys were like boy-racers? What better relaxation after the arduous work of goldmining or establishing farms and businesses than a sporting competition, complete with gambling and refreshments?

In late 1863, less than two years after the discovery of gold, keen settlers founded the first Jockey Club, to hold races on the ideally-flat land at Frankton. A temporary grandstand was erected for the first meeting.

Facilities were improved in time for the second race day three months later, with the construction of a grandstand built of schist stone. You can still see the back wall of it as you travel around Lucas Place.

Imagine the scene with Victorian gents and 'a few ladies' sitting on the benches or supping at the booths while working horses raced on the rough grass. Racing enthusiasts were soon acquiring and training racehorses.

The Racecourse Reserve became official ten years later by an Act of Parliament setting aside over 300 acres for racing purposes.

During World War many men were away, and after the war the old vitality was not revived. Race meetings ceased after about 1920. Now the only race meeting held in the district is the Glenorchy Race Day, a splendid community event held in early January.



Worker Accommodation

The building of the Kawarau Falls Dam was a major project lasting almost two years. Where were the 100-200 temporary workers – carpenters, fitters, and other qualified tradesmen - to live? Fortunately, there was suitable land nearby – the old racecourse.



Each hut had of a wooden floor and framework, with canvas roof and tent-fly. There was an open fireplace with a corrugated iron chimney, but they can't have been cosy in winter. Furnishings were a bunk frame with wire netting stretched across it, a rough table, a chair or two – or wooden boxes - and

little else. Hearty meals were provided at 25 shillings a week by an excellent chef, and served in the former grandstand seen here.

Growing Wings

In 1935 Frankton racecourse was licensed as an aerodrome and scenic flights began.



This plane is a de Havilland 60 Metal Moth, NZ-ACI, belonging to the Otago Aero Club, which visited the airfield to take passengers one at a time on joyrides. Such opportunities were very popular as New Zealanders flocked to experience the novelty of flying. The plane's wings were designed to fold back like a moth's wings for ease of storage and transport. Note that the pilot is on the top, pouring in fuel from a can. In 1937 this plane crashed near Mosgiel.

In 1935 Rodolph Wigley and his son Harry founded the Queenstown-Mount Cook Airways Ltd based at Frankton airport as an addition to their Mount Cook Transport Company. They intended to run scheduled air services in the area, and it seemed that aviation would develop rapidly from this point. However, World War II intervened.

In 1947 pilots Bill Hewett, Frederick ‘Popeye’ Lucas, Barry Topliss and Trevor Cheetham set up Southern Scenic Air Services Ltd, doing freight, scenic and charter flying, and later aerial topdressing. In 1950 they launched regular passenger services in light planes between Queenstown and Dunedin on a subcontracted arrangement with NAC. The western side road beside the airport is named Lucas Place. The two curve-roofed hangars were War Surplus from the Pacific War.

Jules Tapper contributes his knowledge: ‘Harry Wigley and Mount Cook Airline used DC3 aircraft initially to open up scheduled services over a tourist airline network which spanned a route Te Anau, Queenstown, Mount Cook, Christchurch, Rotorua, Auckland and Keri Keri.

Prior to Queenstown’s runway being lengthened to accommodate these larger aircraft, the company for two years operated from an airstrip north of Cromwell and passengers were coached to Queenstown. The big increase in tourist numbers due to this new service persuaded the council of the day to purchase extra land and make a longer main grass runway.’



As a result, from 1964 larger aircraft were able to use the airport, and scheduled DC3 flights began.

In the five decades since then, the number and distance of flights has increased dramatically to include trans-Tasman services.

While the future is ‘up in the air’, we can appreciate the importance of this piece of land to our community over the past 156 years.

Acknowledgements: Aviation information from Jules Tapper
Historical photos: Lakes District Museum, Arrowtown

Growing up at Antrim/Arranmore Farm, Frankton Flats

June Thompson née Hansen, interviewed in January 2018

June was a 'person from the past and the present' at our People from Our Past event in April 2018. We are printing this interview in her honour as she has recently died.

I was born in 1926 in Queenstown at 'Tutuila' which is now 'Hulbert House'. My mother was Mabel (née Lorimer) and my father was Charlie Hansen. He was working on building the first bridge at Kawarau Falls and I was born the year that it opened. I had two older brothers, Alan and Evan. We lived at Frankton in an old house just above where the Camping-ground is now. There were no other houses around there then. Dad started a wee market garden there to fill in time while he was waiting to buy a traction engine.

He had worked with the man who owned the traction engine which provided the motive power for building the Kawarau Falls dam and bridge because there wasn't any electricity. Then Dad got the first threshing mill in the district, and when he sold that he bought Arranmore Farm in Grant Road in 1941. It was called Antrim Farm then. We lived in the wooden house which had belonged to Frank McBride.

School

The Frankton people refused to send their children to school until the Education Board provided a bus. So my eldest brother never went to school till he was nine. There was a family with six children living at the Frankton wharf, and they had the choice to walk to Queenstown and back each day or walk to Lower Shotover school. Finally we got a bus in 1930. I wasn't old enough to go because you couldn't go until you were six and I was only four.

When I went to school, I biked to Frankton and caught the bus to Queenstown. If I wanted to stay after school to play basketball, I had to bike to school in the morning so that I could bike home. At basketball our biggest enemies were the Arrowtown team. That was quite good.



June in April 2018
(Photo by Rita Teele)



The wooden homestead in Grant Road (LDM)



First day of the school bus, 1930 (Photo from June)

Farming

A lot of grain was grown in the district then, and was shipped out from the Frankton wharf. You just had to ring up Shaws Motors – it cost you money to ring Arrowtown in those days – and they'd send a truck over, and they'd pick up your bags of grain and take them down to the wharf. In those days the farmers as far as the Crown Terrace walked their sheep to the Frankton Wharf – a long way. After that half the men and the dogs would jump in the lake, then they'd have to turn around and walk back to the Crown Terrace again. Up the hill from the wharf there was a lot of poisonous tut plant. As they were passing our place, the drovers often used to get us kids to run up and stand there and not let the sheep get at the tut. And quite often they'd give us a penny. We were made. We couldn't wait to go to Queenstown to spend it. We'd go to old Tucker Haines's shop. He had lollies, boiled lollies, just on the corner of Cow Lane.

In 1939 the war started and I was still going to high school. My brothers were called up and went away to camp. When I was 16, I decided I'd leave school and go home and work on the farm because there was no one else to work with my dad. Then when I was 18, I got called up myself and I had to say what I was doing. Seeing I was working on the farm, they said, 'You've got to stay there.' I didn't mind that at all.



My Dad Charlie outside the stable in 1943 (LDM)

We had five beautiful big draught horses. Every day my job was to go up to the loft and get a bag of chaff down when the horses came in after Dad was doing the ploughing or something. It was only once I had a go at ploughing. There were five horses - two pulling the machine and three leaders in the front, so that meant five harnesses to hold onto. Well, how he did it, I don't know. When I had a go, I had an awful mess.

But I used to love the big horses. They were just draughts but they were such quiet old things. In the winter was hard when I had to put the cover on these great big horses. They were so quiet they never moved. The only thing I used to growl at them about was, I used to put the covers out on the fence and hose them down to wash them so they had nice clean covers that night. The first thing the horses would do when I let them out was

go out to the paddock and find a dirty place to roll. In winter we kept them inside until after tea and then I'd light the lantern and go over and let them out.

I liked the sheep work very much, especially when it was lambing time. The only thing I didn't like about it was when they started using sheep crates (sheep trucks) and the lambs had to go away. When the truck left, I'd look up and see all these little lambs looking out and saying, 'What are you doing to me?' I can remember when they used to drive the lambs to the lake at Frankton wharf, sometimes to the *Earnslaw* and sometimes the *Ben Lomond*. All our produce went away there.



Traction engine and threshing mill on Frankton Flats (*LDM*)

We did lots of cropping, mainly barley and wheat and oats. Then we were told to plant linum which had a beautiful blue flower, and the seed was used to make linseed oil during the war. We got a good price but it was an awful job to thresh it – it's such fine seed. We had to plant it far away from anything else so that it wouldn't be cross-pollinated, otherwise they wouldn't have been able to get pure oil out of it. I would have liked to put the turnips in that paddock too for the blue and yellow flowers – the Queenstown colours. But you had to keep them away from each other.

We kept three cows because in the summer time we needed all the milk and the cream that ended up as butter. Once a week it was butter-making – that churn, churn, churn – and all of a sudden you'd hear 'slosh, slosh,' and hurray, it was made. If you were selling the butter you had to weight it up into official papers in the right amount, but we didn't usually because we needed it all ourselves for the cooking and the baking. We dug a big hole in the ground and had a cage. We used to keep the butter down in it. That was the coolest place you could find. We used to have a meat safe that we pulled up the trees. You always kept on doing it, and you never thought more about it.

We had much harder winters in those days with lots of snow. We used to have to dig holes and tracks through the snow for the sheep. Then I'd look up at Coronet Peak and I'd think, 'Why on earth do people want to go up and play in the snow?' I thought they could come down and dig some holes for us. We never found it cold in the house. I suppose we all wore warm clothes.

Driver's Licence

When I was 16, I was able to go for my drivers' licence. Girls weren't allowed to get them until they were 16 then. It annoyed me because my brothers all got theirs when they were 15. There was no resident inspector here. You put your name down at Lake County and when one came to the town, he rang you up and he came to your place. We were busy dipping sheep and my mother came out. 'The traffic inspector's coming to take you for your licence.' So I thought I'd better tidy up a bit, and he came right out to our gate and we went away over the Shotover Bridge in the 1939 Chev with a column gear change. He never asked questions, no theory or anything. I drove along the Ladies Mile and he said, 'When you find a gateway you can turn round and go back home.' We went back to our gate and he said, 'When you next go to the County Office in town, you can get your licence and it will cost you five shillings.' I'd have liked to jump in the car right then and go in, but I saw all these hundred sheep still waiting in the yard. The women around here mainly didn't drive. We all walked. My mother and I used to walk right to Queenstown. An old chap who lived at Battery Hill often used to meet us in there and he'd say, 'I'll give you a ride home in my horse and buggy.'

We got electricity after the war. The hospital had generators until then. The power was going to come through to the hospital from Roaring Meg, and the Power Board asked my father if they could put the poles through our farm. He said, 'You can if you give me the power,' so we got power in the house. It must have been 1945 or 6. Then we bought an electric range. When the threshing mill came around or there was shearing with so many men to feed, I had to swop jobs to cook and cowboy to help my mother. She didn't like the look of this electric range. She said, 'I'll never get a leg of mutton in there to feed all these men.' But we took a tray out the coal range and it exactly fitted. The next winter the old range was taken out and a lovely open fire was put there.

After the war we were able to get a tractor. They weren't making them during the war – everything was being made for tanks and things. So, when he could, Dad promptly got a tractor. We thought this was marvellous. We didn't have to feed it. We didn't have to put it to bed at night and go out and cover it over. The old horses were sold, which was I was sorry about.

Leisure Activities

A lot of us young ones used to go walking on Sundays. I've got a photo of us standing on the Lees' irrigation pipeline which crossed the Kawarau River to Threepwood. We were walking down to Gibbston. There was a rope on top of the pipe you could hang onto, and we took our photo. Later on, once the Arrowtown irrigation scheme got going, the Lees' pipeline was taken down.

Another thing we did was we climbed the Remarkables, we climbed Ben Lomond and all those sorts of things. We had to climb Ben Lomond at night time to be up at the top to see the sunrise. Thinking back, I could have looked out my bedroom window and seen the sunrise much more easily.

We used to skate on the pond in Queenstown. We could also skate where the Events Centre field is now. When it rained it became a giant puddle and froze in the winter.

My father used to let the local rugby clubs use a paddock where Five-Mile is now. The Country, Queenstown and Arrowtown clubs held their competitions there. My brothers and my future husband played there.

We played tennis on a tennis court at Lower Shotover next door to where the hotel is now. In the winter we played basketball on it. There was a hall at Lower Shotover too - it's a sheep shed now. I remember the McBrides from over at the farm called Bridesdale. There were three of them in our days, and they used to love when there was a dance on at Shotover Hall. Charlie was always the MC and he lit the lanterns and put powder on the floor. Alec's job was to boil the billy. Annie was in the kitchen. Ladies all brought plates, of course.

Family History

My dad was born in 1893. Dad's mother Elizabeth was married to Robert Grant and lived at Lake Johnson. He was killed in a farming accident leaving her with four children. Then she married Christen Hansen and had seven more children including my dad. One daughter from the first marriage married and lived at Macetown. Then she had twins and one twin died and the mother died too, so my grandmother took the newborn baby and the older little boy. I suppose when you've had eleven children, what's two more? Their father occasionally walked down from Macetown to see them.



Charlie and Mabel Hansen
in the garden at Arranmore

So my father grew up at Lake Johnson and he went to Lower Shotover School. It was quite a walk - they cut through the paddocks or went along the road and over the first bridge - it was downstream from the road bridge we have now, and it didn't go right across the riverbed. If it rained during the day and the river started to rise, the teacher used to send home the children on this side of the river so that they wouldn't get caught in the flood. Other times they just went home with the kids on that side for the night. Goodness, their mothers would be wondering, Did they get across the river or didn't they? And the parents couldn't ring anybody up to find out.

In 1949 I married Jim Thompson who was brought up in Arrowtown. The wedding was at the farm. We built the house that's across the main road from Hardware Lane as it's called now. I live in McBride Street now. So you see, I've lived all my life, over 90 years, at Frankton. (January 2018)

Further reading about the family and Arranmore Farm in the *Queenstown Courier* available on our website :

'Arranmore: Farming at Frankton over 140 years' by Marion Borrell, Issue 86 p.7

'Memories of Arranmore 1950-74' from Mary Hansen, Issue 86 p.11

'Elizabeth Meldrum-Grant-Hansen 1852-1927' by Rosslyn Munro, Issue 90 p.19

Historical Panels Project: the first four installations

We are presenting history on location, where people walk or cycle. QLDC, DOC and Queenstown Trails Trust are very pleased to receive the panels. Print Central created the designs.

Our first panel, outside the old stone library in Queenstown - a significant location in the history of our Society- is shown on the contents page.

At Lower Shotover, the panel is about the community which was centred downstream beside the first bridge with a hotel, smithy and school. In 2018 the Queenstown Trail counter recorded over 30,000 movements of walkers and cyclists here.

At Arthurs Point, again, our focus is the early community. The panel is located on the viewing platform below the bridge.

At Macetown Road, DOC signs provide practical information. We add the history.

A Road to Macetown's Gold

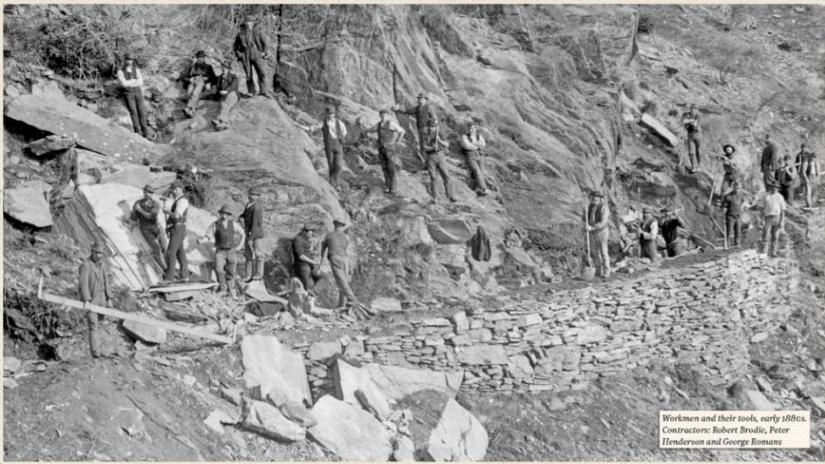
Macetown was a centre for goldmining, especially the tunnelling and crushing of quartz rock. All food, goods, coal, timber and equipment, including heavy machinery, had to be transported from Arrowtown over difficult terrain.

In 1864 a packhorse track was formed over Big Hill saddle, 1200 metres high. Later it was widened to take narrow drays, but it was still a slow, dangerous route, and often impassable due to snow, ice and bogs.

Cartage was extremely expensive.

For years residents and mining companies appealed to the authorities for a better road. There were letters to newspapers and heated public meetings.

In 1876 the route up the river was chosen as it would be shorter and only half the cost of upgrading the Big Hill route. Finance was needed from both local and central governments.



Workmen and their tools, early 1880s.
Contractors: Robert Brodie, Peter Henderson and George Romans

A Feat of Construction 1881-1884

A feature of the road is its dry-stone retaining walls, some built by workmen suspended on ropes. The contractors estimated that they removed over 50,000 tons of rock. It cost over £7000 - the equivalent of about 2,000 ounces of gold at that time.

In 1884 the first buggy reached Macetown in just one and a half hours. Despite being prone to flooding, slips, rockfalls and ice, the road greatly improved the lives of the residents of Macetown.



Denis Congrove with his horses and dray.



Pipes for the Arrow Irrigation Company, late 1900s. The dam is seen up the river.



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

This sign was donated by:



Queenstown & District Historical Society
www.queenstownhistoricalsociety.org.nz



Photos courtesy of:



Lakes District Museum & Gallery
Queenstown

Lower Shotover – Crossing Place and Community

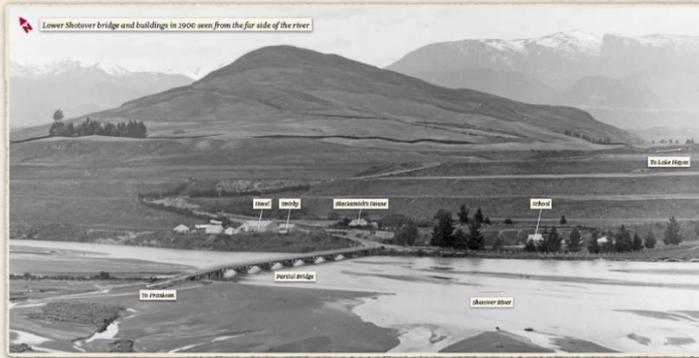
The Shotover River spreads out at this point, so it was the best place for people to cross in the early years of the gold-rush as they travelled on foot or horseback between the first settlements at Arrowtown and Queenstown.

A year after the discovery of gold in 1862, a punt was established here. A partial bridge from this side was built in 1871 (see photo). Because it spanned only the main river channels, it was unusable during floods, and the primitive road across the riverbed of shifting gravels and watercourses was often sodden and soft. For more about bridges, see the panels upstream at the restored second bridge.

An early ferryman, Frederick Foster, built a hotel on this eastern bank, naming it 'Halfway Hotel' – a welcome stopping-place.

Soon, a blacksmith, John Chegvidden, set up his smithy adjoining the hotel. He was the equivalent of a modern mechanic, servicing vehicles and horseshoes that had suffered wear and tear on the rough roads.

After the first hotel burnt down in 1872, it was rebuilt as the 'Ferry Hotel'. In 1915 when the second bridge was built upstream, the hotel was shifted there, where it still provides for travellers as The Ferry B&B.



Lower Shotover School

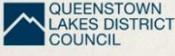
Lower Shotover School opened in 1870 to serve the families on both sides of the river. About 50 children enrolled. The first teacher, John Brown, stayed for three years then became a farmer nearby on Speargrass Flat. The school was the community centre for the large district of Lower Shotover, and the venue for fundraising concerts and dances, election meetings and polls, farewells and sporting events, until a public hall was built in 1931 further up the hill. In 1942 the school was closed.

Dangers

The river at this point was soon known for its ever-changing channels and quicksand. In 1862, before there was a boat here, a shepherd on horseback rescued a bewildered man who was stranded on a rock in the middle of the river, unable to go forward or back because of the strong currents. In 1864 William Colville, aged 34, was droving cattle across, helped by his two young sons, when his horse lost its footing and stumbled. He was thrown off and drowned, leaving a widow and little children. When Annie O'Kane, the young daughter of Sarah O'Kane the hotel licensee, fell into the flooded river, she was rescued by a Newfoundland dog belonging to John Chegvidden.



This sign was donated by:

 **QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

 **Queenstown & District Historical Society**
www.queenstownhistoricalsociety.org.nz



Photos courtesy of:

 **lakes district museum & gallery**
arrowtown

Early Days at Arthurs Point

Gold!

In November 1862, two gold-seekers, Thomas Arthur and Harry Redfern, gained four ounces of gold here in one afternoon, using just a small pan and a butcher's knife. Their great find started the gold-rush on the Shotover River.

Bridges

With gorges upstream and downstream, this was the best place to cross the river. The first bridge was just a plank down near the water – unstable and prone to being washed away.

The second bridge had handrails, and users paid a sizeable toll of one shilling for a pedestrian and two shillings and sixpence for a horse.

The third, built in 1875 in the present position, had the stacked stone abutments still in use today.

The current bridge (1919), the first in the South Island to be made of reinforced concrete, was built beneath the previous bridge. The photo below shows it under construction.

Gold-rush Settlement

With many gold-miners crossing here on their way up-river, a shanty town sprang up with shops, a blacksmith, a bank, a police station with two constables, a post office, several hotels and even an American Bowling Saloon.

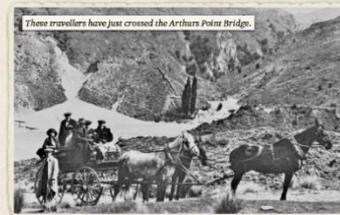
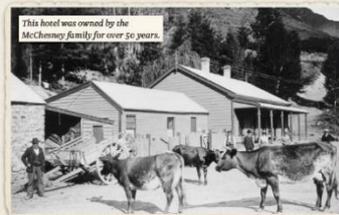
Later Goldmining Operations

In the 1890s, dredges worked above this bridge and further downstream at Big Beach. Hydraulic sluicing was carried out along the banks. The Oxenbridge Tunnel, just upstream from here, was begun in 1906 to divert the river in the hope of finding gold, but was not a financial success.

Tourism

Once the Skippers Road and Bridge were completed in 1901, visitors ventured there on day trips from Queenstown.

More information about goldmining can be found on Morning Star Beach Reserve. The map is at the public carpark.



This sign was donated by:

 **Department of Conservation**
Te Papa Atawhai

 **Queenstown & District Historical Society**
www.queenstownhistoricalsociety.org.nz



Photos courtesy of:

 **lakes district museum & gallery**
arrowtown

Queenstown and District Historical Society

Chairperson's Report for the Annual General Meeting, November 2019

By Marion Borrell

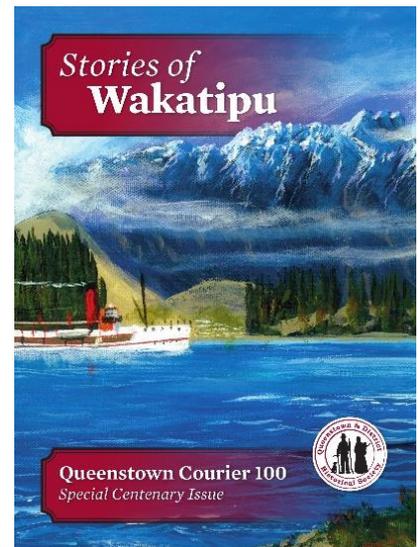
The Society's major emphasis continues to be sharing our local history with people here and everywhere, while remaining vigilant to protect our district's heritage assets.

Our membership numbers are unchanged at about 200 memberships and 300 individuals. Our financial position remains sound with about \$34,000 in hand. Our largest source of income is subscriptions (about \$5000), and we thank members for their support.

100 Issues of the *Queenstown Courier*

To commemorate this milestone and achievement, Danny Knudson compiled this wide-ranging, elegant, beautifully illustrated commemorative issue as a book containing the history of the district through excerpts from past issues, with many references which readers can follow up on the website.

At the AGM in November the book was launched with a talk and presentation by Danny about the history of the magazine. Copies have been donated to all the local school libraries.



Historical Information Panels Project

The aim is to create and donate panels in places where locals and visitors will see them. The four we have completed this year and given to QLDC and DOC have been warmly received, giving us confidence as we proceed. The costs vary according to size and installation. The Queenstown Trails Trust is keen for us to provide more along the trail, and will seek financial assistance. We are grateful for the excellent service provided by Print Central.

Other Promotion of Local History

- *Queenstown Courier Issue 101* contained articles by Rita Teele and J. Taylor Reed, David Hay, and Marion Borrell, and excerpts from Bessie Kinross's memoir.

- Blogs on www.queenstown.com : After 23 blogs since the start of 2016, the series has ended because the website's editor has left. All the articles can be found on our website, and some have been republished in the *Courier*. The blogs were often topical, and intended for the general public.

- Website www.queenstownhistoricalsociety.org.nz receives on average 1000 visits per month, with 2000 page-visits per year by 1000 individuals. Past *Couriers* can be searched and read on-line.

Historic Places in Queenstown brochure: The contents and design were completed last year. Hotels do not wish to buy brochures as they used to in the past, but we are hopeful of accessing other ways to fund them.

-Queenstown and District History app for smartphones: There is still no progress with making it function again. However, the effort of compiling the contents is paying off in the knowledge gained and the stock of articles which can be used in *Couriers* and other places.

Activities and Events from September 2018 to May 2019

These have been well-attended, including by members of the public, some of whom have chosen to become members.

- ‘Our Emigrant Ancestors – Why They Left’ with family histories by Barbara Kerr (Scotland), Marion Marquand (English from Scotland), Pauline Lawrence (Germany), Danny Knudson (Norway) and Fae Robertson (Ireland)

- ‘Vintage Viewing’ - historical films and audio about the Head of the Lake compiled by the Glenorchy Heritage and Museum Group, raising funds for the group.

- Visit to Bannockburn and Stewart Town including the newly-restored house (below), with experts Bruce McMillan and Gordon Stewart.



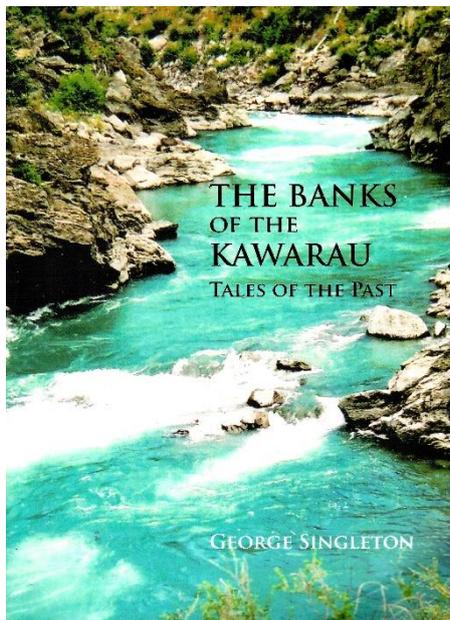
- Visit to Kinloch with a talk by Neville Bryant and lunch at Kinloch Lodge.

- ‘People from Our Past’: Nicholas von Tunzelmann presented by David Mayhew, Patrick Gantley by Jim Sullivan, Sarah Salmond née Cockburn by Kirsty Sharpe, and Margaret Glennie née Hughes by Carole McIntyre-Crolla.



Remarkable Theatre members (from left) Sue Harcombe, Blaise Barham, Jane Robertson and Cheryl Collie presented Charles ‘The Inimitable’ Thatcher and Madame Anne Vitelli, including songs.

- Launch of *Courier101*, a talk by George Singleton about his book *On the Banks of the Kawarau*, and a viewing of Pat Paulin's video presenting his research into changes to Lake Wakatipu at its head over the years due to sedimentation.



Heritage Protection

We continue to monitor Resource Consent Applications. There have been no new applications requiring our action this year. Public hearings regarding the proposed 'Olive Leaf' building beside St Patrick's Church, Arrowtown, have not taken place yet.

Community Involvement

- Lakes District Museum: Jocelyn Robertson has once again served as our representative on the Board. We are indebted to the Museum staff and archives for information and photos.

- Wakatipu Heritage Trust: As I am a trustee, the Society can readily collaborate. Fund-sourcing is now under way for a replica building to shelter the machinery at the Bullendale Dynamo.

- Other entities with which we have been involved this year are QLDC, DOC, Queenstown Trails Trust, Glenorchy Heritage and Museum Group, Remarkable Theatre Company, Hulbert House and local schools.

Acknowledgement of Michael Anderson

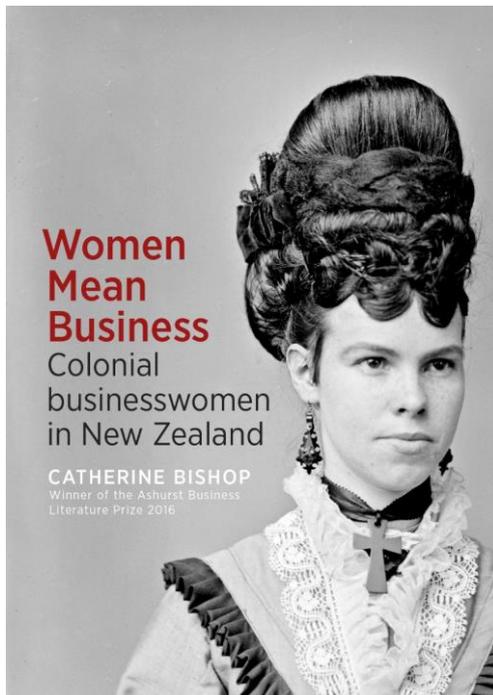
Michael retired as designer of the *Queenstown Courier* after 11 years and 20 issues. We thank him warmly for his skill and care.

The Board

The Board members are Marion Borrell, Denise Heckler, Gavin Jack, Russell McGrouther, Barbara Kerr, Ray O'Callaghan, Patrick Beehan, and Pauline Lawrence who was co-opted during the year.

We welcome interest from members about joining the Board, which is united in protecting and promoting our district's history through changing times.

In our bookshop...



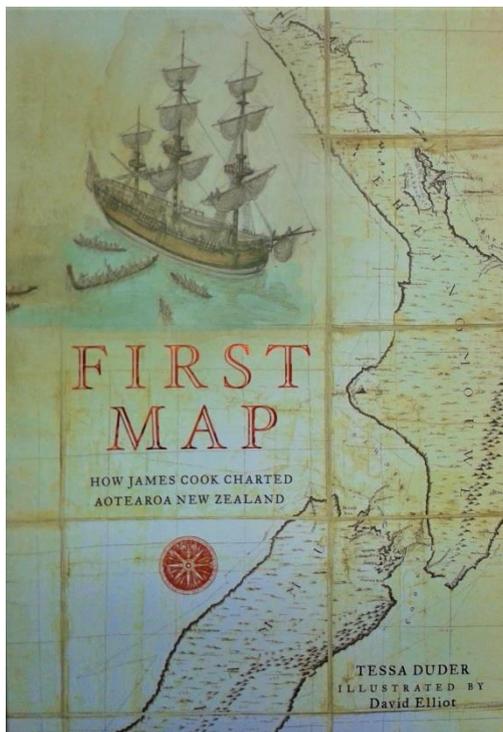
Women Mean Business – Colonial businesswomen in New Zealand

By Catherine Bishop

In the Wakatipu many of the hotel-keepers were women, and two are included in this well-researched and lively account of women running businesses of various kinds. The successful and the outright failures, the heart-warming and the tragic, the everyday and the scandalous.

Dr Bishop gave an enthralling talk at the Museum in October.

Published by Otago University Press, 2019
\$45



First Map: How James Cook charted Aotearoa New Zealand

By Tessa Duder, illustrated by David Elliot

The human story behind the creation of Cook's famous chart in 1773 during his six-month circumnavigation of the coastline in the *Endeavour*.

Cook's perseverance and extraordinary skills as a surveyor and seafarer are revealed.

For young adult and adult readers.

Published by HarperCollins, 2019
\$50

