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- THE QUEENSTOWN COURIER -

The Official Publication of the
QUEENSTOWN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TENTH ISSUE - July 1973

Officers of the Society for 1972-73:

PRESIDENT - Mrs Marygold Miller, 21 Hallenstein St.

SECRETARY - MRS Ailsa Smeaton 6 Park St.

TREASURER - Mrs Beth Knowles 27 Hallenstein St

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Send to any of the above officers of the Society.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT.

The coming year is to be a momentous one for the Society, as our invitation to host the New Zealand Federation of Historical Societies third annual Conference has been accepted. The convention is to be held in Queenstown. This will be a big undertaking for a small society such as ours as it is our aim to attract all groups and individuals in any way involved with history and allied matters. All sessions except the Annual Meeting will be open to everyone, and it is my earnest hope that through our efforts during the coming year the Conference will be an outstanding success. Start thinking about it now. Book the date and give it your support during the months ahead.

Mr Daniel and I have the preliminary arrangements in hand. There will be plenty of work for all. The date is FRIDAY, 19 APRIL to SUNDAY, 26 APRIL, 1974. Attendance is expected from all over New Zealand. All members should attend the weekend's activities and take an active part in hosting visitors.

I look to you all for support in the preparations, and during the weekend of the Conference.

A.M. Miller
President.

Report on Annual Conference of the

NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES.

The Queenstown and District Historical Society was represented at the Annual Federation Conference held in Wellington on the 12th and 13th May, 1973, by Mr Ian Daniel as delegate, and Mrs Beth Knowles as observer.

Proceedings opened on Saturday morning with registration of delegates and observers, immediately followed by the official opening by the Mayor of Wellington, Sir Francis Kitts. There were about sixty people present, and Sir Francis presented an interesting and amusing outlook on matters historical. Two items he mentioned particularly attracted our attention, these were references to Chinese police on Central Otago Goldfields, and a story of a Mayor of Arrowtown who beat up Bully Hayes.

The opening and welcoming speeches were followed by an address by Mr Charles Fearnley on architectural features of Wellington building styles since its beginnings. He mentioned many features peculiar to Wellington, especially the lack of cornices and parapets, which were removed when it became clear that they were a hazard in an earthquake, and the early attempts to make wood look like stone. He also indicated points to look for with application throughout New Zealand, such as the variety of picket fences and finials on gables which are characteristic of individual carpenters working in particular areas, and cemetery architecture and inscriptions as indicative of the thinking of the time. A lively discussion after the lecture brought forward some interesting points.

After morning tea Mr C.R.H. Taylor, past director of the Alexander Turnbull Library, displayed and talked about bibliographies and books of reference dealing with New Zealand and the South Pacific, many compiled by himself. His deep knowledge of and dedication to his subject resulted in a most scholarly lecture.

Saturday afternoon was devoted to a bus tour of Central Wellington and included old dwellings, important research buildings, Old St Paul's which was unfortunately closed for rewiring, and the Wellington Harbour Board's Museum of Maritime History which is particularly well worth a visit.

The Annual Meeting began at 7.30 p.m. with 14 Delegates and 20 Observers present. Seven Societies tendered their apologies. The President, Mr Arthur Moore, presented a full report and was later re-elected, which will allow him the pleasure of chairing the next Annual Meeting to be held in Queenstown, a venue which he had promoted to further his aim of "Federating" as many South Island Societies as possible.

The decision to hold the Conference for 1974 in Queenstown was an important item for us. The consensus of opinion was that the distance from northern centres would be of little moment, the desire to attract southern Societies being of prime importance. We must therefore make every endeavour to encourage other South Island Historical Societies to attend, at least as observers.

Other business which gave rise to full discussion included the financial position of the Federation, (it will be almost non-financial after printing the third Journal), the role of the Journal, and the need for more contributors to newsletters, methods of finance, and notices of motion which paved the way to agreement that the Federation become incorporated. The annual meeting closed at 10.45 p.m. with the feeling, at least on my part, that each society had fairly contributed to the running of the Federation, and the realization of its objectives

for the coming year.

Sunday morning began with a lecture by Mr Stephan O'Regan, of Wellington Teachers' College, on pre-European Occupation of the Wellington area. He was deeply involved with his subject, and, in spite of lack of knowledge on our part of local factors and Maori tribal names and terms used, he held his audience enthralled for a full hour, giving a resume of modern theory on Maori origins, tribal movements and genealogies, and the intricacies of land ownership and occupation.

After morning tea 45 people embussed for a tour through Wellington, Hutt Valley, Pauatahanui, Paremata, Johnsonville, Ngaio, and back to Wellington. In spite of rather inclement weather it was a most enjoyable trip, arranged and commented by Mr Bob Meyer, author of "All Aboard" and numerous other titles. Highlights of the tour were stops at Wallaceville Blockhouse (built in 1860 as a refuge for Upper Hutt farmers), St Joseph's Catholic Church, Pauatahanui, (opened in 1878, and notable for the 'poor man's' stained glass), and the St Alban's Church of England, opened in 1898.

A sumptuous lunch was provided for us in the Pauatahanui Community Hall by Mr O'Regan and some of the Teacher's College students, after which we moved on to Paremata and the ruins of the old Barracks, and on via Porirua, the Old Main Road, through Johnsonville and Khandallah, with stops and commentaries on the way, and finally we reached Chew's Cottage in Ngaio where we stopped for afternoon tea as the guests of John and Judy Siers and the local Historical Society. Mr and Mrs Siers have restored this wooden home beautifully to a state it probably hasn't known since it was built in 1865 for John Chew from Lancashire, who was a sawmiller, engineer and enterprising business man in Wellington till his death in 1888.

This varied and comprehensive tour in effect brought the Conference to a close, as most of the people had to leave immediately to catch their transport home, and a couple of taxis were enough to take the few remaining on a "City Lights" tour that evening. However all who attended the Conference would, I think, agree that the weekend had achieved the objectives of the Federation, especially those of stimulating interest in New Zealand history, and of disseminating news of, and help for, constituent Societies. We felt that possibly greater publicity could have created more interest in the community generally, and provided an opportunity for stating a unified policy on historical matters.

Our aims for the 1974 Conference must be the gathering together of as many Historical Societies as possible, and disseminating publicity of the Conference as a national voice. Enjoyment of the Conference by those attending will follow naturally, as it did in Wellington, if we organise a programme as varied and interesting as theirs was. With our historical resources in the district this should be well within our capabilities.

Ian Daniel.

THE GLENORCHY OUTING.

Glenorchy outing

The Society's field trip to Glenorchy on Saturday, April 14th, was a most enjoyable and interesting outing. Twenty-six adults and three children came, unfortunately not quite enough to cover the expenses. H & H Motors provided a most comfortable bus and the driver co-operated fully with our stops and starts, and was a congenial and interested addition to the party. The weather was only middling - the sun came out for our lunch stop, but otherwise it tended to be overcast with a chill wind.

Our thanks are due to Mr Fergie Heffernan, who joined us at Glenorchy, and was a most entertaining and knowledgeable Courier from then on. To Miss Rose Grant who allowed us to picnic at the beautiful old Haines garden, and who joined us there with a collection of interesting early photographs. To Mr Jim Reid who took over the microphone at various points of interest on the way up, and who finally gave us a comprehensive history of the scheelite mining in the district. To Mr Doug Knowles who outlined the early climbing and exploration, and to Mr Doug. Scott, who with his wife joined us at Rees Valley Station, and who recounted for us the history of the early runholders. These people 'made the day' for us, and transcripts of their talks printed in the following pages should be of interest to our readers.

Scheelite

THE GLENORCHY SCHEELITE FIELD.

Contributed by Mr Jim Reid.
Queenstown.

Scheelite was first known to the early diggers in the 1860's as the 'White Maori', and due to its weight it clogged up their sluice boxes and was of no commercial value.

The first mining on a commercial basis was during the 1880's on the Glenorchy mine reef by a syndicate headed by Prof. Ulrich of the Otago School of Mines. This syndicate drove in on the reef for 100 feet and stopped it out to the surface. This area was apparently very rich and the first ore was hand napped and sent away in boxes on sailing boats from Blanket Bay, which is a sheltered bay about a mile and a half south of the Glenorchy wharf. Subsequently a five head battery was installed on the present site of the battery remains, and a dray road out right from Blanket Bay to the mine. This road is still in use today. The battery was built on the present site to enable water from a race cut in the 1860's from Stoney Creek to the Buckleburn to be used as a means of power and wash water. The price of the concentrate at this period was only £25 to £30 per ton.

After Prof. Ulrich the Glenorchy mine was held by Geo. Watson and practically no work was done during the period 1890-1905.

In 1905 the mine was taken up by my father and his brother, George and James Reid of Queenstown, and Robert Lee of Threepwood, Lake Hayes, and was worked very successfully from 1905 until the end of the Great War in 1919.

During this period the Bonny Jean Co (named after Mrs Aitken of

Paradise House), of which John Kirkland of Invercargill was one of the principals, commenced operation, and at this reef there was another battery established, three miles beyond the Glenorchy Mine. Other mines acquired during this period were Mt McIntosh, Heather Jock, Alaska, Boozer, and, during the 1914-18 War, Paradise Mine at the top end of Mt Alfred was opened up and a third battery erected. It is also of interest that the first air drills ever used at Glenorchy were at the Paradise Mine. These were driven by a huge kerosene engine. Also the first electric light at Glenorchy was generated at the Glenorchy battery. Many high claims were worked over the above period and in most cases the scheelite concentrate was bought by the Glenorchy Coy, thus enabling working parties to sell small lots. Most of these workings could only be worked in the summer months, and anyone who wanted winter employment could get under-ground work in the Company's holdings.

Before the Great War the principal market for scheelite was Germany, and after the outbreak of war the British Government commandeered all scheelite to avoid it falling into enemy hands. The price was around 250 per ton. This was carried on until 1919 when the Glenorchy Coy was informed that the price would cease. It would be appropriate at this juncture to record the following story, which has never been recorded:

Shortly after the end of the war the Glenorchy Scheelite Mining Co. was advised that all concentrates had to be at Bluff by a date about a month away. There was great activity by all concerned to get as much as possible treated and away by this date. Word was then received that the concentrate had to catch a boat at Port Chalmers a few days earlier than the previous date for Bluff. Geo. Reid went to Dunedin to see how they could possibly get this concentrate (45 tons) to Port Chalmers at the latest possible date and was not very successful in arranging anything. He was returning on the Kingston train and told his troubles to the guard whom he knew. The guard thought for a few minutes and then said, "Order three Mortuary Vans to be at Kingston, and they must go through with the Express regardless of what they carry." This was done and a few miners were sent to Kingston on the boat to help the crew load the 45 tons of scheelite into the Mortuary Vans. This was done successfully and away went the scheelite to Dunedin. The vans were attached to a Port Chalmers passenger train and straight to the Port and caught the boat.

From this period the market really slumped and very little work was done during the 1920's. During the thirties there was slight revival and a number of men on the Subsidy Mining Scheme during the depression started mining, and quite a few of these were successful.

The operations of the Company were intermittent and Geo. Reid retired in the mid thirties, and the activities of the Glenorchy Co. were carried on for a year or two under the management of Dave Wylie, but the company did not prosper after the Great War.

When the second World War started the N.Z. Government took over the Glenorchy and Paradise mines as a war effort, and several working parties worked the high country, some quite successfully. Once the war was over the Mines Department pulled out and removed all mining equipment of any use from Glenorchy. From then on only a few remained on the field until the A.C.I. Company came to an arrangement

with the Mines Department and reopened some workings, and test bored the reefs in many places and found the extension of the reef at the northern end. They carried out development work at this end and found some good ore, but no actual mining took place. After spending a huge sum of money operations were suddenly suspended and this is still the position today.

Old hands are of the opinion that if this huge amount of money had been spent mining, rich patches would have been encountered, and the picture could have been much brighter than it is today.

Scheelite being very patchy is very easily missed by inches. This has been proved on numerous occasions in the past when drives have been driven right around patches, and they were not found for years after. It is no exaggeration to state that there is still in the Glenorchy field many times more unworked reef than the areas worked.

When war broke out in 1914 the Glenorchy Company had 10 ton of scheelite on the High Seas consigned to a German firm at Hamburg. This was torpedoed and lost, and of course the company wrote it off. In the early 1920's the German company to whom it was consigned paid for it in full, which was a real windfall for the Glenorchy Company.

THE UPPER WAKATIPU RUNS Upper Wakatipu sheep Runs

contributed by Mr Doug. Scott
Rees Valley Station

Gilbert Rees and his partners ran sheep at the Head of the Lake for a short time until, when the Goldfields started he had his lease cancelled and this country was held as a mining reserve, he took them back down to Queenstown to his head station. The land then lay idle until the lease of the "North Station", as that area was called by Rees, was bought by John and Thomas Butement in 1866. "North Station" extended from Twenty-five Mile Creek to the Precipice Creek, and the Butements also had all the country between the Rees and Dart Rivers.

A blacksmith in Queenstown named Bridges had an area of land in the upper Rees which he freeholded. One of his reasons for doing this was that he thought he could also run his sheep and cattle on the land beyond by stopping people going through his freeholding. In the early 1870's the land laws were changed and fresh application for the freehold had to be made. Bridges did not bother to reapply and sold his stock to Wither, who was farming near Moke Lake, and who took them to Cecil Peak which, in partnership with Bendix Hallenstein, he was then stocking, and was the first to take up the Cecil Peak run.

Butements acquired the land Bridges owned, and also runs 14, 18 and 19, known respectively as "Temple Peak", "Rees Valley" and "Earnslaw". As well as these the Butement brothers had taken up "Routeburn" in 1868, so that by the early 1870's they held the grazing rights to practically all the land in the Upper Wakatipu area. The exception was the Caples Valley or "Birchdale" run, which was taken up by John Von Tunslemann in 1868 and held for about ten years.

The Butement partnership dissolved after several years during a period of low wool prices, and John Butement carried on alone until about 1887 when another period of low wool prices and increasing rabbits forced him to abandon his head of the Lake holdings.

In his heyday when he wanted shearers, Butement would adjourn to Queenstown where he put up a notice to say that he could be seen at Eichardt's Hotel by anyone wanting shearing. When he had a sufficient number he would bring them up the lake to start the shearing. In the shed he would sit on the end of the shearing board with his watch in his hand and when the hour came he would announce, "Now you can start", and "Now you can stop", and so on during the whole day.

The Routeburn Run had been abandoned by Butement earlier than the runs on the east side of the Dart, and it was taken up by Ludemann for some years.

With the departure of John Butement from the scene the various runs he held were taken up as separate holdings in most cases, or lay idle for a time. The land between the Twenty-five Mile Creek and the run now known as Wyuna was taken over by Stewart Duke; Wyuna by Coomer for a time; the Precipice run was unoccupied for some years until taken up by Alexander Mackenzie who later acquired Wyuna as well, and the holding all went under the name of "Wyuna".

'Temple Peak' went to Findlay McMillan for a short time and then to George Fulton, who was fond of foxgloves and scattered their seed about the hills. The results can be seen today by the many foxgloves in the area. Geo. Fulton was the grandfather of Dr Fulton who has been on the Otago Hospital Board in recent times.

'Rees Valley' became the property of W.H. Valpy & Son, and 'Earnslaw' was retained by the New Zealand Land Co for a while, and then Valpys acquired it. Valpy is an old Otago name, and at one time the family owned most of the Anderson's Bay area of Dunedin.

Mt Alford, an isolated hill between the Rees and Dart rivers, was run by Andrew Fraser for many years but was bought by 'Earnslaw' in the early 1900's. After lying idle for some time the 'Birchdale' run was taken over by Hector Fraser.

The Valpy's abandoned 'Rees Valley' and 'Earnslaw' after about ten years owing to the increasing number of rabbits. 'Rees Valley' became the property of James Dunnery, and eventually 'Earnslaw' was taken up by the McBride family.

This was the position of things about the turn of the century and, although there have been many changes over the ensuing years, the boundaries of the runs have remained substantially the same.

NOTE: This article only deals with the big runs, but during the late 1870's, after Butement went out, a great deal of the flat land in the valley was surveyed into farms and small holdings, and there were far more people farming there than there are today, and this was when the Hains family settled in the district. The wheel is turning full circle, and today most of the farms are again part of the big runs.

EXPLORATION AND CLIMBING

mountaineering geological surveys exploration

contributed by Mr Doug. Knowles
Queenstown.

According to W.G. McClymont in "The Exploration of N.Z." the main feature of Otago Exploration in 1859-60 was that the squatters preceded the surveyors and that their tracks all converged on Lake Wakatipu.

In the summer of 1857-58 David McKellar journeyed up the Oreti River into the Von, and was thus the first European to set eyes on the upper portion of Wakatipu. Further exploration of the Mavora, Eglinton and Greenstone valleys were carried out by McKellar and George Gunn a few years later.

With the great activity by squatters to find suitable land for sheep, and the arguments that naturally arose over boundaries, it was essential that a survey of the vast hinterland of the southern lakes area be carried out as soon as possible. During 1861-63 the Survey Department engaged James McKerrow in an exploratory reconnaissance survey of the lake district, which covered a region of 3-4 million acres and six large lakes. This was a tremendous achievement as he surveyed 500 square miles of country from Lake Hawea to Foveaux Strait.

By this time gold had been discovered and miners took over the role of the squatters in exploring new country. Prominent among them is P.Q. Caples, who, crossing west from the Dart River, discovered and named the Hollyford. On a second attempt he crossed the head of the Greenstone River and followed the Hollyford to Martins Bay. Caples carefully prospected creeks and river beaches without finding gold, but of lasting service was his mapping "in a marvellous manner" the country he traversed in the summer of 1863.

In 1861 James Hector was engaged to carry out a geological survey of the province which included finding a route from the west coast. After two trips from Wanaka and up the Matukituki he went via ship to Martins Bay, travelled up the Hollyford, over a saddle, down the Greenstone, and so to Queenstown, which he reached on October 4, 1863, where he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. (Many of our endemic plants are named after Hector and his assistant Buchanan.)

According to McClymont, the exploration by A.J. Barrington and a party of miners of the complicated country between the Hollyford and the Haast, using the head of Wakatipu as their base, "accomplished one of the finest pieces of exploration in N.Z. history".

Fuller descriptions of all the above can be found in 'The Early Exploration of N.Z.' by W.G. McClymont, and 'The History of Otago', by A.H. McIntock.

Climbing. As all views of the head of Lake Wakatipu are dominated by Mt Earnslaw on the Forbes range between the Dart and Rees river valleys, it may be of interest to trace the history of major ascents of the peak.

Mountaineering in Otago may be said to date from March 1882, when the Rev. W.S. Green, his Swiss guide V. Kaufman, and Swiss friend Emil Boss, were persuaded by W.M. Hodgkins (Frances Hodgkins father) to make an attempt on the peak. Bad weather prevented them from reaching higher than 5000 ft. Included in the party was Harry Birley, who was the guide for all parties that attempted to climb Earnslaw during

the next few years. On the 16th March, 1890, Harry Birley made the first successful ascent of the East Peak from the Rees Valley via the Birley Glacier. On his return he told how he had built a cairn on the top and left a bent shilling in a bottle, but the residents of Glenorchy would not believe him. Two years later the second ascent via the same route was made by Malcolm Ross his brother Kenneth, and they found the bottle with the shilling thus verifying Birley's claim. Most ascents of Earnslaw are still made via this route.

The first ascent of the ridge of East Peak, between the Rees and Earnslaw Burn was made by an English climber, L.M. Earle and party, in 1909. The more difficult West Peak of Earnslaw was climbed by H.F. Wright and J. Robertson from the Rees on the 7th February, 1914.

The first ascent of West Peak from the Dart, and the second ascent of the peak, was made by A. Jackson, J.A. Sim, J.D. Knowles and W.S. Gilkison on the 28th December, 1932, followed by the first traverse of both East and West Peaks by A. Jackson and W.S. Gilkison on the 11th January, 1933.

Since the N.Z. Alpine Club built a hut on Wrights Col at 7,000ft many and varied routes on both West and East Peaks have been made by contemporary mountaineers.

Mr Heffernan's lively commentary as we went along gave us an insight into the lives of past generations of settlers, including the Maories - although the latter are thought to have been mainly transients, on their way to and from the West Coast in search of greenstone. He pointed out the site of an encampment on the far side of the Dart River, and took us to the site of a fortified site on Camp Hill which was of comparatively recent date, about the early 1800's, and thought to have been occupied by North Island greenstone seekers who fortified it against more southern tribes. Further back nearer Glenorchy he showed us a Moa hunters site carbon dated back to about 1200 A.D., but this had unfortunately been used as a gravel pit during early roadmaking activities, which had ruined its archaeological value. However many Maori artifacts have been recovered from the district, notably the collection made by Mr Hains which is now in the Otago Museum.

He also interested us with his account of the formation of "The Hillocks". This is an area near the site of the new Dart Bridge where the paddocks are dotted over with rounded grassy hillocks. These, Mr Heffernan told us, have each a rock core round which dust is deposited from the frequent sandstorms which blow down from the Dart river bed, building up to these distinct mounds. The result is most unusual and picturesque.

Thatcher - Entertainer

by H. Roth.

Charles Robert Thatcher, the celebrated entertainer, first came to New Zealand in February 1862. He had made his name singing to the miners at Bendigo and Ballarat, and when gold was discovered in Otago he followed the rush. For six months Thatcher and his wife, Annie Vitelli, sang to the diggers in Dunedin's Commercial Hotel. They then moved on to tour Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland and Napier, but at the beginning of 1863 they were back among the Otago gold diggers.

Bully Hayes, the noted pirate, had bought the United States Hotel at Arrowtown (then called Foxtown) and he engaged "the inimitable Thatcher" and Madame Vitelli to sing on the opening night. They remained there for some weeks but then decided to move on to more congenial surroundings. On the last day of February Thatcher arrived in Queenstown, an event reported in the Otago Daily Times in language that must delight students of New Zealand slang. "Thatcher", reported the paper, "intends to come out to-night, on his 'own hook', in his 'own crib', and instead of 'blooming in the valley' make a spout upon the Lake."

Thatcher's 'own crib' was a public hotel he opened in Beach street a large building with his name inscribed across the front, but his singing was done elsewhere, at Clement's Theatre Royal. "I have not seen him as yet serving behind the bar," reported the Southland News correspondent on 8th April, "and observe that he sings at another place in 'the Royal'. I conclude, therefore, that the 'public' is a spec and that the singing is paid for." Thatcher's concert room, which held upwards of four hundred, was a huge calico tent, with rough boards for the reserved seats and the bare ground to stand on for the shilling men. There was a bar at the end opposite the stage, and while Thatcher pocketed the entrance money, the landlord made his profit from the drinkers.

Annie Vitelli sang sweet traditional ballads, accompanied by a pianist on a harmonium, but Thatcher made up his own songs, using familiar tunes. He called them "Locals" because they were based on topical events and commented on local problems, with no regard for personalities. "His local songs have taken exceedingly well," reported the Otago Daily Times in mid-March, "and he has already attacked two grievances irrespective of the persons concerned in the matter, viz. the price given for gold, advising the miners to deposit it and take it away, and the other the meat monopoly. The Invercargill escort has also been made the subject of merriment, and has taken well. Mr Rees has come in for some hard hits, and the songs draw crowded houses nightly."

His sarcastic comments on the gold escort were to cause some trouble. Thatcher held up to ridicule the Southland authorities who had stationed an agent in Queenstown to buy up gold and send it to Invercargill, rather than to Dunedin. "The Invercargill escort with eight troopers and a capacious wagon had the inglorious task of carrying down only 600 oz. of gold," reported the Otago Daily Times (which was hardly an impartial observer in this matter). "More painful perhaps to the worthy troopers than open attack is the storm of ridicule with which they are assailed. All along the road, and even in Invercargill, the disproportion between the imposing cortege and the few ounces of treasure it has in charge is the subject for any amount of 'chaff',

and on the Lake Goldfields itself, it appears the Invercargill escort is the stock joke."

Edward Jackson, the Southland Provincial agent, took strong exception to Thatcher's attacks, especially when the singer, in another of his "Locals", suggested that the huge Invercargill gold safe would be better used to store potatoes and that Jackson should set up as a potato merchant rather than gold buyer. The two men nearly came to blows, but Jackson prudently declined an invitation to settle the matter like gentlemen, in a fist fight on the Terraces, for Thatcher was a big man, almost sixteen stones in weight, and well able to take care of himself. Instead, Jackson took Thatcher to court. The case was heard in the last week of April before Mr Wood, the Commissioner, who fined Thatcher twenty shillings for using threatening language.

About two hundred people crowded outside the court, and Thatcher who thought the whole proceedings a huge joke, used them that same evening in a highly effective new "Local". "The ease with which these trifles are thrown off is something surprising," commented the Southland News sourly. "It is amusing to observe how well everybody relishes the wasp-like attack of this man, when directed upon others, and how they exclaim when the sting is turned at them. Nothing escapes; the lowest characters are held up as well as the highest, and a coarse innuendo is thrown in occasionally to suit the 'mob'." As he had done elsewhere on his travels, Thatcher published a selection of his local songs in a little soft-covered booklet. Copies of this Lake Wakatipu Songster, which was printed in Dunedin, are now exceedingly rare.

In June and July there were heavy floods in Queenstown. Mining was almost suspended, there was a trade depression, and Thatcher decided to leave for Australia. When they were first arrived in Queenstown, he and Madame Vitelli had set up house in two tents at the back of the township, but as the money kept rolling in, they moved into more affluent quarters. Some indication of their style of living can be gained from an advertisement which appeared in the Lake Wakatip Mail of 18th July:

"Monday, 20th July.

At Two o'clock sharp.

Important Sale.

At Mr Thatcher's Private Residence.

Reuben Harris has received instructions from Mr Thatcher, (who is leaving for Melbourne), to sell by Public Auction, on Monday, July 20th, at Two o'clock sharp, on the premises

The whole of that gentleman's Valuable Effects comprising -

Brandy, gin, old tom
Oilcloth, decanters, kerosene lamps
Lamp glasses, pink glaze lining
Candles, salt, wicks, potatoes
Stove (No.6) complete
Large tent, household utensils, &c.
1 large diamond pin, 1 gold necklace
1 do.do. ring, 1 silver concert flute
1 gold watch and

The whole of his Magnificent Library, just imported. The Auctioneer, in submitting this Valuable Library to the Public, would remark that it is seldom a chance like this presents itself to acquire such valuable Works. The whole will be on view on the morning of the sale, and will be sold without

the slightest reserve."

Thus, after six months of a very successful season, Thatcher and Madame Vitelli departed for Melbourne via the Bluff, but early in 1864 they were back in Invercargill to start another New Zealand tour. Thatcher visited the West Coast goldfields in 1865 and he sang to the miners at the Thames in 1869, during his third tour of New Zealand. He then retired from the stage to open an art shop in London. In 1878 he died of the cholera in Shanghai, still only 47 years old.

The following is one of Thatcher's "Locals" sung on the stage of the Royal Theatre in Beach Street, Queenstown. The Garrison Hall later replaced the Royal Theatre, and the site is now partially built on by O'Connell's Hotel.

Tune - 'The Irish Washerwoman'.

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

But just look around and you will 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 then a place of calm desolation;
He'd crossed the Shotover, his cattle to find
But that nuggets were there never entered his mind.
His shepherds here daily unconsciously trod,
Over nuggets of gold lying hid in the sod;
And Rees drove his bullocks, and branded away,
Never thinking what money they'd fetch him one day.

The shed which was yonder, of stores now chock full,
Was the place that he sheared and collected his wool;
And his schooner that's made lots of tin - no mistake,
Used to take down his wool to the foot of the lake;
And Dealey, his man, who went in for a spurt,
At the races, and rode in a fine scarlet shirt,
Saw no one, and was such a quiet old cock
And branded the calves and looked after the stock

Sergeant Bracken at that time had not left the force;
But was in his blue coat and baton of course,
Bringing coveys to the bar of their country, I vow -
To a different bar though he wishes them now.
If a cove was once drunk Sergeant Bracken, you see,
Jollared 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 perhaps we'd do the same -
Its natural for him or any other man,
To get for his meal here as much as he can,
There's an old saying, and its true as its quaint,
The devil is not quite so black as folks paint.
Thatcher rambles about and he frequently sees,
Lots of squatters that aint half so decent as Rees.

THE HANGING OF MATT DWYER

Hanging of Matt Dwyer - Keith Grant

Contributed by
Mr Keith Grant,
Lake Hayes.

It happened at Lower Shotover School, probably around the year 1884-85.

In attempting to reconstruct the chain of events that led up to the eventual hanging of Matt Dwyer, I have to rely on hazy memories of what was related to me many years ago by my family, and so there will be a certain amount of supposition in the story. Incidentally, my family was well versed about what did happen because one, or maybe two, of my uncles were ringleaders, and I know that it was Grandfather who dealt out the punishment to his members of the guilty lynching party, and the punishment was never forgotten. But on with the story.

There is nothing on record whatsoever to suggest why Matt Dwyer should have been singled out to be hung, and probably Matt himself, least of all, had any greater understanding than anyone else. But, you see, at the time of the hanging, excitement would have been running high and maybe some tempers frayed, because maybe the "Redskins" had actually beaten the "Palefaces". And maybe Matt (who incidentally was fighting with the Redskins) was actually the Big Chief himself? Or maybe his facial features likened him, more than anyone else in his tribe, to being very much like a Sioux Chief? Or perhaps it could well have been the fact that Matt was a straight shot when it came to pelting the Palefaces with well-aimed Shotover clods, so it went against him when defeat eventually came.

We don't know really who defeated who, or whether the fight ended in a draw, but time was running out, school bell time was getting near, so hurried decisions had to be made if the Palefaces were to remain supreme, and apparently the Redskins had no say in the matter at all! It was the Palefaces, beaten or not, who decreed that there was to be a hanging, and that Matt Dwyer (being a Redskin) was the one who should hang!

You see, the preparation for the big fight would have gone on for many days up on the top terrace above the school in the big deep pits which deepened even more as clods were spaded out and stacked around the perimeter in readiness for the great occasion. (Yes, we re-enacted this same procedure in my day in the same pits, but our war did not make history.) Then, on the important day, midday lunches were dealt with in much haste, and each side hurried to their respective pits.

At the time of the application, there did not appear to be any real obstacles in the pathway towards a final decision being made. Since then, however, progress has been at a standstill, and the latest suggested size of area for the park that has been put forward by the Lands and Survey Dept. is 160 acres!! The Society can only regard this suggestion as hopeless and useless; in short an insult to a mighty area.

Mentioned in the brief history with the application, was the fact that occupation of the area started in 1862 and lived on for 46 years. Exactly 111 years after the arrival of the first miners monuments still stand in their varied forms - miles of water races, roads, tracks, massive machinery, tunnels carved into hard rock faces, all depicting the battles that took place in order to extract gold from underground. Given reasonable protection, these monuments will live on, but this Society is well aware of the need to hurry up with the plan to save what is left, as in only these last few months valuable artifacts have been removed from the area where mining took place, and lower down in the old town site, indescribable and inexcusable destruction has occurred to remaining stone walls and chimneys.

The Twelve Mile quartz mining area to the north of the town site of Macetown, is unique in that it is contained within an almost circular mountain rim which maintains an average height of 5,500 ft above sea level, and all water sheds and deep gullies drain out to one common gateway at the junction of Scanlans Creek and the Richburn. The whole idea behind the large area park was to clearly define to all concerned (whether it be Park wardens or sightseers) exactly where the boundaries were to be located. In this case the water shed at the bottom and the rim at the top. Any attempt to establish a halfway line could only result in chaos.

Above all it is important that what remains of historic mining machinery should stay in the area of the proposed park to where it was taken in the first place by extreme difficulty, and not to be removed (as has been aptly described recently by one person) to where our loads of disinterested travellers can view it in the super-market.

Another important aspect of the large area park, of which most of the Historical Society are aware is the fact that a complete authentic history of Macetown and the Twelve Mile has been written and will be published shortly. This work is the result of some five to six years of intense research and covers the 46 years of mining, every operation that took place, and every mine that operated within "the rim". When this work becomes available to the public any interested person will be able to enter the park area and systematically follow the workings of most of the old mines.

As each holiday season passes by it leaves yet another sign of destruction in the Macetown area. There is no notice to advise collectors not to destroy or remove.

Finally, the concept of a 160 acre park at Macetown solves no existing problems. It would not warrant the presence of a warden because removal of valuable artefacts could be taking place outside a 30 acre limit; and if a park in the area is not to be controlled by a warden, then all is lost.

The Editor,
"Queenstown Courier"

Low and Mc Gregor

Madam,

Low and McGregor

The statement has been repeated in several histories that Low and McGregor, the reputed discoverers of gold in the Arrow, in 1862, were later the owners of "Burwood" and "Mararoa" stations.

From inquiries now nearing completion, it is clear that this statement is only partly correct. John McGregor did have an interest in these properties, but his partner was not his brother-in-law, Thomas Champion Low (his partner at the Arrow), but his father-in-law, Thomas Constable Low. The confusion between two T.C. Lows, father and son, may be readily understood;

As the whole Low family emigrated to New Zealand between 1859 and 1862, I give below the family tree, as far as I have been able to reconstruct it:

Thomas Constable Low m. Jean Anderson

Sons:

Daughters:

1. William Anderson Low.

Partner with Robert Campbell
& Son in "Galloway" & "Benmore"
Owned "St Helens", Hanmer
m. Frances Buchanan

1. Jean Low:

("The Rubber Queen" -
see "My Scottish Youth"
by R.B. Lockhart.)
m. John McGregor

2. Andrew Low:

Mentioned in "The Wakatipians",
died at "Galloway", buried
in Clyde Cemetery.

2. Mary Ann Low:

m. Alexander McIntosh
Clark, partner with
Robert Campbell, the
Younger, of "Otekaikae",
in "Mt Linton",
Southland.

3. Thomas Champion Low:

McGregor's partner at the
Arrow. Managed "Fern Hill"
and "Hyde Home" for his father.
Stated to have died in Sydney.
(R. Gilkison, "Early Days in Central
Otago", errs in saying he died at
Clyde - it was his brother
Andrew, see above.)

Thomas Constable Low had been a farmer and publican in Scotland; his arrival in New Zealand is stated by Herries Beattie to have been per "Cheviot", in October, 1862.

Low and McGregor bought "Mararoa" from Nicholas Clayton, and "Burwood" from George Printz. To these they added "Mavora", presumably bought from the creditors of James Ure Russell, but this has yet to be verified.

Low and McGregor sold all these runs on 10 August, 1870, to Robert Campbell, of "Bascot Park", Berks., and Robert Campbell, the Younger, of "Otekaikae". Following this sale, T.C. Low bought "Fern Hill (sic), formerly Nicholas von Tunzelmann's; and "Hyde

Home" and "Waikaia" which are now largely incorporated in "Glenary", Waikaia. These properties were sold in 1877 - "Fern Hill" to Matheson Bros and "Hyde Home" and "Waikaia" to James Gall. Low held a mortgage for £25,000 over the Waikaia runs, which his executors acknowledged in 1881 had been received "in his lifetime".

Thomas Constable Low died at "Braeval", Nairn, Scotland, on 16 May, 1881, aged 76.

John McGregor died at Balmenach, Strathspey, Scotland, on 14 February, 1887.

It was a mystery to me how "Clayton's Flat" came to be so called, if Clayton owned "Mararoa", but McKerrow's map of 1862-63 shows the run boundary as then extending eastward to the Oreti, with "Station, Clayton" clearly marked. "Mararoa" and "Burwood" were granted to the Superintendent of Otago in 1869, for the endowment of a university. The adjustment to the run boundaries must have been made between 1863 and 1869, as the Crown Grant plan of 1869 shows the "Mararoa" run as lying wholly to the west of the Mararoa River.

Yours, etc., P.M. CHADLER.

OBITUARIES: It is with a deep sense of loss to the Society that we record the deaths of two of our members.

Mr Lindsay McCurdy - died on March 24, 1973.

A past Committee member who gave valuable practical assistance to the Society.

Dr Charles O. Branch - died on May 19, 1973.

A foundation member of the Society, we were deeply appreciative of receiving the support of this eminent New Zealander.

The Golden Canyon

BOOK REVIEW. "Golden Canyon", The Story of Skippers Road and the Shotover Valley, by F.W. Craddock. Pegasus Press. \$1.80.

This small book is impressive. It synthesizes the story of a limited area in a most orderly and easily assimilated manner, and comprehensively covers the history, geography and geology of this famous gold bearing district. The organisation of his material is admirable and logical, avoiding the confusion which so many writers present by scattering references to times and places and people indiscriminately through their chapters. Here the clearly headed short chapters make for easy reference, and as a guide to a trip from Arthurs Point to Skippers it can be easily followed, and would greatly add to the appreciation of the area by the modern traveller.

The photographic illustrations are excellent, well captioned and reproduced with quality. Of the clear line drawings of mining equipment I have only one criticism - they have not been named or their uses described. Possibly a note that they could be identified in the Lakes County Museum would have been apt.

This book will give most people all the information they require, while giving an impetus to anyone with a desire to explore more fully, either physically or by further reading. In fact a most valuable addition to historical and descriptive publications, not only for the visitor, but also for local people who wish to know more about the district they have come to live in. I trust the research and work which Prof. Craddock has so obviously and meticulously put into this production will be rewarded by the appreciation which it deserves.

B.C.K.