

THE LATE DR. WILLIAM A. ANDERSON

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We wish to pay tribute to the late Dr W.A. Anderson, who in 1964/65, was the first President of the Queenstown Historical Society.

Dr Anderson, who died recently, made a very real contribution to the Wakatipu district over many years, not only in the medical field, but also in sports administration and local body affairs.

He was Mayor of Queenstown for 15 years, deputy-mayor for 10 years, Chairman of Queenstown Sub-centre of St John Ambulance Association for several years, as well as being Divisional Superintendent of St John. In 1970 his 50 years of voluntary service in this work resulted in his being awarded the honour of Officer of the Most Venerable Order of St John.

Dr Anderson always had the welfare of the Wakatipu district at heart, and it is to such as he we owe a debt of gratitude for preserving the sense of history so valued by us all.

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... THE QUEENSTOWN COURIER ...

The Official Publication of the  
QUEENSTOWN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Twenty first Issue - September 1978

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|------------------|---|
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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Queenstown &  
District Historical Society will be held  
in the Athenaeum, Queenstown, on THURSDAY  
2 NOVEMBER 1978 at 8 p.m.

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## Tourist Hotel Corporation Malthouse

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### NOTES FROM AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE TOURIST HOTEL CORPORATION

"Like an Otago newspaper editorialist who commented on the recent demolition of the Queenstown Malthouse, this Society is relieved that the Tourist Hotel Corporation, for whose actions you, as Minister in Charge, must be held ultimately responsible, has now run out of buildings to bowl over.

We are equally relieved that the activities of your General Manager Mr T. Young and his assistant Mr M. Hay, have so far been confined to this country.

In saying this we are mindful of Mr Hay's comments that the 19th century Queenstown Malthouse was built of 'unfinished stone' and 'unworked timber.' What, we wonder, might have been the fate of the Parthenon, had some Greek bureaucrat decided it should be demolished if its walls were constructed of unfinished stone? Or if some civil servant in Whitehall had ordered the destruction of Britain's Tudor period cottages and mansions because they were constructed of unworked timber? And where else in the world would a public servant, the head of his corner of the bureaucracy, say as Mr Young has done, that he did not know the Queenstown Malthouse had been classified fully 12 months previously as an historic building? But there is one aspect of this sorry affair from which you, as a Minister in the present Government, might derive some sort of satisfaction. That is, the ease with which your Corporation executives were able to overawe and over-whelm a small and unsure local authority, and to blatantly trample down planning principles.

The interests of minorities should be taken into full consideration before matters of this nature are dealt with in future, because, from the reaction throughout New Zealand to this incident, it is clear that concern for historical matters is more widespread than either you or your Corporation has been aware of, and is clearly increasing.

And where else could a public servant state that this Society had not made any direct contact with his department on this

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question, when perusal of his files would emphatically demonstrate the emptiness of his statement?

In this respect those so called public servants, if not the Corporation's Board itself, have successfully demonstrated that they have scant regard for basic democratic principles and procedures, and that the power of Central Government and its Orwellian bureaucracy to dictate to a small community, remains undiminished.

Members of this Society are deeply concerned that this is not New Zealand the way many New Zealanders want it."

Neil Clayton, President  
Queenstown & District Historical Society

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### Bullendale

#### BULLENDALE Part 2

We are indebted to Mr Peter Chandler for this further article on the Bullendale.

Part I of this series (in Courier No.19) gave a brief biography of G.F. Bullen. We now pass on to his involvement in the mine ...

An advertisement of a mining company to work at Bullendale, and the first in which G.F. Bullen's name appears, is contained in the 'Otago Provincial Gazette', 21 March 1866. The 'Skiippers Quartz Mining Co. Ltd.', with a capital of £12,500 in £5 shares, had as its legal manager Richard Creeth, of Dunedin. Shareholders were:

|               |     |        |
|---------------|-----|--------|
| G.F. Bullen   | 100 | shares |
| Ed. Fisher    | 65  | "      |
| J.B. Bradshaw | 100 | "      |
| R.W. Willett  | 8   | "      |
| Fred H. Evans | 20  | "      |

Bullen has already come under notice. Edward Fisher is probably the man who comes to attention as a storekeeper at Packer's Point, Skiippers. J.B. Bradshaw was the first editor of 'Lake Wakatip Mail

in 1863, was later an M.P. and an advocate of factory control legislation. R.W. Willett, (on circumstantial evidence) was a sea captain, whose grandson, Dr R.W. Willett, became director of the N.Z. Geological Survey. Frederick Horatio Evans was a Dunedin land agent, whose sign may be seen in 'History of Otago, A.H. McLintock, 1949, opp. p.441. His later interest in Bullendale seems to have been as manager for G.F. Bullen, though I have not yet been able to establish when, or for how long, he actually lived at the mine. Certainly by 1888 he had acquired Humphrey's 'Cherry Tree Farm' at Frankton. He died 21 March 1904 aged 73 years.

The Skippers Quartz Mining Co. is stated to have been dissolved because of dissension among the shareholders.

The 'Otago Provincial Gazette', 30 May 1866, p.111, contains notification of the registration of the 'Great Scandinavian Quartz Mining Co.' with a capital of £10,000 in £5 shares. Richard Creeth remained legal manager, with shares held by:

|                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| G.F. Bullen, Dunedin     | 660         |
| Edw. McGlashan "         | 451         |
| Wm. Fuller "             | 358         |
| J.B. Bradshaw "          | 83          |
| Richard Creeth "         | 148         |
| Peter Sorenson, Skippers | 300         |
|                          | <u>2000</u> |

Other promoters were not idle. The gazette of 6 February 1867, p.45, records the registration of 'Otago Quartz Mining Co. Ltd', with a capital of £15,000. The manager of this company was Andrew Southberg, stated to have been a member of the party which discovered the Bullendale reefs in 1863. The shareholders were:

Peter Antony  
 Alex Murdoch (or Murdock)  
 Robert Duncan  
 Andrew Southberg  
 Alex Olsen, all of skippers

Although Southberg claimed to be a Norwegian, I am told that his name was originally Anders Soderberg and that he had left Sweden to

avoid conscription (From 1814 to 1905, Norway was subject to Swedish rule, so that he could have been a native of Norway, but a Swedish subject. A similar situation exists with miners of obvious Italian or Yugoslav origin, who are listed as 'Austrians'.)

The Otago mine was further up Murdock's Creek than the Scandinavian but I am informed that the battery is in ruins.

The Scandinavian shaft, which remained the principal entrance to the mine throughout Bullen's ownership, is still open and may be found on a small terrace in Murdock's Creek, on the true right bank and about 3-4 chains upstream from the main battery site. By 1870, Bullen had become sole owner of the Scandinavian, and his steady acquisition of adjoining claims led him to re-name the mine 'Phoenix', after the mythical bird which arose rejuvenated from the ashes of a fire in which it had destroyed itself.

To be continued ...

## Railway route to kingston

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### THE GREAT RAILWAY CONTROVERSY or THE BATTLE OF THE ROUTES

Mr R.J. Meyer, Research Officer of the New Zealand Railway and Locomotive Society, and author of the popular book on early railways and lake steamers "All Abroad" gives the following account of selecting a route from Invercargill to Kingston in the gold rush days ...

Most of us would think the wagon road to Lake Wakatipu went direct from Invercargill up the valley of the Oreti river. It is quite natural to think this, but we must remember that more or less northwards from Makarewa heavy bush, scrub and the like occupied the landscape and the outrider ridges of the Holonuis came down to the bank of the Oreti river in a number of places.

Before 1863 the road to the Wakatipu goldfields went as far as Lorneville and then turned in an easterly direction towards Brydone from where it more or less followed today's State highway 1 to Longford, as Gore was then known.

Here the Mataura river was crossed to the left bank but was recrossed somewhere near Pyramid and so across the Waimea Plains, but once beyond Riversdale the track kept to the side of the Longridge thus avoiding the muddy places until Lumsden was reached.

Here the Oreti was crossed and the track turned right to recross the same river at the Elbow and along the general line of road to Kingston, except that it possibly took a direct line from Garston to Fairlight with two more crossings of the Mataura river to boot.

In spite of its failure, the wooden railway to Makarewa, an undertaking by the Southland Provincial Council, built to eliminate the heavy haul through the swamps of North Invercargill, it made way for the iron rails to as far north as Winton.

The gauge of this line was the overseas standard of 4ft 8½in but not standard for N.Z. But in the Railways Act of 1870 the Government stipulated that N.Z.'s standard gauge was to be 3ft.6in. Accordingly the line to Winton was altered in a final, overnight operation on December 20 1875. But this was not before the Winton-to-Kingston Railway Act of 1871 authorized the construction of a line to Lake Wakatipu.

At its inception the line boasted a name that gave a good idea of the thinking of Southlanders - 'The Great Northern Railway'. The eyes of the provincial councillors must have lit up like kerosene lamps when they envisaged all the gold that would fill the province's coffers!

Three foot six gauge construction commenced and the first contract allowed for the line to be built as far as Caroline. But before the line of railway was actually fixed two separate proposals for the route were fought for but not won by either party. Once it had become known in 1871 that a railway was to be built northwards from Winton to Lake Wakatipu an alternative scheme was put forward.

This came from the secretary of the Mataura and Wakatipu Railway Committee which in a letter, invited the Otago Provincial Council to reconsider the route for the railway from Invercargill to the lake.

It would connect with the Otago Southern Trunk railway at Gore and run across the Waimea Plains to Lowther, a common meeting point for both lines.

The railway committee made the points that its route would save the price of costly bridges over the Oreti river in two places on the Winton to Lowther section; it would serve only a few settlers but by going across the Waimea Plains the line would run to within 20 miles of the gold diggings at Switzers and would pass in close proximity to the runs occupied by Messrs Wentworth, Dundas, Montgomery, Bell, P. McKellar, Swanson, Chapman, McDonald, McNeill and others and it would also encourage the growth of wool.

Timber for mining props could be railed from nearby Cowan's Bush. But the Government got Mr William Brunton M.I.C.E. who knew the district well to give an estimate of cost of both routes. This he did, and by making a line around the outrider ridges of the Hokonuis was able to keep the railway formation on the eastern or left bank of the Oreti river thereby overcoming the costly business of two bridges over that river and the attendant maintenance over the years.

In finding the amended Winton to Lowther route as against the Gore to Lowther line the matter of cost helped to win the day. The route across the Waimea Plains was about 40 miles and would cost an estimated £2925 a mile for a total, say of £117,000.

The distance up the Oreti's valley eastern side was 30 miles at an estimated cost of £3000 a mile, total, say £105,000, a saving of £12,000. The distance to haul material for construction of the line from Bluff would add to the cost but 'the Great Northern Railway' had rail connections to a port and served an agricultural district as against a pastoral one. And the line favoured would be the most profitable one.

But the battle of the routes was not over by any means. The people of Dipton wanted the line to cross the Oreti to their township on the western bank and over the flats to near Castlerock and then cut through the hills to emerge on the flats to recross the Oreti at the Elbow (Lumsden) but this battle was lost too. The Dipton folk were still determined to have a railway on their side of the river for

when the Mararoa branch was being surveyed they pressed heavily for the junction to be made at Dipton, but once again lost the battle.

As the Oreti had to be crossed further upstream to give road access to the Mararoa and lakes area a combined rail and road bridge at the Elbow was the answer. This eliminated what was a costly and unnecessary duplication with tracks on both sides of the river less than one mile apart for about 14 to 15 miles.

Pressure was brought by pastoralists and the N.Z. Agricultural Land Co. to have a railway brought up the Waimea Plains and after many public meetings the Waimea Plains Railway opened its line on 31 July 1880, just two years after the line from Invercargill to Kingston was finally opened.

The company had not seen the writing, in the form of a long depression, on the wall and failed miserably financially so the Government was petitioned to buy the line.

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## The 1878 Floods

## THE 1878 FLOODS

"Fearful floods here. Six feet of water ...

Thus did the Queenstown correspondent of the 'Gronwell Argus' frantically telegraph his Editor at precisely 11.20 am. on 1 October 1878 ...

... in Eichardt's Hotel, Davis Malthouse and Stable just gone. Williams' residence and Hotop's chemist shop washed away. All houses in Rees Street opposite Bank of New Zealand going fast. Eichardt's in danger. All bridges and culverts between here and Arrow are gone. Great damage done at Frankton. O'Kane has abandoned his hotel owing to mountain opposite his place being on the move. Several houses at One Mile have been lost."

It was a Monday, traditionally washing day. At least there was plenty of water.

It was THE FLOOD - no doubt about that; it laid waste to property the full length of the Shotover, Arrow, Kawarau and Clutha Rivers, from the Alps to the sea. Lake Wakatipu rose twelve feet - 300 million gallons was estimated at the time, as the extra water the lake spilled down the gorges to inundate the coastal plains.

Later that week, the Queenstown correspondent of the Otago Witness - a person, judging by his less florid prose, not so excitable as the Argus man - claimed he and many others had known (the wisdom of hindsight?) that there was bound to be A FLOOD.

Since the previous May, he said, heavy snow had blanketed the Otago high country. Much more snow than usual. Something was found to happen.

On Friday evening, 28 September, it did. Spring rains; warm north-west rains; much heavier than usual. Much more rain than usual.

The rivers had been very high the previous Wednesday, but that event was to be exceeded now by 16 hours of incessant rain.

First indications in Queenstown that all was not well came when Horne Creek, in the space of a few hours on the night of 28-29 September changed from a trickle to a torrent, rudely reminding Queenstowners that they had built their town on its delta. It resumed one of its old courses, converting Beach Street into a chasm. By 10 a.m. on Saturday boats were sailing about on Rees Street. Gents in thigh waders posed for their photograph - taken presumably by a photographer also in thigh waders.

The lake rose inexorably. Captain Eichardt, abandoned his Queens Arms Hotel, "for which," the Otago Witness said, "fears were entertained" despite it being a substantial and magnificent two-storey stone building. While Mine Host of the Queens Arms repaired to a rival establishment, Powell's Family Hotel higher up Ballarat Street, now Eureka House, any loss of dignity at the enforced move was compounded by the loss of his hotel stables, which the Otago Witness pronounced as 'doomed'.

Also doomed were Cash's Victoria Hotel, and the Prince of Wales Hotel, both on the lake side of Rees Street. Both could be more aptly

described as grog shanties with accommodation, and accomodating ladies, attached. No doubt the loss of such amenities would have been keenly felt by some, as each 'fast became a complete wreck.'

Monday morning saw a quantity of assorted furniture floating about the streets, but by mid-day things began to get out of hand. A northwest breeze had come up, blowing straight into Queenstown bay. There were several timber yards in Beach Street and along the waterfront towards the mouth of Horne Creek. Floating logs and sawn timber, some of it in heavy baulks for mining use, became so many battering rams amongst the flimsy buildings. The Masonic Hall, with stone walls eighteen inches thick took the brunt of the flotsam from Robertson and McBride's yard nearby, several holes being punched in the walls.

Anxious citizens gathered to watch while Davis' Brewery, at the other end of the waterfront, also took a battering. It was not expected to weather the storm. "And it was not long before it came down with a terrific crash hiding for a moment its downfall in a cloud of dust, which on clearing off revealed a barren island in a waste of water," wrote the Otago Witness correspondent in a paroxysm of grief. First the hotels, then the brewery! The good citizens might well be forgiven their despondency.

On Tues. morning 2 Oct. the Arrow and Shotover Rivers were falling fast revealing the wreckage of months and years of work on the mining claims along their beaches and gorges. At Queenstown, the lake was falling only slowly, penned up by the rock obstruction in the Kawarau Gorge just above the Arrow River junction. Here the river rose 25 ft, inundating a bridge under construction at Owens Punt to the chagrin of its engineer, and the glee of the locals who had always known it was in the wrong place.

The Shotover Bridge was carried away at the height of the flood on Saturday afternoon, and dray traffic was expected to be impeded for months. That same day, as the flood waters swept towards the coast, telegraphic communication with Dunedin was interrupted by the line below Roxburgh being washed away. Isolation of the district was complete, when the recently opened Invercargill to Kingston railway was cut by washouts.

Surprisingly, and unlike the 1863 floods, there was little loss of life, only two deaths directly attributable to the floods being reported. The first, a 6 yr old girl, the daughter of Thomas Lister, an Arrow miner, was drowned when she missed her footing crossing an improvised bridge over the Arrow on her way home from school. Her body was found two days later at the back of Arrowtown, a mile and a half below the scene. The second was a Chinese miner, not named in the newspaper reports, who fell into Stoney Creek, near Skippers. His body was recovered a short time after the incident.

It took until early December to repair the damage to roads and tracks in the district. By that time, the price of potatoes had climbed to between £12 and £15 a ton. But on the credit side, flour had run out down country at Cromwell and Clyde, and Wakatipu graneries and millers were doing a roaring trade, sending down the staff of life by the wagon load. Oh well, it's an ill wind ...

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### Mt Aurum Station

#### MT AURUM STATION

The following is a copy of a letter, sent to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Dn, from our local historian and Goldfields Park Board member, Mr P.M. Chandler.

"Dear Sir,

#### A Preliminary Submission on the Future use of 'Mt Aurum' Station

Following on from the press statement in Southland Times, 5.4.77 that your dept. had purchased Mt Aurum Stn 'for soil and water conservation purposes', and before any precipitate action is taken to plant trees, or otherwise inhibit continuing public use of the Mt Aurum country, I wish to submit for consideration the following suggestions which arise from recent discussion with Mr S. Herbison, Arrowtown (whose connection with Mt Aurum dates from 1924) and Mr T.H. Trevathan, B.D.S., F.R.A.C.D.S., of Infill, who shares our joint interest in the history and recreational use of the Shotover country. We are not unanimous on all points, but this submission contains a reasonable summary of opinions.

Description: Run No. 753, Polnoon and Skippers Creek S.D.'s (formerly Runs 13, 15 and 16, Wakatipu Depasturing District); area 31,200 acres; substantially the catchment of Skippers Creek and parts of Stony Creek

and Flood Burn, with a frontage of 10 miles to the Shotover River. The altitude range is from 1800ft at Skippers to 2200ft at Bullendale, with three principal peaks - Mt Aurum 7330ft, Prince of Wales 5645ft and Silverhorn 5686ft. Included are the former gold mining settlements of Skippers Point and Bullendale.

Background: The history of pastoral occupation tends to confirm that the run, operated as an entity without adequate winter country, has virtually no economic potential, now, or in the foreseeable future. A severe winter climate has always restricted stock carrying capacity. That the district shared in the Otago gold rushes of 1862-63 is probably so well known, that full details of this aspect are not considered to be warranted at present.

There has been a long-established tradition of public use for recreation - camping, tramping, fossicking for gold, goat and deer shooting.

Recreation Potential: The existing national parks in Otago and Southland are in high-rainfall, alpine areas. There is at present a lack of suitable country away from the main alpine areas, suitable for use by people who have not had alpine experience. With low rainfall, no necessary involvement with dangerous rivers and a range of topography to suit all capacities, there is now a unique opportunity to preserve at least some of Mt Aurum as a semi-alpine, semi-remote area, reasonably safe for young people to camp in, or explore with minimum restraint and minimal facilities.

In addition to the above considerations, we feel that Mt Aurum could provide a much-needed 'run-off' area, to ease the problems arising from unauthorised entry on other occupied pastoral land.

Further Possibilities: Incorporation of at least parts into the Otago Goldfields Historic Reserves, or N.Z. Walkway system.

A complete re-opening of old tracks, with the provision of two footbridges, would provide an excellent opportunity to study gold mining methods (and their consequences) in an area still relatively free of noxious weeds.

Present Proposals: Retain as much of the run as possible for public use.

Clear only existing tracks, to be passable for foot  
Provide minimum facilities:

1. Toilets
2. Fireplaces
3. Water supply
4. Rubbish disposal sites

Tidy the cemetery reserve and restore fencing.

Provide a comprehensive memorial to all persons known to be buried in the cemetery (I have a list).

Retain existing huts and arrange necessary maintenance.

Control: Restraints to be limited, with main emphasis on fire control in summer.

Future: Restoration of future tracks and provision of foot bridge to complete access to whole of 'Skippers Basin', which may, for convenience, be considered to extend from Macri Point to Nugget Battery.

I have on hand, maps, photographs and other records which could be made available to support a detailed submission."

## Skippers

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### SNIPPETS OF LOCAL HISTORY ...

... from a tape recorded in Queenstown on the occasion of the departure of the late Mrs Ryan, to live in Rotorua. Mrs Ryan lived here with Cherry Marshall since she was born, and at the time of recording was well over 80.

She talks of a photograph which shows the Queenstown Band in front of the old Post Office - playing with great gusto. This was to mark the occasion of the 60 years' record reign of Queen Victoria. She remembered that the Band played very heartily, led by Frank St. On who always played extremely well on the cornet - he used to practice 'The Rosary' on Sunday mornings, on the beach.

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