

The Official Publication of the
QUEENSTOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY (INC.)

*

Twenty-sixth Issue - January, 1981

Officers of the Society :

PRESIDENT : Mrs Roma McAndrew, 4 Anderson Heights, Q'town

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B. Haworth, J. Yiakmis, Miss F. Stuckey, Messrs R. Rose,
N. Clayton, E. Salter, J. Donaldson, F. Haworth,
K. Robertson.

Our Secretary, Marie Campbell, has been appointed to the teaching
staff of the Riversdale School, so we will be looking for someone
to take her place. We are really sorry to lose such a pleasant and
efficient Secretary, but we wish her well in her new environment.)

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- .. President's Report
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Wakatipu Region (continued)
- .. Index of Couriers 1 to 25
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- * Many of the earlier "Couriers" are now *
- * out of print, but copies of individual *
- * Articles may be obtained from the *
- * Society, on request, at a slight cost. *

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

The last Annual General Meeting, which was held at Rere Lake on March 29, was a bit late because not enough people came to the previously arranged meeting. However, the outing to Rere Lake was a great success for the large number who went, and those who were unable to go were very sorry to miss such a marvellous day.

The Society's next outing was to the Branches, and beyond, on May 3. Six vehicles took a very enthusiastic crowd of members to Skippers and from then on along a very interesting, thrilling and sometimes frightening road, to have lunch by a creek. On the way, Strohle's Hut was inspected, and it was suggested that the Society's help be offered to ensure its upkeep. After lunch, people travelled still further on, as far as was considered suitable to go, where was seen a by-pass tunnel. The day was fine and an outing was had that most people will never forget.

An Annual General meeting was arranged to take place at Kinloch on October 26. Unfortunately, the Labour weekend did not suit most people and, as only three people actually booked, the meeting was postponed. The day, however, was enjoyed by a small group of people who sailed to Kinloch on board the "Earnslaw" and travelled on the bus to Bryants' Lodge. There they were able to hear about retaining the Lodge, from Mr Harry Bryant, who said the Parks Board wanted to dismantle it in order to build a new one. The Lodge was inspected, and lunch was had by the river.

Throughout the year an effort was made to find another site for the Midland Coachlines so that the house they own in Earl Street, Queenstown, would not have to be demolished. Mr Ritchie was of the opinion that it was worth preserving, but no suitable alternative site was found. Details and photos of the house have been retained.

A letter was sent to Mr Dagg concerning Strohle's Hut, but he was under the impression that the Society wanted to take it over, and said he still used it and was keeping it in good repair himself.

Historical Guided Walks around Queenstown were conducted at Christmas and were very popular indeed. Mr Lawrence hopes they can be organised again this year.

An appeal for the Society's support was received from Mr Ward to help prevent the Ministry of Works building a Depot near two historical buildings in Arrowtown. This problem was solved when it was decided the Depot was to be built somewhere else.

The various outings arranged by the Society have proved very popular and enjoyable. It is hoped to arrange more in the ensuing year.

Roma McAndrew
PRESIDENT.

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This and That

- .. During Queenstown's Summer Festival the Society organised a conducted walk around places of historic interest. Mr Neil Clayton took 56 interested people around, including several from overseas.
- .. We envisage a Queenstown section in the Lakes District Centennial Museum some time in the not-too-distant future ... If anyone has photos of early days in Queenstown, or articles of historic interest, our Society would welcome them.
- .. We are indebted to Mr Neville Ritchie, Archaeologist for the Clutha Valley Development, and his assistant Ms Sheridan Easdale, for compiling an INDEX of Couriers 1 to 25 (included in this Issue). This Index should prove invaluable for tracing Articles of interest.
- .. Revised District Scheme .. The Society hopes to arrange a meeting shortly, at which those aspects of the Scheme which affect our area can be fully explained. Anyone interested will be welcome.

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Archaeology and pre History of Upper Wakatipu part 2

ARCHAEOLOGY AND PREHISTORY OF THE UPPER WAKATIPU REGION

The following pages complete this interesting and instructive Article (begun in "Courier 25") contributed by Neville Ritchie (NZHPT) Archaeologist with the Clutha Valley Development Scheme, Cromwell ...

GREENSTONE EXPLOITATION **

Interpretation of the early Maori activity in the Upper Wakatipu is hindered by a lack of economic evidence, the disturbed condition of some of the key sites and a lack of comparative data from other inland sites.

However, ethnographic documentation would suggest that the main camp sites around the Glenorchy area (and other areas of Central Otago) were used as bases by coastal groups, who came into the areas during the warmer months to exploit various nearby resources (Ritchie 1976: 63, 65).

Undoubtedly the greenstone sources were a major attraction to the area at the head of Lake Wakatipu. The two recognised deposits were definitely being exploited before 1500AD (and probably from about 1200AD) on the evidence of Wakatipu nephrite in early, dated east coast sites. Ethnographic accounts indicate that the area served as a staging or meeting place for Maori groups using the trans-alpine trails to the West Coast and those travelling to and from the Poveaux Straits area and coastal Otago, (ibid:65).

After the sensational reports in 1846 of the existence of the West Coast nephrite deposits, it was seemingly forgotten 'overnight' that the Maoris had ever obtained nephrite from the Wakatipu region (ibid:106).

In 1965 Dr G. Orbell and Mr N. Groves announced they had rediscovered the 'lost' Maori Wakatipu greenstone lode, i.e. the Routeburn deposit, but it had already been modestly reported and the stone proven similar to that of Maori artefacts in the Otago Museum by Professor Turner (1935).

But it was apparent to some archaeologists and museum personnel that another distinctive type of greenstone evident in the artefacts in southern museum collections had characteristics which differed from the stone from any of the known sources. Beattie (1920) had also recorded information from his Maori informants which suggested that another deposit in the area remained to be found.

In 1970 the Dart nephrite deposit was discovered. The combined weight of archaeological, ethnological and geological evidence indicated that this deposit was the one alluded to by Beattie and it clearly was a most important source of the southern Maori nephrite (Beck and Ritchie 1976, 1980; Ritchie 1976; Beck et al 1979). Stone from the source has been found in sites around Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri, Foveaux Strait and up the east coast to Banks Peninsula. It is likely that some was traded to the North Island, but this has never really been investigated.

Because of its special interest the Dart deposit has been made a Special Area within the Mt Aspiring National Park to ensure its protection (this means that entry is by permit only). Although the Dart nephrite was of primary importance to the southern Maori, it has little modern commercial potential because it is a relatively small deposit.

Recently two areas have been found within the reserve which show evidence of the nephrite being worked at the source (Beck et al 1979, Beck and Ritchie 1980). It is believed, however, that the majority of the stone would have been collected as it was found and worked by sawing and grinding at base camps. The occupation sites in the Glenorchy area may have served primarily as 'first stage' work areas, the finishing touches being carried out at the recognised greenstone working settlements around Otago Harbour and Foveaux Strait (Ritchie 1976:63).

FOOD RESOURCES **

The limited archaeological evidence makes it difficult to ascertain the dietary importance of the potential food resources available in the Upper Wakatipu, or whether various plants and animals were obtained primarily for day to day sustenance, or preserved for packing back to coastal settlements. Although there are many recorded instances of different Maori groups preserving foodstuffs, in particular birds, for over-winter food supplies, obviously the

volume that could be carried back from the farthestmost inland areas such as the Upper Wakatipu would be very limited. Studies have shown (eg Leach 1969) that the Maoris clearly had different economic and dietary habits in different areas of New Zealand. Thus one cannot automatically assume that because a certain plant or animal was important in one area, that the same was true of another area. The same can be said of collecting and trapping methods.

Catching eels was undoubtedly an important pursuit and direct evidence of this was observed by Alfred Duncan in the late 1860's (Duncan 1969: 28). He noted that in the vicinity of Diamond Lake "we found traces of Maoris in the shape of stake nets, baskets for catching eels, spears, waddies, ashes and other debris betokening a somewhat recent camp but we never saw any signs of them in the flesh...." (of Courier 12, page 6).

Birds are also likely to have been a major dietary component. Early accounts indicate that wekas and the native quail were abundant in Central Otago. Wekas are known to have been an important Maori food item and they were also eaten regularly by the early European explorers. Wood pigeons, tuis, and parrakeets snared or speared in the forest, and ducks taken on the lagoon, lake or river flats are likely to have been significant items of sustenance too, but excavated evidence is wanting. The Dart Bridge site (S122/1) is the only site in the area from which bones (dog and bird) have been recovered, but no specific analyses have been undertaken on this material yet. Some of the items observed by Duncan are likely to have figured prominently in fowling activity (cf on Lake Ellesmere the Maoris built stockades of stakes into which they drove ducks which were unable to fly during moulting. Once they were trapped they were despatched with clubs - Leach 1969:45).

Freshwater mussels were also a major dietary component as evidenced by the large midden (S122/14) of the shellfish beside Diamond Lake, however their calorific value to the Maoris has recently been questioned (Ritchie n.d.).

The role of the moa as a food source in the area is uncertain. Charles Haines found moa bone in the Dart Bridge site (Simmons 1973: 175) but it is the only site in the Upper Wakatipu in which moa bone has been found. MacKenzie (1948:17) made the statement that "Many Maori mats with moa feathers have been found in the region, and as far as I can ascertain the latest find was in 1884 at Paradise ...".

The source of her information is unstated. Even reports of moa remains in natural deposits are few and far between in the Upper Wakatipu. Recently an almost complete skeleton of a *Dinornis* (the largest of the moa genera) was discovered in a cave in the Dart Valley (Beck and Ritchie 1980). The ensuing publicity resulted in a local farmer bringing forth the weathered remains of a small moa he had found in the Rees Valley. Both these specimens will be displayed in the Ranger Station at Glenorchy. Another reported moa deposit in the Beansburn Valley will be investigated shortly. It is probable that moas had died out or were becoming very scarce by the time the first Maoris entered the region, however, the limited known evidence could be misleading; the climate of the Upper Wakatipu is not conducive to long term bone survival.

Other natural deposits of moa bones have been reported in the Wakatipu region near the mouth of the Von River, in the gorge behind Queenstown, and near the former Owen's punt and the Nevis Bluff in the Kawarau River (White 1875).

The significance to the Maoris of the various plants available in the Upper Wakatipu is even less understood than our knowledge of the faunal resources. It is likely that the roots of the bracken fern (aruhe) were of some importance as a food source, along with the cooked root (kauru) of the cabbage tree. Obviously many other trees and plants were also important as sources of firewood, stakes, cordage, thatch and building materials, but exactly what types were available and favoured awaits further fieldwork and research.

CONCLUSIONS **

The Upper Wakatipu is potentially a vital area for research by southern archaeologists. The sites undoubtedly still contain much pertinent information about why and when Maoris undertook journeys into the interior regions and how they sustained themselves.

The small excavations which have been undertaken to date have enabled a generalised picture of prehistoric activities in the Upper Wakatipu to be sketched, but many questions remain unanswered. In fact perhaps more queries have been raised as a result of the small excavations, than have been answered. For example, what is the true nature of the Dart Bridge site (S122/1)? We have only a sketchy idea of its layout, the hut or house styles, the numbers that might have occupied the site and what economic or subsistence activities

were carried out there. Nereby Kowhai Island (S122/8) bears evidence of terracing and pits - presumably it was associated with the Dart settlement? Similarly the Camp Hill pa site (S123/4) is poorly understood. Controlled excavations on the hill could hopefully reveal more about the nature of the pa and the oven(?) depressions that dot the slopes.

Pigeon Island is also archaeologically unknown. This large island may have played a significant role in prehistoric times, as it did in the early years of historic settlement. A systematic survey of the island is an important first step.

In recent years the nephrite deposits have been the focus of research interest, however, they are only part of the overall picture. A fuller understanding of their exploitation requires further work on the habitation sites in the Glenorchy area.

Further development of the archaeology and prehistory of the Upper Wakatipu can be achieved by a number of means, but the initial requirements are :-

1. A detailed investigation of the vegetation and wildlife that existed in the area at the time of initial European settlement.
2. Further analysis of the materials that have already been excavated and the publication of the results.
3. A further programme of archaeological research in the area incorporating the results of the first two studies.

Today archaeological investigations require the bringing together of considerable resources of manpower and equipment during both the excavation and the subsequent analyses. These resources are generally beyond the scope of the average individual.

In 1975 the Government passed the Historic Places Amendment Act to protect and conserve our dwindling number of sites. One of the provisions of the Act authorises the NZ Historic Places Trust to issue permits to control the excavation of archaeological sites. In this way it is hoped to maximise the scientific return from our remaining sites. In general, this means that permits are only issued to qualified archaeologists associated with research institutions (but volunteers are welcome on many excavations). Although the days are over when anyone can lawfully 'dig in sites', this does not mean that local people, in this case the residents of the Upper Wakatipu, cannot make an important contribution to the understanding of their areas prehistory. Anyone

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	Who named them? (place names)	12/2
	Wakatipu Reflections. W.M. Rendel	13/14-15
	Lake Wakatipu - Queenstown.	17/15-16
	Wakatipu District Place Names. P. Chandler (continued)	19/14-16 22/12-13
WING	Present Day Affairs. (demolition of house built by Edward T. Wing)	2/11
WOMEN	Maternity Nursing. (history)	1/9-11
	The Ladies Fashion and Society Notes. 'Lake County Press', December 8th 1882	5/16
	Women's Role. 'Weekly News', February 1910	16/4-5

QUEENSTOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY (INC)

Statement of Receipts and Payments for year ended
30th September, 1980

No. 2 A/c REES MEMORIAL ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS

Bank Balance 30/9/79
Interest Q.S. Bank

20.96
.60

\$21.56

PAYMENTS

Bank Balance Q.S.B. 30/9/80

21.56

\$21.56

R. McCurdy, Treasurer.
October, 1980.

AUDITED AND FOUND CORRECT

E.H.J. Preston
Hon. Auditor.
21/10/80