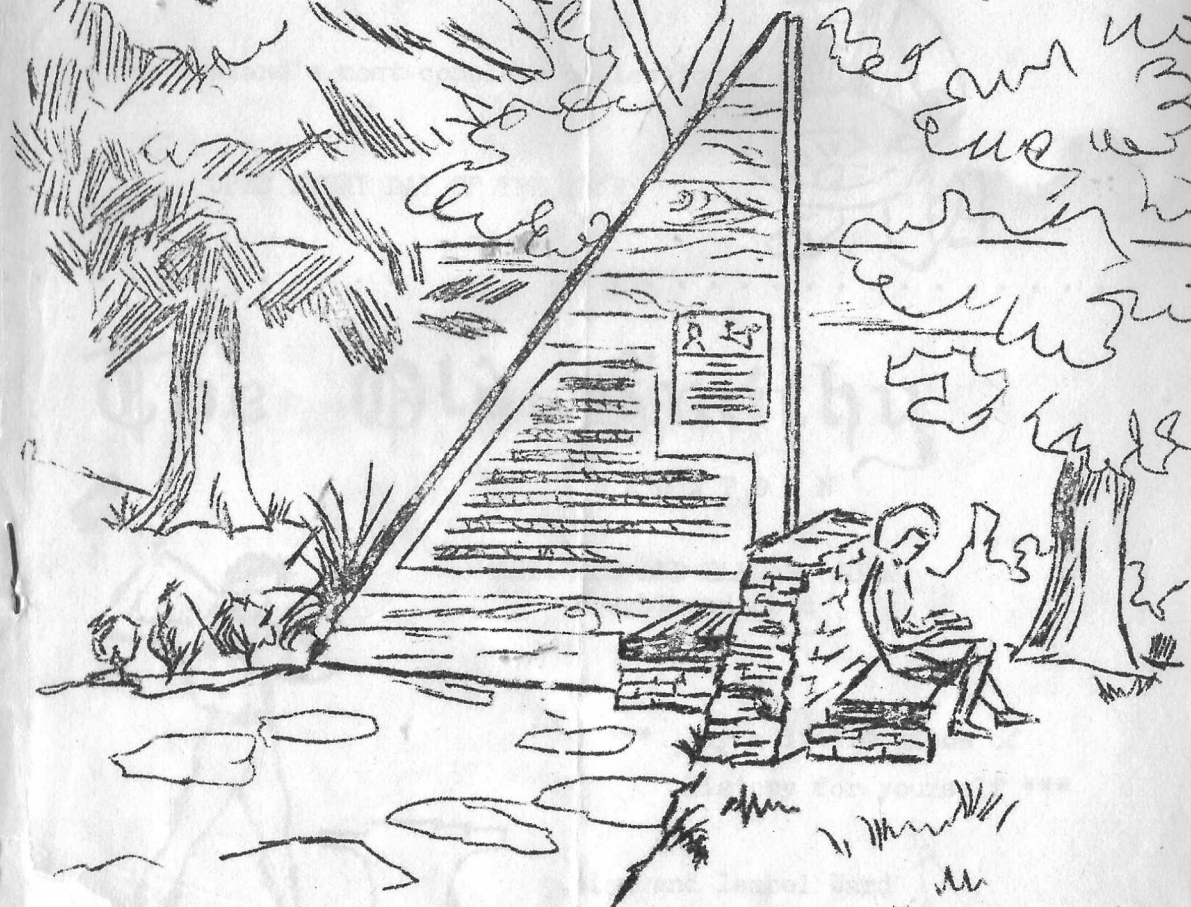


The Queenstown Courier



SPECIAL REES MEMORIAL^N ISSUE

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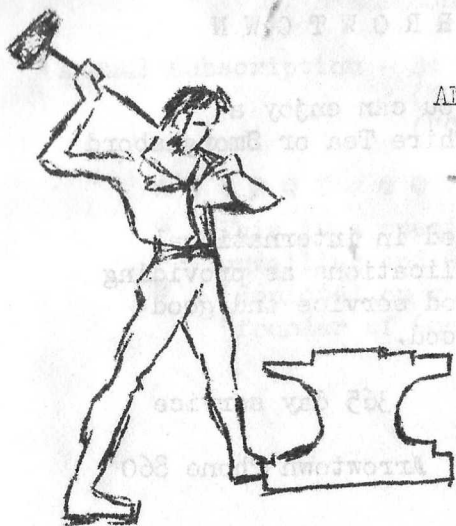
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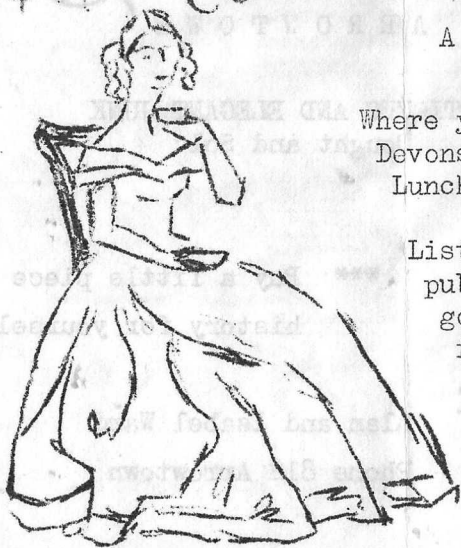
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... THE QUEENSTOWN COURIER ...

The Official Publication of the
QUEENSTOWN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

oooOooo

Twentieth Issue - March 1978

oooOooo

Officers of the Society:

President Mr Neil Clayton, 72 Peninsula St., Queenstown
Secretary Mrs Karen Daniel, Dalefield, R.D.1, Queenstown
Treasurer Mrs Margaret Templeton, 18 Hallenstein St. Qtn
Committee Mesdames B. Haworth, M. Hood, R. McAndrew,
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J. Donaldson

Annual subscription - \$4 per family, or \$3 for one person
("Courier" included in subscription)
("Courier" price to non-members - 30cents)

@ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @

@ This is a special "Courier", covering the
@ unveiling and dedication of the Memorial @
@ (depicted on cover) to William Gilbert Rees, @
"founder of Queenstown". @

@ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @

After the Official unveiling members and friends of the Society accepted the invitation from the Queenstown Borough Council, to afternoon tea in the Council's rooms.

oooOooo

THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKER WAS MR G.J. GRIFFITHS (Author of 'King Wakatip')

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When Mr Clayton asked me to speak at the dedication of this monument to William Gilbert Rees, I tried to point out to him that the fact I had written a book about Rees, or indeed, that I was active in the work of the Historic Places Trust did not necessarily qualify me for such job.

Rees, I imagine, will be looking on with some surprise today and, I might well think, even a little scorn. "Who's this fellow talking about me? Why look at him. He can't box. He rows like a school-girl. He can't ride a horse without falling off, and he's never shorn more than 20 sheep in a day."

Well, all I can offer in self-defence to Mr Rees is what Mr Clayton said to me. First, I've got a good Welsh name. Second, I'm just as bad at making excuses as he was when someone bowled him out. And third, I'm sure to finish up as poor as he was ... if blest so long. So here I am, 150 years, 10 months and 6 days after Rees was born in Haverfordwest, speaking at a ceremony that honours him as the founding spirit of Queenstown and as a local hero.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to say something about heroes and history. Heroes are always bigger than life-size, and when you think about them, you instinctively think in terms of large armies and big battalions. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. One of the curious paradoxes is that heroes can only be created when the scale is quite small. The great heroic epics of literature - the Iliad, the Odyssey, Roland and Oliver, Robin Hood and so on - all had their origins in the exploits of small bands of men, small enough for each one to be individually known and

named; small enough for their characters to have a chance to develop; small enough for them to interact among themselves and show their responses to the writer chronicling them.

We can come much closer to home, and look at William Rees' famous cousin, and godson, W.G. Grace - not merely the bearded patriarch of Victorian cricket that we all know, in his youth one of the most remarkable all-round sportsmen in the whole of England. While still in his teens, in a single day, could make a double century in one London stadium, then nip across to another one and win a championship quarter-mile. A prodigious performance. And yet, for all his legendary prowess, the W.G. Grace of high Victorian England, with its railways and industrial cities, he never left the ranks of the mortals. The demi-gods of cricketing history lived three-quarters of a century before - that small band of men who played on Hambledon and were immortalised in Nyren's famous reminiscences.

What Nyren did for the cricketers of Hambledon, Alfred Duncan did for the pioneers of Wakatipu. In his reminiscences about The Wakatipians, published in a glow of nostalgia 20 years after the events, he imbued the straightforward, practical life of the pioneer with that sense of heroic grandeur which is only possible when small numbers of people are involved, and we have a chance to learn about individual characters.

In Rees he had a character well-worth remembering. The son of a naval officer, who lost his father while still a schoolboy. A fine physical specimen of a man - a noted athlete and sportsman, powerful swimmer, more than handy with his fists. And yet, very much a gentleman. An excellent artist. In practical circumstances a born leader of men, even if he also had his share of the streak of bloody-mindedness that seemed to run through the Rees and Pocock families. I do not need to recount his dramatic early years at Wakatipu.

I ask you to think about the historical origins of men like Rees. You will remember, in the prologue to "Henry V", how Shakespeare asked the people watching his play in an Elizabethan London theatre to forget they were sitting "in a wooden O" and imagine instead that it was the setting for "two mighty monarchies" ...

And he said "Think, when we talk of horses that you see them Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth; For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings, Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times, Turning the accomplishment of many years Into an hour-glass."

Today, I want you to do just the reverse. Can you close your eyes for a moment and dismantle all those fine hotels and motels; the shops, the churches, the arcades and the private homes. Uproot those fine trees, and these magnificent gardens; the roads and footpaths; Clear the beach of its trappings, the sheds and jetties and boats.

What do we now visualise in our mind's eye. Do we feel the ground under our feet? And the sun on our face. Can we hear the lake lapping; or feel the breeze; Can we imagine the mountains around us? In short, we visualise now the country that Rees and von Tunzelmann found as they first set foot here 118 years ago, in February, the same time of year as today. They had been across the Arrow flats, covered with speargrass; they had seen the beauty of the Kawarau falls in their natural state; they already had their eye on Ben Lomond which they would climb next day to reconnoitre. And everywhere, the vast expanses of fern and bracken which now are restricted to the lakeside slopes.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to visualise these things because it is not as impossible as we often think to jump back into history. The earth does not change; the climate and weather do not change; the watercourses and the lakes are still here. Indeed, we can imagine without any great difficulty how we ordinary humans might have stood here in Queenstown Bay with William Gilbert Rees, 118 years ago. He was one of us, however much we may choose to make a hero out of him.

I have taken this theme today because, as deputy chairman of the Historic Places Trust in Otago, I find too often that the sense of history is misunderstood. Some people are hopelessly nostalgic and romantic about the past. Others go to the other extreme and defiantly boast that history is a waste of time. If the everlasting skirmishing between these two extreme groups was limited to an abstract debate on history, no great harm would be done.

It is, of course, largely a psychological incompatibility - and nothing much can be done about it. Unfortunately, however, we find this skirmishing continually involving buildings and other physical elements in society when there is no need for it. Indeed, the longer I am involved in Historic Places Trust work, the more I see - with a great deal of alarm - that the fate of buildings is not being decided on their practical and architectural merits, but on the outcome of these psychological arguments in the community and in local body discussions.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is absurd. We don't wrangle about good songs because they are old or new. We don't wrangle about good poems, or good pictures, because they are old or new. We don't even wrangle about most technological fields - weapons, transport methods, clothes and so on - because they are old or new. We accept that there are things of merit to be found in all the ages of man, and we keep alive in our modern society the songs, and poems, and pictures and other things that are still useful or enjoyable to us.

Why then, when it comes to buildings, does this relatively peaceful co-existence suddenly give way to repeated and bitter dog-fights? There can be little doubt about the answer. And I think there is a close relationship between that and what happened to William Rees, when the gold discoveries, and the mushroom townships, and the provincial government closed in on what we might call the heroic period of opportunity, grand dreams and lack of restrictions of those first few years.

Of course society imposes restrictions. It always must. But nothing can stop the dreams of ambition and achievement welling up in the William Rees-es of today and tomorrow. To preach the virtues of the past alone is to deny such men their right to breath ... an unjust, and futile attitude. Worse still, it virtually forces the most vigorous developers and businessmen into direct counter-attack.

I do not believe that the number of confrontations over the preservation of buildings has occurred solely by accident. I believe the psychological skirmishing I referred to earlier is actually putting such buildings at additional risk because they

act as symbols, and developers become determined to see them removed. I would ask all New Zealanders, and particularly those of you here to-day who are influential in local body affairs, to adopt attitudes and devise policies which will not stifle Man's creative vigour, but which provides positive avenues for it to be expressed while still keeping the best of the past. There are so many mediocre buildings about, so many empty sections, so much under-utilised ground, that the community should never let arguments develop over good new replacing good old. The aim of local body policy must surely be to see that quality should not be judged on a one-for-one replacement basis; but that good new should be encouraged to stand beside good old, and provide the community with two buildings of quality where only one stood before.

This afternoon I am called upon to unveil the monument to William Rees, and recall his spirit to live amongst us in the present and future. There is no reason why the prospect should daunt us. But I beg you, do not just worship him. Live with him, compete with him, challenge him. Try, if you like, to do him in the eye. He was a man that loved a challenge.

But don't be frightened to let him come alive and let his very real qualities - and the qualities of the physical world that he and his generation helped to create - add interest and character to our own times.

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MRS MARYGOLD MILLER'S SPEECH

As a Past-President of the Queenstown and District Historical Society it is years since I chaired the meeting where it was first decided that a more striking memorial to Queenstown's first settler, than the small plaque on the sea wall, should be undertaken.

A new bronze plaque was the first part to be tackled. Rees' self-portrait seemed to be the most appropriate likeness of the man to select. The portrayal of his journey on horseback was sketched by Pamela Haworth, his great grand-daughter, who was attending the local school at the time. The words from the illuminated address presented to Rees by the people of the Wakatipu, when he was forced

to leave his home, seemed to crystalise our feelings towards him. Armed with these bits of paper, I travelled to Dunedin to John Swan's, who agreed to combine these three quite different elements into bronze. I cannot speak too highly of Mr Swan and his staff for the way they carried out what must have proved to be a tricky task.

I have always been captured by the story of Rees' journey, settlement and subsequent removal from the locality which he loved. So in 1974, I travelled to Haverfordwest, in Wales. Getting to know his birthplace increased my understanding of this typical son of Wales, particularly as I have deep roots in that beautiful country. Seeing his home environment, it was not hard to appreciate why he responded so strongly to the wild scenery of the Wakatipu.

The memorial project hung fire for a period; lacking finance and ideas for the total concept, the Queenstown and District Historical Society had difficulty in proceeding to the final, most important stage. Sites were considered, and this one was chosen. From this, the most appropriate spot, can be seen the site of the Rees Homestead and first jetty, and also the two magnificent Peaks, Walter and Cecil, named after his son.

At this point in the project, Mr Neil Clayton became President of the Society. Miss Marilyn Lusk, a qualified Architect, offered to design the last stage of the Memorial. Mr Bob Rose was awarded the contract, all to be ready for the anniversary of the date when Rees arrived.

Memorials are usually controversial. This one is no exception. This is a good sign. It is obviously being noticed and having present-day use, which, after all, is the first requirement of any successful historical reminder of the past.

What should a memorial to William Gilbert Rees incorporate? The ruggedness of the man; his concern for the beauty of his chosen environment - paramount over any desire for riches; his implacable approach to his religious beliefs; his concern for people; his emotions, which ran deep and strong, a national characteristic; his vision wide and reaching upwards with the highest aspirations; his integrity. All this in one man. All this to be incorporated

in one memorial - a challenge bravely met today - the memorial is here for us to see.

I congratulate the designer, the builder and the executive on the action, and thank them for their invitation to take part in this most important, significant occasion in Queenstown. This memorial will remind all Wakatipu inhabitants, and visitors to the district, what has now become a flourishing tourist mecca was once settled by one intrepid Welshman and his family.

I salute William Gilbert Rees and his descendants!

oooOooo

PRAYER AT THE DEDICATION OF THE REES MEMORIAL

Sunday 12 February 1978

Given by Rev. R.H. Weller

Our God and gracious Heavenly Father, as we stand together in the beauty which surrounds us, we offer our praise and thanksgiving for your gift to this people, of this wonderful land; for the grandeur of the mountains, speaking to us of your abiding strength; for the crystal clearness of streams and lakes, reminding us of your purity; for the climate - telling at this time, of the warmth of your concern and love for us all.

And Father, we give thanks in this commemoration for those who in the early days of this land faced danger and privation with courage and fortitude, opening up the country which we now inherit. Among these fathers of the nation, we remember with thanksgiving particularly William Gilbert Rees, who in his vision of the possible caused this place to have its modern birth. We acknowledge before You Lord, this man's insights - Christian insights, and purely human insights; his understanding of what may be developed from what is, and we honour your holy Name in our thanksgiving.

So now Father, we pray that we who are the inheritors of this country, may ever be careful to maintain that which is valuable and beautiful in this place, so that those who come after us may always have the benefits which are ours today.

But, together with William Rees we link the memory of that woman who was his partner and help-mate, his companion and wife, Frankie, and offer our thanks also, for her character and steadfastness, to uphold and encourage in all that her husband undertook.

So we give you our praise, our Father, in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Followed by the Blessing.

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MEMORIAL ALREADY HAS LONG HISTORY!

A proposal to erect a memorial in Queenstown to honour its founder, William Gilbert Rees, was first put forward in the 1950's.

The Borough Council of the time took up the idea, but contented itself with placing a brass plaque on the concrete breakwater in Marine Parade opposite the presumed site of Rees' home station. There was some disappointment, particularly at the time of the district's centennial celebrations in 1962, that there was not a more fitting memorial, although no positive action was taken until November 1971.

The Queenstown and District Historical Society set about ensuring that Rees' contribution to the founding of the town was more suitably commemorated, by first having a bronze plaque made. This was designed by Miss Pamela Haworth of Queenstown, a great-grand-daughter of Rees, and engraved by John Swan and Co. of Dunedin. The illustration on the plaque depicts the character of the district as it was when Rees first settled, while the wording, taken from an illuminated address presented to Rees when he finally left the district, reflects the character of the man, as seen by his fellow settlers.

Meanwhile, the Society was concerned to find a suitable location for the memorial. It is recorded that in November 1972 no progress had been made, the Queenstown Borough Council having turned down a suggestion that it be sited in the Queenstown Mall, formerly lower Ballarat Street. Instead, the Council favoured somewhere in Marine Parade, but it was obvious that this offered little merit, being already occupied by, amongst other things, the local war memorial and a sewage pumping station.

After considerable discussion, the Society selected a site in the Queenstown Gardens, overlooking Queenstown Bay and Rees' homestead site, and having a backdrop of Cecil and Walter Peaks, named for his son. Approval for this site was not readily forthcoming from the Tourist and Publicity Department, which controls the gardens, they preferring a project to replace the somewhat forlorn gate structure at the Park Street entrance to the gardens. The question of a suitable form for the memorial was also the subject of much discussion amongst Society members. Several favoured placing the plaque on a suitable rock, while others noted that this had already been done for the Scott Memorial elsewhere in the gardens.

It was agreed that Miss Marilyn Lusk, B.Arch (Hons) of Arrowtown, an architecture graduate from Auckland University should be called upon to produce a design. Her concept for the memorial was accepted by a majority of the Society's committee and efforts to raise the estimated \$2500 needed to build it were put in hand.

In the meantime, successful representations were made to the Minister of Tourism, Hon. H. Lapwood, through the good offices of the M.P. for Otago Central, Mr. W.E. Cooper, to have the proposed gardens site reconsidered. On the occasion of his visit to Queenstown in 1976 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Tourist and Publicity Department, Mr Lapwood agreed to the chosen site.

Fund raising then got into full swing, with one of the first donations, of \$400, coming from the youth of the district through their Rotary sponsored organisation, Interact.

A tender for construction was let to Mr R. Rose, a committee member of the Society, and the work was put in hand early in 1977. This was virtually completed by the end of that year, with stonework being carried out by a local stonemason, Mr T. Meehan and landscape design by Mr N. Lusk, a Queenstown nurseryman and brother of the architect.

During the course of construction, it was decided to include in the memorial, a quotation from Rees' account of the Wakatipu as he found it, and the planting around the memorial is representative of the native flora of the area as it was then.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT
OF QUEENSTOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10.11.77

The year has been essentially one of low-key activity for the Society. While a wide range of matters affecting the historicity of the Queenstown-Wakatipu area has continued to engage the attention of the Committee, there have been few matters of such a controversial nature as to bring the Society to the attention of the general public, as has been the case in previous years. It may well be that the Society's role as an historical watchdog will continue, but on a lesser scale as public appreciation of, and concern for, historical values becomes more widespread. On the other hand, it may be that the Society ought now to consider widening its aims, as the Historic Places Trust is doing, to assume a role akin to that of the United Kingdom Historical Trust.

In any event, the Society must continue to be alert to, and ready to act against, those influences which, by continuing to place material self-interest ahead of all other considerations, have steadily eroded the historical heritage of the Wakatipu district. The intrinsic attractions of the district have begun, during the past few years, to be replaced by promotionalism, engendered by an influx of those whose sole objective is exploitation - the selling of a commercial package, and who are either unaware of, or mindless of, the heritage of the area.

Buckham's Brewery Following legal advice, the Society made a submission to the Queenstown-Wakatipu Combined Planning Committee to include the Buckham's Brewery site in the register of historical buildings in the district planning scheme. This followed three refusals by the Queenstown Borough Council to do so. The Combined Planning Committee resolved to request the Borough Council to register the site if assurances from the intending purchaser as to the future of the site were not forthcoming. A breakdown in sale negotiations between the T.H.C. and the intending purchaser has left the future of the site in a state of uncertainty. The property is likely to be again offered for public tender in the future, but, with a Planning Scheme review being prepared, the Committee hopes that the property will be registered as a place of historic interest before a sale is finalised. If not, then the Committee should consider requesting a scheme change to give the desired protection. Full backing has been given by the Historic Places Trust for the moves for protection.

Rees Memorial. Work towards completion of the memorial is under way though it has been slower than the Committee had desired. At the same time, there is some way to go before sufficient funds are in hand to meet the full cost. The concept envisaged by the Architect, Miss Marilyn Lusk, of Arrowtown, has been realised in this project. Planting and paving work completed soon will mean the monument will attract worthy attention during the holiday period.

District Planning Scheme. A sub-committee has been reviewing the register of historic places in the Queenstown-Wakatipu combined planning scheme. This important work is due for completion so that a submission can be made to the Scheme Review committee which is due to meet shortly. It is anticipated a draft submission will be available to members for discussion.

Macetown/Goldfields Park. The Society has continued its interest in the formation of the Otago Goldfields Park and welcomes the appointment of one of our members, Mr P. Chandler, to the advisory board. A report on the Macetown area has just been published by the Lands & Survey Dept., and submissions have been invited.

Field Trips. Earlier in the year, a small group of members enjoyed a short trip to the sluicing claims at Few's Creek. There are many similar half-forgotten areas of historical interest scattered through the district. The desirability of a summer field-trip programme including such places might be a point for discussion, at the same time keeping in mind that many members would wish for places of easier access.

Finances. For many years, the Society has maintained its subscriptions at \$2. The cost alone of the two issues of "The Courier" sent to the membership each year now exceeds this amount, and it will be necessary to reconsider the subscription rate. The sum of \$4 is suggested for discussion.

Incorporation. During the year it was suggested that the Society should become incorporated, to protect its members. Mr L.S. Dennis a Committee member, agreed to carry out the necessary preparations of rules. These were approved by the Committee and are now with the Justice Department for final approval.

Committee. Members of the Committee have continued to display a high degree of interest in the Society, perhaps best evidenced by their willingness to attend several meetings called during the year at very

short notice. In particular, the Secretary, Mrs R. McCurdy who has announced her wish to retire from the position this year, has worked unstintingly on behalf of the Society. So, too has Mrs M. Templeton, the Treasurer, whose fund-raising efforts for the Rees Memorial Appeal have involved her in many hours of often unrewarding toil. Mrs G. Reid has worked assiduously at our news-clipping records, and only ill health has caused her to relinquish this task. To these ladies my own personal thanks are extended for all they have done for the Society in the past year. (N. Clayton, Pres.)

Note. At a recent Committee meeting, it was felt necessary to put the subscriptions up to \$4 per family, \$3 for one person

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OBITUARY

Mrs Jim Reid

The death, after a short illness, of Mrs Gladys Reid, a long-time member of the Society, was recorded at the end of 1977. Mrs Reid took a close interest in the affairs of the Society, serving on the Committee for a number of years. During that time she maintained and added to the Society's extensive file of newspaper clippings relating to items of historical interest in the Wakatipu, and in addition contributed to the "Courier" with snippets of interest regarding early days in the Glenorchy district. Before residing in Queenstown, Mrs Reid and her husband were connected with land holdings at the head of Lake Wakatipu and Bob's Cove.

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OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

Membership of the Society now stands at 120.

At the time of printing this "Courier", the Society's Ordinary Account is in credit \$208.

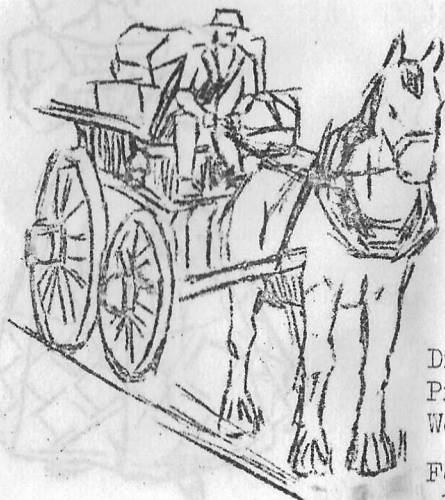
12 people have contributed towards the Rees plaque. Over 60 have donated towards the erection of the memorial. The Memorial and Plaque cost over \$3200. Approx \$600 is still required and donations would be gratefully received. Please send to Mrs M. Templeton, 18 Hallenstein St., Queenstown.

REES MEMORIAL ACCOUNT AS AT 31.10.77

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Credit bal. b/fwd	113.00	J.Swan & Co(perspex sign)	243.13
Donations	1688.46	R.G.Rose (progress payment)	1000.00
Transfer from No.1 Acc	250.00	Credit Bal. 31.10.77	815.58
Interest S.S.B.	7.25		
	<u>\$2058.71</u>		<u>\$2058.71</u>

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS & EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDING 31.10.77

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Credit bal. b/fwd	471.90	Postage Courier No.18	4.97
Subscriptions	244.00	No.19	9.32
Donations: S.S.B.	100.00	The I.M.Print " No.19	
Sundry (3)	6.00	(160 covers & adverts)	44.50
Courier Adverts (2)	20.00	K.Short Ltd (staples)	1.45
Courier Sales	32.04	Xeroxing copies letters to	
Historical map sales	6.70	Minister re Buckhams site	3.60
Interest S.S.B.	14.51	Mountain Scene A.G.M.	4.00
		Few's Creek	18.00
		Petty Cash (M.J.T.)	5.00
		Q.B.C. use of Athenaeum	10.00
		Morton, Baylis & Morris for	
		Courier No.18	42.35
		No.19	64.85
		Registrar Incorp. Societies	20.00
		N.Z. Historic Places Trust	3.00
		State Insurance, tape recorder	3.73
		N.Z. Fed. Hist. Soc. Sub	10.00
		Transfer to W.G.Rees Account	250.00
		Cheque book	.50
		Credit bal. 31.10.77	417.88
			<u>913.15</u>
		less unrepresented cheque	18.00
	<u>\$895.15</u>		<u>\$895.15</u>



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Colin and Rosemary Jack

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

* * * * *

Queenstown

Aims of the Society:

- (1) That we use our power to advise, concerning the saving of historical aspects of the district.
- (2) Preservation and education in all aspects of historical research and interest.

New Members Welcome

Cover by Roma McAndrew

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