

**Bringing the Past to the Future**

# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

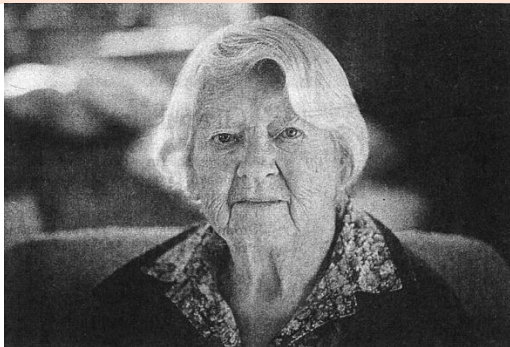
NEWSLETTER OF THE UPPER CLUTHA  
HISTORICAL RECORDS SOCIETY INC.

(Upper Clutha includes Cardrona, Albert Town, Luggate, Queensberry, Tarras, Hawea,  
Makarora, Wanaka and Lakes Wanaka and Hawea)

WINTER 2018 - VOLUME TWO

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## **PHYLLIS MAY ASPINALL, 1922-2018**



Home, hospitality and honouring the past were three cornerstones of Phyllis Aspinall's life, the fourth being art - music, needlework and writing. So it was fitting that she should be made a Life Member of the Upper Clutha Historical Records Society (UCHRS) at her home, in March 2013, followed by a celebratory afternoon tea.

Phyllis has left the UCHRS a legacy that will live on.

In 1978 a committee was set up to establish a museum but they realised that this was a distant dream. They had a collection of written and photographic records that needed to be preserved and the UCHRS was set up for that purpose. Phyllis was one of the founding committee members.

The records were gathered together and later stored in boxes in two fire proofed metal cupboards in the Presbyterian Church hall. As more records were added a better way of storing and filing them became urgent.

Phyllis took the first steps towards acquiring such a purpose-built room to safely store our records. If you look right as you enter our Archives Room in the Wanaka Library you can admire the needlework sign made by Phyllis.

Phyllis was on the Book Committee that produced "Wanaka and the Surrounding Districts" by Irvine Roxburgh, a follow up to "Wanaka Story". She was also deeply involved in the production of "Skirt Tales: Stories of the lives of 100 Women of Upper Clutha" including writing several of the stories. These show an understanding of the lives of pioneering women and their families born out of her own experiences as a young wife and mother on the remote Matukituki Station. Phyllis made sure that proceeds from this book went towards building the display cabinet for Arts and Crafts in the library.

Phyllis trained as an aural historian and recorded the memories of several locals. She also left us written histories of others including her mother-in-law Amy Aspinall. Three stories, on Bill Manson, Ann Jane Pipson and John Hendry Lange, are in "Southern People: A Dictionary of Otago Southland Biography" published to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Otago and Southland.

The UCHRS also holds a comprehensive bibliography of books and magazines which pertains to this region that Phyllis compiled for us and there are many other kinds of records that can be found amongst our archives under her name.

**Margaret Thomlinson**

## **CONTRIBUTIONS/ARTICLES**

The human history of the Upper Clutha really commences with the presence of Māori so it is appropriate to briefly tell you of their story. Richie Hewitt kindly contributed the following article.

### **A MĀORI HISTORY of the Upper Clutha Area**

Polynesians arrived in New Zealand more than six hundred years ago on more than one occasion after the initial discovery and the return of some explorers to Hawaiki. About 1400 A.D. more arrived in northern parts of the South and in the North islands. Two hundred years later the new South Island settlers had explored the whole of the South Island and there is considerable archaeological evidence and supporting documentation that there were a number living permanently in the Upper Clutha area. Māori history records that two males were born on the peninsula in Lake Wanaka.

Pre European arrival, Māori travelled through the Upper Clutha area to and from the West Coast, through the mountain passes. The late 'Albie' Collins and another deer culler companion were walking from the Wills River over the Wills Pass to Ferguson Creek in the Hunter Valley when 'Albie' saw a greenstone mere on the track. His companion was quick to pick it up and kept it. Its whereabouts now are unknown.

Tribal parties from the coast from the mouth of the Waitaki, Moeraki, Dunedin and Southland areas by tradition exercised their rights to harvest the food resources of the Upper Clutha area. Accessing the interior was a significant feat considering that there were no formed tracks or pathways let alone material to satisfy the needs for clothing and shelter. The difficulties experienced during travel are indicated in the publication 'Te Puoho's Last Raid' by Atholl Anderson. Te Puoho led a war party down the west coast and over the Haast Pass into the Upper Clutha area before continuing on into Southland where he was killed in a battle at Tukurau.

The Clutha River was a road to the coast and mokihi were an easily constructed and dispensable watercraft. Although no dugout canoe remains have been found in the Upper Clutha area, a dugout was found near Beaumont some years ago according to an O.D.T. newspaper report. Any doubt that Māori could not use the river as a road is dispelled by the fact that a European, Riley, rowed a boat from the mouth of the Clutha getting to Clyde before he was unable to proceed further. [O.D.T.100 years ago]

Evidence supporting the importance of the Upper Clutha area to Māori is contained in the Tairaroa Papers of 1880, which with its associated map, show food resource sites around the lakes and sites of importance in the areas. The papers show temporary camp sites and also list sites of permanent occupation, dugout canoe landing areas, urupa, and fortified pa. There is an interesting paragraph in the papers which states [in Māori] that ‘this is the place where the pakeha burnt the whare’.

The map and Tairaroa Papers were produced at the instigation of the Hon H.K. Tairaroa, M.P. who realised that the old people were dying and that valuable historical knowledge was being lost. Around eighty-nine sites are identified in the papers and map around Lakes Hawea and Wanaka.

Further evidence of occupation by Māori of the area is found in the Archaeological Site Recording Scheme:

[www.archsite.org.nz/About.aspx](http://www.archsite.org.nz/About.aspx).

The map is not a complete record of archaeological evidence as there are culturally sensitive records held by Ngai Tahu and other unrecorded finds that are held in family collections.



**Maori artifacts found on the lakefront**

The museum in Dunedin has on display a carved post which was found at the mouth of the Matukituki River. Not far away upriver an area of some three thousand square metres has distinct evidence of having been cultivated by early Māori. The humps and hollows of the cultivations are still visible. A canoe paddle together with human remains have been found in the area and another paddle at Tarras with other artefacts. The museum in Dunedin has the paddles and other items in its collection. The remains of a Polynesian person, with a necklace attached, were found wrapped in a cloak some years ago. Subsequent analysis revealed that the remains were female, that the person had lived about the year 1600 A.D. was about thirty-three years old, had had no children, and had not had a ‘sea coast’ diet. It is my contention that Māori did live here permanently, albeit in small numbers. The numbers being limited by the availability of food.

The recently released Ngai Tahu website: [www.kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas](http://www.kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas) reveals a wealth of historical information in regard to the Upper Clutha area and reference material for any person wanting to undertake further study. The Wanaka, Hawea and Makarora libraries hold various publications for reference.

**Richard L Hewitt**

## **MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subscriptions for the 2018-19 year are now due. Subscriptions are \$10 per person and can be paid direct to the Society’s account **03-1739-0012311-00** with your surname and the word “Subs” in the reference field. Failing that you may pay direct to the

Treasurer. Receipts will only be sent out for non-Internet payments and will be sent via email in all cases.

Subscriptions are an important part of our funding to keep the Society “ticking over”.

## AGM

The AGM was held on 23 May 2018. The following people have been elected to the Committee:

President: Graham Dickson

Vice- President Jo Wilton

Secretary: David Simmers

Treasurer: Ken Allan

Committee Members: Bruce Foulds;  
Margaret Thomlinson, Ken Thomlinson

Approval was given to amend the Name and the Rules of the Society. The name was amended to drop “The” so that the Society logically appears in any indexes under “U” and not “T”. The rules were changed to allow the committee to more efficiently manage the Society. The name change and new rules were approved by the Registrar on 5 June 2018

## ANECDOTES FROM THE PAST

In 1883, a writer going by the pseudonym “Vagabond” must have been a visionary. “The future of Pembroke, I think, will, like that of Queenstown, depend upon the tourist.”

Hopefully Wanaka retains its points of differentiation from that of Queenstown.

## RABBITS

Rabbits are always a topic of conversation in a rural community, even amongst the ‘townies’ now. Current conversations are generally centered around the latest release of the “K5” virus that is supposed to run riot throughout the rabbit population. Unfortunately reports vary as to its success, or not, but did you know that as far back as 130 years ago, a Rabbit Conference (no, not attended by rabbits!) was held in Sydney? This was attended by representatives from NZ and it was decided to undertake a practical trial of M. Pasteur’s rabbit microbes that were supposedly fatal to rabbits.

The result – well more “hot air” than action and in reality they were still discussing the subject in NZ newspapers 30+ years later. Probably just as well given some of the diseases that were proposed to be introduced e.g. anthrax – and farmers had to continue relying on the old .22 rifle and traps!



An Upper Clutha memorial to rabbits (spoke too soon- we still have rabbits!).

## LATEST NEWS

### Digitizing Documents – Volunteer(s) required

The project has scanned a number of records but there remain thousands to go. The volunteer who was undertaking the majority of the work, has unfortunately had to leave Wanaka (hopefully temporarily) due to a change of employment location. So if there is anyone out there who can spare us one to two hours a week (it can be any day of the week that the Library is open), please let Jo know. It does not require a degree in computer science to do the work! If you know how to turn a computer on you will be able to operate the system and full training will be given as well.

### Welcome

Welcome to a new member, Bruce Foulds, who has generously agreed to be a member of the Committee.

## 100 YEARS AGO

Weather: 13 June 1918 – “The sun has been conspicuous by its absence during the past week and the weather has been very foggy and cold. Farm work throughout the district is well ahead, farmers having made good use of the splendid weather experienced in the autumn.”

W R Sinclair, reports in the ODT 11 May 1918 of the possibility of damming Lake Hawea for power generation. Apparently an official report was created in 1904 discussing the subject, which was based around the idea of sending water from Lake Hawea to Lake Wanaka at The Neck via a power generation station. All a bit

like discussions on the rabbit problem – some things take a long time!

## THE SLIDE SHOW

Following on from Richie and Iris Hewitt's donation of the TV, a slideshow has been created that continually displays in the Wanaka Library next to the Records Room. The “slides” are some 560 photos from the Upper Clutha past and cover a variety of subjects. As more photos are scanned, we will be adding them to the slideshow. Come and have a look -all photos are captioned.

## MOUNT ASPIRING COLLEGE

The Society has made the records and volunteers available to assist MAC students with their studies on Upper Clutha history.

Our first “live” research meeting with the students was held on 1<sup>st</sup> June and they had some interesting subjects for their projects.

The Society has also agreed to present a prize to be known as “The Upper Clutha History Prize” for the best student history project investigating the Upper Clutha region”.



UCHRS members helping students with their projects at the Library

## JO'S NOTES AND UPDATES

Wednesday morning Research Days continue though it has been quiet – some volunteers are on holiday. The most urgent matter is getting someone to assist with scanning documents - so if you have some spare time.....! It does not have to be on Wednesdays.

## WHO ARE WE?

**President:** Graham Dickson

**Vice President:** Jo Wilton

**Secretary:** David Simmers

**Treasurer:** Ken Allan

**Committee Members:** Ken and Margaret Thomlinson, Bruce Foulds.

The Society was established in 1985 to collect and preserve records and images of the history of the Upper Clutha region and make them available to members of the public. The records are held in a special room in the Wanaka Library and a team of volunteers provides research assistance (appointments are necessary) to members of the public who may be looking for their family history or for persons searching for aspects of NZ history. Copying costs apply.

Please contact a Librarian at the Wanaka Library who will pass on the request, or send us an email to [uchrsoc@gmail.com](mailto:uchrsoc@gmail.com).

The Society is Incorporated and is a Registered Charity.

Funding is reliant on the assistance of a variety of community funders and individual gifts. Donations are very welcome, as are new members.

Donations may be made to our bank account 03-1739-0012311-00 with the

reference – Donation. As we are a Registered Charity, donations are tax deductible – please ask for a receipt.

Membership Subscriptions for year ending 31/3/2019 are \$10-00.

**Website:**

<http://www.uppercluthahistory.org/>

**Email Address:** [uchrsoc@gmail.com](mailto:uchrsoc@gmail.com)

## FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you to everyone who gave us positive feedback on the first edition of the Newsletter. The distribution list has even increased since.

The Society works within a limited budget and with a very small but enthusiastic group of volunteers. We are always on the lookout for new members and/or people who can contribute to our knowledge of our past. We should not forget that today is tomorrow's past!

And finally, Phyllis Aspinall in her favourite location – Aspiring Station -with Jenny Milne



Memories - Jenny Milne with Phyllis Aspinall