

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)

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FATBOYS

No – nothing to do with a certain brand of motorbikes! Fatboys are the names of two rocks up near the Criffel Diggings and define an area broadly on the south eastern side of the Luggate Creek opposite where the Criffel Diggings were situated – a goldfield discovered in 1883. So where is it? If you head towards Cardrona from Wanaka, not long after you pass Mt Barker you will come across “The Larches”, a station homestead hidden behind trees. If you look to your left and back a little from where you have come, the Criffel Diggings are approximately in that area up towards the top of the Criffel Range. In fact, the diggings are so high it was virtually impossible to successfully seek the alluvial gold during the cold winters. The area where the gold situated is approximately 1,200+ metres above sea level. In 1885, the Mining Warden “Protected” all claims and mining privileges from 1 May to 31 October.

The name ‘Criffel’ incidentally originates in Dumfries in Scotland where a number of the early settlers came from. It is a hill of

some 570 metres – a bit lower than the NZ version at 1283 metres although there are higher places on the Criffel Range. The diggings ranged from the height of 1200 to 1350 metres.

The late Stan Kane (a past President of the Society) wrote that three men by the name of Halliday (not the same family as the Halliday’s of Cardrona), Beattie and Wilson prospected the area in 1882 and discovered the main field in 1883. They managed to keep their discovery relatively quiet for a short while until 1884.

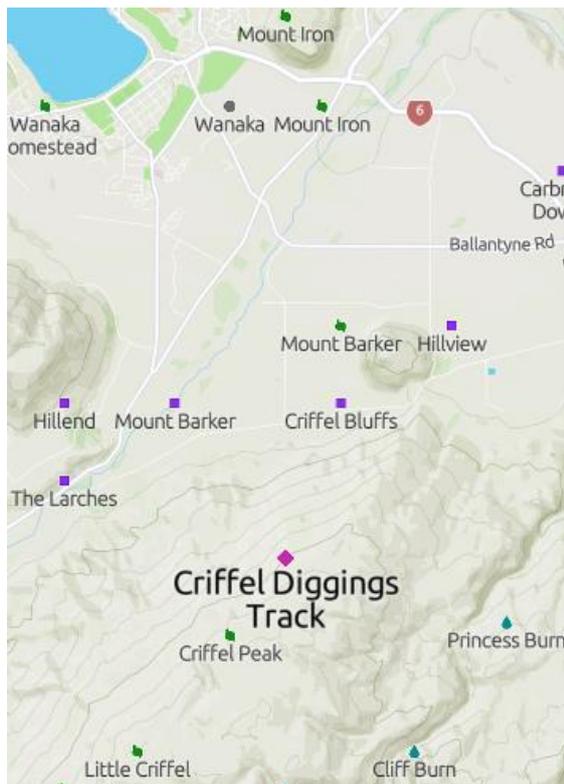
In 1885 there were 50 miners at the diggings and between them they had sold 1,000 ounces of gold the previous season. Halliday, Beattie and Wilson had obtained 300 ounces of gold and had 1,700 loads of wash dirt stacked for washing the next spring. This highlighted the need for water and in 1887 Halliday and Craig built water races to bring water to the diggings – Halliday’s was 15 miles long!

Despite the relative isolation, physical access difficulties and the snow and ice, there was money to be made – not just

from the gold. Both Robert McDougall & Son (in June 1885) and William Monteith (in August 1885) advertised that they had made arrangements to open stores on the “Mt Criffel Goldfield”.

The Fatboys field was apparently discovered in 1887/8. It started a mini-rush but the ‘pay-dirt’ ran deep under the slope. By 1889 only Neuman and his party were working the area.

Work continued on the Criffel Diggings in the 1890s, the Eldorado Company having received a licence for 60 acres in 1898. Small numbers of other miners persisted but eventually it became uneconomic to mine further.



Location of Criffel Diggings. Fatboys is a little further to the southeast.

I have to let Stan Kane have the final words on the origins of Fatboys – “This field is know as Fatboys. There appears two rocks. One a heavy square rock and alongside is a tall slim rock which reminds

me of a picture of a young lady in the days when they specialised in corsets. It looks to me as though they are pulled up good and tight. I wonder if the description is a sarcastic throw-off.” (1993)

Stan Kane used to conduct tours of the goldfield in the 1990s and left his notes in the Records Room. Jill Hamel also wrote an extensive report for DOC in 1991, which I have relied on.



The Diggings area

UCHRS HISTORY – CORRECTION

Apologies. A slight ‘blue’ regarding the Dog Trial Sculpture- The Dog Trial Sculpture on Mount Iron was actually put up by the Wanaka Collie Club and was made by Morgan Engineering. Vicky McRae did much of the organization.

The following article is about the history of the Dog Trials.

DOG TRIALS

Believe it or not but Wanaka was the first place in the World where it has been recorded that Sheepdog Trials took place. The NZ Sheep Dog Trial Assn was formed in 1940 but Dog Trialing competitions had been taking place since 18 April 1867 (152 years ago). By 1870 the Mackenzie Country Dog Trails were being held annually on Haldon Station as well as at Duntroon (1879). As usual, someone in Australia claimed the first trials in 1873 at

a place called Bala but they were well behind the “pack”. Even the Welsh did not get into that act until even later. It has become an international sport as I found out when staying at a Bed and Breakfast house in rural Scotland in 1996. The first question we faced from the host was ‘D’ye know Ginger Anderson?’ Turned out our host was the President of the Scottish Dog Trialing Assn and Ginger was a well-known NZ dog trailist from Omarama – and yes we knew of Ginger! Small world.

The first competition was held on the station owned by Holmes and Campbell on Dog Trial Flat, Hillend, which is on your right just after where Riverbank Road meets the Cardrona Valley Road (heading south). “Each shepherd (13 entered), with his dog, was required to drive three wild hill wethers, turned out of a yard, about a quarter of a mile, put them in a yard of five hurdles, without a wing, and return them to the start place within 30 minutes” The judges were Mr B P Bayly of Clyde and Mr T Allan. Mr H Campbell acted as referee. First Prize was £5 and Second Prize £2 – not inconsiderable sums in those days, more so to a lowly paid shepherd.

Wanaka remembers the early dog trails with a sculpture erected by the Wanaka Collie Club on the base of Mt Iron just above the Mount Iron car park off State Highway 6 coming into town.



OUR PUBLICATIONS

The Society has published a small number of books and booklets over the years. Three are still for sale:

Skirt Tales – Historical Stories from the Upper Clutha - \$25. This is the 3rd Edition and is available from the Society, Paperplus Wanaka, and the libraries at Wanaka and Hawea.

125, Look Alive – 125 Years of Schooling in the Wanaka District - \$12.00. Available from the Society or the Wanaka Library.

The Upper Clutha – 150 Years - \$5. A short history of the Upper Clutha district. Available from the Society or the Wanaka Library.

Courageous and Free – Stories of Upper Clutha WW1 Soldiers and Nurse – **Sold Out!** – but we are investigating publishing another edition.

Postage is extra – please enquire from the Society.

THE UPPER CLUTHA MĀORI

Ken and Margaret Thomlinson have worked on publishing a small booklet on the history of Māori in the Upper Clutha covering the period since Māori first arrived in NZ. Ken has researched the subject in detail and the 39 pages provide a wealth of information. Copies are available from the Wanaka Library at a cost of \$10 (or directly from Ken and Margaret).

100 YEARS AGO

The Cromwell Argus reported that: “We have been experiencing bright sunny days and frosty nights. the frosts are quite severe for this month, and the grass will

suffer by them. A change came on Tuesday, and in the evening we had a shower, but the weather has cleared again.” The Otago Witness reporter had a different view, admittedly 20 days later: “The weather for the past month has been more like spring than winter. Up to the present we have had very little frost – in fact, it has been very dry for this time of year. Last week a strong gale of wind blew for a few hours, and some damage was done. The Bathing House on the shore at Pembroke was blown up on the beach, over some bushes, and came to a still in the middle of the road.” Was this a forerunner to the idea of no buildings on the foreshore and closing Ardmore Street to the traffic???

Thomas McLouglin, who was moving to Oamaru, sold his farm at Luggate to Robert Kingan of Hawea who in turn sold his farm at Hawea to the local schoolmaster, Mr McDermid. Mr W A Schieb of Queensberry, sold his farm to Mr D McPherson of Lowburn – plenty of property sales going on.

And 2,500 sheep walked through Pembroke on their way to winter over at McPherson’s property in the Matukituki Valley – not something we see today – just replaced with tourists!

JO’S NOTES AND UPDATES

Wednesday morning research sessions are in full swing. Any new volunteers are most welcome.

Our database “People Biographies” contains the Upper Clutha Pioneer Family Register plus information on other local ‘identities’. This valuable information is constantly growing.

PLANS FOR THIS YEAR

We are proceeding to produce a booklet on historical sites in the Upper Clutha. The researching and photography is underway under Graham Dickson’s leadership.

MORE IRISH ‘MATTERS’



A bit hard to read so here is the little ‘tale’:

*Some Guinness was spilt on the barroom
floor when the pub was shut for the night.*

*Out of his hole crept a wee brown mouse
and stood in the pale moonlight.*

*He lapped up the frothy brew from the
floor, then back on his haunches he sat,
And all night long you could hear him roar,
“Bring on the god damn cat!”*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held on 21 May. There has been no change to the membership of the Executive and Committee.

It was a close run to get a quorum now that our financial membership had increased to 44 meaning that we had to have 11 financial members present. Fortunately, exactly 11 turned up.

Proposed activities for the coming year will keep the Society very busy.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription remains at \$10 (which in reality is a very small amount compared to other organisations).

Subscriptions for this financial year are now due. Please pay these via internet banking if at all possible. The account number is 03-1739-0012311-00 and record your name in the Reference Field. It makes the Treasurer's job that much easier. If you cannot pay by internet banking, drop your payment into the Library on a Wednesday morning (9-11am) when the Records Room will be open.

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 and Incorporated in 2010, 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.

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 over \$5 are tax deductible – please ask for a receipt.

Membership Subscriptions for year ending 31/3/2020 are \$10-00.

Website:

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

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