

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)

AUTUMN 2020 - VOLUME NINE

MARCH 2020

Welcome to the new decade and our first newsletter for the decade.

A VERY MOBILE CHURCH OF MANY NAMES AND GREAT AGE

As you travel through Cardrona on the way to the Crown Range, you will pass, on your right, the original Cardrona School and a small church named The Lady Fatima Church. But that is not its original name nor its original purpose, and nor its original site. It has had a very chequered history.

Originally it was an annex to the All Nations Hotel and used as a miners recreation hall, eventually being used for dances, weddings and other social gatherings. The Hotel itself (opened in 1874) was burned down in 1895. John Willoughby then purchased the land and what remained, from the then owner, Mrs Knowles. The purchase included the untouched outbuildings. Tim

Enright then arranged to purchase the hall from John for a reported £35 and it was shifted across the road by horse and sledge. The Cardrona community got together and raised funds by various means e.g. concerts, to convert the hall into a church for the Catholic faithful. A Mr Bisset was engaged to convert it and it was reported that *"It will be a very beautiful little church when finished. There are leadlights of cathedral glass"*.

It was all completed in 1902 and on 11 May it was opened *"in the presence of a very large congregation. The church was dedicated for divine service under the patronage of St Bridget of Ireland. The Cardrona people feel very proud of their little church, and justly so, ..."*¹ So the Church started its new life with the name "St Bridgets".

"St Bridget" must have fallen out of favour as by the early 1926² it was known as St Johns as recorded in newspapers of the

¹ Lake County Press, Issue 1013, 15 May 1902

² Lake Wakatip Mail, Issue 3721, 30 November 1926

time. It is not known when or why this change of name occurred or even if it is correct (further research is currently being undertaken) but according to the newspapers it was still the name used in November 1946. The last reported wedding in the Church at Cardrona took place on 20 November 1946 between Johanna Scurr and Harry Miller. Tim Scurr tells me that the name of the church on his aunt and uncle's Marriage Certificate is recorded as St Joseph's – another new name.

In 1952, the church building was moved to Wanaka where it was known as Our Lady of Fatima Church. At some stage it was plastered with roughcast and was used until about 1985 when it was decided to replace it with a new church building. Tim Scurr tells the story, that he heard on the radio of the proposal to demolish the old building and that builders were preparing it for a fire brigade practice! He jumped in his car and raced to town. An hour later he had bought back the building for about \$300 but he only had 10 days to remove it. With the help of Bob Galvin and the Wanaka Rotary Club, the building was jacked up off the piles ready for transport. Tim organised for John Scannell to transport the building back to Cardrona. Eddie Jones, a builder living at the Cardrona Hotel, organised the paperwork and marked out the foundations in the school grounds. Then with the help of Martin Curtis and others, piles were dug in and Tim's tractor pulled the building into place and set it down on the tenth day.

The church was then renovated and the roughcast previously applied in Wanaka was removed. The wood underneath was in a sound condition and in the main, only needing a repaint.

This time, the name of the Church stayed the same as was used in Wanaka – Our Lady of Fatima Church.

It now sits proudly for all to see, in the Cardrona Domain, along with the old school buildings.



OUR COMPUTER REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Over the past 6 months or so we have been working on a project to replace our computer as it has occasionally been having “grandad sleeps” at inopportune times. It is old in computer terms, having been purchased in 2012. Microsoft also no longer supports the operating system which was also another factor to consider.

The Committee decided to purchase not only a new desktop but a laptop as well to accommodate the Society's needs outside of the Records Room. Some updating of software was also needed.

With the help of the Central Lakes Community Trust, the Otago Community Trust, and a grant from Queenstown Lakes District Council, a substantial part of the

funding required was achieved. We are very grateful for the support from these trusts and QLDC.

The ITCentre in Wanaka is undertaking the purchase and installation of the new equipment and software (they have also donated a considerable part of their time to the project which is also very appreciated). They have discovered that Microsoft will grant us 10 free licences for Office 365 (because we are a registered charity) and this opens a “new world” to us in terms of communication and storage of our files. It also enables us to have the new Hawea History Room as part of the system – no more danger of losing USB sticks carrying valuable research files!

It will be a short while before everything is installed and training is undertaken but we are looking forward to full completion – maybe within the next month.

WANAKA CEMETERY TOUR

Our members were invited to join the Wanaka Genealogy Group on a short tour of the old Wanaka Cemetery in Stone Street late last month (January).

Ken and Margaret Thomlinson organized the tour and spoke on the history of the Cemetery and about a number of graves of notable pioneers of Wanaka and the surrounding district. Many of the graves are now unmarked but through research, the names of those buried in them, have been recorded.

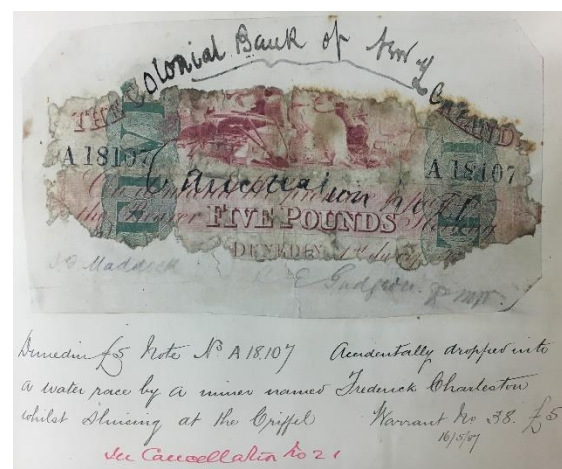
Many of you may be surprised to learn that the original boundaries of the cemetery are quite different from what we see today. The western boundary extended down into part of what is now Stonebrook Drive and is now covered by houses etc. This lower area

of the cemetery was not being used for burials so Sir Percy Sargood, a previous owner of Wanaka Station which surrounded the Cemetery, offered a land swap - he would take over six acres of the lower area and swap it for the equivalent area to the eastern side making for a relatively flat area for the whole cemetery. This transaction duly took place.

Many thanks to Ken and Margaret for organizing the tour and for their research - and to the Wanaka Genealogy Group for their invitation for our members to join them.

HE LOST A FIVER! A CRIFFEL MINER'S STORY

You will recall that in June last year I wrote about Fat Boys and the Criffel Goldfields. Well it transpires that our Newsletter is being read by a lot more people than we thought. A few days ago, completely out of the blue, came an email from the BNZ Archives Curator in Wellington, Tanya Connor. Tanya had come across a £5 bank note from The Colonial Bank of New Zealand that was somewhat worse for wear but had a tale to tell.



It is a bit hard to read and only the central part of the note exists, so I have reprinted

it (and two other photos) on the last page of this newsletter.

It was April 1887 and a miner by the name of Frederick Charleston was working on a tail race up on the Criffel goldfield. The rest of the story is best told in his own words (see the last page for a photo of his sworn statement).

"I Frederick Charleston of Criffel, Wanaka, Otago in the Colony of New Zealand do solemnly swear and sincerely declare that about 4 weeks ago, while working a Tail Race at Criffel, two five pound- £5 – notes of the Colonial Bank of New Zealand, Dunedin issue, which were in my trousers worked out of my pocket and dropped into the Tail Race above mentioned and were washed down the Race by the force of the water. I succeeded in finding one of the notes far down the channel but the other has been lost and I believe completely destroyed. The £5 note has not lost its numbers or Branch name but the date, officers signatures and part of the Bank's name and outside portion of the note has been lost completely.

And I make this solemn Declaration conscientiously, believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of an Act of the General Assembly of New Zealand intituled "The Justices of the Peace Act 1882"

Declared at Cromwell this 2nd Day of May 1887 Frederick X (his mark) Charleston."

Frederick was refunded his £5, which in those days was a lot of money – the equivalent spending power of about \$2,128 today. No doubt the refund was gladly accepted with much relief though it was only half of his loss – and he had to pay 2/6d stamp duty on the Declaration!

A photograph of a complete 1884 £5 Note has been provided on the back page for comparison.

But he was lucky to recover even part of one note when you look at the photo by Doug Brightwell taken at the end of a tailrace on the Criffel (probably before 1920).



What happened to Frederick? Well I know from the Electoral Rolls, that in 1890 he was still a miner, resident at Cardrona. After that there is nothing, not even a death record, so maybe he left New Zealand.

Special thanks to Tanya at the BNZ Heritage Collection. You can view their web page at <https://www.bnzheritage.co.nz>

AN INTERESTING WEBSITE

I know this has nothing to do with history but whilst I was listening to the radio during the rainstorm that hit the lower South Island recently, the announcer mentioned a

website called www.windy.com . It has fascinating maps showing winds, rainfall, temperatures etc for virtually everywhere in the world and it seems to be right up to date. I think it is worth a quick look.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This has been penciled in for the 15th May. If you are a “local” member, please also pencil in this date. We need a quorum of 25% of our members to attend and with total financial membership numbers now at 50 (an all-time record), and an increasing number of new members being from “out of town”, it is important that we get local members to attend. At the last AGM we just scraped through with the right number attending.

In due course, a notice of the AGM will be sent out to everyone as well as being advertised.

We are always ready to welcome new members for the committee so don't be afraid to put your name forward. New skills and ideas keep the Society flourishing and providing our growing community with a much-needed resource.

100 YEARS AGO

For a change, the 100 Years ago weather report comes from a child living at Queensberry. Do you remember the column in the Otago Witness called Dot's Little Folk? Perhaps not as they started being published over 130 years ago! The column was an avenue for children to write to Dot on any subject they pleased.

Dear Dot,—It has been very hot lately, and also very dry, so everything is burning up; but the fruit ripens better. I have been gathering birds' eggs, and I have 758. The birds here do a lot of mischief—the thrushes eat the cherries, the sparrows eat the grain, while the starlings go for the young peas and other young vegetables. I went for a trip round Lake Wanaka as far as Glendhu Peninsula. I stayed at a friend's place for four days, then came home, after being at Luggate sports on the way down. The drive round the lake is really lovely. The veronicas and clematis were both in bloom, and looked very pretty.—Yours truly,
MAIL GIRL (Queensberry).

And from Cardrona:

Dear Dot,—Our brother Jack is with us now; he came in the mail car. The baby is nearly crawling now. New Potato lost his horse up the creek. My father is rabbiting now, but he is not in for tea yet. I hear sugar is very scarce. We have a new school teacher here, and she is very nice. Our other school teacher went away, and she gave us all a prize. My auntie is away now. All the schools are closed excepting Cardrona School. There are 16 going to our school. I have two playmates. It does not get dark for a long time. My sister is going to write to the page next year. We have not many hens laying now, but we have only 12 hens. My birthday is on Sunday, and I am going to ask some friends up. Mr Scurr has a good crop of oats. The ground is very hard up here. We have cricket, and I like it very much. I have a pet kitten, and it is black. I call it Toby.—Yours truly,
WHITE-ROSE COTTAGE (Cardrona).

I wonder who lived at White Rose Cottage?

Louisa Alice Baker was the first “Dot” as a writer for the Otago Witness. The first reference to the column I have discovered was in July 1886 (see the next page). The column continued until 1932 in the Otago Witness before moving to the Otago Daily Times.

LETTERS FROM LITTLE FOLK .

As long as ever there are any little folks on the face of the earth, they will be fond of having stories told them. The grown-up people have all the rest of the paper to themselves, full of news from all parts of the world, and a great deal of other interesting reading; but this one little corner is for the children expressly—their story, their poetry, their letters—and Dot will never find any matter that interests the children too trivial to attend to, and hopes before long to be regarded as their friend. Children take as much interest in the affairs of one another as grown-up people do, and always like to hear what one another are doing, so here is a little letter Dot received this week:—

DEAR DOT,—We had a fine time one day last week. We had a holiday from school, and my uncle took my cousins and me out on the harbour in a boat, to a place where there were a lot of shells. Auntie wanted some shells for the garden walk. We gathered two sack's full, and then got into the boat again to go home; but going home we got stuck in the mud. My cousins were very frightened and began to cry, but uncle threw a bag of the shells overboard, which lightened the boat, and we got off safely. —Yours truly,

JO'S NOTES AND UPDATES

Hi from Jo. We started our Wednesday morning research sessions for 2020 on 5 February. If you are looking for local historical information or early photos, call down to the Library between 9am and 11am.

The indexing of John McCrone's articles in the Alpine News has been completed and work continues on his articles in the Lakesider.

VOLUNTEER TASKS: If you can volunteer an hour or two of your time, we have tasks requiring no special expertise which are best done in the Records Room at the Library. This includes:

- (a) Indexing books
- (b) Abstract summary writing of oral history interviews for the computer literate, either working from home

on your own computer, or on Wednesday mornings in the Library.

Phone me for further details – (03) 443 8123.

TOURISM

The tourism industry is nothing new to the Upper Clutha – they were advertising it over 150 years ago (Cromwell Argus, 29 December 1869). I wonder if the Theodore Russell and Charles Hedditch had foreseen the industry growth in Wanaka to what it is now?

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS.

—o—

WANAKA HOTEL, PEMBROKE.

The above hotel, which is delightfully situated on the margin of the Wanaka Lake, offers to the tourist and pleasure-seeker advantages rarely to be met with.

The scenery in the neighbourhood is exceedingly picturesque; and on an Island in the Lake there is excellent rabbit-shooting.

A large PLEASURE-BOAT is kept for the accommodation of visitors, and every care is taken to provide means for their enjoyment while staying at the WANAKA HOTEL, which is universally admitted to be one of the most comfortable and best conducted houses in the Province.

The Proprietors of the WANAKA HOTEL can confidently state that a more pleasant method of passing a few days free from the turmoil and care of business, than by a sojourn in the neighbourhood of the picturesque and romantic Wanaka Lake, can scarcely be imagined.

THE STORE,

In connection with the hotel, is well supplied with Groceries, Household Utensils, Ironmongery, Mining Tools, &c.

HEDDITCH & RUSSELL,

Proprietors.

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. Postage is \$5-50 if required.

125, Look Alive – 125 Years of Schooling in the Wanaka District - \$12.00. Available from the Society or the Wanaka Library. Postage is \$7-00 if required.

The Upper Clutha – 150 Years - \$5. A short history of the Upper Clutha district. Available from the Society or the Wanaka Library. Postage is \$5-50 if required.

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

Postage is extra – NZ Post Bubble Bags are used to protect the books.

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/>

Email: uchrsoc@gmail.com

FREDERICK CHARLESTON'S £5 NOTE

