



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 2020 - VOLUME TEN

JUNE 2020

Well the last few weeks have been history making, but we will leave that to someone else to report on sometime in the far future. Afterall, it is not over yet!

The Committee trusts everyone has survived the lockdowns OK. Our hearts go out to those who may have lost loved ones and trust that our communities rally around and support those who may have lost their jobs and businesses. If ever there was a case for supporting our own communities and businesses, it is now. By the time this newsletter reaches you, we should be at Level One and enjoying a bit more of normal life.

UPDATE ON THE CARDRONA CHURCH

The mystery of the naming of the Church remains despite further investigations. Local historian Ray O'Callaghan (author of Cardrona – 150 Years in the Valley of Gold) has not heard of the names St John and St Joseph being used. The 1926 marriage

certificate of Patrick Enright and Margaret Torrey definitely recorded the Church as St John's however the minister, Father Hyland, was not a local. He had been relieving at Arrowtown from Rangiora and maybe he or the Registrar became confused – a theory.

MAKARORA JACK & HIS FAMILY

I was given Makarora Jack's obituary written by Ian McCrone with the suggestion that it could be an article for the Newsletter. Jack's birthname was John Lange, not a name I had come across during my readings to date of the history of the Upper Clutha, however often the story comes 'alive' with a little research.

Jack came from a wellknown Makarora family line – his maternal grandparents were Caleb Pipson (aka Strathallan Jack) and his wife Ann Jane n e Hendry. Caleb was one of the first settlers at Makarora and his wife was the first woman settler in

Makarora. They had 12 children, one of which was Nora, b.1876. Norah married John (aka Jack) Lange Snr (son of another John and Broda Lange) in 1904 and 4 months later gave birth to Jack and his twin sister, Mary, at Makarora. Makarora Jack's father had been working on Minaret Station prior to the marriage but lived with Nora and the children for a short while in Makarora before moving to Hawea Flat where Jack Snr was a labourer and then a shepherd.

At some point, Jack Snr became the puntsman at Albert Town. A newspaper article about a function "to mark the passing of the punts and the advent of the bridges" on 27 June 1931 stated that Jack Snr had been the puntsman for 15 years. This is confusing as he does not give his occupation as "Ferryman" until 1938, 7 years after the punt ceased operating. Thereafter, until his death, he gave his occupation as "Ferryman" so maybe it was something of a status factor. The newspaper reported that during the 15 years he "made many friends amongst those who liked to occasionally stay out late, but had no desire to spoil a happy evening by being compelled to swim the river in order to reach home."

But he could be bribed! This story is told in Roxburgh's Wanaka Story: "The story told, while Jack (Snr) Lange, who succeeded Templeton, was in charge of the punts, the quickest way of encouraging Jack to operate after hours was to produce a bottle of whisky; if you volunteered the whisky, then Jack volunteered to work the punt. It was not that the punt was difficult to operate; a child could do it. This was proved on at least one occasion. One lazy Sunday afternoon, when punt business as usual had ceased between 2pm and 4pm,

and apparently all civilised people were supposed to be taking their siesta, the puntman was also setting the example; he was asleep in his hut in front of Templeton's smithy, and woke as if he had been dreaming that a child was taking the punt across the river, he awoke to find that it was true. No doubt the youthful puntman enjoyed his brief hour of command, but it must have been less pleasant for him when he returned the punt to the south side of the Clutha later that afternoon. The lad responsible is now G.L.Norman (Gordon Leslie Norman?)."

Maungawera children had to cross and re-cross on the punt every schoolday. On occasions the punt was put out of action by a flooded river. Then the children had a holiday. Some recall the day when, before their eyes, the punt with the puntman aboard was carried away by a high river, and Jack Lange, the puntman, calmly took out his pipe and enjoyed a smoke while his craft was swept along in the current (what else could he do against the mighty Clutha?). Luckily it came to a rest against a bank a quarter of a mile below the staging.

Jack and Nora had two unfortunate occurrences in 1931. On 16 November, their son Douglas aged just 26, (brother to Makarora Jack) passed away at Cromwell hospital. Seven days later, the body of Alva Gordon McCausland aged 24, was found dead in their home. It was an apparent suicide and one wonders if the two deaths are somehow connected. How Alva came to be living at John and Nora's is unknown but he did come from a broken home - his mother remarried when he was just 6 years old, then remarried again later on.

But so much for Jack Lange Snr. Young Makarora Jack worked as a musterer,

farmhand, labourer and cattle drover before getting a surfaceman's job in 1948 on the gravel road from Wanaka to the Haast Pass. His equipment was a bicycle, wheelbarrow, pick and shovel. His job was to clear slips on the 25km stretch of road along the shores of Lake Wanaka between Makarora Station and the saddle (The Neck) from Lake Hawea.

He continued for several years after the Haast Pass Highway was opened officially in 1965. On his retirement, the Ministry of Works allowed him to set up a home at Boundary Creek.

For some years, this residence (basically three huts put together in the bush) had the only telephone in the area and Jack made many calls for stranded motorists.



Jack and his cat outside his home

In January 1994 a major flood brought huge landslides down across the highway and sent water and gravel through the property. After an anxious night, Jack was persuaded to leave his camp by Sir Tim Wallis, who dropped by in his helicopter while searching for people cut off by the raging creeks. The house was damaged beyond repair and Jack moved to a retirement lodge in Wanaka.

In 1995, he went back to Makarora to unveil a plaque to mark the completion of the sealing of SH6.



The last stretches of the road to be done, were along the lake where he had spent 25 years filling potholes.

Jack passed away on 8 June 1996 aged 92 and was buried in the Wanaka Cemetery. Interestingly at death, his name was recorded as John Hendry Lange. He used his grandmother's maiden name as his second name from time to time.

SIDNEY MORRIS CORNELIUS

Sometimes we come across the names of past residents of the area that mean little to us today, perhaps because they did not leave descendants living in the area to remind us now and then of their contributions to the Upper Clutha. I came across Sidney because his name was spelt differently on two photographs held in the Archives. So started some research into what was his correctly spelt name that took me as far as the UK and the discovery of relatives living in Western Australia.

Sidney was born in Chard, a small village near Crewkerne, Somerset, England and baptised on 29 Sept 1858. His father was also named Sidney Morris Cornelius and was an auctioneer/surveyor.

The family moved to London shortly afterwards and somewhere between 1871 and 1881 moved to Cheltenham in

Gloucestershire. Sidney (Jnr) was supposed to have married in England but his wife died after 4 years – she “lost her reason” and Sidney decided to come to NZ.¹



A colourised photo of Sidney

I doubt this part of the story as Sidney was in Macetown in 1881, working as a miner. He was also supposed to have worked his passage from England to Dunedin, travelled around Canterbury and Westland, and then came to Wanaka for a few months in 1880 before going to Wakatipu, Lumsden, Mossburn and other parts of Southland for “a few years” before returning to Wanaka where lived for close on twenty years. Bearing in mind Sidney died in 1904, the years do not add up – he would have had to be married at 16 or 17 years of age which is

unlikely. A Cornelius family researcher has found no record of Sidney ever marrying and he was known as a bachelor here in Wanaka.

We can for certain, say he was in NZ in 1881, and possibly he lived in Wanaka permanently from about 1894.

Sidney taught himself the carpentry trade and gained a good reputation for his work. He was apparently well-liked and he ended up serving the community in a number of ways. It was stated that he had a good education and he was in much request from public bodies. He was Chairman of the School Committee, treasurer of the tennis and various sports clubs, an Anglican Church officer, undertaker and the census officer. Just before his death, he had studied ambulance work, “and procured all the appliances, also an expensive edition of one of the latest Encyclopaedias, which will give him a clear bent to his ideas. He lived in Wanaka so long because the climate agreed with the asthma which formerly gave him a lot of trouble.”

On the day that Sidney suddenly died, he had been out at Hawea and on returning had met Mr Allan(?) Bremner and asked him “come to his house and help him balance the cash book in connection with the St Patrick’s Day sports.” Mr Bremner arrived at Sidney’s home 30 minutes later to find Sidney dead on his bed. The “sports balance sheet was on his table and the writing left off in the middle of a word with a big scratch down the page made by the pen.” It appeared he fell ill suddenly and went to lay on his bed.

¹ “the Country – Lake Wanaka” (Otago Witness, 13 April 1904.

An Inquest was immediately arranged but had to be postponed until Friday when Doctor Morris arrived from Cromwell to conduct a post-mortem. This was finished shortly before midnight - the Jury was waiting at Mrs Russell's hotel to hear Doctor Morris's evidence and (as quoted) "finish their labours".

Sidney's funeral took place the next afternoon at the Anglican Church. It was apparently the first funeral at that Church.

After his sudden death Sidney was described as a "man of many parts, and of sterling worth". His home was a "tidy little cottage with workroom attached" near to the corner of Lakeside Road and Tramore Street.

As an aside, the research disclosed that Sidney's siblings also had the name Sidney and Morris included as part of their names. It seems to be a family tradition. And who was the Sydney Mildred Grace Cornelius b.1898 in Wellington? Too much of a coincidence not to be related somehow.

COMPUTER NETWORK UPGRADE

It is getting closer! The main computer to be installed in the Library is ready to go and all of the files from the old computer have been transferred across.

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

As a result of the new computer upgrade, the Society has changed its email address but please note that the old one still works for the time being. Any inward messages

are automatically forwarded to the new Inbox.

We will be emailing all of our contacts to advise the new address as soon as we have the whole of the network and the main computer installed at the Library.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Covid-19 Lockdown caused the Society to have an "on-line AGM" via emails. We were required to hold an AGM by 31 May and like many other clubs and societies in Wanaka, this was the only prudent way to go. The Financial Reports, President's reports, Minutes of last year's AGM etc. were distributed to all financial members on 17 May with a request to reply by email with the voting on the relative matters. This was unusual, but we are in unusual times, and we understand that the Charities Commission is OK with the process.

A rule change was considered to change the quorum numbers required for the AGM. It was passed but still requires the approval of the Registrar of Societies and the Charities Commission.

All motions presented were passed unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – MAY 2020

The Society has had another successful year thanks to good participation by members. Membership has continued to grow and has reached 50 during the year, probably the highest it has ever been.

The quarterly newsletter has continued and circulated to members, libraries and

museums. The increased interest in membership is probably due in a large part to the newsletter and the effort put in by Ken Allan is much appreciated. During the year, Ken was also deeply involved in putting together a display at the Transport Museum covering the history of the district. The display includes information from the Society and is a useful addition to local awareness of our history.

A major project over the year has been the upgrading of our computer system. This system is now vital to our society as it enables our records to be stored and accessed when needed.

The old system had been cobbled together over the years as the society grew and parts were old, lacking functionality and were becoming unreliable. A number of committee members spent many hours carefully defining our computer needs, both now and into the future, and in conjunction with our IT consultants a new system has been designed and purchased. The new system will enable more to be done with greater reliability. It is in the final stages of commissioning. The upgrade has been possible due to grants from the Council, the Central Lakes Trust and the Otago Community Trust, our thanks to these bodies for their continued support for our society.

Work on the records has continued during the year, including accessioning of new records and making real progress on digitising our photograph collection to make it more available. The new material has also included a lot of photographs. The Society has received a large number of research enquires during the year, a lot

of these were interesting and the research involved has as well as helping the enquirer, often resulted in adding to our knowledge

The Societies' publication which include the 150 Years book, Skirt Tails and 125 Look Alive continue to have small but steady sales, these are an important part of informing our community of its past. Our community involvement also continued with the awarding of our annual History Prize at Mt Aspiring College. This year it was won by Ollie Williams Holloway for his project "Otago Goldfield Dredging Boom".

Recently Covid 19 has had a major impact on the operation of the society, the level 4 lockdown closing the library and stopping any access to the Records Room. It is probable that some access restrictions will continue for the foreseeable future affecting how we operate. It is possible that if we move to Level 2 some access may be possible but probably limited to 1 or 2 people at a time with strict adherence to sanitising and distancing requirements. These requirements will be set and controlled by the library. Dealing with this new world will be one of the challenges for the new committee.

During the year the committee has met from time to time as needed to make decisions, deal with finances and address operational matters. The committee together with David Simmers who took over the role of secretary as a change from his many years as treasurer, Ken Allan as treasurer and Jo Wilton as Vice-president, has ensured that the society is well managed; many thanks.

The Society's finances are sound and there is a good balance in the bank with income slightly exceeding expenses, in spite of expenditure on the new computer system. This was largely due to one off donations and grants

In my opinion, it has been a good year for the Society; much good work has been achieved. The Society is in good heart and doing a worthwhile job in preserving and making available much of the history of the district.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members who freely give of their time to make the Society a success.

Graham Dickson

JO'S NOTES AND UPDATES

After the compulsory "rest" with Lockdown level 4, 3, and now 2, at the time of writing, we are still unable to access the Historical Room in the Library.

Meanwhile many hours have been spent by several of us from home indexing books, documents, writing instruction documents and the newsletter, as well as managing the new shared computer filing system. The committee members involved still have many hours work ahead.

Abstract summary writing of oral history interviews is still to be undertaken.

Research requests hopefully can be resumed soon.

As soon as we can access the Library, we will send out an email to everyone.

100 YEARS AGO

Telephones arrive in Pembroke and school is closed due to a flu breakout – sounds familiar! In addition, the Luggate Victory Ball was cancelled and the Bachelors Ball at Pembroke was postponed, all due to the flu.

20 June 1920

The Telegraph Department have had considerable difficulty in getting material for the Pembroke telephone exchange, and are still short of some three miles of wire. Members on the party line which is completed can communicate with each other, but as yet are not connected with the office. That, however, will soon be, as to-day (Thursday), Mr Lakeman and his staff are busy putting in the switch board, and making the connections.

Influenza, fortunately not in a dangerous form, has been general throughout the district, not many households escaping. Latest reports are that the trouble is abating. The school, which has been closed for three weeks because of the epidemic, re-opens on Monday.

Following on from the previous articles on Makarora Jack and Sidney Cornelius (both bachelors), I wonder what they, and we, would make of the concerns about the existence of bachelors in 1920 as shown in the following news cutting?:

A Warning to Bachelors.

OVERSEA Ministers of Finance have a knack nowadays of following Old Country precedents in taxation, and we quite expect that by this time New Zealand's very own William has made himself conversant with the very latest dodges of the Imperial Exchequer to raise the all-necessary dibs. It will be interesting to see whether Mr Massey will take a leaf out of Mr Austen Chamberlain's book and put a

special tax on bachelors. Mr Chamberlain has evidently come to the conclusion that the British bachelor has been getting off too easily. He now proposes to penalise him by making the new income tax exemption limit £250 for married people and £150 in the case of bachelors—and, of course, spinsters—for your income tax collector recognises no sex differences. Thus the long-advocated tax on bachelors becomes an accomplished fact. The new legislation practically means that a bachelor paying three shillings in the pound income tax shall pay £15 more a year than his benedict brethren. It is not a very oppressive penalty after all, but it will mean a big annual difference to the British Treasury.

It is an open question whether something on the same lines should not obtain in New Zealand. What effect such an impost would have on the marriage rate it is, of course, impossible to say. Your really hardened old bachelor, selfishly attached to the personal luxuries in which single life enables him to indulge, might still think marriage, with all its duties and responsibilities, worth avoidance at the cost of a penalty based upon the new British differentiation, but at least there would be some satisfaction to the married people—that the bachelor was to be subjected to some special toll to the State. The objection may be made that the extra tax may prevent the bachelor from saving up for marriage, but we fear that too many young New Zealanders never even think of saving until they contemplate matrimony. If they can fritter away a large portion of their earnings on selfish amusements they might just as well let the State take some reasonable toll of their spare cash. We warn our bachelor friends against the all too-possible “wrath to come.”

THE MUSEUM PROJECT

The Society was invited by Jason Rhodes, the Curator of the National Transport and Toy Museum to put together a display on the history of the Upper Clutha. Eighteen months later it is complete along with a timeline, a duplicate of the slide-show that also shows at the Wanaka Library, a selection of historic photos, a copy of a 1836 map of Maori settlement in the Upper Clutha donated by Richie Hewitt etc, etc. More is to be added.



Reaction from locals and overseas visitors has been very positive.

If you have never visited the Museum (located on the western side of the Wanaka Airport), it is worth a look – a trip down memory lane for most of us. There are over 600 vehicles, 20 planes and an estimated 60,000 toys and other items from the past.

Even adult sized pedal cars to play in! Your “ticket” is good for 3 consecutive days. They also have one of the largest toyshops in NZ at the Museum with something for all ages.

If you are a local Upper Clutha resident, ask Debbie or Jason about the “Locals Book”. You pay one standard entry fee and get a free 6 month pass.

SPANISH FLU VS. COVID-19

We have been through quite a traumatic period following the lockdown for Covid-19. Covid-19 will be a significant event in history for the whole world.

I wrote about the Spanish Flu in Newsletter Volume 4 and have chosen to repeat some excerpts as some things look familiar!!!

- This virulent strain of influenza struck the World in 1918 killing millions.
- About 9,000 died in NZ.
- Most of the deaths occurred in closely populated communities.
- The Upper Clutha was lucky, and I have only found the names of two residents who died of that strain of influenza.
- No doubt with the population being dispersed, the quick action to close schools and cancel public activities helped this result. The Government closed hotels, hairdressers and even Church services were suspended.

The following advertisement appeared in the Cromwell Argus which demonstrates the lengths the populace went to avoid catching influenza:

INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

INHALATION CHAMBER.

Melmore Terrace, Cromwell.
(Opposite National Bank.)

All travellers arriving in Cromwell are required to go through the chamber.

All residents of Cromwell and surrounding districts may take advantage thereof.

Influenza convalescents are specially required to go through the chamber.

HOURS: 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Daily.

Attendant in charge who will give certificate of having passed through the chamber.

A. M. BRODRICK,
Mayor.

Locally, John Vlietsra, a 46 year old farmer of Luggate passed away in early December.

The other death occurred, quite unfortunately and unnecessarily. Thomas Collins, a native of Albert Town and employee of Wanaka Station, died due to a visit to Queenstown. He had been required to attend a meeting of the Military Service Board. It had not been conveyed to him that the meeting had been cancelled beforehand (the War was over!) but he contracted the virus anyway. He returned to Pembroke on foot, via the Crown Range and wading the river aggravated his illness. He passed away a few days later. He was reported to be an industrious and popular citizen.

Ironically, given the current situation, the Spanish Flu was thought by some researchers to have originated in the USA.

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 31/3/2021 are \$10-00 per person.

Website:

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

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