

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 2021 - VOLUME THIRTEEN

MARCH 2021

EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

I have decided to try a different layout for the newsletter. Instead of two columns per page, you will note it is now just one column. The two principal reasons for this are to make it more readable for the eyesight challenged amongst the readers (myself included) and to be able to show pictures and maps etc. a bit bigger so that you can see more detail. I would welcome any feedback or suggestions (to treasurer@uppercluthahistory.org).

Possibly there is another reason – a change from all that was 2020. After all, even the USA is experiencing a marked change this year!

Addendum 27 Feb – That was the 'theory' until our Prime Minister put us all back a peg or two with a return to further restrictions last night!

Ah well, so here goes anyway.....

1913 – THE YEAR OF THE LORRY

The movement of bulk goods to, from, and around the Upper Clutha since Maori first passed through the area was largely limited to travel on foot, packhorses, drays pulled by bullocks or horses, rafts and canoes. That was until 1913.

That is not to say that motorized vehicles had not been used in the Upper Clutha area before 1913. Mt Cook Motor Services were providing service cars for transporting people (tourists usually) from Pukaki to Pembroke in December 1910. The development of motorized

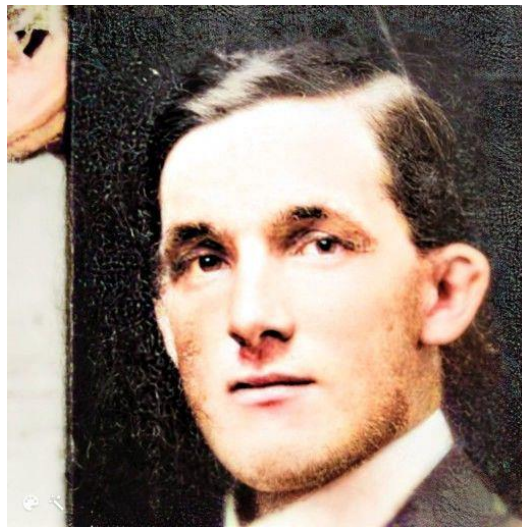
transport was in part restricted by the prohibition by the Councils on motor vehicles being used on certain roads in the area. However, apparently it did not stop a Mr Turnbull using his Model T – he apparently must have felt safe from the watchful eyes of Vincent County and Lakes County staff with their fines book! The catch-cry from some Councillors was that motor vehicles would “scare the horses”.

Additionally, the roads were also very rough, in many cases not more than a bridle track and some had huge ruts created by the wheels of the drays.

Perhaps not surprisingly, and in keeping with a trend in the Newsletters (not by design), it was a young man who first introduced a motorized lorry for commercial transport purposes to the Upper Clutha.

George Edward Partridge (b.1 Dec 1889), a young 22 year old from Lowburn (parents Henry and Annie Partridge), took the plunge and arranged to purchase a Commer lorry from the New Zealand agent in Oamaru, Walter E Searle. Walter had a thriving motor vehicle business selling and servicing cars, lorries and buses. He even ran a local bus service in Oamaru. The new Commer lorry was ordered from the Luton, England factory in 1912 and arrived in Dunedin on 19 January 1913. It was then handed over to George.

George had arranged to set up a partnership with Samuel Hunter¹, a well-known and respected carrier from Pembroke. It was announced in the newspapers on 3 March 1913 and the name of their firm was “Clyde-Upper Clutha Motor Carrying Co”.



Believed to be George Partridge in 1913 (a colourised photo)

Their principal goal was to provide “a regular service from Clyde to Upper Clutha and surrounding districts”. Certainly, there was a good demand for such a service. Grain was produced in the area in large volumes but transport was limited to drays and they were slow. Although the Flour Mill at Luggate had been in operation for some time, and was a boon to local farmers, flour, grain, wool etc. still had to be sent to Clyde whilst the locals continued

¹ Some Upper Clutha publications record his name as Sam Hunt but his surname was definitely Hunter as subsequently researched from a number of independent sources.

their discussions for the Government to build a railway from Clyde to Hawea Flat. The railway had been planned for a number of years and it appears on early maps, but it never came to fruition.



George at the wheel and Sam Hunter (standing on the rear of the lorry) outside the Albion Hotel (known now as the Luggate Hotel) on a promotional tour in late February 1913

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

**To Farmers, Runholders,
Business-men and the
General Public :**

MR GEORGE PARTRIDGE
begs to announce that he has landed an
up-to-date

Motor Lorry

and will this week continue the

Service

from

Clyde to Hawea Flat

and the surrounding district,
and is prepared to undertake the
transport of all classes of Goods,
Merchandise, Farm Produce etc., at
current rates.

All correspondence promptly attended
to. Inquiries solicited. Address :

GEORGE PARTRIDGE jr.,
Lowburn Ferry.

George was the lorry driver and it appears Sam was looking after the obtaining of freight contracts. The lorry was described as weighing 4.25 tons and had a body of the wagon 14ft by 7ft, and it was designed to carry a load of 6 tons. It was powered by a 40 hp engine fitted to a five-speed gear box. The wheels were “40 inch in diameter and fitted with twin solid rubber tyres giving an 11- inch tread on the driving wheel”. Top speed was 20 mph. All was not plain sailing however as the Dunedin Expansion League was still negotiating in early February with the Vincent County Council to allow motor traffic at certain hours of the day on certain roads. Motor traffic was completely prohibited in some places back then. Even special arrangements had to be made in the event of meeting a horse-drawn coach on the road.

The matter was resolved and it appears that the business went well. The only known issue with the lorry was the occasionally over-heating. This started occurring in early 1914.

Then disaster struck! Pat McCarthy, a farmer from Hawea Flat, was travelling down to Clyde on 22 April 1914 when he came across the lorry standing in the middle of the road near Rocky Point. The toolbox was open and the radiator cap was off. There was no sign of George. Pat travelled on to Lowburn and discovered that no one had seen George, so a search was instigated. It was noticed that a water jug that George had purchased a short while beforehand to top up the radiator was missing. Eventually it was surmised that George went down to the river with the jug to get some water to top-up the radiator but he probably slipped on the rocks at the river edge and fell in. The river is particularly “boisterous” at this point.

The last person to talk with George was Jack Oliver, the husband of one of my cousins. He farmed Run 236R just on the northern side of where the Lindis River enters the Clutha. Jack stated there was nothing amiss and after 10 minutes talking, George drove off towards the Lowburn Bridge.

George’s body was never found, but it was reported at the inquest that there were four gold dredges operating just downstream and it was possible his body was buried in the tailings.

And so the business ended. George’s mother was his executrix and she arranged auction of the lorry. It was sold on 1 June 2014 to Wm Reid & Sons for £1,295. So at least the lorry stayed in the Upper Clutha area.

As for Sam Hunter, he packed up and purchased a farm at Taieri Mouth which he farmed until he retired. He passed away in 1939 aged 73.

EVEN EARLIER TRANSPORT – THIS TIME FOR TOURISTS

Cyclists – you know those “annoying people who dare to ride on our roads”, (and I am one of them though not dressed in lycra!). In actual fact, cyclists have been on Upper Clutha roads a lot longer than motor vehicles ever have. A photo taken before 1905 shows seven adults

(locals) on the Luggate Punt, three of whom have bicycles and not a sign of a horse or any other form of transport (apart from the punt - see the next page).



Tourists were using bicycles in the Upper Clutha quite early on. On 23 Dec 1899, a party of four (Dr C P Knight, G H Bethune, R W Kirkby, and D Robertson - all from Wellington), left Palmerston on a cycle tour of Central Otago. Their journey was by way of Naseby, Clyde, Cromwell, Lake Wanaka, Gibbston, Cromwell again, Alexandra, and Roxburgh and ending in Dunedin. They reported that “the roads were not good, and a continuance of rain and some head-winds had to be put down as setoffs” to the “magnificent scenery”. They averaged expenditure of four shillings (40c) per day between them and “splashed out” on Christmas Day when they each spent two shillings on four sandwiches.

Clyde was found to “be very dusty” which led to “industry in removing traces of dust from the throat.” I will leave that to your imagination as to what that means. “Sand” was the first impression of Cromwell, Pembroke was described as “a pretty little place”, but the “environment of Wanaka is bare-looking, being almost treeless.”

They struck rain on the Crown Range and could not ride down the far side (I doubt they rode up the side from Cardrona as well) as the road had been washed out in places. They did take a ride on the steamer on Lake Wakatipu before heading for Dunedin. They actually rode from Roxburgh to Dunedin in one day and finished their tour on 3 January, just 12 days after they started their journey.

Given the road conditions of the day, I think 12 days was a pretty good run!

MORE CYCLISTS – 100 YEARS AGO

A report in the Otago Daily Times on 31 January 1921 discussed the idea in Christchurch of annually taxing bicycles. The Council must have seen this as a potential source of income as it was estimated that there were about 40,000 bicycles in the city. According to the 1921

Census, the Christchurch City area (including Lyttleton) had a population of 105,670, so that means an estimated +37% of the population (children included) had a bicycle. The mind boggles! No room for cars!

HAWEA RESIDENTS – YOUR RECORDS NEED URGENT HELP

Barbara Chinn has set up the Records Room at the Hawea Community Centre but she urgently needs some help. A couple of hours a week would be magic – as would be a little (and I mean little) knowledge of how to operate a computer (basic skills).

If you can help out with this job of preserving and recording the history of the Hawea District, please call Barbara on 03-4434333 or 021-1565576.

LAKES DISTRICT MUSEUM EXHIBITION – EARLY MAPS

The Museum in Arrowtown has an exhibition of early surveyor maps showing through to the 18 April. Sitting alongside the maps are heritage photos from the areas the maps cover.

<http://www.museumqueenstown.com/art-gallery/whats-on/>

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Although it is still just over 2 months away, we would ask that Financial Members give it some thought on how you may assist the committee. Not that there is anything wrong with the current committee – far from it, as they represent a huge resource of our history knowledge and spend countless hours recording it. But there is always the need for some “new blood” from time to time as we all get older. New ideas that come along are also welcomed. Give it some thought and maybe have a chat with President Graham (ph. 4438544).

JO'S UPDATE

This year has started well with new volunteers offering their services. Many thanks to those people. If anyone else is interested, please phone Jo at 021 1040405.

Our Wednesday morning regular opening of the Records Room at the Wanaka Library, from 9.00-11.00 has recommenced (with a short ‘blip’ for Covid19). For those who are curious to view the inside of the room, feel free to turn up, remembering we also have a continuous TV display of historical photographs running outside the room.

OUR PUBLICATIONS

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

Postage & Packaging is extra – 1 copy \$5-90, two copies \$8-60 (using NZ Post bags)

Skirt Tales – 100 Historical Stories of Women from the Upper Clutha Area, Central Otago - \$25. This is the 3rd Edition and is available from the Society, and the Wanaka Library. Very few copies are left.

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 – 2nd Edition – \$30 Available from Paperplus Wanaka and the Wanaka Library.

In addition, the Library has for sale, Ken Thomlinson's booklet titled "The Upper Clutha Maori".

PHOTOS

Copies of the photographs held in our records can be provided either as a digital file or a printed copy.

Costs are:

For individuals:

Digital file: \$10-00

Printed Copy: \$10-00 plus the cost of printing the Photo at Kodak, Wanaka.

For Non-profit Community organisations:

There is generally no fee for digital copies but a donation would be welcome. For printed copies, the Community organization will need to pay for the Kodak Wanaka printing cost.

For Commercial Organisations:

The fee is \$30.00 plus the cost of any printed copy.

Please note that ownership of the image lies with UCHRS and further copying requires our written approval and possibly an additional negotiated fee.

MAPS & RANDOM PHOTOS



A rare photo – the Lower Albert Town punt midstream, but more importantly, Newcastle Road where it originally ended at the punt landing. Dated about 1900.



1913 – if you look closely you can just see the Newcastle Road as it winds its way from Hawea Flat to the Lower Albert Town Punt



Mansons Motors in Ardmore Street where the now closed BP petrol station was located.
Photo taken in the early 1970s (the road looks in better condition than today!).

WHO ARE WE?

President: Graham Dickson

Vice President: Jo Wilton

Secretary: David Simmers

Treasurer/Editor: Ken Allan

Committee Members: Ken and Margaret Thomlinson, Bruce Foulds.

The Society was established in 1985, Incorporated in 2010, and became a Charity in 2014, 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 small 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 admin@uppercluthahistory.org.

The Society 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. Please note that the IRD require donor's full name and address

Membership Subscriptions for year ending 31/3/2021 are \$10-00 per person.

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

Email: admin@uppercluthahistory.org