

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)

SPRING 2021 - VOLUME FIFTEEN

SEPTEMBER 2021

## THE PROFESSOR OF MUSIC AND THE SHIPWRIGHT

It may be a surprise to some, but yes, Wanaka had its own resident who, away back in the early days, was to become a professional opera singer, teacher of music etc. and composer. But let us start off with the story of her husband to be.

Alfred Herman Pinn (nicknamed 'Black Tom'), was born 5 September 1838 in Sidbury, Devonshire, to Alfred Richard Pinn and his wife Sarah n<sup>ée</sup> Hood (or Wood). Records I have found suggest he had two siblings, Mary Ann and Edwin. Some local historians have suggested that he had a brother, Thomas Pinn who lived in Pembroke, however my research failed to discover such a person in the records in England and here in NZ. It is thought probable that the error has come about through the use of the nickname "Black Tom" given to Alfred.



THE LATE MR ALFRED PINN,

According to Alfred's Obituary in the Perth Sunday Times, Alfred served a shipbuilding apprenticeship at the Plymouth Dockyards before he came to the Victorian Goldfields in Australia and thence to New Zealand. It mentions that he came on the French barque "St Jane" in 1862 (an independent reference to this vessel has not been located as yet).

He has been described as a "miner-cum-sawyer" like many others of the time who arrived in the Upper Clutha. We do know that the infamous Henry Hill employed him building boats to move timber down the Clutha River. This had to be before 1865 as that

is the year Henry departed for South America, in a hurry and never to be seen again and with 75% of the payments due on a telegraph-pole contract in his back pocket. Unfortunately, Henry left without paying his sub-contractors, who included George Hassing. George chased after him to Dunedin, but Henry had too much of a head-start and had already disappeared.

Alfred established a cottage on Pigeon Island (Mou Waho) maybe about 1863 and gained a reputation as a boat builder. He also ran some 200 Merino sheep on the island. In 1868 he laid the keel for a schooner to be named the "Eureka" and contracted the man of many skills, George Hassing, to help him on that project. The "Eureka" was followed by the "Nun". Alfred laid the keel for the "Nun" about July 1873 and the vessel was launched on 2 February 1874. The story in the newspaper, was that it was named the "Nun" to commemorate a visit by the Lady Superior of a Dunedin Convent a few days earlier.

During Alfred's time at Lake Wanaka he did build the "Isabella" and a number of other small craft.

Alfred also traded with the "Nun" on the lake until 1877 when he sold his interest to Messrs Miller and Barrett (known as "The Boys").

But before that event, Alfred met and married Elizabeth Magdela Power on 3 March 1875 at the home of Theodore and Celia Russell, owners of the Wanaka Hotel. Elizabeth was the daughter of John and Julia Power n<sup>è</sup>e Shehan and was born on 12 Mar 1857 at Ballygunner, which is just on the outskirts of Waterford, Ireland. It is not known when she came to NZ.

Alfred and Elizabeth established a home at Albert Town and they had four children:

- Alfred Richard b.1877. (Like his father he may also have been known as Tom)
- David b.1880
- Herman Stephen b.1881
- Sarah Julia b.1884
- Pauline Letitia Theresa b.1886

Unfortunately, their son David was drowned on New Years Day 1885. He had slipped into the Clutha River just below Campbell and Mclean's Punt (the Upper Punt at Albert Town). Alfred searched for him down the river as far as the Lower Punt and on retracing his steps, found David's body in about four or five feet of water opposite the Albert Hotel. A sad start to the year.

Returning to Alfred's work. He had indicated after he sold the "Nun" that he intended to leave the district, but was still around when disaster struck the "Nun" about the end of November 1877. It had not long been in the possession of the new owners when it sank at anchor just off Pigeon Island due to a high wind blowing water over the gunwales. It appeared to be a total loss which was of great concern as it was carrying a Mr Henderson's new steam engine for his sawmill. However, Mr Henderson arrived at the scene a few days later and discovered that his engine lay on the deck in just 15 – 18 feet of water. He acquired a diving suit and an air pump and Alfred donned the suit and explored the wreck after which he reported it as being in sound condition. The "Nun" was duly raised using empty casks and

then taken to Pembroke. Mr Henderson was much relieved – as were the owners of the “Nun”! Repairs were effected to the “Nun” but it was felt the name was now inappropriate, so it was re-launched as the “Saucy Kate”.


It seems that Alfred and his family did not leave the district as previously announced by Alfred. They had moved to a house near the outlet of Lake Hawea which unfortunately burnt down in 1882. He had taken up gold mining and was still working at that occupation in 1887 when his children were enrolled at Albert Town School. His address was then given as “Criffel. The school records then indicate that in 1888/9 the family moved to Dunedin.

This move is probably triggered by Alfred’s bankruptcy petitioned for, by himself, on 15 September 1887.

He had fallen on hard times and the following notice suggests that his net assets had been minimal:

**GAZETTE IN BANKRUPTCY.**

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V.  R.

**I N B A N K R U P T C Y.**

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**IN THE ESTATE OF ALFRED PINN, OF  
ALBERT TOWN.**

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**NOTICE** is Hereby Given that a **FIRST  
DIVIDEND** in the above Estate of **TWO  
SHILLINGS** in the **POUND** has been declared,  
and is now Payable by the Deputy Assignee.

**S. MEAD DALGLIESH,**  
Deputy Assignee.

**Cromwell, 28th May, 1888.**

The Stones Directory 1888-93 lists him as a ships carpenter living at Maori Hill, Dunedin, but by 1895 he was living in a less salubrious part of town in South Dunedin. Elizabeth must have entered the employment field as in 1896 she is listed as a “Teacher of Music”. Up to this point there have been no official records discovered of her skills in the musical world but the later newspapers have recorded positive comments about her skills. But then the Pinn’s moved to

Albany in Western Australia and this rather grand advertisement appeared in the Albany Advertiser on 10 Dec 1898:-

**P R O S P E C T U S .**  
**M A D A M E P I N N ,**  
(Professoress of Music)  
**TEACHER OF PIANOFORTE, HARMONY  
AND SINGING.**

**TERMS : PAID IN ADVANCE.**  
**PIANOFORTE.**—3 Guineas per quarter ; one  
Hour or two Half-hour Lessons weekly.  
**HARMONY.**—£2 10s per quarter ; one Hour  
or two Half-hour Lessons weekly.  
**SINGING.**—4 Guineas per quarter ; one Hour  
or two Half-hour Lessons weekly.

**MADAME PINN**  
is to be Consulted at her Residence at the  
Corner of Vancouver and Parade streets, op-  
posite the Recreation Ground.

**MADAME PINN** has had many years of  
Study with  
**PROFESSOR BATH**, of Pianoforte & Harmony,  
**SIGNOR SQUABISE**, the Italian Opera Com-  
poser, and **SULVINI**, the Italian Vocalist.  
She has also had many years of Teaching,  
and is prepared to give every satisfaction  
to her Pupils. 929p

Sulvini, "the Italian Vocalist" certainly existed in England, but it was an Arthur Salvini who sang and taught in Dunedin. A bit of "artistic licence" perhaps? It was not his NZ birthname according to the ODT. Raffaello Squarise was certainly in Dunedin from 1889 onwards and taught music. Becoming a music teacher in the 1890s was a growth industry!

Still, Elizabeth became a composer of some skill and wrote a number of patriotic songs during World War One which were published in New Zealand. Her praises were sung in both the Otago Daily Times and the Otago Witness newspapers.

Her eldest son, Alfred, became a proficient violinist as well.

Alfred and Elizabeth moved from Albany to Drummond in Victoria where Alfred died sometime between 18 and 29 May 1923, aged 94. Elizabeth moved again, this time to Broken Hill, New South Wales, where she passed away on 19 November 1947, aged 90.

It is probable that there is more to be told of this couple's history and the Society would welcome any additional information you may have – including a better photo of Alfred and/or Elizabeth.



MADAME E. POWER-PINN,

An old and highly-respected resident of Lake Wanaka district, and now of Perth, Western Australia, a contributor of verse to the Otago Witness for many years. Besides being the authoress of many beautiful ballads, she is also the composer of some stirring patriotic songs, one of which, written, published, and presented to the Commonwealth Patriotic Fund, is selling rapidly, and bringing in creditable sums of money. The name of the song is "Australia's Call to Arms." Madame Pinn will be remembered in musical circles in Dunedin, where she spent many years as a teacher of music.

## MAKARORA SCHOOL – SMALLEST SCHOOL AROUND

We don't hear much about Makarora these days (apart from when some jet-boaters apparently broke the Covid lockdown!) despite it being a very important Upper Clutha location in the early history of the area. If you have five minutes to spare, have a look at this story on the school – hold down your CTRL key and left click your mouse on the link below – just make sure you have your sound turned on! When you have opened the CRUX website, just scroll down to where the video starts:



[https://crux.org.nz/southern-lens/southern-lens-the-school-with-nine-pupils/?fbclid=IwAR2L-iu4zAV8ZdAsXyRbcRNNUyebhUJTYs1DdldM-PxHq3EIgtCdppZ8-s\\_aem\\_AZO3jxftWPjYickVbRLyHpiPgukWyP3Qzt\\_thZmKE58UvGLqcqcGYpTpF2axWiqKZ6-8xPoEAegfIbv3iiqfKZSQmU7r4c0\\_pZBKwGfCsKRa-PgsNSonuZZc3RliqPOFU1M](https://crux.org.nz/southern-lens/southern-lens-the-school-with-nine-pupils/?fbclid=IwAR2L-iu4zAV8ZdAsXyRbcRNNUyebhUJTYs1DdldM-PxHq3EIgtCdppZ8-s_aem_AZO3jxftWPjYickVbRLyHpiPgukWyP3Qzt_thZmKE58UvGLqcqcGYpTpF2axWiqKZ6-8xPoEAegfIbv3iiqfKZSQmU7r4c0_pZBKwGfCsKRa-PgsNSonuZZc3RliqPOFU1M)

## JO'S UPDATE

Better indexing of the books *Wanaka Story* and *Wanaka and Surrounding Districts* by Irvine Roxburgh continues so as to better identify references for people, places and events. These books are extensively used by researchers but the original indexes in the books are of limited extent.

The indexing of Ray O'Callaghan's important book on the history of Cardrona is just about completed by Graham Dickson.

Scanning of photographs that have been originally filed in the Collection Document File Boxes has commenced.

Our collection of photographs is increasing apace and extra help with filing would be extremely welcome. Some tasks can be done on files using home computers. The completed

files can then be transferred to the Society's computer records. If you have some spare time and would like to help out, please contact me (03-4438123).

## TRAVERSING THE CROWN RANGE IN 1930'S

Following on from the last Newsletter, does anyone know the make of car in the photo? The car was owned by local Alf Kelly and his descendants would like to know what make of car it was. Does anyone out there recognise it? Email me at [treasurer@uppercluthahistory.org](mailto:treasurer@uppercluthahistory.org).



## LIBRARIES PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

This project is proceeding along. The new TV is in action showing a slightly changed slideshow that is currently being modified to show the images of Maori artifacts found in the Upper Clutha, that are held by the Otago Museum.

The slideshow is undergoing a major re-vamp but this is taking a little longer than originally expected.

## A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY – TONGUE IN CHEEK!



## THANKS

Thanks must be given to the various publications that were the sources of the information in the newsletter. Individuals are too numerous to list but references have been sourced from Paperspast.co.nz, a number of out-of-print publications and the records of the UCHRS.

## OUR PUBLICATIONS

The Society has published a small number of books and booklets over the years.

**Skirt Tales – 100 Historical Stories of Women from the Upper Clutha Area, Central Otago** - \$25. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> time this book has been reprinted (this time by the organizers of the book “The Sequel”). It is available from the Society, and the Wanaka Library. Postage is \$7-50 if required.

**The Sequel** – - \$25. A sequel to Skirt Tales and published by a group of Upper Clutha ladies. A small number of this book is available from The Society and the Wanaka Library. Postage \$7-50.



**125, Look Alive – 125 Years of Schooling in the Wanaka District** - \$15.00. 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 \$6-50 if required.

**Courageous and Free** – \$30 -Stories of Upper Clutha WW1 Soldiers and Nurse who died due to war service. This is the second edition. Postage \$7-50.

NZ Post “Bubble Bags” are used to protect the books.

## 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 organizations:**

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 Organizations:**

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.

**RANDOM PHOTOS**



**Brian Umbers and his son Russell outside the service station that was on the corner of  
Ardmore and Helwick Streets**



These two old winches were donated to the local National Transport & Toy Museum, a couple of weeks ago, by Richie Hewitt and H Urquhart. It is believed they were originally near to the wharf on the lakefront and used perhaps for pulling boats up on to the shore? Can anyone 'throw any light' on their history?

## WHO ARE WE?

**President:** Bruce Foulds

**Vice President:** Jo Wilton

**Secretary:** Steve Moss

**Treasurer/Editor:** Ken Allan

**Committee Members:** Ken and Margaret Thomlinson, Graham Dickson, David Simmers, Pam Kane, and ex-officio, Ed Taylor.

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](mailto: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 31/3/2022 are \$15-00 per person.

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

**Email:** [admin@uppercluthahistory.org](mailto:admin@uppercluthahistory.org)