

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, Wānaka and Lakes Wānaka and Hawea)

SPRING 2023 - VOLUME TWENTY-THREE

SEPTEMBER 2023

## TE ARA MAUMAHARA – MEMORY PATH

At long last the replacements for the Millenium tiles are installed and I understand that the official opening will be held on Saturday 9 September. The tiles record significant events that have taken place in the World, New Zealand and the Upper Clutha over the past 1,000 years or so. A total of 645 tiles are installed.



Considerable time and effort was given by a small number of individuals into researching and creating these new tiles which hopefully will be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike, as they wander down the pathway.

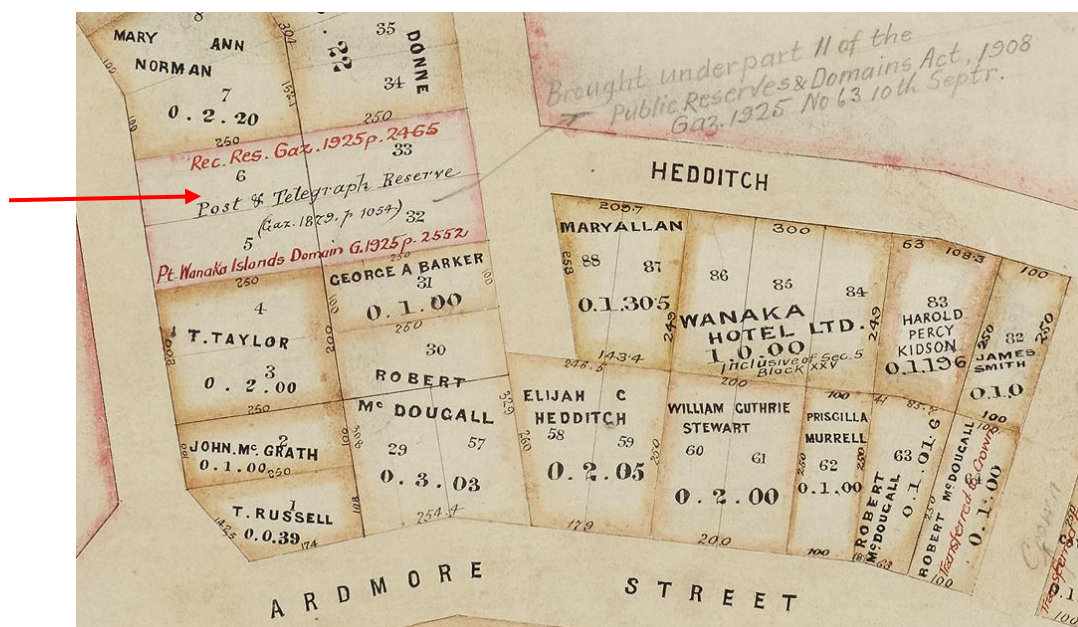
## ARDMORE STREET SERIES – COMMUNICATIONS – A SHORT HISTORY OF THE POST OFFICE IN WĀNAKA

Pembroke (Wānaka) was the last recipient of full postal facilities in the area, Cardrona, Luggate, Hawea Flat and Albert Town having ‘beaten it to the gun’. It should come as no surprise as Wānaka was a late developer as a residential and commercial area and most of the local population was resident at the other aforementioned places.

Nevertheless, in 1873<sup>1</sup> or thereabouts, Theodore Russell was appointed Postmaster and facilities were available from his business, the Wānaka Hotel.<sup>2</sup> This appears to coincide with the statement “Until 1873 it (Albert Town) was the post office for the district .....”<sup>3</sup>

It is recorded that in 1876, Theodore was given possession of the first mail to be transported over the Haast Pass to Pembroke and he then transported it to the Cromwell Post Office. Unfortunately, the next year Theodore died (aged 32) and the work of Postmaster passed to his capable widow, Celia, who was also a considerable benefactor to early Pembroke until she died in 1905.

But it was not as if Pembroke had been entirely forgotten about as in 1879 a Post & Telegraph Reserve was created along what is now known as Lakeside Road. See the map below. You will note that it eventually became a Public Reserve in 1925.

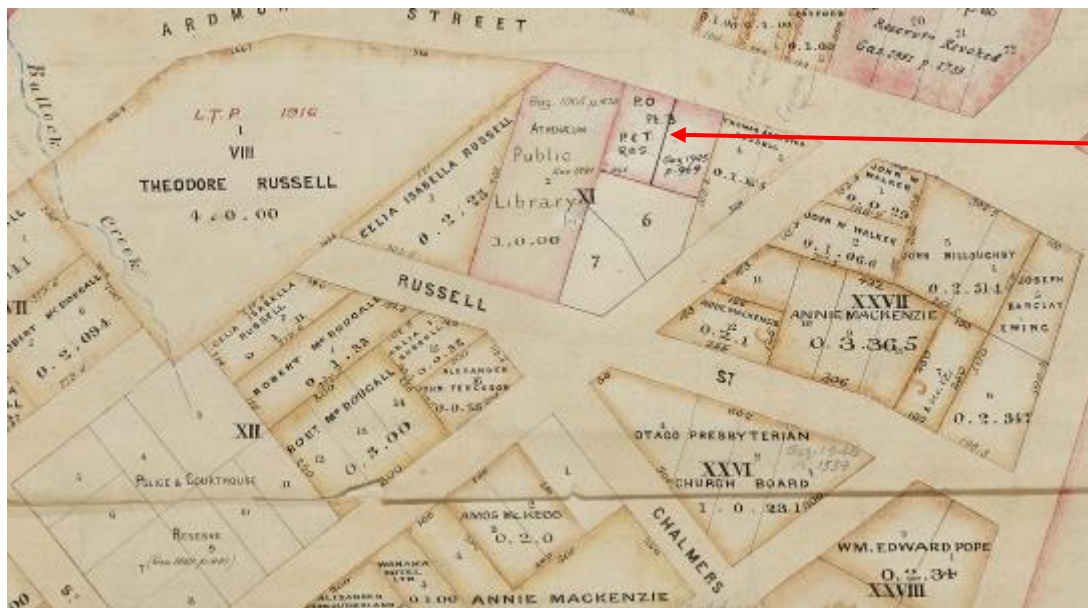


<sup>1</sup> At a public meeting held on 15 September 1883, it was recorded that “Mrs Russell ... has kept the Post Office here for 14 years...” which leads to suggest a start date of 1869. See “Telephone to Pembroke, Lake County Press, 28 September 1883, page 7”

<sup>2</sup> Irvine Roxburgh “Wānaka Story”, Otago Centennial Historical Publications, 1957, Page 114

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.atca.org.nz/read-me> , Albert Town History.

Then in 1881, a further Post and Telegraph Reserve was created on two sections on Ardmore Street, along with land for an Athenaeum (Public Library).



Finally, on 11 January 1883 it was announced that Pembroke, Arrowtown, Macetown and Cromwell were to get a telephone service “at once”.<sup>4</sup> “At once” became just over 5 months (understandable given there were no poles purchased let alone placed at the time of the announcement).

It was announced in the newspapers on 4 September 1883 that the line was intended to be officially opened the following day (5 September).<sup>5</sup> The first advertisement that can be found was:

**Pembroke is now a telephone station ; office hours,  
9 to 5 ; closed on Sundays and holidays.  
(Signed) ARCH. BARR,  
Chief Postmaster.  
Chief Post Office,  
Dunedin, September 12, 1883.**

But the opening was not without controversy in Pembroke and the surrounding district as to the location of the telephone office. The existing Post Office facilities were located in the Wānaka Hotel and a small number of residents and the Police were not happy about that. Their argument was essentially based upon confidentiality of conversations. A proposal was put forward to have the telephone facilities installed in Robert McDougall’s store. Robert reported

<sup>4</sup> Special Telegrams, Dunstan Times, 12 January 1883, Page3  
<sup>5</sup> Latest, Cromwell Argus, 4 September 1883, Page 2

that he was not in favour of this idea as all Post Office facilities should be in the one location and it was reported that he suggested that it should remain at the Hotel.

Newspaper articles indicated a number of public meetings were held, led by the Progress Committee who were initially in favour of Celia Russell taking charge of the telephone office as well as the Post Office. Mr McDougall then wrote to the authorities and said he would be prepared to take over the Post Office and Telephone Office. Subsequently, following on from yet another public meeting, Celia Russell resigned as Postmaster. A regulation had been discovered that said "No Post Office will be allowed to remain in a public house when a store or other suitable place is available." As a result:

**The telephone line to Pembroke, Lake Wanaka, is now open to the public. Mr M'Dougall has, we believe, been appointed postmaster and officer in charge at Pembroke.**

But at the meeting, Harry Maidman (previously the Postmaster at Luggate) moved that the "offices be removed to the reserve set apart for the purpose and an official appointed". This was carried unanimously and a committee appointed to "agitate" the matter.

Agitate they must have done, though no records have been located to date. Six years after the committee was formed, a new specially built Post Office and Telephone building was opened on 7 October 1889 with a Postmaster, William Canning, who had been transferred from Balclutha.

The building was described as "...all that could be desired, being very substantially built and neatly finished, and is a credit to the contractors. The addition of a porch, would, however, be a great improvement, as the door opens straight onto the street, which causes a tremendous draught on a windy day."<sup>6</sup> The matter of the porch appears to have been addressed later when renovations were undertaken (see the following photo).

A Post Office Savings Bank was opened two months later and commenced operating on 16 December 1889 operating from the new Post Office.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Lake Wānaka, Cromwell Argus, 15 October 1889, Page 2

<sup>7</sup> Untitled, Cromwell Argus, 24 December 1889, Page 2





This is a photo of the Post Office and Telegraph Station that was built in 1889. On the right is the Postmaster's residence and on the left is the Post Office. It has had a porch added to the Office entrance probably in 1900. There is a small shed just appearing on the woman's left. The building was added to later and the roofline changed. The front right (original residence) remained relatively unchanged. Rabbits must have been prevalent judging by the wire-netting against the fence surrounding the residence (can be seen when the digital image is increased in size!).

Renovations and additions to the original building occurred from time to time. Exactly what was done is unknown and reliance is placed on advertisements for tenders published in newspapers.

- October 1900 – alterations and additions
- October 1909 – alterations and additions
- May 1913 – additions and alterations
- March 1918 – renovations etc
- January 1928 – newspaper article conjecturing that improvements were going to be made
- February 1936 – additions
- July 1944 – new Post Office building opened
- May 2020 – the Post Office closed down at the Ardmore St, building (now occupied by Kiwibank Ltd) and opened up an agency at Paperplus on the corner of Helwick and Dunmore Streets.

In 1939 it was reported that consideration was being given to building a new Post Office on the western side of the original Reserve.<sup>8</sup> Nothing seemed to come of that until 1944. A new Post Office with a residence attached was opened by the Postmaster General, the Honourable P. C. Webb on Saturday, 20 July 1944. It was of 3,190 square feet (296.3 m<sup>2</sup>).



• NEW POST OFFICE AT WANAKA.—A view of the new Post Office at Wanaka which was officially opened by the Postmaster-General (the Hon. P. C. Webb) on Saturday. The photograph was taken during the ceremony.

It was described of having a public space, mail room, telephone exchange room, private boxes, strong rooms, Postmaster's residence, and a cloak room. The outside walls were of rusticated weather board and a fibrolite roof. The inside linings were mainly of fibrous plaster with red pine panelling. But not only that, the residence had all modern conveniences and an electric range!<sup>9</sup>

The opening was attended by invited guests and an almost "who's who" from the political scene, most of whom made speeches. Fortunately, for later historians, a good record of the history of the Post Office in Wānaka formed part of one speech.

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<sup>8</sup> New Post Office, Evening Star, 17 Nov 1939, Page 8

<sup>9</sup> New Post Office Wānaka, Evening Star, 19 Jul 1944, Page 6

## DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING

The dimensions of the building are 81ft by 44ft overall, covering an area of 3190 square feet. The office comprises a public space, mail room and telephone exchange room, private boxies, postmaster's and strong rooms and a cloak room. The outside walls are of rusticated weather-boarding, the roof of fibroite. The inside linings are mainly fibrous plaster with red pine panelling. All the finishings are in the latest design. The postmaster's residence is attached to the building and is fitted with all modern conveniences including an electric range.



Circa 1990s – on the left is the original Post Office (with additions) and on the right is the Post Office built in 1946 but also amended since construction and especially the frontage over the last three decades.

Time has moved on, and Post Office facilities are now provided in the PaperPlus store on the corner of Helwick and Dunmore Streets.



2023 – As the building looks now. What was the Post Office part, is now occupied by Kiwibank. Note the MACPAC store to the right which was previously the Fire Station built in 1965.

## ARDMORE STREET CONTINUED – THE WILLOW TREE

We have all heard of the Wānaka Tree that is now world famous and a symbol of our area, but how many people have heard of the Weeping Willow Tree in Ardmore street that was an important feature of Ardmore St in the early days of Pembroke? It even had similar beginnings to the later Wānaka Tree – a piece of willow purposely stuck in the ground!

In a later newsletter to come, a fuller description of Ardmore Street, its beginnings and formation will be described, but suffice to say in 1868 when the Wānaka Hotel opened, it was just a bare dirt dray track on the way to Wānaka Station, with no clearly defined borders for many years.

There is more than one story about the tree's origin but the descendants of John Barclay Ewing claim that it was John who planted a stake opposite the Wānaka Hotel. Richard Norman in writing about another newspaper report on the tree's origins involving buried beer bottles, would only go so far to state that an 8 foot willow stick was planted in 1868 and it rooted and grew.

It grew very well and it is reported that it became the focus of casual street meetings and where locals posted notices on it's trunk. No doubt it was also handy to tie up the horse whilst the rider visited the hotel across the road!



So where exactly was the tree?



This photo is taken probably between 1925 and 1927. See the notices nailed to the tree?



This photo is taken between 1927 and 1937 (probably closer to 1927). Note the petrol pumps extending out into what we know as the street nowadays! The building on the left is the second Wānaka Hotel built in 1923 after the first hotel burnt down in 1922

How is it known that Photo 1 was between 1925 and 1927? Well Dunedin-Wānaka Motors Ltd and D A Jolly & Sons (the store less than say 50 metres away) applied for the installation of petrol bowsers in April 1926.

This is the tree's approximate location superimposed on a satellite photo this year (2023):-



There had been a few requests to remove the tree. It was reported as being diseased and finally in June 1937 it was removed. This was perhaps the first move to restructure the alignment of Ardmore Street into what we know today.

### **ARDMORE STREET CONT. -THE "SMITHY"**

In the late 1800s, no self-respecting village or town would be without a blacksmith, not only to shoe the main means of transport, horses, but also make ploughs and other iron equipment. Some extended to the making and repair of wheels.

Cardrona had its own blacksmith in John Willoughby (who later became the publican), John Hardie was the blacksmith at Albert Town and about 1880/1, Joel Cayford and his wife Louisa arrived in Pembroke. Joel was a Blacksmith/Farrier by trade.

He had served with the Imperial Cavalry, 12<sup>th</sup> Royal Lancers in England before he was discharged on 10 November 1876 aged 27. Four months earlier, on 22 July 1876, he married Louisa Clara Hunt at Folkestone. A month after his discharge, they boarded the "Northampton" at Gravesend, England and set sail on 17 December, bound for Nelson, New Zealand. Their first child, Gertrude, was born on board, just off the coast of Tasmania on 12 March 1877. The first port of call was Nelson but their ultimate destination was Cromwell.

On arrival in Cromwell, Joel went into partnership with his brother Richard who had arrived a little earlier on a different ship. He had purchased a blacksmith shop named the Veterinary and Shoeing Forge at Cromwell from a Mr Arlidge on 23 January 1877. The partnership did not last long and on 13 Nov 1877 it was dissolved and the business sold to James Richards.

Richard went off to Hawea Flat where he established "...a blacksmith's shop, store and public-house.". It is not known for sure what Joel did, though there was a family story that he may have rode as a gold coach escort for a while. Joel and Louisa (and child) did move to Pembroke in 1880<sup>10</sup> where he commenced business as the Wānaka Shoeing Forge and Smithy "...under the legendary Willow tree....".

**Cromwell Argus 29th January 1892**

**THE WANAKA SHOEING  
FORGE AND SMITHY**

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**J. CAYFORD begs to announce  
that he has just added a complete  
plant for Wheel Wrighting, with the  
newest appliances, and undertakes  
to do all kinds of work in that line.**

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**Buggies, etc., Repaired and Painted.**

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**JOEL CAYFORD,**  
Late Farrier Imperial Cavalry,  
**Farrier & General Blacksmith,**  
**PEMBROKE.**

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**Agricultural and Mining Instruments Made and Repaired**

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*Advertisement from an early Stones Directory*

Joel only rented the land and building. As the land was held by Celia Russell, owner of the Wānaka Hotel across the road, it is presumed, in the absence of any other records, that

<sup>10</sup> NZ Electoral Rolls, Otago, Wakatipu, 1880-1881

probably Celia Russell arranged for the building to be constructed as an adjunct to her hotel business (her husband, Theodore Russell died in 1878). In fact the land on which the Smithy was located was owned by the Russell family right through until about 1920 (Theodore Jnr inherited it in 1905).<sup>11</sup>

For certain, Joel was there on 16 November 1881, as it is recorded that he was the “hero” that night in saving “the Wānaka Hotel, and perhaps the whole of Pembroke, as mounted on the roof of the building, wood and iron flew shattered into fragments from the sturdy blows of his ponderous sledge-hammer.” The buildings included the “capacious stables, lofts and outbuildings” of the Hotel.<sup>12</sup> This fire has not been recorded in any early history writings of Pembroke until now.

Joel became closely involved in the local community, becoming an inaugural member of the Wānaka Islands Domain Board, one of the first members of the Wānaka Jockey Club and later the Secretary, and on the School Committee. Louisa was known locally as the “village tooth puller”. The village forceps were held at the Smithy and according to a family history. “.. it was to Louisa the villagers went if they required the services of a non-professional dentist. Tradition was that the patient would purchase a bottle of whisky then proceed to drink the lot. When suitably subdued, Louisa would pull the offending tooth.”<sup>13</sup>

In 1892, Joel paved the floor of the blacksmith shop with blocks of wood like a pavement and erected a wheelwright’s establishment at the rear of his shop.<sup>14</sup>

Their children, Gertrude, Olivine, Joel and Bede all went to school at Pembroke. It was reported that their attendance could be irregular depending on how much they were required at home! They and their subsequent siblings also attended Hawea Flat school after July 1895.

In 1894 Joel purchased the Hawea Hotel and blacksmith shop from the widowed Eliza Dowling, Joel’s sister<sup>15</sup>. He sold the blacksmith business to James (Mack) Templeton in April 1895<sup>16</sup>. Joel and Louisa operated the Hotel and Smithy until about 1905 when they moved to a farm at Kakanui, just south of Oamaru. Joel died in Oamaru on 12 September 1911. Louisa died in 1932.

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<sup>11</sup> Probate and Will of Celia Isabella Russell, Probate Records 1904-5, P1/04 – P14/05, Pages 360-375.

<sup>12</sup> Hawea and Wānaka, Otago Witness, 26 November 1881, p14

<sup>13</sup> Bradford, England to Otago, New Zealand, Val Cayford, published 2000, Dunedin, P46-58

<sup>14</sup> Lake Wānaka, Otago Witness, 16 June 1892, P20

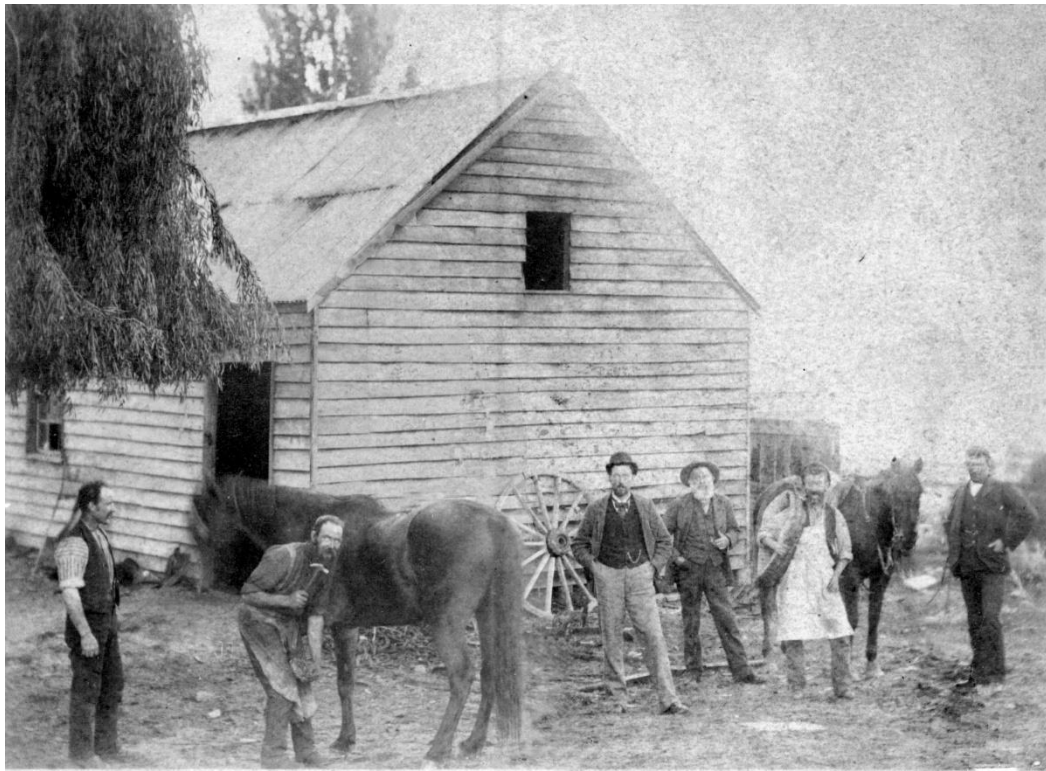
<sup>15</sup> Lake Wānaka, Otago Witness 1 Nov 1894, p24

<sup>16</sup> Lake Wānaka 25 April 1895, p22





*The Hawea Hotel, Joel Cayford above the door*



**The Ardmore St. Smithy between 1895 and 1898**

**Left to Right: Thomas & James Templeton, horse, unknown, Asher Smith, Tom Mangan, John Faulks**

Mack Templeton, contrary to what has been reported in other publications, only operated the Smithy until about August 1899 when he sold the business to Theodore Russell Jnr.<sup>17</sup> Mack apparently had aspirations to go sawmilling however we do know that he was the engineer on William Allan's SS "Makarora" sometime after it was launched in January 1900.<sup>18</sup> Theodore had no aspirations to be a blacksmith and he immediately advertised for an employee and James Perrow took on the job. Two and half years later, on 20 July 1903, James purchased the business from Theodore and started working on his own account.<sup>19</sup> James was a popular man in Pembroke and participated in many social and sporting activities.

Eventually, James identified a new opportunity to establish a new store on the corner of Helwick Street and Ardmore Street, next to the now closed Commercial Hotel. The hotel had been purchased by Theodore in 1909 and immediately closed. James sold his Smithy business to Theodore in August/September 1910.<sup>20</sup> Theodore had been the landlord since 1905.<sup>21</sup> Once again he sought a new blacksmith and John William Powley purchased the business.<sup>22</sup> He in turn sold the business in early 1914 to George Norman. George operated the business until 1922 when he and his wife moved to Australia to work for a Mr William Sylvester, a previous resident of Pembroke.<sup>23</sup> It is thought that is when the Smithy business in Ardmore Street ceased altogether as shortly afterwards (1923), the land and buildings were purchased by Horatio and Helen MacKay with the intention of erecting a new motor garage that eventually became owned by the well-known Manson family.

## RANDOM PHOTOS

Well not very random but maybe of interest to those readers living in Albert Town.

The first one was taken from Mount Iron this year (see next page):

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<sup>17</sup> Country, Otago Witness, 17 August 1899 P34

<sup>18</sup> Lake Wānaka, Otago Witness, 18 February 1903, p31; Note: Mack eventually went to Albert Town in 1905 and set up his own Smithy and at the same time was the puntsman employed by Vincent County Council.

<sup>19</sup> Advertisements, Cromwell Argus, 15 Sept 1903 P5

<sup>20</sup> Wānaka Notes, Lake County Press, 27 October 1910, P4

<sup>21</sup> On the death of his mother Celia Isabella Russell in 1905, Theodore inherited the land and buildings occupied by the Olympic Hall and the Smithy.

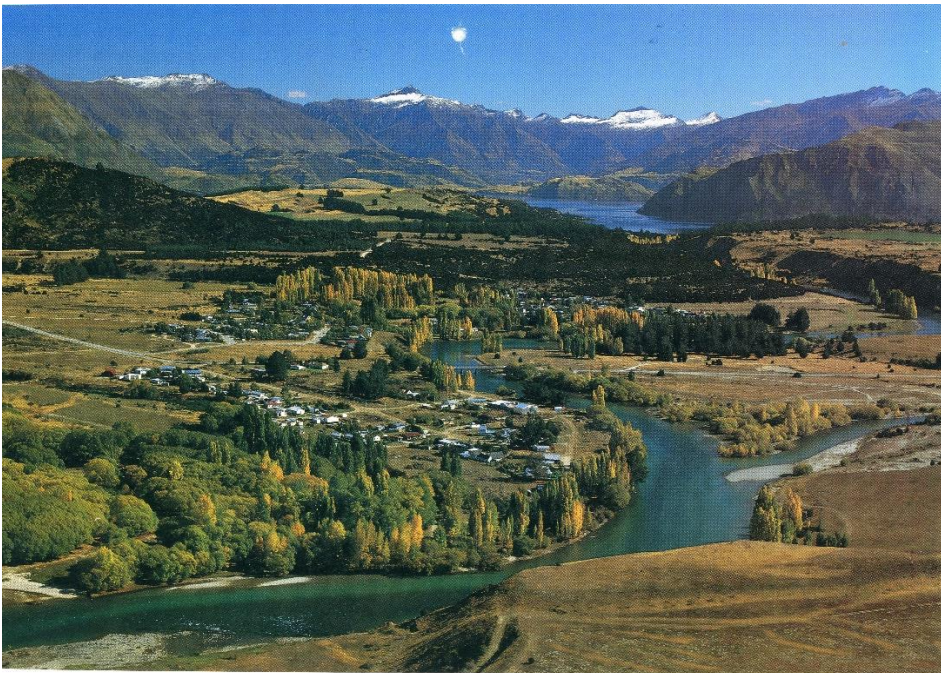
<sup>22</sup> Wānaka Notes, Lake County Press, 5 March 1914, P5

<sup>23</sup> Wānaka Notes, Cromwell Argus, 12 June 1922, P4





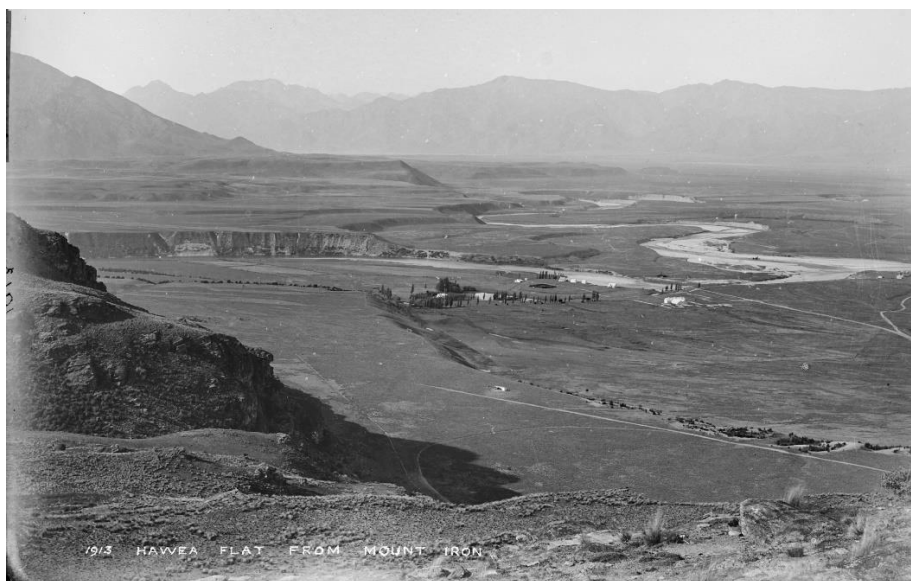
Then 30 years ago (1993)



Then this is what it looked like a lot earlier than the 1.1.1913 date on the photo:



And then a little later:





## JO'S UPDATE

We have been very fortunate to have new active volunteers; Eva Fernandez who has similar computer knowledge skills as Erena is assisting updating the scope of our box contents in more detail onto our database Past Perfect; Sue Neale scanning photographs held in the file boxes; Jeannine Tuffin is undertaking specialist photograph scanning.

David Simmers continues to make stellar progress on scanning the file box documents. An example is one box of miscellaneous handwritten notes of all odd sizes left by Stan Kane jotting down historical facts with some surprising information.

Kaye Spark sadly returns to Australia after a year of scanning and indexing numerous important publications. She will continue writing short one page biographies on early residents of the district which will be a valuable source of reference material.

Terry Davis is project managing on behalf of Central Otago Heritage Trust, to do a Heritage Site Review, last done in the 1970s. The list for the Upper Clutha is incomplete and the UCHRS have suggested many additions with contact details.

## THANKS

Thanks are extended 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. It is available from the Society, and the Wānaka Library. Postage is \$7-50 if required.

**The Sequel** – - \$25. A sequel to Skirt Tales. A small number of copies of this book are available from The Society and the Wānaka Library. Postage \$7-50.

**125, Look Alive – 125 Years of Schooling in the Wānaka District** - \$15.00. Available from the Society or the Wānaka 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 Wānaka 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 of a printed copy.

Costs are:

### **For individuals:**

Digital file:                 \$10-00

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

### **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 Wānaka 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.

## WHO ARE WE?

**President (and Editor):** Ken Allan

**Treasurer:** Bruce Foulds

**Secretary:** Jo Wilton

**Committee Members:** Erena Barker, Pam Kane, Helen Howarth, Ed Taylor Winton Davies.

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 Wānaka 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 Wānaka 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 full address

Membership Subscriptions for year ending 31 March are \$15-00 per person.

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