

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

NEWSLETTER OF THE UPPER CLUTHA HISTORICAL RECORDS SOCIETY INC.

(Upper Clutha includes Cardrona, Albert Town, Luggate, Queensberry, Tarras, Lindis, Hawea, Makarora, Wanaka and Lakes Wanaka and Hawea)

WINTER 2024 - VOLUME TWENTY-SIX
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JUNE 2024

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARDED

We are very pleased to announce that Margaret and Ken Thomlinson have been awarded Life Memberships of the Society in recognition of their many years of dedicated and professional voluntary service as a Members, Officers and Researchers. Both continue to research records to complete enquiries made from many people and organizations and the Society is indebted to them for their skills and knowledge. Both Ken and Margaret have been members from 1993.

Unfortunately Ken was unable to attend the Annual General Meeting to receive his certificate but Margaret accepted it on his behalf.

We wish both of them well for the future a huge vote of thanks.

ROBERT WILKIN – SETTLER OR LAND SPECULATOR?

Robert Wilkin was one of the early leaseholders of Runs in the Upper Clutha, his best known being the Wanaka Station based then at Albert Town. There is a small monument on the berm in front of 2 McLelland Place, Albert Town to his name, claiming he built the first dwelling in the Upper Clutha in 1858, but more about that story shortly.

There have been any number of articles written about Wilkin's life history and it is unfortunate that a number of them have errors of fact in them. Most relate to his investments in the Upper Clutha. He contributed much to the Province of Canterbury where, in his time, he was a community leader, but that was where he lived – not in the Upper Clutha.

Wilkin was born in Tinwald, Dumfriesshire, Scotland in 1820, into a well-to-do farming family. He was well educated and attended Edinburgh University for a period, studying aspects of farming. This set him up well for his future life.



Robert Wilkin – painting by Norman Macbeth

He emigrated to Australia when he was 19 and became a sheep-run manager and eventually a run owner. He was in partnership at times with the Barker family (bankers from Dumfries) and married Agnes Barker in 1850. Her uncle, Archibald McMurdo Thomson, was also one of Wilkin's partners, both in Australia and in New Zealand.

Robert and Agnes had two children whilst in Australia, John and David Ann (known as Anne). Robert was held in high regard and was appointed as a magistrate at Port Phillip, Melbourne. In 1855 the family took a journey back home to Scotland. Whilst there, another son, James Barker Wilkin, was born in 1856. They then returned to Australia, landing at Sydney in February 1858. Unfortunately, their son James died about a month later.

Maybe it was the past acquaintances they had whilst living in Australia, who had moved to New Zealand already, that encouraged them to move to Canterbury. For whatever the reasons, they sailed on the "Dart" along with Robert's brother James and arrived in Lyttleton on 25 July 1858.

Robert's first large transaction after he arrived in Christchurch was to purchase a home. This was the 30 acre property known as Avonbank in the Fendalton area.¹ It was here that he and his wife, who incidentally was almost stone-deaf, lived for a number of years. The residence was known as Holmbank.

Robert was clearly of wealthy means and using his connections in Christchurch, purchased other farming properties in his own name and later in partnership with the Rhodes family. When he left Australia to come to New Zealand, he still owned a Run in Australia, yet he still had access to cash to purchase Avonbank and not long after, other properties.

In his diaries he claimed to know the likes of John McLean and his brothers and it was through John that he learned of the opportunities in the Upper Clutha. When exactly this was is open to debate, but research indicates it was unlikely that Robert journeyed to the Upper Clutha in

¹ Wilkin of Fendalton, New Zealand Freelance , 5 August 1953, p34

1858 as some have claimed. In fact, the majority of articles written about Wilkin, wrote that he arrived in the Upper Clutha in 1859.

In his own words written in his diaries “..... we were riding south on the same route as John McLean and learned he had already taken possession of his block and stocked it, had already named it Morven Hills and had installed a shanty on the Lindis River for his first married couple, the Wilsons..... ‘AT’² and I stayed the night with them and pressing on next morning up a great hill now known as Grandview, To the west and south were lakes, rivers, mountains and glaciers: down at our feet innumerable valleys and flats..... ‘A.T.’ and I therefore drew a rough map locality plan which seemed to embrace as big a scope of country as Morven Hills and, turning our horses round (sic), recrossed the Lindis Pass and made the best way we could down the Waitaki River to its mouth. Here we struck the Dunedin track and, turning south along it, were in the township of Dunedin itself within 5 days. Our application was only just in time, but when we studied the rough maps of the period and learnt that our lease included country you know as Mount Pisa, the Criffel Range and the flats around Lakes Wanaka and Hawea, we realised that on this 300,000 block we should be able to run – without fencing, mind – up to 50,000 sheep. We fairly hugged ourselves!”.

There are a few problems with this statement as written by Robert. It certainly was written well after the events described, perhaps in his latter years when he was apparently quite ill:

1. The Wilsons (Richard and Margaret) did not arrive at Morven Hills until mid-December 1858 at the earliest. When the Wilsons left Morven Hills in September 1867, it was reported they had been there for 8 years which means a start year of 1859.³ (Otago Daily Times, 8 Oct 1867, Page 2)
2. Well before Robert and Archibald viewed all of the land, it had been allocated and leased to other earlier applicants (leases were approved in September 1858) so it was not available. They would have had to put an application in for it by 5 June 1858 and as John McLean discovered, at that time, the Wastelands Board would not lease such a large area to one applicant.
3. Run 239 and Run 240 (to be known later as Wanaka Station) were sold by the first leaseholders in April 1859 and only after that did Robert Wilkin purchase them in turn. For example, Run 239 was not officially transferred to Wilkin until April 1860.⁴

The only logical conclusion can be, that Wilkin did not arrive in the Lindis/Upper Clutha until 1859. He returned to Christchurch and at some stage encouraged his wife to travel to Albert Town in a horse and buggy to erect a whare.⁵ Wilkin wrote that he brought his wife to the Run ‘before the sheep’ and will have time to superintend the building of a whare.” This could only mean during the period October 1859 to December 1859. It may have been the first residence

² Archibald Thomson – his wife’s uncle. Note that some reports stated that it was William Thompson (Thomson), the Auditor for the Canterbury Provincial Council, who was Wilkin’s partner. This is incorrect as evidenced by land transaction records.

³ The Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter, North Otago Times, 8 October 1867, P2

⁴ On the reverse of the original Run 239 Deferred Payment Licence is written that it was “Trans to J T Brown and T W Maude; 15 May 1860 to Robert Wilkin; 6 June 1861 to Thomson and Wilkin.

⁵ Wilkin of Fendalton, New Zealand Freelance, 5 August 1953, p34. They had to swap to horses alone on reaching the Waitaki River.

on the Run though probably not where the current memorial stone sits.⁶ The McCallum family (Oswald McCallum was a shepherd) became resident in the whare about 1863, described by Mrs McCallum as “Mr Wilkin’s first temporary residence.....near the garden” .

Another factor in all this, is that John Heuchan, the first manager of the Run, did not arrive in Lyttelton until 11 October 1859 having emigrated from Dumfriesshire, Scotland, near where Wilkin was born. A widower, he brought with him his seven children and a nephew, Thomas Anderson (who later built the Queensberry Inn and the Luggate Mill). Wilkin was very likely there to meet Heuchan as the first job was to take a flock of some 5,000 sheep from one of Wilkin’s properties to the Run⁷. Wilkin was certainly in Christchurch in late September as he judged sheep for the Canterbury Pastoral Association, first show.⁸

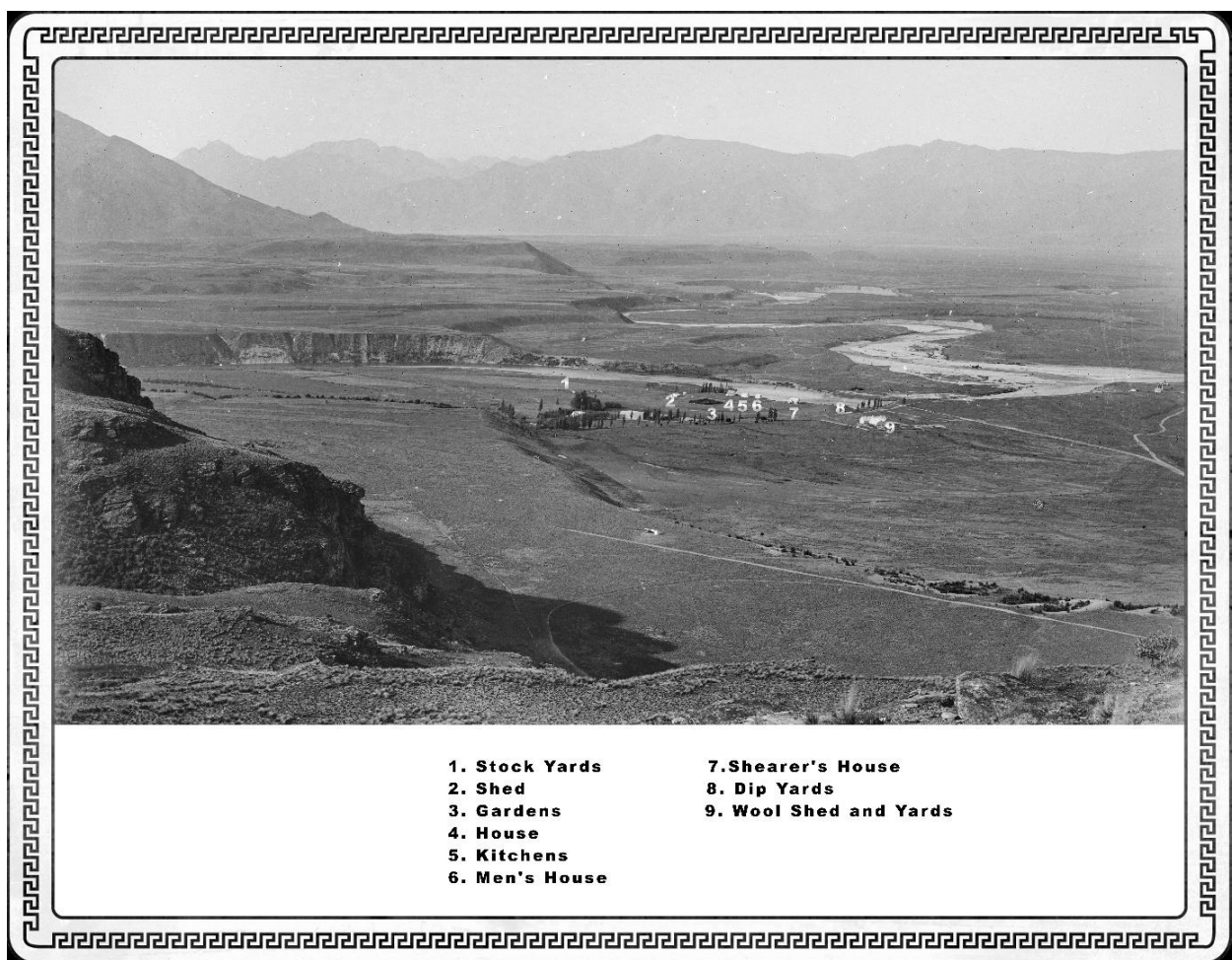
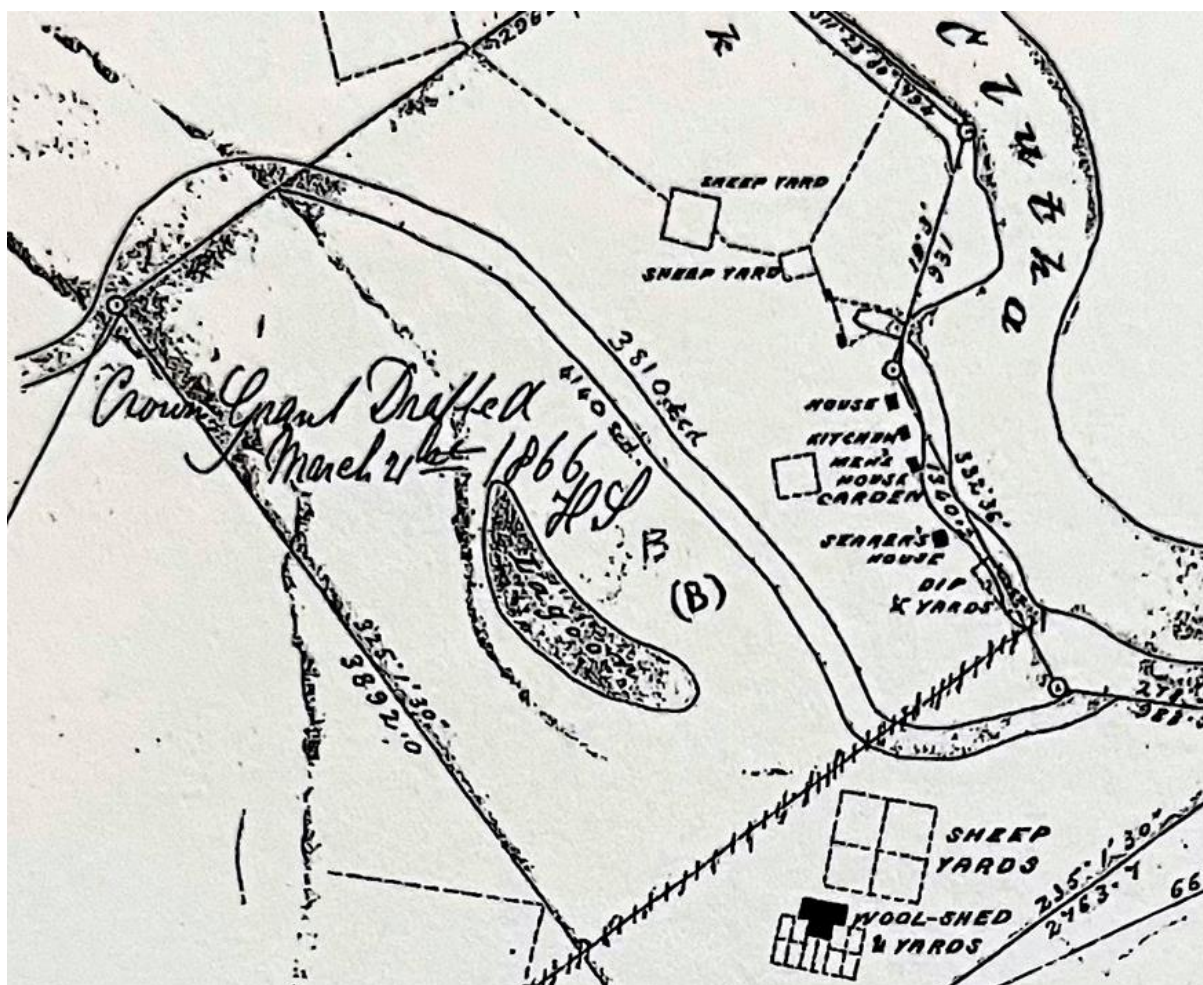


Photo probably taken about 1880s and noted locations are from O’Connell’s survey 1866

⁶ The location of the “gardens” is drawn on J A Connell’s Crown Grant Map drafted 31 March 1866 and is much closer to the Clutha River than the Memorial Stone

⁷ They Came From Dumfries in 1859, Thomas Maginness, Self Published 2014, p.88

⁸ Canterbury Pastoral Association First Show of Sheep, Lyttelton Times, 24 September 1859, P.4



Wanaka Station clipped from O'Connell's 1863 Map updated in 1866 as part of the sale process to establish the boundaries of the Station area.

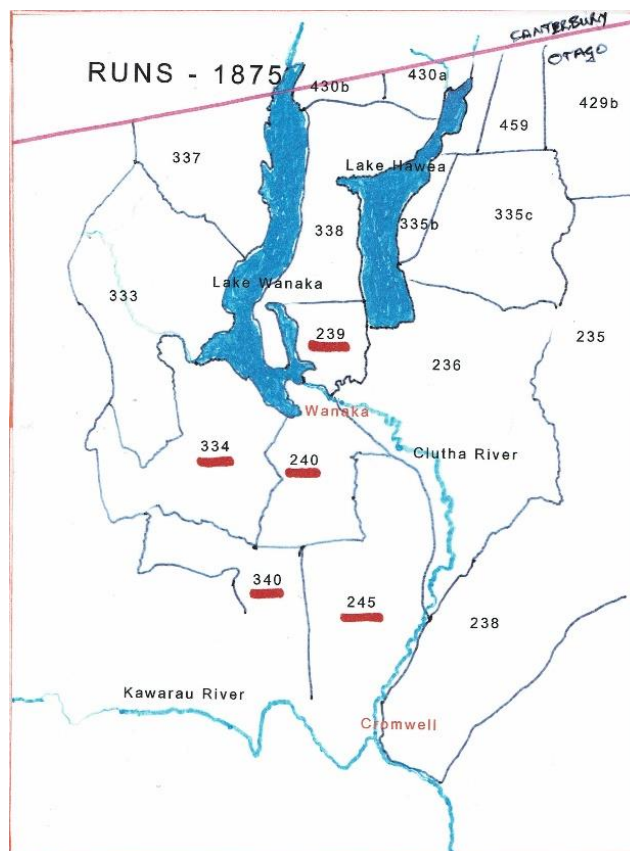
It is most probable that Wilkin's first purchases were Run 240 and Run 239 (both had J T Brown as one of the vendors).



Agnes Wilkin née Barker

Wilkin's last purchase in the Upper Clutha was Run 334 (Roys - Wanaka South) that was contracted earlier on in 1863 and settled on 3 Dec 1863 for £20,169-7-0 with Wilkin paying

£5,042-7-0 cash and the balance plus interest (10%pa), due by a series of five bills (Promissory Notes) payable over the following five years. There were supposed to be 6,600 sheep and lambs, 200 cattle, eight horses and 11 working bullocks. Roy died on 21 February 1864.



Underlined Run Numbers show the extent of Wilkin's and Thomson's Run holdings over the period 1859-1866

The following is a schedule of the land purchases/transactions:

Run No.	Prior DPL lessees before Wilkin	Start Date of First Lease	Date Wilkin became new lessee	Year Wilkin sold his interests
Run 239	1. Freeland and T Maude 2. Brown and E Maude	5 Sept 1858	Probably circa Oct 1859	1866
Run 240 (Wanaka Station)	1. Britten and E Maude 2. Brown	5 Sept 1858	Probably circa Oct 1859	1866
Run 245 (Mt Pisa)	1. H Meyers	5 Sept 1858	2 April 1861	1866
Run 334 (Roys)	1. Roy	26 Feb 1860	24 February 1864	1866
Run 340	1. W Mills 2. Strode & Teschemaker	26 Feb 1860	About 1862/3	1866

Notes:

1. After Wilkin purchased Runs 239, 240 and 245, ownership was transferred to the partnership of Wilkin and Thomson
2. Runs 334 and 340 were purchased by the partnership of Wilkin and Thomson

You will note that Wilkin was not the first proprietor of any of these properties and some properties were sold before DPL's were issued.

By early 1866, Wilkin and Thomson had sold their properties in the Upper Clutha and so ended his association with the area. In Wilkin's own words relating to 1862, *"... But I am going ahead too fast and giving you the idea that I was closely identified with Wanaka myself. I hadn't the time."* That statement, and the fact he lived all that time (and later) in Christchurch, indicates he was not what is known as a settler of the Upper Clutha. In fact, he is recorded as only visiting the area maybe once a year for a short period each time.

He was a land speculator, but just like many others of the time. The real settlers were the shepherds, managers and others who looked after the land, built houses and farm buildings, farmed the livestock, started businesses etc and stayed in the area.

Robert was very much an important part of Christchurch society almost from the time he arrived there. He was the instigator of the Canterbury A&P Show and the first President, a member of the Provincial Council representing Timaru, and held a number of other offices. He had a strong interest in racehorses, breeding, importing thoroughbreds and stud sheep from overseas and was generally held as an expert in the field. He was also the first importer of hedgehogs (8 of them)!

Wilkin died in 1886 in somewhat embarrassing financial circumstances. Relatives of his wife had agreed to purchase a property for £50,000 and whilst they were overseas pending settlement, they had asked Robert to look after the funds. He deposited the funds in his own name on the Bank of New Zealand who on his death, seized the funds to offset his considerable debts to the bank.

100 YEARS AGO

— —
—The Weather.—
The weather of late has been very wet,
and we have had much more rain than we
usually have at this time of the year. A
good coating of snow has also fallen on the
high country.

—Social.—

On Friday 18th inst, a social and jumble sale was held in aid of the new hall and proved a great success, the sum of £118 being realised by subscriptions, the social, and the sale of goods. The amount in hand to date towards the building of the new hall is about £1000 so we may shortly expect to hear of a start being made with the work of erecting the building.

From the Lake County Press newspaper dated 31 May 1923. The Wanaka Hall was opened in 1924.

ARDMORE STREET CONTINUED

In this Newsletter we are moving eastward past the Four Square shop. Principally we are looking at Sections 58 to 62:



2023



1970s



1930s

Looking at the 2023 photo we see the building housing Aspiring Law and Bayleys Real Estate. This is represented on the above map as Sections 58 and 59. A Crown Grant was granted to Elijah Charlton Hedditch (aka Captain or Charles Hedditch) on 15 August 1876. He was an

original partner in the Wanaka Hotel with Theodore Russell who had married his sister, Celia. He was also very well known as captaining boats on the lake and guiding log rafts down the Clutha. In reality he was one of the founders of Wanaka. He built a home on the property, said to be the first residence in Wanaka, that was “surrounded by trees”⁹. In March 1901, as the congregation came out of the local church, the house was discovered to be on fire. A large amount of sewing, the sewing machine and the piano were saved, but the house was destroyed.

In 1902 the Hedditch’s moved to Wanganui ending an association with Pembroke that had lasted 34 years. In 1904¹⁰ Mary Allan, wife of William Allan who had built the Commercial Hotel and the steamer ‘Makarora’, purchased the land from Captain Hedditch. Earlier in 1894, the Allans had their home in Tenby Street destroyed by fire and their adjoining store damaged, but rebuilt on the same site later that year. In 1904 they dismantled the new home and moved it to the new property where they rebuilt it (this is the building in the other two photos). They also added on rooms out the back for boarders and that became the Pembroke Boarding house.



Mary Allan (1930s)



William Allan (about 1895)

In 1924, William died and Mary sold the property to Wanaka Motors Ltd who, as part of the White Star group, wished to have an accommodation house for their clients. Mary moved to Dunedin. The house then became known as the White Star Hotel. In 1936, NZ Railways Bus services purchased Wanaka Motors Limited which included the motor garage further down Ardmore St. and the hotel. It was renamed and leased to others until 1944 when it was sold to Wanaka Hotel Ltd. They immediately closed the hotel thereby reducing competition for their own business. Eventually it was modified into a shop and later on, The National Bank of NZ Limited also conducted an agency before they opened as a branch. Later, the bank moved to a new building two sections along (now part of the ANZ Bank building).

Moving along to Sections 60 and 61, W G Stewart, a runholder (Makarora Run) was granted the land in 1878 and he sold it to William Allan in 1883. Three years later, Robert McDougall

⁹ Lake Wanaka, Otago Witness, 27 March 1901, P29

¹⁰ Transfer was not registered until 1906 but Otago Witness reported that in 1904, William Allan started to shift his house onto the property – Lake Wanaka, Otago Witness, 5 October 1904, P35

purchased it and in 1911 it was owned by his son Andrew. Subsequently it had a number of owners, including Cecil Collings. If I am reading the map correctly, this was subsequently the location of the Holiday Inn house, which had a variety of uses including an art gallery. The car garage, nearer the street (see photo below), was converted into a small icecream shop.



The buildings were demolished recently.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 23 May 2024 and about 16 people attended.

Without going into a lot of detail, there was active participation in the activities of the Oral History group, the status of the proposed new rules for the Society (as required by new legislation regarding charities), and a strategic plan to take us through the next three years encompassing a number of activities centred around making the Society better known and providing better access to our history for residents of the Upper Clutha and visitors alike.

Subscriptions remain at \$15 per person and are due now please.

A new committee has been elected:

President – Ed Waddington

Treasurer/Secretary – Bruce Foulds

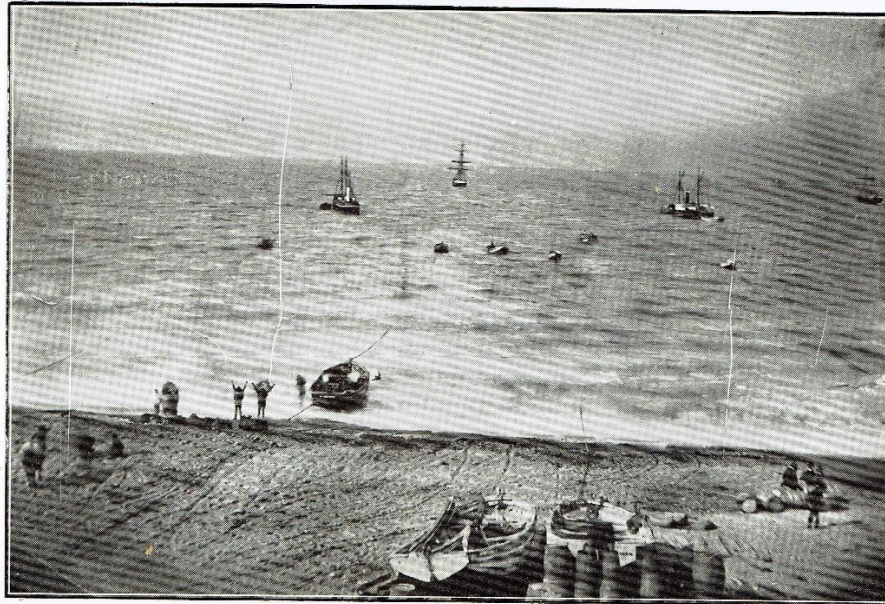
Committee members:

- Ken Allan
- Ed Taylor
- Helen Howarth
- Maia Bennett
- Dawn Bosley
- Jo Wilton

Whilst Bruce Foulds has taken on the 2 positions of Secretary and Treasurer (allowed in the Rules), this is only a temporary situation until we can find another person willing to do the Secretary's job- there were no nominations for that position received.

You will note that I have stepped down as President but will still be producing the Newsletters. I wish to thank everyone who has helped me out over the past couple of years or so as President.

OLD PHOTOS



ROADSTEAD AND BOATING SERVICE BEFORE BREAKWATER WAS BUILT.

Not a view from the Upper Clutha, but from the foreshore at Oamaru sometime between about 1858 and 1871 (the first breakwater was built in 1871). Oamaru was a more important port for the Upper Clutha than the likes of Port Chalmers in the early days. There was a regular shipping service up the coast from Port Chalmers via Maheno and on to Oamaru, Timaru and Lyttelton. There were also ships sailing from Wellington, usually via Lyttelton. Livestock (sheep, cattle and horses), drays and supplies, were off-loaded from the shipping vessels in the roadstead and brought ashore in smaller boats e.g. whaleboats – sometimes livestock was reportedly swum ashore! After a visit to the local Roxby and Trail's store, the livestock, stores and accompanying people, would travel slowly up the Waitaki Valley, over the Lindis Pass and thence into the Upper Clutha. Accommodation in local hotels was aplenty including the likes of the Star and Garter that was mentioned by George Hassing in his writings. The Star and Garter still exists to this day on the same site, but only as a restaurant.

The photo was copied from an old book named "History of North Otago from 1853" and as near as can be gathered, was first published in 1934 – N.B. it is not K C McDonald's version of the same subject! This book includes a small number of pages about the early Upper Clutha.

CARDRONA HERITAGE TRUST

Three of our Committee attended the official "go live" event in April at where else, but the Cardrona Hotel. The Trust has developed a resource that preserves and records the history of the Cardrona Valley. An amazing website has been created under the name of the "Cardrona Heritage Trail". It is worth a look and it is being added to as time permits. The link is <https://cardronahistory.com/>

I understand that there is more to come so watch that space!

UCHRS welcomes this new organisation as an important addition to the recording and preservation of the history of the Upper Clutha.

JO'S NOTES

It has been a very busy year for the committee formulating the changes required by new Government regulations as well as the volunteers who actually do valuable on-going projects on our task list. This includes the large amount of time it takes for the Oral History group to complete a recording, then documentation, not just actual paper, but digitally onto UCHRS systems. It has been a steep learning curve by all involved with the new processes so thank you for your patience. The project recording subdivision history of the area has been a mixed one, however Patersons have come up with the great idea of showing developments in a map format done in decades using different colours for each decade. We are extremely grateful for Patersons staff who are creating this valuable record for us. One of our next challenges is to create documentation for selected photos which will be used on new media in the future.

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.

We also acknowledge the support of our major funders for our projects – the Central Lakes Trust, the Otago Community Trust and a number of smaller local trusts.

ENQUIRIES, RESEARCH AND PHOTOS

The Records Room at the Wānaka Library is open on Wednesday mornings from about 9am to 11am (except during December and January). It is manned by a very small team of volunteers. To make an appointment for Research enquiries, please contact the Wanaka Library staff who will pass on the request, or preferably, email admin@uppercluthahistory.org with contact details and the subject of your enquiry.

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 4th time this book has been reprinted.

The Sequel – - \$25. A sequel to Skirt Tales. .

125, Look Alive – 125 Years of Schooling in the Wānaka District - \$15.00.

The Upper Clutha – 150 Years - \$5. A short history of the Upper Clutha district.

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

Copies of the above books(subject to stock being on hand) are available from the Society.

Postage – we can post books to you but the price of NZ Post keeps rising at a pace. Please contact admin@uppercluthahistory.org for the current cost. NZ Post “Bubble Bags” are used where possible to protect the books.

PHOTOS

Copies of the photographs held in our records can be provided as a digital file. We do not provide printed copies. A small number of photos are subject to copyright or ownership of external parties and we cannot provide files for these.

Costs are:

For individuals:

Digital file: \$30-00

For Non-profit Community organizations:

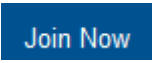
There is generally no fee for digital copies but a donation would be welcome.

For Commercial Organizations:

The fee is subject to negotiation 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.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

If you wish to become a member, please go to <https://www.uppercluthahistory.org/contact-us/>, click on  and fill out the form that appears. When you have filled out all the

details required, please click on . We will be in touch.

The annual Membership Subscription is \$15 per person for the year ending 31 March next.

WHO ARE WE? – THE COMMITTEE

President : Ed Waddington

Secretary/Treasurer: Bruce Foulds

Committee Members: Jo Wilton, Helen Howarth, Ed Taylor, Ken Allan (also Editor), Maia Bennett, Dawn Bosely.

The Society was established in 1985, Incorporated in 2003, and became a Registered 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.

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. 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.

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

Email: admin@uppercluthahistory.org