

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)

WINTER 2021 - VOLUME FOURTEEN

JUNE 2021

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 6 MAY

The AGM was held on 6 May and a few changes took place. President Graeme Dickson and Secretary David Simmers retired from their positions. Graham became President in 2007 and has seen many changes to the Society, as has Secretary David Simmers. David likewise was Treasurer for a number of years before taking on the Secretary's job. But we have not lost their expertise and knowledge as both have been voted on as Committee members. A vote of thanks for Graham's and David's contributions over the years was passed.

The new committee is as follows:

President : Bruce Foulds

Vice President: Jo Wilton

Secretary : Steve Moss

Treasurer : Ken Allan

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

Membership Fees were increased by \$5 to \$15 pa to partially offset ever increasing costs.

**AIRPORTS ARE TOP OF MIND AT THE MOMENT. WHO KNEW THERE WAS AN
“AIRPORT” AT HAWEA FLAT ????**



NZ AIRWAYS SIMMONDS SPARTAN AIRCRAFT AT HAWEA FLAT

A HISTORY OF THE PADDLE STEAMER ‘THEODORE’

Paddle steamers are relatively rare, but Lake Wanaka had its own and it was the first steam driven vessel to sail on the lake. It had quite a colourful and eventful life before it was beached in 1905 and finally scrapped and broken up in 1914.

The ‘Theodore’ probably had its beginnings as an idea of Theodore Russell as an adjunct to the Wanaka Hotel business. Unfortunately, Theodore died in late 1877 before he could start the project. Enter Charles Hedditch, a previous partner of Theodore’s, and possibly supported by Theodore’s widow, Celia, who was running the Wanaka Hotel.

Hedditch must have contacted Asher Smith of Queenstown, a boat builder/carpenter, who may have built the Wanaka Hotel for Theodore Russell. He was living in Queenstown. Asher moved over to Lake Wanaka and set up a base near the Matukituki River. There he

commenced building the 'Theodore' in 1880. It appears that he was in an ownership partnership with Charles Hedditch.

Asher designed the vessel and selected the local wood to be used. It is likely that it was obtained from Ewing's sawmill. The vessel was to be a flat-bottomed hull with a length of 67 feet (though various other measurements are provided in local newspapers) and a beam of 16 feet. To put it into context, this is a smaller hull than those used in the recent America's Cup races that were 86 feet by 42 feet !

On the 9 March 1881, the vessel was launched. Hedditch's wife, Florence smashed a bottle of champagne on the prow, named it 'Theodore', and it slipped into Lake Wanaka. Some 70 persons had gathered at the site, having travelled in three or four boats from Pembroke which is 12 miles away, and by horse overland. After the celebrations were over, the hull was towed over to Roys Bay and moored there to await installation of the machinery, boiler, and paddles etc.


On 26 March it was reported "... portions of her machinery passed through Arrowtown en-route for Pembroke.It is estimated that the steamer would be in full working trim within three months from date." But something was amiss – probably money! The vessel was a sizeable investment – a reported £3,000.

Contrary to the earlier mentioned newspaper report, and five weeks later, Charles Hedditch was in Dunedin "...making arrangements for machinery for the steamer 'Theodore'..... ." Moving on another 12 months, it was then reported that "The 'Theodore' still rides at her moorings, and despite rancorous predictions to the contrary, her engines are expected and will, barring mishaps, soon be landed in Dunedin."

However, again, all was not as reported. Another 5 months on and it was reported that "... the necessary machinery, paddles, etc, for the steamer are now on their way from England, having been specially manufactured by the renowned firm of Marshall and Sons, Gainsborough. Mr Hedditch expects to have the vessel completely fitted and plying on the lake early in the ensuing year." It was indicated that but for a misunderstanding on the part of Marshall and Sons, the arrangement would have been completed by now. I wonder? I suspect that Asher and Charles had run out of money and this caused the delays.

I note that a sum of money had been raised against the security of the vessel with the Commercial Property & Finance Co Ltd of Dunedin which will feature in the story, a little later. It is also suggested in another newspaper report that there was a second charge mortgage to "the Russells".

Eventually the machinery arrived in Dunedin and it was transported to Pembroke at a cost of £200. The engine was a "portable one of 29 hp but could be worked to 40hp". The installation was completed and a trial voyage took place in 23 July 1883. The trial was to everybody's satisfaction – just over two years since it was launched!

On 7 August, the maiden public voyage was advertised - see advert 

On 16 August, the big event took place, and a trip was made around part of the lake with lunch at McKay's and a free ball held at the Wanaka Hotel that night. Charles, now known locally as Captain Hedditch, was the captain and as such continued in that position until the vessel was sold later on.

Then on 17 July 1891 there appeared an advertisement for the purchase of the 'Theodore' by way of a tender process. This was advertised by the previously mentioned Commercial Property & Finance Co Ltd as



T R I A L T R I P O F T H E
S T E A M B O A T
" T H E O D O R E . "

PUBLIC INVITATION.

Messrs HEDDITCH & SMITH have much pleasure in inviting the Public to a trial trip in their new and powerful steamboat Theodore ON THURSDAY, 16TH INSTANT.

The Theodore will leave Pembroke wharf at 1.30 p.m., making the trip round East Wanaka Islands, thence to Glendhu, returning to Pembroke at 6 p.m.

A FREE BALL

Will be given in the Evening.

PROGRAMME FOR FRIDAY, 17TH.

THE "THEODORE"

Will leave the Pembroke wharf at 9 a.m. for Waterfall Creek, Makarora, Head of Lake Wanaka, and will stay two hours at the Head, returning to Pembroke at 6 p.m. same evening.

TICKETS 20s.

To be obtained on board.

SATURDAY 18th.

A trip will be made to Head of Lake, leaving the jetty at 9 a.m., calling at Paradise Lake, Pigeon Island. Two hours will be spent in enjoying this beautiful spot, lately christened Paradise Lake by the "Vagabond," thence to Head of Lake, and return to Pembroke at 6 p.m.

TICKETS 20s.

THE CROMWELL BRASS BAND

Has been engaged, and will be on board on each occasion.

HEDDITCH & SMITH,

Proprietors.

mortgagee. But the next day the 'Theodore' sank alongside the Pembroke jetty. There was a suggestion away back in 1880 in a letter to a newspaper by an unknown person, that Asher may have been having trouble with caulking the timbers, as it was suggested that unseasoned wood was used in the construction. Maybe that came back to haunt Captain Hedditch and Asher Smith?

As an aside, in the NZ Police Gazette dated 21 Oct 1891, the local policeman, Constable A E Remer was awarded £5 "by the New Zealand and other insurance companies in recognition of his services at the ps 'Theodore' when sunk in Lake Wanaka."

Whatever, by 14 September, the 'Theodore' had been overhauled, repaired, re-surveyed and re-launched. It cannot have sold by the tender, as in October it was advertised again by the mortgagees to be sold by auction. That cannot have worked either as the Commercial Property & Finance Co Ltd was registered as owner of the vessel in 1892.



A watercolour painting of the 'Theodore' by Christopher Aubrey dated 1885

The original is in the National Library

All was not lost however, as Robert M McDougall, a well-known entrepreneur in the district, purchased the vessel in April 1892 via his business R M McDougall & Sons. But their problems were just starting!

About May 1896 it was discovered that the hull was “.... in a rotten state.” The McDougalls re-planked the hull and had it sailing again later that year, but this time under the name “Wanaka”. It was re-named back to ‘Theodore’ a very short while later, it is thought, after a ‘hue and cry’ from the locals.

It continued plying the lake until 1905. January 1905 was the last time an advertisement appeared in the newspapers. It was beached at Roys Bay and slowly deteriorated. In 1914 it was broken up and the remains removed.



Photo of the 'Theodore' taken in 1913 rotting away on the beach



Approximate scale model of the 'Theodore' based on photographs of the vessel. Made by the Editor for a National Transport and Toy Museum display

TRAVERSING THE CROWN RANGE IN 1884

It was reported in the New Zealand Tablet of 1 August 1884 that Mr S N Brown claimed the distinction of being the first person to drive a buggy direct from Arrowtown to Pembroke (Wanaka) across the Crown Range. "The exigencies of electioneering business was the moving cause of this plucky work..... . The Saddle had a good deal of snow on it, rendered slippery by frost..... . This being so in mid-winter, it is clear that the road in summer will become a favourite one to connect the Wakatipu and Wanaka Lakes Districts. The road down the Cardrona Creek is very bad, and should at once have something done to it."

Moving on fifty years or so and getting across the Crown Range still had its difficulties as shown in the photo:



MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR FINANCIAL MEMBERS

As previously mentioned, Membership fees have increased by \$5 to \$15 per annum. Thank you to all of you who have paid their membership fees already. At the time of writing over 80% of fees had been paid which is great.

In line with new banking practices, we are unable to accept cheques anymore.

The preferred method of payment is by direct online banking to our account 03-1739-0012311-00. Please ensure the payments are identified by your name and the word SUBS in the reference field.

We will still accept cash if necessary, but you will need to place it in an envelope addressed to UCHRS with your name and the word SUBS on it and hand it in to one of the Librarians at the Wanaka Library or one of the Committee members.

New members are very welcome. Just fill out the form on our website at www.uppercluthahistory.org or come and see us one Wednesday morning.

Thanks.

LIBRARIES PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

The Wanaka Library was granted up to \$5,000 as part of a national scheme to bring the heritage knowledge of their particular area, in a meaningful way, to the local community. The Librarians asked for help in deciding on a project and spending the money! Unfortunately the timetable was very short and the best we could quickly think of was to upgrade the slideshow we have showing on the TV in the Wanaka Library. In short, the end result was the purchase of a 55" TV and two hi-grade scanners as a lot of our photos would need to be recopied to a better resolution. The TV has been mounted on a wall in an area of the Library where visitors can best sit down and view the slideshow. It is to be expanded to cover, as best we can, the history of Maori in the Upper Clutha and show some of the old maps. The assistance of the Otago Museum and Richie Hewitt has been sought to provide photos of Maori artifacts from the area. We have just received advice (25 May) from Gerard O'Brien, that the Otago Museum will be providing us with a selection of photos of their taonga that originates in the Upper Clutha.

The TV will also be able to be used to make presentations by various groups for education purposes and the Society will have free access to the scanners (they are stored under lock and key in the Records Room).

Currently, the existing slideshow is having a quick tidy-up for the new TV while we (i.e. yours truly), create a new slideshow. The latter will take a wee while, but parts are being prepared already.

U3A (UNIVERSITY OF THE 3RD AGE)

Yes, we all keep on learning and educating ourselves. Remember those days when we said “Thank heavens school is over.” Well as most of us have learnt – “it ain’t!”. I didn’t get to University until I was 53 (a slow starter) and had one of the best three years of my life. Challenging, but the oldest student in my first year was aged in her late 70s!!!

In Wanaka we are blessed with two U3A clubs and according to rumours, a waiting list of potential members. Meant for the “retired” or “semi-retired” residents, generally aged over 65, the club’s aims are the education and stimulation of “retired” members of the community. Speakers are found from all over NZ and sometimes overseas (until Covid intervened). Note that I have a view that there is no such thing as retirement and we are generally as busy as we ever were – we just don’t receive a wage for the work we do! Anyway, enough of the lecture!

Last year, the “Two Kens”, (Ken Thomlinson and yours truly) were asked to present talks on the history of the Upper Clutha. Ken Thomlinson was to talk on the early history of the Upper Clutha and I was to talk on the formation of the Upper Clutha Historical Society, what we do, our records, and anything else that might be of interest.

Initially we were to present our ‘lectures’ in the latter half of 2020 but the Covid lockdowns intervened. The “Two Kens” were invited to delay their presentations until May, which were gladly accepted.

Ken Thomlinson’s presentation was made on the 6 May and created much interest. His personal research on a wide range of subjects relating to the early discovery of the Upper Clutha by European immigrants, created much discussion and interest.

As for my own presentation, I can only report that I spoke about the creation of the UCHRS Society and some early pioneers that I thought had an influence on our society (not the “Society”) as we see it today. It is for others to decide if I achieved my goal.

We did manage to sell over \$400 of our publications which was a bonus.

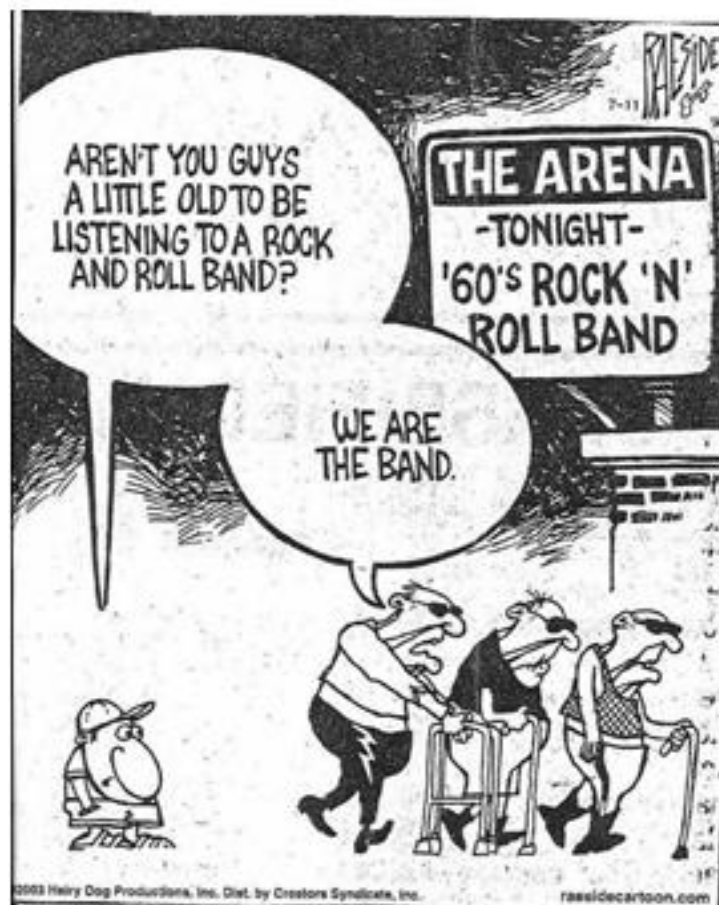
JO'S UPDATE

Volunteers have been working quietly on allocated tasks, some from home such as indexing. Others who have access to the photograph collection now that we can work remotely are making greater progress.

Barbara Chinn has devotedly been scanning our box contents for some years coming in from Hawea most weeks. She will be sorely missed when she 'retires' later this year. Is anyone willing to take over this important task perhaps on a Wednesday morning when the room is open?

We are looking forward to the upgraded TV slide show of historical photographs running in the Library.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY – TONGUE IN CHEEK!



Thanks to the "What's Happening in Hawea This Week" newsletter.

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. Three 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. The third edition has now sold out.

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

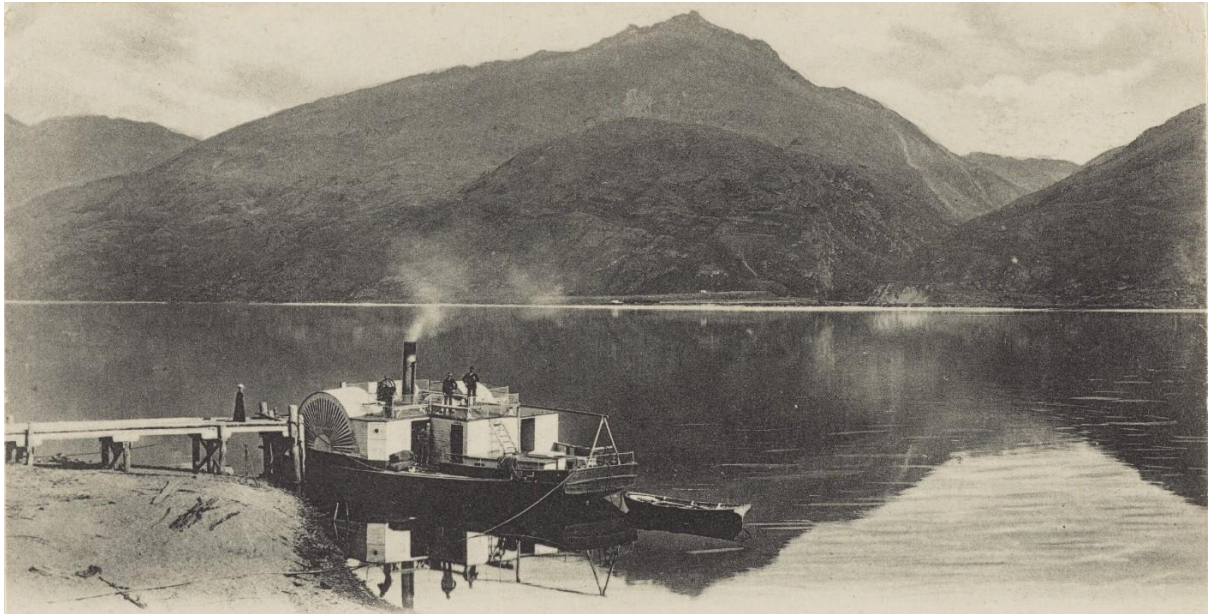
MAPS & RANDOM PHOTO



A colourised photo of the "Theodore" (left) and the "Makarora" (right) about 1902.

AND ON THE NEXT PAGE LITERALLY "HOT OFF THE PRESS", A PHOTO FROM A POSTCARD OF THE 'THEODORE' TIED UP AT THE MAKARORA WHARF. IT WAS DISCOVERED AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY ARCHIVES JUST 7 DAYS AGO!

I am not sure when this photo was taken. The mast is missing and the deck structures (cabins etc) on the deck appear different from other photos. Maybe dated in the 1890s when the vessel was re-planked etc?



Muir & Moddie

No. 5636. Head of Lake Wanaka.

*I should like to visit Lake Wanaka some day.
Expect to be home Thursday evening. Weather cold and unsettled*

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 .

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