

LAKELAND PARK

Queenstown

The Early Days





INDRODUCTION

The first thoughts of a camp in Queenstown must be attributed to Mr & Mrs Jack Ingles. They were the founders of the Queenstown Assembly. With camp ministry in mind they bought the Bank Manager's house, a double storied home below the camping ground overlooking the bay. This photo shows the earliest camp held in the house with meetings in the Shotover Hall. The first Girls Rally Camp was held in this house also.





Bert & Alan



***Larnach
Castle***



At the conclusion of World War II there appeared in the hearts of New Zealand's youth an interest in God and His Word. Youth workers in the country were awakened to this interest. Mildred Holler and Betty Doodney, two Child Evangelism workers, visited our country about this time with the purpose of reaching us vital and interesting methods of sharing the gospel. Enthusiasm gripped both teachers and children. These two Child Evangelism Fellowship workers from the United States became very aware of this interest as they travelled throughout New Zealand, and warned us to take immediate advantage of this situation as their experience had taught them that this interest would not always be there. It was not very long before their enthusiasm spilled over into us and we were very happy to spend many hours throughout those visits preparing visual aids to present the gospel and the Word of God in an interesting manner and, to our encouragement, enabling us to maintain the children's interest and more importantly their acceptance of the wonderful truths contained in the Word of God. The attendance in Sunday schools and youth clubs rose rapidly and this in turn brought about a desire and a need to spend more time with these young people and their teachers.

Larnach's Castle in Dunedin became available to hold camps at Easter times but after a few years it was sold and no longer available. Balclutha School became our next option and after a few years there we felt the time had come to have our own camp site. Alan and I thought about this for some time and approached Bert Oram who was a keen and enthusiastic Christian and a person who was always ready to listen and talk things over. Bert's reply injected us with more enthusiasm. His reply? "Sometimes when I have been in Queenstown I have looked across the lake to that piece of land which is not the golf course and thought to myself what a great camp site that would be"

Further discussions with interested folk produced the idea of buying huts which were for sale after the completion of the Roxburgh Hydro Dam. We had been at camps where such makeshift buildings had been used and were still there many years later in a deteriorated state with little finance to update and I remember Alan saying "there is nothing so permanent as that which is temporary" so that idea was scrapped and the next move anticipated.

In those days there was no road round to Kelvin Heights so Bert, Alan and I hired a drive yourself boat and set off across the lake to inspect the site, enthusiasm soaring within, but soon to drain away as, in answer to our enquiry, we were informed that the Lakefront at Kelvin Grove was being set aside to set up a landing site for Sunderland Flying Boats from Australia. So, where do we go now?

Shortly after this the Government announced their decision to hold a Royal Commission due to the extent of increasing immorality in one of the secondary schools in the Wellington district. The result of this came at just the perfect time for us. Their decision was to provide free Crown Land to any church or youth organisation who were prepared to do something positive to help the youth of our country. Added to this was a dollar for dollar subsidy. The land is Crown Land by Government Gazette, control is invested in our Camp Trust. This is the equivalent of freehold for all practical purposes. Unlike a lease, there is no expiry date to our tenure.



**Scrub
Cutting**



**Scrap Metal
Collecting**



**Stamp
Collecting**

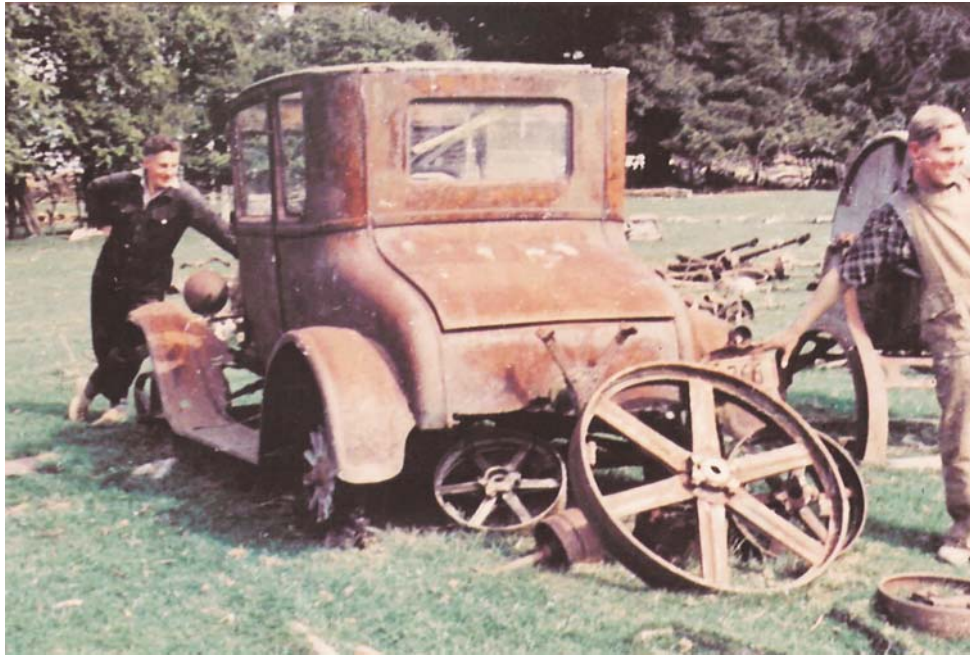
About this time a number of men attending the Invercargill Grace Street bible Chapel got together and formed a Trust; Wilfred McMillan, Geoff Hemmingsen, Roly Frost, Edgar Fryer, Alan Melhop, Bert Oram and Harold Melhop, all devotedly supported by their wives.

During Larnach Castle Easter Camp which was supervised by some Dunedin Assemblies, Alan came to know a gentleman by the name of Ted Pickford. Ted worked for Lands and Survey Department in Dunedin and he attended the Kaikorai Valley Gospel Hall. It did not take Alan long to write to Ted regarding the Crown land offered by the Government. It was very helpful and encouraging for Alan to have the support of this gentleman whose interests were parallel. After a considerable search for Crown land on the Peninsula we became aware of this perfect site (So we thought) right on the edge of the Lake in from of the present site. Application was made to Lands and Survey through Mr Pickford and we waited excitedly for the grant. In the meantime Mr Jardine, a land owner in the area, became aware of our application and applied to Lands and Survey for that lake edge piece of land and in return offered us a piece of his land. This was considered by the Trust who eventually became aware of the dangers of a youth camp right on the edge of the lake. After 45 years of youth camps we have become acutely aware of the hazardous dangers of such a site, PRAISE THE LORD. Finally settlement was concluded.

There was still no road on the peninsula and the Lakes County Council became aware of our intention to build a youth camp. Initially we were not concerned about there being no road and Alan and Bert thought we could purchase a boat to transport our campers to and from the camp. Just imagine it!! Shortly afterwards the Council decided to provide a road; great news indeed. I will never forget the excitement when several of us negotiated that road on foot after the first bulldozer had been through. We were dodging rocks, boulders and potholes but that was minor compared with the excitement of setting foot on that special piece of land.

Now! For the finance to proceed - where was that coming from? First of all I would like to backtrack a little. I just love the photo on the front page of Bert and Geoff praying for the future of the camp, and thanking God for His provision. A number of ideas re finance were suggested and the following put into action with enthusiasm. Scrub cutting, stamp collecting, bring and buy and craft sales, which the ladies entered into with great enthusiasm, scrap metal collection, finance grants from Trusts, finance from some New Zealand Assemblies and, of course, personal donations. Alan approached Mr Hannan our Invercargill MP. He displayed a keen interest in the project and said to Alan "If only you would accept lottery money, there is just so much we could give you" but of course we had to reject that offer, tempting though it must have been. In later years a friend drew our attention to a verse of scripture in Proverb 12 v 22 "the wealth of the wicked is stored up for the righteous."

One of the first projects was the need to prepare the land, and Edgar Fryer, a nurseryman with much vigor and enthusiasm for the project, stepped forward and provided large quantities of trees and shrubs, overseeing the planting and the continual watering during the marvelous working bees held at weekends. This work has been followed on by Paul Gay who has continued the dedication of Edgar Fryer's example. The landscaping of the land today is due to Paul's unceasing efforts. That you so much Paul.



Scrap Metal Collecting

Long Drop Toilets



On one occasion a huge water tank was required on the camp site by a certain date. Doris Fryer, Edgar's wife, willingly agreed to tow the tank by trailer and displayed fortitude in spite of the car breaking down on the journey. Harold flew to the rescue without hesitation. There have been large numbers of people who supported us at working bees. It was not unusual to have 80 people at a working bee weekend from as far away as Oamaru, Dunedin, Milton, Balclutha, and of course Invercargill. Boy, oh boy, did they work hard? They sure did, 8am to 6pm.

Much gratitude goes to Henk Hoogvliet from the Queenstown Assembly who was a tireless volunteer in those earlier days. Being permanently resident in Queenstown a lot of responsibility fell on Henk's shoulders and this he did with true dedication. We are very grateful to you Henk for holding the fort and that without complaint. I would really like to include in this story the names of all the people who worked so hard in those early days; there were just so many, and if you are reading this story please be assured that we did appreciate your dedicated support. God is no man's debtor and He will bless you. I know there have been hundreds more since those early days who have dedicated their time and energy to the camp project but that would require another story and maybe someone following on after me might like to face this challenge.

One or two incidents have just come to mind that may be of interest. Six years passed between the first letter Alan wrote to Lands and Survey and the first camp. There were 45 people present. The boys slept in the loft, Alan and I slept in the boiler room, and I don't remember where the girls slept or the other married couples. The only toilet facility was a long drop, and I placed a bowl of water and a cake of soap on the ground outside for hand washing. The drains had not been connected to the kitchen sinks and large milk cans were placed outside under the windows to catch the water. Some of these men were given the responsibility to check the water levels in the cans and then to carry them over to the gully to dispose of the water. There was no door between the kitchen and the auditorium, and the serving slide between the kitchen and auditorium had not been put in place. This made things a bit difficult for the kitchen staff when cooking meals during lectures to keep the noise levels under control. The egg beater was used only during hymn singing and also any other noisy preparation. At the first camp the water supply had to be pumped up from the Lake. I vividly remember going into the Lake with Alan not quite waist deep holding a hosepipe into which I had to keep pouring water while Alan stood a few metres away also in the lake operating a pump to fill the water tank in the camp site. Our sincere thanks and gratitude must go to Geoff Hemmingsen who served the Camp Trust faithfully as our Treasurer and Secretary. We are very grateful to you Geoff for those many years of support.

One year there was great excitement for the children - a helicopter flew over the camp and landed on the site above the dormitory area. Everyone rushed out to find Santa Clause stepping out of the helicopter with his bag of Christmas presents. It was then announced that the large Christmas pudding was to be brought to the dining room. I wheeled it in on a tea wagon in a large pot, lifted the lid, and out popped this beautiful smiling little two year old girl, hands raised up in the air greeting everyone. I had arranged this with her the previous day and requested that she keep it a secret and she did not even tell her parents; - her name Averil Weir from Milton. She was delightful, thank you Averil.



First Jet Boat Pilots

Kawarau River



The Trust decided that we required more land so they purchased an extra strip of land adjacent to the back boundary of the camp costing One thousand Pounds - that was donated. That strip of freehold land today would be worth \$1,500,000. It became necessary to build a house for the camp manager and his family and our first managers were Jan and Allan Kennedy. Thank you Jan and Allan, those early days were not easy at times but we do thank you both for the team effort.

The Camp Trust appreciated the effort of Ces Hilton, a devoted Christian camper from the North Island who traveled south to assist us with the building plans and ground design.

Alan and Harold were agents for Hamilton Jet Boats and each Christmas they took a jet boat to Queenstown during our holiday. We learned to water ski, this was great fun and one day they thought "Now, we could start a jet boat tourist trip to make funds for the camp." They did just that which included having a jetty built at Frankton and wharf space in Queenstown which was suggested by the Lakes County Council, quite an undertaking indeed.

This jet boat adventure became very popular, Alan and Harold taking turns to operate it on the Kawarau River until finally they were able to employ a manager. Quite some time later Alan arrived home one night after a Camp Trust meeting and said that Geoff had announced that the jet boat operation had made 10/- profit for the year. Finally the opportunity came to sell the jet boat operation and the funds from that were used to build the first dormitory. I failed to mention earlier that the Kawarau River trip had become so popular that people began requesting trips on the Shotover River and that really took off! And today the two jet boat trips have become one of New Zealand's most popular tourist adventures.

Another interesting anecdote was the fact that Steve Staite, a competent Invercargill builder became the builder of our camp. Steve employed an apprentice by the name of Murray Frost aged 15 years. Eventually Murray became a Trust member and later Chairman of the Trust. Thank you Murray for the dedication you gave to this project - may God bless you.

One incident I just have to share with you before my conclusion. For quite some time Alan had been saying "I want to see the second stage of the camp completed before I die." He was nearing 80 years of age and for a period of time focused on raising finance for a new auditorium and other improvements to the Camp. One day I said to him "Darling, you have worked so hard for this project, the necessary finance is not available, I wonder if you should forget about it. If it is the Lord's will to proceed, would He not have supplied the money?" Alan made no comment. About two days later the phone rang, it was a gentleman's voice and he said "I want to donate \$132,000 to the Queenstown Camp project." Alan was over whelmed and he said "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Eventually we had the privilege of sitting in that beautiful auditorium along with others and thankful to the Lord. Alan's desire had been fulfilled and he passes away about one year later. It is my earnest prayer that this camp will redound to the honour and glory of God and that many people will come to know the Lord Jesus as saviour and that Christians attending this camp will

Lakeland Park is dedicated to the moral, spiritual and physical development of the youth of our land and to training in leadership.

With a resident manager, the property will be used effectively by as many people over as many days each year as possible.

A development plan prepared by the Trust Board has the following aim:-

- 1 The building of a manager's house in 1979*
- 2 Landscaping and beautification of the park - 1978 on*
- 3 The building of a second dormitory block - early 1980's*

Donations to Lakeland Park development are an investment in the future; returning moral and spiritual dividends. Contributions are eligible for Government tax concessions.



The Queenstown Christian Camp Trust (Inc.) is a non profit organisation whose purpose is to manage and control "Lakeland Park" as a Christian training venue and outdoor education centre.

All Trust member act in an honorary capacity and are elected by the board.

Lakeland Park is widely used by schools, churches, Bible class groups, youth groups, tour parties etc. nevertheless, the work of the Park is a ministry with definite purposes rather than just a property available for hire.

be encouraged in the ways of the Lord. As we look back over the past 45 years we have much to thank God for as we have experienced High Mighty Hand working for us and with us.

Finally, to Phil and Julia thorn, we are delighted to welcome you both and your family as Camp Managers. Please be assured of our continual prayers as you serve the Lord in this sphere. I am looking forward to meeting you both.

Eunice Melhop

February 2006.



MEMO RE LAKELAND PARK

1. The first thoughts of a Camp in Queenstown must go to Mr & Mrs Jack Inglis. They were the founders of the Queenstown Assembly. With camp ministry in mind, they bought the bank manager's house – a double storied home below the camping ground overlooking the bay. This photo shows the earliest camp held in the house with meetings in the Shotover Street Hall. A girls Rally Camp was held in this house also. (refer page 9 of the ERBC 50th booklet)
2. Bert Oram was one of the forward thinkers for a permanent site. At that time Roxburgh Hydro buildings were for sale. There was a possibility of moving some of these building. However on inspection, the buildings were wooden with a short life. That idea was scrapped with the thought of building in a more permanent material.
3. Refer to page 11 for some information about getting land. Bert's first ask was for the peninsula, which is now the Golf Course. That was declined but the present site was offered instead. There had been a Government enquiry following a moral scare up north. The Government were keen to make land available to any group who would do something positive for young people.
4. Coinciding with all the activity to get started and a search for ideas, was a visit from Ces Hilton. He drew up the first plan and grounds set out. The idea of cabins was his.
5. About this time, Geoff was visiting several northern camps as a speaker. He came home with some ideas of what others were doing.
6. Much of the drive must go to Alan Melhop. He organised the scrap metal collection. He acted as chairman for many years. He was so good at arranging grants of finance from Trusts and organisations. Some Government subsidy was given to help the finances.
7. Alan reminded me that in one year the jetboats made a profit of ten shillings. When they were sold the proceeds with Government subsidy provided funds for the first dormitory.
8. For the earlier years, bookings were arranged from Invercargill by Harold Melhop. Maintenance was done by working bees.
9. Caretakers have been Allan & Joan Kennedy, Doug & Roasalie Frost, the funeral director who lived next door, the Broadbent family, Ivan Grindlay and his wife and the present caretakers – Phil & Julia Thorn.
10. Sincere thanks must go to the Queenstown Assembly for their practical fellowship. Special mention of Henk Hoogvliet and Jack & Barbara Smith.
11. Men who joined the Trust were Alan Melhop (chair), Harold Melhop, Rollie Frost, Edgar Fryer, Wilfred McMillan, Geoff H who acted as secretary and treasurer.

12. Special mention should be made to faithful men and women who came and worked with a will. These working bees were from Grace Street and Rosedaile.
13. An old letterhead (enclosed) the linocut was made by Tiny Eggers. Originally the buildings were included in the sketch but cut out later as they did not match our final plans.
14. The original piece of land is Crown Land with management vested in our Trust by Crown Gazette. Our solicitor advise that this is equivalent to freehold. However if the property were ever sold the position would need to be clarified with the Council who now have taken over management of Crown Lane in the area. A freehold strip on the left of the Camp was bought from Frank Mee. The finance for this was given by Mr H.E. Melhop. The Camp house is on this freehold strip.

Thoughts from Geoff – Eunice Melhop may add with more information.

