

Fred's Story

1

This story is dedicated to my family –

*"We are who we are because  
of each other".*

Fred's Story

2



---

## Contents

The Early Years	1
Childhood Days	2
The War Years	3
After The War	4
Jones & Cooper Builders, Gore	5
Te Anau	6
Marriage	7
15 Crewe Street	8
The Family	9
The RSA	10
QSM	11

---

Overseas Experiences	12
Italy Revisited	13
A Family Reunion	14
Birthdays	15
Frank Frederick Cooper	16
Family Tree	17

#### Fred's Story

4

**F**rederick Charles Cooper was born on 14 January 1922 in Knapdale, a small rural settlement seven kilometres from Gore in Eastern Southland. There was a dairy factory at nearby Whiterig plus remnants of gold mining days, from the early 1900s when Europeans and Chinese mined in the area. A Scotchman, Alexander McNab, named Knapdale after his home district in Scotland after obtaining a farming run there in 1855.

Fred was the first born child of Charles Henry Cooper and his wife Laura. Home was the farm at "Riverbend", Knapdale. Fred's father, born in 1898, was the youngest child of Charles Cooper senior and Mary Haynes. The Haynes family had come from Kent in England and lived in Waipahi in South Otago where Mary met and then married Charles in September 1885 when she was 17 and he was 27.

---

## The Early Years

Charles senior was born in Crawley, Sussex, England where he was educated at the parish school. He had arrived in New Zealand as an 18 year old farm labourer on Monday, 5 October 1874 aboard the sailing vessel the Christian M'Ausland. The ship had departed Gravesend, England with 283 assisted immigrants taking 98 days to sail to Carey's Bay in Otago.

Charles first employment in New Zealand was on a farm at Popotunoa where he worked for two years for 10s per week. He then moved to Waipahi where he was employed by Robert Melrose on his threshing mill and farm. Two years later Charles took on road contracting work. He also bought a threshing mill and employed a harvest team for several seasons to carry out the grain harvest for the local farmers. In 1884 he was able to purchase a land at Waipahi where he lived until 1892 when he bought the farm known as "Riverbend" at Knapdale. As a dairy farmer, Charles was one

*The Early Years*

of the prime movers in the establishment of the Whiterig Dairy Factory and for many years was one of its largest suppliers. This land was farmed by four generations of the Cooper family before it was sold in 1994.

---



*The Cooper harvest team, Charles Cooper, middle row with white neck scarf, in front in the middle his son John and Charlie junior to his right.*

Charles Cooper owned the blocks known as Townend, Riverbend, The Camp and also Strawberry and Daumanns (Pinnacle Hill) – known as Germantown. In 1874 an East German family group who had come to New Zealand to work on railway constructions gangs had obtained land here through a ballot. Gradually as railway employment ceased the families moved on, but the area remained known as Germantown.

Charles and Mary had six children, John their eldest son farmed the block on Knapdale Road known as The Camp, but he gave up farming during the slump of the 1930s. He had a steam engine certificate and was able to get work in the forestry in The Chaslands which he found more profitable than farming.

Their eldest daughter Annie Louisa married James Cruickshank who served in the First World War and farmed at East Gore. Frank Frederick, their middle son known as Fred, farmed the block known as The Camp. When

---

## Fred's Story

6

### The Early Years

World War I broke out he enlisted with the New Zealand army. However, he became a casualty in 1917 and is buried in Belgium. Eva Florence Mary, their fourth child was a nurse, who died eighteen months after Fred on 18 November 1918 during the great flu pandemic that swept the world for approximately two months and left 8600 people dead in New Zealand alone.

Eva was nursing at the Dunedin public hospital when the pandemic struck. She and a fellow nurse nursed till they literally fell on their feet. Unlike her friend, Eva did not recover and is buried in the Anderson's Bay cemetery with a headstone commemorating both Eva and Fred. Eva's name along with three others is also on a memorial which was in the foyer of the old nurses' home in Dunedin.

In later years Charles and Mary lived with their youngest daughter Daisy whose husband Richard McDowell had died from injuries received during World War I. Daisy and Richard farmed on the farm neighbouring Charles and Mary. They then moved to Dunedin where Charles died of cancer on 4 November 1932. Mary returned to the farm at Townend, Knapdale to live with Daisy until she died in 1961 aged 96 years.



*Cooper family from left: Daisy, Charles Henry, Charles snr, Annie, Mary (nee Haynes), Fred, Eva and John*

Fred's Story

8



red's parents Charles Henry and Laura Bell married in Laura's home town of Dunedin on 26 May 1921. Laura was the daughter of George Hay Bell and Charlotte Stonebridge. George Bell's father Archibald was a sea

---

## Childhood Days

captain who is buried in Perth, Australia along with his wife Jessie Hay.

The Hay family were among New Zealand's earliest settlers sailing from Keith in Scotland on the ship the "Ajax" reaching their destination on 8 January 1849. The family of George and Jane Hay and their five children including seven year old Jessie were helped ashore by Maoris at Willsher Bay near Kaka Point, Otago. The Hay family farmed at Romahapa for many years.

Charlie and Laura had six children. Fred is the eldest born in 1922 followed by Joyce who was born twelve months later in January 1923. Allan in 1924, Bruce in 1926, then Rua in 1928 and Joan in 1932. The family lived in the farm house at Riverbend, Knapdale on the property originally bought by Charlie senior. The house was already on the property when it was purchased.

Fred's Story

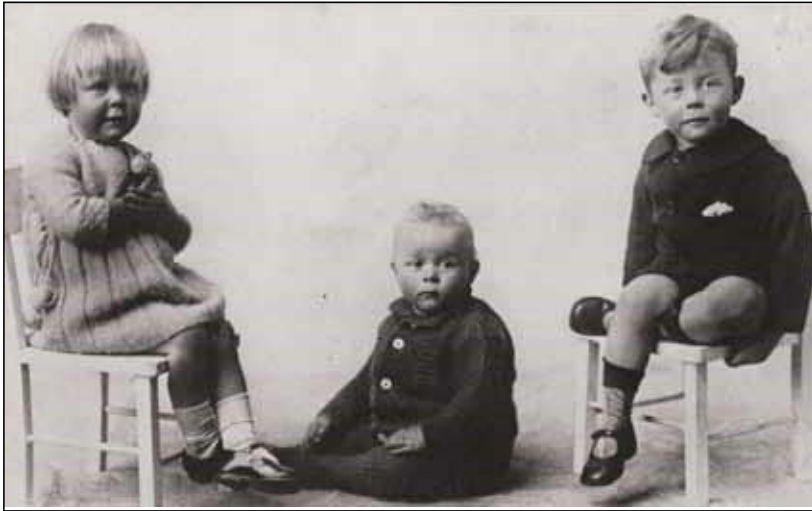
7

---

When Fred was little he carried round a rag doll golliwog with pearl eyes and a stitched mouth and another companion was a black cat. He did not start school until he was six and Joyce had turned five. This was mainly because they had to be driven to the East Gore School in the family's Dodge car. There was a long period of brainwashing with Fred being convinced that he had to go to school to look after Joyce, so when the fateful day came



they got Fred to the school gates and then all hell broke loose with Fred refusing to leave the car. Eventually the headmaster picked Fred up and placed him under his arm and Fred was carried kicking and yelling “I am not going to your buddy school. I’m not going to your buddy school.” This went on for days, older girls, Mattie McDowell (his cousin) and Florence Pollock and her sister would encourage Fred past the gate to get him into the school building each day. However, as time went on Fred became a very keen student and was reluctant to take a sick day off school.



*Left to right: Joyce, Alan and Fred*

When the family were older they biked to school, although they also quite often walked or rode Sandy, the Shetland pony which was left in a horse paddock while the children were at school. Cars were not seen very often on the road, so horses were scared of vehicles when they came along, Sandy in particular. She would career off inevitably ending up running into a gorse hedge. On one occasion when Alan was riding him, Sandy ran into a car and tore a huge 12 inch gash out of his rump which Mr Peterson the vet sewed up. Sandy wore a nappy arrangement and was tied up in the stable for weeks while Charlie treated the wound.

As the family grew, and Sandy became more used to cars, Sandy was hitched to a gig which was driven by their cousin Helen Perry who with her sister lived with the Cooper family for some time. One very hot day Sandy with the gig attached got the children home from school and then headed for the Gold Creek which ran through the farm and he lay down with the gig still attached.

Sandy also learnt to open the kitchen door which would mysteriously open to a horse standing there. After the family moved in to a new house



*Pictured: the house Fred grew up in.*

grain was stored in the old house and Sandy could open the door and go in and help himself to the grain.

Originally their house had no electricity. There was a black coal fired range for cooking on in the dining room with a tap on the side which provided hot water by means of a water jacket. The lighting was mainly provided by candles. In the lounge a kerosene lamp hung from the ceiling. There were three bedrooms although at first all the children slept in one

room. Three sisters, Joyce, Rua and Joan were in one bed and the three brothers Fred, Bruce and Alan in the other double bed. At one time Fred got the measles and was confined to bed for a week in a room with the curtains drawn.

During the 1930s, the industrial world suffered the effects of the economic Great Depression and their cousins, the Helen and Gwen Perry, from Dunedin lived with the family for nearly two years. They were the children of Laura's sister Edith. There were now six Cooper children and the two Perry girls in one room in the two double beds and one single bed. At this time sheets of iron were put up as a shelter on the veranda and Bruce and Fred shared a single bed on the veranda.

About 1935, an old hut was bought from the Whiterig dairy factory and was dragged to the north side of the bedroom where the three boys were to sleep. The bed was a 4x2 frame with chaff sacks stretched across for a mattress. The hut had one small window and a door that did not close properly and was lined with congoleum, (a soft lino). In the winter it was extremely cold as the air came up through the chaff sack mattress which was damp. The boys slept in the hut until a new house was completed in 1938.

In New Zealand the first Labour Government was elected in 1935 and introduced social reforms which encouraged the building of houses. Charlie and Laura built their home at this time.

After the commissioning of the Monowai power station in Southland in 1925, one of New Zealand's earliest hydroelectric power stations, Fred watched the power poles being put in from the Gold Creek Bridge on Knapdale Road. Knapdale had the earliest power to a rural Southland area, about 1926.

About the time electricity came to the house their grandfather built a kitchen at the back door. A coal range was put in and a copper circulator to provide hot water. There was a little bathroom with a tin bath and the hot water was piped through. However, it was such a long distance the water was not hot for long. When they were quite young the three boys bathed together to conserve water.

The family had domestic help, which as was usual at the time. It was a common for young girls to be employed in this way. Iris Carley, Mary Henderson and Minnie Wright were among the girls employed by the Coopers. Laura was a very efficient cook with many people including shearers to cook for. There was usually roast mutton, potatoes and cabbage and a big pot of soup for the midday meal. For breakfast there was porridge for everyone and bacon and eggs as well for the adults. Tea was bread and dripping or bread and jam with plenty of milk. The children were all in bed at night by seven o'clock.

Ten metres from the house were the laundry, tool shed and outside toilet. The toilet was "cash and carry". When the toilet was full Charlie carried it out to the paddocks on the west side of the house to bury the contents. Eventually septic tanks were introduced. There was a pump that



pumped water to a storage tank. Hec Day built the septic tank in the late 1920s, now there was a cistern high above the toilet and a long chain with a wooden handle that was pulled to flush the toilet. The laundry had a double tub, a wringer and a stick to stir the clothes. The washing was done in a copper with a fire under it. The copper sat on bricks, with concrete surround and a chimney. The sheets were washed with "blue" to keep them white.

Rabbits had been introduced to New Zealand for food and sport, but by the 1920s they

*Pictured: In the centre Fred with Joyce to his left.* had reached plague proportions and rabbiters were employed to shoot them. They would hang the dead rabbits in the sheep yards waiting to be picked up. One day Joyce was “encouraged” to remove the eyes from the rabbits with a pocket knife. The children also dug up rabbit holes and took the baby rabbits home, however these would mysteriously disappear.

A lot of time was spent playing at the sheep yards where there was the sheep dip. The top rail of the fence around the sheep yards was 10cmx2cm and the game was to walk along this 10cm wide rail which was about one metre from the ground. The children would jump from one rail surrounding a sheep pen to another. One day they were walking along the five cm concrete edge alongside of the dip, playing ‘Follow the leader’. Fred and Joyce got along but little Rua did not make it and fell into the dip, filled with sheep dip. Was she pushed or did she fall? The sheep yards were some distance from the house and Rua was escorted home for her mother to attend to.

Beside the pump shed was the stump of a macrocarpa tree that had been felled and the stump was used as a chopping block. Hens had their heads chopped off on this stump. One particular day Joyce and Fred had Alan with his head on the chopping block. Fred had the axe in the air about to do the deed when fortunately Charlie spotted Fred with the axe raised, Charlie roared out to avert disaster, and Fred let the axe fall behind his head.

On another occasion, Fred and Joyce were again with Alan at the stables. They were going to string Alan up. There was wire netting over the windows. They had binder twine tied round Alan’s neck and tried to string him up by pulling the twine through the netting. Luckily they were unsuccessful and Alan was left with only red marks on his neck.

At the back of the house was another macrocarpa tree with a pulley on it for hanging meat, supposedly above fly level. The block and tackle was threaded with homemade cowhide rope. The hide was rolled into a round rope. It was very stiff and had to have a big weight to make it run on the

block. On this occasion Rua was encouraged to hang on to the crossbar from which normally a carcass hung. Rua was pulled up into the air, however her arms became tired and she wanted to be lowered again, but she was not heavy enough for them to enable the rope to be lowered. Fred used his initiative on this occasion to get the wooden wheelbarrow for Rua to fall into. She let go and was not hurt too much. However, she probably would have been better off without the wheelbarrow to break her fall.

On one occasion Fred and Joyce were told to keep out of the house because of a visit from Great Grandma Haynes. There was a big fuss made preparing afternoon tea with plenty of cakes and the best dishes used. Fred was not happy at all. The old house had very few windows however, little Gran was sitting in front of a window. She was blind and quite deaf. Fred, banned from going inside, picked up a stone and heaved it through the window with the words “take that you old bitch”. Family members inside were mortified and picked up glass off Gran who fortunately was oblivious to what had happened.

Despite Fred’s apparent ability to curse, his father Charlie did not swear inside the house. Instead he used the word “sugar” to express frustration. One day Fred was sitting at the dining table with his elbows on the table and his chin resting on his hands. He looked out the window as he saw Charlie approach the house and said “Here comes Sugar”.

Horse teams were used on the farm for cultivation. Fred improvised block and tackle harness for his team of horses to pull the plough, his team comprising whichever siblings were willing to participate. One time when Fred had his team with Joyce at the front, they came to a puddle and Joyce was “encouraged” to drink out of the puddle.

Sugar came in jute bags. An attempt to parachute seemed to be a good idea one day. Binder twine was secured to the corners of jute bags. The barn had a loft in it. The children used the “parachutes” to jump out of the loading door of the loft, but the sugar bags were not very effective parachutes. The string was too short and the bags too small, among other reasons. Never the less they tried.

On one occasion when Fred misbehaved he was taken by his father to the manure shed. He was locked in the dark shed which was latched from

the outside and left there for some time. When Fred was eventually let out he was covered all over in molasses which was stored in the shed. Fred had found molasses to be good to eat. He was in a terrible mess as it was very sticky and hard to remove.

When the children were older they wrapped a brick as a parcel and carried it all the way to the main road and left it on the road. A cyclist was unfortunate enough to collide with the parcel, but there were no culprits to be found. On another occasion on the Knapdale road a bag was stuffed with straw with a string attached. A bus came along but by the time the bus stopped and the driver investigated the bag was gone much to his frustration.

At Christmas time, the Perry's would come from Dunedin for holidays and there were picnics at Rankleburn and Blacks Gully. One day with everyone in the Dodge car going up the slight rise to the house a back door flew open and Rua fell out; fortunately without too much injury.





had the courses he was interested in. Fred saved his pocket money to buy his uniform and books. To catch the train to Invercargill each school day Fred would leave home about 7am and bike into Gore and would return home at 6.30pm. This lasted for twelve months, with plenty of time for homework on the train trip. However, 12 months was long enough and he left school at the end of 1937 despite achieving good marks in class.

Fred's first year out of school was spent working at home on the farm, but he was not paid, although the ploughman, Dick Smyth, employed by Charlie was getting 10 shillings a week for his work. Jack Martin offered Fred a job for ten shillings a week as an apprentice builder for the building firm Mallon and Martin. The apprenticeship was not a written agreement in those days; he was just "the boy". At that time trainees were not told anything, they were expected to learn, as his predecessors had, by experience. Concrete mixing was done by hand and Fred was considered too small to push a wheelbarrow, but big enough to mix the concrete which was a third of a yard of gravel and a 112lb of cement mixed by hand in a box, adding water to mix to the correct mix. Fred brought his sandwiches to work while everyone else went home for lunch. He spent his lunch time studying the plans and after climbing a ladder to inspect a roof realised it was, "all geometry, so from then on building made sense".

Work often required sleeping on the job. On one occasion working at Shanks at East Chatton and sleeping on the job, the bed was two single beds tied together. Jack Martin slept on the left hand side, Les Anderson slept on the right hand side and Fred as 'the boy' was sleeping on the boards where the two beds joined.

While working on a Government housing contract on the corner of Broughton and Elsie Street in Gore, Jack Mallon was checking the job and picked up some defects and was told 'the boy' was responsible. His comment was "the boy must be the only one doing any work there". Mallon and Martin split up and Fred continued working with Jack Martin who was not a very generous man.

Fred had bought a Dodge Tourer, four cylinder car for twelve pound, it cost him 16 pound to get it roadworthy. The vehicle was used by Jack, Fred and Len to travel to work. The three sat in the front seat with the tools in

the back seat, there was no boot. Jack however; put the petrol in the vehicle.



*The Cooper family: left Allan, Joyce, Rua, Laura, Bruce, Joan and Fred in 1980*

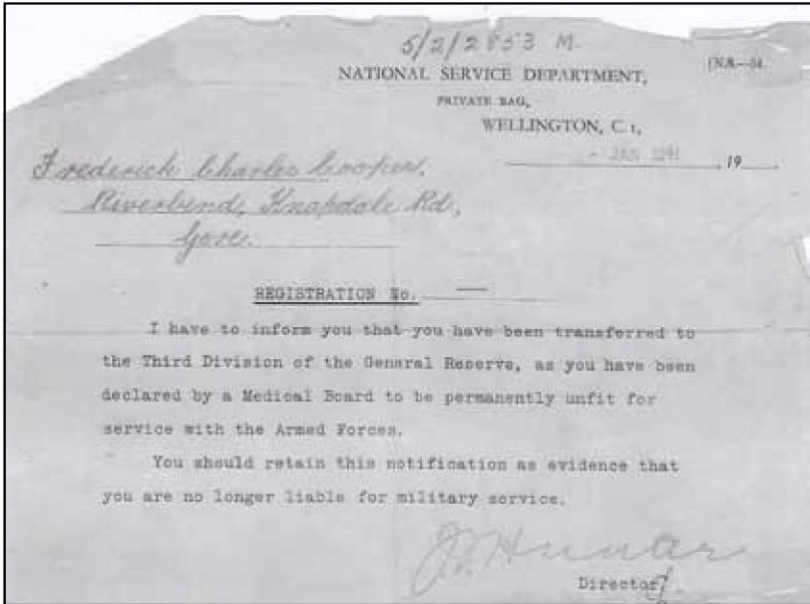
Fred continued working for him until the war broke out. He was pretty discontented doing twelve hour days and sleeping in sheds on the job still for ten shillings a week. A flax mill was being built in Salford Street in Gore so Fred handed in his notice and applied for a job there for “big” money. They were quite happy with his work at the mill because he knew what he was doing. However, Jack Martin came along insisting Fred was his apprentice so he was re-employed, but on four pound a week, with Jack now appreciating Fred’s worth.

**I**n 1940 following the outbreak of World War II Fred volunteered for the



## The War Years

air force as a pilot. Fred did his study to be a pilot by correspondence completing a number of assignments before being turned down on account of being colour blind and therefore definitely unsafe and he was also diagnosed as having a cardiovascular defect which Fred put down to being overworked. The Royal New Zealand Air Force gave Fred a badge and certificate to acknowledge he was permanently unfit for service with the Armed Forces.



In 1942 compulsory military service was introduced and Fred was again called up to serve in the army. Fred was at this time working for Jack Martin who unbeknownst to Fred intervened and said Fred was required for essential work and it was a further three months before Fred was enlisted. Fred was examined and passed as medically Class 2 and began military service on April 1, 1942. Basic training was given in Invercargill and then onto Riccarton in Christchurch to the divisional defence platoon guarding headquarters. Fred took part in all the route marches and played rugby and was at this time examined a second time and now passed as medically grade one.

He was then posted to Norfolk Island in 1943; this was part of the defence of the Pacific from the Japanese. In 1944 he left Wellington in the troopship "the Multan" for the Middle East. The ship landed at Tufick in Egypt and from here the young soldiers travelled by train to Maadi Camp, the New Zealand forces base camp on the outskirts of Cairo. Here they spent several months in training. During this time leave was taken in Cairo by the troops. Fred had 10 days leave in June 1944 where he toured the Middle East, visiting Palestine, Syria and Lebanon before leaving from



Alexandria by sea for Toranto in Italy where the German forces were now in strength.

The New Zealanders then travelled by truck to camp in Italy. Fred was now assigned to number one platoon; Section three of the 7th Field Company of the New

Zealand Engineers. The

*Transport by train, Fred third from left.* units then travelled by railway freight trucks for

two days through the Italian countryside to their new base camp.

The main assignment of the 6th, 7th and 8th Field Companies of the New Zealand Engineers was to build bridges, clear minefields and the demolition of obstructions of the progress of the allies through Italy as well as road maintenance. There was a constant battle with mud and road metal did not exist. A substitute was provided by gathering up wrecks of brick houses with tiled roofs that had been destroyed in the fighting and spreading the debris in lieu of more orthodox materials. Undamaged houses conveniently situated were evacuated and demolished for the same purpose.

The Germans had been very methodical in their retreat destroying bridges, damaging culverts, railway lines and roads. The sappers (Engineers) developed the construction of Bailey bridges which were simple but could be erected sometimes in a matter of hours, often at night under fire and without lights. It had been seared into the souls of the Kiwi sappers the paramount importance of keeping support, including tanks, up to the infantry. The 5th Field Park Company maintained the supply and prefabrication of the material required.

A major bridge building effort was for the assault on Faenza during which on the night of 9-10 December 7th Field Company built a 100 ft double single Bailey bridge over the Marzeno, a tributary of the Lamone, close to a brickworks, a natural target for trigger-happy German gun or mortar crews about a mile south of Faenza. It was subsequently known as the "Brickworks Bridge". The bridge was built of cantilever construction. Fred and his mate Bob Bell had the task to set up the base plate in the river bank. The Germans knew there was some activity somewhere on the river but did not know where. The German Spandau machine guns fired ammunition illuminated with intermittent fluorescent lighting as Fred wearing his tin hat lay spread-eagled on the ground with Bob sheltering with his head in Fred's crutch as they lay flat on the ground exposed to the gunfire.

The Commanding Officer of the 7th Field Company Major Lindell wrote "At 23.30 hours the site was stonked by Nebelwerfers, 8 barrelled rockets from Faenza. It was a cold starlight frosty night and the clanking of the

Bailey parts probably caused the stonk – the enemy was rather close to us and we had a platoon of Div. Cav. as a covering party dug in around the bridge site”. The bridge was completed in nine hours, five of which were spent in carrying the components the last sixty yards to the site.

On 16 December 7th Field Company was again building a 100ft bridge this time over the Lamone River under the instructions of Major Lindell. The work was set out by 4.30pm, the crib piers erected by 11 pm and the bridge jacked down and the ramps completed by 9 am on 17 December. The enemy had shelled and machine gunned the site of the original bridge all night. General Freyberg was an interested spectator and was the first across the Lindell Bridge as it was named. Major Lindell was later awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

Faenza was now occupied by the Allies for Christmas of 1944. On Christmas Day the war had more or less ground to a halt in the freezing temperatures and a thin layer of snow lay on the ground. The 7th Field Company set up camp in an abandoned flour mill in Faenza. Previously they had been camped in Forli where there had been a vermouth factory. Upstairs in the flour mill they were camped in there was room to set up trestles for Christmas dinner. The army cooks acquired meat and other rations. Some enterprising members of the troops secured a plentiful supply of wine and also the vermouth.

It was known there was a pig in a building nearby. British soldiers had parked their vehicle at the entrance to this building. Fred was enlisted to convince the British the vehicle would be safer from shelling if it was parked elsewhere. The vehicle was moved and the pig was let out and captured by the New Zealanders whereupon it became part of Christmas dinner for No. 1 Platoon of the 7th Field Company.

The Allies had reached the Senio River and appalling winter weather set in, it snowed and froze for three weeks. The Company wintered in Faenza. Most of the occupants of the town had evacuated to the south. Fred's platoon stayed in the flour mill in Faenza for about a month where the Germans kept up harassing gunfire. On 26 December the Luftwaffe made a rare appearance, dropping a 550kg bomb into Faenza just 6m from the



New Zealand commander Lieutenant-General Freyberg's caravan. It did not go off.

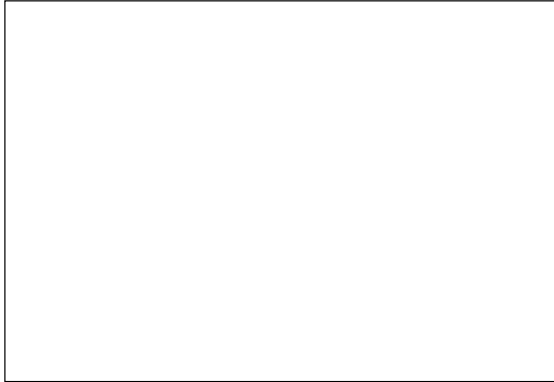
The decision was made to shut down the front for the winter. Fred had four blankets to keep himself warm with. These he sowed together with a bag needle and sprinkled with DDT to delouse them. There was a bath in



the flour mill and when they first set up camp Fred collected enough water to heat and have a bath. This was quite an achievement. Normally personal hygiene was confined to having a wash with a basin and a cake of soap.

As the temperatures improved the Company moved south to San Marino where the platoons each had a rugby team to play one another. During one of these games Fred broke his collarbone which was a great disappointment for him. He was taken by ambulance to hospital in Senigallia, but his stay in the hospital was short as there was action planned on the Senio and the beds were needed by the wounded. Fred's convalescence was confined to a hard bed.

While working in the country with Jack Martin, in New Zealand one Anzac weekend prior to the war, Fred had a vivid dream that he was very cold and everything was grey and the sky was filled with aircraft flying overhead. Now that dream had come true as Fred lay freezing and miserable and the sky was thick with bombers as they flew overhead in preparation for bombing to soften up the Germans before the ensuing attack on the Senio.



The Italian dictator Mussolini had been shot and on 30 April 1945 Hitler had taken his own life, but isolated German soldiers refused to accept this and still kept up the battle. The No. 3 Platoon was attacked and members killed and taken prisoner.

*January 1945 in Faenza* The New Zealanders finished the war in north east of Italy in the sea port city of Trieste where communists from neighbouring Yugoslavia led by the Yugoslavian leader Tito wanted to take the Italian port for Yugoslavia. The Germans had surrendered. The standoff continued for weeks between the Yugoslavs and the Kiwis. There were



*Fred with fellow Engineer G W D Thomas on leave in Rome*



*Transit camp in Taranto, December 1945. Fred standing in centre.*

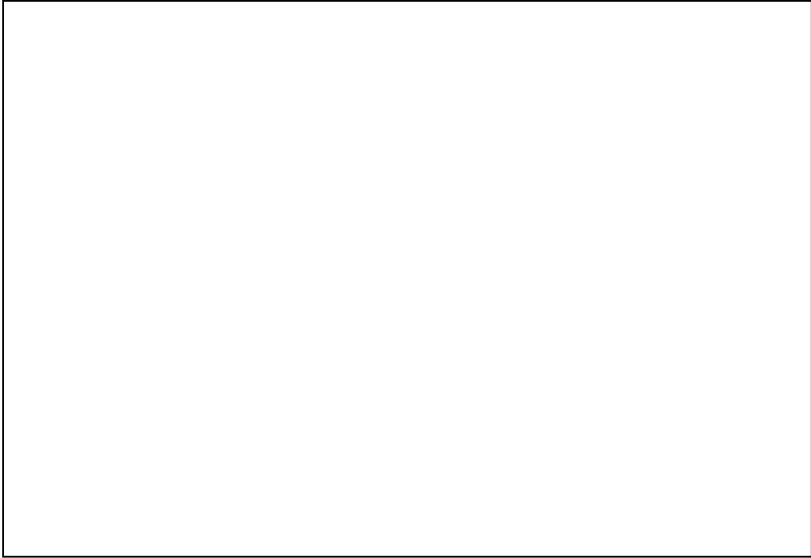
tanks on every street corner and the troops swarmed over the city before Tito's partisans were convinced to retreat to Yugoslavia.

With the war ended Fred took the opportunity to go to England on leave for 10 days. A group of soldiers drove in a truck from Florence, Italy to Calais in France where they took the ferry to Dover. With a rail pass they were able to travel throughout the United Kingdom. They then returned by truck to Florence. From Florence they were trucked to No.1 base camp in Southern Italy where from Bari they boarded the ship "Dominion Monarch" in December

1945 for the ocean going trip home to New Zealand via the Suez Canal.

After four years in the army, two years and 133 days of which were spent overseas on active service Fred and his mates returned to be greeted by only the Salvation Army on the wharf at Wellington on 23 January 1946. The lack of greeting could have been the result of one of two things. At the end of hostilities in the Middle East long serving troops were given furlough to New Zealand. They were upset on their return to New Zealand when they saw fit men hiding behind essential industries work which could have been carried out by returned men and the dodgers be sent into the army as replacements. The returned men were up in arms and many refused to return overseas. Soldiers in Fred's group while in Trentham waiting to go overseas were drafted to work night shift on the wharf loading war materials. He said the paid workers "were slackers", being paid time-and-a-half and double time pay rates and depending on the cargo, danger money also, striking because of their conditions of work. To have seen a wharfie on the wharf would have been "like a red rag to a bull" Fred said.

Another reason for the absence of a welcome home was the Maori Battalion was marched off to a civic reception so that is where the public would have been. Not that it mattered a lot to the Southlanders on board



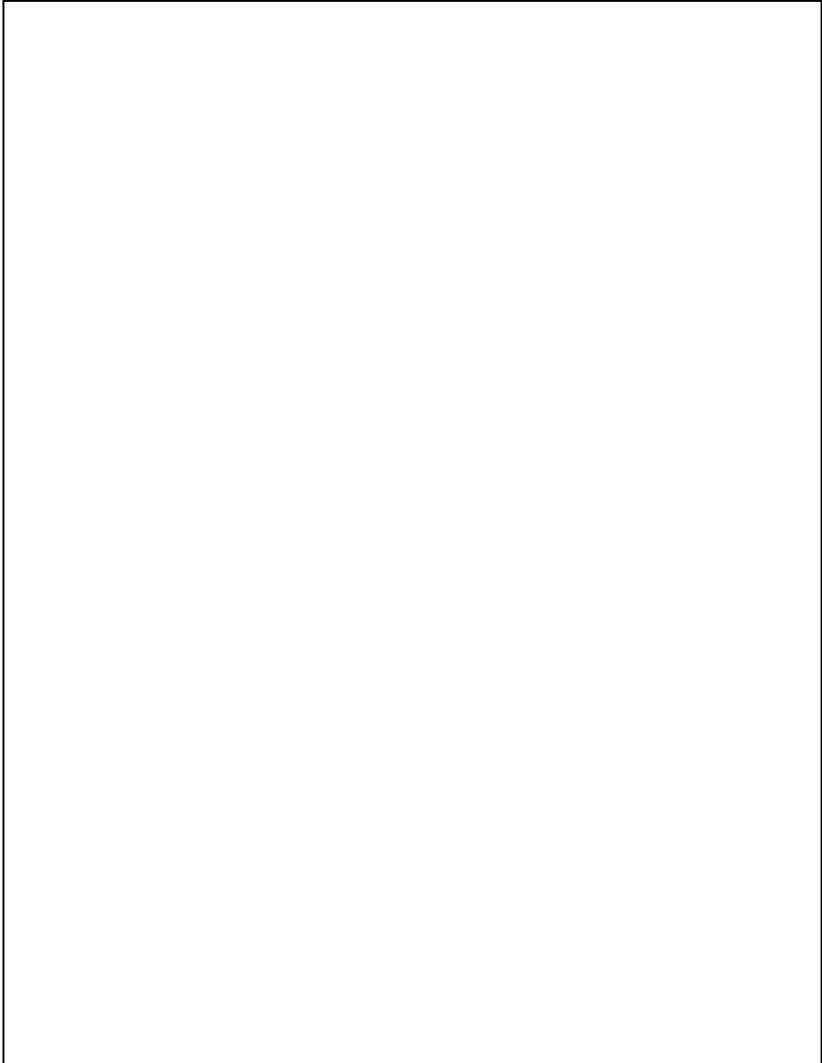
*Fred and his brother Alan pictured in Venice*

who jumped ship and went straight to the first bar and gave themselves a welcome home, then back got on board and sailed to Lyttleton and then travelled by train to Gore. During the train trip there was a “welcome at every train stop” Fred said. He had been three days short of four years in total in the army after his initial false start for medical reasons.

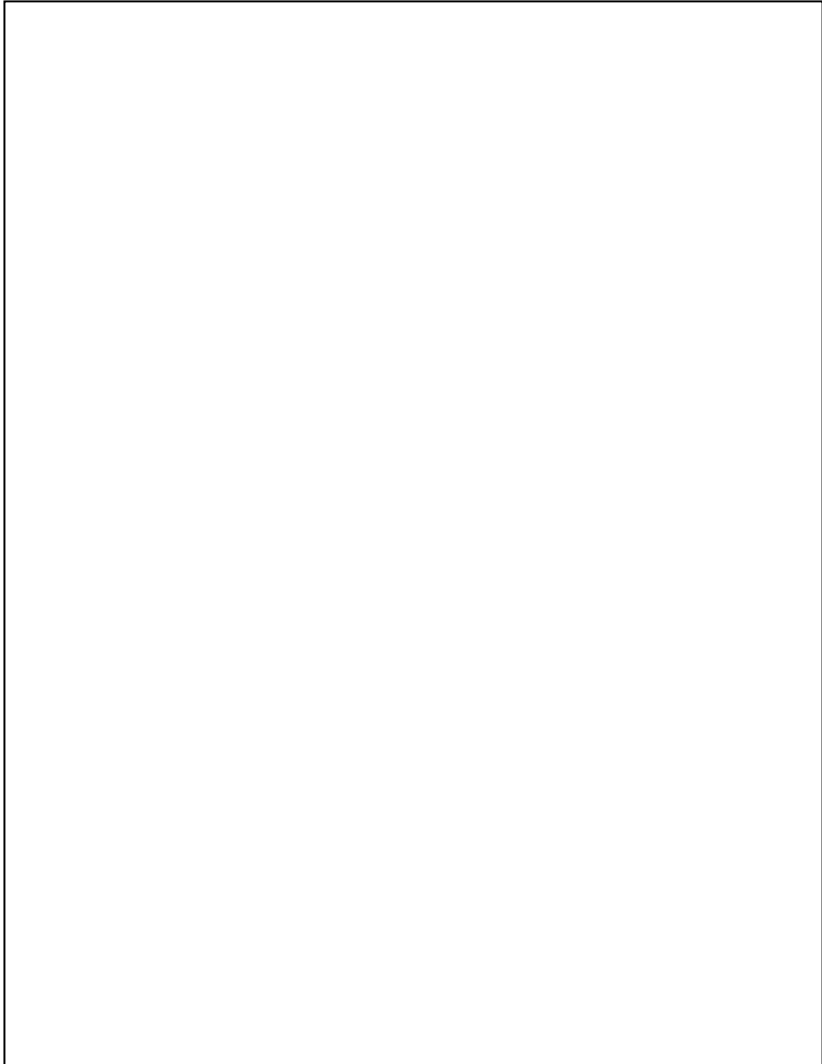
Back home in Knapdale there was a grand Welcome Home ball in the Knapdale Hall for the returned soldiers. This was held on a Friday night and on the following day there was a community picnic and the celebrations finished with a concert in the hall on the Saturday evening.

---

The War years



*The Italian Campaign*



**A**fter the war Fred returned home to the farm at Knapdale in Southland where his brother Bruce was very ill. Bruce was recovering from an operation for goitre and was unable to work on the farm. His father Charlie also became ill with goitre at the same time. Fred was called on to do the grain harvest and stayed on to work on the farm. However, by winter Charlie recovered and took over the reins on the farm again. It seemed to

---

## After the War

be the norm in those days not to pay family members for work done and Fred found this hard. During his time in the army he had great plans about what to do when the war was over and he returned to New Zealand having learnt a lot from Jack Martin prior to his army service.

However, Fred needed to earn a living. He approached Jack Mallon for building work but, work was hard to get as there was little material for building. He found work with a Christchurch firm renovating the Regent Theatre in Gore. When that job finished Fred was employed building Government houses. Frank Windle was his foreman for an Invercargill firm. He was not very competent. At this time Fred became friends with another builder working there, Tex Smith who was to become his brother-in-law. Fred then worked for Bill Archer of Archer Building Contractors until Christmas 1947. He was however determined to set up his own building business. During a holiday at the Queenstown Camping ground at Christmas time in 1947, Fred discussed his business plans with Alec Jones and they shook hands in agreement to work together. It had not been Fred's intention to go into partnership with anyone. However, during the war pay was seven shillings a day, there was two shillings a day personal allowance and the

After The War

---

remainder was sent home. Fred sent his money home to his mother to bank for him. On his return after four years away he found there was no money left in his bank account. When his father then suggested he paid board Fred said he thought it only fair that he did not pay any since his savings were gone. His father agreed to this. It was a bitter blow. Also Charlie had cut the back off Fred's Dodge car and it had been converted to a farm truck to take milk to the factory while he was serving overseas. The car/truck was on its last legs when Fred returned and was sold for scrap. So he returned to the pushbike he had bought with his pocket money while at school.



In spite of the fact that Fred felt betrayed and bitterly disappointed at not

---

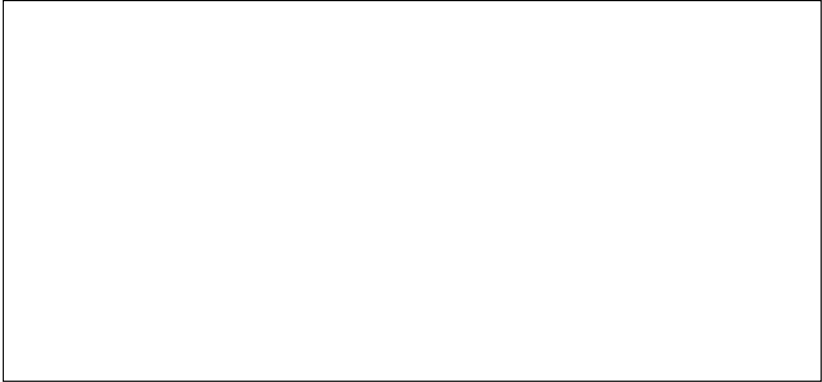
## Jones & Cooper Builders, Gore

being able to carry out his ambition to be an independent building contractor due to lack of finances, in the end things turned out for the better. If Fred had started out alone he could have made a comfortable living, but would not have risen to any great heights because of the probability of not being inclined to take risks. In partnership with Alex they started off doing small maintenance jobs with a quick turn over coupled with working long hours they gradually built up working capital. Building work was now in demand as there had been no building done during the war years. In February 1948, they put in 25 pound each to cover material costs and paid accounts together for the first month's operations.

Their first charge job was to build a house for the mill manager for the Monker and Tobbin sawmill in the Chaslands. They worked seven days a week and completed the work which provided some capital funds. The next project was to build a house for Alan and Dorothy McKechnie in Hamilton Street. This house still stands today. They had a hand churned mixer and made all the concrete blocks for the house on site. Fred's brother-in-law Tex Smith was Jones and Cooper's first paid employee. Alan Scott, Nell's cousin was the second and the first of many apprentices trained by Jones & Cooper. Interestingly Alan was their first apprentice and also the first former employee to set up as an opposition building contractor, as

---

many others did, although not always with success. The firm had up to 20 employees at one time in the early 1970s.



*Alex and Fred on their first project.*

In 1955 Alex presented Fred with the plans of the proposed grain store for Flemings and suggested that they put in a tender. Fred was against it, as they were doing very well in housing. Why move away from it and venture into commercial building of which they knew nothing about? Anyway, he talked Fred over and handed him the plans, leaving him with the difficult task of pricing. Working out the quantities of material was easy, it was only a matter of good arithmetic, but the labour factor was a different story. To arrive at the number of man hours required Fred had to seek help. He went to Stacey Byron who was a former Fletcher Building Contractors employee who had by this time set himself up as a building contractor, but went broke building the Anglican Church. With the information he gave Fred and long hours of calculation (no adding machine or calculator), all done by long hand, Fred eventually arrived at a price and won the tender by a small margin over Fletcher Building, the only other tender. It was a big gamble, but working up to 10 hours a day, seven days a week, it turned out to be a very successful contract. Fred managed to produce an extra 2000 pounds profit over the tender margin and acquired building equipment that set them up for future contracts. From the grain store job on, Fred prepared all the tender pricing of commercial projects and supervised their construction.

Alex Jones' responsibility became housing and subdivisions. There were subdivisions developed in Johnston Street and Mitre Street where a number of houses were built. A second subdivision was the Robertson Block in North Gore which was purchased from a farmer. The land was cleared and services provided - sealed roads, electricity, sewage and water for the formation of Takitimu, Tainui and Mitre Streets in the 1960s.

Jones and Cooper constructed many buildings in Southland over 47 years. The first tender was the grain store for the Flemings Cremota Mill. The next contract was the building of Cockerill and Campbell auction market in Medway Street, and then the Smith and Davidson building on Main Street. There were major alterations to the Bank of New Zealand and the Commercial Bank in the Main Street, plus the former National Bank building in Mersey Street, also the Reid and Gray building for the purposes of Davidson's Grocery which is now the Hokonui Moonshine Museum. Other contracts included the Gore Police Station, the Civic Centre, Resthaven, The United Trading Company, Southland Savings Bank, the Longford Tavern in East Gore, the Baptist Church in Ardwick Street, Grants the Chemist premises in the Main Street and the Bank of New Zealand in Queenstown. There have been a number of alterations to the RSA plus subcontracted work with Amalgamated Builders building the THC Gardens Hotel in Queenstown where their work progressed so well Peter, Fred's son, was promoted to foreman of the whole project. The Fairfield Building was built which is now home to the lawyers Bannerman's.

Fred did all the pricing for the commercial work undertaken in his office at his home in 15 Crewe Street with pen and paper. The purchase of an adding machine was a huge aid for Fred's work. This was powered by hand using a crank handle and the numbers were printed out on a roll of paper, a precursor to the calculator. He really enjoyed building the woolsheds he designed because the project did not involve sub-contractors and felt like a holiday. Fred was known as Fiery Fred in these days because of his ability to speak his mind and honest opinions.

Forty-seven years in partnership saw some prosperous and challenging times. There was the Government instructed quarterly wage rise of 2.5% in the 1970s. Then later, when Labour unions became strong the yearly cost

of living wage rise rose up to 10 per cent. It was hard to build up a working capital, and it became necessary to go into overdraft at the bank.

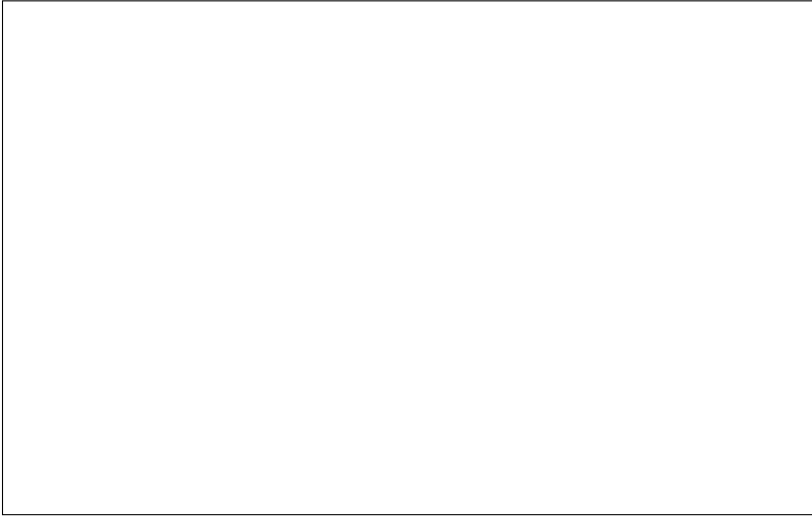


This was modest for a start, but turned into daylight robbery with the 1985 share market crash when overdraft interest rates rose to 23 per cent. This coupled with lack of work and cash flow nearly made the company insolvent. However, with the sale of an asset and good luck they survived. In hindsight they should have made staff redundant to make it easier to continue trading. However, because of loyalty felt towards the staff and their families they retained them through this time.

Fred's son Peter became an employee of Jones and Cooper in 1981 and eventually in March 1993 became a shareholder- director on the retirement of Alec Jones. In 1995, a new company Jones and Cooper 1995 Ltd was formed. Peter married Lee Anne Breen in 1991, the beginning of a new partnership, with Lee Anne having an active role in the business. Fred continued his role of quality control still showing up at the workshop nearly every day to work on a project.

When Peter took over management of the firm in 1989 Fred and Alec stopped drawing salaries from the business. Peter had a firm base to work from and Fred is very proud to say Peter has made a great success of the business. Although Fred is not hands on with running the firm now, he still

feels part of it with every successful contract. The building trade has treated Fred well and through the rental assets created he has not a worry in the world.

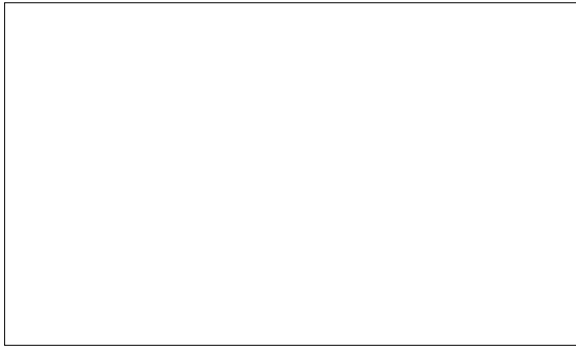


*“On Top of the World”*

*Construction of the French Ridge Hut, Mt Aspiring, 1999*

One of the many roles Fred took on over the years was cook for the builders for some of the Jones and Cooper projects in the 1990s when the firm built a number of back country huts for the Department of Conservation. These included the Muller Hut at Mt Cook, the French Ridge hut in the Mt

Aspiring National Park, the Okaka Hut on the Humpridge Track, the Plateau



Hut on Mt Cook and the Mt Brewster Hut near Haast Pass. The huts were constructed in the building yard in Gore, disassembled, packed up and transported to a site from where the pieces of the hut could be flown onto the mountain site by helicopter. Here the

builders put the hut together again on site and completed the construction. The first of these huts built was on Pearl Island, off Stewart Island. The prefabricated pieces were shipped from Bluff. Fred was the cook on the island as the hut was completed. Pictured below is the French Ridge hut at 1470 metres above sea level.

I n the 1950s Ron Bishop from Gore was keeping company with Fred's

---

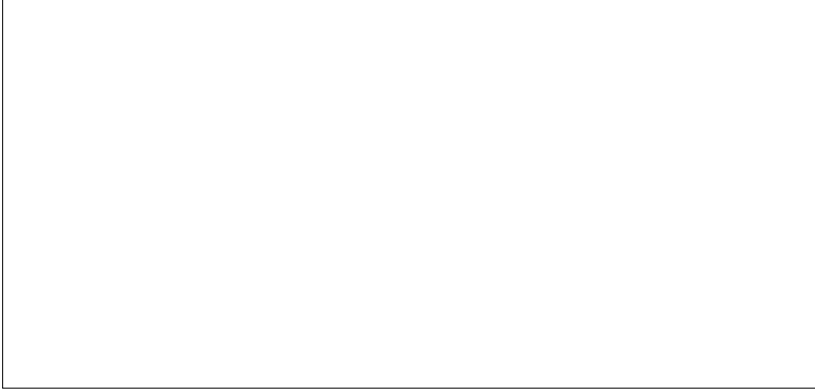
## Te Anau

sister  
Joyce. They would go to Te Anau and stay in a tent while hunting. In those days Fred was too busy working to go far from Gore. After one of these trips they came home and Ron suggested Fred build a boat so they could cross the Waiau River to Beer's farm to go hunting. Fred declined building a boat on the premise that they would probably drown themselves, but suggested he would build them a hut instead. It was to be eight foot wide and ten foot long so as to fit on the deck of Jones and Cooper's Bedford truck. The hut had two bunks and a bench for storage and a black range was attached to the outside of the building. The total cost of the hut was 25 pound, 12 pound 50 each. It was all finished and eventually carted to Te Anau by Alf Bishop, Ron's brother. The hut was finished but there was nowhere to put it. Fred approached Lands and Survey in Invercargill and asked if the hut could be put on the banks of the Upukeroa River. They agreed on the understanding that when the town was developed and sections became available, Fred and Ron would buy a section and move into town.

Te Anau was surveyed around 1949-50 and sections came up for auction in the early 50s and 24 Matai Street was purchased for 50 pound. Fred and Ron considered this exorbitant as there was no paving or sewage. There was only a gravel track and survey pegs. A deal was struck that instead of



paying cash they would pay it off by time payment. In 1953 with Fred's upcoming marriage it was decided to build a bigger place. The "black crib", was built in two pieces. Again Alf Bishop carted the bigger piece of the building and Jack Cooper the smaller piece. They were joined together on the section in October 1953. A range was outside the building, in the



middle of the south side with a circulator for hot water. There were bunks at either end of the building.

The journey to Te Anau from Gore took about four hours on mostly gravel roads with a break for a few beers at the Mossburn hotel on the way. There were very few buildings in Te Anau at this time.

Visitors to Matai Street, and there was a few as it was one of the larger residence, were able to sample "Blondie" a four gallon glass bottle that was filled with draught beer at the Te Anau Hotel. "Blondie" would be emptied and then sometimes filled again before six o'clock which was closing time for the serving of alcohol until 1967. There were occasions when there was a third filling courtesy of an obliging publican.

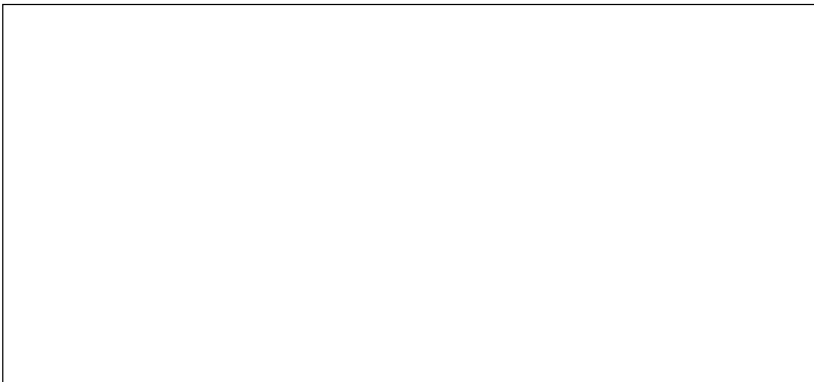
Instigators of some of the hospitality enjoyed were the three Roberts brothers Ted, and Tommy the youngest. The first meeting with them was Labour Weekend 1953 when the Roberts boys arrived along with their father to "meet the bank manager". This was a justification to introduce themselves, although there was actually a bank manager living in the vicinity. Along with their friend Bert Pedlar and Alan Black who was in

charge of the gramophone that provided the music there was often a reason for a party, nearly every night over the holiday period.

Unfortunately “Blondie” was broken at sometime, which brought an end to the filling of the four gallon jar, however, the legend of “Blondie” lives on.

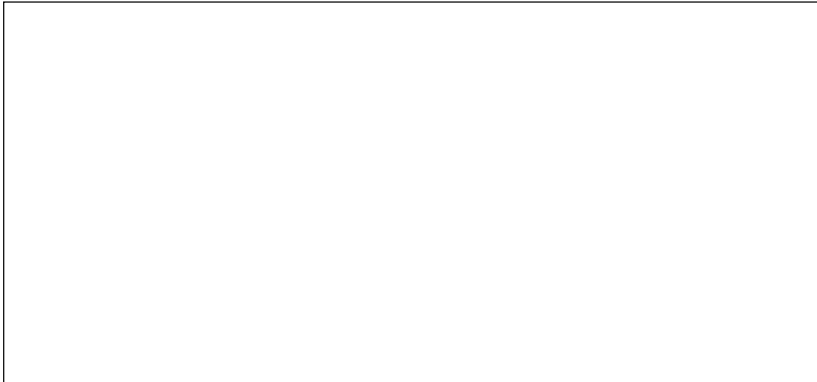
As a baby I spent my first ever summer in 1954 in a tent behind the black crib. Fred had bought the tent before the war and still has it in the garage in Mokonui Street. Fred, Nell, Ron and I, aged three months drove through to the Homer Tunnel when it first opened. I vomited on the journey and was passed to Fred who held me out the window while he drove. Alec Jones objected later to the smell of vomit around the gear lever of the firm’s new Bedford truck.

In 1956 an annex was added to the property as Fred and Nell’s family grew to two children. The annex was made up of two bedrooms, plus a bathroom. One bedroom had two sets of bunks for four children where we slept under “waggas” which were a number of ex-army blankets Fred had sown together. After completing the annex a kitchen with electric range, storeroom, and bathroom were added to the main “black crib” along with the connection of electricity. The toilet was a detached construction called a long drop which had a sign hanging inside that read “Special Area. Landing prohibited”. This sign had been souvenired from a beach in the area of the Murchison Mountains where Dr Geoffrey Orbell had rediscovered the takahe in 1948 after there having been no recorded sightings of the bird for fifty years.



*Picture at centre Fred, to his right Ron Bishop, Lach Stalker and Peter McKay*

In 1974, 56 Mokonui Street was bought for the sum of \$28,000. The annex was shifted from Matai Street by Northern Southland Transport by two loaders for the price of a few beers. Ron retained ownership of Matai Street for the sum of \$8000.



*Fred, Alf Tayles, Frank Stean, Ron Bishop and Joyce outside the original hut by the Upukeroa River*

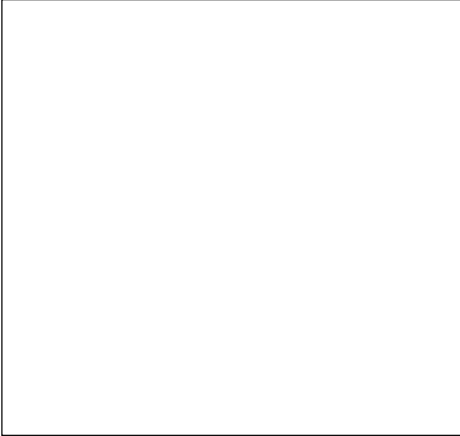
The boat the “Te Anau” was bought by Ron and Fred for 70 pound. It had been built on Stewart Island by Leask Brothers originally as a fishing boat to be used at sea. One Christmas holidays they spent two days cruising the entire coastline of the lake at 7 mile per hour. On other occasions the boat was used for hunting trips.

---

Te Anau



red met Nell, who was studying nursing in Christchurch. Nell was a keen **F**hockey and tennis player. Named Helen after her maternal Grandmother Helen Nossiter, Nell was the third child of George Carter and Dorothy Wayte.



They married on 12 December 1953 in the hall of the Holy Trinity Church, Traftord Street; the church having recently been destroyed by fire. The wedding reception was in the Cosy Tea Rooms in Gore. This was followed by a wedding dance in the woolshed at the Carter's farm at Grassmere, Mandeville.

Following the war cars were not available to buy. Ron Bishop

---

## Marriage

had bought a Morris van chassis off Watson & Grieves for two hundred pounds. Fred had built a body on this for Ron. He had no sooner finished this when he bought another chassis and built this up for himself. Alan Cooper then bought a chassis which Fred built up for him, the third edition being the best of all.

---

The van had a bench seat, the back seat of which folded down to make a bed on which a single mattress was placed. Fred and Nell set off in the Morris for their honeymoon cruising at 40mph with an 8hp motor. They

Marriage

drove the first day to Palmerston, then on to Christchurch where their vehicle was winched on to an interisland ferry as deck cargo to Wellington. Once there they set off on tour to Wanganui, New Plymouth, Auckland, the Bay of Islands where they had Christmas Day in Pahia, then on to Whangarei, and down the East Coast to Gisborne.



They returned by ferry to Picton and travelled down the West Coast via Westport to the end of the road and returned to Arthurs Pass and then travelled down through the centre of the South Island to Alexandra and finally after approximately five weeks touring returned to their home at 15 Crewe Street.

This section was originally owned by Fred's brother-in-law Tex Smith,

---

## 15 Crewe Street

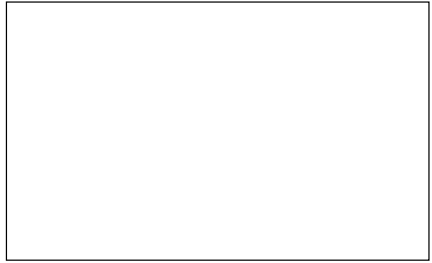
who had decided not to build on it. Fred bought it for one hundred pounds after originally having thoughts of buying in East Gore.

Horrell's Earthmoving was employed to excavate the basement and house foundations. Building started in 1952. Fred's brother Bruce and a neighbour from Knapdale, Dimp Graham helped with pouring the concrete. The house would have been bigger but there were building restrictions as to size and building material was still in short supply following World War II. Fred borrowed two thousand pound from State Advances, as an ex-serviceman's rehabilitation loan at 3% to finance the building of the house.

In 2002 the Crewe Street house was sold and a new home built at 3 Trafford Street, Gore which Fred and Nell moved into. This house is in walking distance to the Anglican Church, the RSA, the supermarket and also the Jones and Cooper workshop.



*15 Crewe Street, Gore,  
where the family was  
brought up.*



*3 Traford Street*



Now the family started to arrive, I was born in September 1954,

---

## The Family

journey through Riversdale and then Balfour, which did not seem to count at all; it was just a place name on the side of the road in the middle of nowhere. Little did I know that

followed by Karen in October 1956, Jan Maree in July 1960 and Peter was

born in November 1964. My childhood memories are of long summer

holidays spent in Te Anau. The packing up in Crewe Street seemed to take

forever as the preparations were completed and the house locked up for

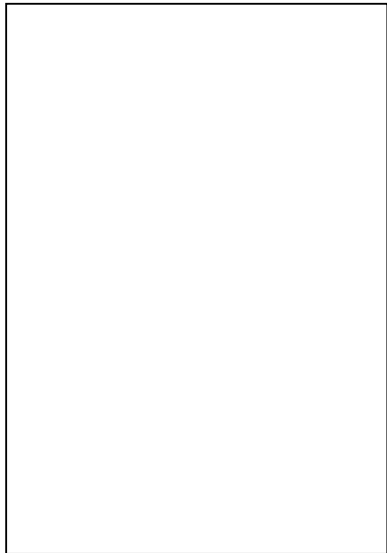
---

our holiday. We packed our belongings into ex-army kitbags which were stowed into the boot of the green Vauxhall Velox car, bought new in 1956. The three girls sat on the back seat with Peter the youngest sitting in the front on Mum's knee. We would set off with Fred driving the car and he would invariably begin to sing as the journey progressed and he relaxed enjoying the drive. It was a very familiar one day I would

*Pam, Jan Maree, Fred, Peter, Nell and Karen in 1972* be married and living there.

The summer holidays in Te Anau were spent swimming in the Upukeroa or Whitestone Rivers on very hot days. Fishing for cockabillies in the lake at the end of Matai Street or in the boat harbour was a favourite past time and the catch was taken home in a preserving jar.

Then there was boating, at first in the “Te Anau”, with the exposed diesel engine and the steering via a wire rope that ran from the rudder to the steering wheel half way up the inside wall of the boat. Water sport began with “skid boarding” being towed behind the “Vogue”, the next boat purchase. Fred built the board which he painted orange for visibility and padded with old life jackets. I remember standing quite deep in the lake to hold the skid board to assist whoever was having their turn. We were boating at the south end of the lake at Tui Bay where it was shallow and safe, where the eels appeared to be plentiful. Water skiing followed behind the boat the “Tekne”. There was no concern about exposure to the sun in those days. Fred would spend an entire afternoon driving the boat as we lined up for our turn on the water skis. Applying sunscreen and keeping covered up from the sun was never a consideration, although there was always plenty of calamine lotion applied at the end of the day as an antidote to sunburn and sand fly bites. In fact we used to apply a mixture of olive oil and vinegar to attract the sun and enhance our suntans. Cold days were



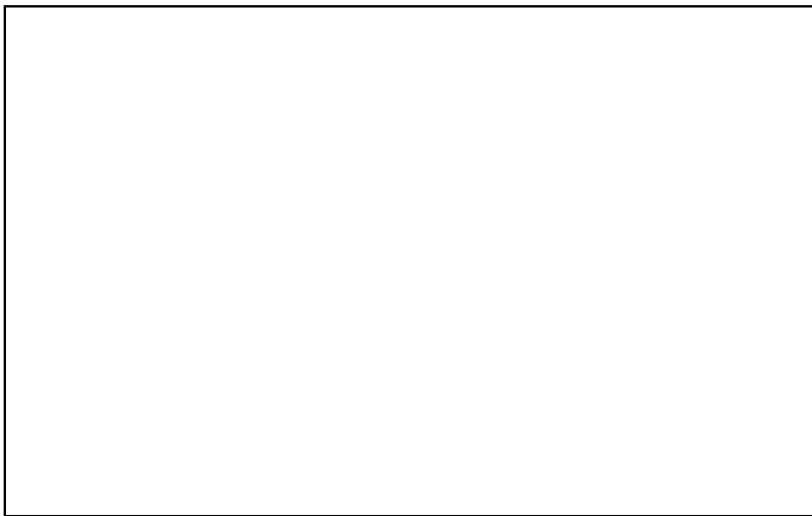
not a deterrent and we water skied from Labour Weekend until Easter, wearing woollen jerseys or bush shirts for added warmth. We had never heard of wetsuits.

The afternoon on the beach was usually followed by a barbecue in the boatshed at 56 Mokonui Street. The barbecue was a “noddy train” type arrangement built of course by Fred. It consisted of a metal drum cut in half to contain the fire with a flat plate on top for cooking on and a chimney added to contain the smoke. The fire had to be lit

well in advance, usually on a hot

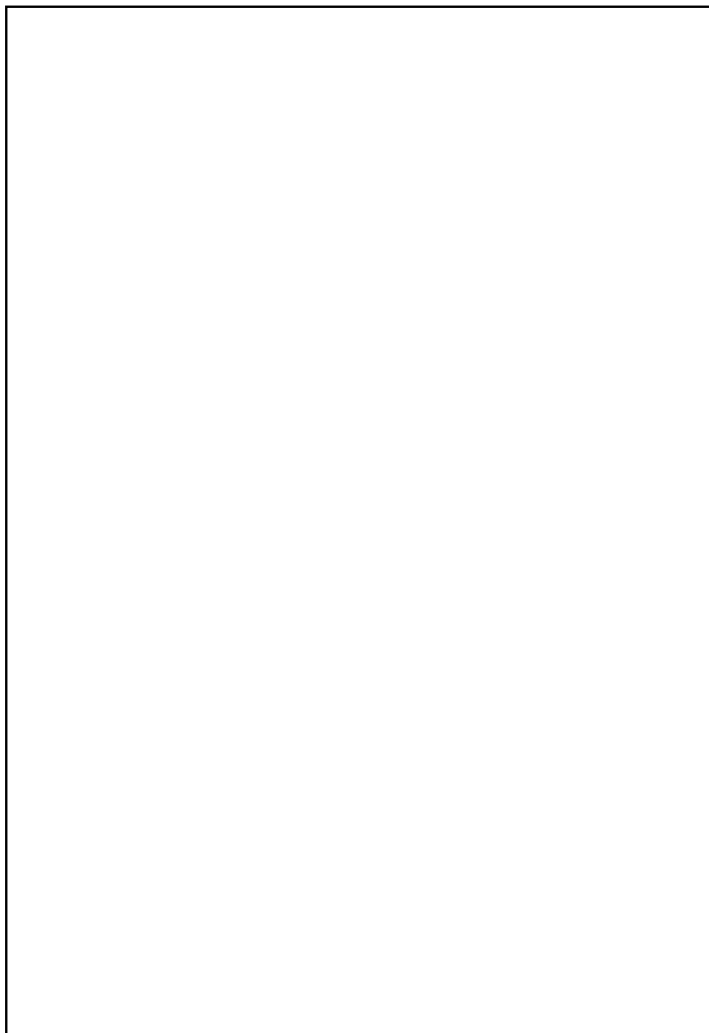
summer's evening, to get the barbecue to the right temperature before the cooking could begin.

The barbecue was usually enjoyed with friends. In particular the Stalker family that Fred first encountered on the lake with their boat broken down, Lachlan, Marlene and four children. Fred towed them back to the harbour with the Viscount. From that day on Fred and Nell and family were joined on most boat trips by the Stalkers who were reluctant to go out boating without them. Fred was the boat driver as all the children had a go at water skiing or riding on the skid board. Marlene was persistent in trying to learn to water ski, with no success. On one attempt she coughed up her false teeth, fortunately they fell in the cleavage of her swimsuit.



### *The Viscount*

In 1973 Fred bought a Viscount boat that the family used for water skiing and fishing trips until 2002 when Fred bought a 22 foot Bayliner boat imported from America. Fred and Nell have fished the arms of the lake numerous times, with Fred having an extensive knowledge of the lake including the best fishing spots and safe havens on the lake.



One of the boat trips is to the Hidden Lakes at the foot of the Hunter Mountains. This is a trip a short distance up the South Arm to a sheltered jetty where the boat can be moored and there is a bush walk to the lakes hidden in the bush. This is a great trip and many a child has been introduced to a walk in the bush here.

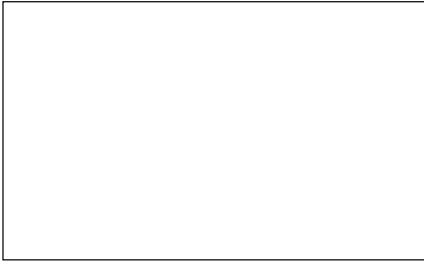
Another favourite spot is Erin Island in the Middle Arm which has a shallow bay for mooring and a camping spot with a long drop toilet. Everything you need for an overnight camp.

On one occasion we hiked up Mt Luxmore to sleep out in the tussock just above the bush line for a night in the days prior to the development of the Kepler Track. Fred carried a pack with all our belongings on a very hot day. Kea checked out our camp site and deer were spotted as well.

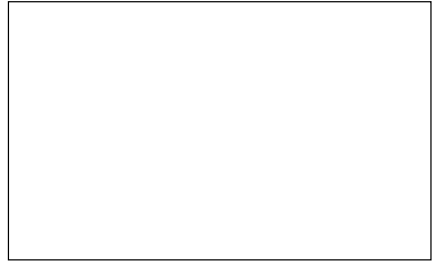
Peter had a dinghy sailing boat and he spent many hours sailing and rowing on the lake. His staple diet in those days was weetbix and his day began with 10 or more weetbix before he set off. On one occasion Jan Maree and Peter rowed the dinghy across the lake to Brod Bay and back.



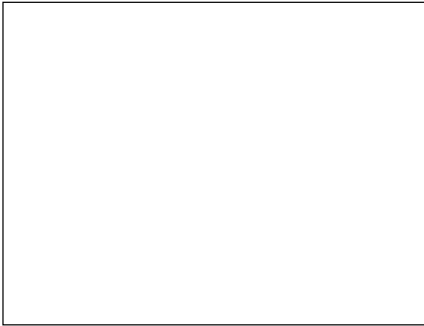
*Launching the Bayliner in Te Anau, January 1996.*



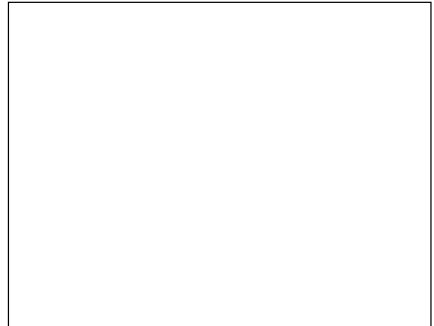
*L to R, Sean Wilkins, Jacqueline Manson, Brendan Wilkins and Fred with a good catch of rainbow and brown trout.*

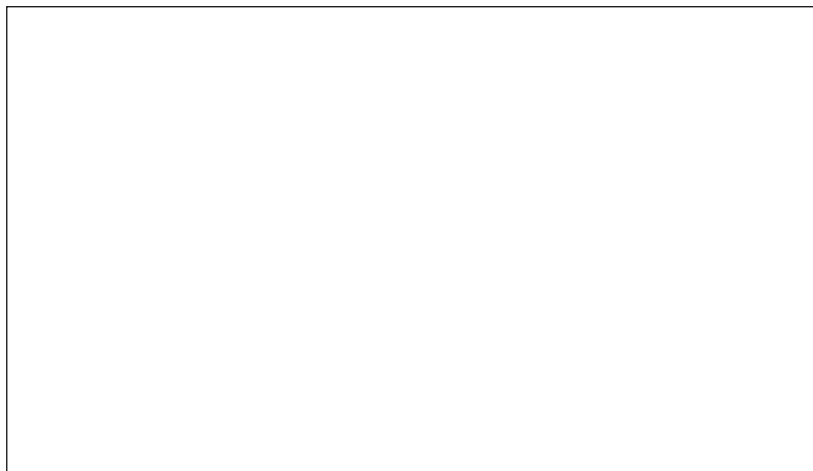


*The perfect end to a summer's day*



*Fred was more often at the helm of the Fred Waterskiing boat, but here he is in his preferred position in charge of the fishing line.*

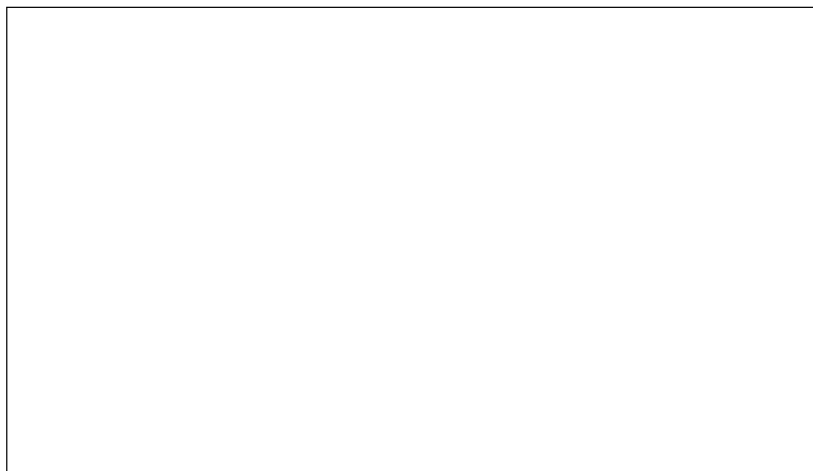




*Nell and Fred with their grandchildren on their 40th wedding anniversary, 1993*

*Back: Sean Wilkins, Jacqueline Manson, Brendan Wilkins, Kate Wilkins holding Megan Manson.*

*Front: Michael Wilkins, Aaron Manson, Fred, Nell and Hazel Manson.*

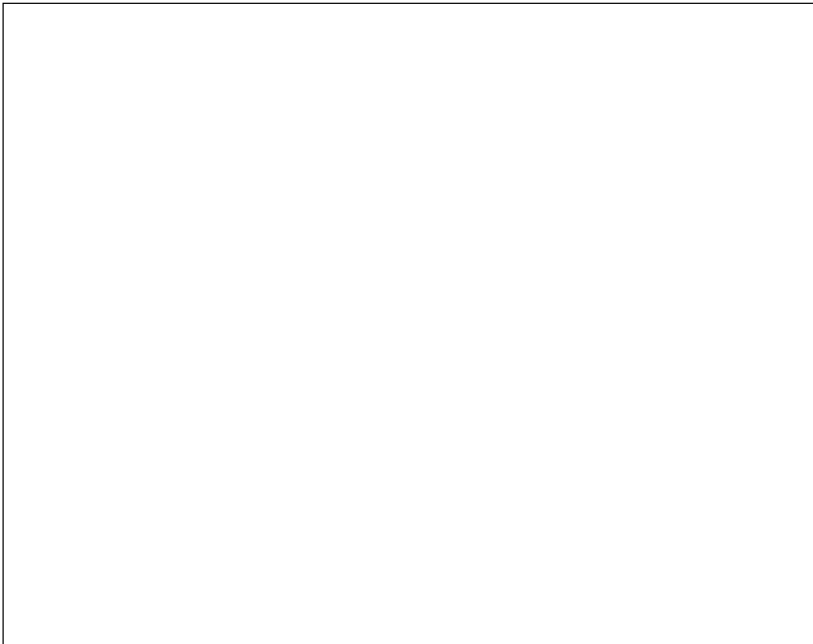


*Nell and Fred at a family dinner to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary, 2003*



On 12 December 2013 Fred and Nell will have been married 60 years. The family has grown with their four children married and there are ten grandchildren. As the grandchildren get married the next generation of great grandchildren has begun.

On 20 March 2013 Fred and Nell's granddaughter Hazel Manson married John Simmons in Omakau. Hazel wore Nell's nearly 60 year old wedding dress, which had to be let out at the midriff to fit Hazel.



---

F

ollowing World War 1 ex-servicemen founded the Returned

---

## The RSA

Serviceman's Association. The primary function was the welfare of the returned serviceman. On return to civilian life Fred, along with many others, became members of the Association. Gore was a "dry" town in 1946 because of alcohol prohibition laws at the time. The RSA was a club you could go to and get a beer and meet up with army mates. Fred was subsequently elected to the Executive Committee of the Association in 1960 and served on that committee for forty four consecutive years including one term as President. He had a term as Treasurer as well. Fred also had a term as District President of Otago and Southland, which involved monthly trips to Wellington. In 1981 Fred was awarded the Gold Star, the highest award for service to the RSA, the third person in the South Island to receive this award. In 1997 he was recognised again with a second gold star badge and bar. He was also made a life member of the RSA.

In 1970 Jones & Cooper won the tender for the building of the present RSA Clubrooms. The RSA had rented premises from Southland Farmer's Co-op until that time. Fred had bought the house and consulting rooms from Dr Waters in Civic Avenue which he later sold to the RSA. Fred designed the initial building which was to cost \$72,000, however there was a \$2000

refund after the completion of the contract. Five male Jones family members had all served in the armed services during World War II, so Alec along with Fred had a strong connection with the RSA.

The RSA is now a very strong and profitable club with 1800 members. In the early 1960s there were 1367 members all of whom were returned servicemen. However, membership today is largely associate members

The RSA

with far fewer returned members.

The Anzac Day commemorations are central to the existence of the RSA and for 15 years, until 2004 Fred was Parade Marshall for the Dawn Service. Since this time Fred has recited the Dedication at the Dawn Service and marches with the Dawn Parade.

## The Dedication

**At this hour on this day Anzac received its baptism of fire and became one of the immortal names in history. We who are gathered here think of the comrades who went out with us to battle but did not return.**

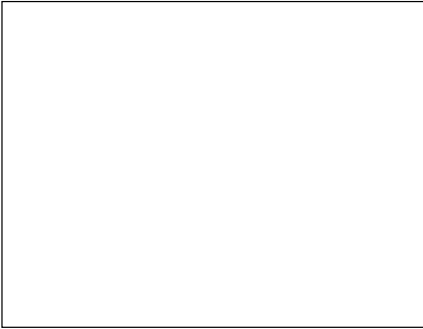
**It is fitting that we should keep this dawn vigil together, in remembrance and gratitude. We feel them near us in spirit. We wish to be worthy of their great sacrifice. Let us therefore, once again dedicate ourselves to the service of the ideals for which for which they died.**

**As the dawn is even now about to pierce the night, so let their memory inspire us to work for the coming of the new light into the dark places of the world.**

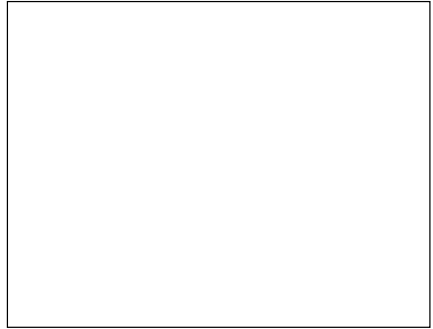
**They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary neither them nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them**

---

The RSA



*Fred is pictured here in 1981 receiving the Gold Star from the then club president Hugh Keown*

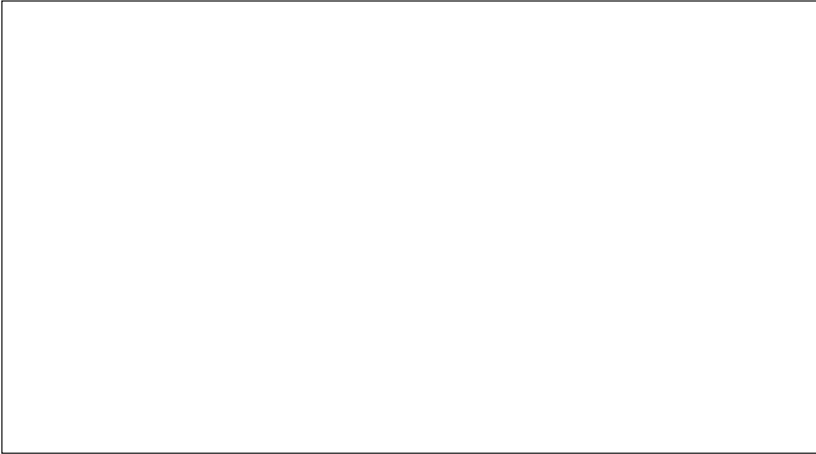


*Nell, Fred and the RSA Dominion President, Dave Cox on the presentation to Fred of a Gold Star and Bar, 10 May 1997*



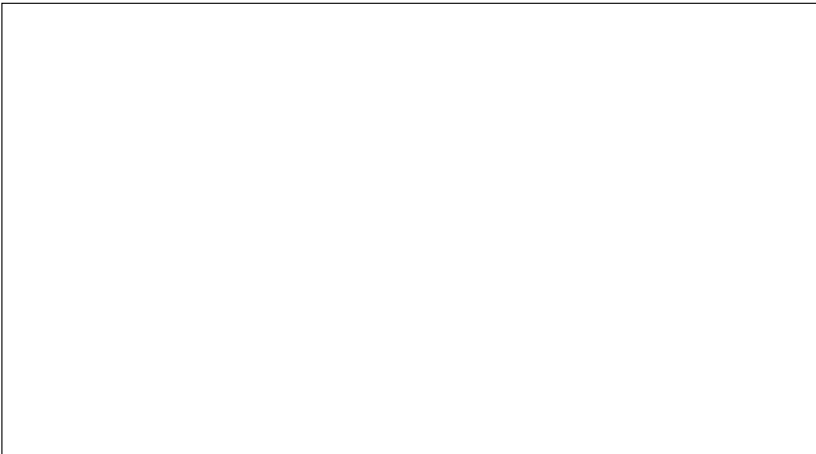
*ANZAC Day March in Gore, Fred to the left of wreath bearer, date unknown.*

The RSA



*Fred served as Parade Marshall for the Gore RSA for 14 years.*

*Pictured here at an Armistice Day Parade*



*Four generations of family members attend Anzac Day commemerations 2010*

*Back row: Sean Wilkins, Peter Cooper, Donna and Michael Wilkins*

*Middle row: Jan Maree Manson, Brendan Wilkins, Kate Soper holding  
Charlie, Lee Anne Cooper, Nell, Pam Wilkins holding Cooper Wilkins,*

---

*Ray Wilkins*

*In front: Fred and Mallory Cooper*

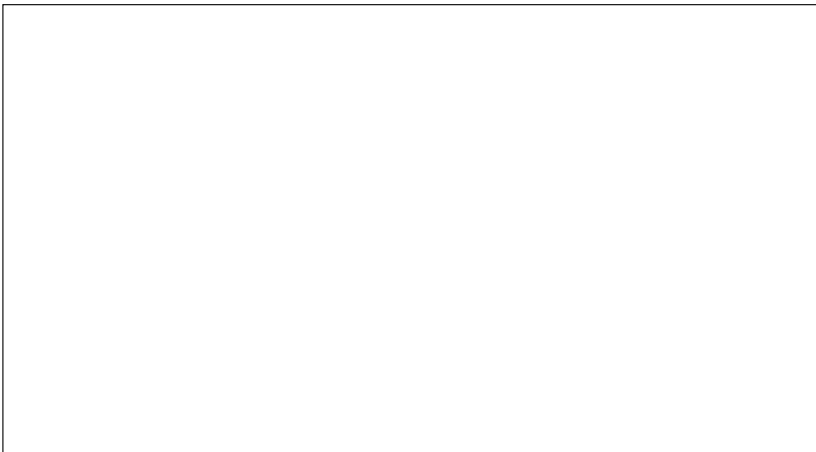
**I**n 2013 after a lifetime of hard work and making a positive contribution to



QSM

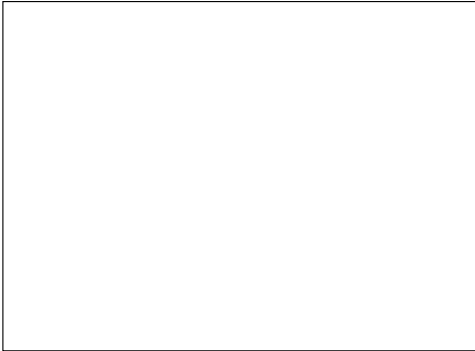
the Gore Community the New Year' Honours List contained Fred's name. He was awarded the Queen's Service Medal. This was largely for his work with the RSA which also included 47 years of visiting sick ex-service personnel and their widows.

Fred is also a life member of the Senior Citizens Club.



*Receiving his QSM from the Governor General Sir Jerry Mateparae at Government House, Wellington.*

QSM



Fred's other involvements over the years has included a long association with the Eastern Southland Hunt Club. On return from the war Fred carried on his interest in horses and rode in hunt club events. He was on the Hunt Club committee for 30 years, serving two terms as

president and was awarded life membership of the Hunt Club. Fred's father Charles and his sister Joan were Hunt Club members. Hunting was a popular past time in country areas with hunt club meets held weekly during the winter months on local properties. Fred first met Nell at a hunt club event. The Carter family were also participants in these events as were many other family members. Horses as well as being the workforce on the farms also provided transport and recreation.

---

**F**red and Nell have travelled extensively. Their first overseas trip together



---

## Overseas Experiences

was a three week Builder's Association trip to Canada and America which gave them a taste for more travel.



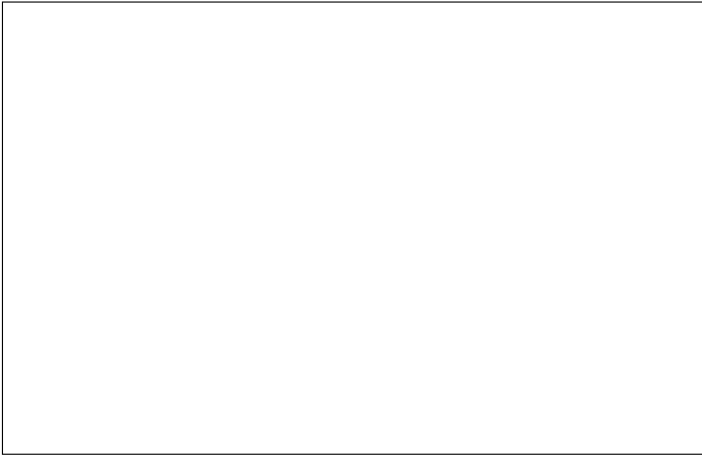


In June 1985 they set off on a four month overseas adventure. During this time they visited Jan and Andrew who at that time were living in the Shetland Isles, Andrew's home country. They stayed with them for three

Overseas Experiences

weeks. They also visited Wayte relatives in the Isle of Wight before hiring a camper van which Fred drove around Europe. They picked up the campervan in London, but promptly got lost and ended up in Piccadilly Circus in the centre of London at 5pm. Fred went into a pub to ask directions of some chaps in the bar who were very helpful. They said go to the bottom of this street past Buckingham Palace, keep Hyde Park on your right hand side until you come to Edgeware Road, stay on this until you come to the M1, well this worked but was not as quite straight forward as it sounds. They spent that night parked quite comfortably in the gateway to a wheat field and the next day they were on their way to explore the Lakes District.

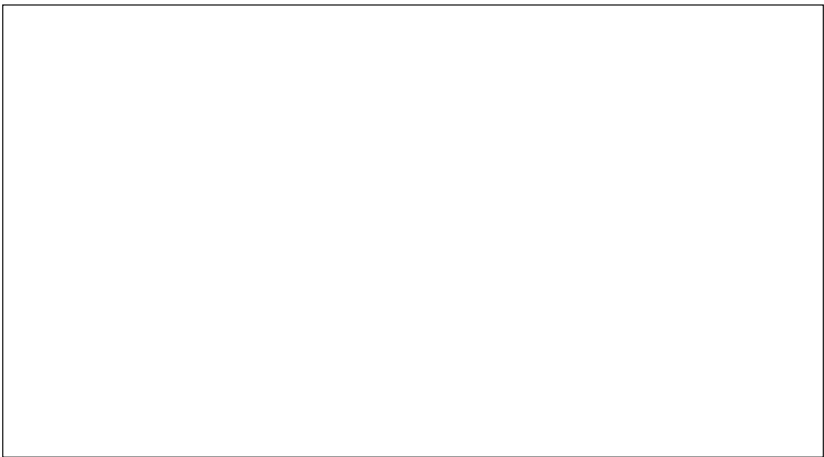
In August they crossed by ferry from Dover to Calais in France where they drove across the country to northern Italy. Once in Italy they retraced some of the movements of the 7th Field Company during World War II, travelling from San Marino to Rimini then up the east coast through Venice and Trieste before driving through Yugoslavia to Austria. A highlight of the trip was two nights spent with the Seifred family near Graz in Austria. From Austria they made their way to Belgium where they spent two days looking for the grave of Fred's uncle Frank Frederick, a casualty of World War 1. They were eventually successful in their quest finding the grave at St Quentin Cabaret 10.5 kilometres from the ancient city of Ieper. 9900



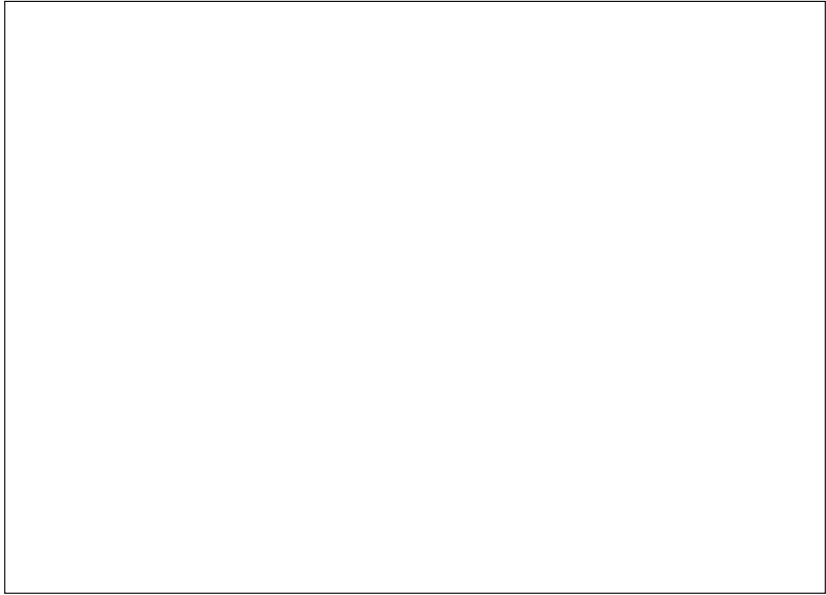
*Fiji, 2012*

---

Overseas Experiences



*Paraliding in Fiji, 2012*



*Fred and Nell with friends on Plantation Island*

Overseas Experiences

miles and 49 days later they returned their camper van to London.

They flew home via New York where they stopped over for five days, before spending the last three days of their holiday in Honolulu.

In 1988 Fred and Nell visited their daughter Karen who was then living in Romsey, Victoria, Australia. Between 1994 and 2002 they had seven overseas trips to Australia, Indonesia, Vanuatu and Rarotonga. Since that time they have travelled overseas every year. They have visited Samoa, Bangkok, Australia, Tahiti and also Fiji five times. They now go each year to Fiji and stay in a beach front unit on Plantation Island. Here they relax and enjoy the heat swimming in the sea once or twice every day.

---

**F**red has returned to visit Italy twice to retrace his time spent there

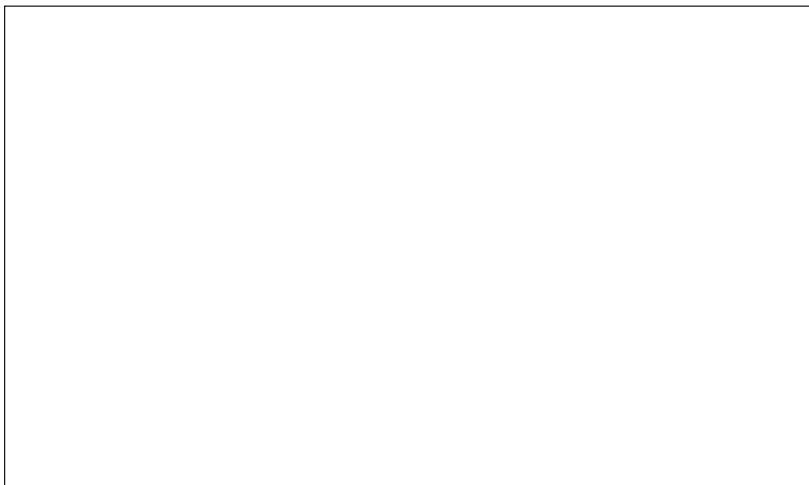
---

## Italy Revisited

during World War II. The first visit was as part of a trip in 1985 and the second time was a tour to commemorate 60 years since the end of the War. This tour took 150 people - veterans, family members and a support crew back to Italy for two weeks. I accompanied Fred on this trip. The Italians in 2005 still held the New Zealanders in huge awe and respect for the role they had played fighting for their country during World War II. Their grandparents had told them of these young soldiers who had travelled so far to fight for them and in some cases gave their lives and remain buried in Italy. Part of the tour was to visit Commonwealth War Grave Cemeteries to pay respects to family members and mates who are buried there. These immaculately cared for cemeteries are spread throughout the battlefields of Europe. There was time for sightseeing including the impressive St Mark's Basilica in St Mark's Square in Venice. Venice was where the New

Zealand army had commandeered a hotel for the use of the Allied soldiers on leave. Cemeteries were visited at Udine, Ravenna, Faenza and Forli. At each cemetery The Ode was recited and poppies left at New Zealander's gravesides. Fred recited the Ode at the Ravenna cemetery.

Italy Revisted



---

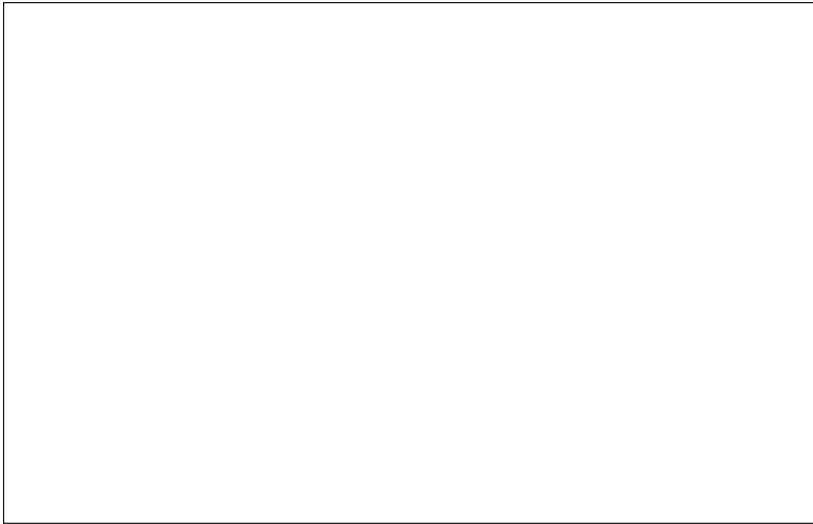
## A Family Reunion



*Fred's room mate for the veteran's trip was Lewis Nicholson of Te Anau.  
Pictured here at dinner in Milan are Lewis, Fred and myself*

**O**n 7 January 1994 Cooper relatives gathered at the farm of Peter and Glenda Cooper at Riverbend, Knapdale for a reunion 120 years after the immigration of Charles Cooper and his brother William to New Zealand. Peter was the fourth generation to farm this property although it was sold

later that year. The reunion was held at their home built by Charles and Laura in 1938 for 900 pound.



A Family Reunion

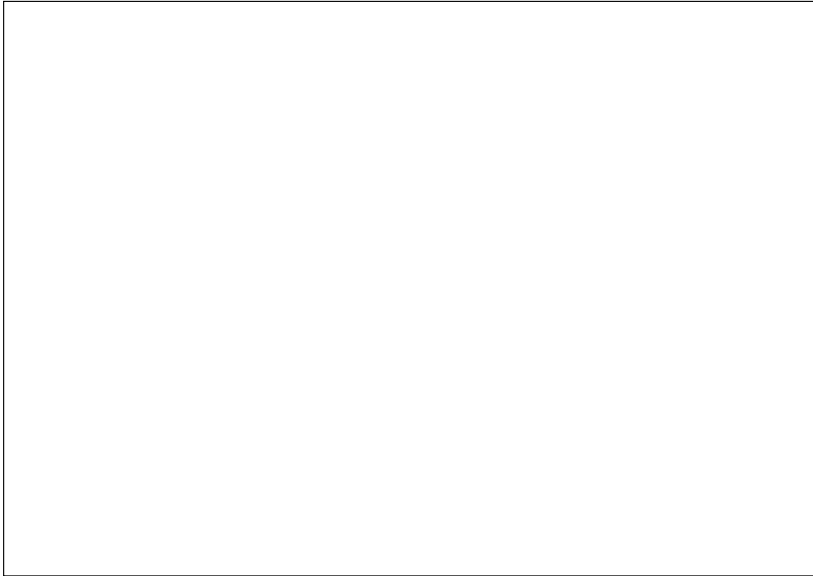
About 80 people gathered from Western Australia, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch as well as local family members for photos, a formal dinner, a memory lane bus trip around Knapdale and a visit to ancestor's graves at the Gore cemetery.

---

## Birthdays

**F**red's birthday is 14 January and Nell's on 11 January and is therefore good reason to celebrate with birthday parties held each year in the boatshed in Te Anau with as many family members as are able being present along with close friends, in particular lifelong family friend Patsy Bishop.

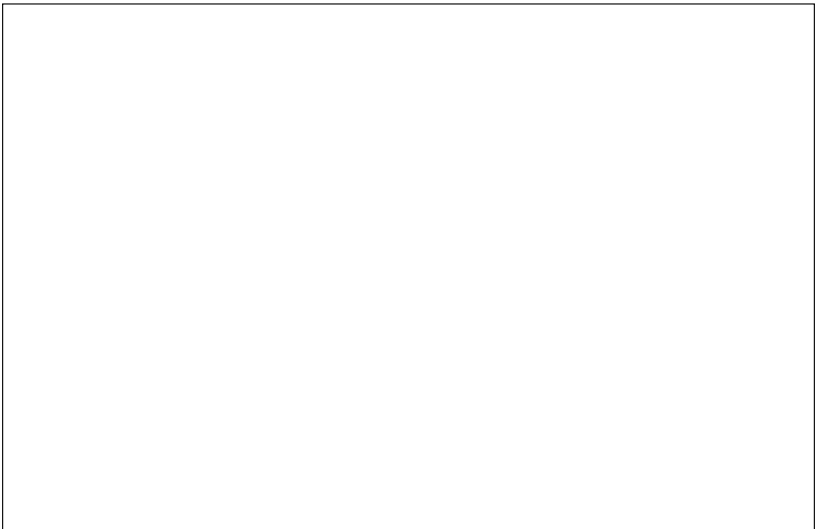




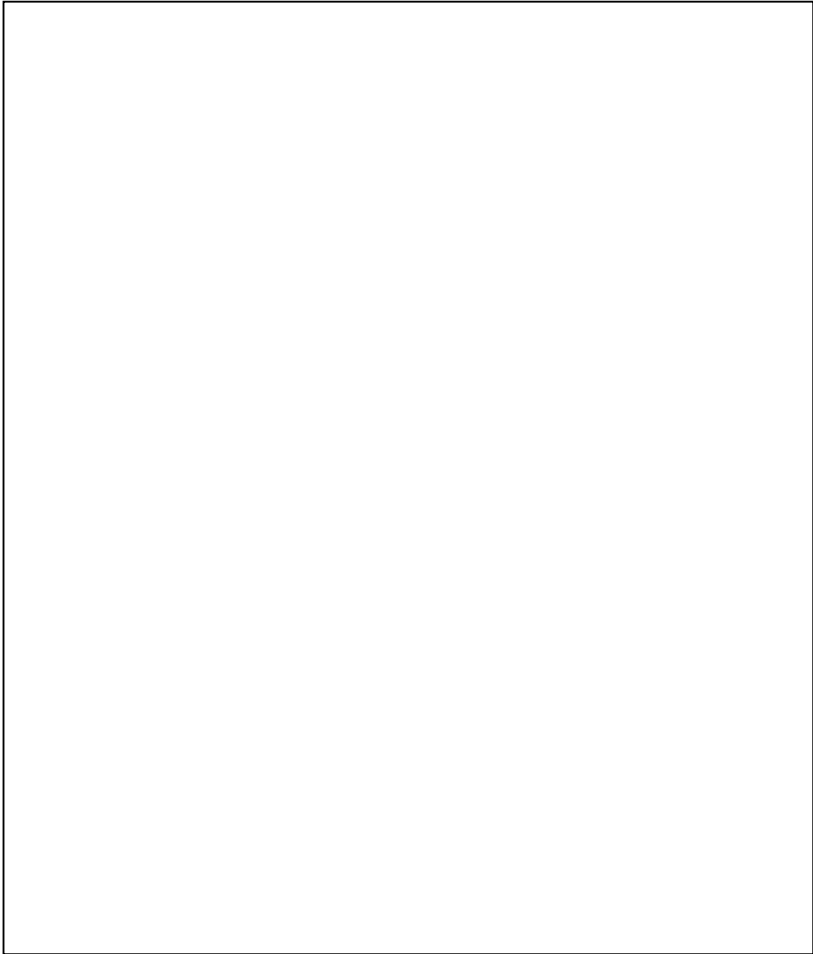
*In 1992 to celebrate Fred's 70th birthday Fred organised for local pilot Bill Black to fly family members up Mt Luxmore followed by a walk back down the mountain.*



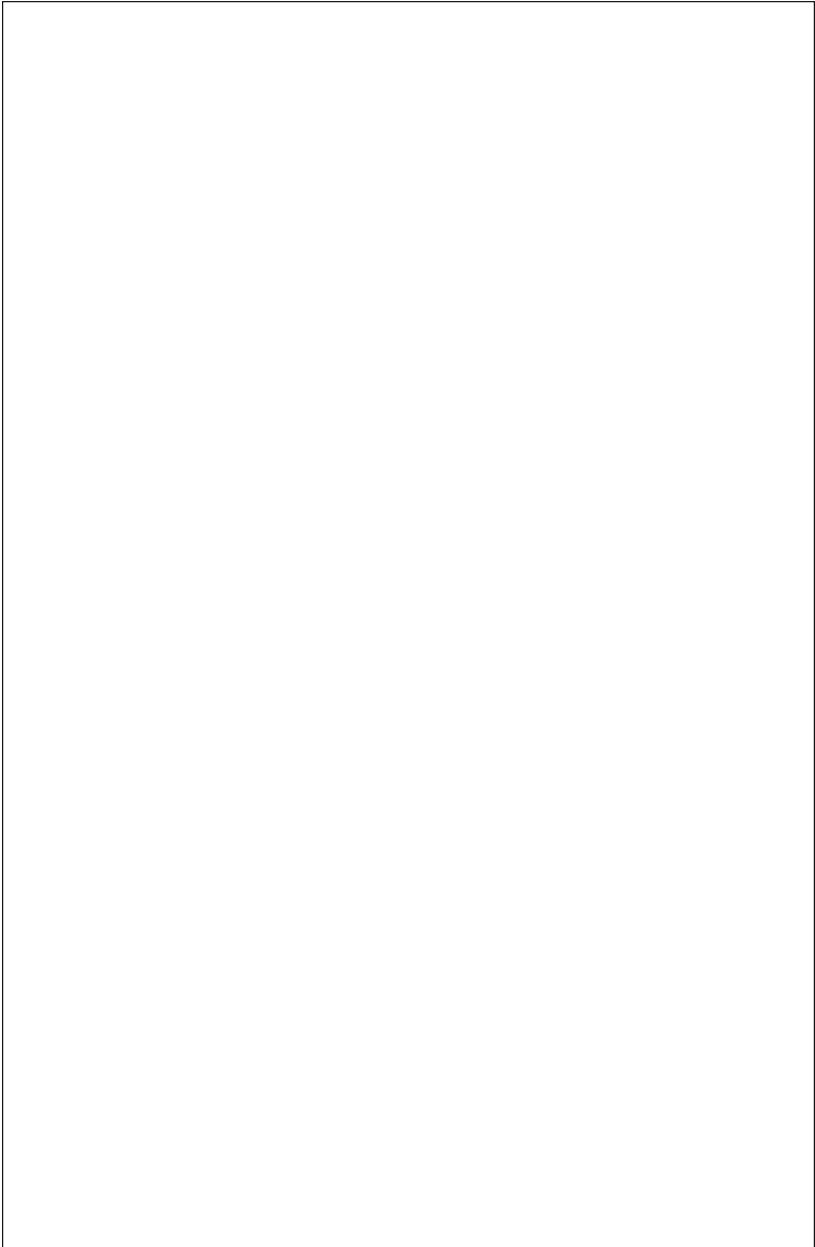
*Family members pictured in Te Anau*

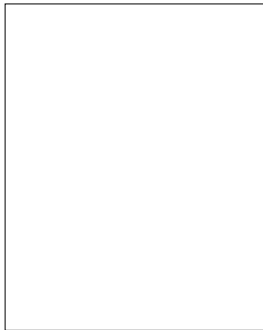
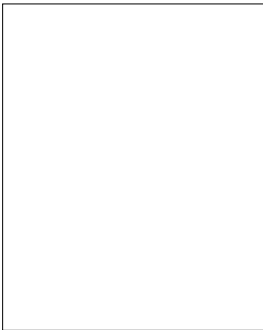


*Nell's 80th birthday party, 2011*



*Fred's 80th birthday party, 2002*





*Pictured at left Fred at St  
Quentin Cabaret Military  
Cemetery in 1985 and at  
right Pam in 2007*

*By Frank  
Frederick's grave.*

Germans moving in two lines in single file and estimated in strength at about 80, were observed advancing across No Man's Land. Our Lewis guns at once opened fire on them and it appeared as if the attack might be beaten off. The enemy, however, succeeded in entering our front line between Durham Road and Northumberland Avenue and penetrated to a depth of about 100 yards. They were finally driven out by our Lewis gunners and bombers, who displayed great gallantry under a most intense bombardment. Between 5 and 5.10am the bombardment slackened off and a few minutes later ceased. Our casualties were 12 killed, 21 wounded and one missing, believed buried. Three members of the Lewis gun crew of the left post were killed and one wounded and the remaining man stuck to his post to the last.

Our front trenches suffered badly and Spring Walk, Northumberland Avenue and Durham Road were badly damaged. On the left the signal station was demolished and all wires cut and the signallers had to be dug out, but were uninjured. The raiders did not escape punishment and there was much evidence of blood on the outer side of the parapet. One wounded German was left in our lines riddled with bullets and was sent back to the adjoining Division's dressing station on the Wytschaete Road. The preliminary bombardment was of a very and destructive nature; but the raiders could hardly claim to have achieved any permanent advance.

So it is that Fred, son of Charles and Mary of Townend, is now one of 450 war casualties buried in the St Quentin Cabaret Military Cemetery in Belgium. The cemetery covers an area of 4644 square metres and enclosed by a low rubble wall in farm land. This is one of the many cemeteries maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.