

Settlement's story brought to life

The Road to Glenorchy, fulfilment of a dream

Directed by Leslie van Gelden
Produced by Beck Industries for
Glenorchy Heritage
Reviewed by Pat Veltkamp
Smith

Hundreds of Glenorchy 150th celebrants left the head of the lake with a tangible memory of the reason for much of the celebrations.

The launch of the DVD, *the Road to Glenorchy, fulfilment of a dream*, was a highlight of the sesquicentennial celebrations marking 150 years of European settlement at the head of the lake and 50 years since the building of the road which gave settlers ready and independent access to Queenstown and beyond.

It was the threat to the frequency of the thrice weekly visits of the Government steamship the Earnslaw that galvanised locals into building their own road. They had no money but great enthusiasm, energy and a will to succeed, captured graphically by Leslie van Gelden.

A relative newcomer but one warmly welcomed to the district, Dr van Gelden is professor of archaeology at an on-line American university and travels overseas at intervals to digs of the pre-history era she is interested in.

Just who we need, locals determined. So Dr van Gelden, with the production skills of Doug and David Beck of Beck Industries, and support from the Community Trust of Southland

among others, has brought to past to life. And with it, near legendary tales of the Tommy Thomson, Wattie Watson, Darrell McGregor and Laurie Smith families.

The 45km of smooth swiny roading between Queenstown and the top of the lake reveals astonishingly beautiful views with off road bays to cater for those who want to stop, stare and film.

Completion of such a stretch of road by a small community raising its own funding through raffles and milk bottle money says a lot for those involved.

And so does the DVD, 54 minutes of a fascinating story, well told with beautiful scenery, good sound and skilful editing.

It is now available for \$30 from Glenorchy gift shop Eclectic, Glenorchy Post Office or Beck Industries in Invercargill.