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The Cardrona Hotel: Creating a New Zealand heritage icon

ABSTRACT

1. *On the road between the famed tourist hubs of Wanaka and Arrowtown on New*
2. *Zealand's South Island lies the former 1860s gold-rush-era town of Cardrona.*
3. *There, beside an immaculately kept heritage precinct of nineteenth-century wooden*
4. *buildings, tourists pause at the Cardrona Hotel, an architectural relic of the rush*
5. *for gold in Central Otago. This hotel has emerged in guidebooks and local histories,*
6. *and on social media sites and ratings guides, as a tourism and craft beer 'must-do'*
7. *and, according to Heritage New Zealand, has become New Zealand's most photo-*
8. *graphed hotel. Its popularity defies belief and even logic, and yet each new visitor to*
9. *the region appears determined to leave with at least one photograph of its distinctive*
10. *facade in their portfolio. The story behind the survival of the heritage-listed structure*
11. *and its elevation to the heights of popular and tourist culture 'icon' status stems from*
12. *a combination of its remote location, the enduring romanticization of the gold rush, a*
13. *succession of eccentric owners, the mythopoeia of a popular book from the 1950s and*
14. *its inclusion in a brewer's marketing campaign. Each has scaffolded the Cardrona*
15. *Hotel to become iconic to the gold-rush era, heritage tourism and New Zealand's*
16. *popular culture and identity.*
17.
18.

INTRODUCTION

20. On the spectacular Crown Range Road between the Central Otago tour-
21. ist boom towns of Wanaka and Arrowtown on the South Island of New
22. Zealand lies the old gold-rush town of Cardrona. There, among new schist
23.

KEYWORDS

false-front architecture
gold rush
Otago
heritage
hotel
mythopoeia
tourism

stone-fronted townhouses and beside an immaculately kept heritage precinct of nineteenth-century wooden school buildings and church, travellers pause at the Cardrona Hotel, an architectural relic of the Central Otago gold rush. The Cardrona has emerged on social media sites and ratings guides, and in various guidebooks and local histories, as a tourism and craft beer 'heritage must-do' and, according to Heritage New Zealand, has become New Zealand's most photographed hotel (Bauchop 2011). The Crown Range Road is now a busy tourist thoroughfare but, as recently as the 1990s, was little more than a narrow, poorly maintained gravel route considered so hazardous that rental car companies refused insurance cover to anyone tackling its curves. The tourists who pause at the Cardrona hotel today encounter a building that has entered local, national and international folklore as a quintessential example of false-front gold-rush architecture and has also emerged in the collective New Zealand imagination as a unique heritage and popular culture icon.

As an 'iconic' hotel, the Cardrona Hotel does not own an exclusive title; each state in Australia has hotels that are labelled icons for a variety of reasons. These can include their inclusion in movies, such as the Palace Hotel in Broken Hill, New South Wales, from *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994) or Mick Dundee's pub in *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), McKinlay's Walkabout Creek Hotel in Queensland. Other hotels are icons due to their notoriety in historic events, such as Tanswell's Commercial Hotel in Beechworth, Victoria, which played host to the Kelly Gang bushrangers in the 1870s. Some are celebrated in popular songs, such as Lees Hotel Motel in Ingham, Queensland, which was Slim Dusty's 'Pub with No Beer' in the 1959 hit (Halabi and Williams 2010). Yet others make the lists for their association with major gold rushes,



Figure 1: Photograph by author, Cardrona Hotel. © Lloyd Carpenter 2018.

1. such as Bendigo's Shamrock Hotel and the Gold Mines Hotel (both Victoria),
 2. Kalgoorlie's Exchange Hotel (in Western Australia) or The Imperial in
 3. Ravenswood (Queensland).

4. Notwithstanding each hotel's importance as heritage architectural treas-
 5. ures or historic artefacts or for their usage in popular culture, none of these
 6. 'icons' combines these aspects in one structure as does the Cardrona. This
 7. was not, however, the reason for the Cardrona Hotel's continued survival –
 8. or its existence – which is a mixture of historical accident and its proximity
 9. to a natural bridge over a dangerous river, a location that shaped transport
 10. patterns, and its use (or neglect) for hundreds of years.

11. **ORAU: CARDRONA'S MĀORI PATHWAYS**

12. The Cardrona Valley was known by Māori as 'Orau'. The safe river crossing over
 13. the Kawarau River made it the main route for Southland Māori travelling to and
 14. from the pounamu (nephrite jade) source at the Arahura River on West Coast.
 15. The route north from Murihiku (Southland) to Arahura runs up the Nokomai
 16. Valley and into Te Papapuni (Nevis Valley), at the end of which a natural rock
 17. bridge called Whatatorere (literally 'flying ladder') crossed the Kawarau River.
 18. On official New Zealand topographical maps, this landscape feature is marked
 19. as 'Chalmer's Leap'. From the bridge, the route traverses the Crown Saddle and
 20. the Cardrona Valley, sidles Lake Wanaka, crosses Tioripatea (Haast Pass) and
 21. continues on up to Arahura (Holmes cited in Stephenson et al. 2004: 27).

22. The stone bridge of Whatatorere would prove equally important to the
 23. first European explorers in the 1850s (McClymont 1940: 125; Temple 1985:
 24. 95–99). Each used Māori guides to keep them out of trouble and to identify
 25. the greenstone routes using the bridge (Tuckett 1844; Barnicoat n.d.). When
 26. the Scottish-born Provincial Government Surveyor John Turnbull Thomson
 27. came through the area, he renamed Orau after Cardrona House in Scotland
 28. (Hall-Jones 2005: 95). The early pastoralists William Rees and Nicholas von
 29. Tunzelmann moved the first herds of sheep to Wakatipu via the bridge in 1860
 30. (Duncan 1888: 13), and it similarly proved useful to gold miners seeking a safe
 31. route to Central Otago's Lakes District goldfield in the period from 1862 to
 32. 1888 (Carpenter 2011: 34; McClymont 1940: 124–30; Middleton 2006: 4). But
 33. ultimately, it was gold that created the township at, and named, Cardrona.

34. **RUSH FOR CARDRONA GOLD**

35. The Central Otago gold rush erupted in August 1862, when Californian veterans
 36. Horatio Hartley and Christopher Reilly deposited 1000 ounces of gold in Dunedin,
 37. collected a £2000 reward from the Provincial Council and announced the loca-
 38. tion of their find as in the Clutha River, near modern Cromwell (Anon. 1862a: 5,
 39. 1862b: 5). Miners rushed from Australia, California and Britain, and Eastern
 40. Otago's Gabriel's Gully, to the new gold country and, as they explored new valleys
 41. and regions, additional goldfields were found, registered and celebrated.

42. Cardrona gold was discovered in November 1862 by Australian veteran
 43. miners Michael Grogan, Patrick May and James Mullins, on their way to the
 44. newly declared Fox's Rush at the Arrow River (Grogan 1862: 3; Anon. 1862c: 4).
 45. The miners' route traversed the Cardrona, where the stone bridge provided a
 46. safe crossing point and avoided a dangerous, precipitous stretch of the
 47. Kawarau Gorge. Grogan and his mates found loose gold in Cardrona
 48. riverbank loam, which prompted a rush of about 1000 miners there (Keddell
 49. 1862a: 3). Goldfields' Warden Jackson Keddell was initially not impressed,
 50.
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 52.

reporting that 'the Cardrona has not realized the sanguine expectations of its prospectors, and is reported as being very patchy' (Keddell 1862b: 6; Anon. 1862d: 5), but then changed his mind, observing that accounts are 'of a very encouraging character [...] prospectors on the Cardrona are stated to be "nuggetting" it out' (Anon. 1862e: 7). However, 'patchy' gold became the byword for the Cardrona field and richer, more consistent, fields drew miners away and, within a few months, the population halved (Pyke 1862: 6).

The Cardrona Valley and its safe crossing over the Kawarau river continued to be an important route to the Arrow and Shotover goldfields (Anon. 1863: 6), and the traffic and local demand was enough to maintain a business hub of hotels, stores and banks in Cardrona, and a commercial stable. But the population and businesses dwindled as gold returns fell, a diminution that reversed dramatically in December 1865 when Otago's first 'deep lead' river terrace claims were found in Cardrona. Warden Lowther Broad announced that a 150 feet wide, mile-long lead had been found at a depth of 40 feet and that several claims were doing well, including one two-man operation that deposited 1270 ounces of gold in four months (Broad 1865; Anon. 1865a: 4). Miners and merchants returned to Cardrona, forming mining syndicates and opening new businesses. James Lawrence opened a twin to his Cromwell Bakery; John Hetherington, Cromwell's pioneer storekeeper, erected a store and worked with former Otago Mounted Constable James Quain to 'paddock' mine a claim (Anon. 1868a: 5); Josiah Mitchinson, a veteran of deep lead mining at Ballarat, moved from the Arrow to Cardrona to form a syndicate and open a store (Mitchinson et al. 1864; Anon. 1869a: 2); and Charles and William Colclough expanded their retail operation.

Through this process, the town evolved into two settlements, known as the Upper and Lower Townships. The Lower Township was where most of the miners had their cottages and was where, in 1863 and 1864, and then again from 1873, Mr and Mrs Giacchimo Lafranchi established and ran the All Nations Hotel. The Upper Township was the main business area and is where the modern town and the Cardrona Hotel are located. When Cardrona's deep lead rush erupted, this was the place where George and Rebecca Bond headed.

GEORGE AND REBECCA BOND

After George Butler Bond's general store failed in Melbourne, he filed for bankruptcy in 1859 (Anon. 1859: 6). During his discharge period, he worked as shopman for Alston and Brown, linen-drapers in Melbourne (Anon. 1860: 6), but when news of the 1862 Central Otago rush broke, he left Victoria with his wife Rebecca, heading for Central Otago. They initially settled at Arthur's Point near Queenstown, where they purchased the Bridge End Hotel and, in partnership with Queenstown Hotelier John Dohey (Anon. 1865a: 1), erected and ran a toll bridge, the first across the Shotover River (Anon. 1866b: 3, 1866a: 2). George formed the Shotover Gorge Association to coordinate syndicated mining ventures (Anon. 1864: 3) and established a new ferry on the Shotover at Big Beach (Anon. 1867: 3). Rebecca was busy too; adding to the son born in Melbourne a year after their 1861 marriage, the Bonds welcomed a daughter in 1864, another in 1865 and would have twins in 1869.

When news of Cardrona's deep lead riches broke at the end of 1865, the Bonds were among the many who considered moving. In 1866, George survived a bitter dispute with shareholders of his Syndicate (Anon. 1866c: 2, 1866d: 3), and by the end of 1867, sold the hotel, toll bridge and mining shares

1. to move his family to Cardrona. With four partners, he secured a claim on a
 2. bend in the old riverbed and, by late 1868, his Empire Syndicate had found a
 3. rich seam at a depth of 130 feet, proof, according to the *Otago Witness*, 'of the
 4. indomitable perseverance of Mr Bond' (Anon. 1869b: 17). For seven years, the
 5. Empire Syndicate erected pumping gear, built tailraces and mined for gold,
 6. while two Chinese syndicates worked the ground adjacent to, and below,
 7. them in apparent harmony with their neighbours (Anon. 1875a: 3).

8. In addition to mining, in 1867 the Bonds built and opened the Empire
 9. Hotel, advertising that their 'newly-erected establishment is acknowledged
 10. to be one of the best and most comfortable family hotels in the district' and
 11. declaring that in addition to offering 'a first-class table', every attention would
 12. be paid to visitors and 'good attendance to horses' was also assured (Anon.
 13. 1868b: 3). The Empire Hotel was Cardrona's largest hotel, and rapidly became
 14. renowned for hosting dances, political speeches (Anon. 1869b: 17, 1875b: 6)
 15. and official meetings, with travellers visiting from Wanaka in the north, and
 16. Arrowtown and Queenstown to the South, to attend. The Bond's adjacent
 17. farm, garden and orchard were also famous, with plums, cherries, apples and
 18. pears featuring on their table d'hôte (Anon. 1875a: 3).

19. Built as a solid, false-front structure of Baltic pine with a smaller, wood-
 20. framed, corrugated iron-clad building behind it, the Empire Hotel was simi-
 21. lar to other commercial buildings across the region, such as the Vulcan Hotel
 22. at St Bathans and Arrowtown's New Orleans Hotel. It was the architectural
 23. twin of another Central Otago gold-rush hotel, the Macetown Hotel, built by
 24. Mr and Mrs Giacchimo Lafranchi at around the same time (Anon. 1871: 2,
 25. 1872: 2). Details of the draughtsmen, and even the builders of these and other
 26. gold-rush-era structures, were not recorded, but given the similarity of some
 27. buildings, it is clear that there was a common architect, or at least a common
 28. contractor, involved in erecting several of them. These hotels were a far cry
 29. from the earliest days of the gold rush, when hotels and stores were little more
 30. than lengths of canvas stretched over wooden frames with a hopeful sign hung
 31. over the door: ephemeral buildings hastily erected and, then, quickly struck for
 32. transportation to a new goldfield when one erupted. Throughout Australasia,
 33. architecture and goldfields towns evolved as larger scale sluicing operations,
 34. quartz mines and even dredging companies developed (O'Mahony and Clark
 35. 2012: 173). In the latter half of the 1860s, the prevalence of regular wages
 36. and longer-term mining employment prospects saw the demand for, and
 37. construction of, more substantial hotels like the Empire, and the emergence
 38. of permanent gold towns such as Clyde, Cromwell, Arrowtown and Cardrona.

39. The process of mining ancient alluvial deposits buried under thick non-
 40. auriferous strata, known as 'deep lead mining' (Ritchie and Hooker 1997: 4), is
 41. dangerous, fickle and expensive and, if the golden 'lead' is lost, can be ruinous
 42. to recover. Worse, the shafts and tunnels used to mine it are susceptible to the
 43. encroachment of water. In October 1875, both circumstances devastated the
 44. Empire syndicate (Anon. 1875b: 6), leading one journalist to comment that
 45. 'Mr Bond speculated largely at the Cardrona; but latterly things have not been
 46. altogether satisfactory' (Anon. 1876a: 3) and another to remark on how badly
 47. he was taking the loss: he 'was well known throughout this and the neigh-
 48. bouring district [...] but latterly he appears to have given way to inebriation'
 49. (Anon. 1876b: 3). The mining losses – and probably his drinking – prompted
 50. the sale of his Empire Syndicate mining shares and the attempted sale of his
 51. and Rebecca's hotel in January 1876. The mining interests were sold to the
 52. Danish miner, explorer and entrepreneur George Magnus Hassing (Anon.

1929: 4), but despite extensive promotion, there were no buyers for the hotel, despite it being declared to be a 'lucrative business in a prosperous district' (Anon. 1876c: 1).

The agent's advertisement shows the work that the Bonds had put into the Empire as it was

one of the best Hotel properties in the Province, consisting of hotel, containing 10 rooms, commodious stabling, bath-house and pump, four-acre paddock, well-fenced and under crop, a fruit garden and hotel furniture of a superior description, including an excellent harmonium and billiard table and a large and carefully selected stock of ales, wines and spirits.

(Anon. 1876b: 1)

Furthermore, on the land to be sold with the hotel was 'an orchard, a few dairy cattle, horses, about three tons of potatoes and a water-powered chaff-cutter' (Anon. 1876b: 1). The insurance value was £500 and the business was, the agent urged, within the reach of 'persons of moderate capital' (Anon. 1876b: 1).

The Bonds' luck went from poor to tragic in February 1876, when George admitted himself into the Cromwell Hospital, suffering the effects of his heavy drinking and possibly suffering from depression. He left three days later without the consent of the surgeon, to stay at Goodger's Junction Commercial Hotel, where he was 'about town and conversed rationally enough with several residents [...] [and appeared to be in] improving health and spirits' (Anon. 1876b: 2). But at midnight the next day, Bond rose from his bed, donned his boots and coat, climbed out of his hotel window, stumbled down the river bank and drowned in the Clutha (Anon. 1876b: 2). The *Cromwell Argus*, *Lake Wakatip Times* and the *Dunstan Times* each editorialized his death, with the Clyde paper hinting that the death could be suicide, commenting that the pressure of a business downturn and the mining reversal 'preyed heavily on his mind, inducing him to do the rash act, which resulted in a watery grave' (Anon. 1876a: 3). Rebecca Bond leapt to her husband's defence, vociferously protesting the 'newspaper writer's endeavour to defame the memory [...] without a particle of direct evidence' (R. Bond 1876: 3), but this did not change the inquest's verdict that her husband was 'found drowned', having earlier 'jumped out of his bedroom window, and it was supposed, made for the Kawarau river' (Anon. 1876e: 4). Rebecca and her six children were left an estate of just £172 (G. B. Bond 1876).

Rebecca Bond did not remain in Cardrona. Instead, she purchased the Ballarat Hotel in Arrowtown. Advertising the Empire for rental and sale, she engaged local miner Henry Miller as manager, a role that he performed from 1876 to 1878 (Anon. 1878: 3). Adding to her woes, in 1878 nearly all mining activity ceased in Cardrona, when huge October flash floods wrecked head-races, pumps and water wheels, filling shafts, tailraces and underground workings with tailings. One press report noted that 'Cardrona suffered damage to such an extent that it will be almost extinguished as a mining centre. Many of the large claims are irreparably damaged' (Anon. 1878b: 16). Miners left for Macetown, Skippers Canyon and Bendigo (in Otago), where quartz mining offered consistent employment.

In 1879 the Empire's license lapsed, its doors were locked and the building stood empty (Anon. 1880a: 4). Clyde firm Preston and Cope attempted to sell it but despite it being the only hotel in the upper township, the post-flood mining environment appeared to extinguish any purchaser's interest (Anon. 1880b: 2). In 1885, Rebecca was again on the move, selling the Ballarat Hotel

1. to purchase the newly refurbished Mountaineer Hotel in Queenstown (Anon.
2. 1885a: 2, 1885b, 1885c: 6) but, meanwhile, her Cardrona property continued
3. to sit neglected.
4.

5. **CARDRONA REVIVED**

6. In 1883, Cardrona miners formed a Mining Association, and wrote to the
7. Lakes County Council for financial support, declaring their intent to prospect
8. new ground, shift flood detritus and engage in systematic pit testing (Anon.
9. 1883a: 8). Their application for support was accepted and community pressure
10. for a road to be built linking Wanaka and Cardrona with Arrowtown and
11. Queenstown also succeeded (Anon. 1883b: 12). The Mining Association's
12. activities, together with small hydraulic claims run by the Try Again Company
13. and the Lafranchis, were enough to sustain a stable, albeit small, Cardrona
14. population, a thriving school run by former miner George Magnus Hassing
15. (Anon. 1929: 4), the upper town store of Robert McDougall and Son, and the
16. Lafranchi's All Nations hotel through the 1880s. However, the Empire and
17. other hotels, stores and banks built in the 1860s sat empty, with one visitor in
18. 1883 describing 'vacated hotels, a closed bank, and other premises now being
19. ravaged by the ruthless hand of decay' (Perapatetic 1883: 10). Another, writing
20. a year later, found 'the departed glory of this once-flourishing mining centre
21. is now dismally demonstrated by the wreck of deserted public-houses, stores,
22. and other buildings, now inhabited by rats, and presenting a most melancholy
23. sight of decay' (Anon. 1884: 2). In contrast, both described a lower township of
24. neat, well-kept cottages, each surrounded by extensive gardens.
25.

26. Road-building from Arrowtown filled local newspaper columns through-
27. out 1884 and in November of that year, the thoroughfare opened for traffic. In
28. 1887, the All Nations hotel was sold to a Mrs Knowles so that the Lafranchis
29. could focus on their mining interests. It continued to operate on a limited
30. 'bush' license while nearly all the upper township's businesses remained aban-
31. doned. This changed in 1888, when a new rush broke out behind the lower
32. township with 40, one-acre claims taken out on a newly discovered deep lead
33. mine (Anon. 1888a: 2). The *Lake Wakatip Mail* announced that 'the Cardrona is
34. getting again a very important mining centre. Gold has been found in payable
35. quantities over a large range of country, and every day applications are lodged'
36. (Anon. 1888a: 2). The population grew, Mrs Knowles expanded accommoda-
37. tion at her All Nations premises and Robert McDougall announced that he
38. would not only re-start his bakery but also open a butchery (Anon. 1890a: 2,
39. 1888b: 2). This gold boom continued into the 1890s (Anon. 1892: 2).

40. Finally, Rebecca Bond received some long-awaited good news: the new,
41. payable gold claims meant that 'business on the Cardrona has naturally taken
42. a fresh start and all is activity and bustle, where, but a short time ago, affairs
43. were as dull as ditchwater. The old [Empire] hotel formerly occupied by Mrs
44. Bond is shortly to be re-opened' (Anon. 1889a: 2; Norman 1890: 31). Eleven
45. years after Rebecca Bond abandoned the Empire Hotel to rats and decay, John
46. Willoughby applied for the license and announced that he would extensively
47. renovate the premises (Anon. 1889b: 2).
48.

49. **JOHN AND ISABELLA WILLOUGHBY, JAMES PATERSON AND AFTER**

50. John Willoughby, a blacksmith, miner and farmer, was born in Cornwall in 1841
51. and from the age of 20 worked as a blacksmith on the goldfields of Victoria.
52. Ten years later, he shifted to Cardrona and married Isabella Lafranchi, daugh-
ter of the All Nations Hotel proprietors (Anon. 1885d: 2). After purchasing,

renovating and expanding the Empire in 1889, he changed its name to the Cardrona Hotel. A combination of the revival of mining and the completion of the road to the Central Lakes area meant that the Willoughby's newly refurbished, newly named Cardrona Hotel, began doing a good trade, offering rooms that were 'tidy and clean' with a 'good table' (Anon. 1890b: 5). The Willoughbys also ran a store, worked with the mining association and, in 1896, bought the All Nations Hotel but, just before deeds were exchanged, this burnt down (Anon. 1921: 5, 1896a: 5, 1894: 2, 1895: 22, 1896b: 2). In 1922, John died and Isabella Willoughby took over, running it until 1926, when she sold it to James Dunlop Paterson (Anon. 1922: 5). Paterson announced his intention to make improvements to the building and to cater to 'both tourist traffic and local trade' (Anon. 1926: 4).

Born in Oamaru, James Paterson grew up in Arrowtown and Cardrona, and earned renown as a bowler for the local cricket team (Anon. 1896c: 7). The nephew of Queenstown and Cardrona storekeeper Robert McDougall, Paterson served in the Otago Section in the Boer War (Anon. 1900: 28). When he returned from South Africa in 1901, he married Etty Lafranchi, another of the daughters of the All Nations' Lafranchis (Anon. 1901: 20). In addition to organizing community and sporting functions in Cardrona, Paterson led fundraising efforts during the First World War (Anon. 1916: 4). He worked a gold claim until 1926, and then mined part-time after his purchase of the hotel (McNeish 1984: 14). In 1936, after ten years happily managing the Cardrona, Etty Paterson died aged 61, and some of the legend that is now in the fabric of the Cardrona Hotel began to form as James ran the business on his own (Anon. 1936: 4). Twenty years later, he was found by the young writer, James McNeish.

McNeish's popular travelogue, *Tavern in the Town* (originally published in 1957), introduced Paterson's Cardrona Hotel to readers throughout New Zealand. This bestseller underwent four reprints and then, in 1984, was republished in an expanded, illustrated edition that contributed to total sales of over 10,000 (McNeish 2016). As McNeish introduced readers to the lonely, eccentric, taciturn Jim Paterson and his ramshackle goldfields pub on the dusty, unpaved Cardrona road, *Tavern in the Town* tapped a rich vein of nostalgia for the innocence of the 'good old days' of New Zealand's past. By 1956, Paterson had run the hotel alone for twenty years, keeping the paintings by, and pictures of, his wife adorning the walls. His eccentricity touched a chord with readers, and stories of Paterson controlling the drinks that drivers could have (if you were headed for Wanaka, two glasses of beer; if to the Crown Range, one only; and if you were a woman, you must abstain) became legendary (McNeish 1984: 16–18). McNeish celebrated, created and underlined this nostalgia, emphasizing simplistic, idealistic values that were perceived as being largely lost in New Zealand – with the exception of Jim Paterson (Davis 1979: 31).

Some tales of Jim Paterson defy modern minds and values, but, it must be admitted, more now than in the 1950s when *Tavern in the Town* was written. One has Paterson taking vacations to see the mid-year races in Christchurch, closing the door with a note: 'Beer under counter – help yourself', while others detail his battles with the Licensing Commission. In 1951, acting under a governmental imperative to reduce the number of licensed premises by closing marginal operations, the Licensing Commission determined that Paterson was not providing what the legislation required. Nevertheless Paterson, supported by the entire Cardrona population, successfully fought to keep his hotel open, which McNeish concluded 'recognized the principle that

1. a hotel, though practically falling to bits, might sometimes be greater than
 2. the sum of its parts – that it might be a necessary social centre’ (McNeish
 3. 1984: 15). A second attempt at cancelling the license in 1958 was thwarted by
 4. the combined support of a Wanaka policeman, the local doctor and Paterson’s
 5. lawyer, who submitted a judgement that precipitate action would kill the old
 6. hotelier.

7. Through these stories of the ageing Paterson, the Cardrona Hotel morphed
 8. from a heritage structure to a witness to (albeit quixotic) history (Smith
 9. 2006: 91). In the revised edition of *Tavern in the Town* (1984), McNeish records
 10. the 1961 death of James Paterson and his burial in the Cardrona cemetery.
 11. Cardrona local Jack Galvin purchased the hotel, leaving it empty and near
 12. derelict until Edmund and Rosemary Jones purchased it in 1975. The Joneses
 13. restored the hotel, keeping the original facade, but adding concrete founda-
 14. tions, and a recycled timber floor, and rebuilding the structure. After their
 15. tenure, the property changed hands several more times, each new owner
 16. restoring it a little until, in 2002, it underwent a major renovation, which
 17. extended the accommodation to 21 bedrooms and enlarged the dining room
 18. and bar (Bauchop 2011).

19. James McNeish took a relatively unloved, near-anonymous wooden ruin
 20. on a minor Central Otago road and, in writing the portrait of its lonely owner,
 21. laid the foundations of the Cardrona’s cultural mythopoeia. In the 1980s, the
 22. 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s, the marketers of Speight’s Beer turned
 23. the Cardrona Hotel from McNeish’s pages into the icon of popular culture
 24. that persists today.

25. **SPEIGHT’S BEER AND THE CARDRONA HOTEL**

26. Not long after New Zealand’s alcohol television advertising laws were changed,
 27. Roy Meares of Saatchi & Saatchi was tasked with reviving the fading Speight’s
 28. brand. To combat the attitude of ‘Drink Speight’s, lose yer mates!’ that was then
 29. prevalent among New Zealand drinkers, Meares created the ‘Southern Man’
 30. campaign of laconic rugged men working and living in the sparse Central Otago
 31. landscape, consuming Speights as their drink of choice (Chandler 2012: 2).
 32. When the agency sought a hotel for the campaign narrative, they chose the
 33. Cardrona’s distinctive facade, initially as background imagery, then rebranded
 34. (albeit with the facade unmistakably that of the Cardrona) for billboard use as
 35. the fictional ‘Bonnie’s Pub’. This was the ideal Speight’s outlet, complete with
 36. its beautiful owner Bonnie out front, and the tag-line ‘She’s a hard road find-
 37. ing the perfect woman, boy’. Speight’s is now the largest beer brand in New
 38. Zealand, thanks largely to Meare’s work (Mathers 2013), but the campaign,
 39. despite its success, has been criticized for its idealized masculinity, diminution
 40. of women, nostalgia for the frontier, its monocultural casting and even for its
 41. boosterism of Southern New Zealand (Law 1997: 22–28; Jackson et al. 2009:
 42. 181–201; Towns et al. 2012: 389–401).

43. In 2000, the 3 Bald Men Design Company were asked to create a dozen
 44. Speight’s Alehouse restaurants throughout the country, with a brief to incor-
 45. porate ‘the essence of “The Southern Man” image and its admired culture and
 46. heritage’ into the architecture to create ‘authentic Speight’s dining experiences’
 47. (Speight’s n.d.; Hobbs et al. n.d.). In 2002, this project reached new heights
 48. in terms of the relationship between the Cardrona and Speight’s beer. At this
 49. time, a corporate Auckland alehouse site owner was also the owner of the
 50. Cardrona Hotel. In response to a very specific design brief to bring the two
 51.
 52.

together, the 3 Bald Men team produced the Cardrona Mount Eden Alehouse in Auckland, a full architectural twin to its Otago namesake (Hendry 2002).

In 2007, in response to former Dannevirke farmer Tim Ellingham's plea for Speight's to become available in England, a Publicis Mojo-designed advertising campaign called 'The Great Beer Delivery' featured another replica Cardrona Hotel Speight's Alehouse. This replica was built and transported on the deck of the *MV Lida* from Dunedin to London via New York to serve Speight's beer to their London customers (Morris 2008). With the catch phrase, 'If you can't take your mate to the pub, take the pub to your mate', the selection of the crew, the building of the alehouse and the voyage across the world became an Internet sensation and was featured on overseas news shows and in numerous marketing programmes and lectures (Williamson 2009). As a result, the Cardrona has become not merely a New Zealand hotel, but *the* New Zealand hotel. In terms of popular culture, the Cardrona had become an icon.

IMPROBABLE HERITAGE SURVIVOR

Neither Cardrona nor any of the other settlements of gold-rush-era Central Otago had an earlier frontier life. There were no roadside hotels (or roads), no stores, no maps and no knowledge of the newly farmed regions and, apart from a few newly erected, scratch-built farmhouses, there were very few buildings anywhere in Central Otago. After gold was found, in each place it was located an ephemeral rush settlement developed nearby, in what Erik Eklund termed 'a frontier-like, anarchic period of development' (2012: 10). Instead of following the standard geographical imperatives that determine the location of urban centres, development simply emerged out of convenient proximity to the miners and their workings. These rush towns, at least in their earliest stages, were like their residents: cosmopolitan, mobile and ready to be removed to a new field at the first cry of 'rush ho!' (Bell 2002: 26). This made for a business environment where the fortunes of the business owner were completely tied to the fortunes of the miners that he or she served. The towns were built on optimism, on the gamble that gold would continue to be found and that capital, investment, infrastructure and a level of stability could one day replace the uncertainty that dogged the rush centres (Dingle 1984: 78–80). However, this also meant that when the gold faded or ran out, the towns faded too. Inevitably, this caused a redistribution of goldfields urban centres that Dilsaver termed 'nucleation' of settlements, whereby small rush towns that, for a time, had supported a significant local population, shrank in size or even disappeared, while the constituent businesses and residents retreated into fewer, larger, more geographically ideal places (Dilsaver 1985: 17). In Central Otago, this saw settlements near Cardrona such as Gorge Town, Kirtleburn, Gibbston, Morven Ferry and Gee's Flat, disappear, while the larger settlements of Queenstown and Arrowtown soaked up the extra population and businesses.

On the face of it, Cardrona, and its hotel, should have suffered the same fate. Isolated, its gold mostly gone, with few residents beyond a handful of struggling sheep farmers battling the dry, harsh climate, a rabbit plague and unforgiving terrain, the business was located on a road that was tough to drive in summer and near-impassable in winter. Only a succession of dedicated, indomitable, quixotic and near-penniless owners meant that the Cardrona Hotel survived.

The lack of financial resources of Cardrona Hotel owners was more important in the process of preserving the structure than might be immediately

1. apparent. Owners with money to spend might have been tempted to renovate
 2. and change the hotel, especially its distinctive facade. Most Otago hotels from
 3. the rush era have had modernizing plaster, roughcast or brick facades added,
 4. so that the hotels built in the very first days of the Central Otago rush – and
 5. that could arguably be called more foundational to the gold-rush story of the
 6. region than the Cardrona – bear little resemblance to their original versions
 7. that were erected in 1862 and 1863. Queenstown’s Queen’s Arms Hotel, for
 8. example, set up by famed goldfields policeman Sergeant Hugh Bracken in
 9. 1863 and taken over to become Eichardt’s Hotel in 1868, could argue for equal
 10. status with the Cardrona as a heritage structure and business, but it lacks
 11. the ‘colour’ of a narrative associated with the benign neglect of the Cardrona
 12. Hotel’s Jim Paterson – and it did not have a television beer campaign to popu-
 13. larize it.

14. Similarly, the New Orleans Hotel was one of the first hotels in the colour-
 15. ful, rambunctious frontier town that was known popularly as Fox’s in 1863.
 16. Erected just after the now infamous lawless era when W. H. ‘Bully’ Hayes ran
 17. his United States Hotel and battled his rivals, the Buckingham family; larger-
 18. than-life characters such as ‘The Redoubtable’ William Fox ran the Golden Age
 19. Hotel; and goldfields songsters Charles ‘The Inimitable’ Thatcher and Madam
 20. Vitelli trod the stages of them all. The well-preserved establishment of the
 21. New Orleans Hotel, still operating in the heart of the tourist ‘boom’ town of
 22. Arrowtown, is rarely commented on for anything beyond its excellent fare,
 23. comfortable accommodation and stunning location, despite its venerable
 24. heritage credentials. Each of these hotels bears enough resemblance to their
 25. rush-era versions to be recognizable as heritage structures, but lack what the
 26. heritage consumer tourists construct in the Cardrona Hotel (which, especially
 27. its distinctive false-front facade, missed out on all of the possible renova-
 28. tor improvements) as a form of historical integrity, even if aspects of this are
 29. pastiche. The rusty ‘Gaelic whiskey’ sign on the Cardrona’s facade, for instance,
 30. faithfully reproduced in the Mount Eden Speight’s Alehouse copy of the
 31. Cardrona, is a modern addition and is entirely absent in historical pictures of
 32. the hotel. A valid comparison might be made with the 1882 mud brick Vulcan
 33. Hotel (originally the ‘Ballarat’) at St Bathans. While it could actually argue
 34. for a greater level of structural integrity with the original structure than the
 35. Cardrona, the Vulcan Hotel was built twenty years later, and it missed out on
 36. the television marketing creativity that created, and cemented, the Cardrona’s
 37. unique heritage persona in public imagination.

39. FALSE-FRONT ARCHITECTURE

41. Ultimately, it is the ‘false-front’ aspect of the Cardrona Hotel that allows every-
 42. one to see the hotel as having heritage and gold-era integrity. The facade’s
 43. structure actually hides the myriad of changes, expansions, rebuilds, changes
 44. of room use and other architectural changes that lie behind it. Its false front,
 45. even in its name, declares a lack of a commitment to architectural truth, but
 46. this allows the owners to make alterations as they see fit, to repurpose and
 47. restructure as much as they like, behind the architectural stage curtain of
 48. Baltic pine first built by George Butler Bond in 1867.

49. The *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture* defines false-front build-
 50. ings as having ‘a front wall which extends beyond the sidewalls of a build-
 51. ing to create a more imposing façade [or] a front wall that extends above the
 52. roof of a building’ (Harris 1983: 208). Popularly associated with American fron-

tier 'rush' areas, historic centres and ghost-towns creating the idea of 'boom-town architecture', false-front architecture is much older than the 'rush' era of the nineteenth century. False-front facades are found on 2000-year-old Zapotec ruins at Mitla, Mexico (Joyce 1911: 154–63), on the duomos of Florence and Siena, on Bernard Poyet's 1806 Paris Chamber of Deputies (Joly cited in Zanten 1989: 16–22) and on Greek Revival antebellum architecture in Southern United States (Zelinsky 1954: 9–12).

It is in its guise of 'frontier' architecture that it has become iconic and it is in this form that the Cardrona Hotel is viewed as a quintessential gold-rush relic by visitors, both local and international. The consensus among architectural historians has the appearance of false-front architecture in so-called 'boom' towns stemming from merchants, hoteliers and business owners being reluctant to pour money into what could be a short-lived, ephemeral town. Nevertheless, to project an image of stability and success to their customers, for the first few years they provided a solid facade, even if little more than canvas tents or corrugated iron shells stood behind these. Early photographs of railway towns, western mining centres and urban rush towns across the American West and throughout the mining areas of Australasia show business owners standing hopefully in front of these structures, while the artifice inherent in the buildings bestows the pejorative 'false' to the name of the architectural style.

The Cardrona Hotel is a false-front structure that, in large part, derives its renown from the perception of its unmodified facade. Fortunately, the succession of owners has regarded the facade as something to be left largely untouched, despite many and extensive changes to the roofline behind it (at least one renovation temporarily produced a peaked roof), and walls that have changed from canvas to iron to stone. If comparisons with other goldfields era hotels are made, it is hard to escape the conclusion that *the only* part of the Cardrona Hotel that is authentic is its false front, presenting a mental conundrum: if authenticity is derived from something inherently false, is it really authentic at all?

CONCLUSION

The incongruity of the replica false-fronted 'Cardrona twin' alehouses in urban Auckland and on a boat to London becomes part of the mythopoeia constructing the real Cardrona Hotel as an iconic part of popular culture in contemporary New Zealand. Stories of eccentric-yet-generous owners underscore the myth creation, assuring all that the nostalgia for this aspect of Otago's past is not only justified, but also a good thing. Through the marketing of beer in the media, and the enduring narrative of the 'lost' New Zealand society represented in the old lonely men behind an old goldfields pub bar, the hotel that George and Rebecca Bond built leaves the gold rush behind to become that most ephemeral of defined objects in modern society: a popular culture icon.

The Cardrona Hotel, then, is itself today constructed via nostalgia and a vague sense of knowing the structure through its promotion. This is a familiarity that is twinned to the false front of the architecture; the popular culture construction is just as false front as the hotel, but is less obviously so, especially as time passes. This means that the contemporary tourist driving on the Crown Range Road to, or from, Arrowtown, and who pauses at the Cardrona Hotel to engage with the presented facade, feels that they too are seeing history and heritage as it really was – and then pull out their camera and,

1. in turn, continue to promulgate its image. Whatever changes each owner
2. has wrought, the Cardrona Hotel is now New Zealand's most photographed
3. hotel (Bauchop 2011), and whether it is George and Rebecca Bond's place, Jim
4. Paterson's hotel or the Speight's Beer pub, it has emerged as an iconic part of
5. New Zealand history, society and culture, and as such, has become a popular
6. New Zealand gold-rush architectural icon.

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SUGGESTED CITATION

Carpenter, L. W. (2018), 'The Cardrona Hotel: Creating a New Zealand heritage icon', *Australasian Journal of Popular Culture*, 7:2, pp. 209–24, doi: 10.1386/ajpc.7.2.209_1

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