



EQUILIBRIUM

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Cover Picture

This 56 pound bell weight is marked at its base West Riding County Council 1898 and Pontefract District. The center of the weight is marked 512 and the top of the handle is marked 56 LB. The marks on it are crown VR, ER, and GR. There are dates from 1898 to 1937 near the hatch marks. The weight measures 13 inches tall and is 7¼ in diameter at the bottom.

Jack Young Collection.

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 Photos are best in 300 DPI Jpegs in a separate file with a maximum of 3 photos per Email.

Granddad's Gold Scale

BY TONY McCARTHY

Sometimes it isn't the biggest, the best, or the rarest scale that means the most.

My name is Tony McCarthy and I live in Dunedin, New Zealand. (Figure 1) When I look back, there is no wonder that I am attached to my Granddad's gold scales and have an interest in collecting Troy weights. *It's in my Blood* and a side line that I am very proud of – for a variety of reasons. Scales have played a huge part in my life, however not exactly in the way you might expect.

In my childhood home was a set of boxed Avery Gold Scales (1891-1896) that belonged to my maternal grandfather, Charles Weaver (Figure 2). Charles was a renowned Dredge Master and Shareholder of the Earnsclough Gold Dredges based in Alexandra, New Zealand, during the gold rush from early 1880s through to 1924.

His father John Weaver, was an old digger from the California and Victoria gold rushes. He left England about 1848 and arrived in Australia. John then travelled to the California Gold Rush with little success, then travelled back to Australia in 1855, joining in with the Victoria Gold Rush. He married in Australia and moved his family onto the Dunstan gold fields in Otago, New Zealand, in 1864.



Figure 1. ▲▲ Map of New Zealand.



Figure 2. ▲▲ Gold scales that belonged to Charles Weaver, the author's Grandfather.

My McCarthy great Grandparents (paternal side) arrived in New Zealand in 1859. In 1890, Granddad and his brother bought their first mining claim and worked together for many years. Granddad McCarthy also worked on the Earnsclough No. 1 dredge and at times as a road maker. In 1907, he joined his brother-in-law, Henry Downie, who was recruited by Captain Henry Miles to work the first tin dredge ever in South East Asia at Phuket Harbour, Siam, now called Thailand.

In the 1900s, Alexandra was at the centre of the gold dredging boom. Interestingly, both of my Grandfathers were born in 1869 and both worked on dredges. Dad and my Uncle Owen, continued the family tradition working on the last gold dredge in the Alexandra area that was finally dismantled in 1963.

Growing up around these 'monster' dredges was an experience few could enjoy. I clearly remember the day, as a 5 year old, when my older brother showed me around the dredge when it was semi closed for maintenance. What an adventure! We went up and

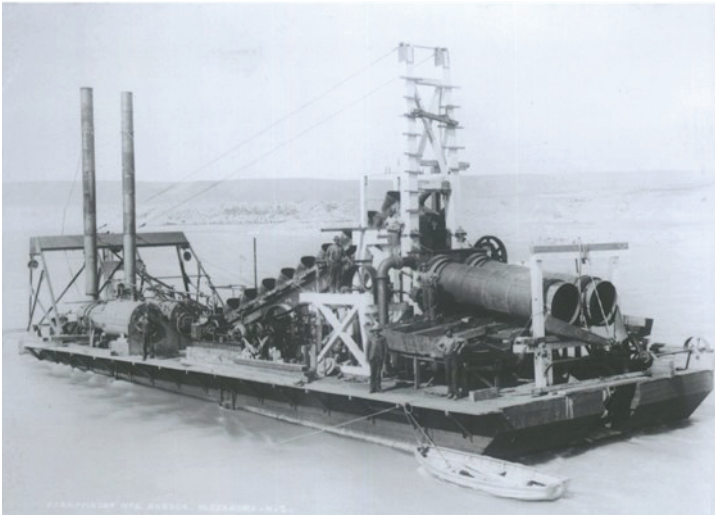


Figure 3. ▲▲ Earnsclough No 2 Gold Dredge in Alexandra, Central Otago, New Zealand 1899-1916. When launched, this was the largest dredge in New Zealand.

down ladders, past moving screen plates and elevators going to places that I am sure we were not supposed to. I was so excited yet so scared. The noise of us running around echoed and everything appeared so big. (Work safe NZ would have had a ‘field day’ with safety practices, procedure and policies.) Being that bit older my brother was far more adventurous which may have led him to falling off the dredge and into the pond. With gumboots being our foot wear of choice and although Quentin could swim, he went down fast (he thought he was a goner) and as he struggled to surface, Dad’s arm came down and dragged him out. I imagine they both had some explaining to do when they got home. Not the best place for children, but I guess we were really lucky and that was life back then.

It was certainly fun. As an adult, I would love to go

back onto a gold dredge, somewhere in the world, but until then I will continue collecting and learning about the scales that weighed the result of our Grandparents’ hard day’s work.

Figure 4. ➤ ➤ Earnsclough No 3 Gold Dredge in Alexandra, New Zealand, 1903-1923. One of the first electric powered dredges in the country. Powered by its own power scheme.

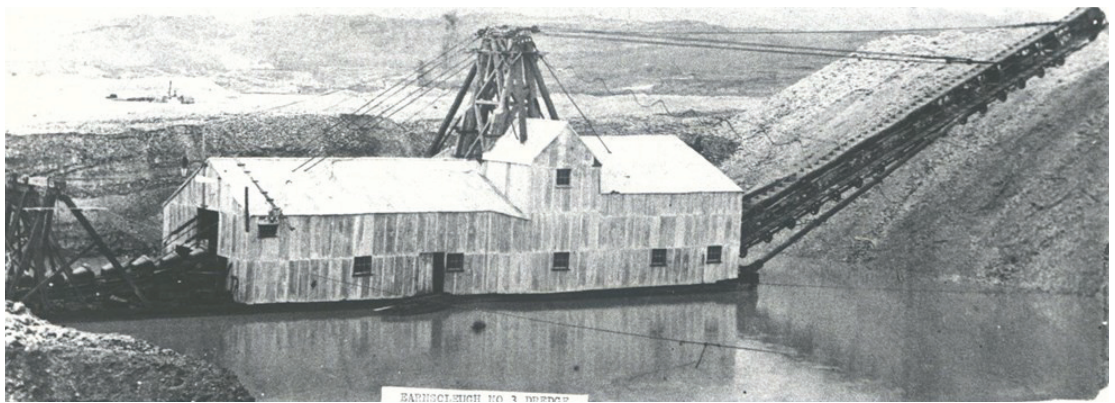


Figure 5. ▲▲ A set of small hand-held gold scales bought by the author at age 15.

As in most families, it was the custom for the oldest brother to inherit the important family heirlooms. So Granddad’s scales were passed on and for some strange reason I decided to also give my brother my first set of small hand held gold scales that I bought in 1972, age 15. Maybe I always thought that in some strange way they might find their way back to me. Although he kept and appreciated them because of their history, he did not have mining in his blood and consequently never felt an attachment to them. After many years my brother decided that I would be a better caretaker of these family scales, so I did not need a second invite and brought him a similar set (at my cost) to replace the original set. So - I am now the very proud caretaker of them and in a few years they will move back with my wife and me, to our home town Alexandra in Central Otago, NZ, where I believe they belong.

Figure 6. >> Alexandra Gold Dredge, 1936- 1963, the last dredge to operate in Otago.

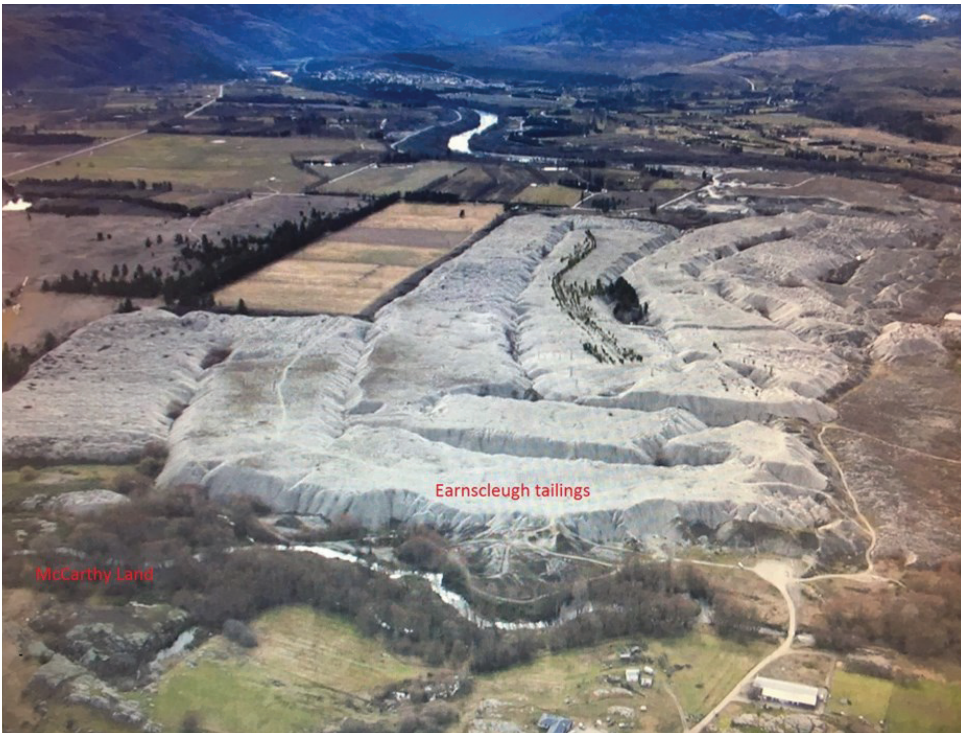


Figure 7. << The Earnscleugh tailings. The result from gold dredging, good productive land has been turned up-side down and now all we can see is gravel and rocks. The tailings have now been declared a historic reserve. At the top of the picture is the small town of Clyde and Alexandra is across the river on the right hand side.

My second set of scales were a cheap reproduction set that I bought for a friend who was in hospital suffering with anorexia. Visitors were not permitted until she reached a specific weight. On one visit, I gave her the scales and said that they represented her health and the balance she needed to attain in order to get well. It seemed simple to me and critical that she understood that every little bit helped. I added a tiny piece of paper to one side to show her how easily the scales could be tipped (we laughed that I didn't have any gold to demonstrate with). She loved them and we often spoke about them once she got out. Sadly, after a tough battle, the scales tipped too far in one direction and she lost her life at age 20. Scales can be big, small, intricate, historic, one-off or mass produced. To me, scales also represent the need for balance in one's life.

ISASC in New Zealand

Prior to myself joining, I was told that there was only ever one other member of ISASC USA in New Zealand, my very good friend, Bruce Cook. When Bruce passed away, his collection went to auction and I was lucky enough to buy some of his gold scales and Troy weights. However, the real treasure that I bought was all of his ISASC magazines and that helped shape my decision to become an ISASC member.



Figure 8. Government of New Zealand scales.

I made contact with Shirley Schmidt, who has been fantastic and so helpful to a new member. With her help and advice from Carol Hayden and Winsome Leadbetter, I continued to replace the few magazines that were missing from Bruce's collection. Big thanks must also go to Mike Sharpe in the UK, who is always so helpful. Information is everything!

I also have been most fortunate in corresponding with some fantastic members. I feel especially privileged to be very good friends with Bob Jibben, who I hold in the highest regard, and who has taught and shown me a lot. (Not just about scales.) We are in regular contact and I always look forward to his next email. I have also enjoyed talking to Clem Monday and I owe a big thanks to both Jan & Bill Berning, and Jaap Visser, who have been so very helpful. I always appreciate it and I am so grateful.

My primary interest is in gold and bullion scales and Troy weights. I also have an interest in coin scales and weights and my brother Quentin is a coin collector. In New Zealand, gold and bullion scales are mostly Avery or De Grave

and, with a population of only 4 million people, it is even difficult to get a decent size set of boxed scales, which are far more expensive than in the USA. When I first joined ISASC, I made the 'rookie mistake' of mentioning to some members that I would like to buy a large set of bullion scales and was stunned with a couple of offers, one being the largest set of scales I have ever seen in my life. I didn't know they made them quite so big and had the Titanic not met her fate, she could well have been big enough to transport them the 7,152 miles to New Zealand. I have learnt since to be careful with what I ask for.



Figure 9. Government of New Zealand scales.

My second most prized set of scales is a set made for the Government of New Zealand. This is a larger set of balance scales made by DeGrave, Short Fanner & Co with 'Government of New Zealand' written on them. They came in the original trunk that still has the manufactures label on top. My understanding is that this set was used to measure the Bank's Troy weights. Not 100% sure! Maybe someone can tell me?

Figure 10. >> Small display of scales and weights in a local bank.



Figure 11. << Set of Oertling bullion scales.



I have a collection of Troy weights that I'm always keen to add to. When I started collecting, I bought a few separate cup weights with the aim of completing a set as I thought the cups were all interchangeable! How naive was that! I didn't know that it is almost impossible to make a set out of individual cup weights. What I know now is that in an original complete set of Troy cup weights, they will fit nicely and be level when altogether (not loose) when all the numbers are lined up, all the lettering of Troy and Oz. will be in their own line and be in the same font. I guess we all have to learn!

Figure 12. >> A set of troy weights, the largest of which is 128 oz.





With my collection of Troy cup weights, I have been trying to collect any set that has a different size outer cup. E.g., the largest cup in a set (which has rings around the outside of the cup) I have sets from 64 Troy oz -50-48 -32-24-20-16-12-10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1-1/2 Troy oz. I am looking for any sets or other cup weights that fall above or in between these numbers.

Figure 13. ▲▲ These two sets have the largest weight being 4 Troy oz, but you will see how different each set is in their layout. This is why it is so hard to make up a complete proper fitting set with all numbers and text lining up.

I would really enjoy making contact with any other collector of gold scales or troy weights or anyone that can give me more knowledge on these items. I am very interested in buying a wooden foldable tripod stand for the Government of New Zealand, scales and any TROY test or bell weights. I am intending to write a booklet on Troy Cup, Bell and Cylindrical weights, any help would be appreciated.



Figure 14. ▲▲ Largest nested weights 1 oz. and 1/2 oz. troy

Other Interests:

- Indian Motorcycles
- Collecting Phonographs and records
- Collecting early electric invalids chairs (POV) now called "mobility scooters."

Although I have now been a member since 2012 I would like to say a big Thank you for welcoming me from far across the seas into ISASC and teaching me more than I thought I would ever know. I hope you enjoy my short story and the pictures below.

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Figure 15. ▲▲ Chinese scales used during the gold rush in New Zealand.



Figure 16. << Troy Bell weights with one 500 Troy oz cylindrical weight.

Figure 17. >> Two banker's gold scales in the author's collection.



Figure 19. >> Nested weights in author's collection.

Figure 18. << Sets of bullion scales in the author's collection.

