

Mad hatters celebrate autumn tea party

By **LIN FERGUSON** in Queenstown

ARROWTOWN Autumn Festival's senior citizens' tea party took the cake again for another year with organisers relenting at the last minute and squeezing another 50 pensioners in for the annual party and show.

Organiser Alma Stevenson said the popular annual occasion was booked to the hilt weeks ago, with 180 booked. However, at the last minute a busload from Riverton arrived on Tuesday, swelling the ranks to 230, she said.

"But we managed and they love it so that's great really, isn't it?"

Even though the food had to stretch a little further, everyone got a sandwich, cake, glass of sherry and a hot cuppa poured from the obligatory church-hall-sized teapot.

The Arrowtown Miners Band launched into favourite songs like

Roll Out the Barrel, You are my Sunshine and *I Love to go A-wandering*, with verve, a lot of oomph and to huge applause.

About 12 keen people had fashioned hats, which caused a lot of giggling and nudges as each creation was remarked on, prodded a bit and judged.

The women's winner, Mary Lines, who wore a skein of wool wrapped around her head with a couple of knitting needles skewered through it, said she had thought it was a fairly "ordinary idea, really".

Natty knitter: Displaying a new take on knitting a wee bonnet is Mary Lines, winner of the crazy hat contest at the Arrowtown Autumn Festival senior citizens' tea party.

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