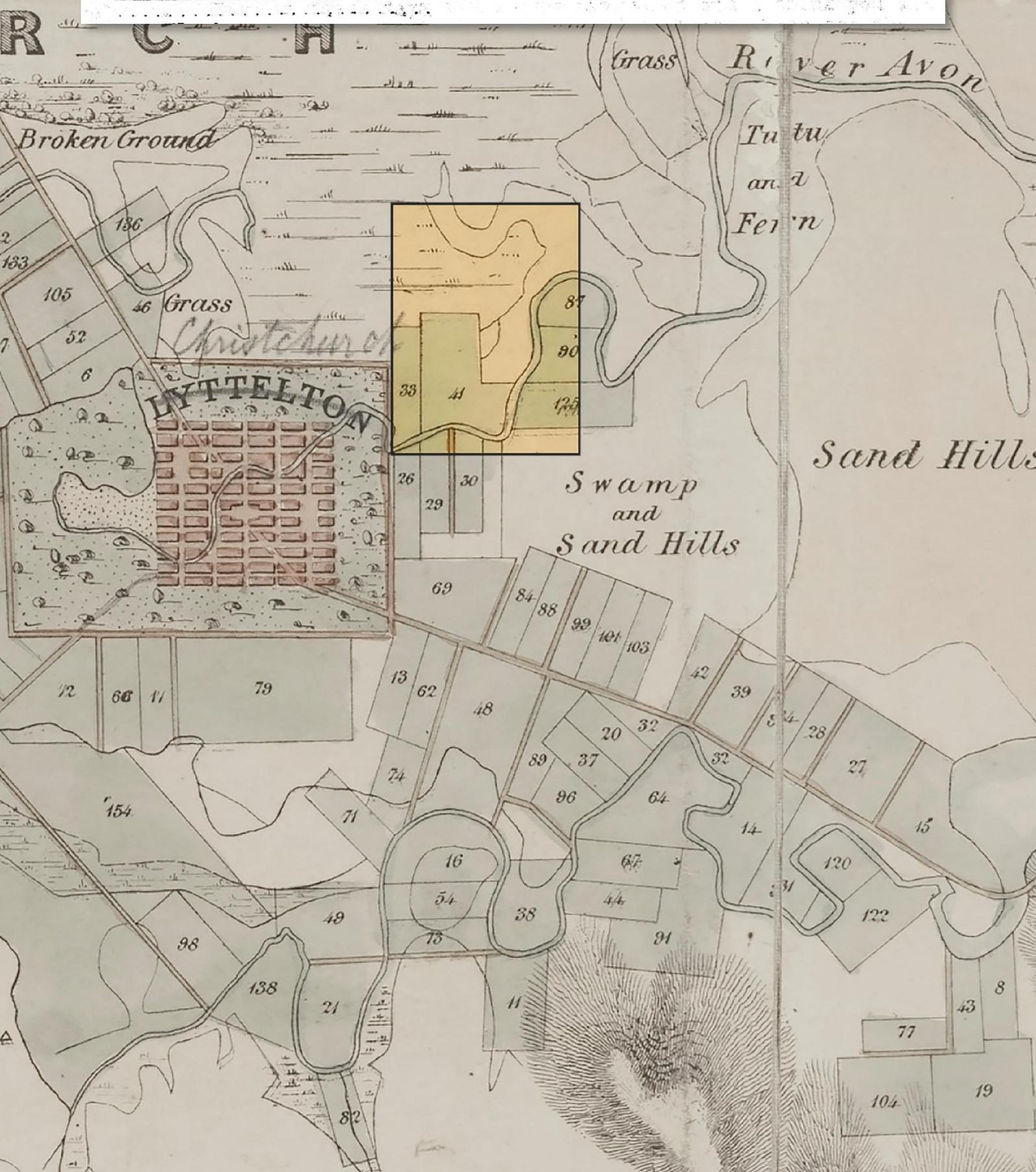


REPORT OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN BY MR. H. DE R. FLESHER TO THE PARENT  
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION ON 16TH OCTOBER, 1956  
THIS ADDRESS COVERED SOME ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY AND INCIDENTS OF  
RICHMOND IN THE EARLY DAYS.



*The cover shows the title from the original typescript of Mr Flesher's talk, along with part of a map from 1851, "Part of the Canterbury settlement", printed by Saunders, Trelawney, 1821–1910., Day & Son. The map was prepared before the arrival of the first Canterbury settlers and shows some of the early land subdivision and vegetation cover of the area around Christchurch. The central highlighted area is approximately the same area shown in maps on pages 4 & 17.*

**Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/40279876.**

# Introduction

In 2020, somebody delivered a sheaf of papers to Avebury House, for the history collection. It is a shame that nobody managed to get their name as we have been unable to say “Thank you”. There are three documents in the set and one is a new addition to our collection of material about the history of Richmond. It is an 11-page typewritten record of “an address given by Mr H. de Rie Flesher to the PTA on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1956”. The first seven pages consist of Mr Flesher’s talk; the other four pages are memories of Richmond School and the surrounding suburb, in response, by other long-term residents. The material is entertaining reading and offers many personal insights and stories as well as information about Richmond in days gone by.

Hubert Flesher (1901—1989) was the son of James and Margaret Flesher and the third generation of the Flesher family to live at Avebury. Hubert was a lawyer, like his father. His grandfather, William Flesher had bought 25 acres of RS 197 in 1871 and had built a large two-storey house on the property in 1885. In 1945 Hubert sold the house and 8 acres of surrounding ground to the government.

Hubert’s talk combines memories of growing up in Richmond in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century with material about the earlier history and development of the suburb that, by the mid-1880s came to be known as Richmond.

In the following pages, I have transcribed the material. In doing so I have applied some light editing: correcting obvious spelling and typing errors and regularising punctuation, but otherwise have tried to keep the look and feel of the typewritten original. I have provided some notes (see page 17) to expand on items and to correct some errors. I have also included two maps: one showing the early rural sections that comprised the area that would become Richmond — see p4, and a second map from 1926 that shows the same area with streets and sections — see p16.

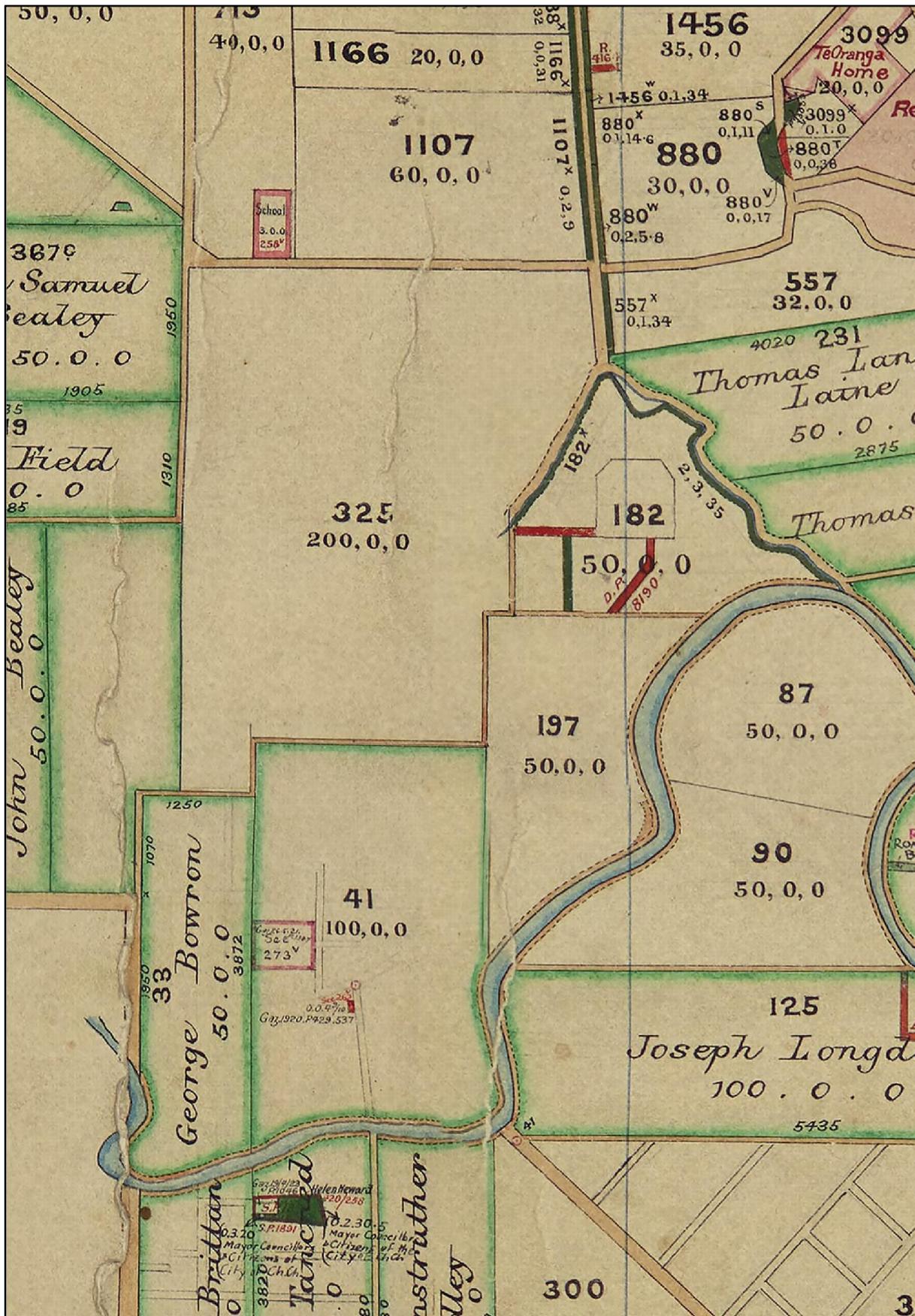
In the introduction to his 1973 book “Richmond a Regional History”, George Walsh refers to “some notes by Mr H. de R. Flesher”. This manuscript certainly appears to be a copy of those notes; in a number of places, the wording is identical or similar, and some of the factual errors in the document are repeated in Mr Walsh’s book.

Responses from other members of the community in the document’s final three pages (see pp12–15) consist of personal reminiscences. These provide colour and bring characters and places to life in a way that is impossible with material strictly from the public record. It is a shame we cannot see the lantern slides Mr Pickles refers to on p15.

The document is a valuable addition to the limited material available about Richmond’s history, and above all, it is an informative and occasionally amusing read. The original typescript is now housed in the Richmond History Group collection at Avebury House.

*David Hollander*

*Richmond History Group, 2021*



Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Christchurch, CAYN CH1031 23142 22, R22668377

**Crown Grant Plans. Christchurch District [Excerpt].** This map, showing original rural sections surrounding Christchurch, was prepared in 1905. This excerpt shows the boundaries of the five rural sections that comprised Richmond, along with their areas (acres, rods & perches). The future layout of some roads is already discernible following section boundaries.

REPORT OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN BY MR H. DE RIE FLESHER TO THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION ON 16TH OCTOBER 1956.  
THIS ADDRESS COVERED SOME ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY AND INCIDENTS OF RICHMOND IN THE EARLY DAYS.

Mr. Flesher -

"I will tell you something about Richmond because there are folk who have lived in Richmond all their lives and who know little or nothing about the earliest days of Richmond. The Flesher family settled here in the early days. There are not so many of the old families about now. It has been very interesting trying to collect some information for you. It makes me feel that there is a big scope for someone to collect information, not only of Richmond, but of other suburbs of Christchurch. There have been tremendous changes in Christchurch. It is still growing, and much valuable information can easily be lost.

Of course, as you know, the first name of Richmond was Bingsland. It was named after Morris Bing<sup>1</sup>. Richmond itself got its name from Richmond Hill in London. A certain part of our area around about the Avon Boat Sheds was called Ellengowan<sup>2</sup>, but I have not been able to find out where that part of the district got its name. We now know the whole district as Richmond.

Now, Richmond is bounded on the west by Fitzgerald Avenue, Whitmore Street, Hills Road, right up to Shirley Road, and on the north by Shirley Road, North Parade to Dudley Creek, then to the river, and then upstream to the Fitzgerald Avenue bridge.

According to the maps of Captain Thomas, who was Canterbury's first surveyor, the land along the river opposite Patten Street and Morris Street, was mainly sandy, and it was covered with toot and fern. Proceeding further upstream, it became more and more swampy. At the corner of Vogel Street and Warwick Street, there used to be a lagoon. That was on the Nicholson property. When the drainage scheme got under way, that lagoon was drained and eventually became a piece of No Man's Land and in due course the Nicholson family, who occupied it for more than forty years, obtained a title to it. There used to be quite a lot of sandhills round about. We know there was one where Mr. and Mrs. Smith<sup>3</sup> live, now known as "The Marsh". The old Flesher home was built on another one. The highest of them all was up near where the Presbyterian Church is in Randall Street where Howard had his cottage. The central part of Richmond was just a great swamp with several creeks winding through it. It stretched northwards to Marshland. There was quite a bit of peat about and it was covered with toi toi. Along the river, where Lois Place is now — that is, opposite Morris Street — there used to be a Maori Camp. This was on what later became the Bassett property, and there is still burnt sand, burnt whale bones and shells of all kinds<sup>4</sup>. Mr. William Bassett had in his possession several pieces of greenstone that were collected there. On the river bank opposite Morris Street there used to be a sandy beach and that was where my family and a lot of other Richmond people learned to swim.

The later generation would swim in the holes by the mouth of the Dudley Creek. Even in those days there were tragedies and I think you will find that at the entrance to the Avonside Churchyard there are the names of four children who were drowned in those days.

To see how Richmond was developed, we have to consider the development of Canterbury. In 1849 the Canterbury Association in its Charter obtained an option from the Crown to purchase all of Banks Peninsula and the Plains between Waipara and the Ashburton rivers and the price was 10/- per acre. This land the Association planned to sell again at £3 per acre. Of the purchase money £1 was to be set aside for education and religious purposes, £1 to bring out more settlers, 10/- to pay for the land and 10/- for administration. We see that in our district with the Church Property Trust Block<sup>5</sup>.

This was bounded by Hills Road, Shirley Road, North Parade, right down to North Avon Road. That was an area of over 200 acres. In the country districts the squatters upset their calculations by sitting on the best pieces of land.

Captain Thomas surveyed the land outside the towns and villages into Rural Sections. Richmond, as you know it, comprises five Rural Sections; 33, 41, 197, 325 and 182. You will see those Rural Sections on your rate notices. Now, R.S. 197 is on the eastern part of the district — North Parade and straight through to the river. That comprised 50 acres and was purchased by J. S. Gundry in 1853 for £150 — £3 per acre. R.S. 33, the western block, Whitmore Street straight through to the river, comprised 50 acres and was purchased by one George Bowron, for £150. George Bowron was the man who started the tanneries<sup>6</sup>. He was the father of the very famous George Bowron who was one of the greatest land speculators in Christchurch — in fact in the whole of New Zealand. Now, the central block R.S. 41 of 100 acres, was purchased by one E. C. Fooks<sup>7</sup> in 1853. He was not content with 100 acres, for which he paid £2 an acre. He purchased ten more acres from Gundry in the eastern block and paid £30 an acre, three or four years later. R.S. 325 was the Church Property Trust Block of 200 acres, and this was kept intact until 1908<sup>8</sup>. Of course that land was not idle. There were many who lived on it — little farmlets and houses. The last R.S., No. 182, is situated in the north eastern part of the district, round about the Richmond Domain. That comprised 50 acres and was purchased for £150 in 1852 by Charles Dudley<sup>9</sup> (Dudley Creek). He came from Lyttelton and was described as a Batchelor of Medicine. He built a small cottage with thatched roof somewhere near the mouth of Dudley Creek. In 1853 he sold some of his land to one named Minchin<sup>10</sup>. Medway Street used to be called Minchin's Road for a while. He sold his land for £400 to Minchin who held it for about 35 years and then sold it to Gardiner for £600. It was Gardiner who built Woodchester<sup>11</sup>, where the Presbyterian Home for Old People is now. Eventually Gardiner's land was afterwards owned by Bannerman, Bailey, Trent and Sharpe<sup>12</sup>, and then it was sold to the Presbyterian Church. Gardiner kept practically all his land intact until about 1908. It was about that time that he started to cut up.

The Christchurch City itself in the late 50s was just the area

within the four belts. The inner area was divided up into somewhere about 1700 quarter acre sections. The outer area, for example, from Barbadoes Street to the East Belt — that was called the Town Reserves. That was later subdivided up into sections of all shapes and sizes. There was no town planning then. Outside the four belts was the country, and Richmond by the middle of the 50's was owned by five people — Bowron, Fooks, Gundry, Dudley and the Church Property Trustees. There were no roads except a narrow path along the river. By 1860 the land outside the belts had been fenced and cultivated, but there was still no development in Richmond. There, as T. T. Morrison<sup>13</sup> in his book says, lay the great swamp. There is a very interesting book in the Canterbury College Library by T. T. Morrison called "The Evolution of the City". There is quite a lot of interesting information about Richmond in it. Morrison in his book says that the farmers in Bingsland found the greater part of their farms and sections under water after rain. The settlers had tried to cut trenches but without success, and even as late as 1886 the Christchurch Drainage Board Engineer reported that nothing could be done to prevent the area from being just a swamp.

Now I would like to mention something about the settlement of Richmond. Some people settled along the Avon because they were attracted by the shipping<sup>14</sup>. There used to be a quay by the Barbadoes Street Bridge<sup>15</sup>. Others settled there because they thought they would be on the banks of the Canal. Linwood Avenue was known as Canal Reserve and Marshland Road was known as Canal Reserve too<sup>16</sup>. Even as late as 1879\* [*sic*] when the Methodist Church was opened up there was practically no road development. At the Church instructions had been given that the services had to stop at 4 p.m. so that people could get home safely before dark. There were still rough tracks, no street lamps and big open ditches on each side. In the early 60s George Bowron started to cut up his 50 acres over here at the south eastern corner of the East belt and London Street. In 1861 a corner section was sold for £61. The next section along London Street was sold for £50. Bowron did not bother to form new roads. He simply gave the people who were interested in buying a section a right-of-way to lead to the accommodation roads. He sold most of his sections between 1864 and 1865 and they were at least quarter acre sections. That is why you will see a lot of very old houses in Perth and Cumberland Streets with large sections. Bowron lived somewhere near the Corner of Heywood Terrace and Cambridge Terrace<sup>17</sup>. Fooks, who bought the central block of 100 acres, was not able to go ahead with sub-dividing his property; he soon got into financial difficulties. He also held what was called Fooks' Run which comprised some 5,000 acres. This extended from Marshland Road up to the Styx and out to Papanui and Burwood, where it joined Kerr's Run which was another run of 5,000 acres. This extended right up to the sea coast. We have the name preserved, with Kerr's Reach. Fooks in the end only managed to save about 600 acres which was mostly marsh lands. He did not farm the area — he was just a speculator<sup>18</sup>. Later, he went into another run in North Canterbury. There are several references to him in Acland's book, Canterbury Runs. By profession he was an architect. He helped design and erect the first Avonside Church<sup>19</sup>. Mountford was the architect for the one at Avonside now. Fooks practiced later as an architect in Ashburton and died in 1907. In 1863 he got

\* Presumably a typo; the date should be 1869 — see p8, para 2.

into trouble with the Church Property Trustees and they took action in the Supreme Court to preserve their own area of 200 acres. Fooks claimed this was part of his run. About the middle of the 60s his creditors sold the central block to one, Lockhart<sup>20</sup>. In 1864 Lockhart dedicated Stanmore Road, that was the first legal road in Richmond. None of the other roads in Richmond have been dedicated. They have just become public roads by usage. The first Stanmore Road bridge was built in 1864<sup>21</sup>. Stanmore Road was still just a track with deep drains on each side. Lockhart had to sell sections and his sales were very slow. One or two of the sales were really difficult. In 1865 he sold 8½ acres which extended from Vogel Street up to where the Boys' Home<sup>22</sup> is and up to the end of Warwick Street. He sold that for £450 and that was purchased by Mr Hadfield<sup>23</sup>. He lived in the two-storeyed house just near the Boys' Home<sup>24</sup>. The 1/4-acre section at the Corner of Avalon Street and Stanmore Road which used to be a bootmaker's shop, sold in 1866 for £35. Of course, it is worth a lot more than that to-day. That was a typical sale that took place in the middle 60's. Gundry bought the eastern block<sup>25</sup>. The greater part of that area which was held by the Bassett family and our family was kept intact until about 1930. My grandfather in 1869 bought the 30 acres plus a two-roomed cottage<sup>26</sup> for £500. He had to borrow £300 from his employer and gave a mortgage to his employer, Mr. Lane, who had a Mill opposite the site where the Public Library is situated. The rest of the land was held first by Pepprell<sup>27</sup> and Wilkins. Later it came into the hands of the Bassett family. My grandfather selected the high part of the land. He used it first of all for growing wheat and kept cows, pigs and poultry. Later on he leased the northern half to A. W. Emmett<sup>28</sup>. When Mr, Emmett started there he had no money. My grandfather lent him £5 to buy a cow and he started delivering milk in Richmond and carried the milk round with a yoke on his shoulders and a bucket on each side. He was one of the very early milkmen and eventually he became one of the most successful dairymen in Christchurch, and for years supplied the Christchurch Hospital with milk.

Those of you who know the Avonside Church well, will know that it was consecrated in 1857, J. S. Gundry was one of the founders of Avonside<sup>29</sup>. Strange to say, across the river the majority of the settlers were either Wesleyan Methodists or Free Methodists. The first Methodist services were held in Richmond in 1868. Bing gave the site of the first Methodist Church and the first Church was opened in 1869 at a cost of £82.17.0. By 1880 there were about twenty houses along and adjacent to Stanmore Road. There was no street lighting and no paths. There was a line of kerosene lamps along the East Belt. They could not afford too many lamps, kerosene was 8/9 a gallon. In winter the roads were ankle deep in mud. Nearly everyone walked. There was a coach that made a few trips along Avonside Drive from about Cowlshaw Street to town. Richmond children first went to school at Avonside and then to the East Christchurch school. This district school was started in 1873. It held its first beginnings at Avonside but in 1875 was transferred to the site over here<sup>30</sup>. Mr Hill first had lease<sup>31</sup>.

The first school committee was formed in 1881. School committee elections were most exciting and as well were training grounds for those who stood for election to the local authorities. By 1881 the first horse drawn tram route to New Brighton through North

Richmond and Aranui was started by the Council<sup>32</sup>, but later they leased it to the City and Suburban Tramway Company. In 1872 a coach started going from Christchurch to North Beach. It passed through Richmond, through Burwood, to North Beach. The other tram Company, the City and Suburban Tram Company, started horse drawn tram routes in the early 70's and they brought a tram line out to Richmond which came as far as the corner of Vogel Street and Stanmore Road. This line was extended right through Richmond and Burwood and North Beach to New Brighton. On this route the teams of horses were changed four times. Jimmy Hayes, one of the first drivers, is still alive. It was a most leisurely trip to go to New Brighton. I remember we used to hear the horse drawn tram squeal round the corner at our front gate (now corner of North Avon Road and North Parade) and we then knew we had plenty of time to stroll out on River Road entrance to catch the tram at the corner of Stanmore Road and Swanns Road. The fare from Richmond to town was one penny. Later Brightlings took over the horse drawn tram route and ran it for quite a number of years. They sold it in 1907 to the Tramway Board which later electrified the route. You will know the triangle at the corner of Medway Street and North Parade — originally North Parade came up, turned to the right, and then turned north. When they put the horse-drawn tram on they wanted a short cut and the Tramway Company paid the Church Property Trustees £1 a year rent for the right to go straight across.

Then we had the coaches in Richmond. One Booker ran the coaches and they started from Barnes' Corner<sup>33</sup> north along Stanmore Road, London Street along Barbadoes Street and round the river to the Square. They had their local customers. At times the coach drivers would blow a bugle and their regulars would come out. The fare was 3d. Many people rode horses. There was one most lovable character by the name of Bill Hedley. He was very keen on army work in those days and he used to try out his horse galloping along the narrow roads. Of course many had quite flash turnouts with spirited horses. Cycles came along eventually. Pennyfarthings and later the early Dunlop cycle. One of the ladies of Richmond, a Mrs. Swann, made a little bit of history. I understand she was the first woman to wear bloomers on a bicycle.

The Working Men's Club<sup>34</sup> was started first as a benevolent society and later in the early 90's got its charter. George Swann<sup>35</sup> (Swanns Rd. — Mrs Swann, his-wife, of the bloomer story) was one of the founders of the Club. For many years he was chairman of the school committee and he was one of the first councillors from this district. Away back as far as 1878 the people of Richmond had tried to join the city<sup>36</sup>. They were not successful until 1892<sup>37</sup> when Richmond became part of Christchurch. Richmond was the first area outside the town belts to join the city. Mr. Swann and my father were the two first representatives<sup>38</sup>.

In 1882 Minchin sold a piece of land at the corner of Medway Street and North Parade to one Jones. Stinking Jones I believe he

was called. He was a jeweller and he attempted to build a hotel there. His two-storeyed house stood there until a few years ago. It was complete with cellars and everything that was necessary. For some reason, he never got a license<sup>39</sup>.

The Stanmore Band was quite well known, and one of the prominent members was James Stapleton of Stanmore Road. He rented some of the land from the Church Property Trustees and lived just near the bridge in Stapleton's Road. Mr. Cusack the bootmaker was another permanent member of the Band.

At times Richmond did not have a very good name and consequently had to have a Police Station out here. Of course times were difficult. There was not sufficient work and there was no provision for secondary education. The youths of the district finding time hanging heavily on their hands got into trouble. They played all sorts of pranks on everybody and one of their favourite pastimes was to collect all the gates. They were taken to the river and dumped there. Gates were being changed round. There were one or two rather nasty incidents. The first constable was Constable Sturmer. He was quite an interesting character. He was very critical of any young minister who came to the Methodist Church. He was not afraid to tell them they preached too long. He was a Methodist and he wanted to be fair to everyone, so he gave instructions that there were to be no fireworks on Guy Fawkes Day so that the Catholics would not be offended. Sturmer was succeeded by Mr. Flewellyn. I think that the Rev. Mr. Flewellyn at Avonside Church now is a relative of his.

There was practically no street lighting except for a few kerosene lamps, and Mr. Lawrence, who used to live in Avalon Street, used to attend to the lights. Mr. Lawrence had a small nursery. Later, gas lights were installed and the last one was outside the gate of our old home in North Avon Road. All who lived further out took hurricane lamps with them. I can remember there were sometimes as many as twenty-four lamps inside our gate on a Saturday night.

Coming to the businesses we had in Richmond, we used to have four bakeries - Barnes at the corner of Vogel Street and Stanmore Road (later taken over by Needham), Maltous of Stanmore Road (Mr. Phil. Aldersley had that later.) In Avalon Street there was a bakery belonging to a man named Leader. In Mud Lane (North Avon Road) there was White's Bakery. Mr. Aldersley told me he used to deliver bread as far as the Sandwich Hotel in Sydenham over to Merivale Lane, right up to the Styx River and right up to Burwood. There were two blacksmiths - Richards at the top of Stanmore Road, and Hughes. There was a very early wool wash near Averill Street on Dudley Creek, and Murgatroyd's wool wash across the river. Those who worked there used to go across the river by punt. Then we had the late Mr. George Broome's Rope Works. He first of all had his Rope Works on Dudley Creek and later our paddock. I have mentioned Mr. Emmett, the milkman. There was also a Mr. Brown who was the father of the tailor over here. He had his business for many years there. Langford was the undertaker in London Street. There was Phillips'

Store at the corner of London Street and North Avon Road<sup>40</sup>. The main one in Stanmore Road was the shop opposite Bruce Street — Buntings — who later started Buntings Brush Factory. They were followed by McCulloch. Mrs Malton had a drapery business. The butchers were succeeded by Marsh. There was an interesting old character named Robinson at the corner of Swanns Road and River Road near the bridge. His grandchild, Mrs. Olds, is there now. He kept his cows across the river and he used a punt to go across to milk them. There were several nurseries. Kerr & Barnett's Nurseries produced practically all the pines which were planted in the central Canterbury Plains and several of the old Richmond folk went out there and planted the pines. They told me that the only way they had to get their water was to walk to the railway lines and stop the engine drivers to get water. Wallace Pedler had a nursery too, and Mr. Lawrence Barcock in London Street produced the ginger beer. Tullochs and Brown were tailors, and Cooper, a one-armed man who delivered the papers. Then we had the stonemasons — the Muschamp family — some are about to-day. Riley was another stonemason. Riley lived above the Club. Then there was a most interesting property just over here — Kent's Cycle Track and Tepid Baths. I think the playground at the school is part of it. There used to be a trotting track round about where Randall Street is now. Barnes was well known with his horses. They won quite a few races down at the Lancaster Park track. This district was in the Stanmore Electorate<sup>41</sup> and in 1884 Dan Reese beat Ruddenclau. There used to be a very successful cricket club in Richmond. Tennis started in the early part of 1885. I remember my father telling me that in those days a tennis racquet cost 12/6d. Mr. Petrie's father was probably the best known builder in the district<sup>42</sup>. The local baths were built in 1892. The district worked very hard to get the baths. I think the City Council was a bit mean at that time. They gave only £50 towards the cost of the baths. Mr. Shand was the main promoter, and Sir George Wigram<sup>43</sup> helped. Mr. Swann and my father battled hard on the Council. Then later Mr. Bassett taught most Richmond boys to swim.

In the following streets we find the names of old residents still kept alive:

Swanns Road, Stapletons Road, Petrie Street, Chrystal Street, Flesher Avenue, Sorenson Place, Dudley Street, Banks Avenue and Hills Road.

It is impossible to cover everything about the district in a short period, but I have endeavoured to give you a picture of what Richmond was like in the very early days. Perhaps when you talk this over you will recall a lot more than I have mentioned. It does seem that we should all take steps to preserve something of the history of the district."

...oOo...

The following letter was read from Mr Philip Aldersley who was prevented from attending through ill health;-

One of my early recollections of Richmond was about 1891. My father would drive in from Rangiora in the summertime down the Marshland Road. He would call and see his old friend, Pat Howard, schoolmaster at Richmond. This one day they were walking round the grounds alongside the brick school. The tired boy of the school was leaning against the brick wall. Pat put his hand on the wall and said "Look out, Buzz, I am going to push it over." You never saw a boy away so quickly.

Later in 1893, I was going to Richmond school 5th standard. My mate was Bill Barnes whose father had the bakehouse. We were going to get the horses for the carts at the top end of Stanmore Road. At the back of the schoolhouse there was a lovely pear tree. We fancied some pears to eat on the way. I stood against the 6ft fence and Bill scrambled on to my shoulders. Pat Howard was having an early morning walk in the garden. "Good morning, Barnes, and where are you going?" "Please Sir, I am going back." So we did not have any pears.

In reply to Mr Harold Keane who conducted a short questionnaire, Mr. George Petrie stated. "I am 72 and a half years of age. I actually started at the school in 1889 when I was five years of age. The grounds of the school at that time were composed of grit and stones. There was no grass such as you have in these lovely grounds to-day. They left many a scar. In fact I have one above my knee to-day that is nearly an inch square.

We did not have Parent Teachers' Meetings, but my father was for a time a member of the School Committee. I remember one day when I was in the second standard, being very surprised indeed to see my father pass through the school with a visiting committee.

In those days bar-the-door, bedlam, cricket and rugby were played. Marbles was also played, but they never appealed to me. I was not a clever scholar, as you will hear later. I lived for sport. Bedlam was a wonderful game, and so was cricket. I remember when I was in St. 5 I was playing in the cricket team. We were having a game in the grounds in Stanmore Road and in line with Mr. Brown's tailoring shop at the corner of Stanmore Road and Warwick Street. The bowling on this day was easy and the ball flew across Stanmore Road to crash through the plate glass window of the shop. I left for home immediately.

The headmaster was very strict. His name was Patrick Howard. His name must have been Patrick because we called him Pat. I am rather hazy about the names of the teachers in the primary classes, but I can remember those in standards 3, 4, 5 and 6. Std. 3 was a Mr. Guinney; Std. 4 Mr. Schneider, Std 5 Miss Spence and Std. 6 Alex Gray.

When I arrived in Std. 4 in Mr. Schneider's class, I was there only five minutes when I received six cuts. Evidently I was in too happy a mood and Mr Schneider was not and he thought he would even things up a bit. You can understand that I have very distinct recollections of that. A few weeks later the class was asked this question. "What is the meaning of the letters fid-def on the British coinage?" The class did not know and I did not know, but I said "Please Sir, it means terms strictly cash." He said "Come out here." Another six cuts. I never forgot the meaning of fid-def "Defender, of the Faith." When I was in Mr Alex Gray's class the class was having geography and he asked us the name of the rock at the entrance to the Red Sea. The class did not know and I did not know, but I said "Please Sir, Rock of Ages." Another six cuts. Some time later the class was in a good mood. I was not the culprit but I had the laugh too. When we had finished lessons, Mr. Gray said to me "Petrie, when you laugh I can only see your ears."

When we were in the 4th, 5th and 6th standards, a military man used to arrive and we would see him prancing round the playground in his red tunic and with a fierce moustache. He also carried a little cane and he wore a small pork pie hat. We would see him waiting for us boys to come out and we were scared. I was fairly tall for my age evidently and he called me out to act as supernumerary or marker. I called out "Up in the middle." Before I knew what had happened I had received a vicious cut on my stern with the cane. He said "Up in the centre, not the middle."

In reply to Mr. Keane, Mr. H. Stubberfield said that he was connected with the school 70 years ago in 1886. "I attended the school right through the standards. I was one of a family of six boys and we all went through Richmond School right up to the sixth standard. I think that is a pretty good record. I never was much of a sport. I went in for the milder sports. I was an expert at marbles and tops. In fact, I was so expert at marbles that no-one would take me on and I felt a bit lonely. I also used to get on to the horizontal bar and I also became quite expert at that. Once I went round 100 times. I remember Mr Petrie. He was called "Dough Petrie."

I was a medium sort of a scholar — nothing very good or bad, but there was one time that I was rather bad. When I was in Std. 4 I wrote four lines on my slate and I showed them to the boy next to me. He showed them to the teacher — I could not get that slate back from the boy. The teacher said "Who wrote this?" "Come out here." I had written something rude — almost to vulgarity. I was sent to Mr. Guinney. He was a big, heavy man with a red beard. He got out the cane and I got six cuts. That was the first and last time I ever had the cane. When I got back to the class there was the boy next to me with a broad grin on his face. I did not mind that. I thought I had got what I deserved."

In reply to Mr Keane, Mr. Adcock said he was in the same class as Mr. Petrie. He said "I could tell a few stories about Mr. Petrie, but that would not be fair. When George and I started at school it was very much the fashion even for boys to have long hair, and George had a beautiful crop of flaxen hair. His mother took great pride in having it in curls. George's curls lasted until he was old enough to say to his mother "Here Mum, cut these off."

I fancy I must have been somewhat similar to Mr. Stubberfield. I was more of a studious type than a sport. I can remember indulging in the lighter form of games. I can also remember being in the 5th Std. with Miss Spence. We did not get on too well. We used to call her Grannie Spence and she did not like it. One morning she got over the edge and I went on strike. I went home, and said to Dad

"I am not going back to that school under Miss Spence." Dad went back with me and had a talk to Miss Spence and she and I were good cobbbers after that.

I can remember the baths being built. I was a pupil of the school in those days. They were built in 1892.

There are one or two points raised by Mr. Flesher in regard to the bakeries in Richmond. The one before Needham was Sunderland. He was a trotting man. He could neither read nor write but he made a fortune many times over out of his bakery.

I went on strike again at the Sunday School. In this case I asked the teacher a question regarding the lesson. She took me severely to task for questioning. I did not go back to Sunday School because they did not give me the information I wanted."

#### Mr. G. Pickles.

"During Mr. Flesher's talk I was reminded of quite a number of people that I had once known or known of and had since forgotten about. Mr. Flesher mentioned the Bowron family. I have known members of that family all my life. I can remember being bitten by the Bowrons' dog when I was quite a small boy. Mr. Flesher mentioned the Dudley family. I noticed in the paper recently that Cannon Norris' wife had died. She was a Miss Dudley and a member of that family. In 1939 I was visiting an elderly Mrs. Minchin who was living in London and who was a member of the same family mentioned by Mr. Flesher. Regarding Miss Spence, I knew Miss Spence well, but in the latter years of her life when she had retired from teaching. I believe she held a record in that she began and ended her teaching career in the Richmond School. Teaching was a serious, if not a grim business in those days of large classes and rigid requirements. Perhaps Miss Spence had mellowed when I knew her, but she was looked upon as a very fine woman and her former pupils regarded her as such. I was speaking some years ago to a young Minister who had gone through her class. At the time it was a large one and a section of it was given to a young pupil teacher. This young fellow thought "This is my chance! I can play up."

However, the pupil teacher was one too good for him. She let him have his head for a while, but when he had gone rather too far she made him report to Miss Spence. He said "Please Miss, I have been sent inside by the pupil teacher." He thought he had better not admit what his offence was and so when Miss Spence at length enquired the reason, she continued to receive no answer from him. She said to him "I know absolute fanootling!" He got a father of a good whacking for "absolute fanootling."

I have here the first Administration Register. No. 1 child was entered in the Register on 23rd February 1881. It is possible that the school is older than this would indicate and that before that time no similar Administration Registers were kept. This is, however, labelled No. 1. The first names are Richard Aughton, Helen Aughton, and Ethel Aughton. Their father is shown as Mr Frank Aughton of Christchurch, and they evidently came from Rangiora. I should like to know more about this family. The next entry was Annie Trimbath. (I am not sure if I have this name correct) Father, William Trimbath of Bingsland.

I have here, too, a bundle of ancient keys rather reminiscent of the Yeomen of the Guard. There are several brass labels attached. They read — Richmond School Baths, Gloucester Street Tank, Richmond School Gate, Addington Workshops Gate and Christchurch Fire Board. Mr. Flesher tells me that there was a large tank in Stanmore Road opposite Warwick Street. It was sunk in the ground with a wooden top. It was always kept locked with a very heavy padlock. One key probably belonged to this. How the others came to rest in my office I cannot tell.

I also found a box of lantern slides. I believe Mr Sherlock, a local photographer, made his photographs into lantern slides. A number of them are of overseas places, but there are a few of the school amongst them. Some are of the early staff of the School. I have borrowed a projector from Teachers' College and will now show them to you."

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This map, an excerpt from a 1926 map of Christchurch, covers the same area as the map on p4. This map shows the layout of streets at the time, as well as the five original rural sections and subsequent subdivisions, with areas shown in acres, roods and perches.

# Notes

1. Morice Bing (1830–78). Born in Hungary, he arrived in Canterbury 1852 after several years in Sydney. He leased part of R.S.325 and purchased part of R.S.41, which he later subdivided. The area along Stanmore Road north of the river became known as Bingsland. The name fell into disuse in the 1880s.
2. Also spelt Ellangowan. ‘Gowan’ is Gaelic for ‘daisy’. Johannes Andersen describes growing up near this area — see: *Andersen, J. C. “Old Christchurch”, 1949 (Reprint Capper Press, 1975), p455.*
3. David Thomas Smith (1872–1962) and his wife Florence Caroline Smith (1865–1963) opened the Richmond Mission in North Avon Rd in 1911. They lived nearby in a large house on the south side of what is now Siddal Place. The house was demolished after the 2010–11 earthquakes. The area was still elevated for a time but has been cleared and flattened recently (2021).  
*See: Petersen, Mary, “To the Glory of the Lord Who Called Them to Serve”, North Avon Baptist Church, 1995.*
4. This is a tantalising glimpse of tangata whenua association with this part of the Ōtākaro River, before the beginnings of the Canterbury settlement c1850. By 1888 this area had become known, in rowing circles at least, as ‘Bassett’s Corner’ (*Press, 8 September 1888, Page 4*). In the late 1920s, William Bassett donated half an acre of land on the north bank here to the CCC, to form part of a riverside boulevard (*Press, 17 April 1928, page 8, and Star, 25 August 1928, page 1*). Since the 2010–11 earthquakes, this area has become Riverbend Refuge, a co-operative development between Avon-Ōtākaro Network, Greening-the-Rubble and other local groups.
5. Church Property Trust Block: Rural Section 325 — see map p4.
6. This is not correct. George Walsh repeats the error in his book. There were two George Bowrons: one (1806–91) who owned R.S.33, arrived in Canterbury with his family in 1851. The other George Bowron (1859-1935) arrived in Canterbury in 1879 with his brother William. These brothers started the tannery firm in Woolston that still operates under the Bowron name. Information about the Richmond Bowrons is available at: <https://genealogy.ianskipworth.com/pdf/bowronbook.pdf>
7. Charles Edward Fooks (1829–1907) arrived in Canterbury with his wife Catherine, in 1851. Later that year he purchased R.S.41 (100 acres) at the Canterbury Association price of £3 per acre. He and Dr Gundry (1807–1886) became friends on the journey out; both arrived on the *Steadfast*. They bought adjacent town sections in Cashel St, and in 1852 Dr Gundry purchased R.S.197 bordering Fooks’s rural property.

8. R.S.325, the Church Property Trust block, formed part of the settlement of the Canterbury Association's affairs negotiated by Henry Sewell in the early 1850s. The Church Property Trustees began subdividing this area in 1908; before this time the land was mostly leased as small farms. After 1908, subdivisions continued with several releases until 1921. *See: Jacobs, H. "The Canterbury Church Property" Church Property trustees, 1930, pp33–4.*
9. Dr Charles Dudley (1810–1881) arrived in Canterbury in 1851, along with his brother John and their respective families. The brothers purchased adjoining rural sections (182 & 183). John settled on his section which he called Broom Farm, but Charles remained mostly in Lyttelton where he maintained a medical practice. He sold all of R.S.182 (50 acres) to E. C. Minchin in 1853 and later moved to Kaiapoi where he became a significant figure in that community.
10. Edward Corker Minchin (1821–99). He arrived in Canterbury in 1853 from Nelson. He bought R.S.182 from Dr Charles Dudley soon after he arrived. He owned sheep stations as well as various properties around Christchurch. In 1881 he sold 7 acres to the Selwyn County Council to serve as a recreation ground (now Richmond Park). He built the house called Woodchester, which he sold along with the remaining land to H. D. Gardiner in 1889. He then returned to Ireland where he died.
11. Woodchester. This is not correct – see note 10. The large house and surrounding land (42½ acres) were described when advertised for sale in November 1889. *See: Lyttelton Times, 16 November 1889, p8.*
12. After H. D. Gardiner died in 1909 the remaining land was subdivided into 41 sections that were sold by auction later that year. Bannerman purchased four sections at that time. The other names do not appear in the list of purchases at that time; they may have purchased sections later. *See: Lyttelton Times, 24 May 1909, Page 4.*
13. Should be J. P. Morrison (Joan Patricia). Her book. *"Evolution of a City", Christchurch City Council, 1948*, is still a major source of information about Christchurch's development.
14. A number of early land purchasers bought properties along the Avon anticipating rising land values due to increasing river traffic. While there was some freight traffic on the Avon, the Heathcote River soon became the main route for goods traffic to and from the town, until the rail tunnel was constructed (opened 1869). *See: Dew, Leslie, "On the move: Christchurch transport through the years, v6: Tidal Travellers – The Small Ships of Canterbury". Tramway Historical Society, 1991.*
15. This site, on the south bank of the river, was known as 'The Bricks'. A cairn to mark the site was erected in 1926.

16. Land was reserved in the original Canterbury Association survey and plans for a series of canals to link the Styx and Avon rivers (later Marshland Road), the estuary and the city (later Linwood Ave) and the Heathcote and Halswell rivers. None of these canals was ever built.

17. Cambridge Terrace – this part of the riverside road is now part of Fitzgerald Avenue.

18. Mr Flesher is unfair in his assessment of C. E. Fooks; he was no more ‘just a speculator’ than anyone else involved in early Canterbury. Over the first decade of the Canterbury settlement, Fooks developed R.S.41 as Melcombe Farm. He was forced to sell in 1861 through circumstances beyond his control. Over the next decade and a half, he operated a successful architectural & surveying business in Christchurch. About 1876 he moved with his family to Ashburton where he was appointed borough engineer and quickly became a significant figure in the development of that town and district, where he died in 1907.

*See: Ashburton Guardian, 18 November 1907, p2.*

His father, Charles Berjew Fooks, also came to Canterbury, arriving in 1852. Not surprisingly, affairs of father and son were closely intertwined, not always for the best. Mr Flesher confuses the two men in several places.

For more information about the Fooks family, see:

*Rice, Geoffrey & Ryman, Frances, “Cricketing Colonists—The Brittan Brothers in Early Canterbury”, Canterbury University press, 2015, esp. ch.14, and:*

*Fooks, Grahame R., The Fooks Family 1780-1980, Margate, Queensland : Grahame R. Fooks, 1980?., available at CCLibraries (Tūranga, ANZC Pamphlets, 929.2FOO).*

19. Church of the Holy Trinity, Avonside. The first church was a simple cob building, probably designed by C. E. Fooks. The church was completed in time to be consecrated by the newly arrived Bishop Harper in February 1857. The building was added to several times and was later replaced altogether by a stone church designed by B. W. Mountfort, which was consecrated in February 1907. The stone church was badly damaged in the 2010–11 earthquakes and was demolished. A new church is being constructed on the site now (May 2021).

*See: Williams, W.T., “A Short History of the Parish of Avonside”, 1955, available at: [www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group](http://www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group)*

20. George Duncan Lockhart (1821–1890). Born in England, he arrived in Canterbury from Melbourne in 1851. He owned several sheep runs at different times, and various properties around Christchurch. He bought R.S.41 (Melcombe Farm) in 1862 from Captain McLean who had purchased it in 1861 after C. E. Fooks was forced to sell. Captain McLean was one of the signatories to a petition asking the Provincial Council to build a bridge over the Avon. He offered to dedicate land for a road north of the river if the Council agreed to build the bridge. In 1864, Lockhart honoured this pledge and dedicated land for the formation of Stanmore Rd north of the river.

21. The first Stanmore Road Bridge was built by the Provincial Council in 1862, in response to a petition from local residents. See: **Avonside Bridge Petition, 1861**, Richmond History Group. Available at: [www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group/stanmore-bridge-petition](http://www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group/stanmore-bridge-petition)
22. Stanmore Boys' Home was established in the 1920s by the Department of Education as a residential facility for boys. The home was based in the large house and grounds purchased from Joseph Hadfield's widow, Elizabeth, (née Sheppard). While some local people referred to it as "the naughty boys' home", it appears that many of the residents would be defined nowadays as having learning difficulties. The home was never a large institution. In the 1970s the home was transferred to the Department of Social Welfare and a specialist school was established on-site. The home was closed in 1988. Later the house was demolished and the New World supermarket constructed a new building on the site.  
See: **Pegasus Post**, 11 June, 1980.
23. Joseph Hadfield (1830–1883) arrived in Canterbury aboard the *Mersey* in 1862. He built a large two-storey house on the Stanmore Rd property, surrounded by an extensive garden. One of the garden trees, an elm (*Ulmus glabra*), still stands in front of the New World Supermarket at 300 Stanmore Rd. For more about the family, see: **Hadfield Family Reunion-2016-document.pdf**, available at: [www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group/previous/3](http://www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group/previous/3).
24. Not quite correct — the Boys' Home was originally based in the Hadfield house. Later this was extended and other buildings added for the boys' home.
25. R.S. 197. See map, p4.
26. This excerpt is the most detailed description of the cottage available. Several documents about Avebury House refer to a cottage existing on the site before 1885, but the details are sketchy — see **Heritage New Zealand/Touhere Taonga Report—Avebury House-2019**. Available at: [www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group/heritage-new-zealand-report-avebury-house-2019](http://www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group/heritage-new-zealand-report-avebury-house-2019)
27. Arthur William Emmett (c1846–1948) He and his wife, Frances Sarah later bought a 100-acre dairy farm, north of Shirley Road, around Quinns Road. In the late 1940s he sold the farm; the area west of Quinns Road was purchased by the government for state housing. The family is remembered in the naming of Emmett Street.
28. John Evans Pepperell (1817–1877) arrived in Canterbury with his wife and family in 1861. In 1866 he opened a fellmongery at Avonside in R.S.87 on the south bank of the river. The business did not prosper and he was bankrupt in March 1868. The operation was later taken up by John Puschel (1852–1928) who was later joined by Joseph Murgatroyd (1827–1901).

The premises were used as a wool scour and fellmongery for many years; the buildings remained on the site until the area was cleared after the Canterbury earthquakes, 2010–11.

29. Dr Gundry was one of two men elected at the first parish meeting in December 1855, to represent the Parish of Avonside as Church Property Trustees; the other was W. G. Brittan. He also served as a member of the first Vestry. Dr Gundry returned to England in 1858. See: *Williams, W.T., "A Short History of the Parish of Avonside", 1955.*
  
30. The school began in the Avonside church school room. A purpose-built school was opened in 1875 on a site in Stanmore Road, now Richmond Green. Several documents about the Richmond School are available on the Richmond History Group website: [www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group](http://www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group).
  
31. Presumably this refers to Mr H. Hill, who, with his wife, arrived in Canterbury from London, aboard the *Merope*, in November 1873. He had been appointed the first schoolmaster of Bingsland school, which opened in 1874. Temporary premises at the Avonside Holy Trinity church were soon inadequate, but a new school was built in Stanmore Road and was ready to open at the start of 1875. Mr Hill and his wife taught at Bingsland until 1876 when he transferred to the newly opened Christchurch East school. He was later appointed school inspector in Hawkes Bay.  
See: *Richmond School Jubilee-1925\_Booklet.pdf*, available at [www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group](http://www.aveburyhouse.co.nz/richmond-history-group)
  
32. The early Christchurch tramways were all initially developed and run by private companies. One of these was the City and Suburban Tramway Company (formed 1892), which constructed a tramline to North Beach and New Brighton through Richmond in 1893–4. The Christchurch City Council did not become involved with running tram services until 1902 when a Tramways Board was formed to take over the tram services from the private companies.  
See: *Alexander, Mark, On the move: Christchurch transport through the years, v3: Rails in the Road, 1985 & v4: The Wire Web. Tramway Historical Society, 1986.*
  
33. Barns's corner. For some reason this is commonly mis-spelled with the 'e'. Named after David Barns (1855?–1912) who had a bakery on the corner of Vogel St and Stanmore Rd, c1880–1899. He was active in the local community as well as being a keen sportsman. He was one of the first three city councillors elected to represent the new Richmond ward on the CCC (see #38). The intersection of Vogel & Stanmore became widely known as Barns's corner into 20<sup>th</sup> century.  
See: *Star (Christchurch), 13 December 1911, Page 1.*

34. Richmond Working Men's Club officially opened with a provisional charter in February 1889.  
*See: "Richmond Working Men's Club: A record of the Club's 100 years 1888–1988."* 1987, RWMC Centennial Book Committee.
35. George Swann (?–1923) was born in York and arrived in Canterbury on the *Merope* in 1874. He was a lawyer; he was admitted to practise as a barrister & solicitor in the Supreme Court in 1882. He was elected to the Avon Road Board in 1886 and was a long-term chairman of the Richmond Domain Board. In 1890 he was elected as one of three councillors for the newly created Richmond Ward of Christchurch city.
36. *See: The Globe, 21 February 1879, p2.* At that time some Bingsland people were dissatisfied with their treatment under the Avon Road Board. Such feeling persisted in Bingsland/Richmond as well as several other increasingly suburban areas outside the city boundary whose needs were not well met by the mainly rural roads boards. The Municipal Corporations Act, 1876 introduced rules for populous areas to achieve municipal control of their own affairs by forming boroughs. The areas of St Albans and Linwood both broke away from their respective road boards (Avon & Heathcote) in 1881 & 1882, but Richmond did not meet the criteria for this to happen. Despite public meetings discussing the possibility of Richmond being part of the proposed St Albans borough, this never eventuated. In 1890, the most densely settled part of Richmond, the area south of North Avon Road, joined Christchurch City, forming a new ward represented by three councillors on the Christchurch City Council.
37. "1892" — should be 1890.
38. The first City Councillors elected for the Richmond Ward in 1890 were David Barns, David Cochrane and George Swann. *See: The Press, 9 September, 1890, p1.* James Flesher was first elected to the CCC in 1891 (*CCC minutes, 1891/09/21*).
39. It seems strange that Hubert Flesher should be unclear about the reason — perhaps he was making a joke. The reason nobody got a liquor licence in Richmond is best summed up in two words: William Flesher. Being a strict Wesleyan, Hubert's grandfather was a strong temperance advocate and as a member of the Licencing Committee was very active (and successful) in opposing any applications to sell alcohol in Richmond.
40. This refers to the corner of London & Whitmore streets today. Nowadays there is no intersection of London Street and North Avon Road. Before 1926 however, North Avon Road began at the meeting of the North & East Town Belts (renamed Bealey & Fitzgerald Avenues in 1903) and then ran a zigzag course north and east, following the boundaries between the early rural sections marked out by the Canterbury Association survey.

41. The Stanmore electorate only existed for two general elections: 1881 & 1884. William Flesher stood for the seat in 1881 and came third in a close contest. After the 1884 election, electoral redistribution saw Richmond become part of a Linwood electorate, but after 1890 Richmond was usually part of the Avon electorate. *See: McRobie, Alan, "New Zealand Electoral Atlas", GP Books, 1989.*
42. Presumably Sir Henry Wigram (1857–1934). He was a successful Christchurch businessman and became active in civic affairs — he was Mayor 1902–3 and oversaw the long-discussed amalgamation of the city with the surrounding boroughs: Linwood, St Albans and Sydenham in 1903. He is probably best remembered for his role in developing the aerodrome at Sockburn, which was later named after him. He also wrote "**The Story of Christchurch**", Lyttelton Times Co. Ltd, 1916.
43. George Petrie (1853—1912) was a well-known builder in Richmond. He and his wife, Isabella, were long-time residents. He built many of the original houses on the south side of North Avon Road, east of Stanmore Road. In 1909, when the Church Property Trustees subdivided part of R.S. 325, a new road was constructed running north from North Avon Road named Leith Street. However, there was also a Leith St in Sydenham, so to avoid confusion, in 1918 the street was renamed Petrie St in his memory. Similarly, the park formed between Petrie St and Stapletons Rd some years later was named after the family.

## Sources

*In preparing these notes, apart from the material cited above, I have made frequent use of the following sources:*

- *Canterbury Deeds Indexes, Archives New Zealand/Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Christchurch Regional Office.*
- **Christchurch Chronology**, CCC, 1983.
- *Christchurch Street Names — 15 PDF files available online from Christchurch City Libraries.* <https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/christchurch-place-names/>
- *The MacDonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies, Canterbury Museum.*
- *PapersPast.*