

Richmond — an Oral History: Leo Shaw

In the Richmond History Group collection at Avebury House is a set of oral history recordings on CDs. These were interviews conducted by Christine Thieme with long-term Richmond residents or people who grew up in Richmond. These recordings are accompanied by abstracts and release forms, which are dated 2008 or 2009. It appears none of these have been transcribed.

Alongside this collection are three C60 audio cassette tapes that appear to have been recorded a decade earlier. All three tapes are recordings of Leo Shaw. Lionel Shaw (known since childhood as 'Leo') lived at 9 Keller St, Avonside at the time these three tapes were made. He was a long-time resident of the area and an entertaining speaker.

Leo was born in 1914 at 323 Stanmore Rd; his parents, Charles and Clarice Shaw had emigrated from England in 1912, along with Leo's maternal grandmother. Charles Shaw ran a fruiterer's business and the family had a shop at 323 Stanmore. This was in the Cadeno Building (built 1912), which housed three shops facing Stanmore Rd on the corner with Avalon St. The shop was on the ground floor and the family lived above the shop. Leo's mother was a singer and piano teacher. In 1922, the family moved to 232 Stanmore Rd, where they bought a house and later built shops on the north-east corner of Stanmore and Swanns Roads.

It appears Leo was well-known in Richmond and surrounding areas. Over the course of these three cassette tapes Leo talks at length about a wide range of subjects; local history and street names, reminiscences of his childhood, schooling at Richmond school and Christchurch West High school, and then his working life. Two of the talks were recorded at Shirley Probus Club meetings where Leo had been invited as a speaker. The talk on tape 3 in the series was recorded before the other two. The subject of this first talk was street names in and around Richmond.



Leo Shaw, right, in 1929, aged 15, with his parents Charles and Clarice.
Photo from Richmond History group collection, Avebury house.

Tape 1

The first part of the cassette labelled Tape #1 was recorded at Shirley Probus Club on 17 September, 1997. The sound quality is poor and there are numerous distracting noises; coughs, laughter (quite a bit of laughter — Leo was obviously an entertaining speaker) and other distractions that made transcription difficult in places.

The second part is titled 'Bits & Pieces' on the cassette label and was recorded in several sessions, in a more intimate setting and consists of Leo reminiscing in private about his life. The sound quality is much better but the subject matter is more far-reaching and often unconnected with Richmond or the surrounding area.

This document is a transcription of tape 1.

About the Transcription

This is not a verbatim transcription. I have edited material lightly, removing repetitions, hesitations and other tell-tale signs of recorded speech. I have also omitted some parts of the tapes altogether:

- the introduction to Leo's 1997 talk at the Shirley Probus Club,
- other short passages of the tape that do not concern local history.

In some places, despite numerous attempts, I have been unable to decipher Leo's speech, usually because of audience noise. Where this has occurred, I have indicated the problem by italicised remarks in parentheses. All other editorial remarks are in italics to differentiate them from the transcribed recording.

In the early part of tape 1, and at the end of tape 2, Leo corrects some factual errors in the recordings; I have included these corrections along with other background material in footnotes. Some of Leo's later statements about place and street names are debatable. Where I have been aware of a different explanation, I have included this in a footnote, with its source.

Dates & Tape Sequence

The three tapes have been labelled without reference to the dates the recordings were made. It has taken some time to work out the sequence, but it appears that tape 3 was recorded first, in 1993 or '94, at a Shirley Probus Club meeting.

Then follows tape 1, which is the only one for which there is a definite date (for part of the tape at least). The first part of this tape was recorded at another Shirley Probus Club meeting on 17 September, 1997. The rest was recorded later and is recorded in private, not at a public meeting.

Tape 2 consists of further private recordings and appears to have been recorded last.

David Hollander
2018

Talk to Shirley Probus, 17 September, 1997 by Leo (Lionel) Shaw

AHCT Tape 1 (in 2007 Richmond History Group catalogue): 1 of 3 tapes.

Tape counter numbers are recorded in the margins as a rough guide for anyone who wishes to explore the tape for themselves.

#045 We used to live at 323 Stanmore Rd¹. When I was 7 in 1921 we moved to 232 Stanmore Rd. There was quite a bit of balls-up with the mail at that time, going from 323 to 232; the poor old postman...

You will know the area I am talking about, because there is that terrible building on the property now, called the 'Corrections Centre'. It was built without any resource consent and is really an illegal structure. However, I am not going to go into that so much, as the fact that that area has been a corrections centre for many years. In the 1890s when Miss Godfreys had a finishing school for young ladies, well they must have had a lot of corrections to make, if the young ladies of those days were anything like the young ladies today. Added to their difficulties, it was the big (*indecipherable*) period, before pregnancy pills (*laughter*). I understand that they had great scope for correction.

When we shifted there, there was my grandmother (my mother's mother), Dad, myself and the horse. I came in for a great deal of correction as a seven-year-old. I remember on one occasion I used some improper words and my grandmother was very strict and was horrified. Mum pretended she was horrified; and anyway, I got a bit of stick and a bit of a dressing down and she said "Wait till your father comes home". They told Dad, but Dad was a bit of an easy-going sort of a chap and I think that to give me a hiding would have hurt him more than me. I guess I got a smack around the buttocks and perhaps a clip across the ear and told "Don't do it again".

#096 I'm going to suggest that that area be the hub for my talk this morning. And there are a lot of stories that go out from the hub, that will be like spokes of a wheel — and I'm the spokesman (*laughter*).

Anyway, carrying on from that, one of the early delights I had as a young boy, was hearing the clip-clop-clip of the draught horses hauling the big wagons laden with wool packs en-route to the wool wash. The wool wash was on the Robson property. The Robson farm was that area in the (*cough*) of the Avon River from the Swanns Rd bridge to the Dallington bridge, and right in the middle of it was the Robson farm, memorialised today by Robson Avenue, which cuts across the street(?) and there are two entrances to Avonside Drive. Bisecting Robson Avenue, going inland from the river, is Galbraith Avenue. Now, in Galbraith Avenue is the wool wash, just a hundred yards up from the river. If you want to locate the area, for the those not very conversant with it, if you walked along Medway St, across the footbridge you'd stand smack bang in the middle of the Robson farm. What I think is the old Robson homestead is an old house on the rise

But that wasn't enough as far as my grandmother was concerned and she and mother put their heads together and I heard them say "I wonder where he heard those awful words?" Well, they asked me and without thinking I said "I often hear my father and his friends talking like that". (*laughter*). Of course, he got the correction then.

¹ This was one of 3 addresses in the Cadeno building, built 1912 on the corner of Stanmore Road & Avalon St (#321–325 Stanmore Rd). #323 served many different uses over many years. The building was severely damaged in the 2010–11 earthquakes and was demolished soon after.

Now this wool wash building is incredible really; it's still there after over a hundred years and it consists of five gable-end structures joined together, with (*indecipherable*) in between. I paced the front out and it was 65 yards across the front and 50 yards back from the road. The galvanised iron is in remarkable order; there's only a wee bit of rust around the doorways and around some of the windows. It's not an area that's been polluted by chimney smoke or anything like that and it has stood the test of time remarkably well.

It's used today I believe as bulk storage for some of the businesses in town. There was a car groomer there, had a little business and I believe the amateur radio society had an aerial there once for the club members.

Immediately opposite on the other side of the road on Galbraith St is a park, which a lot of you will be reminded of, because it's called the Dan Sullivan Memorial Park. Some of you must remember old Dan Sullivan; a fiery headed Irishman who became Mayor of the city during the years of the depression². He would go along to the community sings(?) that was between 12 and 2 o'clock in the Civic Theatre next door and lead the singing and that sort of thing. He was quite a character.

He was also Minister of Education³ in the Labour government of Savage and Nash and Fraser. The reason he is commemorated in that area was that, as the depression descended on us, wool prices sank and wool wasn't selling and the woollen mills were doing their own wool-scouring, so the business went broke during the depression. Dan Sullivan had been instrumental in procuring all that land for state housing and today there are about 100–150 state houses in that area.

If we go further along Avonside Drive, near the Dallington Bridge, there is a big section there, about half an acre in size with very long manicured and mowed lawn and gardens around the edge and there are five self-contained flats there on the southern boundary and the owner of that property lives in one of those flats. He happens to be a Mr Jim Breeze⁴.

Now those of you with connections with the West Coast will remember Jim Breeze as the announcer at 3ZR for many years. You probably heard Jim over the national news whenever there was a calamity over there, such as a shipwreck on the bar, or a flood, or an earthquake — something like that. He would come on the national news and describe the situation. Anyway, I was talking to Jim Breeze there one day and that property was left to Jim by an uncle. Now Mrs Breeze, I was talking to her one day as she was planting some clematis, and she told me that the most fertile ground on the whole section was up against the back fence on the western boundary. No wonder it was fertile, because that's where the Robson stables were; that's where all the draught horses went plop-plops; no wonder it's very good soil.

² *Dan Sullivan (1882–1947) was Labour MP for Avon from 1919 until his death in 1947. He was Minister of Industries & Commerce 1935–47 and held several other ministerial appointments in the first Labour government. He was also elected to the CCC 1915–23 & 1925–31 and was Mayor of Christchurch 1931–36.*

James Watson. 'Sullivan, Daniel Giles', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published 1998. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4s55/sullivan-daniel-giles> (accessed 16 July 2018)

³ *This is not correct; see #2 above. Leo makes a correction later in the tape.*

⁴ *Spelling is uncertain; I have been unable to find any reference to this radio personality.*

#185 We'll go back to the hub again and take another branch. I told you old Jack, the horse, came with us. Old Jack started out in life as a racehorse called 'Welcome Home'. I think he only won one race at Brighton or somewhere; he was more welcome at home than he was on the racetrack. Old Jack was a lovely old horse; he used to have a little bit of a yard in Stanmore Rd and an old shed for a stable. When Dad was booted out of the Working Men's Club at 10 o'clock of a night and walking home, Old Jack would let out a good loud neigh when he got to about Vogel St. That let mother and grandmother know Dad was on the way.

My early recollection of old Jack was as a carthorse; Dad would take him to the markets. Even when we were at 323 he started there and carried on when we moved to 232. Dad would take me with him sometimes to the markets and a very faint memory I have of it — I know it was there in 1922⁵ but I don't know when it disappeared. The market then was by the Bridge of Remembrance in Cashel St; it was later Fail's Fish Cafe. A lot of you will remember the wrought iron tables with a swing seat attached to each leg. Well, that was the fruit market in those days and Dad would take Old Jack and the cart if it was a hot day or he didn't have too big a load on and we would come back along Oxford Terrace to the bridge over the Avon at the Armagh St site at Victoria Square, with the Law Courts over the other side of the river and the Provincial Council Chambers. And just downstream from the bridge was a ramp down into the Avon River. I think it was a shingle ramp then — it is still there today but it is cobbles nowadays with large stones. In those days it would be just a shingle ramp down to the river and Dad would drive Old Jack and the cart down into the river, do a few wheelies and out he would stagger and shake the surplus water off and then trot home.

There was another of those horse washes further upstream by the Carlton Mill Bridge, just upstream of the existing bridge. I used to like that one best, because although it was a lot narrower it was also about a foot deeper and the water used to splash up onto the deck of the cart and I liked that.

Anyway, carrying on with old Jack, when we were at the hub of the story Dad had acquired by (*indecipherable*) ...an old disused orchard in Avonside Drive. We would cross over the Swanns Rd bridge and turn right. Upstream was a house on a rise; quite a big house, and in behind that house was a redundant orchard.

Now it was one of my pleasures to come home from school and be given the task of taking Old Jack to his grazing ground. In the wintertime he used to have a cover, but most of the time it was very sheltered and he didn't require any cover. I used to lead him with just a halter until one day, one of my mates said "Why don't you ride him?". It wasn't a bad idea, but then he was tall and I was small. However, he gave me a leg up and I started riding Old Jack to his haven in the apple orchard. He enjoyed the apple orchard; he probably sweated himself carting apples back from the market during the day and he had a lovely munch on the ripe apples at night-time.

That went on all-right until Dad discovered, somebody told him that I was riding the horse without a bridle and it was dangerous — mind you we didn't have any cars in those days. Anyway, he bought me a bridle; that whetted my appetite and I wanted to go riding, so I nagged until he turned up with an old second-hand (*indecipherable*) saddle. It was a tacky old saddle (*indecipherable*).

I started then riding old Jack...and it came to pass that eventually I took Old Jack up (*indecipherable*) and Pages Rd and we followed the #5 tram lines to Brighton, then down on to the beach and old Jack

⁵ Leo was born in 1914, so he was about 8 years old in 1922.

got to have a paddle in the breakers near the shore and he could go up on the beach and at that point I got Old Jack to gallop. Previous to that... Anyway, I really enjoyed galloping along the beach, especially as old Jack's backbone was very boney and my bum was very tender; the horse always seemed to be coming up as I was going down. So, I suffered quite a bit with saddle soreness and that sort of thing.

There are lots of links — I'll go over briefly them. Mile Road was Woodham Rd. And I told you about the milestone near Stanmore Rd bridge. There was another milestone there at Trent St; I'm not **#270** going into that too much, it used to be St. James St. Well there was another milestone there — one mile to Archibolds ...Remember the old Archibolds signs? Right, well that's three steps (*indecipherable*) in that area. There's a lot more to my life, but I don't know if I'll ever be able to (*indecipherable*).

At this point Leo makes some concluding remarks; I have transcribed these because, although they are not related to local history directly, they are entertaining and they shed some light on the speaker's personality. There follows a vote of thanks and applause. The rest of the tape is recorded later by Leo reminiscing further about Richmond in the early 20th century and his later life beyond Richmond.

I've had a great life. I've enjoyed my life — been through two world wars without much of a (*indecipherable*). Five years in the air force and also a world-wide depression and several smaller ones.

When I eventually fall off the perch and those of you who want to come to my funeral, I thank you now (*laughter*) and hope you will accept my apologies for not being able to attend your funeral in reciprocation. (*laughter*). Also, don't cry for me Argentina, I've had a jolly good life — make my passing a happy occasion...let me hear you singing. Well that might not be possible, but I may be able to borrow a recycled celestial cell phone. Anyway, be on time, come early, you won't get on any committees, just remember, you must get a good seat early because I will be there dead on time (*laughter and applause*).

Later:

I meant to mention that by the Dallington Bridge was the best place for eels in the whole Avon River — maybe something to do with the effluent from the wool wash. I finished the last part of the talk when I rode old Jack along Brighton beach. Well, we came home following the old #19 North beach tram route, past the race-course, down New Brighton Rd and maybe back through Gayhurst Rd back to where the stables were or back to home.

Now another of the delightful little trips I used to do when I was riding Old Jack, was to cross over the Dallington bridge, turn immediately right to follow a cart track which went through the sandhills — there was no road there then, it was the extension of Locksley Avenue. However, the track wound its way through the lupins and the sandhills and came to a clearing, a clearing which I imagine would be about the opposite side of the river to where the present rowing sheds are at Kerrs Reach. There in that little clearing was an old mud hut. I have no idea who lived there, the name of anybody or anything, but it appeared that they had made some attempt at clearing the land, perhaps with an eye to farming. Or maybe it was getting ready for the development of houses and streets and roads around that area. Now that old mud hut — no idea who lived there or when it disappeared even, but I do remember that the walls were papered with the glossy photographs and pictures from the Auckland Weekly News or the Lyttelton times or the Press Weekly, you know those weeklies that used to come out and had local photographs in them all glossy type. The only point I can remember is that the dates on those pictures were about 1880, something like that.

I would continue on that track and it came out at a point where McBratneys Rd now joins Locksley Ave (of course Locksley Avenue comes right round to Dallington bridge). I would carry on Locksley Avenue until about opposite the end of Breezes Rd, you know where the 'Mayor of Dallington' lives; old Cec Cardwell — about opposite Cec Cardwells' place, on the river bank opposite Locksley Avenue, there was a wreck of an old vessel. It was obviously a coastal vessel; it had a very shallow draft, with an almost flat bottom, the bow was sticking 4 or 5 feet out of the water, the ribs, I don't know what you would call them in marine talk, but the side beams as it were. They were all there, sticking out of the water 3 or 4 feet, until you got down to the stern end where they disappeared in the mud. The stern has sunk right into the mud and the bow was sticking out. You could only see the remnants of those ribs and so forth at the low tide. The planking and decking had disappeared but there were some of the bottom planks were there, preserved under the water. I have no idea the name of the vessel or who owned it, I don't know how it came to be there, I don't know how it came to be left there.

But I have a little theory, right or wrong...there was in Christchurch at that time, a man with entrepreneurial ideas, who started first with a dray and a draught horse. He transported goods from the landing or wharf at Lyttelton over the bridle path into the growing town of Christchurch. Those goods would be furniture for the settlers — some bought a lot of their furniture. Even when my parents came out in 1912–13, they brought some of their own furniture. In fact, we still have a mirror that belonged to a duchess and that is still in the family that came from England with the family's possessions.

Also, there would probably be building materials: corrugated iron, cement, nails — when the old house was built in 1871 (*indecipherable*) — the nails were all forged nails, blacksmith's forged nails, but I guess nails would be amongst the imports later on. There was probably produce like flour, wheat and oats, probably a pen of chickens or something, and he carried on and his business flourished as more vessels started coming into Lyttelton harbour, until he had about three drays, or something. Then he cottoned onto the idea that he could float a flat-bottomed or shallow draft vessel, sail it around from Lyttelton, out of the heads and over the Sumner bar and up the estuary.

Up the estuary usually in the Heathcote River — there was quite a little deep channel there, round about what is now known as Ferrymead and I can remember the planks that were driven into the side of the river to make a sort of a landing. And I also recall the Ferrymead Bridge was one of those raiseable structures that could be lifted up to let the masts of vessels through. The vessels went up as far as Richardson Terrace — that spot's marked by a memorial plaque.

But then he also decided to explore the merits of floating vessels up the Avon River at high tide. He got as far as the Barbadoes St bridge. To commemorate some of his actions there is a cairn erected on the bank of the river there, called 'The Bricks'⁶. That commemorates the bricks that Heywood would have floated up the river up as far as the Barbadoes St cemetery and the Star & Garter (*Hotel*).

Looking at it these days, I wonder how he turned the vessels around, until I hit upon the idea that in all probability when the tide was going out, he could float his vessels down to a basin in the Avon River opposite the old Canterbury Rowing Sheds, where the bridge crosses over Fitzgerald Ave at the end of Kilmore St. And if he got into that basin, he could manoeuvre the vessel around and point the bow downstream and so sail on. Now whether this wreck that we used to see was part of that carrying business, I don't know, but it is feasible, because about that time the tunnel would be put through and the rail would take the freight through to Woolston.

There is a lot of weight added to my theory in that where Cambridge Tce meets Fitzgerald Ave on the other side, there is a street called Heywood Tce⁷ and that commemorates the deeds of J. M. Heywood, cartage contractor and customs agent. The carrying business carried on for many years. As did also the pickle factory, which from memory was a two-storey brick building in Peterborough St very close to Montreal St and Kilmore St.

Next to Heywood Tce is another important terrace, the twin terrace if you like: Windsor terrace. Heywood Terrace and Windsor Terrace were side by side. They joined together at the other (*east*) end and formed Draper St, which landed us down again at the hub of the story where we started. Windsor Terrace had to be changed in name because the suburb of Windsor⁸ was being talked about, and that was the area between Burwood and Bottle Lake Hospital. So, Windsor Terrace had to be changed.

⁶ *"Named because a load of bricks intended for building chimneys on the Riccarton Estate was unloaded there (pre-1850). A memorial of original bricks and flagstones, which had arrived as ballast in the Charlotte Jane was unveiled by John Deans (1880–1975), grandson of the pioneers John and Jane Deans, on 17 December 1926."*

<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/PlaceNames/Miscellaneous.pdf>: p23.

⁷ *Named after Heywoods, the home of George Bowron (1806–1891) on the East Belt (later Fitzgerald Avenue). Bowron bought Rural Section 33, 50 in 1851. He named his house, Heywoods, and farm, The Heywood. First mentioned in The Press in 1893 and in street directories in 1896.*

<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/PlaceNames/ChristchurchStreetNames-H.pdf>: p87.

⁸ *Probably named after Windsor Park, the residence and farm of James Rowe (1845–1923), who had a large-scale pig farm on his property, Windsor Park, in what is now Ajax Street, Shirley. Windsor as a name for the area was used in street directories for the first time in 1894.*

<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/PlaceNames/ChristchurchPlaceNames-N-Z.pdf>: p145.

Peter Harvey⁹ was a very important man — came to prominence in the very early days by being half-back for the Canterbury rugby team and he scored the try against the Springboks at Lancaster Park (30 July 1921) in the first Springboks tour of New Zealand. But that wasn't the only call to fame as far as Peter Harvey was concerned. He was also the director of the Deaf & Dumb school at Sumner and he earned a great deal of notoriety for his efforts amongst the deaf & dumb. Peter Harvey got the idea that the reason why people were dumb was not that they couldn't speak or form words, but that they couldn't hear and didn't know how to or what to do about speaking. And so, he taught them to mouth words, like we'll take, for instance, the chair and he would show a picture of a chair and the letters underneath C-H-A-I-R, and he would get the pupils to form the letters into some sort of a sound, like 'cha' would be Cha, etc. When he could get those people to form those words, it also helped with the other deaf & dumb people; they learnt to lip-read. They would see the other person forming the words 'cha' & 'air' and they would get from that it meant chair, by lip-reading. I knew Peter Harvey quite well, he used to come into our shop, especially on a Saturday night to get his 8 o'clock Sports paper, which was delivered by tram, dropped off at the stop and people milled around to collect their 8 o'clock Sports.

Now we are back at the hub again, and now it came to pass, quite a long time afterwards — seventy-odd years afterwards, that we, two years ago shifted to another house in Avonside and I started walking the streets and renewing old sights. That going along Retreat Rd towards the Dallington bridge, there is a road on the right-hand side which jogged my memory; a very important road really and I'll tell you why. When I was christened in 1914, my mother wanted me called John, well that didn't suit my father, because where he lived in Bradford (by the way, mother wanted me called John because John was her father's name and he died when she was twelve years of age in England and nine years later they came to New Zealand, grandma and mother and Dad). But anyway, this road bears a bit of reference to myself, because when they couldn't settle entirely on just John; Dad didn't want me called John because in the street where he lived in England there were five brothers; there was a John there who was rather an effeminate lad and they picked on him a bit — it was cruel as youngsters do — and he was a bit soft this boy. He used to knit; that was the sort of thing that used to upset Dad and his mates. So Dad didn't want me called John, so they had to settle on another name and they called me Lionel, which they both agreed on. Of course, Lionel soon became 'Leo the Lion' and I've been Leo ever since. But this particular street that is named after me is Lionel St. And it was named after me because I was christened in 1914 and it wasn't formed and commissioned until 1925, so it was named eleven years after me.

Now there is a public right-of-way off Lionel St into the back of Woodham Park. Woodham Park's a delightful little park; it's very grassed and there must have been a stream through there at some time; there are quite a few little dips. A lovely little picnic ground for children. There is all the play paraphernalia there, of roundabouts and swings. And there is a lovely little aviary there with multi-coloured canaries, budgerigars, finches, doves, parakeets and there used to be keas there, but they used to keep pecking their way out and making a bit of a nuisance of themselves, so eventually they gave the keas away. The story goes that there was one persistent kea used to come back every now and again and peck a whole from the outside and hop inside for a free lunch and then peck off.

⁹ Named after Patrick Harvey (1880?–1949). Land for sale in Windsor Terrace is advertised in the Star in 1893. Windsor Terrace first appears in street directories in 1896 as a "continuation of Draper Street". Re-named Harvey Terrace on 1 September 1948 when 120 streets were re-named. Harvey, a teacher, was the secretary of the SINZ Motor Union and a long-time resident of the street. <http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/PlaceNames/ChristchurchStreetNames-H.pdf>: p46.

As I say it is a lovely little park; there are some beautiful trees there — lovely old English trees. They are a relic of the days when the Woodham estate was there and they were imported trees from England: ash trees, sycamore, oak trees — all those lovely big varieties. In speaking to the caretaker-cum-curator of the park on one occasion, he told me that the rhododendrons and azalea trees there were transplanted from the Sorensen estate. Now the Sorensen estate comes back to the hub of our story, because the Sorensen estate was on the corner of Swanns Rd and Stanmore Rd on the south-east corner. When the Sorensen property was bought for state houses, those rhododendrons and azaleas were transplanted into Woodham Park. So, there's another spoke back to the hub of the story.

The main entrance into Woodham Park is in Woodham Rd¹⁰, which was once called Mile Rd. It's situated 290 paces east of Wilding Park. Something else about Woodham Rd — it used to be called Mile Road, but when the extensions from Kerrs Road were put in, it was more than a mile long, and so it was renamed Woodham Rd.

I also told you about a milestone just upstream a little from the Stanmore Road bridge, which had "1M" on it which indicated it was one mile to the square that point. But there was another mile sign in that area; there is a street called Trent St which was once St. James St, but had to be renamed when St. James Park and St. James St were initiated in the Papanui area, so it was called Trent St. Another river in England, of course, but no connection with the Avon on Thames or the Avon in Scotland after which our Avon river was named, but this Trent street begins just by where Linwood Avenue starts and it runs back to Armagh Street. Now that sign, it was one mile to Archibolds. There were signs all over Christchurch in those days: one mile to Archibolds, two miles to Archibolds, they were all over the town. Archibolds of course were the furniture manufacturers and their furniture warehouse. Now that brings me to the fact that Avonside drive was renamed Avonside Drive¹¹ — it was originally River road on both sides of the river. There was a bit of confusion there, because if you were looking for an odd number and found yourself on one side of the river you would find out that the odd numbers you wanted were on the other side of the river and you would have to go back to the nearest bridge and so on. So, the side of the river nearest the Cashmere hills was renamed Avonside Drive. Now we have come back again to the Stanmore Road bridge area which was just a wood and a wedge away from our starting point — the hub of the story.

¹⁰ Formerly named Slaughterhouse Road, after the slaughter-house of David Lewis (1825–1874). Re-named Woodham Road, after Woodham, a house once where Woodham Park is now. It also had the alternative name of Mile Road, because it was a mile long when it finished at Kerrs Road. Slaughterhouse Road is first mentioned in *The Press* in 1864. Re-named Woodham Road in 1883 after a petition from "Messrs Cuff, Cowlshaw and others" was received asking for the name to be changed. Woodham Road first appears in street directories in 1900.
<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/PlaceNames/ChristchurchStreetNames-W-Z.pdf>: pp103-4.

¹¹ River Road first appears in street directories in 1887. Re-named Avonside Drive in 1933 by the Public Utilities Committee of the Heathcote County Council.
<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/PlaceNames/ChristchurchStreetNames-A.pdf>: p92.

A few tidbits of odd occasions which occurred; whilst I was maintenance electrician at the Addington Trotting Club, on one Cup Day the main grandstand caught fire and was burnt to the ground. I have spoken about it at other times, but one of the things that I neglected to say was that when the fire started to die down and there was still one race to go (there were only eight races on the program in the days I am talking of) and the smoke was still rising from the stand, but it was razed to the ground and they decided to run the one race left. It was duly run and was won by a horse driven by Derek Jones, a well-known trotting driver. But the coincidental thing was that the name of that horse while all the hoo-hah and the smoke and the embers were glowing — the name of that horse was Smokeaway. Another story about the time I spent at Okuru, there was to be a dance and the whole family of boys — there were about four or five boys — and there were two young cousins who were helping Mrs Nolan with the housework. This particular night it happened to be raining as it can over there and we all boarded the dray with a very sturdy horse and wound our way through the bush for about four miles and they had loaded up the dray with supper, which was a very lavish affair, and we wound our way through the bush to a place called Mussel Point. It was about halfway I think between Jacksons Bay and Okuru. The dance consisted of one fellow on a piano-accordion, there were the brothers and another couple of young chaps and myself and three girls; the two cousins of the boys and one other girl, a girl Cron, who had ridden her horse all the way from Okuru in the daytime, through the bush and the rain and they were the three girls. So I didn't do much dancing, but I did help to keep the fire warm and the fire consisted of one end of the building with a galvanised iron chimney and earlier in the day they had sneaked in a dry log and lit the fire under the dry log. I spent the evening listening to the music and watching people dancing around. There was no grog or anything like that there, but they enjoyed themselves and we had a slap-up supper and then when it was all over about midnight, back we went in the dray. And I was up again at six to do my wiring.

On one Sunday we boarded the family launch and went about two or three miles up the river. It wasn't the Okuru River, but it was a river that flowed into the Okuru estuary, more or less a sort of a mountain stream. We went about two miles up there, had a picnic and a cricket match. Well it was the roughest pitch I had ever played cricket on, but we all enjoyed it and it was good fun. So, back to work the next day.

Referring to the Antigua boatsheds, when I joined forces with Bill Dinney, after I had been there a while, we decided that the state of the roof was so bad, so rusted, it was time we replaced the iron. So, Bill and I decided to do it together and we did it in our off-times — the off-peak times and a bit perhaps towards the winter, a section at a time. It was very hard going; the rafters and purlins were all black pine — very hard wood, and it was made worse in one area where there had been a fire and although solid in the centre it was charred on the outside and so appreciably drier than the rest of it. We lost about about one in six lead-headed nails by knocking the heads off before we got them far enough into the timber to effectively hold the iron. I remember one day there, old Bill and I were there and he had a dustcoat on when he wasn't looking I put a nail through his dustcoat and through the iron and into the rafters. When he found out that he couldn't move, old Bill never swore. I never heard him use a swear word, but he used some equivalent language which meant the same thing.

As far as the boats were concerned, we were generally pretty lucky. We didn't lose in total... the whole time I was there, the ten years I was there, we did lose three boats completely — three canoes. But generally, when we closed up at night we would have a count up and we would know exactly how many canoes there should be in each row and if we were missing something we could look our sheet up and see which boat it was and what time it went out.

But then it necessitated somebody to go up the river, through the Botanical Gardens and explore all the streams and creeks, such as the Addington Drain and the Spreydon Drain and one or two other little side creeks, and occasionally we found them sunk; occasionally we found them pulled up on the bank.

Once or twice there was an odd hole driven — there was a bit of vandalism. Anyway, one canoe that we lost for about three or four months eventually turned up; the police rang us to say they had one of our canoes in their yard and we went and identified it and we got it back. But the peculiar thing about it was that it was about the worst canoe we had in the whole fleet. It was actually a canoe that was made out of the mould that was used to make the original set of the original canoes.

We had bolted the two sections that the hulls and the top of the canoes were made of; we bolted them together and covered the connections over with some fibreglass. It was a very rough canoe — it didn't have the emulsion coat that was usually put on the outside to make a lovely smooth clean coat. But we got that back.

Then one day we missed three canoes; one was the original canoe, we used to call them the banana, because they were shaped a wee bit like a banana. They were actually supposed to be sesqui, which means one-and-a-half, and sesqui was a boat designed to carry an adult and a small child or two small children. We only had twenty of them and that one disappeared then, along with two single ones. They were the three boats that we never saw again. What happened to them is pure conjecture.

We did lose two on another occasion and they were missing for about two months or something like that until somebody rang us one day and said they had seen one of our canoes up by the rowing sheds at Kerrs Reach and there were two boys in it. So I went and I took one of the lads we had working for us along with me and we spotted these two boys in the canoe, so I left the boy I had with me to keep an eye on things and I went back to a friend's place to use the phone and got the police. The police came along and they apprehended these two youths and questioned them and from all the enquiries that the police made, we found out that the other canoe, which was missing at the same time, was in another of these boys' friend's place, so we eventually got both those canoes back. That's about all the trouble we ever had. We had a bit of vandalism of course, and natural wear-and-tear. I used to do the patching up in the summertime and then in the wintertime we would make a more permanent repair.

We also had the old rowing boats. We had three left; three of the old kauri rowing boats. We were very loth to ever let them out. They were too old to stand any shenanigans or any rough play. We would take deposits whenever we let those canoes go and we made sure they were responsible people; adults, etc., before we ever let them out. But we did have trouble just the same, and if you did have trouble with those boats, it was a big job to repair them, because they were kauri, and they were patched a lot, mainly with kauri patching, pinned in with copper rivets and a lot of pitch and so forth to fill in the gaps in between. I did one particular rowboat that had a lot of patches on. We decided we would put a skin of fibreglass on the outside. So we removed all the old patches that had been stuck on and varnished and rounded all the clinker edges of until we had a reasonably smooth surface, and then we fibre-glassed the hulls right through. It was quite a satisfactory job, although a wee bit heavy to pull in and out. That was one of the problems with those rowboats.

Talking about that sort of thing, I remember on one occasion some visitors from overseas wanted particularly a rowboat because their daughter had been there years before and spoken about the rowboats, so we had to give them a rowboat, but it was a morning when the landing had a wee bit of frost on it. I thought "It's a bit dicky, but I'll give it a go and I'll take it very quietly." Well, I got it about half-way down the landing, hanging on to the painter rope, when it gradually got the better of me and started to slide faster and faster. I daren't let it go, because it would have straight out into the river and way over the other side. I was hopeful of being able to stop it before it got right to the end. Eventually I couldn't hold it anymore and in I went — hanging on to the painter rope as hard as I could. We rescued that lot and bailed it out got them going. Old Bill couldn't help laughing. he said "I wish I'd seen it". He didn't.

We had quite a few of those sorts of escapades that happened from time to time. The biggest day we ever had, there was a scout jamboree out at Kaiapoi and they had hundreds of scouts there and they had booked us in from 7 o'clock in the morning until something like half past three in the afternoon. They arrived, busloads of them and I think we counted up that day we had over a thousand people went through in that one day. It was the biggest day we had.

I don't know what else to tell you about them — one of the row boats went over to the (*indecipherable*) museum at Okains Bay and one of the other ones I think is still there, hanging up in the hotel bar in the Strand Arcade in Cashel St.

End of tape 1.