

Contents

Introduction	4
‘...the want of a Bridge...’	5
The Bridge	9
‘...a Road already formed...’	11
Who were they?.....	13
Appendices.....	20
Appendix 1: Signatures Page.....	20
Appendix 2: John Mills (1814–74).....	21
Appendix 3: Contemporary Newspapers.....	22

The cover illustration includes two images from Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Christchurch office: CAAR CH287 19946 ICPW 669/1870 R8418483 (see also p6 & p12), and an 1872 image of the Stanmore Road bridge from John Ince’s book “A City of Bridges”, p106.

Introduction

In 1861 thirty-two people signed a petition addressed to the Provincial Government asking for a bridge to be built over the Avon River in Avonside. After ten years of settlement, there were enough people living north of the river to justify, in their own eyes at least, building a bridge east of the town. The petition was presented to the Provincial Government on 16 October 1861. At this time there were only two vehicle bridges over the Avon; both were at the Market Square (now Victoria Square): one on Whately Road (now Victoria St), leading to the Papanui Bush, the other was nearby on Colombo St.

The Provincial Government granted their request and paid £400 towards the cost of the bridge. Another £237 was provided by public subscription (presumably from the petitioners). The bridge was built in 1862, by which time another bridge had been built, at Madras St. Until 1876, the bridge at Stanmore Road was the only bridge over the Avon east of the town boundaries.

The original petition is amongst Canterbury Provincial papers stored at Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Christchurch. Photos of the original three-page petition are reproduced on p6. On pages 7 & 8 I have transcribed the text of the petition and the names of the people who signed.

The rest of this document outlines in more detail the story of this first bridge as well as subsequent bridges built at the same location and tells how Stanmore Road was formed north of the river. This road became the commercial centre of the suburb that would develop in the surrounding area that later became known as Richmond.

Later in the document I have assembled some information about some of the signatories. Some of these people played significant roles in the early development of Christchurch; others were not so well known. I have been able to find data about fourteen out of the thirty-two people who signed the petition.

Then follow some appendices that provide further information and contemporary data about the petition and the events that followed the original bridge's construction.

*David Hollander
Richmond History Group
November 2020*

‘...the want of a Bridge...’

Until the early 1860s, Stanmore Road only ran south of the Avon River. At this time there were no bridges across the river east of Colombo Street. The relatively few people who lived north of the river had to find a way across in order to reach the town of Christchurch. One option was to cross the river by boat. Otherwise, the nearest bridges led to the Market Square (now Victoria Square); one bridge at Whatley Road (Victoria St) and one at Colombo St (built 1858), and reaching these was no easy matter; the few roads were little more than tracks marking the way through tall flax and swamplands — dusty and rough in dry weather, often impassably muddy when wet.

While Christchurch’s two rivers were obstacles to movement by land, they were also useful highways for transporting goods to and from the growing township, especially considering the poor state of the roads. The river routes were not without dangers; before they reached the Heathcote-Avon estuary, all loads had to cross the Sumner bar safely, and many did not survive the crossing.

The Heathcote River had several wharves along its lower reaches, the highest being Christchurch Quay near the present-day Cumnor Bridge. The Avon’s main wharf was at the Bricks, just above the present-day Barbadoes St bridge. Neither river was particularly suitable for goods transport, but the Canterbury Association had reserved land on both banks of the two rivers for use as towpaths for horses to pull boats upstream when winds or currents were unfavourable. It is apparent from the text of the petition that by 1861, the Heathcote River was the preferred route for freight, and it was difficult for people living north of the Avon to get to the Heathcote wharves to collect freight or to deliver goods and produce for shipping out of Christchurch.

To help support their case the petitioners offered to dedicate land in Rural Section 41 for a continuation of Stanmore Rd as a public road north of the river. It appears that a road had been formed on this section, either by Captain McLean who had purchased RS 41 in 1861, or more likely by the previous owner, Charles E. Fooks, who was the original purchaser in 1851 and who developed the property as Melcombe Farm. It was Captain McLean, who made the offer of dedicating land for a public road north of the river if the Provincial Council agreed to build a bridge — see p7, para. 4d.

The petition was presented to the Provincial Council in October 1861 (*Press 26 October, 1861, p4*). The Superintendent of Canterbury at this time was W. S. Moorhouse who had recently been re-elected to the post. In the same year, work had begun on the railway tunnel to connect Christchurch with the port at Lyttelton. When the tunnel and railway opened in 1867 it soon put an end to the river trade for goods, but this was still years in the future for these petitioners.

To His Honor the Superintendent and the honorable members of the Executive council the petition of the undersigned landowners, occupiers, farmers and others resident in the Parish of Avonside respectfully sheweth.

1. *That they are suffering great loss and inconvenience from the want of a Bridge across the River Avon, which river passing through the entire parish divides the Northern from the Southern portion thereof.*
2. *That this loss and inconvenience are especially felt by those residents, and occupiers of land whose residences are on the North side of the River for the following reasons.*
 - a. *Because they are cut off from all means of attending their parish church except by going first to Christchurch, and crossing the Colombo Street Bridge, or by crossing the River by Boat which during the winter months is almost unapproachable in consequence of the bank being overflowed by every considerable fall of rain, — the practical result of which is that for a large portion of the year they are excluded from the opportunity of attending Divine Worship.*
 - b. *Because they are unable to convey their produce to — or bring such goods as they may require from the wharves in the Ferry Road without having to make the circuitous route of Christchurch and passing over Papanui or Colombo Street Bridge, — a state of things which entails on a neighbourhood now largely occupied, and cultivated a great amount of loss.*
3. *That the District on both sides of the River which would be greatly benefited by the construction of a Bridge is one comprising 3,000 to 4,000 acres of which a large portion is occupied and cultivated.*
4. *That in the opinion of your Petitioners the most convenient site for a Bridge is opposite the Accommodation Road which connects the River with the Ferry Road, for the following reasons —*
 - a. *Because of its proximity to the Church*
 - b. *Because it would be the most readily approachable by the majority of the Parishioners residing in the Northern portion of the Parish*
 - c. *Because it would by means of the Accommodation Road immediately connect the Northern portion of the District with the Ferry Road — the Accommodation Road opening into the Ferry Road within a mile of the principal wharves on the River Heathcote —*
 - d. *Because the present owner of the land on the Northern Side of the River Avon (Captⁿ McLean) has expressed his readiness to throw open a Road already formed, and partly metalled, from the Main Road on the North, to the bank of the River, and to dedicate the same to the uses of the public if the Government will construct a Bridge at that spot*
 - e. *And lastly — because there is on the Northern Bank of the River at the spot indicated an extensive Gravel Pit which would be made available for metalling the Roads in the District, — and especially that portion of the East Christchurch Road lying between Captⁿ. McLean's freehold and the Bridge across the Creek, which during the past winter has been almost impassable for wheeled vehicles, and will probably be entirely so in the coming winter, unless metalled —*

That in consideration of the foregoing [illegible] your petitioners respectfully request that your Honor, and your Honorable Council will take this petition into your consideration, and make such provision for carrying out so necessary a work, as to your honorable council may seem fit.

There are 32 signatures to the petition. I have transcribed the signatures below (not all of the signatures are legible):

Charles Mackie* MA, Incumbent of Avonside	Thomas R. Fisher, Christchurch
Joseph Brittan*, Linwood	William Guise Brittan*
Joseph Palmer*, Lockleys	[<i>Illegible</i>]
John McLean*, Ch. church	William [<i>Illegible</i>]
Greenstreet*, Kempston	Horatio Bunting*
Alexander Duncan	William [<i>Illegible</i>]
William Palmer	Stephen Brooker*
Thom. L. Laine*	E. J. Palmer
William Pitt	Wm. Morgan
John Bowley*	Wm. Burns
Thomas Smelling his mark	J. V. Colborne-Veel*
Ellen Dudley*, Broom Farm [<i>wife of John who had died 20/06/1861</i>]	Thos. Mills Pepperell
Crossward	William Ness
John Stace	John Turner
James Linforth	Tho. Hichens*
Robert Docker*	
[<i>Illegible</i>]	

** Some biographical information about these people is available on pages 13–18.*

It may not seem that many people signed the petition, but Christchurch was still a small place at this time; the 1861 census¹ showed the population of Christchurch to be approx. 3200, with another 4000 approx. living in the surrounding electoral districts of Avon and Heathcote.

On pages 11–16, I have included some biographical information about some of these people, where available, including information on land they owned in the area. A map on p19 shows where some of these rural sections were located. At this time many people owned or leased land in different parts of the land around Christchurch. Owning land did not necessarily mean people lived there, although these people were obviously keen to benefit from the advantages a local bridge would offer.

Appendix 1 shows a larger view of the signatures page. Perhaps somebody may help decipher some of the difficult-to-read signatures.

¹ www3.stats.govt.nz/historic_publications/1861-statistics-nz/1861-statistics-nz.html#idsect2_1_107

The Bridge

The story of this first and subsequent bridges is summarised in a plaque on the north-west end of the current bridge, constructed post-quakes; the fifth bridge built at this location.

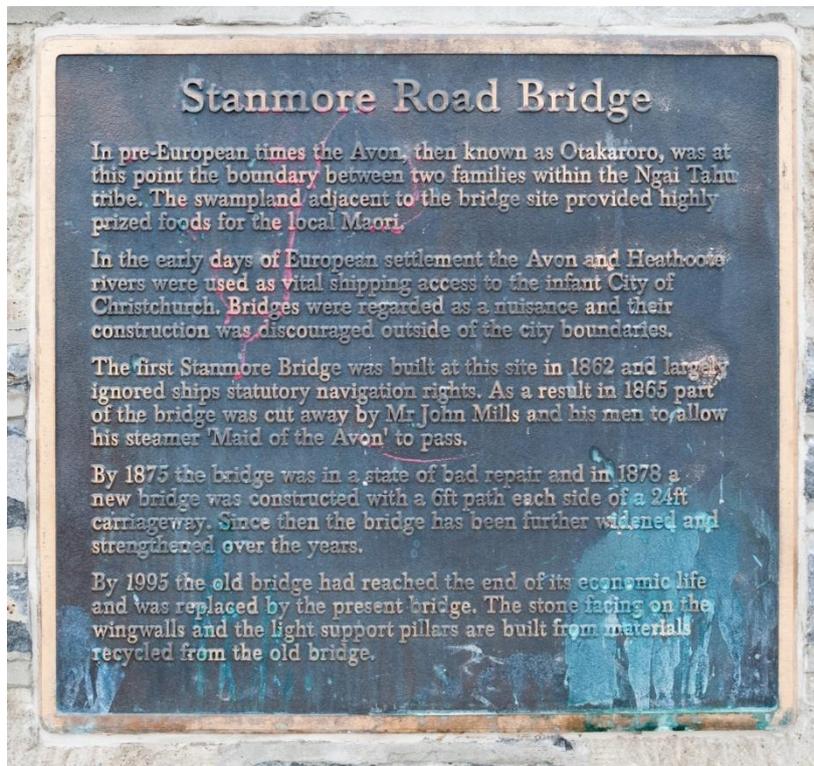


Figure 2. Plaque on the NW pillar of the current Stanmore Rd bridge.

In fact, according to contemporary newspaper reports, it was in October 1866 that John Mills (see App. 2) and his men cut away the central portion of the bridge to allow the steamer, *Maid of the Avon*² to pass beneath the bridge.

So, the people living north of the river lost the use of their bridge only four years after it was built. The affair caused quite a stir in the Provincial Council at the time and the newspapers reported and commented on the fallout at some length³. It turned out that Mr Mills was justified in his actions, as the Avon was classed at this time as a navigable river and any bridge had to allow the free movement of river craft. The fact that a bridge was built ignoring this fact seems to reflect poorly on the Engineer's Office of the Provincial Government at the time.

Local people most affected by the closure of the bridge held several meetings and petitioned the Provincial Council to repair or replace the bridge. In the meantime, somebody constructed a pedestrian way across the missing portion of the bridge⁴, but the bridge was no longer suitable for wheeled traffic. The Provincial Government presumably took some legal advice and later saw fit to pass a special ordinance, "The Stanmore Road Bridge Ordinance 1867" to remove any legal obstacles to a replacement bridge (see Appendix 4).

² This boat was the first steamer built in Christchurch. For the full story of the *Maid of the Avon*, see: Alexander, M. (Ed)., "On The Move: 6. The Tidal Travellers", p21.

³ See Appendix 3, p22.

⁴ See: *Lyttelton Times*, 16 November 1866, p5; <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/LT18661116.2.15>

It was not until 1868 that the bridge was replaced. In his book “A City of Bridges”, John Ince includes a photo of this replacement bridge. According to the caption the photo was taken in 1872.



Figure 3. The Stanmore Rd bridge, looking south, 1872.

By 1877 this second bridge had fallen into disrepair and the two road boards⁵ concerned (Avon and Heathcote — the river was the boundary between the two boards’ areas) co-operated to build a new bridge which was opened by the end of that year.

This bridge was a more considerable structure than either of the previous ones and was to survive, with repairs and modifications until 1996 when it was replaced by a concrete bridge; the fourth to be built at the site. This in turn was damaged in to Canterbury earthquakes 2010–11 and was replaced with the current concrete bridge.

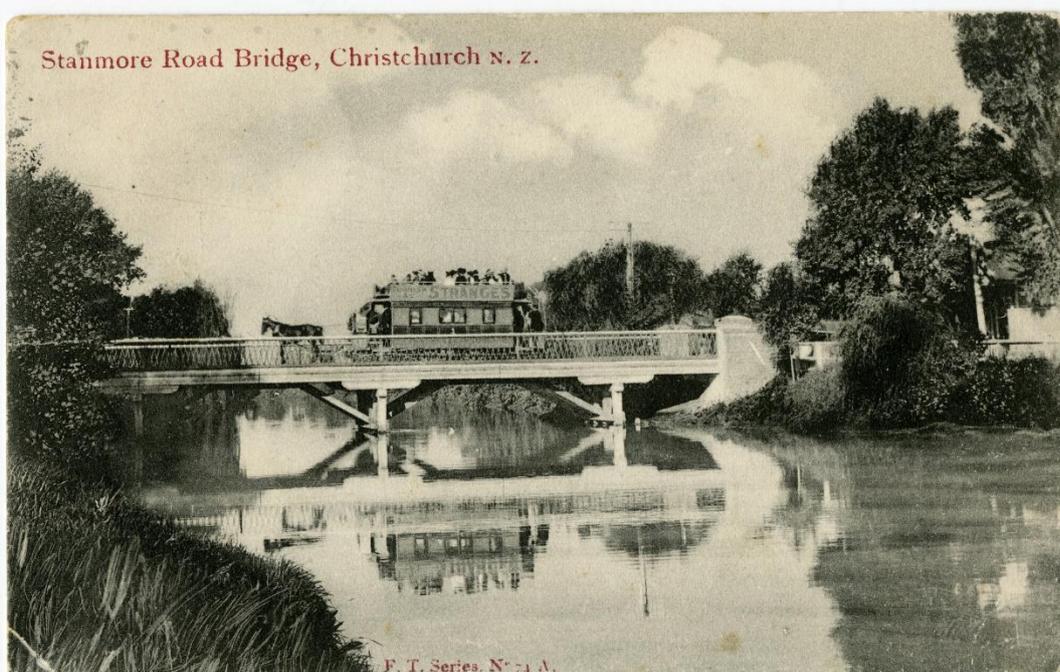


Figure 4. The third Stanmore bridge, constructed in 1877. The tram route along Stanmore Rd opened in 1894, requiring the bridge to be reinforced to withstand tram traffic. (date unknown).

⁵ Road Boards had been established by the Provincial Government in 1864. These elected bodies were responsible for managing road construction and maintenance as well as other local government functions.

‘...a Road already formed...’

Stanmore Road north of the river follows roughly the line of an early farm track laid out on Rural Section 41, from the river north to the accommodation road⁶ on the boundary of R.S.41 & 325 (later North Avon Rd). The line of the road is shown on three hand-drawn plans (see p12) prepared in May and June 1864. By this time, R.S.41 was owned by George Lockhart who had bought the land from Captain McLean in March 1862. It was Lockhart who dedicated land for a public road in June 1864; he obviously honoured the undertaking by Captain McLean to do so if a bridge was built.

The plans also show some physical features of R.S.41, especially the waterway known as Bowron’s Creek, that flowed east from the ‘great St Albans swamp’. This stream caused the later line of London Street to adopt its bends near Stanmore Rd.

The right-hand plan is drawn over a letter from George Thornton, Assistant Provincial Engineer. This letter can be difficult to decipher; I have transcribed the text below:

Provincial Engineer’s Office
Christchurch
14 June 1864

Sir,

I forward herewith an amended plan and description of the road that runs through section 41.

The road was fenced off as shown on plan marked B hence I concluded that was the line of the road adopted.

The plan as prepared now provides for a road 50 links* wide the whole distance, and the acreage is 22 acres, 0 roods and 7 perches.

G.Thornton

** A link is 66/100 of a foot, or exactly 7.92 inches (20.1168 cm). The unit is based on Gunter’s chain, a metal chain 66 feet long with 100 links, that was formerly used in land surveying. So, the original roadway was 33 ft (~10 m) wide.*

Roads at this time were rudimentary affairs, usually formed by digging ditches on both sides⁷ and heaping the spoil onto the roadway to be compressed by whatever traffic came along. If a road received heavy use it may have been shingled to improve the surface, though who would pay for this step was usually a matter of debate.

There are numerous references in newspapers and Avon Road Board minutes to widening stretches of Stanmore Rd over many years. In 1894 the City and Suburban Company opened a tramway from the city to New Brighton, via Cashel Street and then running north along Stanmore Rd to North Avon Rd and beyond. This route was in competition with the New Brighton Tramway Company line that ran along Pages Road. The first trams were horse-drawn, but were later steam-powered and later again converted to electricity. The tram service along Stanmore Rd was discontinued in 1934.

As late as 1918 Stanmore Rd was described as “...one of the narrowest streets in the Dominion utilised for a tram service. In parts it has been widened by gifts and purchases of land, but there is still much yet to be done in this direction to make it a tolerably safe avenue for traffic.”⁸

⁶ Where there were no roads, a land purchaser could gain access to his rural section by travelling along the boundaries of neighbouring properties. Such rights-of-way were called ‘accommodation roads’. See: **Looser, F. “Fendall’s Legacy”** Canterbury University Press, 2002, p19.

⁷ See **Alexander, M. “On the Move: 1. Bullock to Brougham”** p5 & **Walsh, G. W. “Richmond a Regional History”** p5.

⁸ “Richmond’s Expansion” The Star, 18 September, 1918. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/TS19180902.2.47>
Richmond History Group, 2020

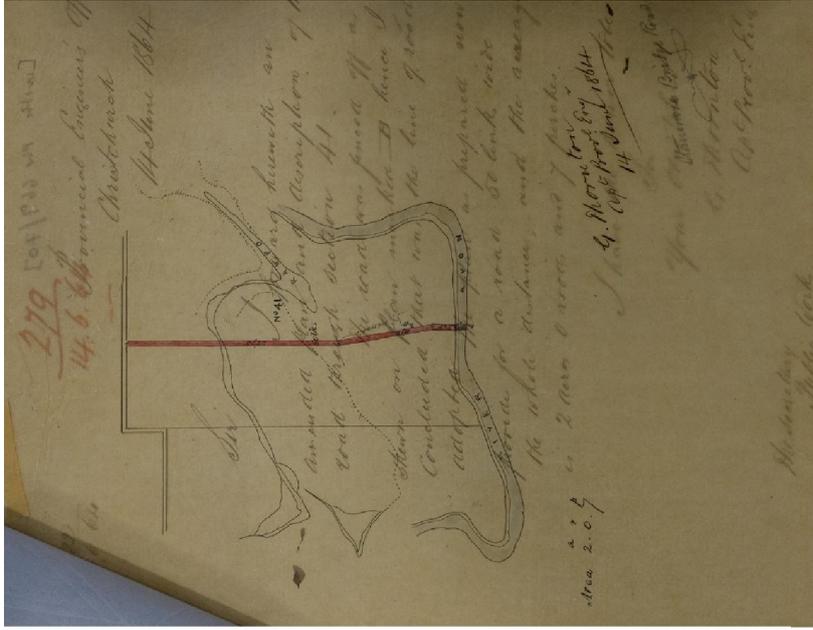
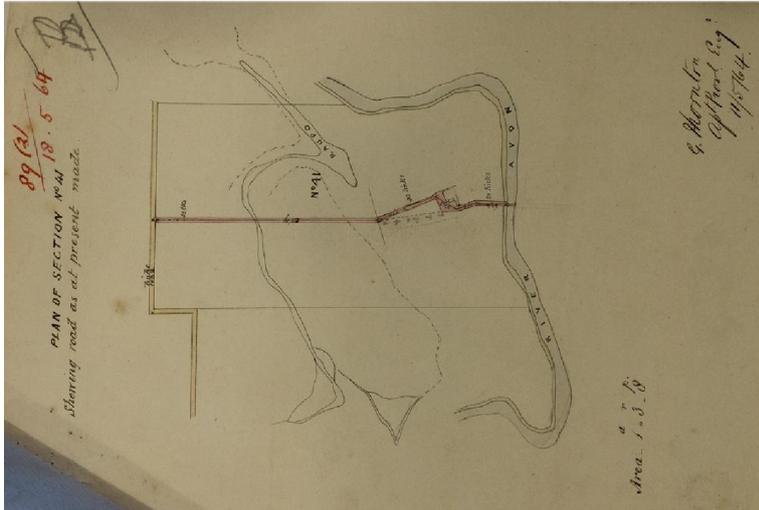


Figure 5. Three hand-drawn maps of the original track through R.S. 41 and the final line of the road constructed north of the river.

Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Christchurch
CAAR CH287 19946 ICPW 669/1870 R8418483

Who were they?

I have not found information about all of the 32 people who signed the petition. Below is some material about fourteen of these people. The list includes some people who played significant roles in early Christchurch. Several people include an address along with their signature; Captain Mclean and Thomas Fisher use 'Christchurch', but the others: Joseph Brittan (Linwood), Joseph Palmer (Lockleys), Charles Greenstreet (Kempston) and Ellen Dudley (Broom Farm) include the name of their property.

The signatories' names are listed below in alphabetical order by surname, not the order they appear in the petition. Where these people owned or leased property in the vicinity, the location of the rural sections may be found on the map on p19. I have gathered information about properties from: "Province of Canterbury, New Zealand List of Sections Purchased to April 30, 1863" (*Christchurch City Libraries*) and "Canterbury Deeds Indexes — Rural sections registers" (*Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Christchurch Regional Office*).

John Bowley (1817–1902)

John and his wife Eliza arrived in Canterbury on the *Castle Eden* in February 1851, with their two daughters, Louisa and Eliza. The family lived in Tuam St for a time and then moved to Avonside. He farmed land at Philipstown and contributed to building the Avonside Church (consecrated 24 February, 1857). He died at Avonside aged 85.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: B619;*

Joseph Brittan (1805–67)

Joseph was older brother of William Guise Brittan. He arrived in Canterbury with his family (wife Sophia, and four children from Joseph's first marriage) on the *William Hyde* in February 1852. He purchased two rural sections, 300 & 301 on the south bank of the Avon, which he developed as a farm he called Linwood. He was active in public affairs; he started a newspaper in Christchurch, the *Canterbury Standard* in June 1854, and was elected to the Provincial Council in 1855 and became Provincial Secretary until 1857. He ran for the office of Superintendent in 1857 but was defeated at the poll by W. S. Moorhouse. He was elected to the Provincial Council again in 1861 but resigned in 1862 due to poor health.

He built a large two-storey brick house at Linwood in 1856–7, which was regarded as one of the finest houses in Christchurch at the time. A son, Arthur was drowned in the Avon near the property in January, 1862. His daughter Mary married William Rolleston in 1865 and the couple lived at Linwood House until 1880, when they moved to Wellington for William to take up roles with the central government. Joseph retired from public life in 1864. His health deteriorated in his final years and he died at Linwood in 1867. His wife Sophia lived on at Linwood until she died in 1877. Another son, Frank, who had managed the farm at Linwood for many years, inherited the property when Sophia died. Soon after he subdivided the land for housing.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: B.738;*

Rice, G. & Ryman, F., Cricketing Colonists. CUP 2015; Lyttelton Times, 4 January 1862.

William Guise Brittan (1808–76)

William Guise Brittan arrived in Canterbury with his wife, Louisa, and their family aboard the *Sir George Seymour* on 17 December 1850. William had been very active in the Canterbury Association in England and continued this close involvement after arrival. He was chairman of the Society of Colonists in Canterbury, and J. R. Godley, the Canterbury Association's resident agent, appointed him in charge of the Land Office. He purchased several blocks of land himself, in Lyttelton, a town section in Christchurch, near the Land Office building on the site where the Clarendon Hotel was later built. He also purchased rural sections; R.S. 5 in Papanui, which included about half of the Papanui bush, and R.S. 26 (50 acres) on the south bank of the Avon River just east of Christchurch. Here he developed one of the most successful early farms in the settlement, later building a considerable house 'Englefield'. He also selected R.S. 41 (100 acres) across the river on behalf of his nephew by marriage, Charles Edward Fooks, who arrived on the *Steadfast* in 1851.

Despite his active involvement in early Christchurch (or perhaps because of it), it seems Brittan was not popular. In November 1852, the Governor, Sir George Grey, appointed Brittan Registrar of Deeds in Christchurch, a role that placed William in conflict with many Canterbury Association people. Later he became Commissioner of Crown Lands in Canterbury. William stood for election to the General Assembly in 1853, for the seat of Christchurch Country, but was defeated at the poll.

He held many other public posts in early Christchurch and was very active in Anglican church affairs over a long time period. He was instrumental in the construction of the church at Avonside in 1855–56, as well as later churches at Papanui and Halswell. He and Thomas Hichens were the first two churchwardens at Avonside. He was also one of the founders of cricket in Canterbury.

William had taken up land at Halswell in 1851, as a sheep run. He went into partnership with Michael Burke, who managed the property while William lived and worked in Christchurch. In the 1860s the partnership was dissolved and William moved with his family to live at Halswell. He sold Englefield and 3½ acres of surrounding land in 1864.

William was not particularly successful in commercial ventures. His property at Avonside suffered from a fire in 1855, which caused him considerable loss. About 1860 he was involved in establishing the Avon Steam Navigation Company, with his brother Joseph and others, but the venture was not a success. In 1868 the house William had built at Halswell was destroyed by fire. He and his family then lived in a rented house in Armagh St, where William died in 1876.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: B740; Rice, G. & Ryman, F., Cricketing Colonists. CUP 2015.*

Stephen Brooker (1819–99)

Stephen Brooker arrived in Lyttelton with his family, wife Rebecca and three children, in June 1851. He had left England in 1838 and had spent time in Sydney, northern New Zealand and South Australia before coming to Canterbury. Stephen bought rural section 2303 (20 acres) in January 1861 on "North Bank River Avon, East Christchurch Road", now New Brighton Rd. It is not clear whether he was living on the section at this time, but obviously he supported the building of a bridge closer than Colombo St. He later bought another section nearby, #2930 in 1863 and two Town sections. He and his wife Rebecca are buried in Addington cemetery.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: B.777;*

Joseph. V. Colborne-Veel (1830—95)

Joseph arrived in Canterbury aboard the *Glentanner* in 1857 with his wife Anne Maria. He farmed 10 acres of land at Linwood. When James Fitzgerald founded The Press in 1961, Joseph joined the staff

and became editor in 1867. He was active in cricket and chess clubs in Christchurch. He was also active in education; he was a member of the East Christchurch School committee in 1875 and a member of the Canterbury College Board that year. He and his wife had four children, two of whom died in the early 1880s. In 1890 he was appointed principal of the Normal School.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: C457; Norman, E.J., "History of Avonside Parish District.", M.A. Thesis 1951.*

Horatio Bunting (Dates unknown)

Horatio arrived in New Zealand from England about 1859 with his first wife Mary. In England he had been a gardener. In the early 1860s he was farming on land near Bottle Lake (rural sections 2431 & 2432). In 1861 he was experimenting with methods of dressing flax at Bottle Lake. In 1862 he and his wife were employed at Christchurch Hospital, he as 'Master' (manager) and she as Matron. It appears they left the hospital in 1863. He started work as a gardener and nurseryman in Windmill Rd (Antigua St). He was bankrupt in 1869. Mary died in 1878 aged 51. He married Eleanor Neville in April 1879.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: B.961; Lyttelton Times: 23 March 1861; 11 May 1862; 27 December 1862; The Star: 22 March 1869; Lyttelton Times: 23 August 1878; The Star, 16 April 1879.*

Robert Docker (1826–81)

Robert arrived in Canterbury in February 1853 on the *Minerva*. He had been educated at Queen's College, Oxford. He soon leased 100 acres (R.S.161) on the south bank of the Avon River. Later he bought two sections further downstream, R.S. 2808 (20 acres on the 'River Avon, near Kerr's') and an adjoining section #5382. He married Jane Hichens, daughter of Thomas (q.v.) on 23 December 1862 at Avonside Church. He was active in the agricultural society and was elected to the Heathcote Road Board in 1868. He later owned a farm, Newburn, near Leeston, where he died on 20 June 1881.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: D336; Lyttelton times 16 August 1854 (Electoral Roll, p3); Lyttelton Times 28 September 1854; The Globe, 22 June 1881;*

Ellen Dudley (1820–1894)

Ellen arrived in August 1851 on the *Labuan* with her husband John and three young children. The family settled on R.S.183 on the north bank of the Avon (now Dallington), where they called their property Broom Farm. She gave birth to a fourth child, a daughter, at Broom Farm in October 1853. Not surprisingly, perhaps, later in the year she advertised for a cook at the farm. Her husband died at Broom Farm on 20 June 1861, not long before she signed the petition. She chose to stay on at the farm. In 1864 she married William de Troy, a school teacher who owned property nearby. He opened a private school he called Broom House in 1866. They had a son in March 1867. William was elected to the Avon Road Board in 1867 and was chairman until required to resign when he was declared bankrupt later that year. Broom Farm was sold about 1880. William was principal at New Brighton School 1873–82. New Brighton School at this time was in the present-day suburb of Burwood and was renamed Burwood School in 1890. Later William taught at Loburn North school and the couple lived in Kaiapoi for a time. In 1888 William de Troy was appointed clerk and surveyor to the Ashley Road Board. The family lived at the board's offices at Loburn. Ellen Dudley died there on 14 October 1894.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: D472 & T413; Lyttelton Times 15 October 1853; Lyttelton Times 26 June 1861; Press 1 October 1894; Star 15 October 1894;*

Avon Road Board Minutes, Christchurch City Council; Burwood School Jubilee, 1872-1972, Christchurch City Libraries.

Charles Greenstreet (1830–72)

Charles Hawkins Greenstreet arrived in the *William Hyde* which arrived in January 1852. He selected R.S.302 on Papanui Rd. He also purchased several adjoining sections near Horseshoe Lake (R.S.1053, 1131, 1327, 2542 & 2550). He called the combined property Kempston — he uses this address with his signature.

In July 1858 he married Eliza Mackie, the younger daughter of Rev. Charles Mackie (q.v.), who was curate of Avonside. Among the witnesses were other local men, Charles E. Fooks and Thomas Hichens. The couple were married by the bride's father. They had a son who died in 1860, aged nine months. They had another son, Frank Edward, later in 1860 and three daughters over the next few years.

He offered sections for sale at Kempston in 1863. It appears these didn't all sell as he was offering 311 acres at Kempston, near 'Horse-shoe Lagoon' for lease later that year. In the 1860s he bought a sheep station in the Ashburton Forks which he called Ringwood. He died at Ashburton in 1872.

Sources: Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: G505; Lyttelton Times, 25 February 1860; 24 June, 1863 & 20 October 1863.

Thomas Hichens (1795–1868)

Thomas arrived on the *Samarang* in August 1852 with his wife Grace and their seven children. The following year he bought part of R.S. 90 (50 acres) from the original purchaser, A. P. Perceval. He farmed there and called his property The Retreat. He was elected one of the first two churchwardens (with William G. Brittan) in the Avonside parish. He was involved in the construction of the church at Avonside, and later with the building of a schoolroom at the church (opened in May 1866). He was a church property trustee in 1857. He was also involved in establishing the Mechanics Institute in Christchurch.

Sources: Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: H529; Christchurch City Libraries, Christchurch Street Names: R.pdf; Lyttelton Times, 28 February 1857; Lyttelton Times, 4 May 1866;

Thomas L. Laine (1825–?)

Thomas Laine and his wife Julia arrived on the *Labuan* in 1857. He purchased R.S. 231 (50 acres), which he called Issues Farm. He later owned several other adjoining sections: 557 (32 ac.), 880 (30 ac.), 887 (30 ac.), and 1456 (35 ac.) — land now in Windsor and Shirley. He served several terms on the Avon Road Board — he was elected to the board in 1868 and was chairman that year. He was elected again in 1871 and was chairman that year and again in 1876. He was a vestryman of Avonside church in 1873 and a member of the Synod that year. In 1878 he subdivided his land, selling 45 sections, most of them 1 acre. One section of 4 acres included a ten-roomed house. He advertised furniture for sale in January 1879 as he was leaving Christchurch.

Sources: Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: L7; Avon Road Board Minutes, Christchurch City Council.

Rev. Charles Mackie (1800–82)

The Rev. Charles Mackie arrived in Canterbury on the *Duke of Portland* in October 1852 with his wife Ann and their four children. He brought a house with him on the ship in sections. He erected the house on a 10-acre section, part of R.S. 175 which he purchased from the Rev. G. B. Tuson. He called the house Stricklands, which was his wife's family name. This property was on present-day Essex St; the house later became the first female refuge in Christchurch and later part of the Essex Maternity Home.

He had the cure of Avonside in 1853. Mackie held early church services in his house as well as other homes in the Avonside area, including John and Ellen Dudley's Broom Farm. He also purchased two rural sections, 345 & 345a (both 50 acres) in what would become St Albans. At this time, he also entered partnership in a sheep run, Lavington, near Rakaiā.

R.S. 30 (50 acres) south of the Avon, had been purchased by Richard Bradley, whose father, the Rev. W. Bradley, had been a friend of Mackie's in England. Richard built a hut there and sold portions of the section. But in September 1853 Richard drowned in Lyttelton harbour. His father subsequently donated two acres of this land for a church, churchyard and schoolhouse. Charles Mackie later arranged for a further six acres to be secured to the church and dedicated as a glebe.

Mackie was active, along with other local inhabitants, in the construction of a church on this site. Charles Edward Fooks designed the building which was constructed of cob in 1855–6. Holy Trinity Avonside was consecrated by the newly arrived Bishop of Christchurch, Henry Harper on 24 February 1857. Mackie held the cure of Avonside until early 1863. He officiated at the marriage of His daughter Eliza to Charles Greenstreet (q.v.) at Avonside in July 1858. In September 1858 he obtained a two-year dispensation to leave Canterbury on the grounds of ill-health. He and his wife returned to England for two years; they arrived back in Canterbury in 1861 when he resumed office at Avonside.

In January 1863 Mackie resigned the cure of Avonside and returned to England where he lived until 1882 when he died at Ottery St Mary, Devon.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: Mac284; Blain Directory-Anglican History, p973–4; Williams, W.T. "A Short History of the Parish of Avonside 1855–1955"; Lyttelton Times 28 February 1857; Norman, E.J., "History of Avonside Parish District.", M.A. Thesis 1951.*

Captain John McLean (1826–71)

John McLean was a sea captain. It is unclear when he came to New Zealand; he was in command of the steamer *White Swan* in 1858. In March 1859 the Lyttelton Times describes him "having resolved to settle at Christchurch."

In April 1860 he was reported in the Lyttelton Times as a partner and manager in the firm Dalgety, Buckley & Co. In November 1861 he bought R.S. 41 (50 acres); this was the property Charles Edward Fooks had owned and had developed as Melcombe Farm. Captain McLean sold this section to George Lockhart in March 1862. The Captain offered to dedicate land for a public road through this section if the Provincial Council agreed to build a bridge at Avonside. Presumably this was a condition of the sale of the land to Lockhart; the land for what would become Stanmore Rd North, was conveyed to the Crown 25 June 1864.

Captain McLean owned R.S. 2431 at Bottle Lake for a short time in 1862. He then purchased Buccleugh Station — 20,000 acres on the Ashburton River, also in 1862. He was active as an official at race meetings in Ashburton in 1869–70. The Timaru Herald reported in September 1870 that

he had sold his station “on the Ashburton” for £15000. He died in December 1871 when he was thrown from a buggy at Winchmore Station.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: Mac320; Lyttelton Times, 9 March 1859; Lyttelton Times, 18 April 1860; Timaru Herald, 28 September 1870; Lyttelton Times, 9 December 1871.*

Joseph Palmer (1829–1910)

Joseph joined the Union Bank of Australia in England and was sent as a clerk to Sydney in 1850. Later he moved to Adelaide where he married Emily Anne Fisher. In 1856 he was transferred to New Zealand to manage the Canterbury branch of the bank; he arrived in Lyttelton on the *Zingari* in March 1856. At that time the only branch was in Lyttelton; Palmer soon opened a branch in Christchurch. At this time the Union Bank of Australia was the only bank in Canterbury and Palmer was an important figure in the growing community. In the late 1850s there was a recession in Canterbury and even the Provincial Government was overdrawn at the bank and for a time, Palmer exercised considerable influence over the government’s expenditure.

He purchased R.S. 593 in 1858 where he later built a house which he called Lockleys. He sold this property in 1866 when he moved to live in Christchurch near the bank’s office. He remained with the Union Bank throughout his career and was appointed the bank’s chief officer in New Zealand in 1871. He became a wealthy man. In 1863 he had bought part of a sheep station, Double Hill on the south bank of the Rakaia, where he eventually owned over 100,000 acres.

Palmer retired from the bank in 1890 and became a director. He was deeply involved in the Christchurch business community; he was a director of several other companies and a member of the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, the Canterbury Jockey Club, and life member of the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association; he was elected to the Christchurch Club, and was an original shareholder of the Canterbury Club. He was also a justice of the peace and for many years a vestryman at St Michael’s Anglican Church. He and his wife had eight children: four boys and four girls. Joseph died in Christchurch in August 1910.

Sources: *Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: P44; Te Ara; The Encyclopedia of New Zealand (<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1p2/palmer-joseph>); Lyttelton Times; 18 August 1910.*

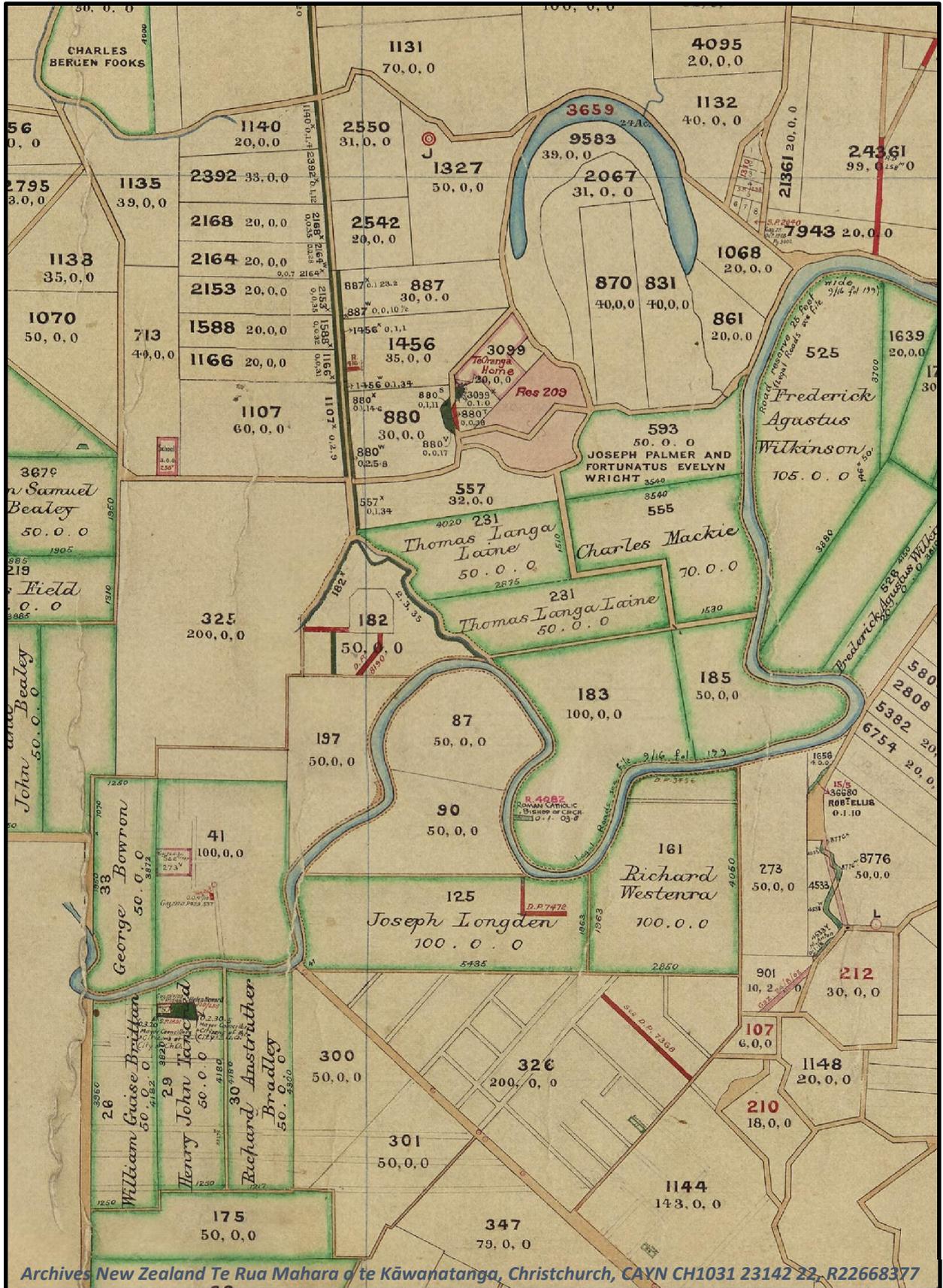


Figure 6. Crown Grant Plans. Christchurch District [Excerpt]. This map, showing original rural sections surrounding Christchurch, was prepared in 1905. Some of the information on the map refers to developments that occurred later than the 1860s. But the map shows rural section boundaries clearly, along with their areas (acres, rods & perches) and, in some cases, the name of the original purchaser.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Signatures Page

Charles Mackie M.A.
 Incumbent of Worside
 Joseph Britton, Linwood
 John Palmer, Leedley
 John Wilson, the Church
 Charles Greenstreet, Kumpaton
 Alexander Duncan
 William Palmer
 Thos. L. Laine
 William Pitt
 John Bowler
 Thomas Shelton, his mark
 Henry Duffley, Worside Farm
~~John M.~~
 Crossward
 John Hare
 James Linforth
 Robert Docker
 R. Brunsden
 Thomas Fisher, Christchurch
 William Guse, Worside
 W. L. Pitt
 William Gunnion
 Horatio Bunting
 William Tice
 Stephen Brooker
 E. J. Palmer
 Wm. Morgan
 Wm. Burrows
 J. V. Colborne-Deal
 Thos. Mills Pepperell
 William Ross
 John Turner

Thos. A. Richards

Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Christchurch
 CAAR CH287 19946 ICPW 669/1870 R8418483

Appendix 2: John Mills (1814–74)

There appear to have been several people called John Mills in Christchurch in the 1860s and it is difficult to sort out which facts belong to which person. We don't know a great deal about John Mills apart from his run-in with the Stanmore bridge.

John and his wife Ann arrived in Lyttelton in January 1857 aboard the *Rose of Sharon*. He opened the Foresters' Hotel in Oxford Terrace in 1858. He was granted a wine and beer licence at first and a general licence in 1864. He bought the Bricks Wharf, near Barbadoes St around 1863. His wife Ann died in 1864.

Like others before him he hoped to benefit from increased traffic on the Avon River. It is clear from the text of the 1861 petition for a bridge at Avonside that the Heathcote river was the preferred route for freight by that time.

In 1865 Mills commissioned Joseph Dixon, a boatbuilder in the lower Heathcote to build a paddle-steamer. The boat cost in the region of £1000 and was christened the *Maid of the Avon* by Mills' daughter at a ceremony at the boatyard on 12 March, 1866. Mills made his plans known and received some coverage in the Christchurch newspapers. One of the articles even mentioned that the Stanmore bridge was a potential hazard to his enterprise and hinted that plans were underway to alter the bridge to allow the boat to pass underneath. Obviously, this never happened and it was presumably under some frustration that Mr Mills took the drastic action, in October 1866, of removing the central portion of the bridge to allow his boat to pass.

It appears that Mills was within his rights remove the bridge. The Provincial Government had made no allowance for river traffic when it built the bridge in 1862; perhaps another indicator that there was little such traffic on the Avon at this time. But he probably made no friends amongst the Avonside community who had contributed a considerable sum towards the bridge's construction.

It's unclear whether Mills intended the boat for carrying goods. An early article (*Lyttelton Times*, 1 August 1865) states that he hoped to dredge shingle from the river bed for use on roads. Later it appears he hoped that the service would operate as a pleasure cruise up and down the Avon. In the end, none of these possibilities eventuated and he presumably suffered considerable financial loss in the enterprise. An earlier river transport scheme on the Avon involving the Brittan brothers had also ended in disappointment.

Mills sold the steamer in 1866 and presumably carried on running the Foresters' Hotel. He died at his home in Oxford Terrace in 1874.

Sources:

Macdonald Dictionary Record, Canterbury Museum: M429;

Rice, G. & Ryman, F., Cricketing Colonists. CUP 2015, p228–9.

Lyttelton Times, 5 July 1865, Page 2; *Lyttelton Times*, 1 August 1865, Page 2;

Press, Press, 29 September 1866; *Lyttelton Times*, 29 September 1866, Page 2;

Lyttelton Times, 5 October 1866, Page 4; *Press, Press*, Volume X, Issue 1229, 15 October 1866;

Lyttelton Times, 20 October 1866, Page 2; *Lyttelton Times*, 13 November 1866, Page 1.

Appendix 3: Contemporary Newspapers

Contemporary newspaper entries referring to the bridge at Avonside are few. The first mention is in November 1861, followed by a call for tenders to build the bridge — see below.

There appears to have been no opening ceremony or celebration. In the following years, the bridge hardly rates a mention; a disgruntled letter to the editor in March 1862. Then, in 1863, Mr Bowron, owner of R.S.33, refers to the bridge in an advertisement for sections he had for sale.

The Press description of the damage to the bridge in October 1866 is quite understated.

THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1861.

PRESENT—The Speaker, Messrs. Armstrong, Brittan, Duncan, Wilkin, Maude, FitzGerald, Harston, Ollivier, Murray, Rickman, Harman, Studholme, Toswill, Davis, Westera, Fyfe, Thompson, Templer, and Peacock.

The Council met at 12 o'clock.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

In answer to a question from Mr. Brittan:—

The PROVINCIAL SECRETARY said that the Government had not had any detailed estimates furnished of the probable cost of a bridge over the Avon, opposite the Stanmore road, but they were prepared to recommend the Council to place a sum on the Estimates equal to one-half the cost of the bridge; the residents to find the remaining half.

AVONSIDE BRIDGE.

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS.

THE Provincial Government are prepared to receive Tenders for building a Bridge over the Avon near Avonside Church according to drawings and specifications which may be seen on application at the Office of Public Works, Christchurch.

Tenders to be sent into the Provincial Secretary's Office, Christchurch, on or before noon, on Tuesday, the 4th of March next, when parties tendering must be in attendance with their sureties.

The Government will not be bound to accept the lowest or any tender.

T. W. MAUDE,
Provincial Secretary.

Provincial Secretary's Office,
Christchurch, Feb. 18, 1862. 888

Press 1 March 1862

(To the Editor of the Press.)

Sir,—Several years ago the footbridge across the Avon at the Bricks was washed away, and since then the residents in the eastern half of the City of Christchurch, have been without any means of communication from one side of the river to the other. To supply this want a cart bridge was promised to be placed across the Avon, opposite Madras-street; four years ago money was voted for this object, the timber for the bridge has been on the ground for two years, the want of communication is severely felt by a large number of the inhabitants of Christchurch, and many of them have subscribed towards its cost—still the Government shews no sign of undertaking the work.

On the other hand a vote was obtained in the last Session, for a bridge opposite to Avonside Church. This work will benefit but a small number of persons, and its election is, in the opinion of many, a questionable application of Public money; at all events it was never heard of till the other day, yet advertisements have already appear calling for tenders for its immediate erection.

Can you or any of your readers, explain the difference of treatment in the above cases; or inform me on what principles the Provincial Engineer proceeds in according priority to Public Works entrusted to him? Rumour says that when he dislikes a particular work, he is very skillful in finding a 'way not to do it,' and I must confess the above looks as if it were true.

Yours faithfully,
FAIR PLAY.

Lyttelton Times, 21 February 1863

VALUABLE FREEHOLD ALLOTMENTS.

Section No. 33, the Property of G. Bowron, Esq.

RIVER FRONTAGES
AND
FRONTAGES ON THE TOWN BELT.

MESSRS. J. OLLIVIER & SON have been favored with instructions from G. Bowron, Esq., to offer for sale by public auction, at their Sale Rooms, in Christchurch, on

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, at One o'clock,

All that valuable freehold section, being No. 33 on the map of the Chief Surveyor, situated on the north side of the River Avon, and about one mile from the centre of the town of Christchurch.

The land is all laid down to grass, and is well supplied by a running stream of spring water.

The section has been laid out into Quarter-acre, Half-acre, Three-quarter-acre, and One-acre allotments.

There is a long frontage to the river, and also to the town belt; the latter is opposite to the Church of England Reserve, which, from the nature of its tenure cannot be built upon; the upper portion of the section fronts to the well-known residence of Samuel Bealey, Esq.

The Auctioneers beg to draw special attention to this valuable estate. The land is dry, with a considerable fall to the river, and is in one of the most healthy localities of the town; the northern line of the Lyttelton and Christchurch Railway is marked on the maps of the Chief Surveyor as running along the eastern boundary of the section. Two bridges have been built across the River Avon, both immediately contiguous to this property; one at Madras street, the other close to the Avonside church.

These sections are now open for selection at an upset price per quarter acre, and may be challenged by intending purchasers, to whom they will be sold at the upset prices on the day above-named if there is no advance.

The terms are liberal, viz.:—One-third cash; the balance by instalment, or according to the extent of purchase-money, extending over from one to three years, with bank interest.

A deposit of 5 per cent. upon the upset price will be required at the time of application. 625

Press 15 October 1866

STANMORE BRIDGE.—On Friday the centre portion of this bridge was cleared away, in order to allow the new steamer, the Maid of the Avon, to pass through it, and consequently the public traffic over it has been intercepted. The steamer had been lying near the bridge ever since Oct. 14, when she was compelled to land her passengers, being unable to pass.

The newspaper coverage was greater following the damage to the bridge. In October, the Press reported in some detail two meetings held by local residents to discuss the issue.

Press, 24 October 1866

The Stanmore Bridge.—A meeting of the residents of the Avon district was held last evening in the Heathcote school, to consider what steps should be taken to replace the Stanmore bridge, taken down by Mr Mills; the Rev. Mr Habens occupied the chair. The Chairman explained the objects, and stated that himself and Mr Lockhart had waited upon the Provincial Secretary about the matter, but they were not enabled to get any satisfactory answer. That gentleman suggested that the inhabitants should forward their requirements to him in writing. Mr Palmer explained the steps that had been taken by the inhabitants in getting the bridge built. The bridge had cost £637, of which the public had subscribed £237. Mr Tippetts thought that the Heathcote Road Board would be the proper body to refer to. After some discussion, the following resolutions were carried:— “That this meeting desires to call the attention of the Provincial Government to the condition of the bridge over the Avon at Stanmore road, and to the inconvenience caused to the public, and especially to the inhabitants at Avonside, by the complete stoppage of traffic on the bridge since Friday last ; and further, respectfully requests the Government to take immediate measures for re-opening the thoroughfare. That a deputation, consisting of Messrs Habens, Bing, Money, Hitchens, and De Troy, with power to add to their number, be and is hereby empowered to wait upon his Honor the Superintendent with the foregoing resolution, and to receive his answer on behalf of the meeting.” It was decided that an adjourned meeting should be held on Tuesday evening next to receive the report of the deputation. A vote of thanks to the Rev. J. C. Bagshaw, for the use of the room, concluded the business, and the meeting then adjourned.

Press, 31 October 1866

Stanmore Bridge.—An adjourned meeting of the residents in the vicinity of this bridge was held last evening in the Avonside school-room, at, seven o'clock. The Rev. J Habens occupied the chair. The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The Chairman stated that in accordance with a resolution passed at the late meeting the deputation then appointed waited upon his Honor the Superintendent, and had drawn up the following report: —“The deputation appointed last Tuesday beg to report that his Honor received them yesterday, and that they presented the resolution with which they were charged. His Honor, considering that the case was one of local rather than of public interest, was not prepared to admit that it had any claim on the Provincial exchequer, but promised to consult his Executive with regard to it, His Honor suggested that, pending the decision of his Executive, the residents in the neighborhood should set on foot a subscription that the Road Boards should be requested to bear part of the expense, and that an application should then be made to the Government for a subsidy towards the cost of restoring the bridge.” Mr Habens said that his Honor had given no opinion upon the legality of the removal of the bridge. Mr Tippetts considered that in that case he did not see the use of subscribing for a new bridge, when it might be knocked down at any time. Mr Money said that unless an Ordinance were passed protecting the bridge, he considered that it would be useless to proceed in the matter. Mr Lockhart said that it appeared to him that the Government cared very little about the bridge. He thought that it was their duty, instead of requiring further subscriptions from the inhabitants, to return the money which they had already received under the understanding that a substantial and proper bridge should be erected by them, which was not the case at present. It was very evident that the Government had misemployed the money.

...cont'd

Press, 31 October 1866, cont'd

Mr De Troy thought that before condemning the Government they should first find out what they intended to do. Mr Newton moved—“That this meeting relies on the statement made by the Provincial Solicitor in the Provincial Council, and on the corresponding promise of his Honor the Superintendent that the matter shall receive the attention of the Executive.” He considered that they were bound to rely upon the promise of the Government. Mr Brunsdon gave a history of the erection of the bridge, which was put up by the Government after they had received from the inhabitants one-third of the cost. The plans were drawn up in the Government offices without their troubling themselves about navigation or anything else, and the fault of blocking up the river was therefore theirs. The Rev. Mr Bagshaw said that he hoped the matter would soon be settled, as it was one which affected the attendance of the school greatly, many of the children being compelled to keep away altogether. He thought the better plan would be to adjourn for a week to see what the Government were inclined to do. The resolution was carried. It was then resolved that at its rising the meeting should be adjourned for a week, so as to allow of a reply being received from the Executive. The Chairman was requested to forward a copy of the resolutions passed at that meeting to the Provincial Secretary, also requesting the reply of the Government. The meeting adjourned after passing a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

On 29 November, the Press included a long article that minutely examined the matter from just about every angle! The article is available at Paperspast:

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CHP18661129.2.6>

Appendix 4: Stanmore Bridge Ordinance

The Stanmore Bridge Road Ordinance 1867.

Analysis.

Preamble.

1. Lawful to Superintendent to construct Stanmore Bridge.
2. Said Bridge to be declared open for Traffic.
3. Title.

Whereas by an Act of the General Assembly of New Zealand entitled “The Highways and Watercourses Diversion Act, 1858,” it is enacted that it shall be lawful for the Superintendent of any Province, with the advice and consent of the Provincial Council thereof, by any Law or Ordinance to be made for that purpose to stop up any river stream or creek in such Province and to build over the same And whereas it is expedient that a bridge be constructed over the River Avon to form a continuation of the Stanmore-road passing through rural section No. 41 in the Christchurch District of the Province of Canterbury.

Be it therefore enacted by the Superintendent of the said Province with the advice and consent of the Provincial Council thereof as follows:

1. Lawful to Superintendent to construct Stanmore Bridge.

It shall be lawful for the said Superintendent to construct a Bridge and make approaches thereto over the River Avon on the site of the present Bridge over the said river known as the Stanmore Bridge and forming a continuation of the Stanmore Road and for that purpose to use the said Bridge or part thereof as he shall think fit and during the construction of such Bridge to stop up such river.

2. Said Bridge to be declared open for Traffic.

The Superintendent shall so as soon he shall have received a certificate, under the hand of the Provincial Engineer or other person for that purpose appointed by the said Superintendent of the completion of the said Bridge by Proclamation in the Provincial Government Gazette notify that the said Bridge is open for public traffic.

3. Title.

This Ordinance shall be entitled and may be cited as “The Stanmore Road Bridge Ordinance 1867”.

https://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/Digitised/Ordinances/Ordinances_765-820.pdf