

## Ruru Lawn Cemetery Tour

**R.S.A. Block**

**No. 171**

**Hinton**

Born at Colac Bay, Southland, John Daniel (Jack) Hinton ran away from home and, at 13, was a galley hand on a Norwegian factory ship killing of whales in Antarctic waters. He became a farm hand in Otago and, throughout the 1930s, was on the West Coast, first as a gold miner, then as a foreman-driver in the Public Works Department.

When World War II broke out, Hinton's father sent him his Boer War sergeant's stripes and a telegram telling him to do his duty. Hinton was the 22<sup>nd</sup> man to enlist at Greymouth. He was 30, had 'strong rugged features', a 'dry and earthy character' and rose to the rank of sergeant in the 20th Infantry Battalion.

In Egypt Hinton appeared quiet but prepared to challenge military authority. The troops received British army rations which were light. Freyberg came by and asked how the men were progressing at shooting. Hinton's reply was: "How would you expect them to bloody-well shoot? Not enough bloody rations, stinking heat and sand". Hinton was reprimanded but the rations were increased.

The Allied troops were sent to Greece as the Germans rolled in. Soon the Allies were in retreat, eventually finding themselves awaiting evacuation by the Royal Navy at the quay at the port of Kalamata.

In port there was chaos. Brigadier Parrington was, nominally, in charge and planning to surrender. When Hinton heard of his plans, he told him to 'go and jump in the bloody lake'. Parrington threatened him with a court-martial for his insolence and Hinton threatened Parrington with a court-martial for cowardice

Hinton went out armed with several grenades in the pockets of his shorts and a 303 rifle with its bayonet fixed. When an order came that soldiers should take cover, he snapped: . "To hell with that. Who'll come with me?" Accompanied by others or with machine-gun cover, Hinton killed the men in a machine-gun post, drove away the Germans at other guns and killed men who had sought refuge in two houses. Eventually he was shot in the stomach

The soldiers had recaptured the town and vital quay but the Royal Navy thought that the town had been lost and did not attempt to effect an evacuation. At 6 a.m. on 29 April Brigadier Parrington surrendered.

Thinking him a German, Hinton had come close to bayoneting a medical officer, Major George Thomson, and it was this man who recommended him for the V.C. The honour was gazetted on 14 October 1941. By now, however, Hinton was a Prisoner-of-War. The commandant at Stalag 1XC near Bad Sulza paraded his prisoners and announced that Hinton had received the award. Hinton, who had already tried to escape, was brought up from solitary confinement, invested with his ribbon and

returned to incarceration. When the camp was liberated by Americans, Hinton borrowed a uniform and fought alongside them till his nationality was discovered. At Buckingham Palace King George VI presented Hinton with his V.C. An acknowledgement of his attempts to escape came in the form of the M.I.D. award when he was back in New Zealand. In 1953 Hinton was part of the New Zealand Coronation Contingent for Queen Elizabeth II. He made several trips to London to attend V.C. and G.C. celebrations. He went alone in 1993, the only other living New Zealand recipient, Charles Upham, being too ill to attend.

After the war, Hinton leased Dominion Breweries' hotels and, at one stage, owned a hotel at Cobden on the West Coast. In 1964, in Latimer Square, Christchurch, three thugs robbed him of his passport, watch and money. In his last years Gabrielle McDonald wrote his biography. At the book launch Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters presented him with a walking stick carved by the people of the Far North.

Hinton long lived in the shadow of Upham, a double V.C. winner, who had been in the same company of the same battalion. Like Upham, Hinton was reticent about his achievements and unhappy that he had been captured and thus unable to fight throughout the war.

Jack Hinton, 87, died on 28 June 1997. He was given a full military funeral. There was a 100 strong honour guard, a eulogy delivered by the Chief of Staff and Parliament observed a minute's silence.

Mildred Elizabeth Hinton, who was born in New Zealand, died, at 69, on 22 July 1998.

## **Block 5**

### **Plot 10**

#### **Sullivan**

Daniel Giles – 'Dan' – Sullivan was born at Waltham, Christchurch on 18 July 1882, one of several children of Catholics, Florance (Florence) Sullivan from County Kerry, Ireland, and his wife, Mary Dow, from Dundee, Scotland. Florance worked as a labourer and carter. At 11 Dan passed the proficiency examination, after attending the Marist Brothers' School and St. Mary's. He worked in a market garden and apprenticed to W. Bates and Sons, furniture manufacturers, as a french polisher and, after completing his apprenticeship, headed overseas.

Sullivan sold his own hand-made furniture door-to-door in Melbourne and, in London, was reduced to sleeping on the Thames Embankment with only ninepence in his pocket. He visited Ireland, Europe and the United States, returning after three years. He later claimed that 'his political career was strongly influenced by a determination to prevent the kind of poverty he witnessed overseas from developing in New Zealand ...

On returning to Christchurch, Sullivan, 23, married Daisy Ethel Webster, 25, on 23 November 1905. Sullivan was a staunch Catholic but gave way to his wife's wishes, the wedding taking place at St. Mary's Anglican church, Merivale. The Rev. C. H. Gosset officiated. Dan was living at Woolston and his father was described as Harry

Sullivan, a carter. Daisy had been born at Sydenham but was now living at St. Albans. Her parents were Arundel Webster, a grocer, and Emilie nee Stoyle. Sullivan had gained his first elected post, at 16, as secretary of the committee organising the Christchurch United Furniture Trades Union annual picnic. He became president and secretary of the union and of the New Zealand Federated Furniture Trade Union and was on the executive of the Canterbury Trades and Labour Council. He wrote on labour issues for the *Lyttelton times* and was a journalist with the *Christchurch Sun*. He was a founder of the Christchurch Journalists' Union and argued cases through the industrial conciliation and arbitration system.

Sullivan became a soapbox orator in Cathedral Square. He stood for Parliament in 1914, his slogan being 'For Labour, for temperance and for the Empire'; unlike many Catholics, he remained a teetotaler and supporter of prohibition.

Sullivan was a Christchurch City councillor from 1915-23 and 1925-31. He chaired the Housing Committee, helping to develop a scheme whereby funds borrowed by the council were loaned to prospective homeowners.

In the 1919 general election Sullivan won the Avon parliamentary seat for the three-year-old Labour Party. The 'forces of Toryism and ... a reactionary Liberalism' were 'massed against him in his stronghold, employing the two-edged tools of calumny and vilification'. Clyde Carr commented:

... he plugged along, ever on and up. Careless of no detail, neglecting no individual appeal, scrupulous and courteous in his attention to his voluminous correspondence, he has impartially given of his best to political supporter and opponent. The public needs of his constituency, the private wants of his constituents, have been ever at the front of his mind and kept well before the Government of the day.

In 1931 Sullivan became Mayor of Christchurch. He would later admit that he was uncertain as to whether he could cope with the crisis:

... When the black clouds of depression, unemployment, widespread misery, social agitation and desperation were gathering and it is only too sadly true that there has been scarcely a day that I have been wholly free from anxiety concerning the peace of the city and anxiety as to whether I would have sufficient funds with which to maintain the distribution of relief to those who so sadly needed it.

In the event Sullivan performed brilliantly. Financially cautious and reluctant to raise rates, he spent much time charming money for relief out of influential local conservatives and working with non-Labour notables like the aged George Harper of the Citizens' Relief Association which became the Metropolitan Relief Association (it is interesting that Harper was the first person to be knighted when the Labour Government came to power in 1935). He interviewed thousands of people and often helped them personally. The disorder which was such a feature of other cities occurred to some extent in Christchurch, especially during the 1932 tramway strike. Of his wife, Sullivan said that 'she never desired public life but submerged her own desires and did her job when the call came'.

Clyde Carr summed up Dan's mayoralty, writing that he would ...probably be best and most gratefully remembered as Mayor of his native city, during that period of deep world depression which he and his colleagues turned to an occasion of bold and munificent civic administration, inspiring and leading the citizens to heights of generosity and self-sacrifice probably unexceeded in the history of this or any other country.

In Parliament, Sullivan supported James McCombs in his attempts to unseat Harry Holland as leader, and, in 1923, made one challenge himself. He was Labour's senior whip from 1931-35. All the while, he was employing his journalistic skills, contributing to the *Christchurch times* and *Sun*.

In 1936 Sullivan reluctantly resigned as Mayor when he was appointed Minister of Industries and Commerce in Michael Joseph Savage's First Labour Government. Clyde Carr commented:

It was a time when the scope for manufacturing was rapidly enlarging and he 'played a vigorous personal part in encouraging ... growth'. He had already, in 1916 and '18, published booklets on Christchurch's leather industry and, in 1918, had written a booklet on post-war reconstruction. He demonstrated that he remembered the realities of the workplace, returning to W. Bates and Sons to show that he had retained the skills of a French polisher. He lived modestly in a house in the street which bore his name - 111 Sullivan Avenue.

Sullivan hoped that New Zealand would become self-sufficient in wheat-growing and was 'always ready to champion the case of the wheat grower before the Government, even if not always with the success that he would have liked'. When, in 1945, the Government turned its back on the idea of self-sufficiency and sought a long-term contract for the supply of Australian wheat. Sullivan went to Australia and negotiated a very good contract.

The 1936 book, *In the public eye*, has a verse – it would appear a politically hostile verse - on one of Dan Sullivan's early preoccupations as Minister of Railways:

It really seems a pity  
that the Mayor of this city,  
having cast aside his Municipal chains,  
should spend his well-earned leisure  
extracting doubtful pleasure  
from the very futile game of 'playing trains'.

In 1938 Sullivan was a member of the caucus committee which thrashed out the details of the new Social Security system. He was Minister of Railways from 1935-41, Minister in Charge of Scientific and Industrial Research, 1935-40 and 1941-47, Minister of Supply, 1939-41 and Supply and Munitions, 1941-47. In 1942 he took on the burden of Minister of Stabilisation

Sullivan ranked fourth in Cabinet until M. J. Savage's death in 1940. Many thought that Sullivan's popularity would make him a strong candidate for the premiership. However, the Cabinet looked to Peter Fraser and Sullivan nominated the Wellington M. P. to be party leader and Prime Minister and ever afterwards supported him and his deputy, Finance Minister Walter Nash. Now ranked third in Cabinet, he was a member of the War Cabinet and, on occasions, Acting Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Finance.

In his fifties, Sullivan still looked youthful. Cartoonists distinguished him by his shock of dark curly hair, and particularly, a lock which hung down over his forehead. Clyde Carr wrote:

Mr. Sullivan ... is ... the municipal grandfather though he certainly does not look it. With the aid of a shock of hyacinthe locks, he miraculously preserves his youthful appearance, the pendant forelock, which he has a habit of alternately tugging and twisting around his finger, constituting the crown jewel.

By the mid 1940s Sullivan was 'grizzled' and without his 'earlier bounce'. However, there remained something of 'the debonair minister of 1935'. According to Michael Bassett

... Sullivan had a roving eye and liked to stroke women whenever he visited Washington; only recently he had fathered a child out of wedlock which ... shocked Fraser ... But Sullivan was one of the more competent in a Cabinet of slender talents and Fraser stuck by him.

On 25 March 1947 Sullivan entered Lewisham Hospital, Wellington, with a heart ailment. His popularity was shown by the fact that radio stations and newspaper offices received many calls inquiring about his condition. His case caused concern, he improved but, in a sudden relapse, he died, aged 64, at 6.55 a.m. on 8 April. He had been in Parliament for almost 28 years, longer than anyone except Peter Fraser who had won his seat in 1918 and W. E. Parry who had also entered in 1919. The *Press* described him as 'one of the "Old Guard" of the political Labour movement'.

Sullivan was 'liked and respected across the political spectrum for his personal warmth, conciliatory nature, integrity, humanitarian ideals and hard work'. Some 15000 people filed past during the day that his body lay in state in Christchurch's Civic Theatre. Peter Fraser involved himself in every detail of the funeral; but, then, Fraser had a fascination with funerals. The Prime Minister must have felt satisfied because vast crowds attended. However, there were still those on the right who disliked Sullivan and continued to dislike him long after his death. In 1972 the widow of a New Brighton doctor stated that she 'couldn't stand Dan' and claimed that he and the seaside suburb's Mayor, E. A. M. Leaver, had flooded local baches with just released prison inmates.

Sullivan's gravestone states that he was 'Mayor of Christchurch, 1931-36 [and] friend of the poor'.

Daisy Ethel Sullivan, 83, died on 7 December 1964.

Bassett, Michael, [\*Tomorrow comes the song : a life of Peter Fraser\*](#), 2000

[\*Carr, Clyde, Politicalities, 1936\*](#)

*Dictionary of New Zealand biography*, Daniel Giles Sullivan, James Watson

Plumridge, E. W. [\*'Labour in Christchurch : community and consciousness, 1914-1919\*](#). M. A. thesis, Canterbury, 1979

*Press*, 9 April 1947, p. 8

### **Block 13**

#### **Lot 172**

#### **Armstrong**

Arthur Ernest (Tommy) Armstrong was born in . His mother was the 'kindly and bright' Alice Fox. His father, Hubert Thomas 'Tim' Armstrong, a member of a poor Catholic family, had been born at Bulls but became a Christchurch M. P. and a Cabinet minister in the First Labour Government Tim.

Tommy was born at Waihi. His 1928-34 term as a Christchurch City councillor coincided with the Depression. The dashing young councillor was known for his left-wing views. In 1943 he became M. P. for Napier. However, his parliamentary career was cut short when, in 1951, National Prime Minister Sidney Holland called a snap election over the waterfront strike.

Tommy later became secretary of the Canterbury branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. In 1963 he was ousted from his position, suspended from membership and barred from taking part in an election for national president. He had returned to the city council in 1962 but voted with Citizens Association councillors and was expelled from the party. In 1965 he was an independent candidate for the mayoralty, council and Lyttelton Harbour Board. In the 1966 general election he was independent candidate for Sydenham but, without party backing, his prospects were always doomed. In these last bids for office, Tommy appeared a sad isolated man.

Tommy died on 21 November 1980. He left a wife and five children.

*Press*, 24 November 1980 p. 6

### **Block 18**

#### **Lot 30**

#### **Block 18**

#### **Lot 32**

#### **Archer**

John Kendrick Archer was born at Leicestershire, England, in 1865. His father, Thomas Archer, a master butcher, was a keen Methodist; his mother, Mary Kendrick, a devout Baptist.

John was educated at Market Bosworth Grammar School and the Nottingham Baptist College and Nottingham University College. Initially a Methodist lay preacher, he

was ordained a Baptist minister in 1892. He married Phoebe Elizabeth Gee, a native of Wisbech, at the Queen Street Baptist Chapel, Peterborough, England, in 1894 and served in various churches. In 1901 he made a tentative entry into public life, being elected to the Hebden Bridge School Board. He was a poor law guardian at Grimsby from 1907-08.

In 1909 Archer came to New Zealand, occupying the pulpit at Napier till 1913, and serving as chairman of the Main School Committee and the local Technical Education Board. In 1914 he was transferred to Invercargill and, while there, spent 12 months on the borough council. He next went to Wellington, leaving there for the Trentham military camp where he served as a chaplain till the end of the war.

In 1919 Archer was president of the New Zealand Baptist Union and became minister at the Sydenham Baptist church, then in High Street and, later, in Colombo Street, Beckenham. Archer was to retire from the ministry in 1932.

Archer was president of the Labour Party and, from 1923-31, was vice-president. He was elected to the Sydenham School committee, the North Canterbury Hospital Board, the Christchurch Tramway Board (of which he was chairman for three years) and the Christchurch Fire Board. He was an unsuccessful Parliamentary candidate.

From 1921-25 Archer was a Christchurch City councillor, being re-elected in 1932. He was Christchurch's first Labour Mayor, holding office for three terms between 1925-31. During his first term, the Citizens' Association formed a majority on the council. However, in 1927, Archer gained a 10,000 majority at a record poll and Labour gained 11 of the 16 seats.

During Archer's mayoralty T. J. Edmonds gave his band rotunda to the city and Robert MacDougall donated an art gallery. However, here were controversies. One took place when the council planned to build women's toilets on the 'Godley plot' opposite the Cathedral (the statue of John Robert Godley stood, at that time, beside the Cathedral, where the Citizen's War Memorial stands today). Many people, led by the colonial elite, rose to defend the legacy of the 'pioneers'. The *Press* thundered against 'the lavatory party' which planned to turn Cathedral Square into 'Lavatory Square', and a legal action went against the council. In May 1928, the *Star* quoted Archer's opinion of a letter from the Canterbury Women's Club. It was

... extraordinary, unwomanly, the sort of thing a 'hooligan' or 'silly young flapper' might write, ignorant, stupid, irresponsible, regardless of facts, deserving of the severest snub, inspired, propaganda, selfish, impracticable, hysterical ... insane and worthy to be ignored.

Archer and his colleagues did not agree with the patrician, George Gould, about where the proposed Citizens' War Memorial might be placed. Gould said of the councillors that 'opposition came from half a dozen men who could not resist the unusual sensation of being able to defeat the hopes and desires of their betters'. In 1931 Archer made way for the vigorous younger D. G. Sullivan. Sullivan resigned as Mayor when he gained a Cabinet place in the First Labour Government. In 1936 Archer then made a fourth – and this time unsuccessful – bid to become Mayor.

In 1937 the Labour Government appointed Archer to the Legislative Council, Parliament's upper house and now defunct. In 1944 the Archers celebrated their golden wedding. In 1949 ill-health forced Archer to retire from the Legislative Council. His 'life of service ended' in his 85<sup>th</sup> year on 25 June 1949.

Phoebe Elizabeth Archer, 87, died on 13 November 1953. The Baptist Union bought the couple's home at 166 Colombo Street and obtained a pound for pound subsidy from the Government with the intention that this should become 'a home for aged Baptists of the Canterbury-Westland Auxiliary Area'. Eventually the property was vested in the Baptist Union of New Zealand and the emphasis on the residents being Baptists removed. Instead the home would provide the residents with 'a maximum of individuality' and 'comfort and Christian fellowship for their declining years'. The institution was named in John and Phoebe's honour 'as an expression of thanksgiving to Almighty God for the outstanding and devoted service of the late Rev. and Mrs. J. K. Archer and as a permanent memorial'.

*Press*, 26 July 1949, p. 6  
*Star*, 1 May 1928

One of the Archers' sons, Kendrick Gee, was born at Heptonstall in the historic county of the West Riding, Yorkshire. He was educated at Napier and at Southland Boys' High School. In 1914 the Royal Humane Society awarded him its bronze and graduated with an Ll. B. from Canterbury University College, before practising as a barrister and solicitor in Christchurch.

In 1942 Kendrick received his first official appointment – as chairman of an industrial appeal.

Archer stated that he had no regrets about his stints as a Supreme Court judge being never more than temporary:

A judge has a very difficult job and is involved in concepts and clever arguments from lawyers. I much prefer dealing more closely with people and their problems in a practical way.

For 23 years Kendrick was chairman of the Waterfront Industry Tribunal. At the time of his retirement, in December 1974, he commented that:

One of my greatest satisfactions is that ... I never had a dissenting opinion from the other two members.

This, I think, shows what can be achieved by mature men from opposite Sides, yes, but able to reach agreement without recriminations.

Kendrick Arche, 82, husband of Lucy, died on 22 November 1978. Their son, Kingsley, 11, died on 4 June 1944.

*Press*, 23 November 1978, p. 6



**Block 33**  
**Plot 4**  
**Stewart**

James Mawson Stewart was born at Orange, New South Wales, but came with his family to Christchurch as a small boy. He began his working life as a clerk in a mercantile office and, later, became works clerk and then, cashier at a venerable institution, the Christchurch Gas Company. While still a young man, he set up the firm of Stewart Beckett and Co., public accountants. He became 'one of the best known businessmen in Christchurch'.

A long-time member of the Stock Exchange, Stewart was a director of local companies, first president of the Christchurch Public Accountants' Association and became president of the New Zealand Society of Accountants' Association. He was instructor in accountancy at the Christchurch Technical College (now CPIT) and chairman of the Fendalton Domain Board. He dwelt at 39 Hamilton Avenue.

Stewart was interested in racing, being a member of the Canterbury Jockey Club and, from 1932 to 1946, steward of the New Zealand Metropolitan Trotting Club. While his health allowed it, he was a keen golfer.

A member, and president of the Christchurch Rotary Club, Stewart

... took a leading part in the charitable work of the club, notably in the Depression years when hampers were distributed at Christmas to those in distress. His personality made him a valuable member of committees appointed at that time to raise money in the annual street appeals.

The 1936 volume *In the public eye* has the verse:

Jim you smile so air-ily,  
poised so debonair-ily,  
auditing so warily,  
backing odds so mare-ily,  
springing jests so dare-ily,  
bearing loads so share-ily.  
We greet you, James, Rotar-ily.

In youth Stewart and his brother, Arthur, bached at New Brighton. There exists a photo of seven dapper young businessmen sitting or standing near the beach and, before them, a leg-pull notice: 'Inmates of the Old Men's Home, New Brighton'. At either end of the middle row sit Arthur and James.

The onset of maturity drew many away from the seaside suburb. James and Arthur retained a business interest in the area. During World War I, they were major figures in the South New Brighton Land Company which consisted of a host of small shareholders, and the Southshore Syndicate, whose members were substantial businessmen. The two companies bought the wasteland where the suburb of

Southshore now stands and sold it at a low price. It was stipulated that every purchaser should donate 15 pounds towards the cost of a bridge which was to take people across the Estuary to Sumner. Seven hundred pounds was collected, plans drawn up and a track – the future Rockinghorse Road – hacked out of the wilderness.

After the war, the company and syndicate were wound up. James continued to hope that the area might progress. In 1927 he attempted to persuade the Government that the bridge should be erected at public expense but without success. Ratepayers became disillusioned, one writing thus to the New Brighton Borough Council:

Cheque herewith for two pounds two shillings ... for enclosed rates.

In regard to these rates, I understand the section to be somewhere in the sandhills to the south of the settlement but, when I have been to Christchurch, I have never been able to find it. As far as I know there are no roads near it, no lighting except by the moon and the stars, no library within 10 miles, nor hospital. It is hard to know why we pay rates. Can you tell me why this money is charged against this unfortunate bleak barren bit of sandhill? And do you know whether anyone buys land about this direction and how it might be got rid of?

Stewart's last years were blighted by illness; the 1947 deaths of his brother, Arthur, and son, Mawson, in Ballantyne's Fire; and that of his wife, Margaret, 61 on 11 May 1948. James Mawson Stewart, 66, died on 29 June 1949.

Greenaway, Richard, 'The Estuary bridge which is still awaited', *Press*, 10 April 1976, p. 11

[\*In the public eye\*](#), 1936

*Press*, 30 June 1949, p. 3 and 9

## **Block 34**

### **Plot 12A**

#### **Hayes**

James Hubert Hayes was born at Halswell, Canterbury, in 1859. He lived to the age of 102 and never left Canterbury.

As a young man, he drove a four-horse coach between Christchurch and Tai Tapu, later driving horse-drawn trams along the New Brighton Tramway Company track (now Pages Road) to New Brighton. He would later recall these days with affection:

Driving a team of horses on a moonlight night was far more interesting and exciting than a present day bus driver's lot ....

Passengers on his hey-day appeared to be much more happy-go-lucky .... Nobody complained when he stopped his tram to pick up a straying goat which belonged to a friend. The goat had more than one ride and eventually caused a complaint by chewing a woman's dress ....

When electric trams were introduced in 1905, Jimmy refused the job of driver and, instead, became a conductor. Rabbits were then plentiful on the tram routes to New Brighton. Jimmy, who had his gun ready, would get the driver to ring his bell when he saw a rabbit, 'two rings if it was on the right hand side'. Jimmy would uncover the red rear light and usually had a good target. This activity, which provided food for the stewing pots of the conductor and many a driver, was carried on day and night.

Rabbits were not the only target. 'Many a passing tram got a reminder who was the conductor of the other one. The popular target was the number on the back'.

In *I well remember* O. B. Stanford commented thus on Jimmy Hayes and the tramway to New Brighton:

One particular tram guard carried a shot gun and potted rabbits among the lupins which bordered the tram line most of the way from Linwood to the New Brighton bridge. There were no fixed stopping places. The tram just stopped where and when there was a passenger to pick up or alight, or, of course, when the guard had a rabbit to pick up.

In his 80s, in World War II, Jimmy was a member of the home Guard and won a cup from the East Battalion Home Guard for the third grand aggregate in miniature rifle shooting. In this period he specialised in trap shooting and was a member of the Waihora and Belfast clubs. He competed regularly, too, in shoots held by the Christchurch, North Canterbury and Ellesmere clubs. Blindness in his aiming eye did not deter him; he simply changed the gun to the other shoulder and, within months, was again shattering clay pigeons. Till his health failed in the last year of his life, Jimmy could still return a good score in a clay pigeon shoot. He held an award naming him the oldest active miniature rifle-shooter in the British Empire and became probably the oldest rifle and clay-target shooter in the world.

It was ironical but inevitable that one of Jimmy's proudest days should be tinged with regret. This was in September 1954 when he was a specially invited guest of the Christchurch transport Board on the last tram to be run in the city. He commented: 'I think I will go but I don't think they will let me take my gun with me'.

Jimmy died on 22 August 1962. Mary Hayes, 95, died on 16 October of the same year. A son, Arnold, had been killed in World War I. Surviving children were William (Chatel), Harold (Onsie), Mabel (Mrs. M. Miller) and Constance (Mrs. Dack).

*Christchurch star*, 23 August 1962 p. 14

*Press*, 24 August 1962, p. 13

Stanford, O. B., [\*I well remember\*](#), 1962

## **Block 36**

### **Lot 24**

#### **Gough**

Thomas Tracy Gough was born in Sydney in 1887. He went to St. Aloysius College, came to New Zealand at 14 and was at the East Christchurch School, Gilby's College

and had a private tutor. He spent six years at the firm of George Doughty, soft goods merchants, and then joined his father's retail footwear business. This had shops in High Street, Sydenham and Ashburton.

In 1929 Tracy joined his brother, Edgar Charles, and Hamer in the firm of Gough, Gough and Hamer, selling engineering and electrical appliances. Edgar and Hamer left and set up their own business and Tracy continued to head the original firm.

In 1932 Tracy's firm began importing tractors and earth-moving equipment. Tracy was in the U.S.A. when World War II broke out. The firm increased greatly in size and played a large part in supplying the materials and machines for the thousands of earth-moving jobs required for the defence of New Zealand and the South-west Pacific. During hostilities the firm set up 12 workshops and had 40 service trucks on the road. More than 17,000 service jobs and major overhauls were completed. New Zealand's first shock-therapy machine was made by Gough, Gough and Hamer. Though the use of such machines is now banned, they were, at the time of Tracy's death, an 'accepted part of the treatment of certain types of mental diseases'.

Tracy lived at 'one of the show places of Christchurch', 'Mona Vale', which ran from Fendalton to Riccarton. The homestead, a two-storey modern brick building, was 'set in 16 acres of park bordering the river Avon, approached by a drive from Fendalton Road'. In 1946 Tracy offered the 'Mill House' to the Christchurch City Council at a peppercorn rental. Representations were then made to the Government but, as no response was forthcoming, the offer was withdrawn. Also in 1946 Tracy gave four acres as a site for the Disabled Servicemen's Civil Re-establishment League Training Centre in Riccarton.

Tracy offered the 'Mill House' and 'Mona Vale' for the accommodation of King George VI and Princess Margaret during their proposed visit to New Zealand but hotels were preferred. Because of the king's declining health, the 1949 visit never took place.

Interested in horticulture, Tracy raised many rare and delicate specimens in his hothouses. He received an award from the Royal Horticultural Society for one of his plants. His home was furnished in period style and contained old china and oil paintings. He owned an excellent collection of Goldie's paintings.

Fond of cruising, Tracy owned a motor launch which he kept in the Bay of Islands; the A class keel yacht 'Marangi'; and a motor ketch, 'Friendship', which, in World War II, was commandeered by the navy. Tracy was commodore of the Canterbury Outboard Motor Boat Club, vice-President of the Canterbury Yachting Association and a founder of the Banks Peninsula Cruising Club. He became vice-chairman, a life member and, finally, patron.

Tracy married Julia Daisy Hill and had two daughters and two daughters. He was survived by his second wife, his sons, Owen and Blair, and one daughter, Beryl Gough.

Tracy Gough died on 3 June 1954. The ashes of his wife, Margaret, were buried on 4 April 1975.

*Press*, 4 June 1954, p. 12

**Block 37**

**Plot 330**

**Ager**

Benjamin John Ager, son of an architect, was born in Ashburton, served as a carpenter with a big Christchurch firm, Peter Graham. Eventually he qualified as an architect and structural engineer. After several years in London, he returned to Christchurch where he practised as an architect. Peter Beaven describes him as 'a man of average height and with a sharp quick face'.

For a time Ager dwelt in North New Brighton where he was a member of the local burgesses' association. He designed the North New Brighton Memorial Hall at the eastern end of Bowhill Road. Later he dwelt in Knowles Street. He joined the Automobile Association, Canterbury in 1912 and, from 1941-57, was on this body's council. His main interest in the association were its buildings and motor camp.

Several apartment buildings were erected in the city, including St. Elmo Courts and the West Avon on opposite corners of Hereford and Montreal Streets, Victoria Mansions on the Montreal/ Victoria Street corner and Carnley and Belveder on Salisbury Street; they 'were elegantly built and named to match'.

St. Elmo Courts were built on part of the site hitherto occupied by St. Elmo Flats. St. Elmo or Erasmus, whose feast day is 2 June, was a sixth century martyr and patron saint of sailors and people, especially children, who suffer from colic and similar diseases. The flats had belonged to Frederick Murray and then Annie Clifford. Seven storeys high and built of reinforced concrete, St. Elmo Court was the tallest apartment building. It had a timber and wrought-iron steel staircase, timber joinery and sash and leadlight windows. There were six flats on the ground floor and seven on each of the other floors.

Young Norman Greenaway watched as St. Elmo Courts was erected. Technological advances meant that the huge gangs which had worked on large building sites were no longer needed. Nevertheless, a substantial number of men pushed wheelbarrows containing wet concrete along a spiral walkway to the top of the building.

St. Elmo Courts was a popular residence. It was only after a struggle that the owners managed to convert the building to offices, the last resident moving out in 1957. In 2010 St. Elmo Courts was listed as a category 2 building with the New Zealand Historic Places trust and by the Christchurch City Council as a heritage building. In 2011, it was demolished because of earthquake damage.

Ager designed the Avon parking building in Worcester Street. At the time of its construction this was 'a very progressive project'. For Todd Motors Ltd., Ager designed a large garage in Victoria Street. For many years this was used by the New Zealand Railways' Road Service but was demolished to make way for the Christchurch Casino.

A late project was the Canterbury Terminating Building Society's six storey building on the corner of High and Manchester streets. This was the second six-storey building in Christchurch, coming after the Lyttelton Harbour Board offices. Ager 'suddenly got very old' and found the task of doing the working drawings beyond him. Peter Beaven, who had come from Timaru to Christchurch, created what was virtually a new design. He drove Ager to the site and the older man said sweetly: "It's completely different".

Benjamin John Ager, 83, died on 18 April 1959. His widow, Wanda Grace, 68, died on 2 June.

*Press*, 18 April 1959 p. 11, 2 June 1988 p. 2, 3 June 1988, p. 2, 15 June 1988, p. 2, 4 October 2005, p. C8

### **Ballantyne's fire victims**

In 1947 more than 300 people were employed in the department store of J. Ballantyne and Co. which covered an acre block on the Colombo Street-Cashel Street corner. The store, in some places four storeys high, was made up of seven smaller buildings linked together. Most of the upper floors were staff work areas, including the dress-making and credit and accounting departments.

The rambling nature of the structure meant that, once a fire had started, it could travel quickly through the store. There were no fire sprinklers and the materials used to line parts of the building were wooden match lining and pinex, both highly flammable. Around the outside there was a first floor veranda which, during the fire, was to make it difficult for the fire fighters to put up their ladders.

At 3.31 p.m. on 18 November 1947 a female employee told a salesman that smoke was coming up the stairs. It was, in fact, coming from the cellar of Congreve's Building which was beneath the furnishing department but there were no flames and no sound of burning. The salesman told the woman to call the fire brigade and tell the owners.

Some minutes later the fire brigade had not arrived. The salesman and other staff members placed fire extinguishers at the bottom of the stairs.

The owners, Kenneth and Roger Ballantyne, knew about the fire but were uncertain as to whether a call to the fire brigade had been made. Another call was made and received at 3.46 p.m.

Two hundred and fifty customers and the retail staff on the ground floor were moved out but there was no attempt to clear the upper floors of the staff who had just returned to work after a tea break. By now the flames had broken through to the furnishing department.

The fire brigade was understaffed and the two most senior officers not on duty. When firemen arrived at 3.47 p.m., they thought that this was a relatively minor cellar fire. They brought short-length ladders and left behind their turntable ladder which would have enabled them to reach people who were trapped on the upper floors.

More staff left the building just as the centre of the department store exploded in flames, blowing out two large windows. Within two minutes the building was aflame. The officer in charge now realised the gravity of the situation, sent a subordinate to make a call to bring out all the fire appliances in Christchurch but the call was delayed by overloaded telephone lines.

One woman jumped from a third floor window, hit the first floor veranda and landed on the road. She died soon after.

Some heads of departments took the unilateral decision to evacuate their staff from the upper floors of the building. The staff of the dress-making section on the second floor escaped after taking the stairs and leaving. Immediately thereafter

... A gigantic maelstrom of flame leaped 300 feet into the air [remaining] for more than half an hour [and] punctuated with violent, surging outbursts as part of the roof and floors fell in. Flames spouted from windows all round the block and sealed the way of escape for many.

The eight women in the millinery department were slow in realising the danger. Only the supervisor and one subordinate made it safely down the fire escape. The other seven died from smoke inhalation.

In the credit department, the workers shut up their equipment and tried to leave via the fire escape, only to be pushed back by the smoke and heat. They moved to another area and were driven back by smoke. Two women tried the fire escape again but could not get to it because the roof of the office began to fall in. They then jumped, landing on the veranda and being rescued by firemen. Those who stayed behind died.

Kenneth Ballantyne broke a window and climbed out onto the parapet. Hoses wet him down until ladders could be moved into position. As he reached the ground, power lines burned out and sheets of blue flame swept along the face of the store. His was the last rescue.

By now over 200 fire fighters using 20 appliances were fighting the blaze. At 6 p.m. firemen, policemen and volunteers began the search for bodies. The fires finally burned out at 8 p.m. The last bodies were carried out on 21 November. Forty-one people had perished.

The full degree of the disaster was only realised at 6 p.m. when police were able to enter the gutted building and seek the remains of the dead. The 'gruesome task of recovering ... bodies' continued till 8.30 p.m. The following morning work began again, particularly in the south-east corner of the building where many bodies were intermingled with debris from the upper floors'.

Christchurch honoured the victims of the biggest fire in New Zealand history by giving them the largest funeral ever to take place in the city. On 23 November 14 station wagons brought the 41 coffins into the centre of the square where they stood during the civic service in the Anglican Cathedral. One thousand people filling the

building and loudspeakers brought the service to hundreds who stood outside. People in homes all over the country listened to the radio broadcast. Those who attended included the representative of the Governor-General, Prime Minister Peter Fraser, members of Cabinet and Parliament, the Mayor and Mayoress, the United Kingdom High Commissioner, 500 next-of-kin, 300 members of Ballantyne's staff and representatives of local authorities and organisations.

Music included the hymn 'Rock of ages' and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, beginning 'The Lord is my shepherd'. The choir sang, unaccompanied, a 17<sup>th</sup> century anthem: 'If life be long, I will be glad that I may long obey. If short – yet why should I be sad to soar to endless day'. The address was given by the Primate and Bishop of Christchurch, Campbell West-Watson. A Presbyterian minister read the lesson which was based on the words: 'And God shall wipe away all tears'. A Methodist and Baptist minister offered prayers, while a Congregationalist announced the final hymn: 'Oh God, our help in ages past'.

Thousands of people stood along the three mile route to the Ruru Lawn Cemetery where a mass burial took place.

Two months later a commission of inquiry was established into the cause of the fire. No definite cause could be found. However, the commission found that there had not been enough well-trained officers at the scene and that attempts to rescue trapped workers had suffered from a lack of co-ordination and leadership. The officers did not recognise the potential danger of the fire until it was too late to take effective action.

The building was unsafe and did not meet city building regulations despite being inspected and passed in 1943.

The management of the store had not taken the risk of the fire seriously. There was no emergency plan and staff did not know what to do in the event of fire. There were no emergency alarms and no way of automatically contacting the fire brigade.

The commission recommended changes in fire prevention and fire fighting throughout the country. It also recommended urgent changes to the building regulations and fire safety requirements to prevent a similar disaster.

### **Deceased**

Beale, Kathleen, single, 25, 14 Nayland Street, credit office  
Blair, Caroline Sarah, single, 21, 27 Retreat Road, Avonside  
Bradbury, Ruth Lillian, 26, single, 17 Ashgrove Terrace, credit office  
Brown, Edwin Alexander., 48, married, 17 Elgin Street, credit office  
Burr, Dorothea Lillian, 37, single, 122 Colombo Street, office staff  
Challis, Jane Kinsman, 20, 71 Chrystall Street, display department  
Christensen, Nellie Elenora Marie, 20, single, 114 St. James Avenue, office  
Cody, Violet May, 30, 2 Taylor Crescent, Spreydon: died from injuries  
Coles, Shirley Dorne, 20, single, 478 Cashel Street, millinery department  
Dick, Jean Archibald, 20, single, 15A Hutcheson Street, millinery department  
Diver, Molly Patricia, 23, single, 53 Ranfurly Street, accounts department  
Elwood, Iris Evelyn, 23, single, 81 Barbour Street, millinery department  
Ferriter, Agnes, 41, single, 862 Colombo Street, credit office



Forde, Mary Sabina, 20, single, 75 Montreal Street, credit office  
 Gillard, Eileen Joyce, 26, single, 273 Armagh Street, credit office  
 Hamilton, Claire Aileen, 16, single, 10 Harewood Road  
 Hamilton, Helen Ballantyne, 26, single, 24 Ayr Street  
 Hampson, Gerald James, 25, single, 35 Sails Street: brother of Marie Elizabeth  
 Hampson  
 Hampson, Marie Elizabeth, 22, single, 35 Sails Street  
 Hayman, Rosalind, 20, single, 23 Mayfield Avenue, millinery department  
 Hepburn, Wilhelmina, 39, single, 113 Burke Street: Wilhelmina was in charge of the  
 millinery department  
 Hudson, William John, 48, married, secretary to the company, 197 Clyde Road  
 Kelliher, Mary, 20, Y. W. C. A., credit office  
 Lawson, Willard Alan, single, 24, 41 Bishop Street, credit office  
 Lloyd, Judith Marie, 21, single, 32 Dormer Street, credit office  
 Lough, John Harold Welsh, 66, married, 115 Merivale Lane, accounts department  
 Lovell, Colin Frederick, 25, married, King Street, Rangiora, credit office  
 McKibbin, William Shaw, 24, single, 56 Dyers Pass Road, audit department  
 McLean, Mary Margaret, 50, widow, 1 Garden Road, clerical department  
 Newton, Emma Earle, 57, single, 158 Olliviers Road, Linwood  
 Osvath, Vilma, 32, widow, 113 Peverel Street, millinery department  
 Rodgers, Kelvin John, 20, single, 103 St. Albans Street  
 Serra, Mary Catherine Murie, 24, single, 11 Tilford Street, credit office  
 Smith, Jessie Stewart, 18, single, 148 Peverel Street, Riccarton, credit office  
 Stewart, Arthur, 63, married, 19 Hamilton Avenue: auditor from Stewart Beckett and  
 Co.  
 Stewart, Mawson, 32, married, 43 Alpha Avenue.  
 Street, Joyce Frances Elizabeth, 28, single, 352 Manchester Street, retail college  
 Ward, Isobel Ann, 23, single, 1 Dover Street, display department  
 Webb, Kitty Patricia, 24, single, 15 Western Terrace, millinery department  
 Were, Bertha, 22, married, 18 Berry Street, credit office  
 Wilby, Myrtle Joy, 18, single, 23 Clive Street, credit office

William Hudson, an Englishman, came to New Zealand in the 1920s, obtained a  
 position with Ballantyne's and married the eldest daughter of William Ballantyne. He  
 had three children.

William Shaw McKibbin, the only child of Mr. and Mrs. V. J. McKibbin, went to  
 Christ's College, During the war he was in the Royal New Zealand Air Force ground  
 staff and spent a year overseas. A keen cricketer, he joined the Old Collegians'  
 Cricket Club and, during the war, played representative cricket for Canterbury. When  
 the Old Collegians moved their headquarters to Elmwood Park, he transferred to West  
 Christchurch. He was in the company's audit department and was to have announced  
 his engagement to Judith Lloyd of the credit office. Both perished in the fire.

Arthur Stewart had been born in Australia but spent most of his life in Christchurch.  
 In his youth he played hockey for the Addington Hockey Club. Later he was a  
 member of the Fendalton Bowling Club. He was a life member of the Fendalton  
 Tennis Club. For many years an accountant at James Shand and Co., he left in 1923 to  
 join his brother, James Mawson, and become a partner at Stewart Beckett and Co. He

was married and had three children. He was 'one of the best known public accountants in Christchurch'.

Mawson Stewart, nephew of Arthur and son of James Mawson, was educated at Christ's College, studied agriculture and joined Stewart Beckett and Co. In World War II he was an officer in the Army Service Corps. He was a keen member of the Accountant Students' Society. He was married and had two small children.

Arthur and Mawson, uncle and nephew, were auditing the books at Ballantyne's store on 18 November 1947.

Joyce Street was Canterbury representative of the New Zealand College of Retailing. She had been in Christchurch for only 18 months and had conducted classes for assistants in city firms. A former school teacher, she had just been appointed the college's New Zealand's principal of the college and was to have taken a six weeks holiday in Australia before taking up her new role in Wellington. She was described as ... a particularly capable, loyal, enthusiastic and charming teacher ... All the students join ... in paying tribute to her great work and influence.

*Press*, 20 Nov 1947, p. 6

*Star-Sun*, 19 Nov 1947, p. 1