

The
**Story
of
Oxford**

1852—1932

BY
Lancelot Watson



Watson, Lancelot
The story of
Oxford, 1852-1932

PRINTED BY
JORDAN & Co.
CHRISTCHURCH

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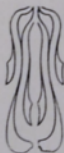
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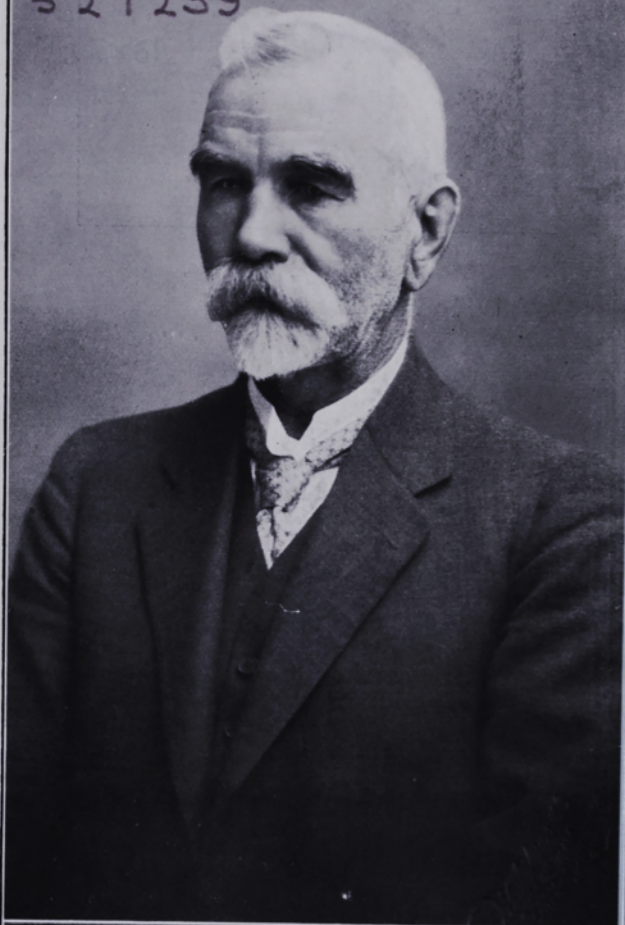
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Lancelotti Watson

Foreword

I launch this booklet on the public with trepidation. It had been frequently urged upon me to write the story of Oxford but I hesitated on account of time, circumstance, and inability to do the story justice. The Diamond Jubilee of the School, taking place this year, forced my hand. The hour had arrived, but not the man. Not to allow the opportunity to pass, I reluctantly accepted the task.

This booklet does not claim to be original. It is largely a compilation of matter procured from various sources. The reading of numerous minute books covering a period of sixty years was arduous and exhausting but it enabled me to secure accuracy, where otherwise memory would have been at fault.

“ When 'Omer smote his bloomin' lyre,
He'd heard men sing by land and sea,
And what he thought he might require
He went and took—same as me.”

I have “ took ” wherever I could, without, in many cases, being able to make an acknowledgement. I must, however, here, express my grateful acknowledgement of valuable assistance and encouragement, to Canon Wollstein, Canon and Mrs. T. A. Hamilton, Mrs. G. Nell (Lucy Woodfield), Dr. J. E. Holloway, Mr. John Ingram, Mr. K. D. Henderson, and Mr. H. C. D. Somerset.

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A very large amount of material has been gathered that could not be included in a book of this size, and its omission may cause disappointment. From a selection of the material I had to raise a structure which I fear, may be without "form and comeliness," and while I have paid particular and more detailed attention to the earlier days I have endeavoured to incorporate the "beginnings" and many of the activities of most social groups through the more than seventy years of the District's life. It will form a foundation for a larger building of the future.

Almost the whole of the first generation of pioneers who could have told a story, have gone, and their knowledge has gone with them. This book is to save, to some extent what they could have, or might have told, from oblivion. Their struggles, and their aspirations should not be forgotten. Future generations should know that things did not come from nothing; that the privileges we enjoy, and the amenities we possess did not come by magic, but are the result of toil, energy, sacrifice, and of service. The younger generations must carry on and jealously preserve that which is good and eliminate that which is evil.

I hope this effort of mine will be acceptable to those for whom it is made. I have done my best. Many things and names I have mentioned and many names I have recorded to recall memories. I hope they are happy memories. This book is my contribution to the Jubilee celebrations, and is dedicated with my best wishes "to all those who have been educated, or received part of their education, or who will be educated in one or other of the schools of the Oxford County."

LANCELOT WATSON.

Oxford, August 5th, 1932.

The Lone Company

Oxford is old, very old, and was associated with man long before white men knew of its existence. The Maoris called it "Tawera," which is sometimes interpreted "Hot-blow," probably in allusion to the hot nor'-westers.

Nearly 400 years ago the Maoris had a pa near Cust, and they used Oxford largely for the source of their food supplies—the native rat, birds, raupo, and the root of the cabbage tree. They probably had habitations here, and the remains of their Maori ovens are numerous. Moreover, they probably, on their journeyings to the West Coast for greenstone, skirted the edge of the forest, keeping within range of food supply. Further mention of the Maori habitation cannot be made here, my purpose being to treat of Oxford in its relation to the white race.

On March 27th, 1848, a Society of gentlemen in London determined to buy land from the New Zealand Company on which to found a Church Colony. The second resolution carried that day reads: That the name of the proposed settlement be 'Canterbury' and the name of the chief town be 'Christchurch.' Canterbury was, of course, taken from Archbishop Sumner who was their President, and 'Christchurch' from the college at Oxford, of which Godley and several others were members.

Captain J. Thomas was appointed by the N.Z. Company to choose and survey a block of one million acres to be sold to the Canterbury Association who suggested to him the 'basin of the Wairarapa River' and recommended to him certain names for places. Most of them were active members of the Association, or noblemen and clerics whose patronage they wished to secure.

By the advice of William Deans of Riccarton, Captain Thomas chose the present site of Canterbury; obtained the consent of Bishop Selwyn and Sir George

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Grey, and made a full report to the Canterbury Association on May 15th, 1849.

Captain Thomas had made a preliminary survey of Canterbury from Mount Grey in the North to the River Ashburton in the South. In a map of the time are shown Whateley Plain between the River Ashburton and Cholmondeley (Rakaia) Sumner Plain between the Rakaia and Courtenay (Waimakariri), the Wilberforce Plain North of the Waimakariri—the Ashley district, Stratford district along the east coast North of Banks' Peninsula, and about 15 miles inland, the Ellesmere and Lincoln districts, the Oxford district, and Harewood Forest. Christchurch is shown on Lyttelton Harbour, and "Stratford" is given to the site of the present Christchurch. He had given names to these places according to instructions.

There are four classes of place names in the Province: Maori names, names given by early explorers and settlers, names given by the regular design of the Canterbury Association, and names given by settlers since 1850. Hence we have the names of members of the Association in our place names. Harewood Forest (Lord Harewood), Oxford (Bishop of Oxford), Ashley (Lord Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury), Cust (Sir E. Cust), Eyre (Mr. E. J. Eyre, Lieutenant Governor of the South Island).

When the pioneer settlers of Canterbury arrived, the only forests on the plains consisted of 100 acres at Riccarton, 200 acres at Papanui, 700 acres at Kaiapoi, and 500 acres at Rangiora, and in ten years almost the whole of this had been cut. There is an item in the "Lyttelton Times" of January 1st, 1865: "That almost the last tree of the Papanui forest on which Christchurch for several years has depended has fallen."

During the decade settlement had radiated from the centre, the more outlying lands being occupied as pastoral runs.

Till 1860 the first settlers in the Oxford district were almost exclusively pastoralists.

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A Mr. Joseph Haydon of Australia, sent one of his managers, Mr. Joseph Pearson, with a flock of sheep in 1851 to take up pastoral country. He took up Burnt Hill, View Hill, Craigieburn, and Mount White runs. In a "List of Runs in the Province of Canterbury" he is mentioned as taking up run No. 1 on October 25th, 1851, of 7,500 acres. This is Burnt Hill, so named on account of the evidences of its volcanic origin; whether or not he made his immediate residence there I cannot say, for, at a gathering in Oxford in 1891, Mr. Pearson said: "I settled in View Hill in 1851 and there was then not a house between my place and Christchurch. In the year 1852 I put up my first woolshed. It was during that year that I performed the feat of journeying from View Hill to Mr. George Duppa's station in the Wairau, Nelson, in five and a half days, Messrs. Lee and Jollie being the only persons who had found the way through before me." At any rate, Mr. Pearson made Burnt Hill his home, where he resided till his death.

Dagnum was taken up in March, 1854, by Mr. C. J. Wentworth Cookson. Mr. Cookson was a relative of the Neave family in England, and named the station after their place in Essex.

The View Hill station of 20,000 acres was taken up in 1851 by John Christie Aitken. He sold it almost immediately to Captain W. N. Millton, who held it till 1865, when he sold it to Edward Barnes Walker. In 1873 Mr. Walker sold it to Mr. J. R. Gorton.

Woodstock station was leased from the Crown in the 'Sixties by Captain Foster. Foster was Captain of the ship "Glenmark," which, after he had left the sea, was lost with a cargo of his wool on its way home. Losing his money in this venture he settled in Oxford, building a house of eleven rooms at the junction of Barrack's and Powell's Roads. Here Mrs. Foster started a young ladies' boarding school, which she carried on successfully for some years. The house was destroyed by fire on the 29th September, 1895. Long

before this Captain Foster had removed, and taken up his residence on a site in Church Street, opposite the Vicarage, which later belonged to Mr. Nalder, surveyor, and still later to Dr. Burnett.

The Warren, which at first was joined to the Carleton Station, was taken up by Cookson and Bowler. They sold "The Warren" to Sanderson and Brayshaw, who sold it in 1863 to Major Thomas Woolaston White. In 1866 Major White sold it to George William Henry Lee, later known as "Jockey Lee." Both White and Lee kept race horses and were much interested in racing.

Mr. Lee was connected with an old Lincolnshire family named Bennet Langton of Spilsby Hall, a friend and admirer of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Mr. Lee also owned "Wharfedale" in "Lee's" Valley, which was named after one of the properties of Bennet Langton. "Lee's" Valley is named after "Jockey Lee." It is not unlikely that Lee gave to his run the name "Warren" from a similar association. It may, however, have been after a friend of Langton, a Dr. Warren, a fellow-member of the Literary Club formed in 1792. Mention is made in "Boswell" on Henry II.'s "grant of a free 'warren' to Cardinal Stephen Langton." Roth's Bennet Langton became heir to "The Warren" and "Wharfedale" on Mr. Lee's death in 1884, and held it till 1912, when "The Warren" was sold to Mr. Robert Chapman, by whom it was shortly afterwards subdivided and sold.

The Carleton Station, which was, as already stated, taken up with "The Warren" in 1852 by Cookson and Bowler, was sold in the early 60's to Major H. J. Coote. In 1866 the station was taken over by Rhodes and Wilkin. It was managed for a term by Mr. St. George Ryder, "a rollicking Irishman," who had two sons born on the station, one, Robert B. becoming headmaster of the East Oxford School, and the other, general manager of the National Loan and Mercantile

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Company in London. Mr. Curle was afterwards manager of Carleton, hence Curle's Road.

It is said that the original name of the station was "Starvation Hill," being the name given to the hill by the Canterbury Association's surveyors. The story is that these surveyors were camped on the hill which now bears this name, when they ran short of provisions, hence the name. However, Mr. Sanderson refused to accept the name as being the official one, and always spoke of the run as "Mount Plenty." Afterwards the permanent name of Carleton was given to it, but "Starvation Hill" still persists as the name of the hill itself.

The Ashley Gorge run was taken up in 1852 by Thomas Ellis and Gustave Gartner, who also kept the Golden Fleece Hotel in Christchurch. Ellis is associated with Canterbury as early as 1840, for one reads "On 7th April, 1840, there landed at Ahahoa from Sydney, Messrs. Heriot and McGillivray, Mr. and Mrs. McKinnon and child (afterwards Mrs. Parkinson), Mr. and Mrs. Shaw, 'Whistling Tom' and Ellis." These had been sent by Messrs. Blackett and Dodge, millers of Sydney, with a view to taking up land and starting farming. They brought with them a dray and eight bullocks, and set out for the plains, taking up their quarters at what was afterwards Riccarton. Once a fortnight they came to Ikirangi for provisions where they got ten pounds of flour and ten pounds of meat for each man—flour at that time being £80 a ton in Sydney. About 30 acres were ploughed up, and a good crop resulted, but it was eaten up by Maori rats; and this loss, together with the fear of the Sumner bar, discouraged these pioneers, and they abandoned the place after eight months' occupation, leaving a stack of straw behind them. McKinnon settled on the Peninsula later on and Ellis returned "and took up the run." By 1863 Ellis had bought out his partner and the flat country was known as Ellis's Flat, hence "Ellis's Road" and "Elisham." He leased it to Henderson and McBeth, and on the termination of the lease in 1895,

the run was subdivided by the Government. Thus came into existence "The Ashley Gorge Settlement."

The site of the present Oxford township was not included in any of the sheep runs, nor was any bush. For six or seven years only two bush sections had been taken up, these being No. 201, a block of 200 acres, lying on the North side of Main Street, having Bay Road in the East, Old Mill Road on the West, and running back to Griffiths' Road or Church Street Extension; and No. 411, a block of 50 acres of bush diagonally opposite the site of the Commercial Hotel. The first of these was purchased by T. H. Reeves, from the Canterbury Association in London, in September, 1850, before the arrival of the first four ships. He, with his partner Hill, settled on this block, and were the first-comers to Oxford. Their two lean-to houses mark the beginning of settlement in Oxford. Block 411 was purchased in the same month by Mr. J. T. Murphy, of Cust.

Let us visualise the scene—station homesteads in a more or less unpretentious state, but having the nuclei of homesteads with their stables, woolsheds, sheepyards, and young plantations of fir trees or blue-gums, or both, boundary fences at first not existing, the shepherds carrying out their duties as boundary riders. The inhabitants are the runholders, their families and their employees. Much of the country is covered with manuka or the native tussock, and on the moister lands flax, and rush and toi toi; while here and there like sentinels on guard were the cabbage trees. The Eyre was but a narrow river at that time, and Cooper's Creek even up to the early 80's, could be easily stepped across. It was only by the denuding of the hillsides, and the destruction of the forest floor that these water courses widened, and the advent of gorse and broom created their tortuous channels.

The wool from the stations was taken down to Kaiapoi by bullock waggon, over the tussocky stretches on the South side of the Eyre. Finally turn our eyes

towards the edge of the bush and we see the two whares of the first Oxford settlers, Messrs. Reeves and Hill, standing under the shadow of the large bush pines and surrounded by flax, tutu and Koromiko, and the tangle of native shrubs.

PIONEER SAWYERS.

Mention has been made of R.S. 201, bought by Messrs. Reeves and Hill in 1850. It comprised about 200 acres of pine bush with a shallow fringe of tussock land along the edge of the bush. In the Lyttelton Times of the 28th September, 1879, it is stated that the "Catholics are about to build a Church on an acre of land given free of cost by Mr. H. B. Johnston. This is a part of Section 201 in the centre of Oxford which has been in the hands of the Curator of Intestate Estates for upwards of eighteen years. As the section could not be purchased until now it had to lie open and was quite an eyesore to the people of Oxford. The fact of this land not being available for building was undoubtedly the cause of there being an East and a West Oxford, as it is the only division between the townships."

At the edge of the bush Messrs. Reeves and Hill built their two houses, the former at a little bush creek immediately behind where Mr. Bunn lived, while the latter was within a few chains of the back of the West Oxford Railway Station, near where Mr. Tritt lived.

Of these two houses Hill's was of the type so usual in the early days, namely, two good-sized front rooms, with a lean-to of two rooms built on at the back. Reeves' house was more pretentious and had six rooms two of which were upstairs.

Reeves did not stay long in this lonely spot, but Hill remained longer. Somewhere during this time, the latter's wife died and he had to make a long, dreary journey in a bullock waggon to Christchurch in order

to bury her. Later on his daughter married a man named Dench, and the couple lived with him till he left Oxford. Reeves' house remained empty and in an unfinished state for some time, till Mr. Wentworth Cookson, who had taken up the Dagnum run, came and lived in it with his family, finishing it at the same time that he was pit-sawing timber for his homestead at Dagnum.

In regard to this period Mr. C. J. Wentworth Cookson writes in *The Press* of April 12th, 1900: "In 1854 I let my farm at Avonhead and went to live in the bush at Oxford, having obtained the use of a large unfinished house built at Oxford of sawn timber, which had been begun a year or two before for a Mr. Reeves who had taken up a large block of land as a cattle run, but for some unaccountable reason left the country and was never heard of afterwards.

"I, and a man of the name of Daniel Philpot, afterwards well known as a resident of Oxford, who was in my employ at the time, set to work, put up a sawpit, and cut enough timber to finish the house, and make it habitable.

"Subsequently I and Philpot went into partnership, as he was a professional sawyer. For the following two or three years we cut timber for nearly all my neighbours in the district, Messrs. Pearson, Dixon, Sanderson, of the Carleton Station, etc. We cut some wide planks for the late C. W. Bishop, who, at that time had a post office and a store near the present Colombo Street bridge. I remember he was very particular as to the quality as he wanted them for counter tops. These were delivered in my dray and horse team about 1856. We also cut all the timber for the late Colonel White's house at the Warren Station, and finally the whole of that for a nine-roomed house on my own run, 'Dagnum,' on the Waimakariri. All the latter we carted on to the ground. The roads, of course, were only tracks, and in wet places were much cut up. It was not unusual to have to unload, when our dray got stuck and carry part, or even the whole of our

cargo over the bad part till sounder ground was reached.

“Before I left Oxford several other sawyers had begun to work, among whom were Mr. Christopher Denby and his mate, and two pairs of German sawyers, who came to cut timber for Mr. Pearson’s house at Burnt Hill. One of these was Mr. Charles Luers, well-known afterwards in Oxford. These last lived in one of the wings of my house and used to sing German songs together very nicely every evening after their work, and take my children out for rides on their backs into the bush every Sunday afternoon.” He adds: “On one occasion while I was engaged at my work in the sawpit I was greatly surprised by a visit from Archdeacon Harper, then a very young man who was travelling about that part of the Diocese with his father, the late Bishop of Christchurch. On one of his periodical visits he greatly entertained me with the account of a very interesting trip he had only recently undertaken to the West Coast, in company with a party of Maoris, and the late Mr. George Locke, of Saltwater Creek, and the hardships and wonderful adventures they experienced on that occasion.”

“The bush sections taken up after Reeves’ and Hill’s central block lay, some at the back of this block and fronting Bay Road; others along the bush edge further west towards the Terrace. For six or seven years no one other than those mentioned above speculated in Oxford property till the year 1857, when a good many of the station holders acquired bush sections presumably to have a supply of timber for station use. Sanderson bought 20 acres (670) immediately at the back of Reeves and Hill. This is the strip that lies along the North side of Upper Church Street between Griffiths’ Hill and Bay Road, with a narrow frontage on the latter. Next, Higgins bought a 20 acre block (678) on the West side of Murphy’s. Ellis took up the next strip of 20 acres (710) at the back of Sanderson’s, and Studholme Bros. (721) and

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Chapman (946), the succeeding strips behind them again. In this way a large part of flat bush land had been acquired by 1860. Knowing the exact line of the original bush edge it is interesting to trace how the first Oxford sections were taken up with the obvious idea of including the best portions of the valuable pine which covered the flats. The open flats outside the bush at East Oxford seem to have been no attraction for some years to come, for they consisted largely of poor flax and tutu patches, intermingled with swampy tussock."

At the end of 1857 Isaac Marsh and his brother-in-law, Christopher Denby, with their families came to Oxford. They took up two sections of 20 acres each (1086 and 896), next or beyond Murphy's and Higgins' sections, between the latter and Fisher's Road. The Marshs had come out to Christchurch in 1851 and for six years had lived at Higgins' station, at Cust. Tom Marsh, an elder son of Isaac Marsh, and his wife made a third family. With the latter was Alfred Ancall, Mrs. T. Marsh's brother, who is still alive. The bush sections lying East of the central block were taken up by outsiders who were otherwise not interested in the Oxford Settlement. It is thus seen that the first settlers in Oxford made their homes at the western end of the bush flats. During the next year or two there came Mr. D. Fisher and his family (1859), Mr. and Mrs. John Paget with their large family, and one or two single men, who were pit sawyers. The Fishers bought Hill's house, where they lived three years, and then built the public house which at first occupied the site where the brick hotel in after years stood. The Pagets made their home on a 20 acre section (1625) at the edge of the W. Oxford Terrace; and it belonged to the family till quite recent date.

Among the single men, pit sawyers who lived in whares around the edge of the bush, was Mr. Luers, already mentioned, and who, a few years later built the Harewood Arms Hotel at East Oxford. At this time

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his home was in Rangiora, but while in Oxford he lived in a sod whare on a section of tussock land which he had bought immediately opposite the present residence of Mr. Alex. Baxter "Currielea." Two other people may be mentioned as completing the number of residents in Old Oxford at 1859-60. One was Satchell, who had a little four-roomed house at the corner opposite the Bank of New Zealand. This, he kept as a public house, the first in Oxford. A year later this building had given place to a larger one and was known as the Oxford Hotel. It was owned then by S. Redfern, who had bought it from Satchell, and who had been helping to cut the timber for it. The other person was Bennett, who has the honour of being the first storekeeper in Oxford. In 1859 his dwelling was a little whare near Cookson's house but he soon built for himself a four-roomed house of the usual lean-to style. Part of this latter is still standing and forms the lower portion of Dorn's, at the front of the bakery.

THE SAWMILL.

It may be noted here that the terms West and East as applied to the Oxford Settlement belong to a later period than the one now under consideration. It has already been pointed out that the names Oxford and Harewood Forest were given by Captain Thomas, who, in his despatch dated May 15th, 1849, says: "The districts Lincoln, Stratford, Mandeville, Ashley, Oxford and Buccleugh, are for the most part grassy. . . . and can be brought into cultivation at a very moderate expense, and I recommend these districts to be first occupied—the first three &c—and the last two with reference to the large extent of forest land adjoining." This forest land was Harewood Forest.

Since it was towards the western end of the Oxford bush flats that settlement first took place it may naturally be assumed that this was the particular locality familiarly called for a few years "Oxford," while the settlement at the Eastern end was spoken of as "Harewood Forest."

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The East Oxford hotel, for which a license was granted in September, 1864, has had no name, but "The Harewood Arms," and what is now "High Street" was for many years called "Harewood Forest Road." In an old "minute" one reads that "It was decided to form and metal the Harewood Forest Road from the office to its junction with the 'Harewood Road.'" The Harewood Road still holds that name. "High Street" is not mentioned in the "minutes" till the 15th June, 1877. In course of time the two ends came to be known as East and West Oxford respectively, and the name "Harewood Forest" disappeared. Indeed, the names "East" and "West" might not have continued but for the definite break in settlement caused by section 201, already referred to.

There seem to be evidences that at one time there was in Canterbury an eastern forest area extending for 100 miles. When settlement began in Canterbury all had disappeared, but the several blocks already mentioned, totalling 1500 acres. By the late 'fifties most of this had been used up or destroyed by fire, and it was necessary to explore avenues of future supplies. In August, 1858, the "Lyttelton Times" drew attention to the "Harewood Forest" as a suitable source of future supply.

It was in the latter end of 1859 that the foundation of the sawmilling industry was laid in the district, an industry destined to be extensive and important for the next forty or fifty years.

In that year Messrs. De Bourbel and Birch, who had been working a saw-mill at Rangiora and had cut out the best of their bush, sold their plant to Messrs. H. Kenrick and H. B. Quinn, who proposed to start operations in Oxford. They had already purchased a number of sections amounting in area to 390 acres, from Messrs. Rhodes and Boys, who were among the absentees who had bought up the bush as a speculation. This land embraced the bush on the eastern side of High Street from the bush edge back to, and in-

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cluding the land at present held by Mr. J. C. Constable, as well as sections on both sides of Victoria Street, and two or three sections on the western side of High Street, through which the main drain runs, and now occupied by Mr. E. H. Thompson, and formerly for many years by Mr. R. B. Dalley.

The site of the proposed mill was at the foot of the first hill in High Street, on the eastern side, on land now occupied by Mr. F. Loffhagen. It was no small undertaking to transfer the heavy engine and machinery over the roadless twenty miles from Rangiora. To Mr. James Ashworth Senr., of Sefton, belongs the honour of acting as carrier on this occasion. The real difficulty was near the journey's end where, for about three quarters of a mile from the Church Street corner to the proposed site was a heavy swamp, intersected by several creeks.

The method of getting roads formed and drains dug before the institution of Road Boards is referred to elsewhere. It may be mentioned here that though the contractor was paid in land, the workers were paid in stores or land, the former being obtained from Mr. J. Birch, of Kaiapoi. The practice of paying for labour in stores obtained for many years, to the great disadvantage of the labourers, and it was not till the "Truck Act" was passed in the 'nineties that it was an offence to make payment in any way but by money.

The establishment of this mill attracted the first of the pioneer sawmillers, among whom may be mentioned Messrs. T. Crowe, G. Keats, J. Mann, J. Weeber, J. Sloper, T. Woodfield, F. Bryant, W. Reed, H. Gordon, C. Massey, J. Pegg, and G. A. White.

The hardships and disabilities of these pioneers were great. There were no houses nor shelters provided for them, and as they arrived they had at once to set to work to provide what shelter they could, as fast and as best they could. At that time there was a heavy rainfall, and one can scarcely imagine the discomforts they endured. The women suffered in a

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special degree; for everything had to be improvised. In relating her experiences, Mrs. J. Mann, who died in 1914, said: "I was the first woman to arrive at this settlement and arrived in January, 1860. We came from Motunau where my husband and I had been employed as married couple for the late Mr. Caverhill. I had an eleven months old baby and to get to Rangiora I had to ride on horseback, holding my baby in front of me. I had never before been on horseback, and the journey was made in the blazing heat of summer. From Rangiora we came to Oxford in a bullock dray, a long and wearisome ride. Here there was no house or shelter of any kind to receive us, and for some time the only shelter we had from the weather was that secured by stretching a sheet or blanket over the tent pole left at a surveyor's camp. Yes, the pioneer life was hard. We had no luxuries and barely necessities. My first chair was made out of a solid block of rimu cut half through and split to form a back."

In March, 1860, the plant was in position and a contract was let to White and Pegg to fell, cross-cut and log the timber of the 390 acres. The bullocks obtained were bred by O'Connell of Mt. Grey Station, and were of the O.C. brand, and cost £50 a pair. A delay in the milling was caused through the fact that the circular saws which had been suitable for cutting the pine timber at Rangiora were not hard enough, nor large enough to cut the beech timber of Oxford. An order was accordingly sent to Messrs Wheatman and Smith of Sheffield, England, for a specially made saw, 5 feet 6 inches in diameter, which, with the spindle cost £75. While waiting for this saw, Mr. E. Youngman was employed to cut the beech (commonly but wrongly called birch) into scantling by pit-sawing. When the saw arrived there was no further difficulty in cutting the timber. The industry got a good start, began to boom, and induced the arrival of many other settlers.

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The first habitations were of a primitive and varied character, and though there was a plentiful supply of timber, few of the early houses were built of sawn timber, but of sods or slabs, and with a thatched roof, the windows being sometimes made with calico. Mr. Gordon and his family lived for some time in an excavation in the clay bank near the mill. It had the advantage of being free from draughts. He later built a timber house on Sladden's Hill, on the site of Miss Murphy's present residence. The first timber house built was Mr. Kendrick's and the next was one for Mr. G. A. White erected on the site of Mr. L. Watson's residence at "Caldbeck." This was the first building in Oxford to receive a coat of paint. The two enormous gum trees (*Eucalyptus Obliqua*) growing here were grown from seeds planted by Mrs. G. A. White in 1861, and are the first to be planted in Oxford. They are therefore of historic value and one is a particularly fine specimen, being over 100 feet in height, and having a circumference of fifteen feet.

Let me digress here to introduce a note about the bluegum which was everybody's favourite in the early days. The chief nurseryman in Christchurch was Mr. William Wilson, who controlled the sale of gum seeds; Mr. Stewart being the other nurseryman. In 1864 Mr. Wilson gave a lecture on the introduction of exotic trees to Canterbury, and he said: "The credit of introducing the blue-gum to Canterbury belongs to Dr. Erle and Dr. Barker. Dr. Erle's plant had a peculiar origin. He bought from me some Tasmanian onion seed, among which was a seed from which a plant supposed to be an English honeysuckle grew. Very soon this plant proved to be, not a honeysuckle, but a robust growing forest tree. An Australian settler having seen it identified it as a Tasmanian blue gum. Some time after, seeds of the plant were obtained from Australia, and were eagerly sought after at a price as high as 20 guineas a pound. In one instance that sum was



W. RYDE'S SAWMILL, WOODSIDE—1884



STAFF OF KENRICK'S SAWMILL—1863

From Left : J. Mann, "Liverpool Jack" (Jack Elvidge), R. McKay, H. Kenrick, G. A. White, Newcombe, J. Flutey, H. Batchelor, J. Sloper. Boys: Alfred & James White.

paid for nine ounces." I wonder if Mrs. White's trees were grown from the 20 guinea seed.

To proceed. One of the next buildings erected was a store for Mr. T. Woodfield, close to the mill (and which was the first post office); and a house and blacksmith's shop was built for Mr. Reed. Other houses went up rapidly after the mill started, among which were those of Messrs. Weeber, Sloper, Mann, and Keats (and their families), in the locality of Victoria Street, and in High Street lived Bryant, Crow and John Clolus. Just beyond Frahm's Creek was Cusden's blacksmith shop. Mr. Pegg's house was where Mr. Constable's stables are situated.

At this time there was only one road in Oxford, namely that between the Commercial Hotel and Parish's Corner, the present Main Street. The road was formed by Mr. J. Paget.

At first Oxford settlers had to depend for their letters and news upon the journeyings of individuals to and from Rangiora, but it was not long before a weekly horseback mail was instituted, giving place to a bi-weekly mail-cart service.

The chief market for timber was Rangiora or Christchurch, though it was from Oxford timber that the first houses in Courtenay and Kirwee were built. Almost the only means of conveyance was by bullock dray, which absorbed much of the profit, the journeyings backwards and forwards being slow and tedious, and not unattended with risk. As an illustration of this mention may be made of an experience Mr. White had. He started from the mill with two bullock wagons loaded with timber for Christchurch, staying the first night at Dagnum with the view of crossing the Waimakariri there, opposite White's accommodation house at Courtenay. On getting up at daylight he found, to his dismay, twelve of his fourteen bullocks dead from eating tutu. Having bought some more bullocks he carted 30,000 feet of timber across the river there. The prospect of trade seeming per-

manent a punt was placed across the stream opposite Dagnum. This punt was a double one with a large platform, and was worked by blocks and a cable, the latter being taken across the stream by Mr. J. Pearson, with the aid of a celebrated river horse he owned at that time. The punt worked well for a time, but, in consequence of the stream continually shifting had to be abandoned. Some years later a punt was established just below the present gorge bridge, and was used till the bridge was built.

Before railways were anticipated other schemes were proposed for the cheaper conveyance of the Oxford commodity. One of these was the establishment of a tramway to Christchurch or Kaiapoi, and the roads laid off for this purpose are still known as the "Tram Road." At a later day, when roads had been formed and horse drays had come into use, Mr. Perham thought the timber could be carted more cheaply and expeditiously by traction engine and trucks. So he bought both, a very costly undertaking and made a start. It was a great and hopeful day for Oxford when this big traction engine with its two heavily laden trucks started off for Christchurch. The hopes of the promoters, however, were soon shattered, for after making the second trip it was found to be too costly and the enterprise was abandoned.

As time went on the industry spread westward; and with the industry, the settlement. The order of the making and forming of roads almost corresponded with the erection of mills, and in not a few cases, the roads were named after the mills. Of course, the first important road was "Harewood Forest Road," on which the first mills started. Then followed Sale's Road. Mr. Sale lived on the hill in the house built by Mr. Gordon, and whether or not he owned a mill, I cannot say, but he must have been interested in timber for I read that "A tender was received from Mr. Sale" for a supply of timber. Hamilton Bros. had their mill on this road, working in Doctors' Bush.

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There was a mill, if not two, on Bay Road; then Fenwick had a mill at the foot of the hill on Fenwick's Road (Old Mill Road), and further West Luers and Woodfield had one on Luers' Road. Gammon operated at the end of Gammon's road. Other millowners were Lee, E. Youngman, W. Ryde, Booth, Sladden, Baxter, Lace and Nell, Feary Bros., Perham, Sharplin, Petrie, Grimwood, Laugeson, Plaskett, and others, extending from East Oxford to View Hill. By this time horse teams had superseded the bullock, and the opening of the railway in 1875 gave a great impetus to the industry. In a few years all the bush on the flats had been cut out, and the land cleared and converted into farms, while the worked-out bush on the hills gave pasturage for stock.

At different times the district experienced serious fires—and a bush fire, driven before a nor'-wester is an awe-inspiring sight. In 1876 was the first most serious fire. It started in the vicinity of Luers' mill and carried by a nor'-wester swept eastward, destroying five mills, many cottages, and much valuable timber. At the same time another had started further West, and the two combining increased the damage. Fortunately, when hope of saving anything was dying, a heavy downfall of rain stayed the onslaught of the fire.

On Friday, January 15th, 1898, was the most disastrous fire the district had experienced. It appeared to come from two different quarters. One originated near Cooper's Creek and the other at the back of Mount Oxford. The former had been burning for some days, but danger was not anticipated until a nor'-west gale sprang up. It then took all before it, destroying mills, and houses and stock—"the property of Ryde, Weld, Friar, Frahm, Lilly, Jensen, Marsh, Bowman, McGillivray, McBriar, Askew, J. M. Booth, Rossiter, Sharplin, Miles, Monson, J. Dohrman, W. Osborne, Mitcheson, Allen, Wynne, Stevenson, Williams, Jones, W. Knowles, Mrs. W. Knowles Senr., Mrs.

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Luers, the Rev. J. Pendray. The estimated direct damage was £15,000." This fire swept almost the whole of the standing bush. Henceforth, till the close of the industry, within the next ten years, the only sawmilling operations were in the View Hill district, and those were on a small scale.

Associated with the sawmilling industry were subsidiary industries. There was a continuous demand for the firewood, which seemed inexhaustible, while from the beginning there was the demand for posts and rails which were supplied to all parts of North Canterbury. Post and rail fences and yards were common in those days. The rails were split and wedged end to end in holes bored in the posts. A good illustration of a substantial post and rail fence is seen at the Warren woolshed. In addition was the supply of fencing stakes, an industry now practically ended.

Shingle splitting was also another activity, the straight grained white and red pines being particularly suitable for the purpose. Moreover it was an industry that a man could apply himself to in the evenings. Some splitters became remarkably expert, and there was a good deal of competition among the shingle splitters in tests of speed. As to-day, at a sports meeting we have "wood-chopping," in those days they had "shingle splitting." The championship at one time was conceded to J. F. Dohrman, who came to Lyttelton in 1859 and to Oxford in 1863 and who still resides among us. It was an ordinary performance for him to split one hundred shingles in nine minutes, and he beat the Auckland and West Coast champions in such competitions.

There was a continuous influx of settlers. As early as 1859 Messrs. Luers and Meyer had bought the sections they afterwards built on, the former a block of 38 acres stretching from Fenwick's Corner to Weeber's Corner, and the latter the section of 25 acres, on which is the residence occupied by Mr. Geo. Meyer and his sisters. Here, about 1863, they built their

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homes, facing Main Street. A year or two later Messrs. Zweibruch and Dohrman settled a little further down the Rangiora Road, beyond the cemetery. These four were all connected with Kenrick's mill, as they conveyed the timber by bullock waggon to Kaia-poi. In 1864 Mr. Luers built the Harewood Arms Hotel, and about the same time Mr. Woodfield removed his store to the opposite corner, which became known as "Post Office Corner." Other settlers were Gundry, Johnson, Bachelor, Frahm. By 1865 there were Walker (at the duckpond), Crannell (near the terrace), Tomlinson (schoolmaster), Briggs (tutor), Knowles, Ryde, and J. Lee. Redfern had removed to Parish's Corner.

The Woodside Settlement had also begun. In 1865 Mr. and Mrs. James Lilly came to Oxford, and a month or two later they, with Mr. and Mrs. R. Marsh, took up bush holdings at Woodside. They, however, were preceded by the McGraths, who occupied a whare on the bank of Cooper's Creek on the site of Mr. R. Vallance's present residence. Captain Foster had bought land across the creek, and his sons were building the house later occupied by G. Cooper (Cooper's Creek), and still later by T. Harle; Mr. C. A. Brown has built his house on the site of the old residence. Nearer Oxford, were McGillivray, McCandlish and McBrear.

The flax milling industry was carried on for some time with varying fortunes. An attempt was made to set up a mill at View Hill on Mounsey's Creek by Cooper, Willon and Harvey, residents of that locality, but it did not succeed. Another mill was set up on Gammon's Creek, but it was transferred further up the creek and became the nucleus of the flour mill there. It was the high price of flax fibre that induced men to enter upon the enterprise. The fibre was a marketable commodity. On account of this Messrs. Comyns, Mann, White and Woodfield each put £150 into a company, rented 70 acres of heavy flax land

just beyond Konini Creek, now occupied by the Henderson Estate, and started a mill of two strippers, driven by a 25 feet overshot water wheel on this creek. They shipped seven tons of fibre by the barque "Nimrod," getting an advance of £12 a ton from Mr. J. Birch, of Kaiapoi. But the vessel was leaky and the fibre was spoilt. It brought only £6 a ton, and as they had to repay the £12 a ton to Mr. Birch, and the shipping company would only pay out on the total loss, the flax company, after paying freight and other charges, got nothing. Mr. White then sold his share for £10 to Mr. T. Crowe, and the mill worked sometime longer. The price, however, declined so rapidly that the production of fibre became unremunerative, and the mill was closed.

About the same time a very large mill was started at Ashley Gorge by Messrs. Richardson & Co., working sixteen strippers with a 20-horse power portable engine. As the supply of flax was practically unlimited, and the capital large, the success of the project seemed assured. Over 100 hands were employed, and the mill was run for seven years. After storing 300 tons of fibre for eighteen months, waiting for a rise in price which never came, the mill had to be closed. The wages which were paid regularly every fortnight helped Oxford and did much to give it an impetus towards prosperity.

This company later started a sawmill at Glentui, and also purchased the Warfdale run. Mr. E. Richardson (afterwards the Hon. Sir E.) was the principal in the company.

About 1869 Mr. Arthur Wright started brick making at East Oxford, and continued till about 1880, when he sold out to Mr. Wilkie, who carried on the business for some time. The site of the brick kiln is at the end of the lane (Brick Kiln Road) running west from Mr. W. Kerr's residence.

In the 'seventies the Carleton run was being subdivided and settlement was taking place there. The early settlers were R. Bennett, Alfred Winter, Michael

Winter, Joseph Cross, H. Engelbrecht, R. J. Reed, H. Steffens, John Skurr, Hudson Lyttle, Grimwood, Curle, Dohrman. A boundary fence ran between the Carleton run and Tara and when the road cut through this fence, a boundary dog was placed at the cut, to keep back straying stock.

THE ROAD BOARD.

Before the institution of local Government, the method of getting roads made and drains dug was somewhat peculiar. The plan was for the interested person or party to make application to the Superintendent to be allowed to form a road. The application was submitted to the Provincial Council, and if favourably considered an engineer would be sent to survey and report. If this report was satisfactory the applicant was offered the contract at the amount estimated by the engineer. If the offer were accepted, on the completion of the job the contractor was allowed to select Crown lands to the value of the amount of the contract price at the rate of £2 per acre, such land having been reserved during the progress of the work.

It was not till 1864 that the First Rating power came into existence and Road Boards were formed. This was a new experience for the members who had to advance cautiously. The method of election was both simple and primitive, and it was followed for nearly twenty years. A Returning Officer was appointed who presided at the meeting of ratepayers called for the purpose of an election. As a candidate was nominated, a vote, for or against him was taken by a show of hands, and those getting the highest number of votes were elected. Immediately on the close of the meeting of ratepayers the new Board met and elected its chairman. It also took a vote to determine which of the members should retire at the end of the year.

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While this method may have had its advantages in the early stages, in general, it placed a handicap on many ratepayers, who, from any cause, were unable to attend the ratepayers' meeting. It thus resulted in the election of members who resided conveniently near to the place of meeting.

The first meeting called for the election of the Oxford Road Board was held in Mr. Kenrick's house on January 30th, 1864, and the first meeting of the Board was held on the same day. It consisted of Messrs. H. Kenrick, G. A. White, Wilson Fisher, H. Gordon and S. Redfern. Its business was to elect a chairman, which position went to Mr. Kenrick. The meeting then adjourned to February 6th, when consideration was given to the question of a meeting place, and Mr. Gordon "was authorised to enter into arrangements with the Committee of the Harewood Chapel for the lease of the same by the Board for a period of two calendar months, terminable by one month's notice for three nights in the week after the hour of 6 p.m., maximum rent to be five shillings per week." The building was secured for 4/6 a week. It was further resolved "that a paid Secretary be appointed at a salary not exceeding £4 per month (calendar), the engagement to be for a period of two months terminable by a month's notice." The Board was evidently taking no risks. There were two applicants for the position, and Mr. Ralfe (a private school teacher) was appointed. Mr. La Nauze was the other applicant.

At this time there were but two short pieces of made road, and it was the business of the Board to give facilities to the settlers to obtain "access to their land fronting on the main line of road." Every roadway at this time was intersected by creeks, the bridging of which was a first necessity. The Board made an inspection and decided to make two culverts, Messrs. White and Gordon undertaking to draw up the necessary specifications for the same, and Messrs.

Kenrick and Fisher to measure up the earthworks. One of these culverts was for the creek running by the Commercial Hotel.

In order to secure revenue it was necessary to proceed with the assessment of the district and tenders were called for such assessment, and for the purpose of compiling a Ratepayers' roll. Mr. C. J. Sale was appointed and received £200 for the work. Values were put on land by the Board for assessment purposes. In 1875 they were as follows:—open land 4/- an acre, fenced land 5/- an acre, bush land 6/- an acre, and cultivated land 7/- an acre. The rate varied from 6d. to 9d. in the £ on the assessment and in 1865 the total rate collected was £135. The Provincial Gazette of Canterbury, dated August 1864, mentions "the amount voted to the Oxford Road Board was £1,500."

The Board had many initial difficulties. The members were the pioneers of local government in the district and they had to be careful of the steps they took. They had no experience to guide them. Not only were the members new to their work, but the ratepayers were new to their obligations, and in the records of these early meetings one frequently comes across the words "warning," or "proceedings," in regard to "obstructing the road," "diverting the water," and warning owners of property to do such and such "at their own risk and peril."

At the fifth meeting it decided to proceed to appoint an engineer to lay out the roads decided to be made in the district, and "that the Harewood Forest Road be immediately taken in hand at a point commencing at the boundary of Section 1748 (the locality of Kenrick's mill) running north to White's Creek" (at the turn of the Ashley Gorge road at Mr. Watson's). The road from Parish's corner to the mill had already been made under the Provincial system. Mr. Hoskin, C.E., was engaged to lay out the roads. In his account he charged the Board not only for "ser-

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vices rendered," but for "hotel expenses," which the Board hesitated to pay.

The contract for the formation of the road referred to was let to J. Paget, for £365. The "cutting" on the hill was to be 25 feet wide.

Most of the road formations at this time were associated with the bush activities, and the roads dealt with give an indication in order of the direction of these activities. There are the roads leading towards the markets, as Oxford Road, Barracks Road and Harewood Forest Road—then Victoria Road, Bay Road, Sale's Road and Woodside Road.

Contracts were let in short sections—no longer than the immediate needs warranted. All work was done by contract, prominent contractors of the time being J. Paget, R. Johnson, C. Denby, T. Marsh. In forming a bush road, for the space of 20 feet in the middle of the road the trees were cut down to the ground level; a ditch was made at the side of the road, and the clay from this ditch was thrown on to the top of the road, covering the stumps, and forming a crown. This was afterwards metalled as occasion demanded.

The first year of the Board was a busy and anxious and not altogether a happy one. The Secretary was dismissed "in consequence of his absenting himself from his duties without permission, and they have no further occasion for his services." Mr. Briggs (another school teacher) filled the vacancy at the same salary. The secretary, at this time, was in no sense an overseer. Mr. Briggs soon gave place to Mr. Christopher Denby, at 10/- a meeting.

The Board changed its meeting place to the Church School in Central Oxford, and in April it was resolved "that a building be erected for an office for the Road Board." Each member was to look out for a suitable site; and on the 17th February, 1865, it was decided "that a building be erected for a Road Board office." In May of that year it was decided that "a

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Road Board office 16 x 12 be built **at once.**" Tenders were called and on the 4th October, that of Colwell for £10/7/6 was accepted. Mr. Sale was to provide the timber.

In November, 1867, the chairman was authorised to "obtain 1,000 bricks and one sack of lime that a chimney be built at the Road Board office." A tender for £3 was received from Mr. T. Keats. The tender would be accepted if reduced to £2/10/-. In the following February a porch 7 x 5 was added, and the path was metalled, and "a table and six chairs were procured."

This modest building modestly furnished was put to numerous uses. On the 29th March, the Rev. D. Dolamore was granted its use "for Divine service." On the 25th October of the same year the Resident Magistrate was allowed the "use of the Board office for the holding of a Court for a period of 12 calendar months." On the 13th December "the Cemetery Committee was allowed to hold its meetings in it; and also the Tramway Committee."

Towards the end of the first year it was decided to engage the "clerk for a period of six months to perform the duties of clerk to the Board, collector of rates, and overseer of works." Meetings were held less frequently. From three a week they were reduced to two, and then to one, and then to "alternate Fridays."

There are interesting records of details at this time. There are resolutions "That Mr. Redfern be authorised to order a box for the keeping of records." The Treasurer is "empowered to purchase a measuring chain for the use of the Board." Messrs. Gordon and White are "authorised to purchase a cash box for the Board." The clerk is instructed "to procure a ring for measuring stones and ten iron pegs for measuring."

During this first year application was made to the Provincial Secretary for gravel reserves.

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There was trouble in securing the rates, and "legal proceedings" were not uncommon. The Board had difficulty in securing sufficient revenue, notwithstanding grants from the Provincial Government. The total revenue from rates was as follows:—

1865, £168/14/8; 1866, £46/14/1; 1867, £142 18/3; 1868, £112/12/2; 1869, £166/15/3; 1870, £151 10/1; 1871, £147/17/0; and the amount struck for 1872 was £188/14/9.

In 1867 the clerk was dismissed for "lack of funds," and the Board was without a clerk till 1869, when it invited tenders for "the services of a competent and trustworthy person to perform the duties of clerk." Mr. C. A. Denby was appointed at £40 a year.

In February, 1873, William Stout was appointed clerk for three months on trial at £50 a year. Later, in the same year, it was increased to £109/4/0 a year for "constant employment instead of clerking and overseeing as hitherto;" the engagement to be for twelve months.

The Board had not functioned long before it had to cope with the gorse and broom nuisance. How came these plants to the district? In the minutes of one of the early meetings is a resolution "to purchase eight pounds of English broom seed." The purpose of this purchase is not stated, but it might have been prompted by an advertisement in the Lyttelton Times in 1864 in which Mr. William Wilson, Seedsman, of Christchurch, advertises for sale 10 cwt. of gorse and broom seed. Be this as it may, the gorse menace soon became a real one, and proceedings had to be taken against settlers for allowing gorse to spread on the roads. A local Magistrate's Court was certainly needed then, for summonses were taken out thirty at a time.

Many settlers disputed the authority of the Board in this matter, declaring that they were not responsible for the gorse which had been brought on

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to the roads with the river shingle. Occasionally the Board recognised this claim. The Scotch thistle also was considered a nuisance and steps were taken to have the roads cleared of it.

One of the earliest problems—and one which became the most serious and costly, and which obtained till later days—was the problem of drainage. Before settlement all streams followed the natural slope of the country, and in the main, kept to defined channels. Should an obstruction cause a deviation a new channel was formed and a new course taken, which came to be recognised as the natural fall. With settlement came obstructions and deviations and floods.

Early in 1875 Mr. W. B. Bray made a survey of the district for the purpose of considering the flood water question, and drainage in general. His report was accompanied by a plan which was adopted, at the same time leaving the whole matter in the hands of the Government. Had the recommendation been legalised and put into operation (the cost being only £350), much litigation would have been spared. Up in 1904 the enormous amount of £3,800 had been spent in litigation and damages on Finlay's Drain alone.

The centres of trouble were "the five roads," at Viewhill, the Government Drain at West Oxford, the Church Street corner, and the Main and Findlay's Drain.

The Board was, at times, "at its wits' end" to know what best to do. It "inspected several disputed water courses, and decided on opening out and deepening all such as were traceable." It "opened up the drain through Stubbs' Swamp," it opened up the Main Drain at Stubbs' and took it westward to Harewood Forest Road; but declined to open it up to Bay Road. It decided "to clear out and widen the upper and lower creeks;" it asked "permission to take the water through the Church property." It proposed "that the water now running along Church Road be turned

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round the corner of the Church enclosure and thrown into the creek at Aherne's Smithy as a temporary arrangement for the relief of Pearson, Quigley, O'Connor, Grimwood, Kennedy and Jeff." Dr. Weld called the Board's attention "to the damage he had sustained through the Board turning more water through Aherne's cutting than had a right to go, thereby injuring his property." And so the trouble continued. A volume could be written on the drainage problem of early Oxford.

Stock strayed in those days, and pastured on public roads. In 1868 Messrs. R. K. Kenrick and R. Morris each offered to put up a public pound at his own expense, on condition of receiving the appointment of poundkeeper. It was a business proposition. The offer of Kenrick was accepted. The next year tenders were invited "for leasing the pound." In following years there were many poundkeepers and many rangers, and many complaints, and many grievances. Occasionally an enthusiastic ranger would search the river beds for stray cattle, and occasionally complaints were made against the ranger for allowing his own stock to monopolise the roads. "As it was in the beginning."

During the first ten years of the Road Board, the following had been members of it: H. Kenrick, G. A. White, Wilson Fisher, H. Gordon, S. Redfern, W. Reid, Pegg, Terry, Woodfield, D. Fisher, Luers, Lee, Cooper, Comyns, Gammon, Sladden, Sedcole, and T. W. White, and four of these had occupied the position of chairman: Kenrick, Wilson Fisher, Redfern, and Luers.

Settlement had been extending to the farm lands, and the problems of the outlying districts were calling for solution.

A Local Elections Act was passed in 1876, but it was not brought into operation here until May 2nd, 1882, when the following ratepayers were elected under a system somewhat similar to what obtains to-

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day: Ffitch, McPhedron, W. F. Pearson, J. Skurr, and D. Sladden, who was elected chairman.

Under the Public Works Policy of Sir Julius Vogel in the 70's there was a great influx of immigrants, not only from the British Isles, but also from the Continent, and as the Emigration Agent in England received a specific payment for each emigrant he was not particular as to where he procured them. Pamphlets featuring the advantages of New Zealand, a "land of engines and machinery," where work was not hard, but wages good, a veritable "Delectable Country," were broadcast on the Continent, and many Austrians responded. Not a few of them were inexperienced in the work they would have to do in the new country.

In February, 1874, the Board received a communication from the Provincial Secretary "relative to the allocation of a portion of the immigrants shortly to arrive in the Province." Provision had to be made for their accommodation on arrival. Some time before this a commodious building had been erected by Mr. J. Paget for an "Accommodation House or Hotel" on the Oxford Road, just where the railway line leaves the road; but a license not being obtained, or the locality proving unsuitable for a hotel, it remained unoccupied for a considerable time. When the immigrants began to arrive it was purchased by the Government for the purpose of Immigration Barracks. Hence for many years the road branching off there and joining up with High Street at the Harewood Arms Hotel was known as "Barracks" or "Accommodation" Road, usually the former.

The Board decided to erect two immigrant cottages on the gravel reserve, the site of the Old Road Board Office, and to find employment for 25 immigrants. Tenders, however, were called for six cottages, and that of Petrie and Bluett for £575 was accepted.

It may be mentioned here that the first tenants of those six cottages were Messrs. Summerfield, Inch,

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John Bickerton, S. Dalley, Holbrook and Boyer, with their families.

In June of that year a deputation of the newcomers waited on the Board asking for employment. Their request was sympathetically received and it was decided "That the Clerk prepare rakes and hammers, and point out work on the roads for the immigrants, at 5/- a day; also that he prepare a brand, and mark the tools the property of the Board required for use on the roads." Ten men were employed.

In August, a letter was received from the Secretary for Public Works relative to the erection of immigrants' huts at a cost of £10 each. It was resolved to accept the offer and invite tenders for the erection of twenty such huts. Messrs. Petrie and Bluett were the successful tenderers and handed over the buildings duly completed on the 30th of October of that year. They formed a little "Commune." They were insured for £450, numbered by R. H. Parish, and put into the care and supervision of the Road Board, to be let according to the "printed regulations supplied." (I have been unable to locate these huts.)

Labour was now in over-supply and a meeting was held in the new schoolroom at West Oxford "to take into consideration the finding of employment for the newly-arrived immigrants." It was decided that they be set to "forming about 23 chains of swamp on Ellis' Road, commencing at the Main Drain and extending westward, and that the Clerk be instructed to employ someone to go along and work with them, and act as interpreter." Mr. C. Geissler was appointed. The pay for the work was 8d. a yard, and the interpreter was to receive 1d. a yard.

At this time Mr. G. A. White informed the Board that Richardson and Co. would contribute half the cost of a cutting into the Ashley and would provide houses for the immigrants employed. The offer was accepted, and the men were sent out. But there had

been a mistake. The houses were but temporarily erected whares constructed of flax and brushwood, and unfitted to stand rough weather.

On the night of the arrival of the newcomers, when each had been allotted his quarters, there came down upon them a characteristic nor'-wester, filling them with terror and dismay, especially when their dwellings were blown away. They took shelter in the mill house, and next morning were brought back to Oxford.

Among the immigrants employed at this time and on these works the names are recorded of C. Geissler, F. Pachnatz, G. Piter, F. Piter, G. Pavilih, J. Zimmerman, P. Johanson, A. Mashlan, G. Benisch, J. Benisch, G. Gerli, A. Gerli, B. Gerli, K. Schmik, J. Gorish, B. Langer, J. Schubert, J. Grunn, J. Kubala, A. Thinn, J. Konig, A. Berger. (I give the names as spelled in the minute book.)

In April, 1874, on the motion of Messrs. Sedcole and Gammon it was decided "that the members meet at Mr. Gammon's at 9 o'clock on Monday for the purpose of selecting a piece of ground for recreation purposes, on the South side of the River Eyre." The meeting took place and the piece selected was reserve No. 1651, "at the North-West corner of the Warren Estate." Application was made for this reserve, which was granted.

In October of that year the Secretary of Public Works requested the Board to undertake the ploughing of about 15 acres in the reserve and sowing with blue gum seed. The Board was enthusiastic and decided "that arrangements be made with Mr. Mehrtens for ploughing the necessary quantity of land ready for sowing the blue gum seed, and that tenders be invited for fencing the portion to be enclosed." The specifications in regard to these matters were most explicit. Whether or not the land was ploughed, the

fence erected, and the seed sown, there is no present evidence; but a belt of trees was planted on three sides of the reserve, a racecourse laid out, a pavilion erected and for many years "The Recreation Reserve" was the scene of the Oxford Jockey Club's Annual Race Meeting, referred to elsewhere.

In April, 1874, it was decided "to form and metal footpaths," and the footpaths selected were, in the main, those in use to-day. Tenders were received for the work, but being considered too high, it was placed in the hands of the road foreman, Mr. Mehrtens, to do the work "At 11/- per day for horse and cart and 8/- per day for himself," and he was to employ immigrants at 5/- a day "With power to discharge them if not satisfactory." The layout was probably not observed, and the work was not gone on with expeditiously. By 1898 the footpaths were formed on both sides of the streets and "Proclaimed and set apart for foot passenger traffic only." The kerbing and concrete channeling was commenced in 1911, the arrangement being that the landowner should pay half the cost. A great improvement was thus effected in Main Street, and it would be a good thing if the remaining landowners would have their frontages improved similarly.

At its meeting on the 12th February, 1875, the Board decided to build a new office, together with a 5 stalled stable. The office was to be 30 x 15 with a 10 feet stud. Messrs. Petrie and Bluett drew up the plans and specifications and contracted to build for £170. This building, while being used as an office for over 40 years was also put to other uses as occasion required.

Mr. McGrath asked for its use for a "Roman Catholic Service," to be held on Sunday, 29th August, 1875. His request was granted; and this probably marks the beginning of the activities of the Roman Catholic Church in Oxford.

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On the 18th October, 1878, Mr. Parish asks "For the use of the Road Board Office for a Church Meeting." This was probably after the Anglican Church had been destroyed by the nor'-wester; and on the 4th of the same month the Board decided "That the office be strengthened with buttresses."

The old office was sold for removal and forms the original part of the dwelling on the Oxford Road, now owned by George Paris.

On October 8th, 1875, Mr. Wilkie was appointed surveyor and clerk. He resigned on August 10th, 1877, and was succeeded by Mr. John Dobson, selected from among 45 applicants, at a salary of £200 a year. Mr. Dobson held office for about eleven years, during which time many important surveys were made, and road improvements effected. He seems to have had a penchant for substituting fords for bridges, with foot-bridge for foot travellers. The change did not meet with general favour and bridges were restored. It is interesting to note here that on the 29th September, 1876, Mr. Griffiths waited on the Board, recommending the use of stone in culverts, and it was resolved to make a trial. For a number of years thereafter stone culverts were erected where possible, and to-day they are still functioning with no costs for repairs or maintenance.

The roads were much cut up and furrowed by the heavily loaded drays and waggons, and in 1876, to obviate this somewhat, the "width of tyre ordinance" came into operation and notices were posted "Warning that the provisions of the "Width of Tyre Act" would be enforced against persons using more than three horses in drays with less than 4 inch tyres."

In 1877 the Road Board Office Reserve was planted. Mr. Pegg was appointed overseer of the tree planting at 8/- a day. Tenders were received for making holes at 2½d. per hole. The following were

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accepted: Morris and Shearman, 1,250 holes; Evans, 225 holes; Pickerton, 298; Kavanagh, 122; 1,895 holes being dug at a total cost of £27/15/1.

About the time of the abolition of the provinces, the Board had a plethora of money. In 1877 £6,732 was placed to its credit in the Bank of N.Z., and it was decided to place £4,000 on fixed deposit for 12 months and £1,500 for six months. This was a grant. In contrast to this, the Board at times in later years found itself short of funds and we read on the 6th of June, 1894, when the financial year had not gone half its course, and it feared the shortage of funds it was "Resolved that the surveyor must close his eyes to all fancy work, and reduce the amount of the monthly labour sheet."

On the 24th November, 1877, £8,329/9/- was remitted to the Board, and £5,000 was placed on fixed deposit at $6\frac{1}{4}\%$.

As early as 1876 there were proposals for making roads into Lee's Valley and Wharfedale. On the 6th of September, 1879, Messrs. Thornton and Bull informed the Board that they had explored the hills and could get a road into Lee's back country, six or seven miles at a gradient of 1 in 15 or 1 in 20. Later the Board decided that the following be requested "To tender for cutting line and finding best and most practicable road to the River Townshend": Dobson and Son, Thornton and Bull, and F. Pavitt.

On the 7th of February, 1879, the clerk was instructed "To have lines cut in continuation of Sladden's Road and to look for a road over the Saddle East of Mount Oxford into Warfdale." In the following month Mr. Harman wrote about a line he had found West of Mount Oxford and offering to cut a line through the bush at £8 a mile. The clerk was to wait on Mr. Harman and see the proposed line. It was also proposed to continue Luers' Road. The line suggested

by Harman was chosen, and a track formed, but allowed to get into disrepair, and the money spent on it was thus wasted. The line ultimately chosen was that discovered by Mr. James Sharpe.

On May 5th, 1888, Mr. Dobson resigned his position as clerk and surveyor as well as the other offices connected with the Board "Which was accepted with regret after his long and faithful services."

On the 6th August, Mr. James Sharpe was appointed at a salary of £125.

On the 2nd December, 1896, Mr. Sharpe reported "That he had laid out the first portion of the road through Ashley Gorge run to the far side of Break-neck Gully." This road was extended from time to time till it reached beyond Efford's Flat, and was known as "Sharpe's Road." Later, when efforts were made to have the road taken through, and the continuation of which was surveyed by Mr. R. H. Gainsford, who succeeded Mr. Sharpe, it came to be known as the "Lees' Valley Road." In fairness to the discoverer it should be known as "Sharpe's."

One of the first acts of the Board elected under the "Local Elections Act," in 1883 was to grant £50 towards the erection of a "mortuary chapel in the cemetery."

At that time it was reported that the total area of bush lands was 8,644½ acres, of open lands 42,038½ acres. The value of the bush lands was £8/7/0 an acre and the open land £8/4/8. The total amount expended since 1874 was £51,025/0/10 and that on bush lands roads was £11,880, including £500 granted by the Provincial Council for bush roads, and showing a balance due to the bush of £2,555. There were 97½ miles of shingled roads. The Balance Sheet for 1st May, 1885, shows balance last year £1,320/11/8; receipts £2,366 /4/8; making a total of £3,686/16/4. Of this amount £1,240 was for bush roads to the upper Ashley.

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The story of the inception and inauguration of the Eyre Water-race system is an interesting one, but cannot be given here. So also is the story of the Waimakariri-Ashley Water-race, and the battles of the headworks. This large system and its invaluable worth merits a story to itself.

As settlement increased south of the Eyre, and as Oxford was the business centre of the settlers the Eyre River was often a serious obstacle to convenient advances and a bridge was a necessity. The question of finance was the obtruding factor. By the sale of lands in that part of the district there had been an accumulation of funds for road making purposes, and on the 5th April, 1899, a deputation consisting of Messrs. F. Gilchrist, D. Hawke, A. Wotherspoon and A. Wright interviewed the Board as a deputation from the Bridge Committee, handing in a petition from the settlers on reserve 2331 asking the Board to devote £800 of Land Fund Revenue to build a bridge over the River Eyre at the Depot Road, and requesting that the petition be forwarded to the Land Board for that Board's sanction. The Road Board decided to spend this amount provided it had authority to do so. It got this authority. The clerk drew up the plans for the bridge and the tender of J. W. Thomas for £710/15/3 was accepted. For the approaches the tender of McCarthy and Scanlon for £97 was accepted. Thus the whole cost of the bridge, with its approaches, was borne by the settlers on that reserve, conferring a benefit not only on themselves, but on all South Eyre settlers as well as on the settlers on the north side. At a later time when the bridge had to be extended the cost was borne by the whole district. One result of the public spirit shown by those settlers was, that, in consequence of not having that £800 to spend on roads, the roads in that area are in a more backward state than they otherwise would have been.

The Road Board went out of existence on the 30th of March, 1912, after which the district was merged

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into the Oxford County Council. The first meeting of this Council was held on April 24th, 1912, the members being C. F. Bassett, A. Baxter, H. Campbell, H. T. Cooper, J. Cross, J. McCormack and J. Wells. Mr. D. Hawke was the last Chairman of the Road Board and Mr. H. Campbell the first Chairman of the County Council.

The Road Board, holding its first meeting on the 30th January, 1864, and its last on the 30th of March, 1912, had during its forty-eight years' activities done a great work. It had laid out all the roads, and provided a complete water-race system. Starting with less than three miles of roads it finished with every part of the district roaded and metalled. With the exception of Gammon's, Cooper's and View Hill Creeks, every creek and watercourse had been bridged. It laid the foundations on which its successors might well build. During the 20 years of the County Council the remaining creeks have been bridged. Improvements have been effected throughout the district, and the moneys raised have been well spent. The Rest Room, the Hospital, and the Town Hall, none better in New Zealand, are evidences of their wise activities.

Let it be remembered that those who spend their time, their energy, and their thought in promoting the interests of their district are worthy of loyal support. Their services to the public are generous and gratuitous. The social amenities of the district have been provided largely by them, urged, and encouraged no doubt by private individuals and social institutions. The result is a monument to their public service.

Natural History

Geology.

“The Geological history of the district is two-fold. There is first of all the purely geological history which traces the mode of formation and the intrinsic nature of the rocks composing the hills and plains; and secondly, there is that history which is more interesting and more readily understood, namely, the sequence of events and the processes by means of which the landscape features were formed out of the rocks.”

The oldest rocks here are those which form the main mass. They consist chiefly “of Greywacke—a hard siliceous material, very tough and resistant, grey in colour, formed chiefly from those materials constituting granite, namely, quartz, felspar, and mica.” Some are less resistant than others, especially those containing a large proportion of felspar.

The hills have a volcanic origin, and igneous rocks are in abundance. The particular locality of the crater, or craters, has not been ascertained. There may be several as those volcanoes that erupted, Burnt Hill, Gorge Hill, View Hill, and Starvation Hill. Such craters may be far below the shingle of the plains. Where did the shingle come from that forms the plains, and what was the process of formation? How came the volcanic hills to be covered with such a depth of soil? How came the sands and the rocks of the hills to be mixed with sea-shells or fossils?

And then the sedimentary rocks—shales and flints and chalks! What submergences and upheavals of the land surface in the distant past, and the disintegrating and wearing down of the hills during the ages, and alluvial deposits on the plains!

The amateur student of Geology has a fine field for investigation at his door. One might hope with

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the modern trend of education, at least some pupils of our local schools will make an intensive study of the geology of this district. Our education system fails in training for the "occupation of leisure." Here a most interesting and alluring hobby awaits acceptance.

The Bush: Botany.

On February 13th, 1860, Samuel Butler records in his diary: "Next day I went to Oxford which lies at the foot of the first ranges and is supposed to be a promising place. Here, for the first time, I saw the Bush. It was very beautiful. Numerous creepers and a luxuriant undergrowth among the trees gave the forest a wholly un-European aspect, and realising in some degree one's idea of a tropical vegetation. It was full of birds that sang loudly and sweetly. The trees here are all ever-green, and are not considered very good for timber." This last sentence has been disproved by the results of 45 years of sawmilling industry.

It is not easy, at this stage, to visualise the Oxford Bush in its pristine glory, unaffected by axe and fire.

"All cannot fade that glorifies the hills,
Their strength remains, their aspect of command,
Their flush of colour when calm evening stills
Day's clamour, and the sea-breeze cools the land.
With shout of thunder and with voice of rills,
Ancient of Days! In green old age they stand
In grandeur that can never know decay,
Though from their flanks men strip the woods
away.

"But thin their vesture now—the restless grass
Bending and rustling as the breeze goes by;
Catching quick gleams and cloudy shades that pass
As shallow seas reflect a wind-stirred sky.
Ah! Nobler far their forest raiment was
From crown to foot that clothed them royally,
Shielding their mysteries from the glare of day,
Ere the dark woods were reft and torn away."

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William Pember Reeves, in his poem "The Passing of the Forest" shows what we have lost; what we have paid for progress. "Beauty swept away."

There were no glades, no open spaces. On the flats and in the gullies were gigantic trees of Matai, Kahikatea, and Rimu, and on the hillsides the magnificent Beech, while ever underneath "A realm of tangled rankness rife."

In the gullies, and on the rocky sides of creeks was moss, a foot in thickness; every fallen tree was a nursery of forest life, and in every cool grot were magnificent ferns, the tree-fern rising to a height of fifteen feet, with a spread of frond of more than that extent. Exploring the recesses of the bush for the first time one is speechless at the surpassing charm.

While the majority of the settlers were absorbed in the immediate problems there were those who saw the consequences of the destruction of the bush. They were filled with foreboding. Not only did they visualise "beauty swept away," but they saw the consequences of the destruction of the forest carpet. This carpet held the rains for days, and allowed but an "oozing flow of water," so that the creeks were small, and the streams constant. Destroy this carpet by fire, and there will be an immediate escape of water, the creeks will become rushing torrents, making a way before their formidable rush. The hillsides will be torn down, and the creeks, widened, and in their lower reaches filled with shingle, causing untold damage. The settlers advised restrictions; they advocated the preservation of the bush on the slopes on the immediate sides of the streams, and they urged that areas, possessing not particularly good timber, be preserved as scenic resorts, and to maintain the water supply. But they were unheeded, and it was not till within recent years that forest reserves were made at Mount Oxford and View Hill, for the conservation of the water supply.

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When, in the late 80's the Oxford Domain Board, through its Secretary, Mr. John Ingram, asked the Road Board to endeavour to get set aside certain areas "For the conservation of water and for recreation purposes," that Board replied that the areas mentioned "Were too far away for recreation purposes," but they would do what they could to conserve the water supply. There is little bush left; there is little forest-floor. Almost all has gone, but the preservation of what remains should be recognised a sacred duty.

It may be appropriate to give the names of the principal plants that constituted the bush, or that were common on the plains in the early days, and may still be found, if searched for, but in a minute degree where now bush obtains. Many herbaceous plants, some of great beauty, have disappeared, as the gentians and celmesias which were common on the slopes of Mount Oxford. The grass tree (*dracophyllum*) has also disappeared. On the plains were the cabbage tree, the manuka, the wild Irishman (*tumatakuru*), the yellow Spaniard (*aciphylla Squarosa*), the tutu, the native broom and the kowhai; while among the herbs were violets, star bells, linum, and native geranium. There was, of course, the N.Z. flax (*phormium*), and on swampy ledges, *asteleas*. In the forest were the white pine (*kahikatea*), black pine (*matai*), red pine (*rimu*), and the black beech, familiarly called birch (*nothofagus solandri*), which constitutes the greater extent of the bush.

Growing among these were a large number of smaller trees and shrubs, many producing flowers of great beauty. Native trees and shrubs would well repay planting in our gardens and grounds. They should not have been superseded, as they have been, by exotics. They are not difficult to propagate, if the grower will but study their native habit and plant accordingly. Moreover, gathering native plants and propagating them is a fascinating pursuit.

The following were abundant, and may still be

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found. For the benefit of those more interested, the popular, the botanical, and the Maori names are given, where possible. Broadleaf (*Griselinea littoralis*); mahoe (*Whitey—Melicytus Ramiflorus*); Several Ribbonwoods (*Hoherea*); the Fuchsia (*Konini—Fuchsia ex-corticata*); Kowhai; Maori May (*Putaputa Weta—Carpodetus serratus*); New Zealand Lemon (*Tarata—Pittosporum eugenioides*); Pepperwood (*Horopito—Drimys Colorata*); Red Matipo (*Mapau—Suttonia*); The Wine Berry (*Makomako—currant—Aristolelea racemosa*); Lancewood (*Horoeka—Pseudopanax Crassifolium*); Pokaka (*Eleocarpus Hookeriana*); Hinau (*Eleocarpus Dentatus*); both of these last have bell-like flowers, like those of the Lily-of-the-Valley; Five Finger (*Patete—Schefflera digitata*); there are several *Pittosporums* (*Matipo*); several Myrtles, about twenty Veronicas, half-a-dozen Copros-mas, a dozen or more Daisy Trees (*Oleareas*), including the native holly (*ilicifolia*). Among the climbers are the lawyer (*rubus*), the Native Jasmine (*Par-sonia*), and the Clematis indivisa (*Pikiarero*), with sprays sometimes twenty feet long.

In the middle 90's a regular correspondent of the "Oxford Observer" urged the institution of "Native Plant Clubs" the members of which would explore the bush, learn to identify the plants, study their habits, and, where possible, transplant into their home gardens. They were to encourage the establishment of native gardens at the schools, and to have a section of Pearson Park set aside for the growing of native flowering plants, and for a fernery. The proposal was considered to have merit, but it did not materialise. There is the embryo at Ashley Gorge. Is it too late? To be successful there must be individual enthusiasm, and a love of nature.

Birds.

One reads that "Oxford, in the pre-European days was a great district for the Maori to hunt the na-

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tive rat for food." It was also "a great place for birds for food."

When Canterbury was first settled in 1851 the pioneers found the country inhabited with innumerable birds. This was so in Oxford. The Bush teemed with birds of many kinds. With the clearing away of the bush their food supply and their shelter vanished; and, in consequence they vanished. Besides this, they may not have been able to hold their own against imported birds; and knowing no fear they fell an easy prey to such imported vermin as stoats, ferrets, hedgehogs and cats, while vandal gunners have been the cause of the diminution and destruction of many, such as the pigeon, the kakas, the herons, and the bittern. In the line of a bush tram they would be seen in hundreds, and so tame that they could be knocked over with a stick. Many are gone forever. Few remain—and these might be preserved if the love of birds became instinct in man.

On the swampy ground the Pukeko (swamp hen) was common. It is still found in certain localities. Few birds were more common and more interesting than the Weka (woodhen). Their "call" in the evening was almost uncanny. Up till 1917 they were abundant, and in the hills they were in thousands. To-day they are almost extinct. (When did you last hear or see one?)

In the open country up till the beginning of the century, pipits, or native larks were plentiful; now they are rare—almost extinct. The Kaka abounded—now rare. One was seen here about three years ago. There are still a few wood-pigeons, which were once numerous, and with the kaka were a regular source of food supply. The tui (parson-bird) has disappeared, but the bell-birds, after being almost extinct are on the increase. Fantails and tomtits and robins are now scarce. They were almost totally destroyed in the snowstorm of 1922. Bats disappeared early—they

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were once numerous, and the "Morepork" may occasionally be heard. White herons were occasionally seen and the bittern was common, as were the greyduck, the paradise duck and the teal. There were the cuckoo, the wren, and the canaries—all gone. Occasionally we see the "Nutties," and white eyes pay us their regular visits in the Autumn and Winter. The kingfisher is no longer common. Out on the open the dotterels, the stilts and the plovers have disappeared or are disappearing.

"Gone are the forest birds, arboreal things,
Eaters of honey, honey sweet of song."

We have imported birds which are neither as welcome, nor as harmless, nor as intriguing as the natives. It is not unlikely that some of these introduced birds have been a menace to the natives. The skylark was one of the most welcome, but is now scarce, and there are thrushes, and blackbirds, and finches, the house and hedge-sparrow—the latter an interesting bird—and the magpies.

With our native birds so fast disappearing it should be an obligation on all of us to save them from extinction.

Mrs. T. H. Hamilton (C. Woodfield) writes:—

"I have been in many parts of New Zealand and in a great deal of the native bush, but nowhere have I seen the native birds in such numbers as they were in the East Oxford Bush. Whether that was due to the shelter given by the curve of the hills there, or because there was plenty of food for them I do not know. But when the first tramway was laid there were hundreds of parakeets flying close to the men who were working, numerous wood-pigeons, and kakas. The kakas had the most vivid scarlet colouring under their wings, and so made an easy mark for anyone with a gun. Then there were the fantails, little wax-eyes, the tiny robins, and now and again one saw a wrybill—wekas innu-

merable, kingfishers, and the morepork, which at night time utters its cry of 'Morepork! Morepork!' A great many men were employed in splitting shingles in that part of the bush, and the birds would come quite fearlessly around them."

PARKS AND DOMAINS.

Pearson Park.

The Recreation Reserve or "Race Course" as it came to be known, was procured in 1874, and very soon came to be used as such. A Domain Board was appointed which included Mr. Joseph Pearson, Mr. J. R. Gorton, and Mr. H. Sedcole. The land was let and the rent accumulated. The distance of the reserve from the township mitigated against its use as a Park, and it was desirable that grounds be secured more accessible. Towards the end of the 80's Mr. Ingram, who was Chairman of the Road Board, and Mr. W. F. Pearson, a member of Parliament, interested themselves in the question of securing a section suitable for a Park and Sports Ground in the township. After much trouble, many delays, and much division of opinion and opposition in regard to locality, the present grounds were secured.

The land was in a deplorable condition, being covered with gorse and broom, but by the inexhaustible enthusiasm of the promoters the gorse and broom were removed, the creek diverted, and the old bed filled up, the land ploughed and levelled, and for two years let to residents in small lots, free of rent, to grow potatoes and other vegetables.

It was then designed with the centre path, and the Playing Park as at present. The Racing and Cycle track was surveyed and laid out for the Sports Committee by Mr. James Sharpe, and the first tennis court was laid down by Mr. T. Davis. The other tennis courts and the tennis pavilion are of more recent construction, while the bowling green was laid down in 1918.

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The Park was opened by a sports gathering on the 6th April, 1891, a wintry storm on January 1st preventing its opening on that day.

The Park is named Pearson Park, in honour of Mr. W. Pearson, M.H.R., who had been so active in securing it for the public.

Pearson Park, since its inception has been a memorial to the foresight of those who secured it, and a credit to every Board that has had its management and control. There have been no slack periods—and whether the Boards have appeared liberal or conservative in their plans, they have used the funds at their disposal in the best interests of the public. They merit the gratitude and appreciation of the public, and not only they, but the several caretakers and custodians who have given of their best to make the Park a place of beauty, and of pleasure. These together, have united to make Pearson Park a pleasure resort surpassed by few others in the Dominion.

Ashley Gorge Domain.

The Ashley Gorge Domain (reserve 3094) was set apart as scenic reserve in 1895, when the Ashley Gorge homestead block was cut up for closer settlement. It was vested in the Oxford Road Board, who functioned as the Ashley Gorge Domain Board, Mr. T. Harle being the first Chairman. Later, on the suggestion of the Chairman, application was made to have the hillside opposite included in the reserve, which was granted. At that time the beech grove covered a much greater area, and was ten times as dense as it is to-day. From various causes much of the forest life has gone—not only the birds and the flowers and the creepers, but the best of the beautiful beech trees. At different times the Board endeavoured to safeguard the reserve, but it continued to suffer. In 1911 it erected the fence, enclosing the grove, thus ensuring

a large measure of protection, and on Arbor Day of that year the senior pupils of the East Oxford School, under the direction of the Board, planted the whole of the exotic trees on the left of the drive.

With its limited revenue the Board made what improvements it could.

In 1924 all the schools in the district planted a large poplar grove, planting about 1,500 cuttings. The members of the Board, together with representatives of the various school committee, were present to render assistance and encouragement, though very many of the trees, on account of the dry season, did not grow. The attempt marks the starting point of a scheme for preservation and permanent improvement of the Domain. At present a definite scheme is in process to plant, where suitable, native, and only native, trees, and to maintain, as far as possible, its forest character. Groves of the better shrubs, such as Veronicas, Oleareas, and Coprosmas, have been planted, as well as a number of specimen trees, many of which are doing well.

"Located as the Domain is in a bend of the river, shut off from public view, its restfulness, its freedom from distraction, its absence of artificiality, its beech grove, its gently flowing water, its slaty rocks, its smooth beach, and its bushclad hills all combine to make it a resort of exceptional attraction, and an ideal resting and recreation place."

Visitors to Ashley Gorge, do not fail, particularly in the Autumn, to admire the charm of the poplar grove. When Autumn shows its hand, and tinges the leaves with gold, there, in all its beauty is the union of "The Orange and the Green." "*Who made that Poplar Grove?*" And why was it planted? It may be noticed that above is a "shingle slide," and below is a large area of splendid flax. The grove divides the two, and appears to protect the latter. In the 70's Mr. J. O'Halloran, who was managing the "run" in those days, noticed that not only was the "shingle slide"

likely to be a source of trouble in itself, but it might also over-run and ruin the flax land below. He proposed to localise the "slide," and keep it to a definite and straight course. Accordingly, when in 1877 two swaggers, Charlie Brown and Harry Polson (significant names) called at the station for work, they were supplied with tools, and poplar cuttings, and set to work. (Their pay was 10/- a week and mutton.) It was intended that the planting should be continued up the "slide," but Mr. De Bourbell, one of the owners, thinking the work of no practical benefit, stopped it; hence the limitation of the grove.

Mr. O'Halloran, in this, as in many other ways, displayed foresight, and had his scheme been completed much of the later trouble caused by the "slide" would have been prevented.

The View Hill Domain, consisting of ten acres, was presented by Mr. J. R. Gorton for a Recreation Ground. The Deed of Gift was signed on June 10th, 1890, by Mr. Gorton, and the Declaration of Trust was signed by all the members of the Oxford Domain Board—which controls it. The Domain was planted by the children of the View Hill School, on Arbor Day, September 15th, 1892.

The Carleton Domain.

On August 17th, 1889, a public meeting was held at Carleton to receive the report of Messrs. O'Halloran, Rutherford and Carter, who had been appointed to wait on Mr. Baker, Commissioner of Crown Lands, to endeavour to get reserve 2808 set apart for a Recreation Reserve. Mr. O'Halloran was voted to the chair and reported that Mr. Baker had inspected the reserve and had decided that $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres of the southern end be set apart for a "Recreation Reserve," and the balance be set apart for a "Plantation Reserve." The land was brought under the "Domains Act," and gazetted on the 20th of March, 1890, and Messrs.

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O'Halloran (Chairman), W. H. Carter (Secretary), J. Cross, R. Bennett, J. Dohrman, W. Rutherford, and W. Mussen were appointed members of the Domain Board.

HALLS.

Perhaps the first public building in Oxford was the original part of the building that was for many years the Baptist Church in East Oxford. This was built entirely at the expense of Mr. T. S. Mannering, for divine worship. The next public building was probably the Road Board Office, in which, though small, public meetings were held.

The first hall was the Drill Hall, erected in 1865 or 1866. It was cheaply built, the timber being slabs—but it was not dismantled till 1924.

The Canterbury Rifle Volunteers were formed in 1860 and the Oxford Company, known as No. 4 Company, was established in 1866. Mr. C. Sale was captain, and his commission was dated April 15th, 1867.



DRILL HALL : 1867-1929

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Mr. C. Sale was a brother of Professor Sale. He came to Oxford as a member of a survey party. "He was a well-educated man, over six feet in height, broad in proportion, well-built, a fine-looking fellow." The officer commanding the Canterbury District was Lt.-Colonel T. W. White, who for about 10 years owned The Warren.

In 1875, the Oxford Town Hall Company was formed, and the Town Hall was erected, but unfortunately was soon destroyed by fire. A new hall was erected in 1880. The plans were prepared by Mr. Simpson, Architect, and Mr. George Keats was the builder. Except that the building was a cold one, it eminently served its purpose for nearly fifty years. For a country hall it was well equipped for dramatic performances and the extensive scenery painted by the late Mr. R. H. Parish was a particular acquisition. Mr. Parish was a considerable shareholder in the Company, and in that capacity rendered great public service by the generosity by which the hall was granted for benevolent purposes. He was not only an excellent scene painter, but was the chief promoter and was the life and soul of the Dramatic Company. On one occasion, in 1912, in regard to this he said: "I am proud to have been connected with the Dramatic Company. It was started by me 35 years ago (1877) as a benevolent institution to help the fatherless and the widow, and the proceeds of the first concert held amounted to £30 and were given to a widow whose husband had been killed in the bush."

During its long existence the hall never paid a dividend. The revenue was never sufficient to meet outgoings, and when improvements had to be made, or repairs effected, a special concert had to be held to provide the necessary funds. Not a little of its upkeep was paid for by the personal contributions of one or other Director. In time, however, the Company found it impossible to carry on, and in 1924 decided to go into liquidation and sell the hall. It offered the build-

ing to the County Council, which found the time inopportune to purchase. There was a danger then of the building being lost as a hall, and to prevent that, it was purchased by the Oxford Benevolent and Improvement League for £400, who, on the opening of the New Town Hall on June 3rd, 1931, presented it to the Oxford County Council. Its services were not yet ended; for when, on October 2nd, the Oxford Working Men's Club was destroyed by fire, that body temporarily occupied the hall till the end of April, when it entered into its new premises.

The Coronation Hall.

Though the Town Hall was a suitable building for large gatherings, there was no public building suitable for comparatively small gatherings, such as general committees, or debating societies. The best building for this purpose was the Reading Room of the Public Library, which had become a common meeting place. This practice, however, often interfered with its legitimate use as a reading room.

In 1911 there was a very active and progressive "Debating and Mutual Improvement Society," which was so popular that the Reading Room could not conveniently accommodate its members. Accordingly, when consideration was being given to the form a "Coronation Memorial" should take, and when the Road Board asked this society to suggest a suitable memorial, it readily and unanimously resolved to recommend "That the Memorial should take the form of a Coronation Hall, to accommodate from 80 to 100 persons."

This recommendation was approved by the Road Board, who called a public meeting to discuss the forthcoming Coronation Celebrations and Memorial. That meeting decided to erect a Social Hall. A Committee consisting of Messrs. D. Hawke, R. B. Dalley, L. Watson, A. Stubbs, and R. Parish was appointed to interview the Hon. D. Buddo in regard to a subsidy,

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and Messrs. D. Hawke, L. Watson, and R. Parish were appointed to interview the Domain Board. A large and representative committee was appointed to make all arrangements for the celebrations. As a result of these activities the Domain Board presented the site and £100, the Road Board donated £40, the Farmers' Union £5, and the Government half the contract price of the building, namely £157/10/-. The balance was made up by small contributions, and the results of a sports' meeting and a concert.

Coronation Day broke fair and promising. From all parts of the district people came into the township, and before one o'clock the streets were crowded. A drizzling rain developed into torrential rain, which continued all the afternoon, compelling the abandonment of the programme. At one o'clock there were assembled at the East Oxford School nearly 300 children from all the schools in the district; old identities, Cadets numbering 46, Boy Scouts numbering 48, Girl Peace Scouts numbering 24, the Territorials, under Lieutenant Colonel Millton, who had with him Captain McMillan and Lieutenant Hunter. Colonel Millton gave an address, after which an adjournment was made to the Park for the laying of the Foundation Stone of the Coronation Hall. In spite of the rain which still fell in torrents, there was a large assemblage. Mrs. D. Hawke laid the Foundation Stone, and Mr. L. Watson gave an address, the proceedings closing with the National Anthem.

The building was erected by Mr. T. L. Gainsford, and during the succeeding years has been in almost continuous use, having fulfilled its purpose absolutely.

The Domain Board, who are the sole controlling body, have maintained it with the utmost care, and to the public satisfaction.

The Town Hall.

As already stated, the Oxford Benevolent and Improvement League, in the public interest purchased

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the old Town Hall. It was in a very dilapidated condition, to repair which would have been costly. When it was proposed to renovate the building there was a general public feeling against such a proposal. It would be better to devote the money required towards the erection of a new hall. By a carnival over £1,000 was raised. The League gave much consideration to the question of erecting a new hall, but hesitated, on the ground, not only of the cost and responsibility entailed, but also of the opinion that a public hall should be owned and controlled by a public body, and not by a private one, as the League was. The League therefore made a proposal to the County Council, that should the Council build a new hall in a central position it would hand over to the Council not only the funds it had collected, but also its interest in the old hall. This last offer was to prevent the possibility of competing halls. After long and careful consideration the Council accepted the generous and public-spirited offer and at the opportune time took a poll to raise £4,000 for such a hall, which was carried by 403 to 120.

In the meantime a section of the ratepayers petitioned the Council against borrowing so large a sum, declaring that a suitable hall could be built for £3,000. The Council, therefore, while asking for authority to borrow £4,000 undertook to limit the amount of the loan to £3,000.

Plans had been drawn up by Mr. H. St. A. Murray, tenders were called, and that of Messrs. Keir and Thompson of Rangiora for £3,050 accepted. The highest tender was in the vicinity of £5,000.

The Foundation Stone was laid by Mr. August Meyers, Chairman of the County Council. A Hall Committee, of which Mr. L. Watson was Chairman, and Messrs. R. F. Henderson and H. Feary, members, in conjunction with Mr. H. C. D. Somerset and Mr. F. Debenham, attended to all accessories such as furnishings, lighting, and stage arrangements and equipment,

all of which were completed and in readiness for the opening day on June 3rd, 1931 (King's Birthday).

This was one of Oxford's notable days, and there was a very large assemblage. Addressing the gathering outside the hall, Mr. Lancelot Watson, now Chairman of the County Council, said the long expected hour had come. For many years the residents had been hoping for a hall worthy of the district. They now had one. They had talked about it for six years, and had watched it growing for six months. The New Hall, he hoped would satisfy all, and "Be the centre of the civic life, and the pleasures of the community."

Mr. August Meyers, who had just relinquished the Chairmanship of the County Council, referred to the various amenities the district possessed, and that the last, but not the least, was the hall. He hoped the residents would give it the support it deserved—if they did that, its success was assured. With the erection of the building in its central position, there would be no longer East and West Oxford—but only Oxford.

After Mrs. L. Watson had unlocked the entrance doors, the hall was declared open "For the improvement, the instruction, the pleasure, and the profit of the people of Oxford." The children were then allowed the honour of being the first to enter the building, which was soon filled to capacity.

When all were accommodated, the Chairman extended a welcome on behalf of the County Council, and expressed the hope that the large gathering was the forerunner of many more, in the building, which, the Council believed would meet the average needs of the district. It was for the residents to use it to the best advantage.

Addressing the children he said the hall had been built for their use, as the older people would soon be off the scene. He exhorted them to use the building well and neither to bring discredit to it nor allow others to do so.



THE OPENING OF THE OXFORD TOWN HALL : JUNE 3RD 1931

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Mr. A. Bringans, headmaster of the Oxford School, addressing the children, referred to them as the ratepayers of the future, pointing out that upon them would fall the burden of maintaining the advancement begun by their elders. It was for them to take up the work when the time came and "drive forward."

The official ceremony was continued in the evening when over 400 paid for admission. Short addresses were given by Messrs. A. A. Fantham (Chairman of the Agricultural and Pastoral Association), H. G. Parish (Chairman of the Farmers' Union), A. Baxter (Chairman of the O.B. & I. League), W. H. Knowles (Chairman of the School Committee), and Mr. H. C. D. Somerset, for the W.E.A., and the Drama Circle. It was remarked that in the arrangement and equipment of the hall every interest had been considered, full provision having been made for pictures, concerts, dancing, dramatic performances, and the general purposes of a Town Hall.

The furnishings, and furniture were obtained from Beath's Limited, and the piano from the Bristol Piano Company. The box scene, on the stage was presented by the Drama Circle, and the stage drapings by the Girl's Club. The total cost of the hall, including land, furnishings, crockery, and architect's fees was £4,189.

The question is asked, "Will the revenue of the hall cover the maintenace costs, the interest and the sinking fund?" The answer is "No!" To fix such charges as might be expected to make this possible would be prohibitive. Those for whom the hall was built could not afford to use it. It is a public duty to provide for the public the facility for social advancement. The hall is the contribution of the whole County. And while the County makes this contribution it should be satisfied, if it is so managed that the

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revenue provides the cost of maintenance. "The Hall is the Civic Centre of Civic Interests."

Central Town Hall.

About the time that the first Town Hall was built at East Oxford, a hall was built at West Oxford. This went by the name of "The Central Town Hall." It was run at a loss, and in 1880 was sold to the West Oxford Lodge of Oddfellows for £240. Henceforth it was known as "The Oddfellows' Hall." But to the Oddfellows it was a bad investment and they sold it to Mr. W. Paget in 1900. At the time of writing it is being dismantled.

Carleton Institute Hall.

The Carleton Institute Hall was built in 1884. The residents of the district subscribed generously to the building fund, and "The farmers carted the timber and stone piles free of charge." The first year's expenditure, including contract for building and extras, £50/3/-, was £87/7/4, leaving a small debit balance. At the end of the second year there was a small credit balance, notwithstanding that during the year the building had been painted and lined. The Hall Committee consisted of Messrs. H. Little (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer), G. Winter, H. Steffens, J. Cross and R. Reed. Later, a stage was built. In 1893, anterooms were built by S. Early, at a cost of £32. Later still a piano was procured. Besides concerts, the hall was used for dancing, skating, the Dramatic Society, the Rifle Club, and the Salvation Army.

Cooper's Creek Social Hall.

The Cooper's Creek Social Hall was originally the school, and was bought by the local residents from the Board of Education on the consolidation of schools effected in 1924. A kitchen was added and other improvements were effected. It is controlled by a body of trustees, G. A. Ryde (Chairman), A. Meyers, J. Taylor, R. Southgate and C. A. Brown.

The Churches

The Baptist Church.

The Baptist Church was the first definitely established church in Oxford, and the Rev. Decimus Dolamore was the first resident minister. He arrived about 1865. Before the establishment of the Baptist Union in New Zealand, each Baptist Church was connexionally independent. It was therefore a simple arrangement for the Baptists to take over the undenominational place of worship that had been erected in East Oxford.

Shortly after the settlement began in East Oxford, Mr. T. S. Mannering from Fernside conducted divine service in the newly erected house of Mr. Bryant. The accommodation being too small, he at his own expense, built the original part of what afterwards became the Baptist Church. The congregation still increasing he gave £30 towards the enlargement of the building, which later was taken over by the Baptists, and held by them till 1921, when they erected the handsome little church in ferro-concrete near the railway station. Succeeding Mr. Dolamore were Revs. Powell, Harrington, Wagstaff and others.

The Anglican Church.

In April, 1858, Bishop Harper, who had arrived in Christchurch from England in 1856, made his first northern visit, including Oxford. He records that on April 13th he "Rode to the Cust Valley and arrived at Mr. Higgins' about 6 p.m. Evening Prayer." April 14th, "Dined at Mr. Sanderson's. Arrived at Mr. Cookson's 3.30. Mr. Cookson absent. Drank tea in the sawyers' hut. Slept at Mr. Cookson's. Evening Prayers." April 15th, "Visited T. Marsh Junr. Rode on to Captain Millton's and dined there. Returned partly by the same route and arrived Mr. White's. Service: Present Mr. W. and three servants." This is

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probably the record of the first church services held in the district.

On Sunday, October 13th, 1861, the Bishop held Divine Service in Oxford, at Mr. Cookson's house. About 1862 the Rev. G. J. Cholmondeley was appointed to take charge of the district from the Hurunui to the boundaries of Rangiora and Woodend. He lived in Rangiora and his Cure included Oxford, and he conducted services in the old schoolroom on Main Street. He, however, soon resigned, and the Rev. B. W. Dudley, the first Vicar of Rangiora, made occasional visits to Oxford. In 1863 there was a proposal to build a church and "The Rev. B. W. Dudley offered his services in the first instance without remuneration till the congregation is able to support a minister of its own." This church, the first St. Andrew's, was built in 1866 and was consecrated by the Bishop on September 30th of the same year. Previous to this Mr. A. P. O'Callaghan had been appointed Vicar of Oxford and Cust. Previous to the erection of this church the services for some time had been held in the old drill hall. Mr. O'Callaghan resigned in 1869, and in December, 1870, Rev. F. T. Opie was licensed Deacon Curate of Oxford: and the Vicarage was built about 1871.

The old schoolroom on the church section was removed up to West Oxford for church services, but it was so damaged in transit that it was never used, but instead, a church was built, the first St. Mary's, and was consecrated by Bishop Harper on July 12th, 1875.

In 1914 St. Mary's was removed to Cooper's Creek, but a heavy nor'-west gale completely wrecked the building before it had been let down on its piles, and as a result, a new church was built, a new St. Mary's, which was opened on October 24th, 1915, and meets the needs of The Terrace, Cooper's Creek, and View Hill.

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The list of Vestrymen in the early days is interesting. One reads that on April 13th, 1875, J. E. Weld and F. Comyns were appointed Church Wardens, and C. Aherns, W. Wollstein, J. Weeber, H. Meyer, T. Hamilton, F. Crowe, — Perham, R. Parish, and A. Hamilton, were elected Vestrymen for the year 1875-6.

On September 9th, 1878, St. Andrew's Church was so badly damaged by a heavy nor'-wester that it could not safely be restored. (The wreckage was sold by tender to Mr. J. Weeber for £25.) Steps were immediately taken to "Rebuild the Parish Church."

A strong effort was made at this time promoted by Mr. Mardon "To build one handsome central church on the original church reserve to serve the whole district."

Sufficient support was not given to this proposal, and the church was re-erected on the old St. Andrew's site. The Architect was Otto Peez, and the builder was C. Petrie.

According to the plans submitted by the building committee and endorsed by a public parish meeting, the walls of the new church were to be of concrete. This church, the present St. Andrew's, was consecrated in 1879.

For many years, there was on the St. Andrew's Church ground a "mounting block," to enable ladies to mount their horses—the side saddle being the order at that time.

The Methodist Church.

Though Wesleyan services had been held, conducted by laymen, it was not till 1872 that the first Methodist Church was built. This was the West Oxford Church, erected on a section given by Mr. T. Broome, who was a generous public benefactor in those days. In that year the Rev. J. W. Worboys was appointed on behalf of the United Methodist Free Church of New Zealand. On the 30th December, the

first general official meeting, known as the quarterly meeting, was held, at which were present Rev. J. W. Worboys, Messrs. A. Wright, J. Jebson, Walker, T. Sharplin Jr., J. W. Lee Jr., W. Youngman, H. Youngman, A. Ancall, —. Griffiths, —. Ross, and —. Harvey. At this time the church was worked in connection with Malvern. Officers were appointed, and various activities of the church were organised.

In 1876 a Methodist Church was built at East Oxford, as well as at View Hill, but in the nor'-west gale of September 9th, 1878, both of these buildings were destroyed. The former was rebuilt but suffered from financial stress till 1893, when it was closed. In 1895 it was removed to its present position in Main Street. When the disastrous nor'-wester in 1898 so damaged the West Oxford Church as to make it unsafe, that Church was closed, and afterwards sold—and the congregation moved up to the Central Church and joined with those from East, thus forming a combined central body, much stronger than the two separate congregations apart.

The Roman Catholic Church.

The first Roman Catholic Church service was held in the Road Board Office in 1875. In 1879 the Church was built on its present site, presented by Mr. Harry B. Johnston.

The Presbyterian Church.

On August 2nd, 1873, a meeting was held in Oxford for the purpose of arranging for Presbyterian services in Oxford. Those present at that meeting were Messrs. Higgins, Bennett, Anderson, McClinton, Cumming, Garland, and Whyte. The first services were held in the Road Board office. For some months the Rev. Neil McCallum officiated in the district, and on the 5th of April, 1877, he was inducted into the Charge of Cust and Oxford. In this year the place of service was changed to the West Oxford Town Hall. On February 16th, 1879, the "Sacrament of the Lord's

Supper" was first dispensed, those partaking being Mr. and Mrs. James Aldridge, James Whyte, Miss Dods, Miss Agnes Rainey, Miss Jane Carson, Miss Charlotte Forbes, Mrs. John Carson, and Mrs. Hans Kennedy. On the 1st of September, 1881, the contract for the building of the church was signed. The church was opened early in 1882 and was then named "St. Columba."

The Salvation Army.

The Oxford Corps of the Salvation Army opened in Oxford on the 2nd July, 1885, by Captain Patrick and Cadet Haldaway. These were known as the "Flying Brigade." The meetings were first held in the East Oxford Methodist Church.

Sunday Schools.

All the churches had Sunday Schools. Probably the first Sunday School was started in what later became the Baptist Church. The teachers were Mrs. G. A. White, Messrs. T. Woodfield, J. Bryan, W. Heyward and G. A. White. The school anniversaries were popular affairs, and great generosity was shown, the amounts raised being at times over £20. Some schools were more popular than others—and perhaps the most popular, and the one that exercised the largest influence at the time was that conducted by Robert F. Garbett, before he took Holy Orders, and when he was in the survey party of Mr. Broderick. The school was held in the public school, and he was assisted by an able staff of teachers, among whom were Mr. Reston, who had just retired from the position of head jailer at Lyttelton, and the Misses Reston. Under this staff the school soon became an important factor in the district, the number of pupils rising to over 200.

In regard to this school, Mr. R. B. Dalley writes:—"To me one of the happiest experiences of my life was my association with what accords with my conception of a model school and ideal teacher. It was Mr. Garbett's practice, as soon as the school had been opened, and the classes settled down to work, to go out

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'into the highways and byeways' looking for potential pupils. Meeting a boy or girl he would engage him in conversation and so interest him in his school, that he seldom failed to return with an additional pupil. Through his acquaintance with the child he would get an introduction to the parent, and as a result of his keen interest in the children, won the respect and confidence of their parents. As a proof of this, though the Sunday School was Anglican, parents of all denominations did not hesitate to entrust their children to his care, and the sectarian spirit never manifested itself.

In those days of fifty years ago, aids to teaching were few, and Mr. Garbett's practice was to write out sets of questions for the upper classes that were marvels of directness and simplicity, and we looked forward with great interest to the annual examination that was held by the late Dean Jacobs, who visited Oxford, with his family, staying at the late Mrs. Kenrick's home. Among the most treasured of my books are prizes received by me in the years 1879-80. Many of those pupils have travelled afar, but I am sure they have not forgotten the lessons taught by those devoted teachers in that up-country school."

Later, when Mr. Garbett became the Anglican clergyman in Oxford, he displayed the same interest in the children, and during the twenty years he occupied that position he gave regular weekly Bible instruction in the State schools of the district. This devotion to the interests of youth secured for him the esteem and admiration of the whole district, and the veneration of those who knew him best. His warm-hearted sympathy with every agency that tended to make life happier and better is an enduring memory.

The Public Library

On May 27th, 1868, a meeting of people interested in forming some kind of educational group was held in the Drill Hall. At the first meeting Mr. Thomas Broome offered a section of land at the corner of Church Street and Bay Road "to the people of Oxford to be held for them in perpetual trust for the following purposes: Mechanics' Institute, Library, Reading Room, Teetotal meetings, Lectures, Literary Lectures or Debating classes on Political Economy, Arts and Sciences." Mr. Broome's offer was accepted and subscription lists were opened for the building. Three months later the "Mechanics' Institute" was built at a cost of £37. The Trustees of the property were Wilson Fisher, Thomas Broome, Henry Sedcole, Philip Briggs and William Hayward. The first committee consisted of Wilson Fisher, Philip Briggs, Henry Sedcole, Henry Meyers, Will Forbes, Will Milligan and Thomas Broome. A Government grant for books was obtained and the Institute soon had an actual membership of 70. It was open as a reading room on three days a week from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Monthly lectures were held at which collections were taken up in aid of the funds. Political Economy and Evolution were favourite subjects.

The Institute was a social force for about twenty years, and then began to lose its hold. The number of subscribers dropped to almost nil. This decline may have been owing to the centre of population shifting. The books were then shifted to what is now the County Council chambers, but then the Orange Hall, when interest was revived.

By this time, 1891, Pearson Park had been secured, and the Library Committee asked the Domain Board for permission to erect a Library on the Do-

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main, and permission was given provided "a paltry building was not built;" and undertook to contribute £80 towards the cost.

On the 30th April, 1892, the Oxford Domain Board invited tenders for the erection of a two-roomed building on Pearson Park. On the 8th February, 1893, the building was completed at a cost of £114, and the library books came to have a permanent home. For many years the Reading Room was the larger room, and for some time being well supplied with periodicals and magazines, was extensively used, not only as such, but as a common meeting and committee room. As support fell away, and later when the Coronation Hall was built, a suitable meeting room was provided; and more accommodation being required for books—the Library was enlarged at the expense of the Reading Room.

No sooner were the books shifted from the Mechanics' Institute than the building was removed to the Anglican Church section in High Street, where it was used as a Sunday School for some time. When the East Oxford School was raised to the position of a District High School, the old building was used, first as a cookery room, then as a woodwork room, and finally as a metal-work room.

Sports

Racing.

Prior to the advent of the motor car or the railway, the horse took a much more important place in the scheme of things than he does now—and most people in the country owned a saddle horse, and endeavoured to own a good one. Most people owning a hack of any quality took a pride in displaying that quality. Many are the records of wonderful journeys taken on horseback, or with horse and cart. What loads some of them carried and what distances they travelled! With so many good horses and confident owners it was but natural that there should be questions as to their respective merits, which could be settled only by trial. One reads in the "Lyttelton Times" of April 8th, 1881, that "a race was run off yesterday at West Oxford between Mr. Denton's "Young Barbarian" and Mr. J. Fisher's "Mutu" for five guineas, which resulted in "Young Barbarian" winning by half a length. A great many people were present on the course. Another match has been arranged between the same horses to take place on April 27th, for the sum of £25 a-side."

Then the "meets" of the Brackenfield Hunt Club and the annual meeting of the Oxford District Races, later the Oxford Jockey Club, were further inducements to the keeping of good horses, and making the best of them.

For a period of thirty-four years one of the most popular public holidays was St. Patrick's Day; the usual date for the Oxford Races. Then, horses, which for the rest of the year, were station or farm hacks, or creamery cart horses under the names of Dolly, Jack or Larkie, blossomed out on that day as racenorses bearing such names as Psyche, Fiction, Black Eagle, Windermere. Sometimes the horses had

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names which were descriptive of their daily life in the locality in which their owners lived, such as "Seldom fed" or "Nor-Wester," and "Wool at a Shilling."

The fortunes of the Club fluctuated, due probably to the granting or the withholding of totalisator permits. During the leaner years only local events were held, but usually there were open events, including the Oxford Cup, the stake of which varied from 55 sovereigns in 1902 to five sovereigns in 1896.

In 1876 the first of the regular meetings was held. The officials on that occasion were:—President, Mr. R. L. Higgins; Judge, Jos. Pearson; Clerk of Course, J. R. Pearson; Scales, J. Plaskett; Treasurer, J. Mullen; Starter, H. Brettagh; Secretary, J. R. Pearson; Stewards, S. J. Gammon, T. Woodfield, H. Sedcole, W. F. Pearson, J. Free, J. Paul, L. D. Benjamin, J. R. Gorton, D. Sladden, G. W. H. Lee, F. Jackson, R. Perham, D. Fisher, H. Moody, T. B. Howson.

The last meeting was held in 1909, after which the Club combined with the North Canterbury Club, which then became the North Canterbury and Oxford Jockey Club, and the meetings were thenceforward held in Rangiora.

In 1909 the officers were:—Patrons: G. Witty, M.P., G. Forbes, M.P., C. A. C. Hardy, M.P., J. O'Halloran, M. J. Dixon, and A. W. Rutherford, Esq.; President, F. Crowe; Vice-Presidents, Arch. Wotherpoon, R. H. Parish, A. Stubbs, A. S. Clarkson; Stewards, Messrs. A. Henderson, W. T. Gilchrist, R. E. Harley, R. J. Gilchrist, R. F. Henderson, Jas. Brown, D. McGrath, L. Powell, E. Feary, F. Wotherpoon, J. B. Pearson, H. Ensor, J. Gingavon, C. F. Bassett, H. Askew, A. Powell, J. McCracken, D. Gillanders; Judge, G. Coward; Clerk of Course, J. J. Heasley; Starter, H. Thompson; Clerk of Scales, G. J. Leech; Handicappers, The Executive and H. Brinkman (trots); Hon. Surgeon, Dr. C. Greenwood; Treasurer, Jas. McCormack; Secretary, F. Hopkins.

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The following is a list of the horses winning the Oxford Cup, together with the stake, and where possible, the amount passing through the totalisator for the meeting.

- 1876—J. Lunn—"Nector," 40 sovs.
1877—J. Cone—"Manuka," 30 sovs.
1878—M. Duncan—"Cast Steel," 30 sovs.
1879—G. H. Lunn—"Milo," 30 sovs.
1880—J. McCausland—"Orange Peel," 25 sovs.
1881—E. A. Derrett—"Don Juan," 30 sovs.
1882—(—) Clayfield—"Albion," 30 sovs.
1883—T. Sheenan—"Psyche," 25 sovs.
1884—No open events; 2 principal races of 10 sovs. each; won by A. Henderson's "Leo" and W. T. Gilchrist's "Ocean Bird."
1885—E. Murfitt—"Rex," 20 sovs.
1886—F. Bull—"Fickle," 20 sovs.
1887—E. Murfitt—"Lavender," 30 sovs. £785.
1888—G. Hahn's "Rosebud" and P. Hanrahan's "Lavender" dead heat, 40 sovs. £866.
"Rosebud" won the run-off.
1889—H. Lunn—"Count D'Orsay," 40 sovs.
1890—H. Lunn—"Count D'Orsay," 40 sovs.
1891—Sports Meeting—No open events.
1892—Hurdle Race—R. Gilchrist, "Tug-of-War."
Flat Race—A. Henderson, "Clarence."
1893—No record.
1894—Race of 10/- each and £5 added.
Hurdle Race—J. Blain's "Miss Bell."
Ladies' Purse—F. Crowe's "Blaze."
1895—Ladies' Purse—R. Charles' "Minnie."
Hurdle Race—Youngman's "Rainbow."
1896—G. D. Crowe—"Zola," 5 sovs.
1897—G. D. Crowe—"Zola," 10 sovs.
1898—G. D. Crowe—"Zola," 10 sovs.
1899—C. P. Murray-Aynsley—"Huku," 15 sovs.
1900—S. Pickering—"Blucher," 20 sovs.
1901—H. A. Knight—"Flame," 35 sovs. £645.
1902—H. A. Knight—"Kotokoto," 55 sovs. £644.

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- 1903—D. Rutherford—"Zealous," 35 sovs., £456.
1904—H. A. Knight—"Natalie," 15 sovs.
1905—S. J. Ryan—"Saranges," 12 sovs.
1906—P. Graham's "Helios," 12 sovs.
1907—Miss I. Button—"Slow Meg," 12 sovs.
1908—Mrs. R. Emerson—"The Brat," 14 sovs.
1909—F. P. Claridge—"Narrangarie," 20 sovs.

It is interesting to note that in the races of the earlier years the riders were the owners.

Hunting.

Before the advent of hares or hounds there were paper steeplechases. The Brackenfield Hunt Club was founded in 1883 by Mr. G. B. Starky, and since then there have been usually two hunts a year in Oxford. At first they were "drag" hunts, and the story is told that on one occasion the man with the "drag," finding the day hot, and the run exhausting, turned in at the Harewood Arms hotel for refreshment, and forgot the hounds till he heard their cry, and they bounded in at the front door, while he hurried off through the back, with the hounds in close pursuit.

In the earlier days of hunting the "meets" were large, when everyone who had a good horse turned out. On one occasion in 1891, when the hunt was at Mr. Wright's, there were 63 horsemen present, and 12 ladies. This is in contrast to what obtains nowadays when there will be scarcely more than a dozen followers.

Football.

As in most districts in New Zealand, in Oxford football has been the principal winter pastime. From the early days of settlement football was played intermittently; but the first match of which we can get any record was the match played on the local ground against Sydenham on the Queen's Birthday, 1883, and it was in that year that the Oxford Club affiliated with the Canterbury Rugby Union. It seems impossible at this date to get a list of those who played in that his-

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toric game against Sydenham, the only names mentioned in the newspaper account of that time being Dunnage, Marks and Hahn. The report goes on to say that while the forwards put up a good fight, as far as their knowledge of the game allowed, the backs were outclassed. The score was 3 goals, 7 tries and one touch-down to nil. There were three spells. "The passing of the blues quite puzzled Oxford, who seemed powerless to prevent their repeated rushes."

In 1882 or 83 a team played against Waikari, among whom were Tom Pearson, Strangman, Hawkins, G. Smith, T. Aldridge, J. Gundry, W. Ryde, J. Dempsey, T. Coltman. The match was played in the field that received the drainage from the hill, and before the game was over, the field was a bog.

By 1889 football was fairly well established. Oxford and View Hill each having a team, which combined when outside matches were played. The names of the Oxford team to play Rangiora in 1889 were:—J. Parkinson (captain), F. Luers (vice-captain), Gorton, G. Ryde, W. Ryde, Harle, P. Thompson, Dempsey, T. Pearson, J. Gundry, Neithe, Pickering, Sheldon, Knowles, Reston; reserves—Hooper, J. Woods.

The View Hill team in 1890 was Parlane (3), Harle (3), Pearson, Luers, Gilchrist, Sheldon, Sirett, McGrath, Plaskett, Budge, Mounsey; while the Oxford team to play View Hill that year was:—Ryde, Free, Reston, Waterman, Parkinson, Pickering, Ryder, Gundry, Prichard, Pearson, Aldridge; reserves—Griffiths, Kubala, King.

Rangiora, or North Canterbury as they called themselves, were the teams against which matches were most frequently played, especially in the early period. In recent years Rangiora has aspired to honours in city football, and matches between the clubs have been less frequent. Of the fourteen Rangiora v. Oxford matches of which we have the records, Rangiora won six, Oxford six, and two were drawn.

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The travelling to most of these early matches was by horse drag, and transit was not infrequently precarious and uncertain. Many were the exciting and unrehearsed experiences. On one occasion the team set out in Paget's Coach, drawn by four horses, each of which wanted to go in a contrary direction; the consequence being that horses, coach, and players finished up in a gorse fence. (Note—The historian does not record the events of the next spell.)

The North Canterbury Sub-union was formed in 1904 for teams north of Kaiapoi, and until 1924 included Waikari-Hawarden Clubs. The Oxford seniors were runners-up in the competitions several times, but did not succeed in winning till 1921, repeating the performance in 1922, 1927, and 1929. The following played in three or more competition games in the 1921-22 seasons:—H. Feary, C. Feary, R. J. Sharpe, T. Garlick, H. Garlick, E. Martin, K. D. Henderson (captain), L. Henderson, W. Young, T. P. Duckworth, H. W. Bluett, G. Leahy, D. Grant, B. Sharplin, J. Brown, A. Blain, E. Grimwood, E. McGrath, F. Ward, Marsh, J. Alford, P. Meyers, J. Dohrman.

The 1927 team that won the competition was:—C. R. Watson (captain), R. Leake, A. Blain, A. Inch, K. Judson, J. Mann, R. McConnell, E. Grimwood, D. Grant, C. Mann, A. N. Henderson, R. Henderson, A. Gainsford, R. Garlick, C. Ryde, R. Inwood, L. Mulligan, M. Watkins.

The 1929 team that won the competition was C. R. Watson (captain), L. Gibson, K. Stubbs, J. Mann, C. Mann, Joe Mann, F. Adams, C. Ryde, K. Judson, M. Watkins, A. Ellis, R. Henderson, R. McConnell, D. Gillespie, B. Beere, P. Kennedy, D. Melrose, V. Aroa.

It was not every year that the club was able to run a senior and a junior team, but when enough players were available this was done. Thus Oxford was the winner of both the senior and the junior competitions in 1922 and 1927.

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Besides engaging in the usual club competitions Oxford has on several occasions sent its team further afield. In this connection teams visited Kaikoura twice and Akaroa once. The first trip to Kaikoura which took place in 1921, is worthy of special mention, because of its transport experiences. The trip was made at the suggestion of Mr. Tom Harle, an old Oxford player, and then resident there. It was decided to make the trip in Charlie Hall's Ford truck, and to leave at 9 a.m. on Friday morning. After a delay of an hour only nine players had put in an appearance, and at 10 o'clock a start was made. At Cust, the headmaster of the school was almost induced to close his school and make the trip. However, three were picked up here, including George Scrimshaw, afterwards a member of the 1928 "All Black" team to South Africa. In Rangiora two more recruits were secured, and the long trip commenced. The Ford found the hills somewhat difficult, and the progress was slow. It was midnight when Kaikoura was reached. The players went straight to a dance, which had been arranged in their honour. On the following day, the match was played, and Kaikoura won by 11 to 3. The return journey was made on the Sunday at about the same speed, the last 30 miles in a snow storm.

Several Oxford or ex-Oxford players have represented Canterbury or the Country Team in their annual match against Town. Those who have been capped for Canterbury are D. McGrath, K. D. Henderson and G. Leahy.

The following have played in teams picked from the six Sub-unions forming Country in the annual match against the City Clubs, forming Town:—E. Tipping, L. Blunden, K. D. Henderson, J. Alford, O. le Comte, C. R. Watson, D. Grant, Joe. Mann, and K. Denton, while C. R. Watson and A. F. Ellis were in the Country Team which toured Marlborough and Nelson in 1929.

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Next May the Oxford Football Club will celebrate its Golden Jubilee.

D. McGrath toured with the Canterbury team in 1898, playing against Auckland and Nelson.

H. Feary first represented North Canterbury Sub-union in 1905, and played his last game for the team in 1922.

C. R. Watson played for Country against Town in 1927-8-9.

K. D. Henderson played twenty-one consecutive games for Canterbury, the last seven as Captain of the team.

C. Feary started playing for Oxford seniors in 1906, and played most of the 1928 season.

A North Canterbury Representative team went on tour in 1907, playing against Ellesmere, Ashburton and South Canterbury. The Oxford members of the team were:—L. Blunden, E. Tipping, H. Feary, C. Feary and T. Bluett.

The Old Boys' (Boys' High School) Football Club was formed in 1901, and the first try in the first match was scored by C. F. Bassett.

Cricket.

The first record we have of Cricket being played in Oxford was in 1878, when an Oxford team played against Cust in a paddock on the west side of High Street, opposite the Working Men's Club. The Oxford team consisted of H. Feary, Thos. Feary, R. Dench, —. Dench, W. Cooper, G. Cooper, Dr. Weld, Robilliard, R. Johnson, senr., C. Johnson, and Rogers. For the next ten years there does not appear to have been a regular team; for in the "Oxford Observer" of 1889 there is the report of a meeting held at Mitchell's, with J. Weld in the chair, when it was decided to form a cricket club, and the opening day was to be September 28th, 1889. The officers of the Club were:—President, Dr. Weld; Captain, Mr. Dee; Secretary and

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Treasurer, —. Reston. The first team of this Club was Bluett, Brown, Reston, Dalley, Dee, Dempsey, Parkinson, G. Ryde, W. Ryde, Smith, Weld. W. Ryde was the most successful bat, but W. and G. Ryde shared the bowling honours.

The following year Oxford beat Cust, McKee, G. Ryde, Prichard and Brown doing most of the scoring, while W. Ryde was the most successful bowler.

In 1893, after one game being drawn, Amberley beat Oxford in the deciding match in the North Canterbury Association Cup, the Oxford team being:—Saulez, Volckman, Gorton, E. Feary, G. Ryde, W. Ryde, Fisher, Weld, Ryder, Clarke, Brown. In this game Weld held the batting honours and E. Feary the bowling.

There were several periods when Oxford had no team. During one of these—in 1906 or 1907—several keen players from the district joined the Cust Wanderers, who, at that time, had a fairly strong team, and went on tour each year, on one occasion going as far as Dunedin. Among the Oxford players in the touring team were E. Feary, G. Rudd, E. Vincent, Blunden and Rattray.

Later, an Oxford team, playing in the Ashley County Competition, were the winners in the 1910-11 season. The team comprised:—G. Rudd, C. Feary, G. Ryde, W. Ryde, E. S. Chambers, T. Sherlock, E. Feary, W. O. Berryman, P. Fisher, A. Moore, L. G. Smith and C. Brown.

For 1922-23 season, a View Hill team, consisting of H. Feary, C. Feary, W. Mackrell, A. H. Denne, R. Southgate, M. Pavelka, W. A. Reynolds, H. Prichard, S. Glew, C. C. Early, C. E. Brown and A. Moore, was entered in the North Canterbury Sub-association competition, which it won, after a play-off with Woodend. W. Mackrell bowled unchanged the whole of this season, and took 120 wickets for 551 runs—an average of

4.5. He had previously played senior cricket in Auckland and in Australia.

The following season the same team played in the senior competition, while Oxford entered a junior team. The seniors were runners-up, while the juniors won after a play-off with Loburn.

In the 1924-25 season both teams were entered as Oxford teams.

From 1922 onwards annual matches between Country Sub-associations and Town Associations have been played, Oxford being represented by H. Feary, R. Southgate, and L. T. Wright.

In 1912, on New's Year's Day, Oxford played and beat a Linwood team on Pearson Park.

The interest in cricket has been maintained by the enthusiasm displayed by the veterans. Some of these were active players for thirty years. For over ten years Mr. R. E. Judson was president of the Oxford Cricket Club and delegate to the Centre. Is there a body of young players coming on? Let us hope so, and that the future will be better than the past.

GAMES AND RECREATIONS.

With Pearson Park so conveniently situated and so eminently suited for sports of various kinds, it was but natural that very soon clubs would spring into life. Reference is made elsewhere in this story to Football and Cricket.

With nearly every young fellow in the district riding a bicycle, or desiring to ride one, a Bicycle Club was a natural evolution,

Oxford Cycle Club.

The Oxford Cycle Club was formed in October, 1895. The officers were:—President, John Ingram; Vice-presidents, W. F. Pearson, C. Thompson, A. Stubbs; Secretary and Treasurer, W. H. Alford; Captain, H. Thompson; Committee, E. Thompson, W.

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Mitchell, P. Thompson, W. H. Alford, G. Ryde. With a good track competitions were popular, and at times records were made.



1st. Bicycle Race on Track in Pearson Park

Tennis Club.

The Oxford Tennis Club was formed in October, 1896. I can get no particulars of this, beyond a report stating "Pearson Park, which has become a place of beauty and general public resort, has now a Tennis Club and Tennis Court, and a Club of 60 members. It celebrated its opening on the 17th December. There was a pleasant gathering of members and their friends, and though the weather was boisterous, the trees afforded excellent shelter."

The club has had a prosperous career, and has produced many good players, besides providing amusement for a great many who did not aspire to high honours.

The Oxford Sports Club.

The Oxford Sports Club was formed in 1895. President, John Ingram; Vice-presidents, J. R. Gorton, W. F. Pearson, John O'Halloran; Secretary, George Smith. Its annual sports have always been a popular fixture, receiving public support. The Club is now known as the Oxford Sports Association, and each year it presents a programme, drawing competitors from a wide field. This is especially so in regard to the wood chopping and sawing competitions. The Association merits the whole-hearted support of the whole district, not only to provide prizes for the annual events, but to provide funds for the perfecting and maintenance of the track.

The Oxford Bowling Club.

The Oxford Bowling Club was formed in 1914, with Mr. D. Hawke President and G. J. Leech Secretary. Its first years' activities consisted in making the green, for which much gratuitous service was rendered. In this it received ready assistance and co-operation from the Domain Board. Though in an almost unplayable state, the green was opened in February, 1915, when there were about 50 members of the club, and their lady friends present. At a later period the green was divided, one half forming a Croquet Lawn. The Tennis Courts on the one side, and the Bowling and Croquet Greens on the other, the Park is the scene of unremitting pleasure and enjoyment, by both young and old.

Music.

While society is composed of individuals, these individuals form themselves into groups or societies, according to the predominating bias of its members. Some of these groups function solely for the pleasure and benefit of the individuals of the group, while others function largely for the benefit of the community, thus increasing their own pleasure. Oxford has had many of these. There have been Debating Societies, Mutual Improvement Societies, Reading

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Clubs, Dramatic Societies, Draughts Clubs, Christie Minstrels, Orchestral Societies and Brass Band. The Dramatic Societies were not continuous, but they rendered valuable service, and large benevolence in their activities.

An Orchestral Society was formed about 1888 and held together for several years, giving welcome service at popular concerts. It consisted of James Brown, conductor (violin), Miss Luers (pianist), D. Cooper ('cello), T. Brown ('cello), J. Harbidge (violin), C. Bluett (violin), Miss Dohrman (violin), E. Reeves (cornet), A. Jones (euphonium), H. Smith (viola).



OXFORD ODDFELLOWS' BAND

Standing: Alex. Baxter,* Tom Baxter, Geo. Smith,
Jim Hooper, A. Jones, A.S. Stubbs.

Sitting: Wm. Mitchell, Tom Brown, J. Gordon (conductor)
Ted Reeves, J. Garrick, J. Pavelka.

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Though improvised bands have performed on special occasions, the first organised Brass Band was formed in 1890 under the auspices of the Nil Desperandum Lodge of Oddfellows. The conductor was J. Gordon. This Band was very popular for some years, and then petered out.

In 1912 the present Oxford Band was formed under R. E. Johnson as conductor. It carried on, rendering much public service, till about 1921, when for various reasons it became almost defunct. Its first difficulty had been to secure instruments, a costly responsibility, and with a band scattered, the instruments would similarly be scattered. It was in 1923 that the O.B. and I. League saw the danger, and the Band handed over the whole of their equipment to the League, thus conserving them for a Brass Band. The League had no sooner done this than fresh life was infused, and the Band was resuscitated, under a different and better management. It was given the use of the instruments and has rendered valuable public service up till the present. It is a fine combination and possesses a number of young players which enhance its future prospects.

The Oxford Working Men's Club was founded in 1887, under the initiation of Dr. Weld. The foundation members were:—Wilson Fisher, W. F. Pearson, C. F. Petrie, W. Mitchell, J. Weeber, F. Comyns, J. Brown, and T. Brown. It was located on its present site in rooms rented from Mr. Mitchell in what was then known as Mitchell's Temperance Hotel. In a short time the whole property was purchased from Mr. Mitchell, and the building re-organised. From time to time additions and alterations were made, the most considerable being in 1930. In October, 1931, the buildings were totally destroyed by fire. New buildings were erected and opened on May 7th, 1932. Mr. G. W. Haines was the architect, and Mr. L. B. Davenport the builder.

Military

From the earliest days of settlement Oxford has shown an appreciation of its responsibilities in national defence. When trouble has arisen, whether at home or overseas, it has been alert for the call to arms. When danger has most threatened, then has it been most ready to take its part in the general defence. Patriotic blood runs in the veins of its people.

In the early 60's, the Maori War was raging in the North Island, and in anticipation of the need during that decade volunteer corps were formed throughout Canterbury. In 1866 the Oxford Company, known as the No. 4 Company, was formed. Mr. C. Sale was captain, and his commission was dated April 16th, 1867. Mr. W. Ryde, senr., was commissioned as an Ensign. A drill hall was built in High Street with volunteer labour, and though the Company was disbanded in 1869, it was used, as a public hall, till the Old Town Hall was built, and for many years after in connection with the butchery carried on next door, being dismantled in 1924.

It is said that when the volunteer company was disbanded many of the old Enfield muzzle loading rifles could not be returned, having been lost or mis-laid in pig-hunting. Moreover the bayonet, the old triangular weapon, had been put to uses for which it was not originally designed. A long wooden shaft was affixed to the socket, thus forming an effective and useful spear—and spearing wild pigs was more interesting and exciting than bayonet exercises.

No further attempt to resuscitate "volunteering" seems to have been made till 1897, although, during the interval, a number of ex-soldiers were residents in the district, including several who had had experience in the Franco-Prussian war. Among these were F. Ulmrick, F. Pachnatz and J. Clolus, the two former on the Prussian side and the latter on the French. In this

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year the disturbed state of affairs in South Africa was probably the incentive. In August, 1897, Mr. G. A. White forwarded to the Defence authorities a petition signed by sixty-eight young men of the district, asking to be formed into a Volunteer Company. Lieut-Colonel Gordon, officer commanding the Canterbury District, visited Oxford to investigate the position. His report being unfavourable, the petition was abortive.

A year or two later the South African trouble came to a head, and there was a great revival in volunteering, particularly in mounted infantry, many mounted companies being formed in Canterbury. The Cust Mounted Rifles was formed, with Mr. Lance as Commander, and was accepted by the Defence Department in May, 1900. This Company was recruited largely from Oxford, and its first mounted parade was held in Oxford on September 3rd, with an attendance of forty. Captain Lance and Lieutenant Millton and Johnson were in command. Its first camp was held at Summerhill on the 21st October, under the above officers with the following N.C.O.'s:—Dr. Volckman as Surgeon-Sergeant; R. D. Atkinson, Sergeant-Major; and C. Ruddenklaau and T. J. Hunter, Sergeants. On the 16th December (Anniversary Day) of that year the Company went into camp at the Christchurch Showgrounds, and took part in the Canterbury Jubilee celebrations.

In anticipation of the visit to Christchurch of the Duke and Duchess of York in June, 1901, fifty-four members paraded at Carleton, and were instructed in ceremonial drill by Staff-Sergeant-Major Coleman, and at a general meeting held at the close of the parade Lt. Millton was elected Captain, and Sergeant-Major Atkinson 2nd. Lieutenant. At a later date Sergeant Hunter received his Commission as Lieutenant. From this Company Farrier Dorn, and Troopers Simpson, A. Russell, R. Russell, J. Bourke, Cleaver, W. Budge, F. Debenham, J. Purvis, E. Blank, F. Blank

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and R. Mounsey took part in the South African Wars, and Troopers Heasley and Frame, who afterwards came to the district, were seriously wounded in the war.

On the adoption of the Territorial scheme in 1911 the Cust and Malvern Mounted Rifles were merged in C. Squadron of the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry, Oxford supplying one troop under Lieut. F. J. Gorton. There were also a few infantrymen in the district and youths from 14 to 18 years were posted in No. 26 Company Senior Cadets under Lieutenant K. D. Henderson.

It may be mentioned here that the C. Squadron, C.Y.C., provided a Lloyd Lindsay team which secured Dominion fame, winning in every competition in which it entered. In 1912, at the military tournament in Christchurch, at which 18 teams competed from all over New Zealand, including one from Australia, it secured the first honours, while in Auckland, in 1913, it again secured first class honours, and at that tournament, in the single horse jump in which there were 46 entries, it secured first and second place, the winners being P. Meyers and A. E. Cooper. The members of the team were Sergeant A. Cooper, P. Meyers, J. Gilchrist and Theo. Cooper.

The East Oxford School formed a Company of Junior Cadets in 1906, and in the following year went into camp for a week in the Rangiora Showgrounds, with the North Canterbury Battalion. It is well to remember that these boys, who had their preliminary training in the Junior Cadets, and later in the Territorials, constituted the war-time generation, together with those reaching the age of 20 between the years 1914-1918, and further, that a number of these were serving on Gallipoli when General Hunter-Weston suggested that a Brigade of New Zealand Infantry should be lent to him to stiffen his assault in an impending attack in June. "We could make sure of the New Zea-

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landers going straight through," he added, "and sticking it when they got there."

In the Great War of 1914-1918 the young men of Oxford answered "The Call" and played a worthy part, a part worthy of the highest traditions. On the Oxford Roll of Honour are the names of 186 who went forth to "live or die for their country." Some of these were mentioned in despatches for distinguished service. G. Munn received the D.C.M., and the M.M. was won by R. Garlick, O. Gillespie, M. Pavelka, L. Tritt, and W. L. Watson.

Well may it be said, as is inscribed on the Soldiers' Monument, "*They were a wall unto us both by night and by day.*" Those who gave their lives were—

William Allen
Eric S. Bassett
Leonard W. Blunden
Alex. Brown
Frank J. Burrows
Charles T. Cleeve
George Cross
J. Thomas Dalley
Ernest W. Dohrman
Charles H. Eley
Herbert H. Ffitch
Foster Fisher
Albert Frampton
Albert Garlick
Harry Gilchrist
Otto Hahn
C. Alfred Hawker
Charles Henderson
Godfrey Lassen
Bernard Lyons
James H. Lowe

Thomas McCahon
George Mackay
Thomas Morris
George A. Nelson
Rowland Nelson
Harry Nelson
Arnold W. Paget
Frederick H. Paget
Harry Papps
Edward Pavelka
Charles L. Roberts
Leslie G. Smith
Robert Taylor
Alexander Vallance
Ashley Vincent
Raymond Vincent
Archibald Waterman
Courtenay C. Wells
Leslie Wilkie
Harry C. Woodward
Reginald J. Youngman

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Added to these are the names of those who, though returning from the war, died from the effects of war conditions:—

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| T. Bluett | A. Zimmerman |
| Harry Garlick | L. Powell |
| O. Meyers | W. O. Berryman |
| Wilfred L. Watson | |

In 1930 Compulsory Military Training ended, and military training became voluntary. The Canterbury Mounted Regiment, commanded by Major F. J. Gorton, consists of three squadrons, of which the head-quarter squadron draws its men from North of the Rakaia, Oxford being represented by eight men.

Lodges and Societies

The Loyal Nil Desperandum Lodge of Oddfellows, Oxford, was founded on October 14th, 1868. On the 5th of October, Messrs. Luers, Woodfield and Rees were initiated in Rangiora in anticipation of this event. P.P.G.M. Stephens occupied the N.G. chair, and the local members present were the three mentioned above and C. L. Davies. The meeting was held in the Harewood Arms Hotel. On the lodge being opened Dr. T.C. Waring was elected, admitted and initiated. The officers elected at that meeting were Woodfield as N.G., Davies as V.G., and Rees as E.S., and the following propositions for membership were received:—Edward B. Youngman, William Paget, Harry Youngman, William Comyns and Joseph James Weeber. At the following meeting these were admitted. Bro. Beesley was elected Treasurer, and Drs. Waring and Rees medical officers.

Mr. Luers offered a section of land for a Lodge-room, provided the building were gone on with within a certain time. Later, he requested that the meetings be held no longer in his house, and the lodge met in the Mechanics' Institute. This accelerated the building of the lodge room, which was soon completed, and the Lodge had its first meeting in its own lodge room on the 3rd January, 1870.

The West Oxford Lodge. Loyal Oxford Lodge of Oddfellows was founded on the 18th January, 1876. P.P.G.M. Wright occupied the N.G. chair, Bros. Comyns, Marsh, E. B. Youngman, J. Wratt, H. Youngman, W. McKenzie and W. Cooper joined by clearance, and Pegg, Cornick, Shadbolt and H. Wilson by initiation. The officers elected were:—N.G., H. Marsh; V.G., E. B. Youngman; E.S., J. Harre, who resigned and was succeeded by W. R. McKenzie; R.S. to N.G., W. Cooper; R.S. to V.G., John Wratt; L.S. to V.G., Chad-

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bolt; warden, W. Pegg; I.G., H. Youngman. Comyns and Cooper were elected Trustees and H. Youngman Treasurer.

The meetings were at first held in an upper room of Paget's Hotel, and later in the Central Town Hall. In 1880 they bought this hall for £240 and added an annexe, costing £85, and held their first meeting in their own hall on the 7th of February, 1881. The hall proved a bad investment for the lodge, which they sold in 1900, when their present lodge room was erected.

A Druids' Lodge appears to have been functioning in 1881, but no particulars are available, except that Dr. H. Reeves was the medical officer.

The Oxford Loyal Orange Lodge, No. 43, later known as "Walker's Heroes" held its first meeting in the Oddfellows' Hall, W. Oxford on August 23rd, 1883.

The District Master — Walker, presided, and there were present H. McClinton, John McBriar, Sam McBriar, and James Wilson of Oxford, and R. Meredith, W. Cromie, W. Kennedy, T. Tallot, S. Early, and R. Harte from the Cust and Rangiora lodges, who became foundation members.

The officers elected were:—H. McClinton as W.M., John McBriar as D.M., W. Kennedy as Secretary, S. McBriar as Treasurer, James Wilson as Chaplain, and R. Meredith as Foreman of Committee. The first nominations were Donald McPhedron, James Whyte, Richard Walsh (elected at the first meeting), and Allan Cockburn.

The section for the Orange Hall (the present Council office), was purchased from Dalley for £18 in March, 1887. The foundation stone was laid on July 12th, 1887, and the receipts for that day were £46 7s. 6d. The Hall was opened on August 16th, 1888, and the building and section were sold to John McBriar for £45 in 1894. For some time the Lodge lapsed, and in 1909 a new charter was granted to L.O.L., No. 45.

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The meetings were held in the Oddfellows' Hall till their new hall on High Street was built, and opened on July 12th, 1913.

The Masonic Hall was built, and the Lodge opened in January, 1912. The foundation members were P. C. Jones, J. J. Heasley, A. Meyers, W. Weld, L. Watson, A. H. Scott, A. Henderson, E. Feary, W. C. Jamieson, C. F. Bassett and F. A. Hopkins.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union was formed on the 11th September, 1911. Mrs. Helen Barton, of Glasgow, addressed a meeting of the women of the district in Reynolds' Tea Rooms, when a branch was formed with thirty-four members. The officers elected were:—President, Mrs. R. H. Gainsford; Vice-presidents, Mrs. Couch, Garbett and Bowles; Secretary, Mrs. J. Comyns; Treasurer, Miss Caverhill; White Ribbon Superintendent, Mrs. G. Ryde; Cradle Roll Superintendent, Mrs. Couch.

The Ladies' Hospital Decorative Committee was formed on the 15th November, 1920. Mrs. R. F. Henderson was elected President, and the following were elected to the Committee:—Mrs. Hawke, A. Baxter, H. F. Luers, E. W. Meyer, J. McGrath, T. J. Frame, A. Henderson, R. H. Gainsford, P. Thompson, R. E. Judson, H. T. Cooper, F. Horrell, C. McIntosh, F. J. Meyer, G. A. Ryde, F. Ffitch, F. Gilchrist, and Misses Powell, Cooper and Winter. Mrs. E. G. Sharpe was appointed secretary, which position she has held continuously, and on the resignation of Mrs. Henderson, Mrs. D. Hawke was elected President, and has since held that position. The object of the Committee was not to visit the sick, but to keep the hospital supplied with flowers, and to provide extras for the staff and patients.

Plunket Society.

The Oxford Sub-branch of the Royal N.Z. Society for the promotion of the Health of Women and Children, was formed on February 22nd, 1922. The meeting

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of women was convened by Mrs. D. Hawke, under the auspices of the W.C.T.U., and was held in the Coronation Hall, Mrs. R. H. Gainsford presiding. Addresses were given by Mrs. Pyne, Christchurch, Mrs. H. A. Knight, Darfield and Plunket Nurse Wilson. A fund was started and a room engaged.

The officers elected were:—President, Mrs. E. Woodfield; Vice-president, Mrs. R. G. Wolff; Secretary and Treasurer, Mrs. W. H. Evans; Committee, Mesdames P. Thompson, W. Skurr, D. Hawke, Jr., F. Debenham, C. Early, A. Henderson, R. Henderson, R. E. Judson, G. Ryde, E. Skurr. The attendance the first year was—Adults 224; babies 279.

Officers in 1932:—President, Mrs. W. J. Skurr; Vice-presidents, Mrs. W. Knowles, Mrs. K. D. Henderson; Secretary, Mrs. A. Bringans; Treasurer, Mrs. A. Smither; Committee, Mesdames W. Beere, E. Bowman, J. Budge, L. Burnett, F. Debenham, F. Gorton, A. Graham, A. Henderson, R. E. Judson, T. Power, R. Stringer, E. Skurr, H. Thompson, W. Virtue, R. E. Johnson, R. Southgate, R. Wolff. Attendances, 1931-32—Adults 628; babies and children, 747.

Oxford Branch, N.Z. Farmers' Union.

The Oxford Branch of the New Zealand Farmers' Union was formed about 1903 or '04. It was one of the early branches of the Union. The Secretary was Mr. Jas. McCormack, and the chief promoter Mr. John O'Halloran. Indeed, he was the moving spirit of the Union, as he was of many other things in Oxford. The political correspondent of various institutions, he was closely associated with members of Parliament, and was unremitting in his attempts to secure something for his district—the water races, the opening up of Crown Lands, "thirds" from the sale of Crown Lands, and the A. and P. Association—are all closely associated with his name.

The Oxford Agricultural and Pastoral Association.

The Oxford Agricultural and Pastoral Association was started under the auspices of the Farmers'

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Union. Its first Show was held on May 30, 1906, in Pearson Park, when the total number of entries was 411. The officers and Committee of that Show were:—Patron, C. A. C. Hardy; President, John O'Halloran; Vice-presidents, J. Ingram, E. B. Millton; Secretary and Treasurer, James McCormack; Committee, H. T. Cooper, T. Blain, R. J. Gilchrist, Dan McGrath, Jas. Budge, Arch. Wotherspoon, A. Henderson, W. T. Gilchrist, G. Bassett, A. Meyers, John Cross, F. Crowe, F. Gilchrist, J. Powell, C. Bassett, J. Rains, C. Feary, T. J. Hunter, J. Mounsey, A. D. Budge, W. Wright, R. F. Henderson, G. Coward, A. Stubbs, H. Askew, F. Thompson, A. E. Smalley.

The Association was incorporated in September of that year, and in the following and succeeding years, its Shows have been held on its own ground, and have been numbered among the popular and well-organised country shows of Canterbury. With occasional fluctuations, the entries have exceeded 1,500. During the first six years of its existence it had a different secretary each year, but the present secretary has held office continuously since 1911.

Flower Shows.

The first Flower Show in Oxford was held in connection with St. Andrew's Festival in 1889 "as an experiment." The experiment was a success, and at each recurring Festival the Flower Show, which constitutes a "Summer Show," has formed a most important part of that Festival.

In 1910 a "Flower Section" was added to the Schedule of the A. and P. Association, thus providing for an Autumn Show.

In 1928 the Methodist Church promoted a Spring Flower or Daffodil Show, which they have continued since, and which is increasing in size and importance. Thus, with the Spring, Summer, and Autumn Shows, there are inducements for all flower lovers to be actively and profitably interested.

The
Oxford Benevolent and Improvement
League

INCORPORATED.

(O.B. & I. League.)

On the 6th of October, 1915, the Oxford Patriotic Committee was formed, and at that meeting there were present Mr. D. Hawke, Chairman, Messrs. F. Hopkins, G. Smith, A. T. Stubbs, T. Brown, E. Feary, T. J. Frame, J. Heasley, A. Henderson, W. Weld, L. Watson, R. F. Henderson, and J. Cook. During the war and for some time after, this committee attended to the "send-offs" and "welcome homes" of our soldiers, and in general gave sympathetic and active attention to their interests. It was a live committee, and its influence was felt outside the district. For nearly six years it functioned and with the experience of a common interest the members became attached to one another. In the meantime some had dropped out, and others had taken their places. There was a feeling, however, that six years of meeting together for the common good had produced a spirit that should be maintained. When it was proposed that the committee should wind up its affairs and disband, Mr. L. Watson urged that some means should be adopted by which the activities of the members should be continued for the common good. The idea was approved and a sub-committee was appointed to formulate a scheme. On the 2nd of August, the committee held its final meeting, completed its affairs, adjourned to have the minutes "written up"—resumed, had the minutes read and confirmed and signed—and then disbanded.

Several of the members retired. Mr. Hawke was voted to the chair, and the following motion proposed by Mr. L. Watson, and seconded by Mr. A. Henderson, was carried unanimously: "That the late Oxford Patriotic Committee be re-constituted to be called 'The

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Oxford Benevolent and Improvement League.' " Thus was inaugurated a unique group for the social welfare of the district. The League is a private body and became incorporated. Among its registered rules are the following:

2. The objects of the League shall be to raise funds to assist in and contribute to benevolence generally.
3. . . . the membership shall consist of not more than twenty-four members nor fewer than fifteen.
6. To become a member of the League a person must be proposed by one member, seconded by another, and voted for by a majority of the members present at the meeting following that at which the proposal is made.
8. The officers of the League shall consist of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Treasurer, and a Secretary, who shall be members of the League, all of whom shall be elected at the annual meeting of the League.
10. The income and property of the League from whatever source derived, shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the League, and no funds shall be paid directly or indirectly by way of dividend or bonus or otherwise to members of the League.

Three foundation members are still members of the League, Messrs. D. Hawke, L. Watson, and E. Skurr. Messrs. A. Baxter and E. Lassen were elected the 1st year, Mr. Knowles the 2nd, and Mr. G. Smith the 3rd. The other members have a much shorter period to their credit. The meetings are held monthly, and the attendance is so good, that rarely are more than four or five members not accounted for.

In 1924 the League purchased the Town Hall for £400 thus saving the hall to the district. It also pro-

moted a carnival, raising over £1,000, and presented this sum of money, together with the old hall to the district. It was the inspiring force in securing the new Town Hall which reflects credit on the whole district.

Since its inception it has assisted the district in many ways, disbursing £1,200 in benevolence and improvements. It made a substantial contribution towards improvements at the Ashley Gorge Domain, as well as to the Cemetery Board. It was instrumental in getting the Board to hand over the management of the Cemetery to the County Council, which has effected marvellous improvements, and made one of the tidiest and best kept cemeteries in Canterbury.

It has offered an annual bursary to the value of £5, to the pupils of the Oxford District High School, who show greatest ability in research into the Natural History of the District.

The League's regulations governing the award of bursaries are interesting as showing the keen educational trend in Oxford, and for the benefit of readers are given here.

1. With a view to encouraging individual scientific study in the Oxford District High School, the O.B. & I. League make an annual grant of £5 for that purpose.
2. The child has naturally an inquiring mind, especially towards Nature, and no restrictions should be placed in his way towards his individual development along those lines, but on the other hand the inquiry should be a venture on his part. This is the way discoveries are made.
3. In order to encourage this venture each child can make his own choice of pursuit such as botany, geology, entomology, physiography, etc. It is essential that the child should get his thirst for knowledge and his first know-

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ledge from Nature, coming to books for confirmation of his hypotheses.

4. It may be that the child may make trials in many fields before it discovers its particular bias. These preliminary researches will be recognised.
5. It is suggested that candidates for the bursary make notes, gather specimens, draw diagrams and write descriptions, and thus have something which shows the result of their researches in an intelligent form.
6. The results of pupils' work, together with the teachers' reports, are to be submitted by the last week in November.
7. A committee for the discussion of any details that may arise shall consist of two members of the League, the Headmaster of the School, and two members of the school staff, to be nominated by the Headmaster.
8. The *sine qua non* of the whole scheme is that the child must rely on his own unaided effort for discovery, coming back to his teacher or to his books only to help him over those difficulties that cannot otherwise be surmounted.
9. Whenever a bursary is granted, it shall be looked upon, not as a reward, but rather as an inducement to further study in the subject chosen by the bursar, and shall consist of books or instruments having a direct bearing on the subject of study.

The Oxford Brass Band, in 1923, being unable to carry on, presented to the League "All its instruments, uniforms, equipment and cash, by way of gift to be held in trust for the purposes of a Brass Band in Oxford." The League sponsored the new band and has continued to do so—and enabled the Oxford Lyric Orchestra to come into existence.

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Sports associations are fostered and receive financial help, and books are provided for High School pupils whose parents cannot afford them. It is in the realm of benevolence, however, that the League has been most active, giving timely and substantial aid in cases of poverty, hardship and distress.

The financial depression that has overtaken the country has had its effect on the League. On transferring to the New Hall it purchased a "Talkie Plant," which depleted its finances; nevertheless it has endeavoured to provide, and succeeded in providing, a weekly entertainment unsurpassed in New Zealand. It endeavours to secure the best possible programme, while using all the profits for the benefit of the district. It produces a social amenity for the district that could not otherwise be secured.

A recent writer has said: "The twenty-four members of the League are men animated with the idea of service to the community, ready to help in any movement for the common good. Born out of the stern necessity of the war, this League is the best memorial that any village community could possess."

An Original Lay-Out

Town-planning notwithstanding, villages and townships are not formed according to a pre-conceived plan, but grow according to the demands of the situation. Customers do not exist for the benefit of the shop, but the shop for the benefit of the customers, and it is located and equipped to suit their convenience.

Reference has already been made to the fact that block 201 divided Oxford arbitrarily into East and West. Mr. Harry Bell Johnston, in the early days a Christchurch lawyer, owned block 201, as well as a good deal of bush land in the Oxford district. He held it for speculative purposes. He held also the whole of the land on the South of Main Street from the Bank of New Zealand to the Commercial Hotel, and running back to the Burnt Hill Road.



The Forest Inn, West Oxford. Built in 1862 for Mr. David Fisher

Block 201

(MAIN STREET)

RANGIORA ROAD

BAY ROAD

CONEY STREET

WILKINSON STREET

CHRISTCHURCH ROAD

CHURCH

MARKET PLACE

EXCHANGE STREET

MANCHESTER STREET

HIGH STREET

CHEAPSIDE

PEATH STREET

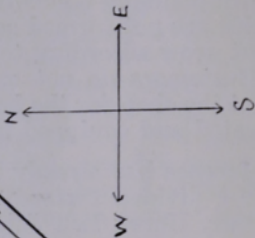
YORK STREET

BATH STREET

FOREST ROAD

ESPLANADE

RIVER EYRE



TOWNSHIP OF OXFORD

PLANNED AND SURVEYED

FOR

H.B. JOHNSTON AND KNOWN AS

JOHNSTON'S TOWNSHIP.

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He had visions of establishing here an English village—with village streets, market-place, and Esplanade complete. A map of the proposed village as surveyed is given. The various blocks were subdivided into small sections—and there are sections set apart for church and vicarage, as well as for market-place, while the South, on the bank of the River Eyre, is the Esplanade. The names of the streets are interesting, but those only remain that run at right angles to Main Street. The township was planned, but never realised. Only sections on the Main Street were sold—as town sections. The township was spoken of as “Johnston’s Township,” and in most maps of the Oxford County the “Town of Oxford” is shown as occupying the site of this “township.”

PUBLIC SALEYARDS.

Who had the first auctioneering business in Oxford? Mr. Mardon erected a few cattle and sheep pens and started business in West Oxford, near where Mr. Munn lives, but the venture was not successful. Reference is made elsewhere to the town laid out by Mr. Harry Bell Johnston. In 1876, in order to induce Mr. J. Ingram to start business there, he offered to erect him a home and saleyard in Market Square; but Mr. Ingram did not think the situation a suitable one. In the *Lyttelton Times* of September 3rd, 1878, one reads that “A meeting was held at Love’s Hotel to consider the advisability of erecting saleyards at East Oxford. It was decided to erect them at the back of the Town Hall at once. Half of the amount required was subscribed in the room. The Directors of the Town Hall decided to let the hall free of charge for the purpose of holding a market. It is also intended to let the saleyards without any charge for the same purpose.”

The other half required was evidently not raised, for the saleyards were not erected.

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In 1882 Mr. Ingram started with Mr. Charles Thompson, who acted as auctioneer. The saleyards were built where they now stand, a very few pens at first. The partnership lasted for a year, when Mr. Ingram took over the business. The business must have prospered, and the district must have advanced, for on the 29th October, 1891, the new saleyards were opened. A free luncheon was given to 400 guests, and there was a yarding of 800 cattle and 3,000 sheep.

At a banquet tendered to Mr. Ingram on the 10th December, 1891, Mr. J. Pearson said "We well remember when Mr. Ingram started his auctioneering business. We have seen how, by his pluck, perseverance and energy, his honesty and obliging nature, he has built it up until it is second to none outside of Addington." He further said "Mr. Ingram has been the means of advancing the place materially. He has rendered valuable services to his fellows in a social capacity. If sports or other gatherings for the pleasure of the people were being arranged, they always found Mr. Ingram at the head of them, and doing his best to make them a success." One may say that there was probably no one man who did so much for the commercial advancement of the district as Mr. Ingram.

Mr. Ingram's reply on this occasion was characteristic. "I have certainly done what I could for the advancement of Oxford, but I have been in a position which gave me facility to do so, and doubtless, if others had been in a similar position, they would not have done less. The greatest enjoyment I have is to see others happy, so that when contributing to the happiness of others I have been contributing to my own pleasure."

Dairying

The Creamery at East Oxford was opened on May 12th, 1893, and was closed on November 20th, 1918. An article written at the time said: "Owing to the adoption of home separating, the Oxford creamery, after running for 25 years, ceased operations on November 30th. During the whole of that period Mr. L. Newport has been the officer in charge.

Twenty five years ago the dairying industry in the district was in a parlous condition. Dairy farmers worked hard and long with little reward, and were largely dependent on the storekeeper. Little money was handled, prices were absurdly low, and progress seemed hopeless. With the advent of the Creamery a marked change for the better took place. The dairyman got full value for his commodity; he handled his money, and became independent of the storekeeper. The improved condition of the output resulted in the improved condition of the



OXFORD CREAMERY

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homestead, and the improved standard of living. The small man discovered that dairying now provided a sure means to a modest but comfortable livelihood. To-day the dairying industry is one of the most important of the district and is growing in importance."

What was said in 1918 may be repeated, with qualifications, in 1932, and though prices are at a minimum, the revenue, though reduced, is sure. One may further add that though giving up the control of the Creamery, Mr. Newport has continued to serve the dairy farmers, by collecting the cream, and despatching it without fail, "in fair weather or foul," to the Central Dairy Factory. He has completed nearly 40 years of honourable and devoted service to this primary industry. All honour to him!

THE LOCAL PRESS.

Somewhere in the middle 80's, Mr. R. H. Parish, one of the most enterprising and public spirited citizens Oxford has had, seeing the opportunity, purchased a small printing press. With this he did "jobbing" work—and as he became more familiar and expert in the business, ventured on the publication of a weekly newspaper. This paper, known as "The Oxford and Cust Observer" and at first "Canterbury Liberal," but later "Canterbury Democrat," had its birth on August 17th, 1889, and continued to circulate in the district for about fifteen years. It served a useful purpose, and was a splendid means of spreading local news and advancing local interests. At different periods it had regular contributors, who, in no small measure, directed public thought along useful lines. In some of their views they seemed in advance of their day, but not a little of the seed they sowed has germinated and grown in later years.

The paper was a good advertising medium. Among the advertisements in the first issue were John Ingram, auctioneer; R. H. Parish, draper; F. A. Waterman,

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A.1. bakery; G. Smith, iron and tin worker; A. P. Prichard, general storekeeper; Pickering Bros., blacksmiths; Weeber, fancy store; C. J. Dorn, Oxford Bakery, est. 1862; J. Dempsey, boot and shoe maker; James Brown, boot and shoe maker; A. Ancall, butcher; H. J. Laming, saddler; J. Lewthwaite, furnishing warehouse, everything required suitable for cottage or mansion; W. Munn, boots and shoes; Griffiths Bros., general carriers; Walter Ryde, Woodside sawmiller; G. E. Waylandt, family butcher; Harewood Arms Hotel; Paget's Commercial Hotel.

The sales report states: "Lambs fetched 7/4 to 9/-; sheep, 10/3; small pigs, 7/- to 10/-; potatoes, 6/- to 7/- a sack.

Shop prices: Ladies' ulsters, 12/6, worth 20/-; Boys' Knickerbocker Suits, 5/6; Colonial Tweed Suits, 25/-; Holland Finish Calico, 3d. a yard; Moleskin Trousers, 5/- a pair; Blankets, 5/6 a pair; Largest Size Double Blankets, 12/6 a pair; Men's Best Watertights, pegged, 15/- a pair; "Cottle's Cure" for Chilblains, Coughs, Colds and Croup.

MEMORIES.

Gold.

One day, Mrs. John Clolus, when cleaning a duck for cooking, saw what appeared to be grains of gold. Immediately the news spread that gold had been discovered, and there was no end of gold seekers in the creeks close by. In the midst of the search, Arthur Bluett, who had been a gold miner, and who carried about with him, in a pouch, a small quantity of gold dust said "Let me have the dish." Taking it, he secretly dropped some of the gold dust into it, and after a little shaking said "What's that?" There was certainly gold. That settled the question. A number then, equipping themselves with milk pans set off up the stream, through the bush, and over the hills. In a day or two they returned exhausted, and in rags, but with no gold.

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In the Lyttelton Times of July 1st, 1885, mention is made of this. It says: "The prospecting party sent to report on minerals has returned. The creek running through East Oxford where gold was formerly found, was carefully examined, but no trace was obtained. The party sank a hole in Mr. Laugeson's land at the source of the creek and found gold, but not in payable quantities."

The Moa.

Some will perhaps remember the "Hunt for the Moa." Charlie Ross, a big dark man, was the chief actor in this affair. He made the model of a moa's foot in wood and leather and with this model made imprints in the clay bullock track. These marks were seen and raised wonder. What bird could make such large footprints, and take such long steps? None but a moa! Then the report, and the search, and the wax, and the tin for melting the wax to take the impression—the eager tracing of the marks—culminating in the discovery of the discarded model! A hoax! But what yarns were afterwards told!

A Shooting Case.

There was an accidental shooting case in 1867, the victim being George Hathaway. He and Ted Wright, who had taken Mr. Woodfield's gun without permission, went into the bush to shoot pigeons, and George got the contents of Ted's gun in the legs. After getting George away on a cart to go to Rangiora to a doctor, Ted hid in the bush as he was afraid, if George died, he would be tried for manslaughter. His sister, Emily, put food for him where he could get it at night, until he heard that George was in no danger of dying. I wonder if George, or Ted, or Emily, if alive, remember this.

A Lay of East Oxford

(Referring probably to about 1875.)

Umbrageous Oxford! land of posts and rails,
What discontent within thy bounds prevails!
A tea-pot storm is raging in thy breast,
Or strictly speaking—'tis in Oxford West.
The reason why, I'm sure 'twill make you laugh,
East Oxford's going to have the telegraph;
Post Office also, dreadful to relate,
Will surely share the same untimely fate.
Let Mullins rave and David Fisher roar,
They're euchred dead, and feel no doubt quite sore.
'Tis sad to think how many wasted reams,
Petitions and such like, what inky streams!
What sleepless nights! What quarts of Ward & Co.
Have vanished in the struggle! But all no go—
What secret meetings! Gammon in the chair,
Hunter as clerk, memorials to prepare.
The doors all locked, with Charley Ross as guard,
And Denby talking figures by the yard.
Their Town Hall, too, on paper quickly got,
At taking shares they were not quite so hot.
The lock-up was the most they could obtain,
Suggestive, may be, of a softening brain.
In Oxford West, however, to cut it short,
Their hole and corner came to nought.

Almost a Tragedy.

At the View Hill School a clever and enthusiastic young schoolmaster essayed to give a lecture on "Chemistry," with the result that a violent explosion wrecked the interior of the school, shattering panes of glass, clock and maps, and hurling the audience in all directions, besides blowing up the floor. Plaskett, of portly dimensions, endeavoured to make an exit through the window and stuck fast, "saying his catechism freely," whilst the luckless teacher crawled out of the door on hands and knees to receive the "blessing" of parents and children.

Written in 1891.

"When I arrived in Oxford the first mill was getting ready to start. The wages were 7/- a day, which we sometimes got, but the price of necessities was 50 per cent. above present rates. I have a keen recollection of a venerable and respected resident bringing us our weekly supply of mutton in a dray drawn by 'Whiskey,' a bullock who has long since gone the way of all beef. We paid for the mutton 7d. a pound. Bread you could either bake or go without, while other stores had to be procured either from Rangiora or from West Oxford, where there was a sort of store where the prices were double what they are now, and the quality worse.

We were a simple people, and our wants were few—a pair of moleskin pants, a blue shirt, a belt, a pair of formidable looking water-tights, and a billy-cock hat formed our outfit, while our wives wished for nothing better than a nice print dress. As the infantry began to arrive the mothers used to make clothes for them out of old trousers and gowns (no sewing machines in those days), while the more industrious of the men, after their day's work at the mill, or in the bush, would split shingles till 9 or 10 o'clock at night, and be up in the morning by daylight to dig their gardens before they went to their ordinary work. The consequence of this was we had always a few pounds to go and come on. In spite of all this, it is better to be living in 1891 than in 1861."

Those Times.

"Wilson Fisher's Gully was one of the most beautiful gullies and contained the prettiest piece of bush in Oxford. It should have been retained as a reserve. It had not much large timber, and was a glade of ferns equal to anything to be seen on the West Coast. It was the favourite picnic place of the district, and the Sunday School picnics, when the children were taken up the hill in bullock drays, were always held there. One bullock dray was driven by Tom Cusden, who always tried to make his bullocks race the others.

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Are there any in Oxford to-day who remember those joyous times, those memorable picnics, and the jolting in those bullock drays?"

School Games.

"The school games to-day are nothing like what they were when I went to school. Now-a-days the games are organised. Every child has to play, and every facility is given for games. Grounds are provided and kept in order, as well as playing material. In our day, to play cricket, we each had to give sixpence to provide a bat or a ball, and if we didn't pay we couldn't play. We had to make up our own games. We had Chevy Chase, Bull-in-the-Ring, Prisoners' Base, Fly-the-Garter, Fox and Hounds, and perhaps Tip-cat, or Marbles or Tops, while the girls played Oranges and Lemons, Nuts in May, Sally Sally Water, and Hop-Scotch. We thought we had fine times, and when there was no game to play, we could get into mischief."

THE HOSPITAL.

March 30th, 1920, was, as the Chairman of the County Council, Mr. R. F. Henderson, said "A 'red-letter day,'" for, on that day the "Oxford Maternity Hospital" or Home was officially opened. In 1914 the Minister in charge of the Hospital Department, at a conference in Wellington, stressed the importance of Maternity Homes, and expressed his willingness to give their establishment special assistance. The North Canterbury Hospital Board accepted the suggestion and put a sum on the estimates for the establishment of a home—"Oxford was the first in the field." A site of about five acres was secured from W. H. Alford, and the building was erected. The total cost was £5,486. At that function Mr. Henderson said "While some might object to the cost of the institution, the saving of life, and the amelioration of suffering are beyond price." He added: "If the nurses and doctors popularise the treatment here, the public will make use of it."

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For some reason the Hospital was not used to the extent that was expected. There was something about it that was not "popular," and it was not till it lost the "atmosphere of an institution" and "breathed the atmosphere of a Home" that it came to receive reasonable patronage. And this will obtain: for it will come to its own only when it takes the character of a home. It must be the best place procurable for the purposes for which it was established. It is those in charge, and responsible for the treatment given, who have the power to make it the success that it merits. Moreover, this fact must be appreciated, that the Home is for the benefit of the people; not the people for the Home. The people have a large financial responsibility in its maintenance. It is therefore but worldly wisdom on their part, to make use of that responsibility, and to see that they get their "money's worth."

The situation is ideal for the purposes of a Maternity Home. The natural outlook is beyond price. Though the functions of the Home have been extended by the acceptance of cases other than maternity cases, that extension is but the fringe of what might be done. The possibilities of extended usefulness are far beyond any yet attempted by the governing authority. In such a superb situation the institution should develop beyond a Hospital, into a Home where patients would convalesce much more quickly and effectively than they would in Christchurch.

Nearly forty years ago it was urged that a Convalescent Home be established in Oxford. Will one see this dream realised? May we hope that the day is not far distant when New Zealand will come into line with the more enlightened countries of the world as regards Hospital administration; and that the authorities will recognise that in Hospitals such as the Oxford Hospital we have not only an admirable institution to meet the needs of the local people, but also the nucleus of a first-class Convalescent Hospital, to which patients can be removed from an atmosphere of acute ill-

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ness never absent from a big General Hospital to one of returning health in bright sunny wards at the Oxford Hospital.

Here room will be found for ailing children, where, by means of good food, fresh air, and sun-bathing they can be restored to health, and that quickly. A few beds in such a hospital in conjunction with an open-air hostel—and this hostel, in connection with the Oxford open-air, sun-bathing school, would provide facilities for dealing with large numbers of children from Christchurch without interrupting their education—and at a trifling cost. It is these children, who, in later life, cause our hospitals to be such an intolerable burden on the community. Is it not better and cheaper, and wiser, to get ultra-violet rays direct from the sun in Oxford than from a lamp or a machine in Christchurch?

This is surely an ideal worth striving for and worth living for! Shall we make it one of our ideals?

THE WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

The first "Summer School" held under the auspices of the W.E.A., was held in Oxford from December 25th, 1920, to January 2nd, 1921. Professor James Shelley of Canterbury College was Director. Seventy students were enrolled from Christchurch, and Oxford people to the number of 200 attended the popular lectures. Lectures were given by Professors Shelley, J. B. Condliffe, C. Chilton, Gabbatt, J. Hight, Salmond and Tocker, the Hon. G. W. Russell and Mr. J. Johnson, M.A. Miss Millicent Jennings conducted a course in folk song, and Mr. R. M. Laing, M.A., conducted rambles to places of scenic interest, and gave lectures on Botany and Geology.

In 1923, Mr. H. C. D. Somerset was appointed sole secondary assistant at the Oxford District High School, and Professor Condliffe suggested that he should in-

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augurate a tutorial class for adults. There were at that time many rural W.E.A. groups in Canterbury, but most had visiting tutors. The proposed class was to be experimental in an endeavour to work out with a resident tutor, the needs of a typical rural centre.

Oxford was particularly adapted to such a project. Being 41 miles from Christchurch, it is outside the radius of city attraction. It had a strong community spirit, while the Summer School had prepared the ground to some extent. The time was ripe for rural adult education.

There was a general cry from Educationists for an "Agricultural bias" in education. An Agricultural and Pastoral country should frame its education to accord with its rural life. But unfortunately the "Agricultural bias" was interpreted only as a case for an injection of Agricultural science into the usual curriculum designed for all schools, town and country alike. Experimental plots, manurial tests and beans grown in sawdust were to make a rural course. The ideal



First Summer School in N.Z. under auspices of W. E. A.
Oxford 25-12-20 to 2-1-21

THE STORY OF OXFORD

that Professors Condliffe and Shelley had at that time was a course that would balance the ordinary activities of the country and tend to make the country a desirable place in which to live and move and have one's being. While the course should be related to rural activity, it should certainly tend to bring culture to it.

The Course started in June 5th, 1924, when Professor Shelley lectured on "Drama as a Social Factor" to an audience of 60, and it was decided to devote the first session to English Literature and Drama.

The classes have been running eight years with courses in Literature, Psychology, Economics and Drama—and lectures in Music, Art, and Literature, with good and regular attendances. Of these, not the least interesting was Drama, and a Drama Circle was formed which read plays, and produced several to large audiences. Indeed, this is one of the best results of the class, for the community has come to have such an appreciation of Drama as it did not think possible. The desire is Drama, and more Drama.

These classes have formed a link between child education and the public and have demonstrated that education and culture belong not to a period in life, but to life itself. Moreover, the student, whether adult or youth, realises he can follow his own predilection without curb or restraint. Another development of the courses has been the establishment of girls' and of men's clubs, the former taking eurythmics and folk dancing, and the latter gymnastics and physical exercises.

The W.E.A. is a social force in the District. It provides facility for developing the innate desire for knowledge and inquiry, and opens the door of knowledge to the community that otherwise is open to but a select few. It provides in the country the social amenities of the town, and places the country in a position of advantage over the town. So far as real education and culture are concerned, it gives equality of opportunity.

Schools and Education

It is not easy to get accurate data in regard to the first schools in Oxford. Mr. G. A. White and Rev. D. Dolamore are said to have had night schools. In the very early sixties Mrs. Solaire opened a little school. The room had an earth floor and the seats were pit-sawn planks laid on blocks of wood. A small table at which only three scholars could sit at a time served for a desk and writing lessons had to be taken in turn.

A few years afterwards Mrs. Milligan opened a private school for girls in Church Street. Miss Steadman, afterwards Mrs. Sale, opened a boarding school for young ladies about 1869, on Sladden's Hill. Many young ladies came from Christchurch, and for a time it was a popular school. She afterwards gave this up and started a day school near Parish's corner. Mrs. Foster, wife of Captain Foster, had a boarding school. Messrs. Rolfe and Briggs also had private schools.

In about 1868 the Anglican Church started a day school on Main Street, and Mr. Tomlinson was the first master, followed by Mr. Wollstein.

In 1872 a public meeting of residents decided to apply to the Education Board for a school. Their request was granted, and thereafter education was State education, which began in the Baptist Church on September 16th, 1872, and the new school of one room was opened in May, 1873. The school was afterwards enlarged to three rooms, and at one time the attendance reached almost the 300 mark. In July, 1874, the West Oxford School was opened, and in 1876 Carleton and View Hill. The Woodside School (Cooper's Creek), first known as Oxford West side, was opened in 1882, Kiri Kiri 1892, Rockford 1895 and closed 1926. Warren opened 1916. There was a period when the four bush schools were full; Oxford West with an attendance of over 100, Woodside 80, and View Hill 90. With the cutting out of the bush, settlers moved else-



Mr. Alex Bringans B.A. Dip. Ed.
Present Headmaster Consolidated Schools



Mr. W. Wollstein
First Headmaster East Oxford School



Carleton School 1876 and 1st Scholars. Richard Willis, Headmaster
This building is now on the New School Site at Oxford

where, and the attendance declined. I give a list of the several head teachers with their years in brackets.

Oxford East.—W. Wollstein (1872-78), J. H. Newlyn (1879-80), T. A. Hamilton (1880-81), T. May (1881-2), Harry Wilson (1882-89), R. B. Ryder (1889-1904), C. Bourke (1904-10), Lancelot Watson (1910-22), A. H. Denne (1922-29), Alex Bungans (1929—

Oxford West.—John Harre (1874-5), T. Ritchie (1876-81), W. Cuthbert (1881-83), J. B. Harbidge (1883-1913), Geo. Anderson (1913-25).

Woodside.—Mary M. Reston (May 1882-86), J. Marshall (1887-9), Lancelot Watson (1889-99), D. Arnott (1899-1906), F. T. Rundle (1907-11), Francis R. Callaghan (1911-15), Mrs. F. L. Webb (1915-25).

Carleton.—R. Willis (April 1876-78), T. A. Hamilton (1878-80), W. A. Banks (1880-2), J. McLeod (1882-4), S. McCullough (1884-6), W. Stirling (1886-1902), Janet Dick (Mrs. Cowens) (1902-10), Wm. Dickie (1910-15), G. M. Pilkington (1915-17), W. J. Sloane (1917-23), W. J. Roberts (1923-25).



Miss M. Buchanan

For many years Assistant Mistress at
East Oxford

Ashley Gorge.—A. Wright (1904-5), C. A. McMeekan (Mrs. Kerr), (1905-25).

View Hill (no dates).—Comyns, J. McIntyre, E. Mayo, A. Malcolm, Densham, G. W. Maber, R. Mounsey, Miss Harvey, Mrs. Dingwall, Miss Newport, Miss Smith, Miss Wilson, Miss Mounsey.

Kiri Kiri.—E. A. Shrimpton (1892-4), E. Hefford (1894-5), Miss Anderson (1895-6), Miss Hurse (1896-

THE STORY OF OXFORD

1900), Miss Callaghan (1900-11), Miss Bella Dynes (1911-20), Miss Affleck (1920-6), Miss Bowen (1926-8), A. H. Ellis (1928-30), Mrs. Norton (1930-).

The education, generally, aimed at a standard VI grade. The three R's were the principal subjects taught. This type of schooling was severely academic in character. It was rather instruction than education. Initiative on the part either of the teacher or of the scholar was not encouraged. The system tended to suppress both, and few of the older residents look back with pleasure on their school days.

By the year 1900 a little elasticity had been introduced into the system, and Nature Study was included. While this was a "free" subject, it promised to be fruitful; but it was not long before a "definite scheme of Nature Study" had to be provided, and the life went out. Is it not deplorable that in a district such as this, with the material in abundance and at the very door, the study of such subjects as Geology, Botany, or



WOODSIDE SCHOOL 1882 First Pupils

THE STORY OF OXFORD

Bird Life, was neither attempted nor encouraged? Where nearly every boy, on leaving school, went into the bush to earn his livelihood, what a world he would have entered had he had a reasonable initial training in plant life or in Botany, or in the bird life of the bush! He was neither taught nor encouraged to see, and to think for himself, and when he entered on his life's activities the door, if not closed to him, was certainly not opened for him.

May we hope that the training for the future will be better than that of the past.

Consolidation.

Consolidation took place in 1925. Mr. Anderson of West Oxford and Mrs. Kerr of Ashley Gorge retired on superannuation and Mrs. Webb of Cooper's Creek was transferred to another position. Mr. A. H. Denne, of the Oxford School, became head-master of the Consolidated School, and Mr. W. J. Roberts of Carleton School, joined the teaching staff, and has, as well, driven one of the buses.



East Oxford School 1875 and Early Pupils

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Other teachers were Miss G. L. Alley (infant mistress), Miss Eileen O'Connor, Miss Clague, Miss Alford (pupil teacher), Miss Partridge, and Mr. H. C. D. Somerset (secondary department). Miss S. Ruddock and Miss K. Nankivell came a little later. Mr. C. Hargreaves and Mrs. A. Ellis were visiting teachers in woodwork and cookery respectively. The Consolidated School opened with two rooms on the Bay Road site, the rest of the school being accommodated in the old East Oxford building. The new school was opened by Sir James Parr, Minister of Education, on the 20th of June, 1925. Three buses were provided for the conveyance of the children.

With consolidation came a widening of school activity. Instead of the small school with one or two teachers, Oxford now possessed a grade 5 school in a rural environment. There was much difficult work in bringing about a real consolidation of heart in the pupils, but the staff was keen and results soon began to show. The High School already possessed a School Council, elected by the pupils, and a large measure of self-government followed.

In the football field added numbers soon told. The 1926 team won the North Canterbury Schools' Rugby Competition and also two seven-a-side competitions. The team consisted of R. Whyte, A. Dynes, K. Stubbs, W. Stevenson, A. Beere, E. Doody, E. Rossiter, L. Morris, T. Judson (captain), E. Russell, J. Wright, K. Doody, D. Wotherspoon, P. Mann, C. Moore, N. Dalley, A. Frampton. This memorable team scored 103 points and had only 3 scored against it.

Another development of great educational importance was in self-expression through Drama and Folk Dancing. Miss Alley, who was appointed in 1922, brought with her specialised knowledge of these sub-

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jects. As a result the school has become noted for the quality of its concert work. "The Princess and the Swineherd" (1922), brought in £60 for school funds. Among other plays produced by the school were "The Fairy Doll," "The Old Bull," "Scenes from Hamlet" (Shakespeare's Birthday Festival), "Snowwhite and the Seven Dwarfs," "El Dorado," "Cinderella" (70 performers), "Catherine Parr."

The school also staged the Queen Crowning Ceremony in 1926, with some hundred performers. A most ambitious undertaking was the performing of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in the old Town Hall, on July 9th, 1926. The Secondary Department supplied the players, the infant department the fairies. The play was beautifully dressed and was provided with a full scenic and musical setting. The cast was as follows: Peter Quince (J. Garlick), Bottom (C. Bassett), Smug (C. Cottam), Snout (E. Paget), Flute (L. Feutz), Starveling (L. Walker), Theseus (A. Beere), Hippolyta (Beatrice McGrath), Lysander (J. Croy), Demetrius (R. Powell), Helena (J. McMeekan), Hermia (Verna Waterman), Philostrate (G. Lowe), Oberon (Betty McNae), Titania (Gertrude Henderson), Puck (Frances McCormack), Fairy (Eileen Thompson), Peaseblossom (Patty Hall), Cobweb (Molly McGrath), Moth (Sylvia Taylor), Mustardseed (Winsome Denne), Rabbits (Adrian Roberts and Nola Feary), Fairy Train (Bernice Spencer, Shona Bassett, Elaine McCahon, Nancy Mann, Jean Baxter, Eunice Lowe, Eileen Hale, Dorothy Elliott, Rona Elliott, Marie Whyte, Myrtle Paget), Soldiers (W. Ward, R. Whyte, A. Dynes, S. Skurr, T. Judson), Pianists (Mavis Roi and Eileen Doody). The play was an example of co-operation in the whole school.

Proficiency examinations proved that a high standard was being set, but the aim was always to train future citizens for an active life.

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Three rooms were added to the new school early in 1929. At this time, also, Mr. Denne went to Dannevirke, and Mr. A. Bringans, the present headmaster, was appointed. Early in the present year two further rooms were added, the secondary and technical rooms were moved to the new site, thus completing consolidation. It now only remains to absorb the small schools still existing in the district.

Secondary Department.

The Secondary Department of the school was opened in 1913, with Mr. L. Watson as its first headmaster, and Miss Grace, the first secondary assistant. Following Miss Grace came Miss Best, Mr. C. Arnold, Miss Anderson, Miss Gunn, and Mr. Somerset. This Department remained a sole charge one until 1930, when increased attendance warranted a second assistant, Miss Parlane. Miss Logan and Miss Pollard have held this position in turn.

In 1923 a more practical course was introduced by increasing the time given to science and handwork. A school council was elected and a magazine started. In 1925, by the courtesy of Mr. Jordan, the Oxford printer, the pupils were able to set up and print their own magazine.

The first High School re-union was held in 1925, and is now looked upon as a fixed institution. Metalwork and commercial subjects entered the syllabus in 1930, and at present, a rural course is being developed along with the more academic work. Courses in art and music are a feature of the work.

School Committees.

Consolidation has been brought about by the keen support of the parents and the persistent efforts of the School Committee. Oxford people are especially in-



QUEEN CARNIVAL



The Infant Group Consolidated School 1931



SCHOOL STAFF 1929

Back Row: H. C. D. Somerset, Mrs. Norton, W. J. Roberts
Miss Hart (relieving). Front Row: Miss Grant Miss Alley,
A. Bringans, Miss Ruddock, Miss O'Connor.

debted to Dr. Burnett, whose enthusiasm and energy are always available in the cause of education.

The present committee consists of : W. H. Knowles (Chairman), A. Smither (Secretary), Dr. Burnett, Rev. W. G. Sell, T. Doody, G. A. Ryde, K. D. Henderson, R. E. Judson, W. J. Skurr.

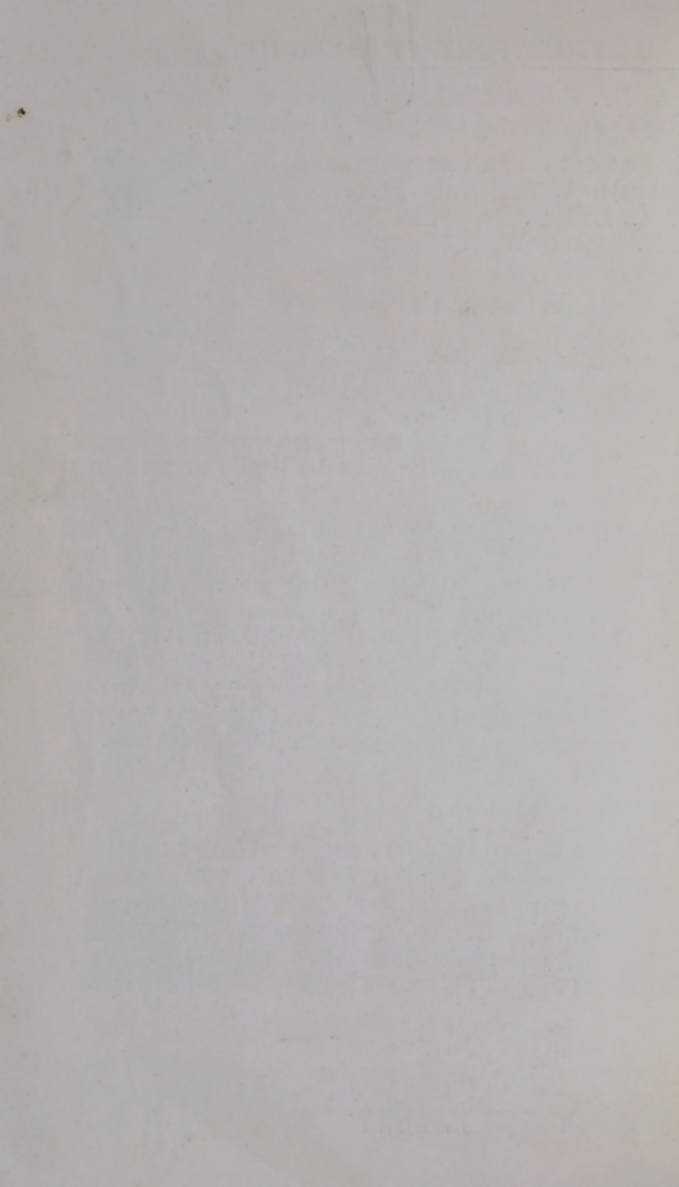
What of the Future?

Finally it must be remembered that a school does not consist of a group of buildings, merely; its spirit dwells in its pupils, past and present. This spirit is not the affair of a day: the school, to-day, is the creation of sixty years of work. It now has many things in its favour, and it should be able to lead the way in rural education.

Out of this Diamond Jubilee we hope that an "Old Pupils' Association" will grow—and be ready at all times to assist the old school. Of this we may be certain: A school, to fulfil its proper function must become the *Centre of the Life of the District*. To a limited extent this has begun. Let us hope that those who assemble to celebrate the School's Centenary, will look back to this Diamond Jubilee as the dawn of a new era of co-operation in the great task of education of young and old.

Let us remember that

"New times demand new measures and new men;
The world advances, and in time outgrows
The laws that in our fathers' day were best;
And doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
Made wiser by the steady growth of truth."



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