

3.4 Ambrose Taylor 1889-1907

Ambrose Taylor was selected for the position of Head Gardener from a field of twelve applicants and was appointed on a salary of £120 plus house, in October 1889. As was the case during his predecessor's time, his ability to progress the development of both the Domain and Hagley Park was severely hampered by a lack of funds and a dearth of skilled workmen. During his first year as Head Gardener, the Domains Board's meagre yearly revenue was £600, derived from the rent of Hagley Park for grazing and sporting purposes,²⁹³ the sale of trees and seeds and interest from the investment of a small endowment from the Provincial Council. From this approximately £400 was expended on labour and £100 in secretarial work, leaving £100 for the day to day operational costs, purchase of new plants, tools and materials etc.²⁹⁴ This paucity of funds had caused a noticeable deterioration in the appearance of the grounds towards the end of the Armstrongs' tenure and continued to thwart Taylor's proposals for irrigation and the addition of other "*fresh features*" until at least 1904.²⁹⁵

Taylor was less focussed than the Armstrongs on the botanical and educational values of the Domain, and was described by the Chairman of the Board as having a very good eye for effect and an understanding of forestry. For much of his employment he was occupied in directing the thinning, pruning and removal of trees in both the Domain and across Hagley Park. Early removals included many of the Armstrongs' remaining nurse pines as well as some of Enoch Barker's riverside gums. This was followed by the removal of mature poplars between the Acclimatisation Society and the river. Numerous young trees were removed after they were wilfully damaged by young boys and by 1893, following a "*practical survey of the whole Domain*" over 800 trees had been removed because of overcrowding.²⁹⁶

Taylor's efforts to create scenic effects within the Domain and Park were initially directed at opening view shafts to the Avon River and the Port Hills. This involved the reduction of the over-planted shrubberies and the thinning and pruning of densely planted tree belts along the margins of the river; an approach that drew frequent criticism from members of the public. Despite his attempts to explain the benefits of his rigorous tree felling regime in Hagley Park, the level of community concern was so great by 1904 that the Minister of Lands was forced to intervene and "restrain" the Domains Board from further tree removal until Henry Matthews, the Chief Forester, Government Forestry Department, had been consulted.²⁹⁷

Ambrose was assisted by his son Edgar from approximately 1895. Edgar started as his father's casual assistant after school at the age of nine, and was eventually formally engaged as a gardener. He continued his employment with the Domains Board until the early 1900s.²⁹⁸ Much of the physical work, nursery cultivation, plant labelling and tree planting in Hagley Park was undertaken by Edgar.

²⁹³ At this time football clubs were paying the Domains Board £1.00 per acre per year grounds rental on Hagley Park and cricket clubs £2.00 per acre per year

²⁹⁴ *The Star*, 11 June 1890, p. 3

²⁹⁵ In 1904 a bill was passed by Parliament giving power to local bodies to subscribe funds to Domains Boards outside their boundaries

²⁹⁶ *The Star*, 18 October 1893, p. 1

²⁹⁷ Letter, Under Secretary of Lands to Chief Forester, 23 February 1905, AADS W3562 257/1/562 Pt 1, ANZ

²⁹⁸ Edgar's diary records that he left soon after James Young was appointed Curator (June 1908), however, Tipples (2010) notes "... in 1906 he began work for A. W. Buxton Limited, a firm of nurserymen and landscape gardeners"

3.4.1 The Domain

In conjunction with his ongoing arboricultural programme, and when funds and donations permitted, Ambrose Taylor began to move the Domain towards an aesthetic more closely approximating that desired by the Board. In 1896 he laid out a Rosary in the main lawn opposite the Curator's House. Board reports indicate that this was made possible by a number of significant gifts of roses from local nurserymen as well as donations from the public.²⁹⁹ Recalling the Rosary in his diary, Taylor's son Edgar noted that it was “a circular arrangement of formal design similar in pattern to the existing [1935] Rose Garden [with] 350 Roses...”³⁰⁰ Planted with hybrid perpetuals and tea roses, it included popular varieties of the day as well as newly released species. It was removed in 1912 following the formation of James Young's Rose Garden.³⁰¹

Eight years later a fern house was constructed in the shade of the Museum's western wall. Mentioned in the diary of Edgar Taylor, the “fernery grotto” as it was called, was described as being “60 feet x 40 feet and 20 foot high at the ridge ... fully stocked with tree ferns and numerous other New Zealand ferns, including the finest specimens of *Todea superba* (Prince of Wales) fern... and fed by water pipe from the Museum.” Domains Board Minutes document its planning and erection and note that Samuel Hurst Seager was responsible for its design.³⁰² A somewhat ephemeral structure, it had disappeared by the early 1910s. Another structure resembling a garden pavilion or rotunda was located adjacent to the Pine Mound, beside the walk leading from the Museum to the river. Seen in a postcard view of the Domain dated to ca. 1905 little other information is known about its use and construction.

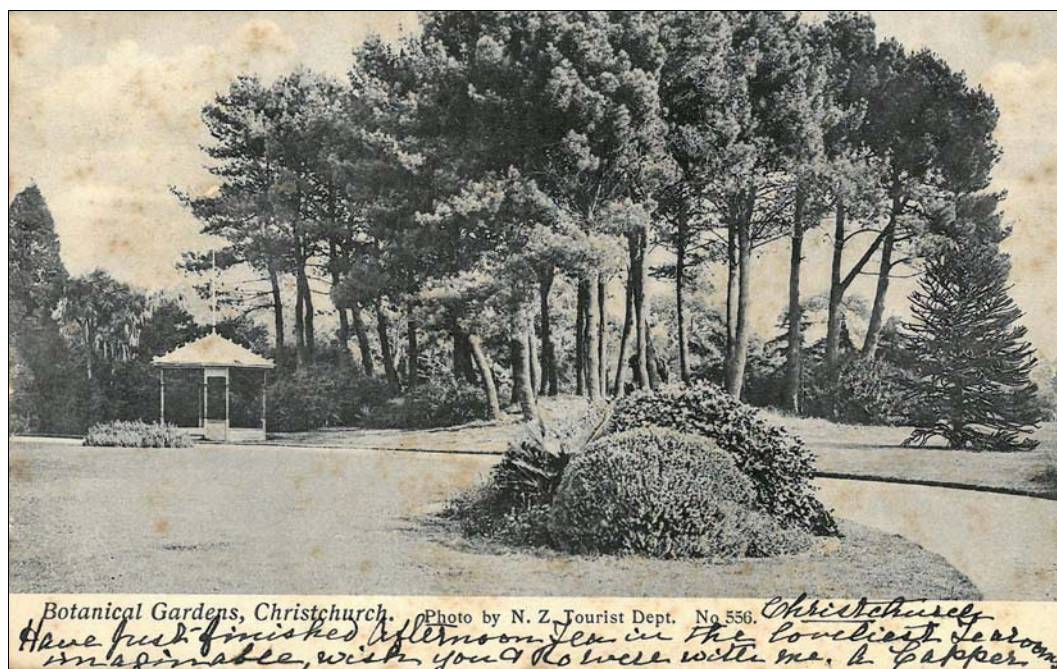


Figure 3.21. Pine mound and small garden structure, ca. 1905
Source: Tourist publicity postcard, L. Beaumont, private collection

²⁹⁹ *The Star*, 15 July 1896, p. 2

³⁰⁰ Edgar Taylor diary cited in Duff, G (1981) *The History of the Botanic Gardens and Hagley Park*, unpaginated

³⁰¹ Minutes of special meeting of inspection, 16 March 1912, CH343/79a, CCCA

³⁰² *The Star*, 11 March 1904, p. 3; *The Star*, 11 September 1904, p. 3

Taylor's attempts to continue the development of the Pinteum in the old deer park were deferred by the Board for reasons of expediency. However, a new collection of conifer stock in the form of a significant gift donated by T. W. Adams³⁰³ was noted to have been planted in the western portion of the Domain. This stock was the progeny of parent stock directly sourced by Adams from the English nursery of J. H. Veitch and Sons, and included *Abies concolor*, *A. grandis*, *A. nobilis*, *A. pectinata*, *A. Formosa*, *A. Webbiana*, *A. nigra*, *A. Nordmanniana*, *A. Veitchii*, *A. pinsapo*, *A. magnifica*, *A. amabilis*, *A. Mertensiana*, *A. Douglasii*, *A. Englemannii*, (now *Picea engelmannii*) *A. cephalonica*. Some years later Adams provided Taylor with a variety of willow cuttings from his own collection, and the Department of Agriculture donated a collection of native grasses labelled with both botanical and common native names.³⁰⁴ Other gifts of plants were received from Domains Board member Hugh Murray-Aynsley who gifted primroses, Landscape Architect and Nurseryman Alfred Buxton who gave a large collection of roses and Nairn and Son who gifted tree ferns for the fern house.

Donations of seeds and plants were not limited to those from local nurserymen or private collectors, and the Minutes of the Domains Board document Taylor's gratitude to a number of overseas institutions such as Professor Goodall of Harvard, Messrs Damman and Co, Italy and the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris for donations of seeds for the Domain. These were raised in a new glasshouse/pit-house structure that was described by Edgar Taylor as being devised on the principle of the old English pit-house. The roof of the structure rested on a brick foundation at ground level and six steps descended into a pit about three feet deep below ground. To compensate for deficiencies in the garden borders and beds, Taylor ensured that special attention was focussed on the appearance of the lawns and, to this end, a 'Ransome' combination mower, catcher and roller was used. This was pulled by a horse equipped with leather shoes to minimize turf damage. By-Laws instituted by the Board in 1892³⁰⁵ prohibited the public from walking on the Domain's garden beds, grass plots and borders, and further protected Taylor's grass swards. This was enforced by a Park Ranger who, together with Taylor, had been sworn in as special constables. Additional surveillance was provided by a trooper from the Voluntary Regiment who patrolled the Domain on Sundays on horseback.

At this time there were 1½ miles of shrubbery borders in the Domain. In keeping with period conventions these were a mix of height-graded herbaceous plants and shrubs. An account of the Domain at this time described these as "*spacious borders about forty feet in width. The back of these borders is filled with a choice selection of herbaceous and other flowering shrubs, with here and there a fine specimen of conifera. The outer part of the borders is filled with a good stock of ordinary budding plants.*"³⁰⁶ Very low Buxus formed a live-edging to the garden beds beside the walks that were fashionably sunk 1 to 1½ inches below the grass level. Seats, presented by some of the city's prospering businesses,³⁰⁷ were strategically positioned to direct views to the borders.

High visual interest and colour effect was provided in geometric beds incised into the front lawn (Armstrong Lawn) leading to the Head Gardener's cottage. These beds were mass planted with

³⁰³ Alfred Albert Thomas William Adams, (known as Thomas William Adams), 1842–1919, farmer, forester, churchman, educationalist. A key contributor in the formative years of New Zealand forestry, by 1904 Adams had established an arboretum of 800 trees and shrubs at his property in Greendale, Canterbury

³⁰⁴ *The Star*, 8 August 1904, p. 3

³⁰⁵ Bye-Law (sic) 11, Bye-Laws of the Christchurch Domains Board relating to the Government Domain and Hagley Park North and Hagley Park South, dated 7 July 1892, AADS W3562 Box 257/1/562 Pt 1, ANZ (see appendix 5)

³⁰⁶ *Auckland Star*, 24 May 1890, p. 2

³⁰⁷ Singer Manufacturing Company, Kaiapoi Woollen Company, Ballantyne and Co., Messrs E. Reece and Son, etc

seasonal species and featured a row of Fan Palms (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) which were universally popular in the Victorian and Edwardian garden (figure 3.22). Also on the front lawn, a well, surrounded by a pond twelve feet in diameter, provided water for the floral displays, and nearby shrubberies and lawns. This was located adjacent to the existing *Cedrus deodara*.³⁰⁸ The eastern face of the Museum was heavily clothed in Virginia creeper to minimise its strong visual presence, and a group of donated *Abies douglasii* were planted “on the very plain side of the Museum” on the recommendation of Leonard Cockayne. The rest of the grounds were described as consisting of “large tracts of grass, with considerable clumps of pine and other trees, and here and there a fine single specimen tree. Conspicuous amongst these specimens were a few fine *Auricularia imbricato*,(sic) *Wellingtonias*, *Cupressus*, *hollies*, etc.”³⁰⁹

Vignettes of the willow-fringed river were achieved by replacing sections of the continuous garden bed that bordered the river with grass plots, and walks were faced with street sweepings to improve their surface. Groups of cabbage trees and ferns were said to “give character to parts of the gardens”, and yuccas and the flowering *Furcraea longaevea* were an exotic and popular feature.³¹⁰ Under Taylor, the Armstrongs' geographical collections had become less strictly arranged and included plants that were not native. Other changes included the cessation of archery practice and competitions; by the late 1890s this practice was considered too dangerous to be taking place in a public garden.³¹¹ Nevertheless the area continued to be known as the Archery Lawn and was used as a venue for band concerts in the early 1900s.



Figure 3.22. View of one of the buxus-edged garden beds in 1894. The popular 'Cabbage Palm' (Cabbage tree) and new and arresting forms of yuccas and aloes were valued for their geometric form and exotic appearance. Source: Public Gardens Christchurch 1894, Album of the Boileau family's voyage from England to Australia, NLA

³⁰⁸ Taylor diary quoted in Duff, unpaginated

³⁰⁹ *Auckland Star*, 24 May 1890, p. 2

³¹⁰ *The Star*, 2 December 1893, p. 1

³¹¹ *The Star*, 25 September 1900, p. 1



Figure 3.23. A 1905/1906 view of the main lawn, now know as the Armstrong Lawn, with young *Trachycarpus fortunei* planted in 1904. Taylor's Rosary is visible between and to the rear of the Moorhouse Statue and *Auracaria imbricata* Source: *AJHRNZ* 1906, C.-10

In 1898 a fire destroyed much of the old Native Section and the Australian Border, together with the western and eastern ends of the northern portion of the border surrounding the Archery Lawn. Many of the older trees survived together with a few shrubs, but a significant acreage of cocksfoot grass and five chains of picket boundary fence between Christ's College and the Domain were lost. Recording this event in his diary, Edgar Taylor reflected that “*years of planting endeavour to improve the status of the Gardens vanished ... including the most valued portion of the plant life.*”

New structures and features

In late 1901/early 1902 three buildings connected with the magnetic survey of New Zealand were erected in the Domain under the authority of the Hon. Minister of Lands.³¹² These buildings were located in the Armstrong Pinetum, then more popularly known as “The Wilderness”, the Armstrong's conifer collection having dwindled with a number of fires aiding in its demise.³¹³

The Absolute Magnetic House (housing the measuring instruments necessary for the standardisation of the measuring instruments proper), and the Observatory Office (base station for the magnetic survey of NZ and home for the seismograph), were located in quite close association with one another, while the Magnetographic House (housing extremely delicate and sensitive recording instruments) was located to the east of the Absolute Magnetic House and positioned on top of a terrace into which the magnetic cellar was dug (figure 3.24). These buildings occupied an area of

³¹² At that time the cause of the earth's magnetic condition was still one of the unsolved problems of science and it was expected that valuable information would be gained in this direction by the establishment of a number of linked observatories across the Southern Hemisphere

³¹³ 'The Old and the New: Christchurch Gardens Their Early History', *The Sun*, 29 November 1915

around two acres and were originally fenced, and later hedged off, from the public. For a more detailed history of the surviving building and other site elements from the magnetic survey refer to Volume 3: 1.10.3.

Other scientific fixtures included a new rain gauge, standard barometer and thermometer that had been provided by Sir James Hector, head of the Meteorological Department, in 1894.³¹⁴ These instruments were mounted near the Head Gardener's cottage and readings from each were forwarded to Wellington as part of the Meteorological Department's collection of long term data about New Zealand's climate.³¹⁵ The fate of the small meteorological station that had been erected in Hagley Park in 1876 remains unclear.



Figure 3.24. The Magnetographic House with Townend House far left and the Orchid House left. Note the rustic bridge spanning the lakelet.

Source: Postcard attributed to James Gardner, Early New Zealand Photographers website

Commemorative events and education

Historical markers in the form of plantings dedicated to specific events continued in the Domain and Hagley Park, the most significant of these being the planting of two commemorative oaks to mark the 1893 marriage of Duke and Duchess of York and the 1902 Coronation of King Edward VII. These were planted on August 9, 1902, on the western side of the Domain near the large *Araucaria araucana*. Concurrent with this ceremonial planting, a further pair of oaks was planted in Hagley Park just inside the Armagh Street Gates, on the southern side.³¹⁶ (Refer appendix 8 for further details.) All four trees were the progeny of the Albert Edward Oak.

Other commemorative occasions saw the unveiling of a statute of William Rolleston, the city's fourth and last Provincial Superintendent, on Rolleston Avenue, close to the entrance of the Canterbury

³¹⁴ *The Star*, 23 May 1894, p. 3

³¹⁵ *Ibid*; Phillips, J. (2008) in *The Amazing World of James Hector*, pp. 85-86

³¹⁶ *The Star*, 9 August 1902, p. 5

Museum in 1906.³¹⁷ The statue was the third publicly commissioned sculptural work in the city. This is discussed in more detail in Volume 3: 1.11.3.

Taylor is believed to have been the first Head Gardener to have assumed a public education role. This began in 1901 when, at the invitation of the chairman of the Domains Board, sixth and seventh form girls from Sydenham School were shown around the Gardens by Taylor. As part of the programme “*Mr Taylor imparted a large amount of botanical information, drawing attention to the various plants, giving their names, homes, habits and uses and showing the visitors the historical trees in the Domain*”.³¹⁸ Clearly novel, reports of this educational “innovation” were described as far afield as Manawatu. It is unclear how often this occurred in the years prior to Taylor's resignation in 1907.

At the time of his resignation the Domain was described as “*the most interesting and prominent feature in Christchurch*” by *The Star*.³¹⁹ It contained a house for the Head Gardener and cottage for the Park Ranger. A cottage for the Gardens' Caretaker (located in the nursery), a tool shed, hot house, shade house, three large footbridges connecting the Domain Gardens with North and South Hagley Park and several smaller bridges, lawns, walks, artesian wells, special trees and unpretentious but very valuable buildings connected with the Magnetic Observatory.³²⁰



Figure 3.25. William Rolleston statue on Rolleston Avenue fronting the Canterbury Museum
Source: Radcliffe postcard, Early New Zealand Photographers website

³¹⁷ Antigua Street from the Avon River to Armagh Street was renamed Rolleston Avenue in early 1904 as part of Council's re-naming of the city's four belts, *The Press*, 15 December 1904, p. 4; *The Press*, 12 January 1904, p. 6

³¹⁸ *The Press*, 8 April 1901, p. 4

³¹⁹ *The Star*, 12 February 1909, p. 2

³²⁰ Domains Hagley Park, 1894-1928. AADS W3563 253 1/310, ANZ; *AJHRNZ* 1908, C.-10, p. 25

3.4.2 Acclimatisation Grounds

By the turn of the century the Acclimatisation Society's zeal to anglicize Christchurch had abated somewhat, and its operational focus appears to have been directed at stocking Canterbury's rivers with salmon and trout. By 1889 members had turned out 25,000 trout in local rivers and were working to improve their success rate with salmon.³²¹ Additional water-races had been formed in their grounds, and bores drilled to ensure a constant source of clean water for the sixteen hatchery and rearing ponds that were in operation.³²² The Society was quick to take advantage of Victoria Lake following its formation in 1897 and regularly stocked it with young trout fry. Their construction of a flood gate in the lake a few years later enabled them to release the fry into the Avon River on an annual basis.³²³

The Society was dependent on revenue derived from the sale of young trout, rod and gun licences, and public donations to maintain its operations and, by 1901, the grounds were described as being in a very bad plight. One description from late that year noted that the Curator's dwelling appeared to be tumbling down, the animal pens were weather-beaten and forlorn in appearance, and the only living things to be seen were two opossums, two kea and three pheasants. Soil in the pens had become impregnated with disease and, according to the Chairman Dr Moorhouse, few birds survived in the gardens because of depredations by stoats, weasels and rats. The fish ponds, however, were swarming with trout of all sizes including Rainbow, Brown, Scotch Burn, Loch Levin and American Brook trout.³²⁴

Although it was noted that the Acclimatisation Garden was never intended as a show place, or zoological garden, pressure was brought to bear on the Society by the New Zealand Exhibition Committee in 1906 to improve the grounds "*from a floral point of view.*" Responding to this, the new Curator, Mr Chas Rides, and his parents (both of whom were described as "*well-known for their enthusiasm in flower culture*"³²⁵), made plans to relocate earlier plantings of three thousand imported crocuses, ranunculi and anemones, and five hundred hyacinth bulbs to the Society's grounds fronting Riccarton Road (now known as Riccarton Avenue). Members of the Society borrowed birds to increase the attractions in the Grounds, formed a new duck paddock near Riccarton Road, and expended extra labour and energy beautifying the gardens, in view of the large numbers of people expected to visit Hagley Park.³²⁶

From this point, members and the Curator made efforts to maintain their grounds and began a breeding programme of wildfowl. This necessitated the erection of a six foot high wire fence around two acres of ground, in an area secluded from the public, where game birds were raised for release in lakes and rivers throughout Canterbury.³²⁷ Despite this programme, the focus of their operation remained directed at fish breeding and distribution, and the landscape clearly reflected this in terms of built structures and pond systems.

³²¹ *The Star*, 18 January 1889, p. 4

³²² *Annual Report of the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society 1888*, AEQH 21352 CH1002 Box 37/c, ANZ

³²³ *The Star*, 29 June 1908, p. 2

³²⁴ *The Star*, 13 December 1901, p. 1

³²⁵ *The Press*, 1 April 1905, p. 11

³²⁶ *Annual Report of the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society 1907*, AEQH 21352 CH1002 Box 37/d, ANZ

³²⁷ *The Star*, 29 April 1908, p. 1



Figure 3.26. View of the public fish ponds in the Acclimatisation Gardens, ca. 1906
Source: Postcard, L. Beaumont private collection



Figure 3.27. View of the trout ponds in the private part of the Acclimatisation Gardens, July 1909
Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, AWNS-19090729-11-3, AL

3.4.3 Hagley Park

Taylor's impact on the landscape aesthetic of Hagley Park was considerable. As previously noted, his thinning and pruning activities extended into the plantations and avenues of Hagley Park where he worked to “*lift up the trees to form a Gothic arched-shaped canopy*” and attempted to clear a space between each tree of about 48 feet in the avenues.³²⁸ This, he argued, not only allowed the trees to develop their natural habit, but also enabled views through what had become almost tunnel-like avenues to the landscape beyond. In discussing his philosophy for park formation, Taylor explained that in a public park, “outlook” was to be especially preserved. His preference was for artistically grouped clumps of trees and glades rather than thickets, as he believed that these landscape elements were more suited to the natural form of English trees.³²⁹

Adhering to these principles, and backed by the Domains Board, Taylor began a program of tree removal that focussed on the felling of pines near the Plane Avenue. It is likely that these were nurse pines planted by the Armstrongs and not removed as planned because of limited funds. Public opposition to these tree removals forced Taylor and the Board to call a halt to the programme in 1904, but not before over 520 trees had been felled.³³⁰ The level of public protest against Taylor's systematic tree removal demonstrated the extent to which Hagley Park's tree cover was valued, not only for aesthetic reasons but also for its experiential qualities as described in the following account of the Park.

*“Around the outer edges of this park there is a ride of several miles in length, along which there is a mixed plantation, which makes it cool and shady... The plantations on each side of the river almost entirely shade it from the sun's rays, and the promenade along its banks is one of the coolest and pleasantest places for a stroll...”*³³¹

Despite Taylor's pruning, thinning and felling focus, new planting was undertaken in an area of around two acres in South Hagley Park, adjacent to the Park Caretaker/Ranger's cottage (near the site of today's netball courts). This was planted in 1893 in what was described as different varieties of trees planned as a permanent park group.³³²

In addition to the changes initiated by Taylor in the plantations, a number of large-scale events and new landscape features modified the topography in North Hagley Park, and impacted on the remaining indigenous vegetation and archaeological record. Numerous loads of soil were carted from Hagley Park to the Domain for flower-beds³³³ and from South Hagley Park to North Hagley Park for additions to the Rotten Row. Road scrapings from the city's streets were deposited in different parts of the Park to manage sand drift, cinders from the Hospital were used on the paths in South Hagley Park, and deep excavations were made for cabling, water pipes, building foundations and other structures in North Hagley Park. However, one of the most significant topographical modifications was the formation of Victoria Lake in 1897.

³²⁸ *The Star*, 11 February 1899, p. 7

³²⁹ *Ibid*

³³⁰ *AJHRNZ* 1904, C.-10, p. 3

³³¹ *Auckland Star*, 24 May 1890, p. 2

³³² *The Star*, 18 October 1893, p. 2

³³³ This practice also occurred during John Armstrong's time as Head Gardener



Figure 3.28. Mixed river edge plantings including eucalyptus, cordylines, plane tree and willows. Possibly the Domain side of the river. Undated but likely to be a late nineteenth/early twentieth century view. Source: F-77840 ½, ATL

The transformation of the North Hagley Park swamp

Lobbying for a waterbody in the Park began in 1881, but it was not until 1892 that a subscription was mounted to turn an area of swampland near the Armagh Street entrance of North Hagley Park into a lake. The project was seen as not only a worthy way of commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign, but also as a way of converting “*an ugly swamp into an ornamental sheet of water*”, thereby completing the picturesqueness of Hagley Park.³³⁴ Despite some hostile criticism of the scheme £150 was raised from members of the public enabling the Domains Board to begin transforming the swamp, an area of a little over an acre, into a water body with a basin of approximately five acres in area and three feet deep. The ceremony marking the cutting of the first turf took place on 21st June 1897 and in early November the following year the lake was formally opened by the Mayor, Charles Louisson. The event was celebrated by a crowd of over 5,000 who were entertained by the Garrison Band and the Christchurch Model Yacht Club who organised a mosquito fleet parade on the water.³³⁵

Model yacht enthusiasts were quick to take advantage of Victoria Lake and it soon became a recognised attraction in the city providing an endless source of amusement for model yacht owners and large numbers of the public who assembled on the banks to watch the displays. However, as a consequence of the formation of this waterbody, a rich indigenous wetland ecosystem was destroyed. This was regretted by many botanists, as voiced by Herriott (1919), who described it as one of the two richest areas of New Zealand plants.³³⁶

³³⁴ *The Star*, 11 February 1892, p. 2

³³⁵ *The Star*, 7 November 1898, p. 1; *The Press*, 7 November 1898, p. 6

³³⁶ Herriott, E. M. (1919) p. 442



Figure 3.29. Postcard view of Victoria Lake from the Armstrong's pine clump
Source: Postcard, L. Beaumont private collection

Celebration ground and drill field

Hagley Park continued its role as a public events space and landscape of celebration with the 1900 Relief of Mafeking celebration. This involved a bonfire and fireworks display combined with the burning of effigies of President Kruger.³³⁷ The following year, the Park played host to the Royal Review and encampment which was held on June 24, 1901.

Described as “one of the most striking features of colonial rejoicing at the time of the Royal visit”,³³⁸ the Great Military Review, as it was called, was one of a number of New Zealand wide displays of colonial military strength and support for the Duke of Cornwall and York (later George V). Thousands of spectators congregated to witness the Duke's inspection of over 11,000 voluntary troops, including school cadets, and medals were presented to returned officers and troopers.³³⁹

Other important public occasions included the Coronation celebrations in August 1902. This was marked with an Imperial Salute of 101 guns at noon, followed by the planting of two King Edward Oaks, one by the Mayoress and the other, by the Mayor on behalf of the Friendly Societies, near the Armagh entrance to the Park. In the evening a “monster bonfire” set between the Armagh St entrance and Victoria Lake terminated the celebrations.

The Canterbury Volunteers, whose ranks had swelled to include the Mounted Rifles Corps and the Canterbury Engineer Voluntary Forces, continued to use Hagley Park for reviews and tactical situation training. In the case of the Canterbury Engineer Voluntary Forces, this involved camping in Little Hagley Park, building and dismantling bridges, constructing entrenchments and other earthworks as well as practising the art of laying landmines.³⁴⁰

³³⁷ President Kruger was the internationally renowned face of Boer resistance against the British during the South African or Second Boer War (1899-1902)

³³⁸ Christchurch Domain. AADS W3562 257 1/156 Pt 1, ANZ

³³⁹ *Thames Star*, 24 June 1901, p. 2

³⁴⁰ *The Star*, 8 December 1903, p. 3; *The Star*, 19 July 1902, p. 5

The Mounted Rifles Corps and the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry were also common sights in the Park as they carried out regular mounted drill and reconnoitring practice.³⁴¹

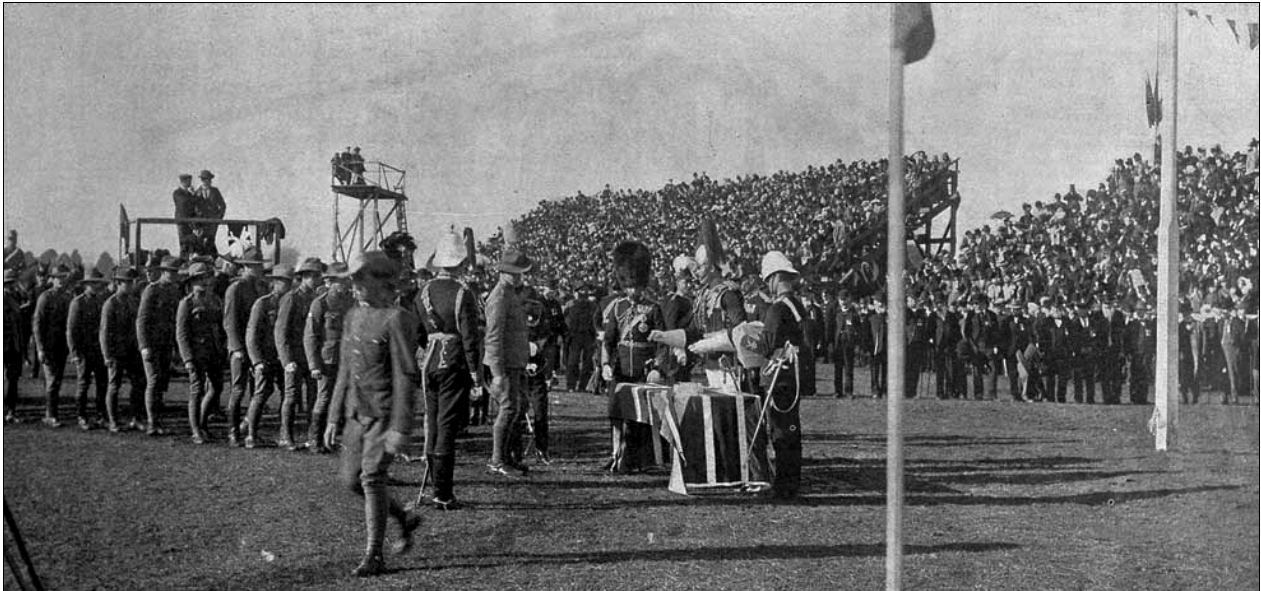


Figure 3.30. The Duke of Cornwall and York presenting returned servicemen from the South African War with medals, Hagley Park, June 24, 1901
Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, AWNS-19010705-3-1, AL



Figure 3.31. Canterbury Engineer Voluntary Forces during bridge building practice in North Hagley Park, ca. 1904. Source: F-23010 -½, ATL

³⁴¹ *The Star*, 20 May 1885, p. 3; *The Star*, 7 October 1890, p. 3

In 1907, a military pageant associated with the presentation of King's colours drew large crowds to Hagley Park. Fifty-four officers and 574 rank and file from the city's various companies made up the parade and, accompanied by the Garrison Band, officers, troops and cadets marched to North Hagley Park. The King's colours, in silk, in the form of a Union Jack with a gold crown and the words "South Africa, 1902," in gold, were handed to the Mayor and then consecrated by Bishop Julius.³⁴² This was followed by the presentation of long service medals and the event ended with the ceremony of saluting the colours.³⁴³

Three years later over 1200 cadets, boy scouts and volunteers camped in North Park on the occasion of Field Marshall Viscount (Lord) Kitchener's visit to Christchurch.³⁴⁴ The cadets had been mobilised for parade inspection by Lord Kitchener as part of his review of New Zealand's defence policy.³⁴⁵



Figure 3.32. Bishop Julius consecrating the colours, Hagley Park, 1907
Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, AWNS-19071003-11-2, AL

The New Zealand International Exhibition, 1906-1907

Between November 1906 and April 1907 the New Zealand International Exhibition was held in North Park. Part of a sequence of similar demonstrations of national pride, the exhibition was intended to represent New Zealand to the world, and marked the transition from colony to self-governing dominion. Having received the consent of the Domains Board, building for the International Exhibition commenced in 1905 and the Park's sylvan landscape was quickly transformed into what some described as an awe-inspiring collection of buildings, illuminations and amusements. The exhibition site extended from the Kiosk Bridge near the Victoria Lake to Carlton Bridge, across to a point on Helmore's Road (now Helmores Lane).

Buildings occupied approximately fourteen acres and the remainder of the site was transformed into a series of thematic landscapes. These included "Wonderland", "Geyserland", an ethnological section

³⁴² Anglican bishop of Christchurch from 1879 and Archbishop of New Zealand from 1922-

³⁴³ *The Star*, 27 September 1907, p. 4

³⁴⁴ *The Press*, 18 February 1910, p. 8;

³⁴⁵ AJHRNZ 1910, E-11, Session I, p. 2

that included a romanticised version of ancient Māori life in the form of a model pā (Arai te Uru Pā), as well as an athletic ground, side shows, and a camera obscura.³⁴⁶ Animal encounters in the form of a seal enclosure, ostriches, camel rides and performing dogs and monkeys offered an additional level of entertainment, and the attractions in Wonderland included an impressive water chute. An air-ship, suspended on wire ropes over Victoria Lake travelled between the Māori pā and the pine grove while underneath, waka plied on Victoria Lake. Other forms of boating on the Avon River were made possible through the construction of a temporary weir near the Domain Bridge that deepened the river along the exhibition frontage (figures 3.33-3.37).

The banks of the Avon River were planted with arum lilies, bamboos, pampas grass, cabbage trees, ferns, niggerheads and clumps of flax. Flower beds of various decorative shapes were incised into the turf fronting the main building, and some hundred thousand plants were said to have been laid out in the gardens as part of the exhibition landscape.³⁴⁷ However, cultivation across the exhibition grounds was not limited to ornamental display, and Department of Agriculture records document the transformation of an acre of the Park into demonstration plots of various pastures and forage crops.

A temporary railway spur was laid through North Hagley Park, via a siding from the Riccarton Station to expedite the transportation of construction materials and deliver visitors to the exhibition. On the western boundary of the exhibition site an area of four and a half acres was fenced off for a school cadet camp. Temporary buildings, including a canteen and cookhouse, were erected to service relays of cadets from all over the country who underwent military training drill in the Park by day and enjoyed the exhibition amusements in the evening.³⁴⁸

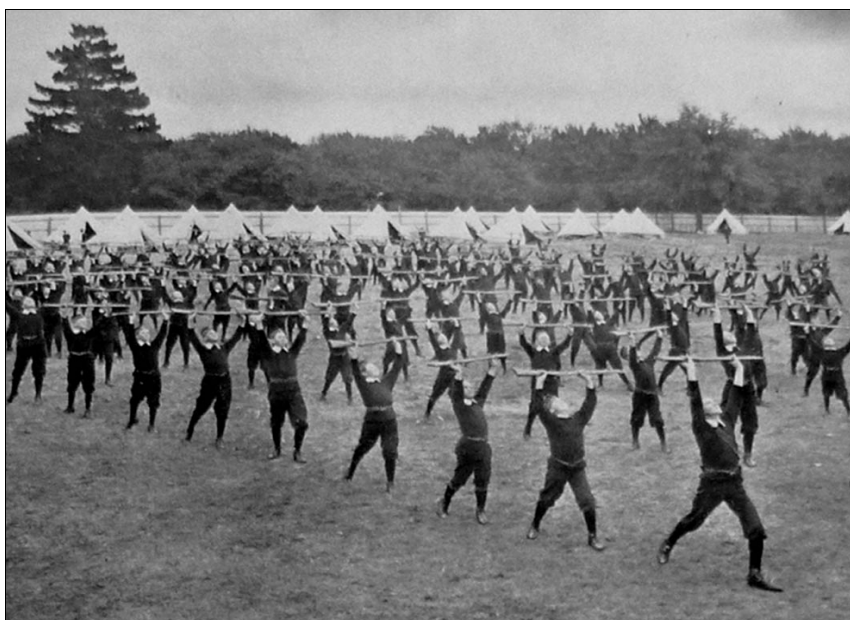


Figure 3.33. Battalion of cadets practising physical drill at the cadet camp in Hagley Park, 1907
Source: *AJHRNZ*, 1907, E.-1D

³⁴⁶ Portable box containing lenses and mirrors which projected the image of a scene outside on to a surface opposite the opening where it could be traced. In use from the C16th and a forerunner to the camera

³⁴⁷ Cowan, J. (1910) *Official record of the New Zealand International Exhibition of Arts and Industries held at Christchurch, 1906-7: a descriptive and historical account*, p. 73; *Poverty Bay Herald*, 6 April 1907, p. 6

³⁴⁸ *AJHRNZ* 1907, E.- 1D, p. 3



Figure 3.34. (Top left) View of the front of the exhibition building with garden beds and fountain
Source: PhotoCD 6, IMG0017 CCL

Figure 3.35. (Top right) The Tourist Department's "*land of sulphur and wai-arikis, geysers and steam-holes*"
Source: Postcard, L. Beaumont private collection

Figure 3.36. (Middle right) View of Wonderland and boats on Victoria Lake
Source: Barry Hancox private collection

Figure 3.37. (Lower left) Section of palisading and part of the trench associated with the Arai te Uru Pā, photographed by James McDonald, 1906. The trenches were described as being about 4 feet deep and 3 feet wide
Source: MA-C.001705, MNZ

Figure 3.38. (Lower right) The airboat which travelled above Victoria Lake
Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, AWNS-19061122-013-3, AL

Calls by members of the public, and attempts by the Domains Board, to retain the exhibition gardens and the fernery as permanent features within Hagley Park were unsuccessful. By early September 1907, all of the buildings had been removed from the site, some auctioned off and others demolished by a traction engine. Garden beds were returned to turf and rocks remaining from the exhibition fernery, concrete building foundations and old iron were buried in trenches in the Park. However, more far-reaching than this, was the complete biophysical transformation of the site and the consequent loss of Hagley Park's last remaining significant indigenous ecosystem. This had existed across the sandy ground that had been modified to create Wonderland.³⁴⁹

The Exhibition's showcase of Māori culture, in particular the model Māori pā, Arai te Uru Pā, proved a popular drawcard for visitors.³⁵⁰ This had been built by Whanganui Māori and carved by expert carvers from Te Arawa. Another important feature of the model pā was the Ngāti Whatua waka taua (war canoe), Taheretikitiki,³⁵¹ which had been loaned by King Tawhiao for the duration of the exhibition. Overwhelmingly the Māori culture on display featured the work of North Island iwi and not Ngāi Tahu, in fact when Māori performers were needed for the exhibition, they were also brought in from the North Island.³⁵² This was a disappointment for Ngāi Tahu who, despite the pā being named after their waka Te Araiteuruto, were only able to participate in a very limited way in the exhibition.³⁵³

As a memorial to the Arai te Uru Pā, the Domains Board was gifted a carved pou by the Māori Exhibition Committee. This was to be used as a marker of the historic site of the Exhibition pā,³⁵⁴ and remained in Hagley Park until July 1915 when the Domains Board bowed to public pressure and removed it.³⁵⁵ At this time, the Chairman of the Board reported that “*several ladies had complained of the figure which did not seem to be beautiful nor to mark any sentiment.*”³⁵⁶ Although the Board resolved to offer the pou to the Canterbury Museum there is no record of it in the Museum's holdings.³⁵⁷ It is however noted that some elements from the Exhibition pā were re-erected at the old Kaiapoi Pā site, Woodend.³⁵⁸

At the end of the exhibition the Domains Board successfully secured the in-situ retention of the foundation stone. This was considered an important memory marker of “*the greatest exhibition of the colony*” and also had significant memorial and associational value as the last public act the Right Hon. Richard Seddon performed before his death. Correspondence from the Exhibition Manager at the time noted that the foundation stone was to be protected by a strong railing.³⁵⁹ Board Minutes and newspaper reports indicate that at some time in late 1912, the foundation stone was removed to enable the Rugby Football Union to develop eight playing grounds in North Hagley.³⁶⁰

³⁴⁹ Herriott, E. M. (1919) p. 442

³⁵⁰ As indicated by the significant photographic record and newspaper commentary which focussed on this part of the exhibition

³⁵¹ This had been built on the Kaipara Harbour in 1882

³⁵² CCC, *Historical Overview for Christchurch City*, 2005, p. 20

³⁵³ Tau, R. T. *Ngāi Tahu- From 'Better Be Dead and Out of the Way' to 'To Be Seen to Belong'*, in Cookson, J. & Dunstall, G (ed), 2000 p. 224

³⁵⁴ *The Star*, 11 June 1907, p. 4; Minutes of the Domains Board 10 June 1907, CH343/80e, CCCA

³⁵⁵ Board Minutes 1915, October 1912 - February 1916, CBGA

³⁵⁶ *The Press*, 7 July 1915, p. 6

³⁵⁷ Pers. comm. L. Beaumont/S. Murray, Canterbury Museum, February 2011

³⁵⁸ Refer Amodeo, C. (2003) *Forgotten Forty-Niners*, p. 21

³⁵⁹ *The Star*, 8 July 1907, p. 3

³⁶⁰ *Lyttelton Times*, 2 October 1912, Domains Board – Newspaper clippings file, CH343/80d, CCCA

Some years later, in 1937, Curator James McPherson noted that the foundation stone was in a good state of preservation in the store of the Christchurch Domains Board where it was being kept so that it could be incorporated into any exhibition buildings that might be erected in Christchurch in the future.³⁶¹ The stone's fate post 1937 remains unclear, although there is some suggestion that it may have been incorporated into another Council building at some later date.³⁶²

Recreation, leisure and other less socially acceptable pursuits

Hagley Park's popularity as a venue for regular temperance demonstrations and annual picnics continued unabated and it was considered to be the favoured resort for the golfing public. Rotten Row, or the Park Ride as it was known by then, remained a popular feature that had been extended by 1897 to include the entire upper section of North Hagley Park. At least one additional bathing place had been approved by a Special Committee of the Domains Board, and this was located in the area of the plantations opposite Helmore's paddock and to the west of Helmore's Bridge. Deviations were made to the footpaths to facilitate access to the river, and the public was allowed to bathe there between 5 am and 7am.³⁶³ Letters to the paper suggest that this may have already been a popular unofficial bathing place for Fendalton and Merivale residents.

Many of the sporting bodies established in the previous fifty years continued to use playing fields and pitches across both North and South Hagley Parks and a number of new licences were granted to recently-formed codes. Other groups transferred their licences and shifted their quarters to the preferred North Park, which was higher and drier and considered to be more conveniently located. By 1900 South Hagley Park was said to be favoured only by the cricketers and polo players, and the sheep that grazed it.³⁶⁴



Figure 3.39. 'Hagley Park near the Riccarton Road', February 1907

Source: *Otago Witness*, 27 February 1907, HC

³⁶¹ *Auckland Star*, 13 September 1937, p. 6

³⁶² Pers. comm. L. Beaumont/S. Murray, Canterbury Museum, February 2011

³⁶³ *The Star*, 15 November 1895, p. 3

³⁶⁴ *The Star*, 25 September 1900, p. 1

As in previous years, sports groups were required to prepare the grounds at their own expense and pay a licence fee to the Domains Board to occupy a fixed part of the Park. This was a nominal fee, with football and hockey paying 30 shillings a year for three acres, and the Ground Committee representing cricket, paying £15 pounds for the use of ten acres.³⁶⁵ Designs for all proposed structures were reviewed by the Board, and the cost of erecting buildings was met by the sports clubs who, although frequently permitted to fence off their grounds, greens and lawns, were not permitted to debar the public from entering. It was stressed by the Domains Board that Hagley Park belonged to the public, and was absolutely open to everyone, without charge for admission.

New licences and structures agreed by the Board during this period are summarised as follows;

- 1886. Canterbury Rugby Union Footballer's Memorial pavilion erected on North Hagley Park
- 1889. Cricket Club caretaker's house built on South Park
- 1891. Linwood Football Club granted a ground on North Hagley Park
- 1891. The re-formed Christchurch Golf Club held its first match on North Hagley links in September
- 1892. Christchurch Polo Club granted 15 acres in South Park behind Christ's College Cricket Ground in the north-west corner of the Park. By 1900 this had grown to 25 acres 2 roods and 25 perches
- 1892. The Christchurch Ladies' Golf Club began to share the 18 hole layout of the Christchurch Golf Club's course
- 1893. Christchurch Polo Club pavilion erected to a design approved by the Board
- 1893. Christchurch Golf Club erected a hut (on wheels) on North Park to hold their equipment
- 1896. Hockey Club granted ground between the polo ground and the College Cricket Club
- 1899. Model Yacht Club pavilion erected near Victoria Lake
- 1901. Golf Course reduced to nine holes in 1901
- 1902/ 1903. Christchurch Golf Club surrendered its lease and removed its hut on wheels
- 1904. Hagley Golf Club formed and took over the nine-hole course
- 1905. United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club took up a lease of 3 acres, 3 roods and 27.2 perches in North Hagley Park in an area "*bounded by the Plane Avenue Riccarton Road and the Wellingtonias.*" Their two-storey pavilion was erected in December 1905



Figure 3.40. Cricket pavilion and caretaker's house, South Hagley Park, ca. 1908

Source: Part of G-004102-1/1, ATL

³⁶⁵ *The Star*, 25 September 1900, p. 1

Hagley Park was not only the preserve of sporting groups, promenaders, cyclists and sheep. The hollows and depressions in its terrain were reportedly the domain of numerous youth who, despite regular police raids, congregated on Sunday afternoons to play the illegal game "Two-up".³⁶⁶ Vagrants, colloquially referred to as "Domain dossers", and people of bad repute, although banned from the Park under the Domains Board By-Laws, were also a regular presence in both landscapes. When apprehended these individuals were either committed to the Lunatic Asylum, sent to gaol, or in the case of vagrant children dispatched to a Home or the Industrial School.

The disorderly, sheep stealers and those engaged in "larrikinism" (which commonly involved throwing seats into the river, hurling rocks at boaters, picking flowers and damaging trees) were also seen by the Court and flogging or significant fines were common punishments from the mid-nineteenth century.³⁶⁷

MAGISTERIAL.

CHRISTCHURCH.
THIS DAY.
(Before R. Beetham, Esq., R.M.)

MISCELLANEOUS.—William Chapman, for leaving his cart unattended, was fined 10s.—Peter Jack, for a similar offence, 10s.—Jack White, two horses astray in Oxford Terrace, 5s.—T. H. Green, turning two horses on to Cambridge Terrace, 5s.—J. D. Davis, for giving an unstamped receipt, was fined 5s, as he had subsequently given another receipt duly stamped.—John Baxter (13), John Campbell (10), and Ernest Townsend (8) were charged by the Domain Board with wilfully damaging trees in the Park. Mr Beswick appeared for the prosecution. The two younger boys were discharged, and the Court ordered a letter to be written to the schoolmaster of the elder culprit, recommending him for a flogging.—Frederick Thomas was fined 1s and costs for taking a bicycle into Hagley Park.

CHRISTCHURCH.
SATURDAY, NOV. 27.
(Before Mr R. Beetham, S.M.)

VAGRANCY.—J. M'Gilvery and Minnie M'Gilvery (husband and wife), Robert Wilson and Margaret Dingledee, were charged with being without lawful means of support at Christchurch on Nov. 26. J. O'Callaghan, ranger to the Domain Board, deposed that the accused were in the habit of frequenting the North Park, and that their conduct was objectionable to the public. Constable Kelso proved the arrest of accused, who were in possession of some bread and bottles of beer, and appeared to have camped for the night under a fir tree in the North Park. Constable Tonkin and Detective Benjamin deposed that the M'Gilverys and Dingledee bore bad characters. Detective Benjamin said that Wilson was a doctor, but seemed to have gone to the bad. There had been previous convictions against the M'Gilverys. Adjutant Bishop, of the Salvation Army, corroborated the police evidence as to three of the accused. He offered to take charge of Wilson, and to get him away from New Zealand to Sydney, where he had friends. In reply to the Bench Sergeant-Major Ramsay said there was no previous record against Wilson. Wilson was then convicted and discharged on the understanding that he was to place himself unreservedly in the hands of Adjutant Bishop. Addressing the three remaining accused, his Worship said—"You three people are simply a menace to the decency of society. You are each sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour."

Figure 3.41. Court notices relating to behaviour in Hagley Park

Source: (Right) *The Star*, 27 November 1897, p. 4; (Left) *The Star*, 18 December 1889, p. 3

³⁶⁶ *The Star*, 17 July 1899, p. 4

³⁶⁷ *The Star*, 18 December 1889, p. 3

3.5 James Dawes June 1907- May 1908

James Dawes was appointed as Ambrose Taylor's replacement in June 1907. Unlike his predecessors his employment was brief, and the Domains Board accepted his resignation in May 1908 after it had been discovered that he had been in the habit of *“taking too much drink and had been intoxicated when on the job, instead of attending to his duties.”*³⁶⁸

Dawes had a more contemporary and permissive view of the way the public could engage with public landscapes and during his first few weeks of employment he was quick to point out that, under his curatorship, the public were to be given more liberty. *“The present prohibition against walking on the extensive and pleasant lawns of the gardens would likely be abolished,”* the fence around the Head Gardener's cottage was to be removed so that the public could view the *“pretty Dutch garden”* and the public were to have access to the Rolleston Sundial which, since at least 1874, had been encased in protective railings.

His planned changes in the Domain included removing every plant that did not have *“an immediate use in its present place.”* The border gardens were to be filled with herbaceous plants better than those already growing, and to this end he requested plant donations from local nurserymen and Board members.³⁶⁹ Taylor's Rosary was to be enlarged and all the roses under cultivation in various other garden beds concentrated in that dedicated area. The front (Armstrong) lawn was to be *“diversified by flower beds larger than those that were there now”* and the other flower beds, which were scattered about the gardens, practically abolished. Walks were to be narrowed, and his proposed treatment of the New Zealand native shrub section involved the removal of many plants to reduce overcrowding and duplication of species.³⁷⁰

It is unclear exactly how many of these changes Dawes was able to effect in his twelve months as Head Gardener. Certainly his plan to increase the flower beds on the front lawn was achieved, the new beds having been formed by Edgar Taylor to Dawes' instruction.³⁷¹ These were described by Taylor as *“two large rectangular plots, each 60 feet x 35 feet divided into two sections of different geometrical design similar to eighteenth century parterre”* and were located opposite and parallel to the Museum.³⁷² Dawes also reduced the width of the eastern walk running parallel with Rolleston Avenue to 18 feet in width.³⁷³

Dawes' proposed changes in the Native Section appear to have been tempered by the Domains Board, which sought the advice of Dr Leonard Cockayne³⁷⁴ soon after Dawes had voiced his quite radical proposals for this area. As a consequence, it was agreed that the Native Garden should be interfered with as little as possible and only plants missing from the collection were to be added. At this time it was noted that the Native Garden, and indeed the rest of the Domain and Hagley Park, was a valuable resource for Canterbury University which used it as a teaching ground. The Christchurch Technical College had a similar presence in the Domain at this time, utilising over an acre of ground for experimental plots in a comparatively neglected corner near Riccarton Avenue,

³⁶⁸ Board Minutes 11 May 1908, CH343 80e, CCCA

³⁶⁹ *The Star*, 9 July 1907, p. 4

³⁷⁰ *The Star*, 12 June 1907, p. 4

³⁷¹ Duff (1981) *Looking back in time*, unpaginated

³⁷² Edgar Taylor cited in Duff, unpaginated

³⁷³ *Lyttelton Times*, 9 June 1911

³⁷⁴ Cockayne is widely regarded as New Zealand's greatest botanist and among the country's leading scientists

and a further four acres (approximately) for agricultural instruction.³⁷⁵



Figure 3.42. Postcard view of “A bend in the River Avon in the Gardens, Christchurch” ca. 1908
Source: L. Beaumont private collection



Figure 3.43. Early twentieth-century view of turf ribbon bordered beds. The cabbage tree shown near the Woodlands Bridge is believed to be the one that was growing in that spot when the first settlers arrived in Canterbury ca. 1908. Source: Beken collection 1955.81.683, CMDRC

³⁷⁵ *The Star*, 19 May 1907, p. 4; *The Star*, 18 February 1908, p. 3; *AJHRNZ* 1909, C.-10, p. 32