

3.6 James Young June 1908 – November 1932

James Young was appointed to the position of Head Gardener in June 1908 following the termination of Dawes' employment by the Domains Board. Consistently referred to as energetic and enthusiastic, Young's innovative approach over the course of twenty-four years made a significant impact on the amenity and the aesthetic of both the Domain and Hagley Park.

Such was the nature of Young's transformation of both landscapes that Herriott (1919) wrote *"Now, by this year 1919, every square inch has been dug or ploughed over more than once. Loads of soil have been carted from the Park to the Gardens for flower-beds and to form the present paths of Rolleston Avenue. Still other loads of city refuse have been deposited in different parts of the Park and covered over with soil..."*³⁷⁶

As well as the considerable physical changes wrought to the Domain, a change in terminology in 1913 saw it renamed the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Young's title appears to have correspondingly changed at this time, and his position became that of Curator.

3.6.1 The Botanic Gardens

In an effort to encourage what was described as *"the more respectable portion of the community"* back to the Botanic Gardens, a number of new innovations and landscape features were introduced to popularise it during Young's time. Regular band concerts were held on the Archery Lawn, an impressive rose garden was formed and by 1910 a tea kiosk was in operation on the site occupied by the present building. This combination of entertainment, refreshments and horticultural improvements proved successful, and newspaper reports documented a significant increase in visitor numbers, particularly on a Sunday afternoon.

This was coupled with a more permissive attitude on the part of the Domains Board which revoked some of the by-laws and agreed to allow revenue-gathering events in the Domain. These garden fêtes, Rose and Christmas carnivals raised much needed funds, initially for the beautification of the Domain, and then for the benefit of the Red Cross and the city's returned soldiers. Modelled on fêtes organised by some of the English botanic gardens, and frequently opened by the Governor General of the day, these annual events were popular social occasions, attracting visitors with ice cream, peanut, cake, fruit salad, flower and plant stalls. Brass bands and popular entertainers performed and sideshows, beauty competitions, a Versailles carnival and the opportunity to take motor rides through the Botanic Gardens ensured high visitor attendance rates.³⁷⁷

The first fête, held in February 1910, attracted a crowd of between 20,000 and 25,000 visitors and raised £556 enabling the construction of a new propagation house and other improvements.³⁷⁸ These events continued until at least 1930 and regularly featured new attractions to encourage the public's ongoing attendance. Highlights of later fêtes included the opportunity to inspect a bi-plane that was exhibited in the Botanic Gardens, best decorated car competitions, an evening radio concert, and gymnastic displays by the YMCA and beauty competitions for children.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁶ Herriott, E. M. (1919) p. 438

³⁷⁷ Fête Minutes September 1916 - 1930, CH343/80b; Clippings file 1913-1928, CH343/80c, CCCA

³⁷⁸ *Canterbury Times*, 16 February 1910, pp. 40 - 41

³⁷⁹ Grundy, P. R. (1981) *Cultural Recreation Opportunities in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens*, p. 8-9 ; *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 December 1926, p. 1



Figure 3.44. The Domain fête held in February 1913
Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, AWNS-19130227-13-2, AL

Formation of the Rose Garden

One of the first significant changes Young initiated was the formation of a Rose Garden. Described at the time as the largest in Australasia, it extended over half an acre in a part of the Botanic Gardens that Young later recounted as “covered by broom and littered undergrowth and haunted by a very undesirable section of the public.”³⁸⁰ The site was transformed with the help of 1,000 dray loads of imported loam, and the first section of the garden was laid down in 1910.

Modelled in part on a rose garden in the Duchess of Sutherland's Hertfordshire home, Young's garden was a strongly geometric design of circular beds planted with standard and weeping standard roses, and rectangular beds planted with hybrid tea and hybrid perpetual roses. Pergola roses- a mix of climbers, ramblers, pillar and Wichurian roses were swagged on chains along a walk bordering the garden, and the entrance was marked with an elaborate rustic arch. Two years later a second (southern) section was added. This was designed by James Young's son, J. C. Young, who at the time was a student at the Canterbury College School of Arts.³⁸¹

The garden was originally planted with no more than two roses of each variety and showcased between 800 and 1,000 roses. However, by 1928, this practice had been discontinued and many of the plots were planted en masse in one variety.³⁸² Each variety of rose and date of planting was recorded using seasoned kauri and totara labels of around 12 inches in length, coated in white lead paint.³⁸³ The garden was further ornamented with a pair of large tazze³⁸⁴ presented by Domains Board member James Jamieson in 1916.³⁸⁵ These were mounted on pedestals, and were associated with a stone seat (extant but relocated) and a sundial³⁸⁶(figure 3.45 and Volume 3: 1.11.6).

Building on the success of the Rose Garden, the Domains Board added a rose carnival to the Gardens' “events calendar” in 1913, and the rose beds themselves became a demonstration ground for annual rose pruning seminars. New rose varieties were regularly added and Domains Board files document many importations direct from the well-known rose nursery of Messrs. Samuel McGredy & Son, of Portadown, Ireland.

³⁸⁰ Unsourced clipping dated 10 June 1931, Clipping file, CBGA

³⁸¹ *Public Activities in Christchurch: Official record of the work of the City Council...1925-1927*, p. 131-133

³⁸² *City Beautiful*, December 15, 1928, pp. 19-22

³⁸³ Young, J. (1921) *Rose growing in New Zealand*, p. 25-26

³⁸⁴ Shallow bowl with a circular base mounted on a stem or other support, for the display of flowers and plants.

³⁸⁵ *The Sun*, 2 September 1916, Christchurch Domains – No. 1 Album, CH343/80c, CCCA

³⁸⁶ This seat is now located in the Herbaceous Border Garden and the tazza are located either side of the steps at the end of the Cherry Mound as seen in post 1933 photographs



Figure 3.45. Views of James Young's Rose Garden. (Top) Note the collection of white ornamentation including the sundial, seat and Jamieson tazza visible in the background. (Centre) Rustic pergola entrance to Rose Garden. (Bottom) The rose walk on one side of the Rose Garden. This showcased pillar and climbing roses trained on pine supports and overhead chains. Source: Postcard views, L. Beaumont private collection - top. Early New Zealand Photographers website- middle and bottom

Walks and other improvements

Under Young's direction a number of new walks were formed, and existing ones were deviated and curved or re-formed "to improve the general appearance of the landscape from every possible point of view."³⁸⁷ In the case of the Riverside Walk, this was moved higher up the bank from the Tea Kiosk to the bridge leading to the Acclimatisation Grounds.³⁸⁸ Described as "a great believer in the value of open spaces", Young removed planting at the western end of the Archery Lawn. He also undertook a wholesale clearance of overgrown massed blue lupins and other vegetation on the edges of "the wilderness" (Armstrong's former Pinetum) and the river banks, opening up a series of wide view shafts that extended across the whole Domain. This move was not without public criticism, and a spate of letters to the editor claimed he was "killing the soul of the Garden" and bemoaned the loss of what was described as "the beautiful seclusion and shelter on the archery lawn."³⁸⁹

Many of the historical problems associated with watering the garden beds and trees were remedied in 1909 with the erection of six large water tanks. Located in a secluded part of the grounds³⁹⁰ they were mounted on a thirty-five foot high tower. Water was pumped into these by a five horsepower electro-motor operating a centrifugal pump, and over 500 yards of iron piping was laid to improve watering throughout the Domain.³⁹¹



Figure 3.46. Postcard view of one of Young's improved walks showing ribbon borders and incised bedding displays between *Trachycarpus fortunei*. Posted from the Domain fête, 9 February 1911
Source: Postcard, L. Beaumont private collection

³⁸⁷ *The Star*, 15 July 1909, p. 3

³⁸⁸ *The Sun*, 6 December 1921, Domains Board – Newspaper clippings, CH343/80d, CCCA

³⁸⁹ Unsourced clippings, dated June 1911 & 17 April 1914, Clipping file CBGA

³⁹⁰ These are believed to have been located to the rear of the Canterbury Museum, based on comments made by Young in 1930 concerning the need to move tanks and pipes from the rear of the museum to accommodate the Robert McDougall Art Gallery

³⁹¹ *The Star*, 15 July 1909, p. 3

Bequests and gifts

Through a number of important bequests in the 1910s and 1920s, the Board was able to acquire many of the character defining structures common to late nineteenth and early twentieth-century botanic gardens. The most significant of these are summarised below and extant features are discussed in more detail in Volume 3.

The Peacock Fountain - The result of a significant bequest to the Beautifying Association by the Hon. J. T. Peacock, the fountain was installed in the Domain in June 1911. A pre-fabricated design (Iron Fountain No: 38 from the Coalbrookdale Iron Works, Shropshire,) the fountain's flamboyant design and scale caused much controversy which was played out in newspaper columns of the day. Various referred to as “a giant piece of ironmongery”, “an abomination of desolation” and “vulgarily imitative” by members of the Art Society, even its proposed location on the Archery Lawn was contentious.³⁹² Nevertheless, it was positioned within a concrete bowl near the Archery Lawn where it could be seen from all entrances into the Botanic Gardens. The fountain's pedestal was fashionably ornamented with rocks, and a small alpine rockery fringed the exterior of the basin (figure 3.47).

The Townend Conservatory - Formerly part of Allan McLean's significant “Holly Lea” estate on Manchester Street, the conservatory was sold to the Christchurch Domains Board for use as a Winter Garden or Exhibition House in September 1913.³⁹³ Funds from the Annie Townend estate financed its removal and re-erection in the Botanic Gardens, and the building became known as the Townend Conservatory.³⁹⁴ It was positioned between the Kiosk Lakelet and James Young's Rose Garden and was formally opened in 1914. The Conservatory was home to many rarities from the McLean collection including a fruiting pineapple plant, a banana palm, a *Mimosa pudica* (sensitive plant) and other sub-tropicals, all of which were the subject of much public interest. Further sub-tropical species were generously gifted by some of the Domains Board members and the public and rare and valuable stove and greenhouse plants were added in 1915 from the Mona Vale plant sale, following Annie Townend's death.³⁹⁵ (figure 3.48).

The Orchid House – This structure, along with McLean's orchid collection also came from Holly Lea in 1913 and was located to the rear of Townend House.³⁹⁶ Additional orchids were secured by Young in 1915 from the Mona Vale plant sale. The structure is believed to have been removed around the time the Townend House was dismantled in the mid 1950s.

The Cuningham Winter Garden – The construction of a Winter Garden was made possible by a bequest by Mr C. A. Cuningham who left almost his full estate for “the beautification and improvement of the botanic gardens.”³⁹⁷ Positioned at the head of the Rose Garden adjoining the Townend House, it was formally opened in August 1924 (figure 3.49). It was stocked with an array of sub-tropical plants including fruit-bearing species and palms, many of which had been chosen by James Young on a dedicated plant-sourcing trip to Australia.³⁹⁸ Four valuable Italian marble statues

³⁹² Various unprovenanced newspaper clippings dated June 1911, Clippings book, CBGA

³⁹³ *Evening Post*, 12 February 1913, p. 6; *Ashburton Guardian*, 13 August 1913, p. 2; *Ashburton Guardian*, 23 September 1913, p. 2; Muir and Moody postcard view of McLeans Mansion with Townend House alongside

³⁹⁴ *Architectural Heritage of Christchurch: McLean's Mansion*, p. 14; *Ashburton Guardian*, 31 July 1913, p. 2

³⁹⁵ *The Press*, 22 January 1915, p. 2

³⁹⁶ *The Press*, 9 October 1913; Herriott, E. M. (1919) p. 435

³⁹⁷ Domains Board Minutes, 31 March 1916; *The Sun*, 8 December 1915

³⁹⁸ Curator's Report to the Domains Board, 5 December 1924, CBGA; *The Press*, 22 November 1924

were donated by local resident George Scott from his 'Opawa' estate to celebrate the building's opening.³⁹⁹

The Inwood Rock Garden – Financed from some of the proceeds of a legacy from Mr A. H. Inwood and a gift of £500 from the Rev. Inwood, this rock garden was constructed in 1917. It originally extended from the South Bridge to the Native Section and, like the other water gardens around it, overlaid part of the Armstrong Pinetum. In 1921 a new rock garden was under construction and by 1928 it was said to be proving one of the Garden's principal attractions.⁴⁰⁰

Curator's House - In 1919 the badly deteriorated Head Gardener's cottage was sold for £88.00 and removed from its site near Rolleston Avenue. The following year a replacement two-storied dwelling, known from the time of its construction as the Curator's House, was erected over the footprint of the earlier 1872 cottage. The new house was designed by the architectural firm of Collins and Harman and its construction was financed from the sale of shingle from the borrow pits within the Gardens. Reflecting a blend of Arts and Crafts and Tudor-character features, the house was initially separated from the Botanic Gardens by a sturdy rustic fence, tying it to the other Edwardian rustic features that were favoured by Young and members of the Domains Board at that time.⁴⁰¹(figure 3.50.)



Figure 3.47. The Peacock Fountain, photograph published in June 1913
Source: *Canterbury Times* photograph, Bishop Collection, Ref 1923.53.255, CMDRC

³⁹⁹ Curator's Report to the Domains Board, 4 April 1924, CBGA

⁴⁰⁰ *The Sun*, 17 February 1917; *The Sun*, 14 February 1921; *The Star*, 4 August 1928, CH 343,80c, CCCA

⁴⁰¹ Rustic-work was a style of landscape construction using simple natural materials (predominantly wood, bark, tree trunks, branches, thatch, rocks etc) in rather a primitive form that was intended to display the hand of the maker, rather than the work of nature. Popularly used for seats, foot bridges, summerhouses, fences and gates etc. Rustic elements in the Botanic Gardens at this time included the entrance arch in the Rose Garden, Iris garden Bridge, Kiosk Lakelet Bridge, tree surrounds and rock collar around the pedestal of the Peacock Fountain



Figure 3.48. Townend House. The small building to the rear is the Orchid House
 Source: Postcard attributed to James Gardner, Early New Zealand Photographers website



Figure 3.49. The newly erected Cuninghame Winter Garden. By 1928 it boasted a collection of plants from all parts of the world and was said to display *“one of the most vivid masses of colour conceivable”*
 Source: Historical photograph collection, CBGPA



Figure 3.50. The Curator's House with rustic fence in 1929
Source: *The Sun*, 14 September 1929

New plant material

Donated plant material and new varieties provided additional interest within the various collections, particularly rhododendrons and exotics gifted by Edgar Stead ('Strowan', Ilam), an iris collection from Heaton Rhodes ('Otahuna') and weeping ash and other trees and shrubs from Dr Jennings.

Other plants and seeds were gifted by John Deans ('Riccarton House'), Dr Charles (Chas) Chilton, Charles (C. A. C.) Cuninghame, Herbert Guthrie-Smith ('Tutira', Central Hawkes Bay) and other members of the public.⁴⁰² A donation from the nurserymen Messrs. Nairn and Son in 1916 following the death of David Nairn was of particular note and included a collection of scarlet manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium* 'Nichollsii'), a variety personally raised by him. This was gifted with the Nairn family's request that the plants were to be displayed as a dedicated group in honour of David and in recognition of his role in breeding this popular variety.

Members of the public also generously gave statuary and seats to ornament these new gardens. The most significant of these, as previously noted, were four Italian marble statues (extant) donated by Christchurch resident George Scott and two Oamaru stone urns or tazze for the Rose Garden from Domains Board Member James Jamieson. Two teakwood garden seats from the T.S.S. Willochra were donated by Sir Heaton Rhodes,⁴⁰³ a glazing globe and twelve two-person seats presented by Robert McDougall, and a Wardian case gifted by Dr Edward Levinge.⁴⁰⁴ Notwithstanding this emphasis on new furnishings, the Domains Board remained concerned with identifying and recording the Gardens' historic fabric and, in 1911, twelve stone tablets were ordered to mark its commemorative trees.

⁴⁰² In the *Canterbury A. & P. Association Journal* of August 1911, p. 81, Young provides a list of all of the new trees added to the Botanic Gardens between 1909 and 1911

⁴⁰³ When the steamship Willochra was taken over by the Government for use as a troop ship all internal fittings, carpets, garden seats etc were sold off by the Admiralty

⁴⁰⁴ *The Sun*, 5 February 1921; Report to Domains Board June 1919, CH343/79c, CCCA; Christchurch Domains Board Minutes 1928, p. 74, CBGA

New landscape features

Concurrent with the development of nursery buildings, display houses and ornamental features, a number of new gardens and lakelets had been formed. Their construction was made possible by increased revenue,⁴⁰⁵ a large pool of relief workers, plant donations and, in the case of the New Zealand Garden, sourcing trips made by Young himself. These new features included:

- a Kiosk Lakelet with “cultivated island” and rustic bridge was constructed in early 1910. This was achieved with financial assistance from the Meteorological Department, enabling Young to bring the overflow from Victoria Lake to supply the new lake, thus avoiding the need for iron artesian wells that interfered with the magnetic field in the observatory⁴⁰⁶
- an avenue of *Tilia europea* (linden or lime) known as Beswick's Walk was planted in 1917
- a Bog Garden, lakelet and “map island” were formed in 1920 adjacent to the Inwood Rock Garden (figure 3.52)
- a children's paddling pool with rock island, sandpit and playground were constructed in 1918. The playground was based on what the Chairman of the Domains Board described as “new American ideas in vogue” and its design and equipment were influenced by the Children's Playground in the Dunedin Botanic Gardens. (figure 3.53)
- a lakelet for water lilies and irises was formed near the Rock Garden in 1927⁴⁰⁷
- an Australian Garden to the south-west of Young's Rose Garden and above the Rock Garden was laid out in 1912 and planted between 1913 and 1917⁴⁰⁸
- a rhododendron border was planted to the south of the Australian Garden
- a New Zealand native shrub section was formed near the Rock Garden, as distinct from the Native Section proper lying between the Nursery and the Rose Garden



Figure 3.51. View of part of the New Zealand garden and lakelet ca. 1920

Source: *Canterbury Times* photograph, CBGA

⁴⁰⁵ From 1913 an Act of Parliament enabled the Domains Board to levy rates not exceeding £2500 per annum from local authorities within a radius of ten miles from the General Post Office, Christchurch

⁴⁰⁶ *AJHRNZ* 1911, C.- 01a, p. 18; 'Kiosk Lakelet, newly planted island and rustic bridge' featured in *Canterbury Times*, 2 February 1910

⁴⁰⁷ 'After 21 years' work Mr Young makes a survey of progress', *The Star*, 4 August 1928, CH343/79d, CCCA

⁴⁰⁸ *AJHRNZ* 1913, C.-10, p. 36



Figure 3.52. The map of New Zealand in the western end of the Bog Garden. Created to a design by George A. Mazey, it was approximately twenty-five feet long and was laid out to the points of the compass so as to be in the correct position relative to the rest of the world. Mt. Cook and Mt. Egmont were marked by two white-tipped rocks and planted with native species. It was removed in late 1937.
Source: G-562-1/1, F.J. Denton Collection, ATL



Figure 3.53. Newly-formed children's playground, with paddling pool and swing boat ca. 1918. The development of this was influenced by the American Playground Movement.
Source: G- 45647- ½, S C Smith Collection, ATL

The site works associated with Young's new projects supplied enough shingle to re-form every path and drive across the Botanic Gardens. The works also enabled the introduction of large quantities of new plant material, such that by the end of the 1920s the Domain was described as having a first-class collection of flowering shrubs, especially rhododendrons, azaleas and lilacs.

Boundary treatments were an important focus for Young at this time and a wheel-traffic bridge was erected between the North Park and the Domain near the Bowling Club grounds in 1911. Two new sets of new ornamental gates were installed, one at the Museum entrance and the other near the Curator's House on Rolleston Avenue.

In addition, the (extant) brick boundary wall between Christ's College and the Botanic Gardens was erected in 1923. This was fully funded by the Christ's College Old Boys' Association, and was designed to incorporate the (extant) door, gable and barge board from the Old Library that was part of the Anglican Diocesan Synod Hall and Offices, as the gateway between the Botanic Gardens and the College.⁴⁰⁹

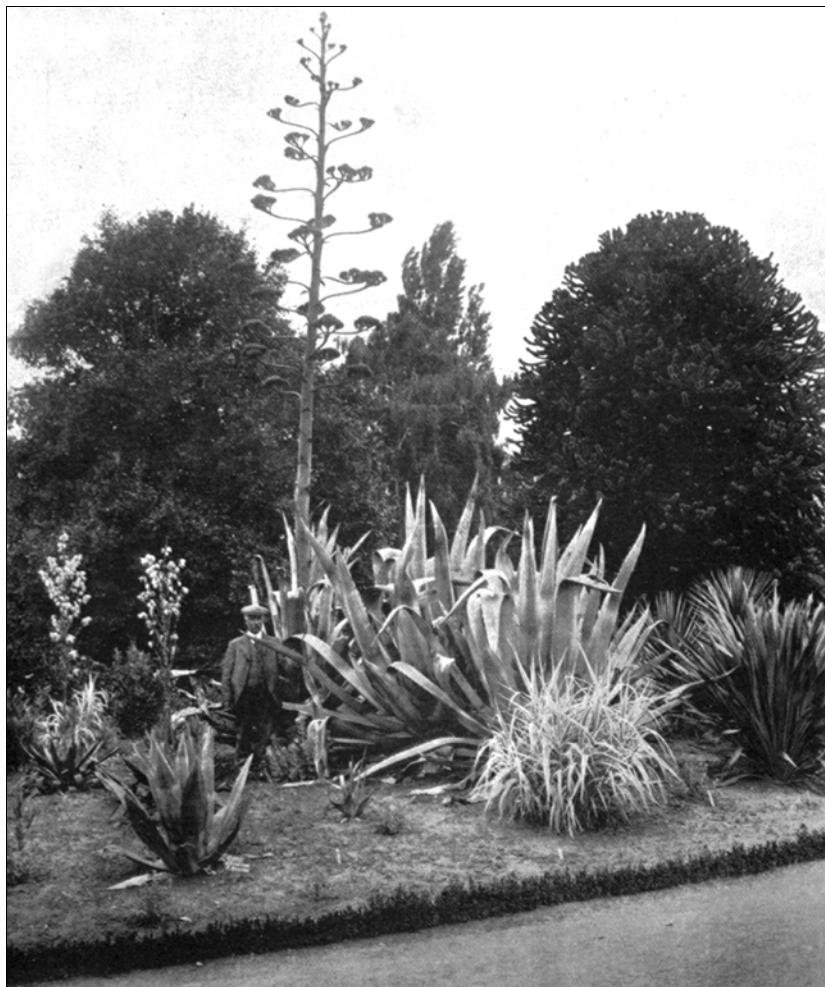


Figure 3.54. James Young and the agave, yucca and furcraea collection.
Source: Canterbury Times photograph, 1923.53.256, CM

⁴⁰⁹ *Ashburton Guardian*, 10 October 1911, p. 2; Christ's College Old Boys' Association Minutes, 24 January 1923, CCA; Report and Statement of Accounts 11th Oct 1923, p. 4, CCA

James Young's specialist gardens

Young's Bog Garden was constructed on the site of a shingle pit to the north of the lakelet in the Native Section. This relatively shallow depression was formed into a ring-shaped waterbody surrounded by a larger lakelet of irregular shape. Water lilies, irises, flax, toe-toe and niggerheads were planted in the water and on the islands. Encircling these and planted on the slopes of the large lakelet were celmisia and what were described as comparatively rare trees. These included Flowering ash, Scarlet flowering chestnuts, *Liriodendron* (tulip trees), *Platanus occidentalis* (American plane), *Rhus typhina* (staghorn tree), purple trembling poplar, English birch, Canoe birch, Tasmanian manuka, English lime, golden ash, ribbed ash and *Fremontia californica*.⁴¹⁰ An outer belt of approximately 30 trees was planted by the Board, the Mayor and three representatives of local newspapers to mark the completion of the garden's construction. This group included a *Plagianthus* (Ribbonwood) planted by Dr Chas. (Charles) Chilton in June 1920.

Most of Young's new initiatives were praised by the public, but the dismantling of the old Armstrong Native Garden, in favour of a new New Zealand garden with new native species of ornamental interest, was met with some concern. Arguing once again for the retention of the old garden, Leonard Cockayne described it as “one of the horticultural landmarks of the Dominion and possibly Australasia” and noted that its destruction would be deeply deplored internationally.⁴¹¹ Nevertheless the construction of a new New Zealand Garden, described as being between the Bog Garden and Beswick's Walk, proceeded.⁴¹² Reports suggest that efforts were made to include rare native species as well as a diverse collection of New Zealand alpine plants, many of which were donated by local nurserymen and members of the public. This included “the first and original plants found of scarlet manuka”⁴¹³ donated by Mr Spencer, the owner of the property on which the plant was first discovered.⁴¹⁴ Some members of the Domains Board⁴¹⁵ also provided plant material including Leonard Cockayne, who offered half of his own valuable plant collection for the project.⁴¹⁶ Yellow, white and red flowering kowhai⁴¹⁷ were used to edge the new native garden and these were described as being planted in rows and associated with plantings of beech.⁴¹⁸

In Young's mission to fill this new garden he had reportedly “been to places no other botanist had visited and collected assiduously,” bringing back hundreds of specimens from the West Coast in 1917.⁴¹⁹ His spoils included many plants from the *Epacris* genus including heath and *Dracophyllum*, as well as mountain beech, gentians and rata. Despite this, the educational value of the collection was considered disappointing, because of the small number of indigenous plants represented. In the opinion of Dr Arthur Hill, the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, there was “a fairly representative display of native flora, however the native plants were not displayed in any botanical or biological manner so as to be of real education value, nor were they properly labelled...”⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁰ *The Sun*, 28 June 1920

⁴¹¹ Unprovenanced clipping dated 12 June 1911, Clipping book CBGA

⁴¹² A 1927 plan shows a 'Native Shrubs' Section in an area on the eastern side of the central Water Garden lakelet

⁴¹³ *The Press*, 2 July 1913, Christchurch Domains Board Newspaper Clippings, CH343/80d,CCCA

⁴¹⁴ The history of the discovery of the red manuka on Mr Spencer's run is recorded in the *New Zealand Gardener* June 1, 1960, p. 665 and also in Nairns' Nursery Catalogue for 1914 and Shrubshall (1950) qMS-1803, ATL

⁴¹⁵ Dr Levinge, Leonard Cockayne and Thomas (T.W.) Adams

⁴¹⁶ *The Press*, 2 July 1913, Christchurch Domains Board Newspaper Clippings, CH343/80d,CCCA

⁴¹⁷ Red kowhai now known as *Clianthus puniceus* (Kaka beak)

⁴¹⁸ Unprovenanced clipping dated 9 June 1911, Clipping file, CBGA

⁴¹⁹ *Lyttelton Times*, 12 June 1917, p. 8

⁴²⁰ These were generic comments that Dr Hill applied to Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch Botanic Gardens as recorded in the *Evening Post*, 2 April 1928, p. 13

Other harsh criticism directly levelled at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens by Dr Hill noted

*“One of the main difficulties in considering the question of a Dominion Botanic garden is that Botanic Gardens do not exist in New Zealand except in Title and by Act of Parliament. ... What I have said about the present Gardens being really Public pleasure gardens, is well illustrated by the Christchurch “Botanic Gardens” and by the Domain Gardens at Auckland. In both there has been a sad waste of money in the erection of Winter gardens - costly structures housing a very poor collection of plants of no botanical interest and of very little horticultural value. The plants displayed could have been grown in any small green house, as the ugly and very large structures contain only a senseless repetition of a comparatively few uninteresting plants. ...”*⁴²¹

The general public, however, was perhaps less concerned with collection rigour, and horticultural value, their attention seemingly more focused on floral display and the latest horticultural novelties. To this end, particularly striking bedding displays were effected in the rectangular border gardens that edged the western side of the (south) walk on Moorhouse Lawn (now Armstrong Lawn).⁴²²

Other interesting floral effects were achieved in incised beds which by 1910 covered much of the main (Armstrong) lawn. In some of these beds Young formed symmetrical diagonals using variegated grasses and infilled the diamond-shaped spaces with differently-coloured blooms.⁴²³ In another scheme he created a highly praised floral representation of the armorial bearings of the Isle of Man (three legs in armour conjoined at the thighs) that was laid out close to the Moorhouse Statue.⁴²⁴ Another of Young's impressive floral displays was the mass planting of flowering cherries in a quarter acre triangle near South gate (now known as the Cherry Mound). This was later enlarged to twice its size by James McPherson in 1936.

Commemorative plantings

New commemorative occasions, both choreographed and informal, added to the Botanic Gardens' royal and gubernatorial⁴²⁵ record. In 1917, as part of a ceremony to mark the commencement of the Rock Garden's construction, the Governor General, Lord Liverpool, planted two chestnuts at the entrance to the garden. Three years later, in a departure from the accepted symbolic practice of oak planting, the Prince of Wales planted a kauri on the Archery Lawn. Positioned within a circular bed, it was nevertheless encircled with a double border of *Narcissus 'Queen of England'*.⁴²⁶

Other commemorative events saw the Prime Minister of the day, William Massey, plant a *Fagus sylvatica purpurea* on the Archery Lawn in 1920 and, seven years later, the Duke of York planted the same species on the Archery Lawn near the fountain. Domains Board Members and the Mayors of Wellington, Dunedin, Wanganui and Christchurch, as well as the Hon. William Rolleston, Sir Heaton Rhodes, and Sir Francis Bell recognised the city's jubilee in 1928 with scarlet oaks and copper beeches. These were planted along the path then known as the Central Walk on the south side of

⁴²¹ Hill, A. W. (1928) 'Report on Matters of Botanical Interest in New Zealand', ADSQ 17639 F1 Box 551/ Record No. 45/8, Volume 2. Visits of Scientists, ANZ

⁴²² Young quoted in the *Ashburton Guardian*, 6 January 1914, p. 2

⁴²³ *The Star*, 14 December 1908, p. 2

⁴²⁴ *Ashburton Guardian*, 4 November 1913, p. 2; *The Press*, 4 November 1913, p. 8

⁴²⁵ Of or relating to Governors and Governors General

⁴²⁶ *The Press*, 17 May 1920, Clipping file, CBGA

the Archery Lawn.⁴²⁷ Details of other commemorative events are documented in appendix 8.

Another ephemeral, but no less important planting occurred in 1920 when poppy seed from the battlefields of the Somme was planted. Forwarded by Ettie Rout to James Young and the Curators of the Melbourne and Sydney Botanic Gardens, the seed from this sowing was reaped in March and then distributed to relatives of fallen soldiers throughout New Zealand.⁴²⁸ Newspaper reports document a flood of applications for this seed from all over the country.⁴²⁹ Other significant gifts of seed included 900 varieties of seeds from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, and 181 varieties of seed from Sir Frederick Moore, Curator of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin in 1921.⁴³⁰



Figure 3.55. The Duke of York planting a *Fagus sylvatica* on the Archery Lawn, March 1927
This tree was removed in 1996

Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, AWNS-19270324-38-3, AL

In 1931, after ongoing problems with water pressure, the Peacock Fountain was relocated to the east of the Archery Lawn. Removed from its concrete pool, it was placed in a general depression in the lawn and an irregularly-shaped lakelet was formed around it. Two rocky islets spouting sprays of water furthered the display and water lilies and goldfish provided additional interest.⁴³¹ When in full play in this location, it was not unusual for the fountain's spray to drift 40 feet in windy conditions.

⁴²⁷ Removed by 1935 according to H. H. Allan, as noted in the addendum to his 'Historic Trees in New Zealand' papers, IA63 Record 8/25, ANZ

⁴²⁸ Ettie Rout was at this time the Honorary Secretary of the NZ Volunteer Sisters and was running a Red Cross depot in Villers, Brettoneux

⁴²⁹ *Poverty Bay Herald*, 9 January 1920, p. 5

⁴³⁰ *The Times*, 2 April 1921

⁴³¹ Lucking, G. (1995) *Peacock Fountain Conservation Plan*, p. 6; *The Sun*, 23 March 1915, Christchurch Domains Board Newspaper Clippings, CH343/80d,CCCA

The following year the Domains Board entered into what would become a lengthy relationship with the Christchurch Rotary Club and Rotary International. This was inaugurated with the planting of a *Cedrus deodar* as a “Friendship Tree”, by Sydney Pascall, the President of Rotary International.⁴³² The planting of friendship trees was a new phenomenon initiated by Pascall when he assumed the role of International President, and was seen by him as a most appropriate way of symbolizing the Rotary idea of the active pursuit of friendship among nations.⁴³³ Rotary's association with the Domain was not limited to tree planting, but also included project work until at least 1987 across what became known as the Rotary Lawn. This is discussed further in later sections.



Figure 3.56. The Peacock Fountain in its second location ca. 1933 with spraying islet on right.

Source: Historical photograph collection, Photograph 76, CBGPA

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

In August 1923, a deputation from the Canterbury Society of Arts successfully petitioned the Domains Board for a site within the Botanic Gardens where a new art gallery could be constructed. Although this move was generally welcomed by the art fraternity, a large sector of the city was aggrieved by this appropriation of land and little progress was made in advancing the scheme. However, in early 1925, Robert McDougall, a prominent businessman announced his offer to fund the building of an art gallery.

Between 1925 and 1928 twelve sites around the city were proposed as alternative locations for the gallery. However, the contemporary view that art appreciation and viewing experience was improved when galleries were located in a cultivated park or domain and separated from the everyday world held sway,⁴³⁴ and members of the Domains Board, the Canterbury Art Society and Curator James Young jointly agreed on a location for the new Art Gallery in 1928. Council's formal confirmation of the decision to locate the gallery to the rear of the Museum prompted a further round of public debate. While some members of the public supported the decision a large number

⁴³² Pascall, famous manufacturing confectioner, was the first British and European President of Rotary. The tree in the Botanic Gardens was his 25th friendship tree world.

⁴³³ *The Rotarian*, July 1932

⁴³⁴ Hurst Seager quoted in *The Press*, 17 April 1928, Box 4, Folder 4c, McDougall Gallery Archive, CAGL; Hurst Seager quoted in *The Press*, 2 June 1927, p. 10

were strongly adverse to it, and public opposition ranged from the need to protect the important spiritual values of the Armstrong Law,⁴³⁵ to concern over the alienation of part of the Domain from its original purpose as the city's lungs. Many shared the sentiments expressed by the Rev. F. R. Rawle, who argued that *“if a picture gallery however imposing, were to blot out the lawn or even a part of it, nothing that could be hung in the gallery, not even the greatest treasure, could compensate for the loss.”*⁴³⁶

Nevertheless, plans for the gallery proceeded and, as part of the Jubilee celebrations in 1928, Robert McDougall laid the foundation stone for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery behind the Museum. This was followed by a tree planting ceremony that was linked to the city's jubilee celebrations. Planting the only Kauri (*Agathis australis*) in a group of ceremonial exotics, Mr McDougall christened the tree 'The British Empire Tree' and exhorted the tree to grow and improve like the British Empire.⁴³⁷ Domains Board minutes record that this planting took place at the western end of the Archery Lawn.⁴³⁸ The tree may possibly survive as noted in appendix 8.

The design of the gallery was determined through an international competition, and following the selection of the winning design in 1930, work began on clearing the area behind the Museum. By The building was officially opened on June 16th 1932⁴³⁹ and soon after this, the gallery's surrounds were described as *“a tribute to the energy and enthusiasm with which Mr Young, the curator always carries out his work.”*⁴⁴⁰



Figure 3.57. View of the newly completed gallery as seen from south walk bordering the Archery Lawn. Note the collection of seat styles placed alongside the walk.

Source: Photographic collection, Botanic Gardens, 24, No. 2705, (undated)

⁴³⁵ When it was mooted that the Gallery was to be constructed on the lawn

⁴³⁶ Rev. Rawle quoted in *The Press*, 30 March 1928, Box 4, Folder 4c, McDougall Gallery Archive, CAGL

⁴³⁷ *The Press*, 29 May 1928, p. 9

⁴³⁸ Pers. comm. L. Beaumont/S. Molloy, Christchurch Botanic Gardens, May 2010

⁴³⁹ For a more detailed account of the construction and history of the Robert McDougall Gallery refer to Pearson & Associates (2010) *Robert McDougall Gallery Christchurch, A Conservation Plan*

⁴⁴⁰ Shurrock, F. A. 'McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch', *Art in New Zealand*, Vol. 4 -5, December 1932, p. 107

James Young retired in November 1932. During his time as Curator he had endeavoured to turn the Botanic Gardens into a miniature Kew and, despite receiving much criticism for his alterations to the Archery Lawn in the early 1910s, at the time of his retirement it was acknowledged by the Board that he had been an inspiration to Christchurch gardeners. It seems likely that a special tree planting ceremony would have been carried out in his honour, however this remains unconfirmed.

3.6.2 Acclimatisation Grounds

By 1908 the pond margins in the public section of the Acclimatisation Society's Grounds had been faced with concrete in an effort to improve the overall appearance of the grounds.⁴⁴¹ A new Curator's cottage was constructed in 1913, and one year later, new concrete races, (50 yards long, 2 feet 3 inches high and 2 feet 4 inches wide) were formed to replace leaking old timber structures. These improvements had the desired effect and the landscape was praised as being decidedly picturesque on occasion, particularly in spring when the Society's bulb display was at its best. Members of the public were encouraged to visit the gardens to view this ephemeral display as well as the aquarium, the animal pens, and the aviaries of magpies, peafowl, pukeko and parrots.



Figure 3.58. The “nicely contrived” concrete-edged public ponds in the Acclimatisation Society Grounds post 1908. Source: Historical photograph collection, Photo 70, CBGPA

Despite these improvements the Society's Grounds were often allowed to lapse into what was described as a most disgraceful condition, with rank overgrown vegetation and stagnant water. This prompted regular calls for the ponds to be filled in and the area amalgamated with what was then known as the Harman Plantation (now referred as Harman's Grove). This predominantly *Quercus rubur* and *Quercus cerris* plantation lay between the river near the South Bridge and the Riccarton

⁴⁴¹ *The Star*, 6 January 1908, p. 3

Avenue and had been established some time prior to 1902.⁴⁴²

Reluctant to abandon its operation, the Society appears to have continued with small animal and wildfowl breeding programmes, having success with Canadian Geese, and in 1914, with squirrels. The following year a substantial new aviary covering 1,000 square feet was erected, followed three years later by a new hatchery. This, it was said, made the Acclimatisation Grounds “*the most complete establishment of its kind in the Dominion.*”⁴⁴³

In 1918 there were growing calls to do away with animals and birds that were of no use for acclimatisation, and the Society was also under pressure to discontinue its practice of keeping animals in such close proximity to the Hospital. Regardless of this, a new Canadian Geese pond was constructed and efforts were made to import new bird species from Norway and India. The size of the grounds was, however, reduced in late 1918 when the Domains Board took over a triangular portion of grounds from the footbridge over the Avon River to the Riccarton Road drain.⁴⁴⁴

In 1926 the Society finally decided to vacate its grounds. This was due in large measure to the restrictions imposed upon its operations by the Domains Board. The move enabled the rationalisation of the hospital complex and, after protracted negotiations, an arrangement between the Society, the Domains Board and the Hospital Board was reached, and the necessary enabling Act was passed on October 9, 1928. This saw 1 acre, 2 roods and 31.5 perches of the Acclimatisation Society's grounds transferred to the Canterbury Hospital Board in trust for a Nurses' Home and recreation ground.⁴⁴⁵

In return, the Society received \$2,000 compensation from the Hospital Board and the right to remove the fittings from their hatchery, thereby enabling members to relocate their piscatorial operations to Greenpark in 1930.⁴⁴⁶ The balance of the Acclimatisation Grounds not needed by the Hospital, together with the area that had been used by the Hospital as a kitchen garden, were returned to the Domains Board and incorporated into the greater Hagley Park landscape.

Construction of the Christchurch Nurses' Home began in 1931 and involved the relocation of a historic milestone.⁴⁴⁷ This was thought at the time to be the last milestone remaining in the city.⁴⁴⁸ During construction, the milestone was apparently moved from its original position and placed against the fence that had been constructed to surround the new building. This was to ensure that

⁴⁴² This was an existing plantation that was named the 'Harman Plantation' in honour of Richard J. Harman, long-serving member and Chairman of the Domains Board who “*always took a special interest in the Park and used to visit this portion of it when the plantation was young and prune the trees*”. A hornbeam near the centre of the grove was specially reserved by the Board as part of the commemorative gesture. *The Press*, 19 December 1902, p. 4

⁴⁴³ *Annual Report of the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society*, 1918. AEQH 21352 CH1002 Box 37/d, ANZ

⁴⁴⁴ *Annual Report of the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society*, 1926. AEQH 21352 CH1002 Box 37/d, ANZ

⁴⁴⁵ Lanpac Report (2002) *Land Status and Historical Investigation: Hagley Park*, Christchurch, p. 9

⁴⁴⁶ *Annual Report of the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society*, 1929; *Annual Report of the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society*, 1930. AEQH 21352 CH1002 Box 37/d, ANZ

⁴⁴⁷ Free standing milemarker of natural stone with an engraved legend specifying a distance. Positioned beside a road or track.

⁴⁴⁸ In 1988 a *Press* article noted that few milestones remained in Christchurch. Those recorded at that time were “*the stone marking seven miles from Cathedral Square which can be found in a Belfast pub - nicknamed 'The Peg'. Another is outside the nurses' home in Riccarton Avenue and another near 68 Avonside Drive*” 2 April, p.2

the milestone remained “in full view of the public.”⁴⁴⁹ The stone was extant in November 2010 and is now believed to be the only milestone surviving in the central city.⁴⁵⁰

The Society's Curator's cottage and surrounding grounds of approximately half an acre were retained by the Domains Board, and the cottage was initially occupied by James Young as part of his brief role as Sports Superintendent, following his retirement from the Curator's position.⁴⁵¹

Following this reconfiguring of the old acclimatisation landscape, part of the Hospital Board's tennis courts continued to encroach upon about 1 rood and 20 perches of what had become Hagley Park (previously the kitchen garden). An agreement was subsequently reached to rent this portion of the Park to the Hospital Board.⁴⁵²



Figure 3.59. Survey plan ca.1926 showing the location of the Nurses' Home within the Acclimatisation Society site

Source: CAAR 12600 CH290 354 Record 16/1B, ANZ

⁴⁴⁹ *The Press*, 8 April 1933, Domains Board – Newspaper clippings, CH343/80d, CCCA

⁴⁵⁰ Pers.com: L. Beaumont/John Wilson, Canterbury historian, February 2013

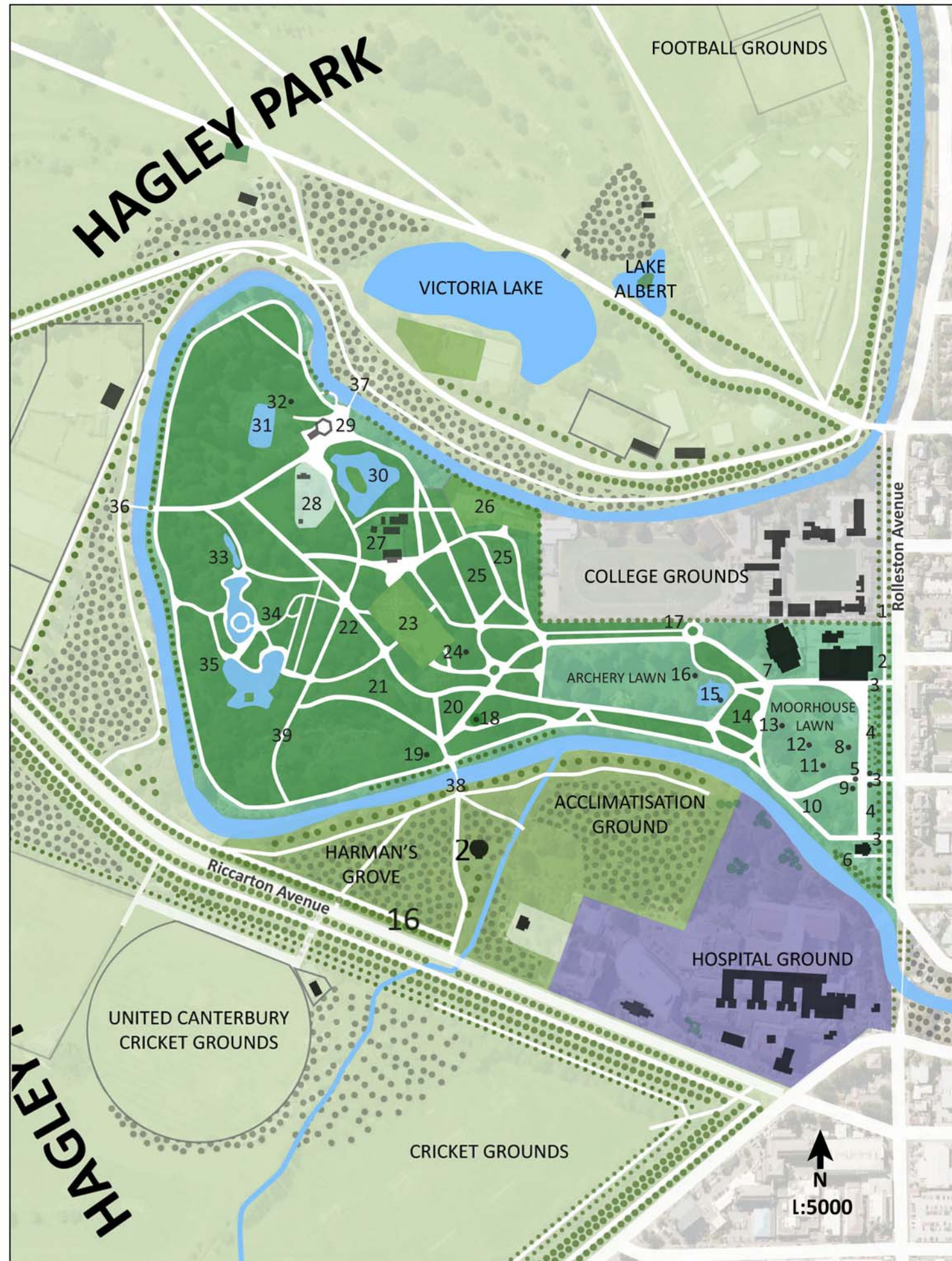
⁴⁵¹ *The Press*, 7 October & 5 November 1932, Christchurch Domains Board Newspaper Clippings, CH343/80d, CCCA

⁴⁵² Brown, A. (undated) Notes on the history of Hagley Park, p. 24, CCC Heritage files

BOTANIC GARDENS AND SURROUNDS 1933

Early 20th Century Development

1. Bridge to Tea Kiosk c.1920s Source: G-40980-1/2, ATL
2. Rock edged water gardens and rustic bridge c.1920 Source: G-017599-1/1, ATL
3. Archery Lawn early 1900s Source: Historical photograph collection Photograph 34, CBGPA



Key

1. Double row of horse chestnuts
2. Rolleston Statue
3. Iron gated entrances
4. Double row of specimen trees in lawn
5. Moorhouse Statue flanked either side by a series of regularly spaced rectangular border gardens interspersed with Trachycarpus
6. New Curator's house fronted by Rolleston Sundial
7. Robert McDougall Art Gallery
8. Cedrus deodara planted to celebrate John Armstrong's birthday
9. Araucaria araucana attributed to Governor George Bowen or Sir George Grey
10. Quercus robur planted to commemorate the marriage of George V
11. Sequoiadendron giganteum planted by the Duke of Edinburgh
12. Prince Alfred oak planted by the Duke of Edinburgh
13. Marchioness of Normanby's Cedrus libani
14. Pine Mound
15. Peacock Fountain in irregularly-shaped lakelet
16. Fagus sylvatica planted by the Duke of York
17. Christ's College brick wall and Diocesan Library door
18. Edward Albert oak
19. Quercus borealis var. maxima planted to commemorate the coronation of George V
20. Cherry Mound
21. Australian collection with rhododendron edging path
22. Conifer collection including remnant Pinetum plantings
23. Rose Garden with Hunter Sundial, set of stone tazza, concrete seat and large ornamental vase
24. Quercus robur planted to commemorate the coronation of Edward VII
25. New Zealand Garden (old)
26. Nursery area with four propagating houses, tool shed, shelter shed and other buildings
27. Show Houses - Cuninghame Winter Garden, Townend Conservatory, Orchid House plus the Magnetographic House with Magnetic cellar
28. Magnetic Observatory made up of Absolute Magnetic House, Observatory Office and other measuring equipment
29. Tea Kiosk
30. Kiosk Lakelet with cultivated island
31. Childrens' rock-islanded paddling pool, sandpit and playground
32. Cedrus deodara planted by Sydney Pascall as a Rotary 'Friendship Tree'
33. Water lily and iris pond with rustic bridge
34. Native Garden (new)
35. Inwood Rock Garden, Bog Garden, lake and 'Map Island'
36. Dray Bridge
37. North Bridge
38. South Bridge
39. Beswick's Tilia edged walk

Sources

Refer figure 3.67 Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens 1933 map

Figure 3.60
Map of Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens 1933