

## **MAYORS OF RANGIORA BOROUGH**

In the early days the Mayors retired annually and either put themselves up for re-election or stood down.

### **H Blckett – 1878-1880, 1887-1888**

Henry Blckett was born in Durham, England in 1820 and was employed in the woollen-drapery trade. Because of ill health, he came to New Zealand in 1858 with his family on the 'Gypsy'. He opened a general store in High Street (opposite Books and More today) and was the Postmaster from 1865 to 1873. His business included a wine and spirit agency, and his cellar and the counter of his shop became the meeting point for discussions on the town's business. Mr Blckett threw himself wholeheartedly into schemes to develop the town and district, and his keen business and political brain, good common sense, and powerful oratory made him perhaps the most notable and popular citizen in early Rangiora. His motto was always 'Have the money in the bank before you spend it.'

He served on the Rangiora and Mandeville Road Board and a Drainage Board set up for the purpose of reclaiming the Rangiora Swamp. He became the first Mayor and was re-elected to the position a total of five times. Other interests were as first chairman of the Rangiora School Committee, and later the High School Board, the Domain Board, and he was involved in the building committee for the St. John the Baptist Anglican Church.

He died in 1907 and is buried in the Rangiora Anglican Cemetery.

### **J Johnston - 1880-1883**

John Johnston was born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland in 1840 and came to New Zealand with his father on the ship 'Mystery' in 1859. He obtained employment at Anderson's foundry in Christchurch and at the end of 1863, he moved to Rangiora and opened his own business. He began by repairing agricultural implements and his business grew to become an ironmongery and general engineering works, being a direct importer and agency for agricultural implements. He moved to the present position of Johnston's Building at the corner of Victoria and High Streets.

He was elected to the first Council of 1878-80, and became the second Mayor. Because of the pressures of business, he declined to stand again, but was on the Council again from 1899-1901. However, he continued to be a leading citizen. He was a founding member of John Knox Presbyterian Church, on the School and High School Committees, Superintendent of the Fire Brigade, and Chairman of the Rangiora Investment Loan Land and Building Society.

He died in 1915 and is buried in the East Belt Cemetery.

### **A Ivory - 1883-1885**

Aquila Ivory came to New Zealand on the 'Glentanner' and arrived in Rangiora in 1857. He was a member of a family group consisting of the Ivory, Stapleforth, Doggett and Jennings families. This family formed the first Baptist congregation in Canterbury. They built a small chapel in Victoria Street (on the site of the Queen Street extension) known as 'Little Bethel.'

Mr Ivory obtained work as a bushman, then became a farmer and later he ran a grain and estate agency. He was a Councillor from 1879-1883, and from 1889-1892, in addition to his Mayoralty. His son Joseph Aquila Ivory also served on the Council in 1931-38, and 1942-47.

He died in 1908 and is buried in the East Belt Cemetery.

### **H Boyd – 1885-1887**

Hugh Boyd was born in Ayrshire, Scotland in 1843, and arrived in Lyttelton on the 'Mermaid' in 1864. He had relatives already in Rangiora, so he settled in the district and commenced business as a building contractor. Shortly afterwards he was joined in partnership with Mr. Thomas Keir (see T Keir). Boyd and Keir were responsible for constructing many of the early buildings, both public and private in the district. Many of the historic homes in North Canterbury were built by this partnership. Their workshop was behind their cottages in High Street to the west of Johnston's Building.

Mr Boyd was on the first Council 1878-1885, and again 1911-21. He was a member of the School and High School Committees. He was one of the founders of the library and literary institute and for a time was honorary librarian.

Mr Boyd died in 1924 and is buried in the Anglican Cemetery in Ashley Street, Rangiora.

### **E R Good - 1888-1891, 1898-1899, 1911-1912**

Edward Richard Good was born in Shropshire, England in 1850 and came to Lyttelton with his parents on the 'Royal Stewart' in 1855. His father settled in Rangiora and opened a large drapery and boot store. Edward took over the business on the death of his father in 1875.

Edward was on the first Council 1878-88, and again in 1891-98, 1900-06 and 1910-11. He was also Mayor on three occasions. On the first occasion in 1888 he was elected when the sitting Mayor Henry Blackett was late returning from a trip. He was a bastion of conservatism and frugality in Borough affairs and was also a Justice of the Peace.

Mr Good was long connected with the Literary Society, and the Tennis and Cricket Clubs.

He died in 1919 and is buried in the Anglican Cemetery.

### **G Cone – 1891-1892**

George Cone was born in Aldham, Suffolk, England in 1842. He came to New Zealand with his parents on the 'Bangalore,' landing in Lyttelton in 1851. His father died the year after following a fall from a horse. As young men, George and his brother began farming directly across the Ashley River from Rangiora where Cone's Road is now. In the late 1860s, George gave up farming to become an overseer on the railway construction works and then went into business as a butcher. His shop was on the corner of High and Ashley Streets but later moved to the corner of High and Albert Streets to make way for the Bank of New Zealand.

Mr Cone took a great interest in agricultural matters and was a prominent member of the local agricultural society. He was a member of the North Canterbury Racing Club and President of the Athletic Society. For many years, he was also Sergeant in the voluntary cavalry.

Mr Cone served on the first Council 1878-80, and again in 1882-90, and 1893-98.

He died in June 1898 and is buried in the Rangiora Anglican Cemetery.

### **J Sansom – 1892-94, 1901-02, 1912-14**

John Sansom was born in London in 1854. He came to New Zealand on the 'Ashburton' in 1858. On leaving school, he drove a mail coach and later he took over his father's business as a baker and general storekeeper. His shop was at the corner of High and Church Streets and it traded for 70 years, providing the children from the Borough school with sweets and other items.

His interests included the chess club and he was also captain of the rifle club. He was a Councillor from 1888-92, 1894-1901, 1902-12, and was Mayor on three occasions.

John married Henry Blakett's eldest daughter Margaret, and he died in April 1918.

### **T Keir – 1894-96**

Thomas Keir, a carpenter by trade, was born in Perthshire, Scotland in 1837, and came to Lyttelton on the 'Mermaid' in 1864. It was on the ship that Mr Keir

met his future business partner, Hugh Boyd (see H Boyd). They were in partnership as builders and sawmillers for over 40 years.

For 30 years, Mr Keir was a member of the Rangiora Institute and was on the first School Committee. He was an outspoken leader of the temperance movement in Rangiora, and was a founding member of the John Knox Presbyterian Church.

He served as a Councillor from 1887-94, 1896-1903, and 1904-09.

He died in November 1911 and is buried in the East Belt Cemetery.

### **C I Jennings – 1896-1898, 1914-1921**

Charles Ivory Jennings's parents arrived in New Zealand from London in 1857 to join other family members already in Rangiora. His father, Charles Sr, was a carpenter and became the settlement's first undertaker.

Charles Jr was born in 1860 in a cottage built by his father at the corner of the track leading to Ashley that became Ashley Street. He went on to become the most prolific holder of office in the history of Rangiora's municipal, social, cultural and sporting institutions. In 1884 he became the representative in North Canterbury for the 'Lyttelton Times'. This was before telephones were installed about 1898, so his urgent reports were written on thin paper and attached to a homing pigeon to carry to the office in Christchurch. The pigeons were returned on the train the next day.

In the course of his work he became acquainted with the business of most organisations and societies in the town and in many cases he ended up running them. Among the organisations he was secretary of were the Rangiora Literary Institute, the Horticultural Society and the Brass Band, and he was Chairman of the Board of Governors of Rangiora High School from 1925-43. From 1887 to 1924, he was the secretary of the John Knox Presbyterian Church and from 1910 to 1944 he was the Session Clerk.

Initially his office was on the north side of High Street between the Bank of New Zealand and the Junction Hotel. He later moved to an office in Johnston's building. Jennings spent much of his life walking up and down High Street attending to public business. His home, which still exists, was at the corner of Ashley Street and Jennings Place which was renamed in his honour in 1938.

He first occupied a seat on the Council in 1886 and served two terms as Mayor, the second during the difficult First World War years. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1891, and was awarded an MBE for his services to the Borough.

He died in 1947 at the age of 87 and is buried in the East Belt Cemetery.

## **A B Blackett – 1899-1901, 1910-1912**

Andrew Benton Blackett was a storekeeper and he followed his father Henry into local body affairs. He was a tall raw-boned man who always rattled out his speeches at a very fast clip. He was also associated with the Athletics Club and the Rangiora Hockey Club.

He was a Councillor from 1892-9, and 1909-10, serving two terms as Mayor. On the second occasion he was elected unopposed when Bell (see C W Bell) stood down because of disappointment over not getting a water scheme underway.

He died in 1931 and is buried in the Anglican Cemetery.

## **J Carmichael – 1902-1905**

James Carmichael, an engineer by trade, was born in Dundee, Scotland, in 1855. Mr Carmichael arrived in New Zealand in 1880 and worked in Dunedin until 1886 when he moved to Rangiora and started a cooperage factory near Rangiora High School. The factory produced butter churns, washing tubs and cheese vats from kauri and tawa. After several years Carmichael went into the bicycle business in a shop at the corner of Ashley Street and the street to the Railway Station. He later also sold cars, accessories, petrol and oil. He was a quiet man who rode about town on a big tricycle.

He became a Councillor in 1895-1902, and 1905-11. He was elected unopposed for his term as Mayor.

## **E W Relph – 1905-1908**

Edward William Relph was born in 1858 in Wicklin, Kent, England. After working in the office for the East India Dock Company and in the Far East, he came to Lyttelton on the 'Hurunui.' In 1892 he became manager of the North Canterbury Co-operative Stores Company and was a driving force behind the Co-op's success and expansion. This store progressed to become the Farmer's Co-op on the corner of High and Percival Streets. The present Farmer's store is under different ownership but is on the same site.

A bright, lively and friendly man, Relph brought his own particular business skills and progressive outlook to the Council table in 1901. During his Mayoralty the gas works were opened, the band rotunda in Victoria Park erected, and the new Council chamber in Percival Street built. His daughter Adeline had the honour of turning on the gas for the lamps in the park and in the centre of town.

He died in Christchurch in 1943.

## **C W Bell – 1908-1910**

Charles William Bell was born in Rangiora in 1871. He was a son of early settler Jonathan Bell, who had settled to the west of Rangiora (Bells Station). After having served an apprenticeship as a tailor and gaining experience in the trade in Wellington, he returned to Rangiora where he entered into business on his own account in 1894. His premises were in High Street to the east of Durham Street.

Mr Bell was a member of the school committee, and was a District Grand Master of the Rangiora Oddfellows Lodge. He also served in the Rangiora Rifles, reaching the rank of sergeant.

Mr Bell was a leading member of the Beautifying Society and the Poultry Club. He put much time and energy into making the arrangements for the annual poultry shows, riding his bicycle to Christchurch and back to organise the equipment needed to stage the show. This club still has its annual shows.

## **F B Lane - 1921**

Frederick Bampton Lane was a watchmaker and jeweller in Rangiora from the early 1890s, with his shop being on the corner of Alfred and Victoria Streets. He had long been a leading figure in the Methodist Church and the prohibition movement. A quiet unassuming man, tall and thin, he was not in good health when he became Mayor in May 1921, following Mr. Jennings. He resigned after only three months in office and died shortly after. He is buried in the Methodist Cemetery.

He was also a Councillor from 1913-1921.

## **W. A. Banks – 1921-1923**

William Alexander Banks was born in Christchurch in 1860. As a schoolteacher, he spent many years at country schools, before settling on 'Longhope,' a 400-acre farm at Loburn. From 1901, he was Chairman of the Ashley Road Board.

After retirement he became a Councillor in Rangiora from 1916-19. He took Lane's place for the remainder of the term but did not contest the Mayoralty in 1923.

He died in 1941 and is buried in the East Belt Cemetery.

## **W A Rowse – 1923-25, 1927-29, 1931-36**

William Arthur Rowse was the son of a Wesleyan Missionary and had been brought up on Maori Mission Stations. Although trained as a draper, he was the Rangiora reporter for 'The Press' newspaper.

A kind, gentle man, he had acquired a broad working knowledge of the business of most of Rangiora's organisations. His office was situated on the west side of Johnston's building in High Street.

He became a Councillor in 1915-23, and served three separate terms as Mayor. After his first term, Robert McIntosh narrowly defeated him in a heavy poll. At the next election, he beat McIntosh by a small margin. In the next election he was ill at the time of the election meetings and was defeated by C S Ayers by three votes, and in a record poll in 1931 he defeated Ayers by a comfortable margin. During most of those years the question of a water supply was always being debated. However by 1931 a scheme was in place and Mrs Rowse was given the honour of switching on the supply. At the election of 1933 Mr Rowse offered the mayoral chair to anyone who wanted it but nobody did, and so he was returned in the first uncontested election since 1918.

Mr Rowse died in January 1936 and is buried in the Methodist Cemetery.

He was also the last of a line of mayors going back to the 1880s heavily represented by men who were strongly devoted to the Methodist Church or the prohibition movement.

## **R McIntosh – 1925-1927**

Robert McIntosh was a retired farmer from Loburn and a son of Kenneth McIntosh who arrived in New Zealand in 1858 and first settled in Beach Road, Kaiapoi. The family later moved to a property on Lineside Road in Southbrook.

He was a Councillor from 1921-25, and in 1931-33. During his time as Mayor, the Town Hall was built, and land acquired for Dudley Park. McIntosh also offered to purchase a strip of land that gave access to the park from High Street and this was gifted to the Borough and became Park Street. Mrs McIntosh had the honour of opening the Town Hall.

At the time he was Mayor of Rangiora, his brother Hector was Mayor of Kaiapoi, and the brothers instigated the McIntosh Shield for sporting contests between the two towns.

Mr McIntosh died in 1939 and is buried in the East Belt Cemetery Rangiora.

## **C S Ayers – 1929-1931**

Cecil Samuel Ayers was a builder, who with his father Samuel built many of the brick dwellings in the King, Seddon, and Ayers Street block. He was also the builder of the Rangiora Maternity Hospital in 1924, using a construction method he pioneered of using hollow concrete walls.

He was a Councillor from 1915-28, and 1919–56. He was Mayor for one term when he defeated the sitting Mayor Mr Rowse by three votes, but was defeated by Mr. Rowse in the election of 1931. During his term as Mayor, the Council had been stripped of most of its experienced men who had retired, and this was a time when experience was sorely needed.

Mr Ayers died in 1966 and is buried in the Methodist Cemetery, Rangiora.

## **C W Tyler – 1936-61**

Charles William Tyler was born in 1883, a son of C A Tyler who had a carrier business and livery stable on the corner of Ivory and Alfred Streets. Initially, he managed his father's depot in Christchurch, and later he and his brother Albert took over the business themselves. Mr Tyler exchanged his dray for a car, which he used as a taxi. He also became the town's first traffic inspector. When the partnership with his brother was dissolved, he joined Herbert Gulliver in the undertaking business, with Gulliver doing the joinery, and Tyler doing the funeral directing.

He first became a Councillor in 1925. When William Rowse died, Tyler was the logical successor and a deputation of businessmen and Councillors went to his home and asked him if he would accept the Mayoralty. Tyler agreed and was sworn in on 17 January 1936. This procedure was repeated over many years and only once, in 1959, did anyone stand against him. Consequently he was Mayor of Rangiora for twenty-six years, through the Depression, the Second World War, and the post-war period of recovery and progress.

For the greater part of his long term, Tyler had an efficient Town Clerk and a good organiser in J M Fraser. Not unnaturally, after so long a time chairing changing Councils, Tyler became accustomed to running the ship. Tall and well built, and dressed in a black suit, he was always in the public eye. He approached problems with sound common sense and there was never any evasiveness, uncertainty or verbosity about his chairmanship.

Tyler was a member of countless boards and committees. He was Chief Fire Officer of the Rangiora Brigade from 1924-1961, Chairman of the Lyttelton Harbour Board 1947-49, and was Chairman or President of various other organisations.

He died in office in 1961 and is buried in the Rangiora Anglican Cemetery.

## **L E Farr – 1961-1971**

Leslie Ernest Farr, the proprietor of a motor firm at the corner of Church and High Streets, had previously farmed at Bennetts. Before coming to Rangiora, he served for about two terms on the Oxford County Council. He first became a Rangiora Borough Councillor in 1958 and returned after his Mayoralty for a further three years.

During his terms of office between 1961 and 1971, almost all of the available land on the north side of the Borough was subdivided and built on, new streets were formed and old ones extended. Water and sewerage extensions and a new sewerage treatment plant were completed.

Also during his term the Dudley Park swimming pool was built, and the land for Matawai Park, the reserve situated in the centre of the old bush was purchased and planted in native trees.

Mr Farr died in 1985 and is buried in the Oxford Cemetery.

## **J A McKenzie – 1971-1980**

John Alexander McKenzie became a Councillor in 1968. He had a drapery business in High Street on the site of the present Postie Plus shop. It was during the early part of his term that the population increased so rapidly that property developers were forced to look to the southern part of town for their housing sites. The Borough's electrical trading department was sold in 1972.

The Borough was also involved in the investigation of local body administration during his years in office.

Mr McKenzie died on 16 July 2005 and is buried in the Rangiora Lawn Cemetery.

## **D M Harris – 1980-1986**

Dorothy Harris was first elected to the Council in 1974. Before coming to Rangiora, Dorothy had been involved in Plunket Society and Play Centre Committees. After settling in Rangiora, she became the Secretary-Organiser of the Educational Development Conference for Canterbury-Westland.

During her six years as a Councillor, Dorothy was involved in Library Services, the Community Arts Council, Nurse Maude, Canterbury Promotion Council, and other committees. She was also involved in Adult Education, and the Adult Reading Programme.

In 1980 she was elected unopposed as Mayor, a position she held for two terms. It was during this time that Dorothy initiated amalgamation talks with the Rangiora County Council following the passing of the Local Government

Amendment Act in 1985, and pre-empting the 1989 amalgamations. Both Councils had their headquarters in Rangiora, their interests and staffing were similar, and removing the restrictive boundaries would aid the progress of both. She and the County Chairman, Trevor Inch, worked towards the amalgamation, which was formalised in 1986. Dorothy was therefore the last Mayor of Rangiora Borough, and for a short time, first Mayor of the short lived Rangiora District Council.

During her time as Mayor, as a member of the Canterbury United Council, she was on the Transport, Regional Planning, Policy and Resources and Air Pollution Committees. She was also Chairman of the North Canterbury Branch of the Heart Foundation during those years.

From 1992, she returned to local government as a North Canterbury representative on the Canterbury Regional Council.

Mrs Harris died on Boxing Day 2006 and is buried in the Rangiora Anglican Cemetery.

## **Rangiora District Council**

### **T M Inch 1986-1989**

Trevor Milton Inch, a farmer, was a member and then Chairman of the Rangiora County Council before the Borough and County amalgamated in 1986. He was Mayor of the new Rangiora District from the elections in late 1986 until 1989, when the Waimakariri District Council was formed from Rangiora District, Kaiapoi Borough, Oxford and Eyre Counties and part of Kowai County, as part of local government re-organisation.

Trevor was the first elected Mayor of the new District, and died in office in 1995. His memorial is the Trevor Inch Memorial Library in Rangiora, a facility he worked hard to achieve.

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## **Acknowledgement**

Rangiora & District Early Records Society