

CHEMISTS AND DRUGGISTS IN EARLY CHRISTCHURCH AND LYTTELTON, NEW ZEALAND, 1850s-1880s.

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Very little has been written about the chemists and druggists of the early Canterbury settlement in New Zealand from the 1850s to the 1880s. A few passing references may be found in such works as Reg Combes's *Pharmacy In New Zealand* (1981) or in the almanacs of the 1860s, but no systematic attempt has been made to document them all. The availability of the *Lyttelton Times* and *The Press* on the National Library's website of digitised early newspapers, *Papers Past*, now makes this task much easier.

Arthur Bayfield was the first pharmacist in the Canterbury settlement. He arrived with his young wife and son in the *Randolph* on 16 December 1850 and brought with him enough stock to open a pharmacy without delay.¹ When the first colonists of the Canterbury Association arrived in the legendary 'first four ships' that month they found a wooden jetty and several substantial wooden barracks beside the house that had been built for the settlement's leader, John Robert Godley. Along the shore, on what had been surveyed as Norwich Quay, there were several shops and cottages, and a hotel, The Mitre, hosted by Major Alfred Hornbrook. This had been operating for a whole year, satisfying the thirst of the workmen employed by Captain Joseph Thomas, the chief surveyor, to build the jetty and the immigrant barracks. The port of Lyttelton was named after the chairman of the Canterbury Association, Lord Lyttelton.²

Lyttelton already had a resident doctor. Dr William Donald had been appointed port health officer in January 1850, and was the first registered medical practitioner in the province of Canterbury. Presumably he had mixed his own medicines and ointments before Bayfield arrived, but now he could write prescriptions and send his patients to the pharmacist.

Bayfield probably occupied a tent at first, as did most of the new arrivals. The barracks had been designed for one shipload of immigrants; nobody expected the first four ships to arrive almost at the same time. The first two in fact arrived in the same day, 16 December 1850, which seemed almost miraculous after a voyage of several months from England. Fortunately the weather stayed fine over that summer, and simple cottages soon sprang up to replace the tents of the first arrivals. A popular design was an A-frame hut, perversely called V-huts by the settlers, as a joke; they were, after all, upside down on the bottom of the globe.

Bayfield's first advertisement in the *Lyttelton Times* appeared on 15 February 1851, under the heading 'Chemist & Druggist'. He had opened his premises in Canterbury Street, where he had on sale 'Drugs of the purest quality, Perfumery, Hair, Tooth, and Nail Brushes, etc.' He added 'Prescriptions carefully prepared'. He obviously had some

timber left over from building his shop, for his ad ended: 'N.B. A few Scantling and well-seasoned Totara Boards'.³

Competition appeared in August 1851 when one H. G. Mallam, 'Chemist, Druggist and Stationer', advertised that he had opened premises in London Street, next door to Messrs Collier and Mason. He hoped 'by strict attention and good drugs to merit general patronage'.⁴ On the same page, however, Bayfield drew the attention of farmers and flockmasters to his 'valuable SHEEP DIPPING COMPOSITION for effectually destroying the Tick Lice, and all other insects injurious to the Flock'. He added that his composition also prevented attacks of the dreaded Scab, and cleansed the skin, thereby greatly improving the quality of the wool. He also had available 'Horse and Cattle medicines prepared with Drugs of genuine quality', as well as Scab Ointment'.

In those days sheep dips were often based on tobacco, discreetly laced with arsenic. Bayfield must have been a shrewd businessman, for this ad appealed to the so-called 'Shagroons', experienced Australian sheep farmers who were bringing flocks to Canterbury to take advantage of the extensive grasslands of the Canterbury Plains and the foothills of the Southern Alps. Wool exports were the salvation of the Canterbury settlement, for the close-knit agricultural economy envisaged by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the theorist of 'systematic colonisation', proved insufficient to support a growing population. The sheep farmers were the only ones who had spare cash to spend on horse and cattle medicines.

Another competitor had appeared by August 1851. Dr John Seager Gundry had been the surgeon-superintendent of the immigrants on the *Steadfast*, which arrived at Lyttelton in June 1851. His delightful diary of his first few months in Canterbury has survived, and describes the process of selecting a town section in Christchurch, at the Land Office on what became Oxford Terrace. Dr Gundry's town section was on Cashel Street, on the west side of Colombo Street.

Christchurch had been designated the future city and capital of the Canterbury settlement. Captain Thomas and his surveyors had pegged out a grid pattern of future streets on the largest area of dry grassland adjacent to the highest point of navigation by laden whale boat on the River Avon, which wound through the site of the future city. The streets were contained within four broad avenues known as the Belts. To the west a large area had been reserved as Hagley Park, named after Lord Lyttelton's estate.

Beside the river in the middle of town Captain Thomas had set aside a Market Place which later became Victoria Square. The centre and focal point of the new town was Cathedral Square, but the cathedral was long delayed for lack of funds, and was not consecrated until 1882. The Market Place was the first commercial and official hub, with the first gaol, immigration barracks, public works office, first post office and one of the first hotels, the Golden Fleece.⁵ But a second commercial hub soon developed south of Cathedral Square, in the blocks on either side of Colombo Street, on

Hereford, Cashel and Lichfield streets. (The streets were all named after Anglican dioceses.)

Dr Gundry's first ad in August 1851 simply stated 'Mr Gundry, Chemist and Druggist, Cashel-Street, Christchurch'. It was common enough for doctors in those days to augment their professional incomes with the sale of pills and medicines, but it was not regarded as appropriate for them to advertise like a tradesman. Dr Gundry's ads ceased after 13 September. He had probably been 'spoken to' by Dr Alfred Barker, the first general practitioner in Christchurch, who took a strict view of medical etiquette.⁶ Most of the early doctors had arrived like Gundry as ships' surgeons, and decided to stay. One of them, Henry Richards, claimed to have been a dresser for the famous surgeon Liston, but he had never finished his degree, and although he was by all accounts a very competent practitioner Dr Barker persuaded the other doctors to ostracise him, and he finished up as a country doctor in the Malvern district. Gundry returned to England in 1858.

In August 1852 we first hear of one Dr Chapman, who opened his 'Christchurch Dispensary' in Cathedral Square. He claimed to have had 'long and extensive experience' with leading medical men in London, and to be available for medical and surgical advice every morning and on Saturday evenings. The treatment of diseases of women and children would form a 'prominent feature' at his establishment. However, he too seems to have lacked a medical degree, and never appeared on the New Zealand medical register. Like Gundry, his ads ceased after only two months. But he turns up again (if it is the same Chapman) in 1859 as Mr Chapman, proprietor of a Homoeopathic Institution in Manchester Street, claiming to have been one of the surgeons at the Hahnemann Medical Institution in Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, London.⁷ Whatever Dr Barker thought of him is not known, but Chapman advertised every few days throughout 1860. Then the ads cease, and he appears to have moved on.

As Christchurch grew rapidly in population, Bayfield opened a branch in High Street (then known either as the Sumner Road or the Ferry Road) next to the first town hall, and employed an assistant to run it. This was known as The Dispensary. His wife Matilda may have assisted him in dispensing medicines. Bayfield's name frequently appeared below long ads for Holloway's pills and ointment, one of the most successful (and lucrative for its inventor) all-purpose remedies of the nineteenth century in Britain. The pills were said to be 'wonderfully efficacious' in curing everything from Ague and Asthma to Ulcers and Worms.⁸ (Thomas Holloway made a fortune from these worthless placebo pills, and founded the Holloway Infirmary and Royal Holloway College in Surrey from the proceeds. His greatest claim to fame was the efficacy of his extensive advertising.)

In November 1855 Bayfield sold his Christchurch branch to Edward Hillborne, who may have been his assistant before that date. Under his first notice assuring customers of the same 'good stock of genuine articles' he inserted a terse message, 'Arsenic on sale, ex-Spray'.⁹ Presumably this was for rats rather than humans, or perhaps for sheep

dip. Hillborne carried on this pharmacy until his death in December 1860, when his widow Susan Hillborne called in his debtors and creditors to meet at Mr Harman's office in Hereford Street, to settle all claims on his estate.¹⁰

Bayfield died at the end of 1861 and his widow Matilda set the date of 1 February 1862 for the settling of accounts.¹¹ She carried on the Lyttelton business until August 1862 when she announced that the pharmacy had been bought by H. Lawrence MPS. He was a qualified pharmacist with experience in England and Australia before coming to New Zealand.¹² The original shop in Canterbury Street was destroyed in the great Lyttelton fire of October 1870, but was rebuilt on the same site. This pharmacy business carried on under various names until 1943.¹³

Lawrence faced stiff competition in Lyttelton from 1864 when Edward S. Ellison opened a pharmacy in London Street.¹⁴ Perhaps in response, Lawrence renamed his establishment the Apothecaries' Hall, and advertised himself as a 'Pharmaceutical Chemist', with 'Genuine Drugs and Chemicals'.

By now three significant new pharmacies had appeared in Christchurch. The first was established in 1859 by two medical men. Dr James Somerville Turnbull had an MD and LRCS from Edinburgh, and had come out in 1858 in the *Labuan*. Also on that voyage was Peter Brown Hilson, who had an Edinburgh LRCS. (They may have been students together.) They appear to have taken over the Dispensary in High Street at first, but must have found it too small. Between them they had enough capital to build a handsome two-storey wooden pharmacy on the corner of Armagh and Colombo streets, facing Victoria Square, in 1859. This was rather grandly named 'The Apothecary's Hall', and soon became the leading pharmacy in Christchurch.¹⁵ Dr Turnbull had his consulting rooms in the same building.

Turnbull had known a young dispenser in his home town of Jedburgh in Scotland, and paid for John Valentine Ross to come out to New Zealand to manage the pharmacy. On arrival in July 1861 he formed a partnership with Charles Cook (not to be confused with the headmaster of that name) and they remained partners until March 1868. In April 1867 Turnbull opened a branch of Cook & Ross in Timaru, and Charles Cook went south to manage it. J. V. Ross continued in charge of the Cashel Street Apothecary's Hall until his death in 1893, and became one of the best-known among Christchurch's pharmacists and public figures.¹⁶

The Dispensary in Ferry Road apparently kept going until the building was advertised for sale in June 1862: 'Shop and Dwelling-House for sale, near the Town Hall . . . with plate glass front and 3 rooms. The premises are at present used for a chemist and druggist's business, and also as one of the branch post-offices'.¹⁷ The *Southern Provinces Almanac* for 1862 lists Turnbull and Hilson as having two pharmacies, one in Ferry Road (presumably the Dispensary) and the other in the Market Place (the Apothecary's Hall).¹⁸

The second new pharmacy in Christchurch was established in 1861 in Colombo Street north of Cathedral Square, between Armagh and Gloucester streets. It was a business venture by one of the first store-keepers in early Christchurch, an enterprising and utterly honest young man named George Gould. His was the very first cottage in Christchurch, erected in Armagh Street early in 1851. He had brought it down from Auckland as a kitset, and only had to get a bricklayer to add a chimney to complete it. His store in the Market Place prospered, and he built substantial new premises in Colombo Street in 1859 named Cookham House, where he set up a warehouse and boot factory. The pharmacy occupied part of the new building from 1861, but the whole place was lost in the Golden Fleece fire in 1866. Gould was well-insured, and wrote orders to restock the very next morning, so as to catch the English mail. Cookham House was rebuilt in brick and stone. Gould went on to become one of the city's most successful businessmen and most generous philanthropists. His stock and station agency was later absorbed into Pyne Gould and Guinness, a major Canterbury company.¹⁹

The name of Gould's first pharmacist is not known, but from 1866 it was Austin Fussell.²⁰ The shipping columns of *The Press* and *Lyttelton Times* reveal that Gould and Company regularly imported cases of drugs, kegs of spirits and in 1869 a tub of leeches for the local doctors.²¹ The new Sale of Poisons Act of 1871 prompted Gould and Company to insert a long ad, warning that parties wanting to purchase Cyanide of Potassium, Tartar Emetic, Laudanum, Opium, etc. (in addition to the poisons listed in the Act, such as strychnine and arsenic) would now be required to sign the Poisons Book in the presence of a witness, if they were not known to the pharmacist. Dover's Powders, Paregoric Elixir and Syrup of Poppies, though made in the usual way, would now have to be labelled as poisons. Essence of Almonds, however, would not be affected because Gould and Company had a process to deprive it of its poison, Prussic acid.²²

Gould finally sold the business to Fussell in 1874, but he chose to retain 'the same name and style as before'.²³ Failing health may have prompted Fussell to advertise for 'a thoroughly competent Druggist's Assistant' in 1874.²⁴ Unfortunately, Austin Fussell slipped and fell from a ladder in his warehouse in May 1875 and hit his head on the floor. He was unconscious for four days and died on 14 May.²⁵ Fussell's widow Mary Jane later sold the business to Alfred Wright, who had been their principal assistant and acting-manager after Fussell died.²⁶ Wright opened a new branch of Gould's Pharmacy in Whately Road (now Victoria Street) in 1877,²⁷ but he sold the business almost at once to Joseph Stevens, who had been a senior assistant at Cook & Ross for several years.²⁸ Wright tendered successfully to supply drugs to Christchurch Hospital for several years in the 1880s, a contract worth about £1,000, but protested when the contract was given to the wholesalers Kempthorne Prosser.²⁹

Gould's Pharmacy moved to new premises next to Ballantyne's department store in Cashel Street in 1886. The firm was a heavy advertiser, promoting Carboline

toothpaste powder and Hickman's Eclipse Hair Procurer.³⁰ Unfortunately, Hobday's fire in 1888 badly damaged the pharmacy, and a sale of damaged items cleared the old stock over a month to make way for alterations and rebuilding at the rear.³¹ During the Russian influenza pandemic of the early 1890s Gould's Pharmacy promoted Quinine Wine at 3s 6d a bottle: 'As a preventative from La Grippe and Influenza it has no equal'.³² The business was sold to A. V. Bishop in 1895.³³ After making 'extensive alterations and improvements' Bishop sold the business to H. I. Hobden and R. G. H. Cole in 1898. Hobden had been the dispenser at Christchurch Hospital and Cole came from Bonningtons.³⁴

The third new pharmacy in Christchurch in the 1860s was in a brick house on the Ferry Road, but within the city limits, probably in what is now lower High Street. This was established in 1862 by Henry Horsford Prins MRCS in connection with his practice as a surgeon. Prins was to become one of Christchurch's leading surgeons, and a successful breeder of racehorses. As a young man he had arrived in 1859 in the *Cashmere*, only to find that Christchurch already had too many doctors for its population, all struggling to make a living. He probably set up his pharmacy to generate income. He advertised himself as a 'Dispensing Chemist and Druggist', as well as surgeon and accoucheur.³⁵ With a succession of assistants he kept up this profitable pharmacy almost until his death in 1897.

Dr Turnbull's partner Peter Hilson unfortunately became an alcoholic and died in Christchurch Hospital in December 1863. Turnbull had by then sold the pharmacy business to his assistants Charles Cook and John V. Ross. Dr Turnbull gave the two young men a glowing recommendation, describing Ross as 'a most efficient druggist and a man of strict integrity'.³⁶ Cook & Ross became a Christchurch institution, as well-known as Ballantyne's department store. It was strategically located in Colombo Street, on the No.1 tram route to Papanui, and the No.4 line to St Albans. People arranging to meet in town would say 'See you at Cook & Ross!' The 1859 building with its tall round-topped windows lasted until 1926.

Outside Christchurch pharmacies had been established at Akaroa, Ashburton, Timaru, Rangiora and Kaiapoi. The Akaroa business was set up by Dr Daniel Watkins, a 'genial and jolly' general practitioner, but it was run by his son Henry.³⁷ The Rangiora business was run by a man names Bourke, about whom little is known. The Kaiapoi pharmacy had been set up by Thomas C. Rowley in 1862, but he soon ran into difficulties and had to sell up in 1863. The auctioneer Henry Alport advertised 'To Surgeons, Chemists, Perfumers, etc.' the following for sale:

235 bottles containing drugs, medicines, etc.

42 large ditto, ditto, ditto

33 packages medicines

3 large window show glasses

Quantity of perfumery, fancy soaps, hair, tooth and nail brushes, trusses, syringes, and other surgical instruments

Pestles and mortars, pill machines

Measure Glasses, empty bottles, tins and jars

Chairs, mats, shop fittings, etc.³⁸

Richard Robinson, a qualified chemist from Lancashire, set up shop in Cashel Street in 1863 and advertised throughout 1864 with a very simple ad assuring the public: 'Orders by post, or otherwise, punctually attended to'.³⁹

Yet another chemist appeared in Christchurch in 1864. J. C. Brooke & Co., chemist, advertised a warehouse for sale in January 1865.⁴⁰ In September 1865 he advertised for a 'competent' chemist's assistant.⁴¹ However, the business failed to prosper and Brooke was declared a bankrupt in July 1866. He had borrowed from John Lewis and Richard Walton, who now laid claim to all of his real and personal estate and effects.⁴² The lease on his shop, which had 16 years to run, and the goodwill of his pharmacy business, were auctioned in September 1866.⁴³

In 1866 we find a reference to 'Dr Leach's Dispensary, High Street', with no further details.⁴⁴ Christopher Leach MRCS, LSA, appears on the NZ Medical Register in Christchurch in March 1864, and again (under the 1867 Act) in April 1868. Very little is known about him, and he was deleted from the Medical Register in 1872.⁴⁵

Another failed chemist at this time was William Hamilton Ennis Pinching. In June 1866 he advertised 'Pinching's Celebrated Cough Syrup' from his dispensary at the corner of Durham Street and Papanui Road (in fact Whately Road, now Victoria Street).⁴⁶ But his debts were such that he was in custody in August 1866 when the Supreme Court heard his petition for sequestration.⁴⁷ He made another start in Kaiapoi in 1867, advertising that he had taken over Swann's old shop in Charles Street. He offered drugs and chemicals of 'best and purest quality' along with horse and cattle medicines 'of every description'. He also extracted teeth.⁴⁸

However, by January 1868 Pinching was once again unable to pay his debts and was declared bankrupt in August with assets of £320 and liabilities of £376.⁴⁹ [In 2020 money, £350 would be worth about \$23,000.] His creditors allowed the business to survive, under a new manager, as the best hope of getting their money back. Pinching's estate was assigned to trustees, who finally sold the business in 1875. As well as the chemist and druggist's shop there was a stock of fancy goods, books and stationery.⁵⁰

T. Wallace started business as a dispensing and family chemist in July 1865, from a shop in the High Street Triangle, opposite the former Wesleyan Chapel.⁵¹ His ads appeared daily for two months while the business got established. Shipping notices reveal that he was importing cases of drugs and acids, and kegs of soap, along with drums of spirits of wine.⁵² In 1870 he gave £5 to the relief fund after the great fire in

Lyttelton.⁵³ However, Wallace appears to have retired in 1873 and sold the pharmacy to Drs Campbell and Parkerson. He later said he had no further interest in the business after that date.⁵⁴ It continued as Wallace and Company until 1880, occasionally advertising for 'a good steady Dispenser'.⁵⁵ One of the firm's specialities was the sale of blocks of ice, used in early ice-chests, ancestors of the refrigerator. In December 1876 Wallace and Company advertised for an engineer 'for the Ice Machine'.⁵⁶

Robinson's pharmacy in Cashel Street appears to have prospered. His wife Elizabeth came out from Lancashire to join him in 1865 and their first child, a daughter, Sarah, was born in 1866. They lived above the shop, which appears in a photo dated 1868 in the Canterbury Museum. It sits in a row of simple wooden shops between H. Smith, Working Jeweller, and Bonnington's Stationery Warehouse. Next to Bonnington's is J. King, General Grocer and Soap and Candle Manufacturer. They were on the north side of Cashel Street opposite the A1 Hotel, in what was known as The Triangle, the heart of early Christchurch's retail district.

Sadly, Richard Robinson died suddenly in 1871 aged only 32. Elizabeth was then 35, and with help from local businessmen carried on the business, suggesting that she had been trained by her husband as a pharmacist. She was pregnant when Richard died, and her son John Henry died in infancy in 1872. Despite these personal tragedies, she carried on, moving premises in 1873 to the High Street Triangle near to Davenport's.⁵⁷ In June 1881 she became the first woman in New Zealand to be registered as a pharmaceutical chemist. She sold the business to Joseph Arthur Cooke, a trained pharmacist from Leeds, when she remarried in 1885. Her new husband was the hotelier Charles George Dann and she took her family to live with him in the Royal George Hotel. She kept an interest in the business, and advertised that she was available in the shop each day between 11 am and 4 pm for consultation. She was still on the register in 1891, but died in 1895 at the age of 59.⁵⁸

Henry Samuel Fairbank had been a pharmacist at the High Street dispensary owned by Dr Prins, but went out on his own in July 1869, renting the premises vacated by the failed *Evening Mail* newspaper, also in High Street, next to Carl's Empire Hotel.⁵⁹ Fairbank advertised 'homoeopathic medicines, pilules, tinctures and globules' at his High Street shop in 1871.⁶⁰ In 1873 ads appeared for 'Fairbank's Pills', in boxes priced at sixpence, one shilling and two shillings. The ad reassured the public that these pills had no mercury, antimony or other minerals, but had entirely vegetable ingredients. They had apparently been shown to be efficacious in correcting a sluggish liver: 'they strengthen the stomach, improve the powers of digestion, and by allaying irritation of the mucous membrane tend to restore sound and healthy action to the vital parts'. Conditions claimed to be corrected included indigestion, flatulence, spasms, headache, dimness of sight, loss of appetite, offensive breath, heartburn and depression of spirits.⁶¹

The Lyttelton business of Edward S. Ellidson declared bankruptcy in December 1870, but he rose again, having cleared his debts, and opened new premises in London Street in May 1871, advertising 'Patent Medicines and Family Recipes'. Using the best

drugs ('of which he has a fresh supply') Ellidson offered 'accurate preparation' of all physicians' prescriptions. He also offered to replenish medicine chests and to extract teeth.⁶² In 1873 he announced that the business would be conducted by F. Biggs, formerly dispenser to Dr Prins.⁶³ Ellidson himself was now manager of Wallace and Co. in the High Street Triangle in Christchurch. In September 1874 he left Wallace's and set up his own pharmacy across the road.⁶⁴ With Robinson's also in the Triangle, this was almost the pharmaceutical district of Christchurch.

Chemists proliferated in 1870s Christchurch. Another of Dr Prins's dispensers, E. J. Elliott, opened his own chemist's shop on the corner of Montreal Street and Oxford Terrace in November 1872.⁶⁵ The dispenser at Christchurch Hospital, W. R. Cooke, advertised in June 1873 'Good News for the Sick'. He had left the hospital and set up as a chemist and druggist in Fisher's new building at the corner of Hereford and High streets. He gave his credentials as having studied medicine and surgery for 24 years and served eight years at the hospital, dispensing for upwards of 13,000 patients. He had attended all operations and post-mortems, which gave him opportunities to study anatomy. He had observed the treatment of patients by 'the following celebrated Medical Gentlemen, Drs Stedman, Prins, Turnbull, Powell, Deamer, Nedwill and Parkerson', compounding their medicines and observing their effects. He was therefore in a position to give 'correct opinions on all Medical or Surgical subjects'.⁶⁶

John Baxter started advertising in November 1872 from 'the Medical Hall, Cashel Street'. (Had he taken over Robinson's original shop, perhaps?) The ad was mostly about James M. Crosby's Balsamic Cough Mixture, produced in Scarborough, Yorkshire. Baxter also offered free copies of Crosby's pamphlet *Diseases of the Lungs and Air Valves*, probably designed to frighten gullible readers into lifelong dependency on his patent medicines.⁶⁷ Baxter's ads appeared frequently in the 1870s. He seems to have specialised in English patent medicines, including such choice items as Chlorodyne Jujubes manufactured by A. P. Towle of Manchester.⁶⁸ When the Oxford (North Canterbury) chemist John Paul died in 1880, Baxter bought the business and maintained it with his Victoria Street pharmacy.⁶⁹

Then in August 1883 the first display ad appeared for Baxter's Lung Preserver, with a column of English testimonials, mostly from Yorkshire. These included a medical doctor, a chemist, two ministers and the editor of the *Yorkshire Independent* at Leeds.⁷⁰ The recipe remains unknown, but probably included alcohol and small amounts of opium or morphine. Baxter advertised heavily, and marketed his invention through the wholesalers Kempthorne Prosser. It became one of the best-selling cough mixtures in New Zealand. Baxter also promoted the patent medicines invented by Dr Charles Rooke MD (1809-72), whose ceramic ointment pots are now collectors' items: Rooke's Golden Ointment, Rooke's Solar Elixir, and Rooke's Oriental Pills were produced in Scarborough, Yorkshire.⁷¹ It is said that before he died in 1895 Baxter cut his cough remedy recipe in half, giving one half each to his two sons. They were sworn to secrecy, and supervised the mixture of vats of the cough mixture, adding their own ingredients when the other brother was out of the room.

George Bonnington became one of Christchurch's best-known chemists, and was prominent in the formation of the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand in 1880.⁷² He started in a small way in 1873, with a shop on the west side of Colombo Street, between Armagh and Gloucester streets.⁷³ His brother Charles Bonnington was the bookseller and stationer next to Robinson's pharmacy in Cashel Street, though he moved to new premises in High Street in 1873.⁷⁴ The brothers had come down from Nelson, and alongside the usual soaps, perfumes and infant foods Bonnington's sold fruit wines from Nelson with names such as 'Riwaka', 'Motueka' and 'Wakapuaka'. The fruit wines and other home remedies failed to become popular, and the photographic materials imported from London proved an expensive liability. George declared bankruptcy in January 1875, naming his brother Charles as one of two trustees for his property.⁷⁵ The business and its goodwill were put up for sale, but had no takers. The Timaru branch of Cook and Ross was also on the market at the same time, Cook having decided to return to England.⁷⁶

Somehow George Bonnington cleared his debts and set up a new shop in the premises vacated by Strange and Company on the corner of High Street and Cashel Street. He had to apply to the city council for permission to erect a sign over the shop's curved verandah.⁷⁷ He had been busy devising a new cough mixture containing carrageen or 'Irish Moss'. This was a seaweed extract used as a thickening agent in jellies and blancmanges. Its medicinal qualities had long been recognised and syrup of carrageen had been available in the US from the 1830s. Bonnington added small amounts of morphine and opium, with sweetening agents, which made this a pleasant tasting and relaxing cough mixture. He patented his mixture and began marketing it in 1876 as 'Bonnington's Pectoral Oxymel of Carrageen or Irish Moss', a remedy for coughs, colds, asthma, influenza and bronchitis.⁷⁸

Bonnington's Irish Moss became a household name in New Zealand and Australia, making George Bonnington a wealthy man. Such was the success of his cough remedy that he built a large brick factory in Linwood near Ferry Road where it was manufactured in bulk for the Australian market. In 1883 he rebuilt his corner site on Cashel Street with a four storey Italianate sandstone building designed by architect Thomas Stoddart Lambert. It had a telephone system and the first Lamson pneumatic cashier machine in New Zealand, if not the Southern Hemisphere. George Bonnington became a city councillor and helped found the Christchurch Orchestral Society. He served as secretary and treasurer of the Pharmaceutical Society, and was appointed to the Pharmacy Board which conducted examinations for the registration of pharmacists. He died in 1901 aged 64 years.⁷⁹

A pharmacist who arrived in Christchurch in 1875 achieved far greater notoriety as an accoucheur or 'man-midwife' in a famous court case in July 1876. William Potter Townend had trained at Guy's in London with his elder brother Dr Joseph Henry Townend, but had not completed his medical qualifications when the brothers decided to make a fresh start in New Zealand. They both had pharmaceutical

qualifications (LSA) but William had taken an interest in obstetrics, and it was agreed that he would take care of this side of his brother's practice. They took rooms in John Lewis's office block in Colombo Street, facing the Market Place. (This was known as the Crystal Palace as it had a glass-roofed verandah.) William Potter set up his chemist's shop on the ground floor while Joseph had his consulting rooms above.

William advertised heavily to get his business started, but his ads included mention of his medical brother, which made the other doctors in Christchurch furious, as this breached their code of etiquette that doctors (as gentlemen) did not advertise. Dr Turnbull condemned Joseph Townend in a letter to the hospital board for advertising 'in the manner of a small tradesman', and urged his medical brethren to ostracise the Townends. Joseph responded by undercutting the other doctors. Their agreed standard fee was 2s 6d for a visit: he charged only 1s 6d, and his practice grew rapidly. The Townends were both polite and pleasant men, and thoroughly professional.

William Potter soon became known as a skilled accoucheur and in addition to running his pharmacy he delivered hundreds of babies in his first year in Christchurch. However, disaster struck in May 1876 when he attended a breech birth. He managed to turn the baby so that its head was presenting, but by this time the mother was exhausted and he could not detect any heartbeat in the foetus. Believing the baby was dead, and in order to save the mother, he took the drastic decision to cut up the foetus with scissors. Then suddenly the baby was born, alive and bleeding. It survived a day, refusing nourishment, and died the next afternoon. The mother survived. The police charged William Potter Townend with manslaughter.

Townend's trial in the Christchurch Supreme Court in July 1876 was the talk of the town, and was widely reported in the New Zealand newspapers. The jury heard all the gory details, and duly found him guilty. Judge Johnson sentenced him to four years in the Lyttelton Gaol. But the Townends had many friends by now and a petition was signed by over 5,000 people. William was released after only four months, and promptly got married to his fiancée, Rosa Perkins. He quietly carried on his pharmacy business for many years, and among his apprentices was J. W. Bates, later dispenser at the Christchurch Hospital.

Townend moved premises in 1881 to 183-5 Colombo Street, between Hereford and Cashel streets. This was in the heart of the growing city, and Townend's business prospered accordingly. He was an inventive pharmacist, developing his own brand of Sarsaparilla herbal drink, Townend's Tasteless Teething Powders,⁸⁰ and Townend's Sulphur Hair Restorer.⁸¹ His greatest success, however, came in 1897 with his Cinnamon Oil Cure for consumption or TB.⁸² He had heard about the use of this oil in France in 1892 as a means to destroy the bacilli of tuberculosis, and had experimented for several years until he found an effective compound. He advertised it as the 'latest application of modern medical science', and also claimed its effectiveness as a cough remedy for colds, bronchitis and catarrh. Townend's Celebrated Cinnamon Cure gained a worldwide reputation, and made him a wealthy man. He built a large house in Opawa, 'Fifield' in Hawford Road, and bought a racehorse in 1898, a sure sign of

commercial and social success in colonial Canterbury.⁸³ William Potter Townend died in 1934 in his 89th year.⁸⁴ His brother Joseph had pioneered aseptic surgery in Canterbury in a glass-lined operating theatre at the new private hospital, 'Strathmore', in Ferry Road. Joseph's daughter married the brother of the Earl of Seafield, and Joseph's second marriage in 1900 was to a wealthy heiress, Annie Moore of Glenmark. But he died suddenly in 1902.⁸⁵

It is worth pausing to notice that Christchurch has produced three internationally famous cough mixtures: Baxter's Lung Preserver, Bonnington's Irish Moss, and Townend's Cinnamon Cure were sold in Australia and India, as well as in the UK. The first two were still being sold in New Zealand more than half a century after their inventors had died.

Several of the smaller Canterbury towns had acquired chemist's shops by the 1870s. Ashburton had Cambridge's Pharmacy.⁸⁶ Pinching's Dispensary in Kaiapoi was taken over in 1875 by James C. Roll, who advertised 'Homoeopathic and patent medicines at Christchurch prices'.⁸⁷ He sold off the fixtures and stock of Pinching's Dispensary and moved back to its original shop, next to the Post Office, from which he advertised almost daily in the Christchurch papers.⁸⁸ In Rangiora J. Smith operated a dispensary in High Street, next to Blackett's and opposite the Union Bank.⁸⁹ John Paul was still in business until 1880 as the only pharmacist at Oxford.⁹⁰ In the Ellesmere district Leeston now had a chemist, Joseph Smith,⁹¹ and Southbridge gained a new dispensary in 1878, operated by Robert Douglas, chemist and druggist.⁹² In Lyttelton Dr Macdonald had a dispensary in London Street,⁹³ and Bayfield's pharmacy was now being operated by A. B. W. Parsons.⁹⁴ A Mr Chadwick had taken over the Akaroa Pharmacy. At the head of Akaroa Harbour the pharmacist Edwin Edson Gruber was treating patients as if he were a doctor, claiming that his diploma was in Melbourne. He also claimed to be a member of the British Pharmaceutical Society. But Akaroa's resident doctor, Dr William Oscar Jennings, insisted that he was the only legally qualified medical practitioner in the area.⁹⁵

In Christchurch a new name was that of W. W. Price who had a shop in Hereford Street East in 1878.⁹⁶ W. H. Anthony's Family and Dispensing Chemist in High Street was advertising Ghollah's Great Indian Cures in that same year.⁹⁷

An important step towards the formation of the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand was taken by the Canterbury chemists in August 1878. A meeting was announced to be held at Radcliffe's Hotel on 22 August. John V. Ross was elected chairman and read a circular from the Wellington chemists led by Charles Decimus Barraud calling for such a society. Ross expressed satisfaction at seeing no fewer than 27 chemists present, nearly all of the chemists in Canterbury at that time. The motion to form a Pharmaceutical Society in Canterbury, in conjunction with their Wellington

colleagues, was moved by J. C. Brooke and seconded by A. B. W. Parsons. This was carried unanimously.⁹⁸

The chemists then elected a committee to carry out the objects of the meeting: Messrs Kempthorne, Parsons, Paul, Elliott, Wright, Cook, Cambridge, Watkins, Anthony, Ross and Ellidson. This was a roll call of the Province's leading and most respected pharmacists. Mr Rowe was elected secretary and treasurer on the motion of Mr Anthony, seconded by Wright. Watkins and Cooke of Timaru moved that a suggestion be made to the Wellington society for a common entrance fee. This was also carried unanimously. Finally, a vote of thanks was proposed by Paul of Oxford and Ellidson of Lyttelton to thank the Wellington society for taking a lead. Both *Press* and *Times* described this as 'a very unanimous meeting'.⁹⁹

Barraud had led the campaign for a Pharmacy Bill and soon after the inaugural meeting of the Pharmaceutical Society in 1879 a bill was introduced into the New Zealand Parliament. The main aim of the bill was to establish an official register, and to set penalties for selling adulterated drugs. Pharmacists already in business for more than six months before the Act came into force were considered as qualified and eligible for registration. A Board of Pharmacy would set standards for the profession and conduct examinations for those wishing to be registered in future. The bill was passed in 1880 and came into force on 1 January 1881.¹⁰⁰

Christchurch was represented on the new board by John V. Ross. In the election for the second board in 1883 George Bonnington topped the poll with 132 votes. By then the register of pharmacists had been established and the profession was legally recognised in New Zealand. As we have seen, Elizabeth Robinson was the first woman to be registered as a pharmacist in New Zealand in 1881.

Though New Zealand remained a colony of Great Britain until it acquired Dominion status in 1907, the colonial phase of the country's development was passing by the 1890s. New Zealand towns and cities were favourably compared with British provincial towns as civilised and prosperous entities, and New Zealand society had matured. The history of pharmacy takes on a different character after the 1880s, and has been well-described by Reg Combes in his *Pharmacy in New Zealand* (1981). Other names were to come to the fore in Canterbury, such as Henry Papprell, Douglas Dodds and Eric Dash, while the advent of the UFS (United Friendly Societies) pharmacies provided a service for low income families. H. F. Stevens Ltd started trading as a wholesaler in Christchurch from 1880 and soon rivalled the larger wholesalers such as Kempthorne Prosser and Sharlands. But all of that is a different story, and belongs to another historian. This short survey of pharmacists in early Christchurch and Canterbury is offered as an introduction to that larger story.

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¹ Reg Combes, *Pharmacy in New Zealand: aspects and reminiscences* (Auckland, Ray Richards for the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand, 1981), p.18.

² For further background on the Canterbury settlement see G. W. Rice, *Christchurch Changing: an illustrated history* (second edition, Canterbury University Press, 2008).

³ *Lyttelton Times* (hereafter *LT*), 15 February 1851, p.1.

⁴ *LT*, 9 August 1851, p.1.

⁵ See G. W. Rice, *Victoria Square: Cradle of Christchurch* (Canterbury University Press, 2014).

⁶ On Dr Barker see C. C. Burdon, *Dr A. C. Barker, 1819-1873: photographer, farmer, physician* (Dunedin, McIndoe, 1972).

⁷ *LT*, 31 December 1859, p.5.

⁸ *LT*, 1 November 1854, p.10.

⁹ *LT*, 21 November 1855, p.5.

¹⁰ *LT*, 23 January 1861, p.5.

¹¹ *LT*, 1 January 1862, p.1.

¹² *LT*, 6 August 1862, p.6.

¹³ Combes (1981), p.18.

¹⁴ *LT*, 24 December 1864, p.8.

¹⁵ Rice, *Victoria Square*, p. 56.

¹⁶ Canterbury Museum, Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies, R 374.

¹⁷ *LT*, 7 June 1862, p.5.

¹⁸ *Southern Provinces Almanac* (1862), p.126.

¹⁹ Canterbury Museum, Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies, G 406.

²⁰ *Press*, 4 March 1869, p.2.

²¹ *LT*, 16 October 1869, p.2.

²² *LT*, 30 December 1871, p.1.

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- ²³ *Press*, 3 January 1871, p.1.
- ²⁴ *LT*, 21 August 1874, p.1.
- ²⁵ *Press*, 11 & 15 May 1875, both p.2.
- ²⁶ *Press*, 30 October 1875, p.4.
- ²⁷ *LT*, 11 September 1877, p.4.
- ²⁸ *LT*, 8 October 1877, p.2.
- ²⁹ *Press*, 23 November 1892, p.3.
- ³⁰ *Press*, 18 August 1887, p.1; 1 June 1888, p.8.
- ³¹ *Press*, 4 October 1888, p.5; 10 October 1888, p.1.
- ³² *Press*, 23 November 1892, p.3.
- ³³ *LT* 2 September 1895, p.1.
- ³⁴ *Press*, 9 November 1895, p.5.
- ³⁵ *LT*, 12 February 1862, p.5.
- ³⁶ *LT*, 11 February 1863, p.3.
- ³⁷ *LT*, 24 November 1864, p.6.
- ³⁸ *LT*, 28 February 1863, p.6.
- ³⁹ *Press*, 31 May 1864, p.4.
- ⁴⁰ *LT*, 10 January 1865, p.7.
- ⁴¹ *LT*, 5 September 1865, p.1.
- ⁴² *LT*, 27 July 1866, p.4.
- ⁴³ *LT*, 5 September 1866, p.8.
- ⁴⁴ *LT* 24 February 1866, p.2.
- ⁴⁵ Rex Wright-St Clair, *Historia Nunc Vivat: Medical Practitioners in New Zealand, 1840 to 1930* (2003), p.221.
- ⁴⁶ *LT*, 19 June 1866, p.1.
- ⁴⁷ *LT*, 17 August 1866, p.4.

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- ⁴⁸ *Press*, 5 March 1867, p.1.
- ⁴⁹ *LT*, 6 January & 31 August 1868, pp.3 & 2.
- ⁵⁰ *Press*, 23 January 1875, p.4.
- ⁵¹ *Press*, 6 July 1865, p.1.
- ⁵² *LT*, 23 October 1865, p.2; *Press*, 21 December 1865, p.2.
- ⁵³ *Press*, 27 October 1870, p.4.
- ⁵⁴ *LT*, 8 February 1877, p.2.
- ⁵⁵ *LT*, 19 February 1874, p.1.
- ⁵⁶ *LT*, 11 December 1876, p.1.
- ⁵⁷ *Press*, 23 October 1873, p.1.
- ⁵⁸ Jonathan Chilton Towle, 'The little-known history of New Zealand's first female pharmacist, Elizabeth Robinson', *Pharmacy Today*, April 2020.
- ⁵⁹ *LT*, 5 July 1869, p.3.
- ⁶⁰ *Press*, 5 June 1871, p.1.
- ⁶¹ *Press*, 26 September 1873, p.2.
- ⁶² *Press*, 24 December 1870, p.3, and 22 May 1871, p.4.
- ⁶³ *LT*, 24 February 1873, p.4.
- ⁶⁴ *LT*, 28 September 1874, p.1.
- ⁶⁵ *Press*, 25 November 1872, p.1.
- ⁶⁶ *Press*, 7 June 1873, p.1.
- ⁶⁷ *LT*, 14 November 1872, p.4.
- ⁶⁸ *LT*, 19 January 1874, p.4.
- ⁶⁹ Canterbury Museum, Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies, B 234.
- ⁷⁰ *Press*, 24 August 1883, p.4.
- ⁷¹ *Press*, 14 September 1883, p.4.
- ⁷² Combes (1981), p.21.
- ⁷³ *LT*, 13 June 1873, p.1.

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- ⁷⁴ *LT*, 24 February 1873, p.4.
- ⁷⁵ *Press*, 25 February 1875, p.1.
- ⁷⁶ *LT*, 12 March 1875, p.1.
- ⁷⁷ *LT*, 15 & 25 June 1875, pp.3 & 2.
- ⁷⁸ *Press*, 1 January 1876, p.6 Supplement.
- ⁷⁹ Canterbury Museum, Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies, B 562.
- ⁸⁰ *Press*, 5 November 1896, p.1.
- ⁸¹ *Press*, 30 April 1897, p.6.
- ⁸² *Press*, 2 June 1897, p.6.
- ⁸³ *LT*, 3 January 1898, p.3.
- ⁸⁴ *Press*, 22 October 1934, p.1.
- ⁸⁵ Canterbury Museum, Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies, T 345.
- ⁸⁶ *Press*, 25 January 1877, p.1.
- ⁸⁷ *Press*, 15 March 1875, p.4.
- ⁸⁸ *Press*, 16 April 1875, p.4.
- ⁸⁹ *LT*, 16 July 1877, p.1.
- ⁹⁰ *LT*, 17 August 1878, p.6.
- ⁹¹ *Press*, 13 March 1877, p.2.
- ⁹² *LT*, 28 January 1878, p.1.
- ⁹³ *LT*, 6 January 1876, p.1.
- ⁹⁴ *LT*, 5 August 1878, p.2.
- ⁹⁵ *LT*, 30 September 1875, p.2.
- ⁹⁶ *LT*, 17 August 1878, p.4.
- ⁹⁷ *Press*, 8 August 1878, p.1.
- ⁹⁸ *Press*, 24 August 1878, p.2.

⁹⁹ *LT*, 24 August 1878, p.4; Combes (1981), p.20.

¹⁰⁰ Combes (1981), pp. 23-4.