

= Joseph Brittan =

Dr. Joseph Brittan ( 12 January 1805 ? 27 October 1867 ) , a surgeon , newspaper editor , and provincial councillor , was one of the dominant figures in early Christchurch , New Zealand . Born into a middle @-@ class family in southern England , he caused a scandal by marrying his deceased wife 's sister . As was not unusual at the time , this was responded to by emigrating , and he followed his younger brother Guise Brittan to Christchurch , where he and his wife arrived in February 1852 with four children . Joseph Brittan soon got involved in the usual activities of early settlers and gained prominence in doing so . He had bought 100 acres on 10 July 1851 and took up 50 of this to the east of Christchurch that he converted to farmland . There , he built the family residence , and the suburb of Linwood was subsequently named after Brittan 's farm and homestead of Linwood House .

The members of the Brittan family were devout Anglicans and had a close association with the neighbouring Holy Trinity Avonside , where Guise Brittan was a lay reader . William Rolleston became Joseph Brittan 's son @-@ in @-@ law in 1865 , when he married his only surviving daughter Mary ; Rolleston was elected Canterbury 's third Superintendent just months after Brittan 's death .

Brittan was a member of the Canterbury Provincial Council for just over three years . He served as Provincial Secretary from 1855 to 1857 and was expected to succeed James FitzGerald as the second Superintendent of the Canterbury Province , but was beaten by William Sefton Moorhouse in October 1857 . He established the third newspaper in Canterbury , the Canterbury Standard , which existed for 12 years until shortly before Brittan 's death . Brittan was a very eloquent speaker , but he had a biting and sarcastic character , and was disliked , and even feared , by some . Later in life , he suffered from gout and frequent headaches , and this together with financial trouble , often made him irritable and impatient . He died at his homestead in October 1867 after a long period of declining health .

= = Early life = =

Joseph Brittan was born on 12 January 1805 in Bristol , England , into a respectable middle @-@ class family that originated in Bristol . His father was a brewer . He was listed in Kelly 's 1848 Directory of Dorset for Sherborne under the heading " Traders " as " agent to Royal Exchange & fire office , " and also with his brother William G as " proprietors of ' Sherborne & Yeovil Mercury ' " . He lived at some point in Linwood , Hampshire . His first wife was Elizabeth Mary Chandler with whom he had seven children . Three of them died in infancy , and then his wife died in 1849 , two weeks after the birth and death of their last child . The surviving children were Joseph ( Joe ) , Arthur , Elizabeth Mary ( Mary ) and Frances ( Frank ) .

Brittan married his deceased wife 's sister Sophia as his second wife . This was not legal in England or acceptable to the Church of England . He intended to marry in Denmark where it was legal and the necessary documents for the application were eventually collected and countersigned by the lord Mayor of London on 1 September 1851 . However , for some reason the wedding was performed in Gretna Green in Scotland . As was not unusual at the time , having caused such a scandal was responded to by emigrating , which the newly @-@ weds did a month after the ceremony . They sailed for Christchurch in New Zealand on the William Hyde with his other sister @-@ in law and her 2 children , which left Deal , Kent on 21 October 1851 . Brittan 's younger brother William Guise Brittan ( known as Guise Brittan ) had immigrated to Christchurch earlier aboard the Sir George Seymour in 1850 . Guise Brittan had married Louisa Chandler , a sister of Joseph 's wives . Charles Fooks , who by this time was in Melbourne was married to another of the Chandler sisters ; his wife and children did not travel with him , though . Instead , Mrs Fooks and her two daughters came out on the William Hyde together with Joseph Brittan and family . Also on board was some livestock brought by Joseph Brittan , including a Devon cow , ducks , geese , pheasants , and some rabbits .

During the journey , Brittan performed the duties of the ship 's surgeon . He and the ship 's chaplain

produced a play , The Merchant of Venice , and his contribution was to invite women to act the female roles , which was unusual for the time and a hot topic of conversation causing great amusement . Arriving in Lyttelton on 5 February 1852 , most of the immigrants had to find somewhere to live and many slept in tents or under the open sky . The Brittans were among the fortunate few , as a house on Christchurch 's Hereford Street had been arranged for them by Guise Brittan . Like everybody else who was heading for Christchurch , upon disembarking from the ship they had to make their way over the Port Hills then follow the steep Bridle Path to reach the city . They carried as many of their possessions as possible , but following months at sea , their fitness was rather poor . The remainder of their possessions was shipped by whaleboat around the coast and up the Avon River , which was a dangerous undertaking due to the Sumner sand bar located at the entrance to the Avon Heathcote Estuary .

= = Life in New Zealand = =

Christchurch , still a very small settlement ( it had around 140 buildings in early 1852 ) , already had two doctors , so Brittan 's services in that area were not required . Instead , he followed his brother 's interest and became involved in land speculation . He bought rural section ( RS ) 300 , a triangular piece of land of 50 acres ( 20 ha ) along Canal Reserve ( later called Linwood Avenue ) , with the northern tip of the land touching the Avon River . He leased the adjacent RS 301 , which he later purchased . In total , the property had 110 acres ( 45 ha ) , which was in addition to land he owned at Papanui Bush .

Brittan converted the land in Avonside to farming , with 10 acres ( 40 @, @ 000 m2 ) set aside for a homestead , garden and orchard . He called the property Linwood after his place in Hampshire . Linwood House was ready in 1857 and the family moved there from their first home on Hereford Street . Adjacent to his farm was Holy Trinity Avonside , which at the time was a cob church . On 24 February 1857 , it became the first Anglican church in Canterbury consecrated by Bishop Harper , and Guise Brittan , as churchwarden , read the lesson at the service . The entire Brittan family had a close connection to the church , with Joseph Brittan helping to raise money for its construction , and Mary Brittan singing in the church choir . They faithfully attended church on Sundays , and when subscriptions were taken for the construction of ChristChurch Cathedral , Brittan pledged a generous ? 100 .

Brittan had sundry interests and immediately upon arriving in Christchurch , joined others in various activities . He played cricket in Hagley Park within a fortnight of reaching Christchurch , and later helped improve the grounds and raised money for fencing the area . He also pursued horse racing , later bred horses , and hosted Canterbury 's first steeplechase on his Linwood farm . The Brittans enjoyed music , and not only did Sophia play her piano brought from England , but Joseph played a portable harmonium . He joined a musical group in the port town of Lyttelton , which in the early years was culturally more important than Christchurch , and walked there over the Bridle Path with his instrument strapped to his back . Musical evenings were also held at the Brittan home .

= = Newspaper proprietorship = =

Before they emigrated , Joseph and Guise Brittan had been proprietors of the Sherborne Mercury , a newspaper covering Dorset and outlying areas . In his new country Brittan continued this line of work , becoming the founder , proprietor and editor , of the Canterbury Standard , published from 1854 to 1866 . The advertisement announcing this new paper appeared in the Lyttelton Times in August 1853 . Owned in part by William Thomson and James Willis , the paper was first published on 3 June 1854 , and became the third newspaper in Canterbury , following the Lyttelton Times ( first published in 1851 ) and the short @-@ lived Guardian and Canterbury Advertiser ( published for three months in 1852 ) .

Brittan was also part of a ten @-@ member syndicate that in February 1862 attempted to formalise the ownership of another Christchurch newspaper , The Press , which had been founded in the previous year . A deed of association for " The Proprietors of The Press " was drafted , but

surprisingly , the deed was not executed . Four months later Brittan 's political colleague , James FitzGerald , who had no funds , was the sole owner " through the liberality of the proprietors " , as he called it later . Part of Brittan 's interest in The Press was its declared opposition to the proposal to connect Christchurch and Lyttelton via a rail tunnel , a project that he himself was strongly opposed to . Brittan and Henry Jacobs , the first headmaster of Christchurch 's first school , Christ 's College , are listed as two major writers for The Press during its early years . Before mid @-@ 1863 FitzGerald had a prolonged absence from Christchurch , and Brittan became the acting editor of The Press . In 1866 the Canterbury Standard was sold at auction to The Press , which within days , on 23 April , stopped its publication .

= = = Political career = = =

Elections were first held in New Zealand in the second half of 1853 , and two levels of government were introduced : a House of Representatives at the national level , and Provincial Councils for the six provinces . Brittan first stood for public office in 1855 , when membership of the Canterbury Provincial Council was expanded and various seats across many electorates became available . As a resident of Hereford Street , he stood in the Town of Christchurch electorate , where two positions were to be filled . For weeks campaigning filled the newspapers , with candidates using derogatory language towards each other , and Brittan being accused of " assiduously frequenting the public houses " . When the nomination meeting was held on 8 March in Market Square , only Brittan and Dr Alfred Charles Barker were nominated , and both were thus declared elected .

In May 1855 , the Executive Council , led by John Hall as Provincial Secretary , resigned . James FitzGerald , the Province 's first Superintendent , tasked Brittan to form a new Executive Council , and he succeeded Hall as Provincial Secretary . While FitzGerald was attending the first session of the 2nd Parliament in Auckland in 1856 , Brittan deputised for him . Brittan resigned as Provincial Secretary in February 1857 and was succeeded by Richard Packer , but remained on the Provincial Council until the end of the first term in July 1857 , when he did not seek re @-@ election .

Later in 1857 , FitzGerald resigned from Parliament on the advice of his doctors , and also decided not to seek re @-@ election as provincial Superintendent . Robert Heaton Rhodes offered a requisition to Brittan to make himself available for the by @-@ election that would result from FitzGerald 's resignation from Parliament in the Lyttelton electorate , but Brittan replied that he could not absent himself from his private affairs as yet ; Parliament at that time met in Auckland , and the 1858 session lasted from 10 April to 21 August , which required an absence from home for several months . Instead , Crosbie Ward , the editor and proprietor of the Lyttelton Times , was the only person nominated on 28 May 1858 and was thus declared elected .

The public generally expected that Brittan would succeed FitzGerald as Superintendent , but this did not transpire . Brittan became a candidate for the position when he published his political views in a long letter that appeared in almost all editions of the bi @-@ weekly Lyttelton Times over a period of several months . William Sefton Moorhouse announced his candidacy a few months later , but was not only less experienced than Brittan , but a less polished public speaker . William Richmond , who visited from Taranaki during the election campaign , remarked that " Joe Brittan is a much cleverer man than Moorhouse who seems a softie " . The idea of building the Lyttelton Rail Tunnel became the central issue of the election campaign . Moorhouse was a strong proponent of the project , whilst Brittan was opposed to it . Moorhouse received much support for his position from the residents of Lyttelton , as evidenced by the results of the election : of the 12 @,@ 000 residents of Canterbury , including 3 @,@ 205 in Christchurch and 1 @,@ 944 in Lyttelton , both candidates received 206 votes from the residents of Christchurch . However , overall results were a victory for Moorhouse by 727 votes to 352 . Moorhouse later began the project by turning the first sod on 17 July 1861 . Helping Moorhouse in his 30 October 1857 election victory was the support of John Ollivier , a skilled orator who was regarded as the ' kingmaker ' and had a reputation as ' perhaps the best after @-@ dinner speaker ' .

Following his January 1860 resignation from Parliament , Ollivier spearheaded a requisition , broadly supported by influential people , to have Brittan make himself available for the resulting by

@-@ election in the Christchurch Country electorate . Brittan declined the requisition , mostly because he was opposed to the rail tunnel scheme which had overwhelming support by the population , and he could not see himself being their representative if he disagreed with this popular public opinion . Isaac Thomas Cookson , who had earlier supported the Brittan requisition , was elected .

On 30 August 1861 , a nomination meeting was held for the election of a Canterbury Superintendent , and to fill the four positions on the Provincial Council available in the City of Christchurch electorate . Moorhouse was returned unopposed as Superintendent , and ten candidates were nominated for the Provincial Council . The election was held the next day , and Brittan topped the polls with 140 votes , followed by Isaac Thomas Cookson with 139 , Frederick Thompson with 114 , and Richard Westenra with 100 , these being the men who were elected . Isaac Luck , Edward Reece , George Wilmer , William Barnard , John Cracroft Wilson , and Richard Taylor were defeated .

Within months , Moorhouse prorogued the council , and another election was scheduled . Seven candidates were nominated for the four positions available in the City of Christchurch electorate . At the election in May 1862 , Brittan again topped the poll , with Isaac Thomas Cookson and Richard Westenra being re @-@ elected , and Samuel Bealey also being elected . In September of the same year , Brittan announced his resignation from the Provincial Council , citing declining health , but it is thought that the loss of his son earlier that year was also a factor . Brittan was succeeded by James Somerville Turnbull , who was elected unopposed . William Wilson , who later became the first Mayor of Christchurch , publicly thanked Brittan at Turnbull 's nomination meeting for the years of service that he had given .

In mid @-@ 1863 , Brittan was appointed resident magistrate for Christchurch and Kaiapoi , succeeding John Hall . Declining health made this position untenable for him , and he resigned after nine months , being succeeded by Charles Bowen .

= = = Family , death and legacy = = =

Brittan had four children who survived childhood , all with his first wife . The eldest son , Joe , appears to have been of a simple mind , was never tasked with important roles , and later lived as a recluse , being regarded as a burden to the family . His two younger brothers , Arthur and Frank , were sent to Christ 's College . Mary was likely first educated privately with her nieces at the home of her aunt . In 1854 , a private School for Young Ladies was opened on Oxford Terrace , which she attended until she was 16 . After the family moved to Linwood House in 1857 , Mary continued at that school as a boarder .

Tragedy struck on 1 January 1862 , when Arthur Brittan drowned in the Avon River while learning to swim . He got entangled in watercress , which the Brittans themselves had introduced to the Avon , and it took a half @-@ hour for his body to be recovered . Arthur had left school by then and was helping his father on the farm . Joseph Brittan was heartbroken and there are indications that he went through a period of depression . Soon after the drowning , he advertised for both a dairyman and a farmworker , and even put Linwood House up for sale , though no property transaction was recorded .

William Rolleston , at the time Provincial Secretary , proposed to Mary Brittan in early 1865 . He was 34 at the time , and she was 19 . Both Joseph and Sophia Brittan were opposed to this marriage , which is surprising , given that Rolleston was intelligent , well educated , successful , and even of higher social standing . They thought he was too old for their daughter , and that she was too young to marry . Perhaps Sophia Brittan did not want to lose her daughter , who was in effect running the household and entertaining guests , as she was often too ill to look after these tasks herself . Despite parental objections , an engagement was announced , soon after which Rolleston was offered and accepted the role of Under Secretary for Native Affairs , requiring a move to Wellington . Hence , the wedding went ahead on 24 May 1865 at Avonside Trinity Church , after which the newly @-@ weds moved to the capital .

Sophia Brittan was often ill , and health was a dominant issue in her life . Joseph Brittan also had

his problems , suffering from frequent headaches and gout , and together with financial trouble , he was often irritable and impatient . Joseph Brittan 's health declined during 1867 . Distressing for the family were the financial affairs , with various debts that only Joseph knew about . Rolleston tried to give financial advice to both Sophia and Frank Brittan , but he was ignored . Joseph Brittan died on 27 October 1867 at Linwood House . He was buried at Holy Trinity Avonside next to his son Arthur , and when Sophia Brittan died in August 1877 she was buried near her husband . Brittan 's oldest son Joseph died in 1924 , and an inscription for him was placed on his father 's grave stone .

Brittan 's daughter 's biographer ( Rosamund Rolleston , his great @-@ granddaughter ) described him as " a man of ability and a polished speaker [ his ] biting , sarcastic manner made him both feared and disliked " , and as " quarrelsome and uncompromising " . In his obituary , he was described " as a speaker [ who ] took very high rank , possessing a force and fluency of expression , a power of lucid statement , and a readiness in debate , which with one or two exceptions have never been equalled in the Council . " Brittan Street was named for him and first appeared in street directories in 1892 . Linwood House , which fronted onto both Linwood Avenue and Brittan Street , was registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust as a class D heritage building in 1982 , and with a change of the classification system later , it later became a Category II listing . Significantly damaged in both the September 2010 and the February 2011 earthquakes , Civil Defence ordered the building 's demolition in March 2011 , which was carried out later that year .