**Arthur and Richard Powys**

Might Arthur and Richard have gone broke on their New Zealand farm? I don't know but it is quite on the cards that they did. A good many younger sons came out to early Canterbury from the country houses and rectories of England. A good many got down to work and established successful families but a number of them who arrived with enough money but no business sense, and no desire to work, quickly lost their capital and either led a reduced life out here or went home again. The sudden silence from The Lyttelton Times after the steam plough was first used on Arthur's farm might suggest that, if not a complete white elephant, it was also not the roaring success that was hoped for after what must have been a large capital outlay by all involved in its importation.   
  
Arthur Littleton Powys was born at Thrapston, Northamptonshire 17 October 1842, the eldest son of the Re Atherton Legh Powis, rector of Titchmarsh, and his wife Charlotte Elizabeth.Two years later on the 19 September 1844 a second son Richard Atherton Norman Powys was born ( ?at Broseley ) and a third son Walter Norman Powys was born at Titchmarsh in 1849. Two daughters Evelyn and Alice completed the family.

Arthur and Richard both lived in Canterbury, New Zealand for several years. One of them, almost certainly Arthur arrived in Canterbury in the ship Matoaka 1 december 1860 at the age of eighteen. Richard must have arrived here straight from school within a year or two of his brother, and whatever else they did during their time in Canterbury, cricket was their abiding passion.  
  
In 1863 they both played for a Rangiora team against Christ's College. Arthur made top score 24 not out, and Richard took 5 wickets. They both played for Canterbury against the English XI in 1864. Arthur was on the committe of the newly formed United Canterbury Cricket Club in 1866. In a match United v Ashburton played at South Rakaia in October 1866 he made 36, a very good score for those days. Both he and Richard played for the Canterbury XI against Otago in February 1867. In December that year Arthur played for Leithfield against Kaiapoi and practically won the match for his side scoring 57 in two innings in a total for the match of 113. He captained Canterbury against Otago in February 1868 and soon after that when he left New Zealand the United Canterbury Cricket Club expressed regret at his loss. E.J.C.Stevens said that he was the first 1st class wicket keeper Canterbury had. It has to be said that cricket ran in the family. Arthur and Richard's younger brother Walter played at various times for Cambridge University, Hampshire, and the MCC while their uncle Arthur Crichton had a first class career with the MCC.  
  
Soon after his arrival in Canterbury Arthur went into partnership with Everard Jones and Thomas Octavius Hurt in a farm on the River Selwyn, this partnership being dissolved 24 October 1862. By 1866 Arthur was farming the land soon to be called Astrop, the locality in those early days being described as Waipara Flats or Weka Pass, there being no Hawarden or Waikari at that period.  
What tenure he held of this land is uncertain and it is not known when he first occupied the property. His claim to fame in local farming history was that his was the first farm in the province, and perhaps in New Zealand to use a steam ploughing plant, for the story of which we must focus on another young Northamptonshire man.  
  
William Aubrey Willes was born 25 April 1839 the second son of William and Sophia Willes of Astrop House, and a grandson of the Rev William Shippen Willes who inherited Astrop House and park from a Willes Cousin.   
William or Willie Willes as he seems to have been known, came out to Canterbury at the age of 22 in the ship Sebastopol in December 1861 and soon after his arrival went into partnership with Henry de Bourbel, calling themselves corn & flour merchants and general commission agents. de Bourbel who hailed from a noble French family had been a subaltern in a hussar regiment, fought in the Crimea, and had a penchant for speculation of all kinds. During the early 1860s they did a very good business. Willes lived at Ravenswood, Woodend until the early 1870s when he moved up country to Astrop.  
  
During the mid 1860s the Sefton Farmers' Club attempted to inprove on the primitive animal drawn plough and made inquiries about steam driven ploughs. They formed themselves into a company and William Willes set out for England in 1864 to research and purchase one of these for the company. He visited steam cultivated farms before purchasing a complete steam ploughing apparatus from the manufacturers, Howard & Co of Bedford who, in July 1866 sent the following information to The Lyttelton Times newspaper in Christchurch, NZ:

'By Messers Shaw Savill's next ship to New Zealand the David Brown, will be sent to Lyttelton for W.A.Willes Esq. a complete set of steam ploughing apparatus including a novel and powerful traction engine.....'.

In September 1866 a further report appeared in The Lyttelton Times: ' on the arrival of Mr Woofe per David Brown with machinery for the cultivation of our plains, we were in hope of seeing it first put in operation in the immediate neighbourhood, but we are sorry to find that the land of A.L.Powys Esq. the gentleman to whom it is consigned, is at a distance of some 50 miles and that the valuable traction engine will have to be taken to its destination in packages as imported, upon drays, the bridges upon the way being of too light a constrction to ensure its safe transit.....'.

Belcher & Fairweather undertook the transport from Christchurch, Mr Woofe the mechanic together with his son and a few farm labourers suucessfully assembled the parts and on the 3 September ' the massive and elegant machine moved majestically over the varying trackless hill and plain to the paddock marked out for commencing operations.' After this last report in The Lyttelton Times no more was heard of it, at least in the newspaper.  
  
The Powys brothers returned to England in 1868, Richard departing in the Bluejacket on the 18 January and Arthur in the Mermaid on the 24 April. Arthur later went to the Argentine where he became director of a European colony called the Alexandra Colony. On the 8 August 1875 at the age of 32 he was killed there by Indians.

His brother Richard became secretary of the Royal Veterinary College in Camden Town, London, a post he held until his death on the 10 July 1913.  
  
Whatever tenure Arthur Powys had in the 2000 acre property at Waipara Flats was transferred on his departure to William Willes who received a Crown Grant for the place in October 1868 and named it Astrop