

STODDART COTTAGE

TIMELINE 1819 - 2017



The Old Homestead, Diamond Harbour, New Zealand.

By Margaret Stoddart c.1913. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery/Te Puna Waiwhetu.

DIAMOND HARBOUR, NEW ZEALAND.



Interior of front bedroom (history room) on 17 April 2017 following earthquake repairs. Photo: Kirk Hargreaves

- 1819** Mark Pringle Stoddart, who built Stoddart Cottage, is born in Edinburgh, Scotland. His father was an admiral and his mother was a Sprot, an old Scottish farming family. Mark is the youngest of five children.
- 1835** Anna Barbara Schjott is born at Skein in Norway, the daughter of a clergyman. She later married Mark Stoddart.

JANUARY 1851 Stoddart (age 32) arrives in New Zealand at Lyttelton aboard the *Australis*, after several years farming in Australia. He first settles at Terrace Station near Rakaia Gorge, then at Glenmark in North Canterbury where he stayed at least until 1853.

- 1852** The 50 acre (20ha) headland now known as Stoddart Point is purchased by Stoddart, Rural Section 246. In the years following Stoddart incrementally added four nearby blocks of land until the farm was over 460 acres (186 ha) and included all the land along the cliffs as far as Pauaohipnekotau Head. Bayview Road now runs along the top boundary of what was once the Stoddart property.

- 23 DECEMBER 1853** Stoddart's cousin, Mark Sprot arrives at Lyttelton aboard the *Egmont*. Stoddart (age 34) and his cousin set to work planting walnut, wattle

and gum trees and putting in shelter belts. They grow what was possibly Canterbury's first crop of lucerne. Clover and wheat were also cultivated. Stock included sheep, cattle, pigs and fowl.

Fruit trees of many varieties, including apples, pears, peaches, apricots, cherries and figs are included in the new orchard. Gooseberry and blackcurrant bushes are planted, together with a large acreage of strawberries. Onions peas and potatoes are also grown.

Stoddart lives in "the upper house" probably with Mark Sprot. This was either a separate dwelling, long gone, or possibly the original rear section of the building we now call Stoddart Cottage (*visible in image on page 6*).

1856 A pre-fabricated cottage is recorded as arriving from Melbourne. Its walls were later filled with loess as insulation and the front section was roofed with Welsh slate.

APRIL 1857 The diary of Stoddart's friend Dr Matthew Morris records he is "shown the site of the home in a little hollow sheltered from the nor'west and the sou'west with a view of the bays and Lyttelton. The garden will be a splendid situation with a stream on one side and a pond at the bottom."

18 JULY 1857 Stoddart advertises in the Lyttelton Times that he has lost his deeds, his original land conveyances for R246 and two town Allotments 92 and 93, from the Canterbury Association. He offers a reward for their return.

27 MAY 1860 Stoddart sails for Sydney, returning to Lyttelton in December from Melbourne. He is recorded as bringing with him only one package and maybe two cases.

4 JANUARY 1861 Dr Morris visits and writes "Saw Stoddart at his Diamond Harbour home, which was much improved since my last visit...Had some splendid strawberries. Best I've had in New Zealand".

5 JANUARY 1861 An article about Canterbury in the Lyttelton Times describes "a mass of cultivation about Diamond Harbour...the beauty of the spot, with the neat house, pretty garden and green fields all about it...the great extent of operations...turning the whole foot of Mt Herbert into English pasture...the ornament that this place will become to Port Cooper [Lyttelton Harbour]".

Much of the water for the homestead, stock and cultivation is stored in dams and tanks installed by Stoddart, or comes directly from Morgan's Creek which flows down the gully to Diamond Harbour beach. Two of the dams can still be seen in the gully below Stoddart Cottage.

The Lyttelton Times.

VOL. XXXV.—NO. 1634.]

CHRISTCHURCH: MONDAY, MARCH 12, 1866.

[PUBLISHED DAILY: PRICE 3d.]

27 FEBRUARY 1862 Mark Stoddart (age 43) marries Anna Schjott (age 27), at Okains Bay where she had been living and working as a governess for the Rhodes family. With his best man Thomas Potts from Ohinetahi, Stoddart walks over the hills to Okains Bay for the wedding. The newly-weds come back to Diamond Harbour by boat.

28 FEBRUARY 1862 Stoddart's diary entry for the day after the wedding records "settled into the new cottage".

3 APRIL 1862 The Stoddarts' first child, Mark, is born.

26 JULY 1864 Mrs Mark Stoddart has a second child, a daughter, called Frances.

26 MAY 1865 Son Mark dies, age 2. "Poor Markie died at home" Stoddart writes in his diary.

- 3 OCTOBER 1865** Third child, daughter Margaret Olrog Stoddart is born at Stoddart Cottage. “No. 3 born, All well.” Stoddart writes. Margaret grew up to become a talented painter. Many of her works are held in public and private collections throughout New Zealand.
- 10 MARCH 1866** A tenant is sought for the Stoddart property advertised in the Lyttelton Times. (see page 4 for image)
- 17 APRIL 1866** The Stoddart family depart Lyttelton on the *Himalaya* to visit relatives in Scotland and Norway. Fourth child, James, was born while they were away.
- 14 NOVEMBER 1867** Stoddart family arrive back in Lyttelton on the *Glenmark* and return to live in their Diamond Harbour home.
- 27 JUNE 1868** Fifth child is born, a daughter called Mary (known as May).
- 10 DECEMBER 1869** Sixth child, Agnes, is born.

10 MARCH 1871



Mark and Anna Stoddart with three of their seven children taken by A C Barker at Diamond Harbour in 1871. Margaret sits on her Father's knee.
Source: A C Barker, Canterbury Museum Collection.

- 3 APRIL 1872** Seventh child, John, is born at Stoddart Cottage. The homestead at Diamond Harbour (known now as Stoddart Cottage) is a home noted for its hospitality.

The

SPLENDID BUILDING SITES. DIAMOND HARBOUR OPPOSITE LYTTELTON.

A PORTION of the PROPERTY of Diamond Harbour, opposite Lyttelton, will shortly be put in the Market in ALLOTMENTS to SUIT PURCHASERS.

The situation of this Land is unequalled in Canterbury, with respect to the bracing purity of the atmosphere, the beauty of the scenery, the facilities for laying out Gardens and Pleasure Grounds, and securing that drainage fall so necessary to the healthful occupation of any locality. It has moreover been ascertained, that a constant supply of water from the hills can be secured at an insomuch derable expense.

The Proprietor has marked out a site specially adapted for a first-class Hotel, and arrangements are pending for the establishment of regular communication by Steamer, to and from Lyttelton, which would reduce the time for the journey from Christchurch Station to about forty minutes. There is a good Landing Jetty, and the Property is situated very favourably for purposes of Amusement, such as Boating, Fishing, Shooting, Cricket, &c., and the portion of Land laid off in Allotments commands an unrivalled View of the Harbour, and Lyttelton Heads.

Visitors will be shown over the Property, which only requires to be seen to justify the description given above.

For further particulars apply to
MESSRS GARRICK AND COWLISHAW,
M. P. STODDART, Esq., on the premises;
Or, to
J. DRUMMOND MACPHERSON. 4087

Shipping Notices.
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NOTICE TO PASSENGERS.

THE sailing arrangements of the
safe and comfortable

PASSENGER SHIPS
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A photograph of Stoddart Cottage c.1897 and its setting showing remnants of orchard and market gardens. It was taken the year widowed Anna Stoddart returned to Diamond Harbour to live with her daughters in the big house, known later as Godley House.

Source: Canterbury Museum Collection

4 SEPTEMBER 1908 Mary (May) Stoddart marries farm manager Richard Farmer and moves into the old homestead Stoddart Cottage.

1909 Their daughter Francie is born at Stoddart Cottage but three days later her mother May dies. The baby girl lives at the cottage with her father who is extremely deaf as a result of an infection contracted while he was working on the Panama Canal.

6 JUNE 1911 Anna Stoddart (nee Schjott) dies at Diamond Harbour.

1913-1914 Stoddart Cottage, as part of the Stoddart estate, is purchased by Lyttelton Borough Council. The Council plans to establish a model garden suburb for workers from Lyttelton, connected by a ferry service.

Little Francie Farmer moves to Hackthorne Road to live with her aunts.

12 JANUARY 1914 Gazette Notice “11936 The Mayor, Councillors, and Burgesses of the Borough of Lyttelton. - 336 acres, Rural Sections 246, 498, 1333, and part of Rural Section 2404, Borough of Lyttelton. Occupied by applicant and E A Thier”

In the years which follow a succession of farm managers live in Stoddart Cottage, now owned by Lyttelton Borough Council, as the settlement develops. Diamond Harbour continues to be a popular picnic destination.

29 OCTOBER 1916



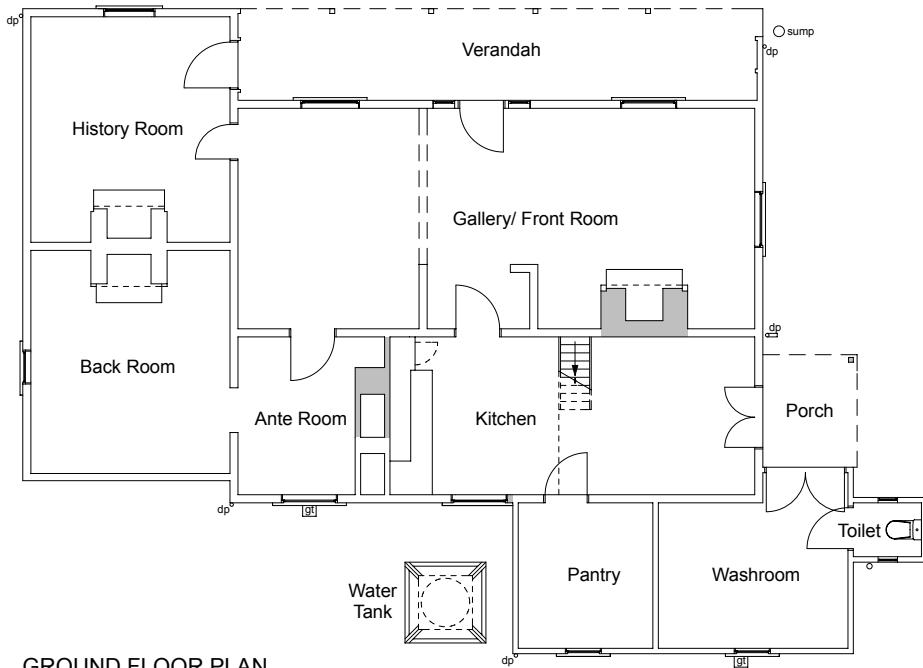
A group of young picnickers enjoy a day at Diamond Harbour in the spring of 1916. Stoddart Cottage can be seen in the background. Source: Collection of Diamond Harbour and Districts Historical Association.

1938-1952 The Buchanan family live at Stoddart Cottage. The garden is full of flowers and fruit trees.



Four members of the Buchanan Family on the porch of Stoddart Cottage. Source: Stoddart Cottage Trust.

- 1950's** Ted Lee, a Lyttelton Borough Council employee who worked around Diamond Harbour, lives at Stoddart Cottage.
- 1958-1961** Bartholemew Melvin (Sckenkel), a foreman with the sewer and water project, rents Stoddart Cottage for his daughter Melva Peagram and her husband George to live in. There are four children: Karl, George, Lynda and Marie.
- 1960's** Stoddart Cottage is occupied by Mr Chalmers, then Mr and Mrs Fearnley.
- FEB-JUL 1969** Stoddart Cottage is leased from the Lyttelton Borough Council and used as an overflow classroom for nearby Diamond Harbour School until the new school being built in Hunters Road is ready. Miss Donaldson teaches 19 pupils in the two front rooms, ranging from Primer 1 (new entrants) to Standard 1.
- 1977** Stoddart Cottage is rented to amateur theatrical group the Peninsula Merrymakers for rehearsals, meetings, play readings, and to store props and an extensive collection of costumes. Local builder Barry Bowater is employed to remove hall walls to make a bigger rehearsal space.
- Stoddart Cottage is used as a community facility by the Merrymakers and by a local arts and crafts group, but as the years pass, gradually falls into disrepair.
- JUNE 1986** Inaugural meeting of Friends of Stoddart Cottage. Led by Tony Lester a group of about 20 local stalwarts begin extensive restoration of Stoddart Cottage with support from Lyttelton Borough Council, Parkinson Trust and other public funders.
- Roof mended with slates from a demolished Lyttelton building.
 - An attic room is discovered.
 - Periodic detention workers assist with painting.
 - Project lasts ten years from 1988 to 1998.
- NOVEMBER 1991** Volunteers lift the floors. New piles, joists, floors and re-levelling are needed.
- 16 NOVEMBER 1998** Stoddart Cottage Trust is formed “to administer, maintain and develop the property known as Stoddart Cottage and the surrounding garden, and to provide other support and assistance consistent with this charitable purpose”. Certificate of Incorporation numbered CH/930856.
- 1999** Stoddart Cottage Trust and Banks Peninsula District Council enter into a lease agreement for the cottage and its grounds for the purpose of “housing and exhibition of historical artefacts and the development and promotion of the cottage as an historical site” for a term of 20 years, expiring in 2019. Rent is \$1 per year.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Floor plan of Stoddart Cottage from the Building Condition Report 2009.

DECEMBER 2004 A Conservation Plan for Stoddart Cottage is prepared by architect and conservator Ian Bowman. The statement of heritage values reads:

“Stoddart Cottage is nationally significant as a rare surviving pre-fabricated cottage of the early 1860s which is largely authentic in form and construction. The cottage is historically associated with the family of Mark Stoddart who first owned the land and constructed the cottage, especially his daughter renowned artist, Margaret whose paintings of the cottage and the area are among her best recognised. The cottage is a good example of a Victorian Georgian double gable box cottage.”

2007-2010 Stoddart Cottage becomes popular for Annie Baxter’s Victorian teas, served in full period costume on Sundays, in conjunction with a programme of exhibitions by local artists.

OCTOBER 2009 A Building Condition Report is produced by Fulton Ross Team Architecture. It includes coloured photos of many aspects of the cottage interior and exterior, a floor plan and maintenance schedule.



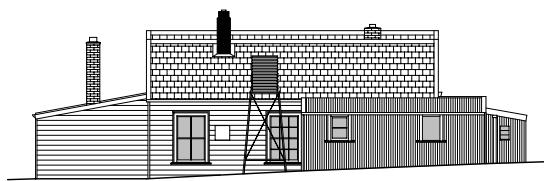
NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

22 FEBRUARY 2011 Earthquake and aftershocks significantly damage Stoddart Cottage.

Brick chimneys fall. Red stone fireplace collapses.

Building closed to public (“red-stickered”).

JULY 2015 Cottage re-opens following interim “make-safe” repairs.

MARCH 2016 Cottage closes. Work starts on full repairs including rebuilding stone and brick fireplaces and lightweight chimneys.

17 APRIL 2017 Cottage formally re-opens, fully repaired.



Top photo: Stoddart Cottage with garden in full bloom on 21 November 2008. Photo: Colin McLeod.

Want to know more?

Adderley to Bradley, A history of the Southern Bays of Lyttelton Harbour
compiled by Mary Stapylton-Smith. 1993. Friends of the Diamond Harbour Library.

Produced by Stoddart Cottage Trust, July 2017.

www.diamondharbour.info