Inconsistent coherence in post-quake
Christchurch, New Zealand

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Abstract

Many city layouts are born out nineteenth century Victorian formality: axial roads, planned open spaces, with the overarching visual coherence that would shape the character of its inhabitants. This paper uses as a case study: Christchurch, New Zealand, which has in the past had the reputation of being the ‘Garden City’ of New Zealand. Christchurch was hit by a series of large earthquakes occurring from September 2010 to February 2011, (the latter claiming the lives of 185 people). Subsequently many buildings, (including houses), were condemned and demolished by the Christchurch City Council (CCC). This resulted in many people closing their business’s and families being forced out of their homes and leaving the shattered city. However some local people consider the time was ripe for a new type of city to be established, a more humane and sustainable one. This paper unpacks some of the duelling forces at play shaping the ‘rebuild,’ on the one hand the CCC, with its powerbase ‘of behind closed door decisions’ that is pushing for a ‘framing’ of the city that seemingly harks back to its Victorian roots. Against which there is a tide of individuals and small groups that are exploring new directions, via various interventions and new businesses that speak of how the ‘common person’ could live in this Urbanity. These events have been fast moving and the case studies are explored and researched via formal central news agency type statements and informal decentralised social media responses. A natural tragedy has provoked a temporal informality in contrast to the formal coherent past and this paper will attempt to explore these ramifications.

Keywords: Christchurch 2010-11 earthquakes; Top-down governance; Grass-root movements; Local Community power; Urban Recycling; Sustainability

Background

When most people think of New Zealand: rugged mountains and turquoise glacial rivers of the South Island seem to come to mind. New Zealand is small country in the South Pacific, which in 2014 had a population of only 4.5 million people. At that time, it was rated the third most prosperous nation to live in. (This prosperity index rating supposedly combines economy,

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entrepreneurship and opportunity, governance, health, safety and security, personal freedom and social capital to generate these ratings). Christchurch is a provincial city in the South Island, before 2010 it was New Zealand’s second largest city, and had a reputation of being the ‘Garden City’ of NZ.

Then, out of the blue Christchurch was hit by a series of large earthquakes occurring from September 2010 to February 2011, (the latter claiming the lives of 185 people).

Figure 1. Plan of early Christchurch drawn by J. Cartman in 1850
Source: J.P. Morrison (1948, Plate II)

Figure 1. above, is the 1850 plan of early Christchurch. Looking at this plan, and without knowing the topography of this proposed new site, the reader might assume that the landscape was flat, and in fact you would be right. Much of the central city was built over an existing swamp, which was part of the Canterbury Plains, upon which the City fathers deemed more suitable for a city than the original port town of nearby Lyttelton. A set of volcanic hills (known as the Port Hills), separated the natural harbour from the alluvial plains that stretched from the meandering Avon River westwards to the Southern Alps, (approximately 90km to the West). In all events it took some 30 years to establish a drainage system and water-supply before many parts of the new city were to be attractive to the settlers, the town was for many years “recognized as one of the most unhealthy in New Zealand.”

The Southern Alps also discharge their ‘winter melt’ via large fan ‘Gravel Rivers, the closest of which is the Waimakariri River. The gravel of such fan type rivers “formed the sub-structure of the plain.” It was like ‘establishing a city on a bed of marbles,’ (something that was not discovered until the quakes of 2010-11). The link between port and Christchurch city was formalized with construction of the Lyttelton Rail Tunnel in 1867 (and later the digging of the Lyttelton Road Tunnel, completed in 1964). The early rail tunnel allowed agricultural produce (mainly wool, meat, and dairy products) from the Canterbury Plains to be exported direct to colonial ‘Mother England’ via ship. New Zealand was considered the food basket of the United Kingdom up until the 1960’s.

From this 1850 city plan it is immediately clear to the viewer of the formal nature of the urban design stemming from its Victorian parentage. As Morrison notes: “[t]he disadvantages of Christchurch as a town were in the main the defects of its virtues. The mathematically planned

streets of the inner city were of a sameness that confused the newcomer." Only the slow moving Avon River snaking from West to East, (from left to right in the above drawing), adds some relief to the grid of the city blocks and this river soon added to the character of the city which developed in the mould of a small Cambridge, England (with its River Cam).

Introduction

As historian Michael King intones about New Zealand attitudes, values and habits which include "a willingness to have a go at any kind of job opportunity that presented itself;... a concern for the underdog; compassion for those in need or in trouble; an unwillingness to be bullied, or to be intimidated by class or status." That said, we Kiwis live in a democracy, we vote freely for our local members of Parliament which form the Government of the day; and we also vote in our Council members to serve us locally. Yet, within the NZ triennial local body voting system, for years: 2004, 2007, and 2013, the Christchurch City October elections attracted just 38.77% to 42.78% of Cantabrians to come out and vote for their council representatives. A spike did come in the October 2010 election, (just one month after the initial earthquake), where 52.15% of the residents voted. This paper suggests that 'leadership was sought at a time of tragedy,' and the subsequent slump back in 2013 voting numbers seem to reflect a certain return to a cynical 'same as, same as' regimen. New Zealand has (like other democracies), these overarching bodies of governance, which in essence carry on the bureaucratic running of the country towns and cities in a relatively smooth manner. However extraordinary events can focus upon the performance of large scale bureaucratic departments, and today with widespread and easily accessible social media the common person can make their opinion widely heard. Democracy also brings individual freedom within each person's lives allowing the eligibility to attend school, find work, to make a living to support themselves and their families.

In Christchurch the earthquake of 22 February 2011, (a 6.3 scale quake, which claimed the lives of 185 people), many office buildings and apartments in the Central Business District (CBD), and houses out in the suburbs were 'red stickered,' basically condemned by the Christchurch City Council, (CCC). Many businesses and families were forced out of their buildings and homes and subsequently such land / property owners decided to leave the region. However many residents decided to remain seeing this as a possible 'new start' and have set about new and sometimes challenging businesses, often borne out of necessity and practicality, yet at the same time rethinking about how they might now like to live within this new 'timespace.'

This paper is written just five years after the traumatic Canterbury earthquakes, and although it explores via 'close reading' various blogs, newspaper articles, and websites; the writing therein although written with great lucidity is often emotive due to the unexpectedness and scale of the calamity. In addition, within the 12 month period of the aftershocks, the stress of not knowing when these might or might not happen, left many people sleep deprived and 'frazzled,' and this often spilled out into their writings. The city 'rebuild' may take 25 – 45 years, and therefore none of us know how this willfully play out. This paper is a mere 'snapshot in time,' and is limited in regard to any long term outcomes in relation to cities, people and places.

Discussion centred around some of the Initiatives by the ‘common people’

"Project Lyttelton set up New Zealand’s first Time Bank in 2005.\(^{69}\) (Lyttelton is now an outlying suburb to the south-west of Christchurch city, but remains the city’s port). In the immediate aftermath of the February 2011 quakes the ‘sense of community’ and peoples willingness to reach out and help each other and care can be highlighted by Lyttelton’s efforts via ‘Time Banking.’ Rakowski claims that one of the definitions of ‘urban informality’ that most scholars agree on is: “the [associated] activities...share at least two characteristics. They tend to be **small scale** and their workers usually are **not protected** by [labour] law.” \(^{70}\) Time Banking “originated in the USA in the 1980’s from the work of Edgar S. Cahn. Since then it has spread worldwide...No matter what type of work is done, one hour always equals one time credit. 1 = 1. Every person is equally valued.” \(^{71}\) That the Lyttelton Time Bank (LTB) had been set up prior to the quakes enabled them to have an online data base of its hundreds of members and their skill sets on offer to trade. In the time leading up to the quakes, “some 30,000 trades[were transacted...from which] evolved a stronger social network...built through these trades.” \(^{72}\)

During the actual crisis of Christchurch earthquakes of 2010-11, the LTB was able to mobilize its local resources thereby freeing up trained emergency workers to assist on projects that needed greater skill, for example:

“...The volunteer fire brigade, ambulance and Health Centre asked the [LTB] to start coordinating volunteers...Teams of people helped take down dangerous chimneys, called up older people in the community to check if all was OK, and provided a drop in centre for people to simply touch base with other humans.” \(^{73}\)

This hub of communal knowledge and skill base, with its proven ‘trial under fire’ experiences can now help prepare future civil disaster organizations is an example that “bottom-up, grassroots organizing often provides a more effective and nuanced response than is provided by top-down bureaucratic processes that offer a one size fits all approach.” \(^{74}\)

Another small scale response to the hurried demolition of buildings within Christchurch (with the resulting ‘spoil’ being trucked off to outlying landfill sites), was Rekindle (a company set up by Juliet Arnott in 2012). Her company was specifically set up to re-use the native timbers that made up a prominent part of Christchurch (and typically New Zealand’s ‘timber balloon frame, timber clad homes’), within Rekindle’s range of manufactured timber furniture products. Rather

\(^{69}\)Project Lyttelton Inc., (2011) The Lyttelton Time Bank played an vital part in the local response to the recent New Zealand quakes, Lyttelton: [link](http://www.lyttelton.net.nz/timebank)


\(^{73}\)Project Lyttelton Inc., (2011) The Lyttelton Time Bank played a vital part in the local response to the recent New Zealand quakes, Lyttelton: [link](http://www.lyttelton.net.nz/timebank)


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than such demolition timbers ending up crushed as landfill, Rekindle engaged with 'salvage' and 'recycling,' as its *modus operandi*, with obvious environmental and economic benefits to the community. Such native timbers are now no longer available on the market and therefore irreplaceable. Rekindle go further to claim that there is significant cultural benefit: “each home also contains a story of social history - time encapsulated in layers of paint and wallpaper...memories big and small.” The retention of such patinations and colours of the original house timbers that are now exposed and given a new life within Rekindle’s chairs and tables and is just one example of possible adding new nuances of meaning and continuance related to these specific ‘dwellers and their place.’

![Image of Rekindle's product](image_url)

**Fig. 2.** Burwood Resource Recovery Park and *Rekindle*’s chairs amidst the mountain of timber landfill
Sources: David Hallett and *Rekindle*’s website

As a result of the wholesale building demolitions across the city and especially within the CBD, many properties ended up as empty sites. *Life in Vacant Spaces* (LIVS), is an independent Trust set up in June 2012. It acts as an organization working with other community volunteer groups such as: Gap Filler, FESTA, and Greening the Rubble. LIVS strives to manage privately owned property for landowners that have had their buildings demolished and seeks out short and medium-term uses for the countless vacant sites within the central city zone. “[Their] mission is to cut through red tape and unlock permissions, making vacant space available to creative Christchurch and enabling hundreds of temporary activations.” One of the groups under this LIVS’s umbrella is *Agropolis Urban Farm*, which is similar to the 1990’s ‘sustainable urban agriculture’ movements such as the *Organopónicos* of Havana, Cuba, (set up to grow food in urban Havana due to the trade embargos put in place by the USA).

![Image of Agropolis Urban Farm](image_url)

**Fig. 3.** Images of Agropolis Urban Farm
Source: Agropolis Facebook page

“This a scalable transitional urban farm within Christchurch’s inner city. It involves composting organic waste from inner city hospitality businesses as well as the ground preparation, sowing and planting, harvesting, cooking and

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distribution of the produce...[They intend to expand the enterprise] into an urban food hub including creating a mobile kitchen that can be used for 'garden to plate' experiences and educational opportunities with the community, schools and beyond.\textsuperscript{77}

Is this at twist on the city’s previous reputation, a ‘new Garden City’ of New Zealand?” Can local communities make temporary yet legal use of vacant urban ground that can enrich and educate urban children of where their foodstuffs come from?

\textbf{FESTA (Festival of Transitional Architecture)} is another new volunteer group which sprang up following the disaster to investigate this new temporal realm within Christchurch, (initially on an annual basis over ‘Labour Weekend’). This group of local people claim that: “Christchurch has an unparalleled opportunity to be a global epicentre for creative urban renewal through transitional and experimental architecture, art and performance.”\textsuperscript{78} FESTA go on to say:

“Large and small transitional projects have already provided a way of creatively and immediately reoccupying and regenerating the central city. They give us a chance to experiment, meet pressing needs and they inform our long-term decisions. FESTA desires to harness the community’s craving to be involved in creating their city. This festival will be an on-going and unique event that learns from and informs the exciting transitional city.”\textsuperscript{79}

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\caption{Images of LuxCity 2012 for FESTA}
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\textbf{Sources:} Unitec student groups: Silhouette Carnival, Altitude, and Archrobots respectively

The author was just one of Architectural Tutors that helped six of the groups of Architectural students from Unitec, Auckland to realize their built projects on now ‘one might create a city from light for one night’ (the event was held on the evening of 27 October 2012). The six Unitec installations were part of the total 16 designed and fabricated by over 350 architecture and design students from across New Zealand.

The built installations used light and light weight materials (such as rope, grapevine mesh, modern nylon stretch knit fabrics, upvc conduit and so forth), to create various and varied temporary spaces for one evening. The spaces catered for activities such as bars, cafes, live music and performance venues. This form of ‘real life’ learning encountered by the second year B.Arch. students was contrary to other modes of tertiary learning, where students often design projects in ‘silo type’ isolation away from real sites, real clients, distant from money related issues and seldom involved 1:1 scale fabrication. For this FESTA event the students not only did

\textsuperscript{78} FESTA, (2012) Festival of Transitional Architecture, Christchurch: http://festa.org.nz/about/
the traditional production of design drawings, models, through various iterations; they also had
to present to 'real clients,' (the owners of the above bars and cafes). The students had to adapt
and modify their original designs to accommodate their clients. They also had to produce
websites and presentations suitable for pitching to potential commercial sponsors and /or
donators of product to help with the realization of their projects. In addition, the students had
to come up with ways of generating funding, (cake sales, raffles, art auctions and so forth), to
comply with the Brief that had stipulated a 'zero budget.' Although it seemed daunting to most
students to approach a business and ask for a 'hand-out' or borrow some equipment, almost all
of the students reported back that commercial CEO's wanted to help Christchurch, wanted to do
something, but did not know how to do so in a meaningful way.

The 2012 event was FESTA's first such 'happening,' with an expectation of 2000 people attending
the 'one off' night time event. On the actual evening, in actual fact, over 20,000 people
attended, (FESTA claim 30,000). It turned out, that this was the first time that many Cantabrians
had returned to the CBD since that disastrous 22 February 2011 day, (some 20 months earlier).
It was an emotional outpouring of awe and warmth for a few hours by the Christchurch city's
inhabitants, many of whom were still living in broken homes and still without functioning toilets.
"A time to forget, even if it was for just a few hours,"80 as a fellow Tutor relayed to the author of
what his Christchurch resident sister had told him. This paper asks: is this a form of forgetting
not only for the individual but for the city? By engaging with something new, rising phoenix like
from a particular tainted site, for a very short period of time (4 hours), is this a way of creating
some small joy for a collective audience? Perhaps Paul Ricoeur might agree, with his deep
meditations about forgetting as a way of humane negotiation between memory and history? 81

Discussion centred around some of the Initiatives by various 'Authorities'

Also following aftermath of these earthquakes there are various 'top down' bureaucratic
organizations also working on re-build type projects within the city of Christchurch in contrast to
'bottom up' type community driven ones as exampled above. These projects have been driven
from the Government level (e.g. CERA: Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority) as well as
from the local Christchurch City Council (CCC). And although Government and the CCC may not
have been thoroughly primed to deal with such wide scale devastation, the seeming lack of
consideration for the affected local communities has left many residents in a state of frustration
and disbelief.

One such example is whether or not to rebuild the city's Anglican Cathedral 'ChristChurch
Cathedral,' (which lost its stone and copper spire and much of the stone nave during the
quake). Seemingly, the Anglican Church itself doesn't want to pay for its own Cathedral's
repair; it has 'moved on' and commissioned the so called 'Cardboard Cathedral' (designed by
Japanese Architect Shigeru Ban). This 'transitional cathedral' has been built, (it opened in August
2013), on the site of another church, the former 'St John's on Latimer Square.' The original St
John's church was demolished after being badly damaged in the Canterbury earthquakes. The
new "cathedral had a budget of NZ$5.3million, and the final costs have been reported to be 5.9
million New Zealand dollars, [which is, approximately LKR 522million]." 82 Some NZ$4.0

80Keldereman, M. (2012) What is the use of having an event like LuxCity 2012 in earthquake ravaged
Christchurch CBD? Auckland: Private conversation with Author
82Dennis, A. (2013) Budget shortfall for Christchurch's tubular cardboard cathedral, Sydney: The Sydney
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million[LKR355 million] of construction costs were largely paid for the insurance monies from the damaged, (but currently still standing) 'ChristChurch Cathedral,' this fact, a High Court Judge has 'deemed may be illegal.' In addition, controversy raged about a maintenance fund (NZ$240,000.00 per year, [LKR 21 million]) that the Anglican diocese used to get from the Christchurch City Council, (this is city rate payers' money), which was applied for again in 2012 to help towards the budget shortfall of NZ$1.9 million, [LKR 168 million] the city councillors turned the request down.  

![Fig. 5. Cardboard Cathedral: Images of the cardboard tubes during construction and installed](Sources: seismic.org.nz and time.com respectively)

Other political and symbolic decisions made by CERA and the Anglican Church dient revolved around the use of cardboard tubes as a 'structure,' for a 'temporary building.' There are a few inconsistencies that confirm that such decisions have been in a large part a 'public relations exercise.' For instance, under the New Zealand Building Code for such a building to get a Building Consent the design would have to be able to stand up for 50 years. Is that really temporary? And, the 'cardboard tubes,' it turns out are not structural at all, as was explained when some of the tubes got wet and started to wrinkle:

"Naylor Love Construction director Scott Watson said...[t]he cardboard columns were cosmetic only, with the building load carried by timber beams concealed inside the tubes."  

This paper contends that the NZ Building Code says nothing about the use of 'cardboard as a structure,' and that our NZ Structural Engineers probably would not be able to produce a 'Specific Design' for such 'cardboard columns' that would satisfy our Building Code. And thus it probably was always going to a timber structure (that would comply with the Code), and the cardboard tubes merely camouflage the timber structure.

The costs as outlined above, do seem an awful lot of money to build a monument to a ever diminishing number of believers, which as at least one local inhabitant notes "attendances at the old cathedral before the earthquakes ruined it were as low as 70 for a Sunday service, and of

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those about one third were [visiting tourists]. This author agrees with many, that the 'ChristChurch Cathedral' was an iconic symbol for the locals via its 'spire rising up off the Canterbury plains' but this paper also questions: are such monuments really required for our society in this social media driven society? Recent visits by the author to this 'cardboard Cathedral' reveal that the project seems to be largely a money gathering exercise with buckets for donations displayed prominently inside the entry, is that how places of worship normally conduct themselves?

![Image](image)

**Fig. 6.** New Zealand's first public solar-charge table

*Source: The Christchurch Press*

In an attempt to show that the Christchurch City Council was regaining some semblance of control and that it 'had its finger on the pulse' it installed a 'solar table' (19 May 2014). The Council claimed to have "launched the country's first free public solar-charge table, allowing users to plug in their smartphones or tablets to charge while hanging out in the food-court at [the] Re:Start Mall." The 'for and against' online feedback to such an initiative is currently approximately equal. But the intensity of the naysayer's responses outweighs the votes of support. One such example, (by a respondent named "Kuzak") is:

"What a waste of rate payers money. The CCC yet again wastes money on PR rather than fixing things that are broken. So you have to stand and wait with your phone while it gets charge, what a waste of time. Car phone charger, desk charger and back up batteries are cheap - it should be users responsibility to charge their phone not the ratepayer...Maybe the [thousands of dollars] spent could have been spent on things that impact people (and their cars) like the holes in the roads on the East side of town. Nice how the west side get new footpaths and roads touched up again, while the east still waits." 

Who decides to spend the rate payers' money in these projects? When the 'man-in-the-street' type projects may not find favour with the Council and don't get financial backing, in fact such non-action often seems draw the communities even closer together and Kiwi's work out ways of how to 'get on and just do it.'

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As further evidence of the CCC not performing for its citizens, even as recently as September 2014, there remain many people are still without working toilets years after the quakes, for example in the suburb of Waltham “a cottage has not had a working sewer since the February 2011 earthquake. [The occupant] used a chemical toilet for more than two years but when the Christchurch City Council removed kerbside dumping stations [Port-a-Loos] last year, [the occupant] resorted to using a bucket.”

Christchurch City Council has had much criticism from within the local community. And to make things worse in July 2013 the CCC was stripped of its accreditation to issue Building Consents by International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ). These consents are building permits that allow people permission to carry out intended building works. So, just 17 months after the fatal earthquake, and with the city’s residents reeling from insurance company non-pay outs and the CCC continuing to charge rates on properties that had been deemed not inhabitable. People wanting to get on with their lives by carrying out building works to fix up their damaged buildings so business’s could restart or houses could be made habitable again, found themselves with Council relieved of one of its key duties. As a result Building Consents were then farmed out to other city councils around the country, and CCC merely acting as a ‘postman.’ But to be fair, no one saw these tragic events coming, (there was a joke doing the rounds that: the earthquake fault line under the River Avon had been forgotten about for 25,000 years!). Largely the people who worked for the council were caught off guard and found wanting, few had experienced first hand such an event. Little wonder then that Christchurch locals felt further let down by its elected local body. (It was not until December 2014 that its Building Consent issuing status was reinstated).

Fig. 7. Proposed East and South Frame to Christchurch, showing key project locations, 2012.
Source: Image is part of the information pack of ‘breathe,’ the architectural competition for a new urban village, held in 2012 (CCC).

Figure 7. shows an aerial view of the Christchurch City Council’s, Christchurch Earthquake Recovery Authority’s, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu’s and the New Zealand Government’s proposed strategy of ‘framing’ the earthquake shattered CBD with the ‘East and South Frames.’ In fact 89

these same framing devices can be seen in figure 1. above, where the original Christchurch city grid is they are bounded by the ‘east and south town belts.’ So it would seem in fact that the current ‘powers that be’ (predominantly the government and CERA), and are intending some sort of ‘back to the future’ type strategy including the retention of the CBD on its current site, yet the gravel of the fan type rivers that form the sub-structure of the CBD are still there below. Will this ‘grand formal gesture’ of ‘coherently framing’ the CBD make everything right and worthwhile? In addition these ‘frames’ are currently privately owned valuable inner city land that will be somehow compulsorily purchased and merely grassed over!

And still the saga continues to unravel, CERA is currently moving ahead with various ‘anchor projects’ within this grand framed scheme, giving little or no detail to the public, despite the fact it involves taxpayer’s money. One such is the new Convention Centre, which as recently as 29 July 2015 made the national headlines with the news that “NZ$77 million [approximately LKR 681million] has already been spent or is about to be spent for land [and consultant fees]...all this on a project that still has no finalised budget or start date for construction.” 92 Whether this and other just ‘grand formal gestures’ will come to fruition on the old CBD ‘bed of marbles,’ only time will tell.

Will the decentralising way in which we now live with social media and the internet actually require us to live in a ‘framed coherent’ city like our Victorian founders? Or can we engage in a multi-layered and vibrant urbanity which fosters different activities that engage in (rather than merely paying lip service to), local community power, recycling, sustainability, together with a lightness of touch upon the planet that make for an inconsistently coherence by providing more variety, more choices for people and thus a more humane place in which to dwell?

Conclusion

Along with most New Zealander’s suspicion of large organizations, (they tolerate them at best), Kiwis also like to the ‘champion the underdog,’ this paper would like to suggest that the ‘top down’ actions of the Christchurch City Council and CERA are at seemingly at odds with the intimate and community specific activities that have sprung up around this city since the tragedy. Although such interventions are small and often temporary in they speak volumes of how they their new city ‘could be.’ And yet the ‘powers that be’ continue to not listen to the communities which voted them in in the first place. The coherence of the city is inconsistent at best, each side adhering to themselves with perhaps the only distractions that bind the cities for a few moments such as when they come out and support with long held pride the local Canterbury Rugby side or as shown above:the unique FESTA events.

Whether the duel is equal or not, the top-down driven powers seem to be ploughing on ahead with often grandiose schemes amid political shenanigans, only time (and no doubt money), will tell how such schemes will evolve or devolve but meanwhile the average person carries on ‘living like an ant.’ But for now it seems (and the author is reluctant to say it), but ‘history repeats.’ The city of Christchurch at its time of inception went for a period of 32 years to drain the swamps in a sanitary way upon which large areas of the city were built upon:

“Municipal liberty for a while was given precedence before considerations of health. While the City Council disputed with this County or Borough Council and that Road or Town Board as to who was in fact responsible for an offensive

drain, those in the neighbourhood of the drain protested and petitioned the
authorities in vain. Throughout the records of City Council and Board of Health
meetings there are minutes of resident’s complaints, warnings to offending
citizens, and Sanitary Committee reports recommending this and that measure
to improve the state of health in the district.”

The current residents of the suburb of Bexley (many of whom are still without functioning toilets
in their houses), could ‘fast forward’ 135 years and those same comments could still apply
between themselves and the local and national authorities.

As Bailey Peryman says, “[s]o much has been committed on our behalf, without our permission
and without any kind of consensus, stuff that’s going to have a huge impact on the shape of our
city,[He also adds]That the problems we’re facing have their roots before the earthquakes...I
think the whole recovery thing is a misnomer. We need to throw the idea of recovery out the
door and go back to the transitioning to something better.”

The above paper is really just a series of snapshots in and around the Canterbury region,
highlighting some its people and signposting the city of Christchurch as a place of community
that has been tested. Trial by nature and also tested by humanity, marking this place as unique.
Portraits taken just over the period of September 2010 to September 2015, and if nothing else is
has been learnt, it is simply that Cantabrians are adaptable when put under such stress, they are
survivors with a have strong community spirit and they will continue to have stories to share
from their lived experiences for generations to come.

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