

## Submission on Titiroa Locks Gates

I farm as a lease on Environment land. 444 hectares between the Mataura River and Titiroa Stream. Almost all of our drains drain into the Titiroa Stream.

When I came here 40 years ago it was a run-down farm which was very wet with a lot of rushes and gorse. I have drained the farm with novaflow which has made it a viable proposition. Before the locks were put in it was uneconomic to drain land because it stayed wet all the time. I am not sure why there are objectives to consent renewal as there are hundreds of eels in the Titiroa and Waimahaka Streams.

For the las 40 years there have always been commercial eelers catching eels in the creeks and streams, except for the last 2years as there is no market for them now. They always caught trout too but let them go.

Something I have noticed this year, while there were not many whitebait caught on the Titiroa last season, since then, every month there have been very good runs, even in the ditches. Our neighbours have seen and commented on this also.

January through to September, these are all good breeding times and as for the fish there are plenty of trout being caught in the Titiroa and Waimahaka Streams.

Depending on how much local rain there has been the gates are open for more than half the day.

The first locks were put in in 1918 and were seen to be very effective at protecting the land. They were damaged after a big flood about the late 1960's. The new locks are a part of the Mataura River scheme and were partly paid for by tax payers and rate payers and you just can't remove them There are also three private farms that would be badly affected – K Morton, P Golden and A Holms

All of our ditches and creeks have been fenced off and adult whitebait live in these creeks all year round.

Thirty years ago I fenced off a lot of ground on the Titiroa and Mataura (below the bridge) for habitat and this has been very effective. This was done for Environment Southland and this year a lot of the low land has been retired by Environment Southland on the Titiroa and Mataura.

The whole environment of the Mataura River and Titiroa Stream is modified, rightly or wrongly.

I would like to be notified of objectors submissions before court and why they are objecting. I would also like to be heard at the court hearing.

I have included some photos that I took on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023, and a little bit of history of the old locks from "A History of Fortrose" by Joan MacIntosh.

Yours faithfully



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if flood  
gates wernt  
There all  
this ground  
on left  
would be  
flooded  
aswell





Big Tide  
1st August  
2023

Titirua Stream  
on night

Taken just  
over Titirua  
Bridge.





bridge

Flooded ground with tide 1st August 2023  
before bridge on right





Big tide  
1st August  
2023

Water gaining  
over locks



out the sections to be affected by the Titiroa drainage scheme and a rating struck for classes of land, a, b, and c, affected by the scheme.

The owners of land receiving most immediate and direct benefit were charged 3/5½ pence per acre.

Those likely to receive lesser benefit were rated 1/4d per acre, and class C, those likely to receive only an indirect benefit were charged 6½d. per acre. This rating was to continue for the period of the £2500 loan raised and was expected to last 36 years or until the loan was fully paid off. It did not affect many Fortrose farmers, but those further up country.

In 1920 the Southland County Council erected a bridge over the Titiroa stream which replaced the one built by local people and washed away in earlier floods. This wooden bridge was just above the Lock gates where the old ford had been. It remained in use, an awkward approach from the East side, until the new high concrete one was completed on May 2, 1967. The Mataura River was bridged in 1927-28 by the Southland County Council.

At present, the Southland Catchment Board have an estimated outline plan for the whole of the Mataura Catchment area set at seven million dollars. The Lower Mataura area will be affected by the stop banking and clearing of willows far inland, for it will send flood waters down more rapidly etc. and to try to compensate the few farmers who would be affected by this proposal, the Catchment Board offered to buy these farms at present day value. The farmers sold, and the farms are now leased on the understanding that this leased land is not protected from flood.

The right bank of the Mataura is to be stopbanked to throw the force of the floods to spread over the lower areas between the Mataura and Titiroa. The new 1967 bridge over the Titiroa was designed to fit in with the total flood protection scheme. In the future, it is planned to rebuild lock gates to the side where they are now and leave the natural river channel. A recent flood breached the old lock and it has not yet been mended.

#### THE SALEYARDS

The first cattle yards in Fortrose which were occasionally used for public auctions were built and owned by Bruntons. They were situated about where Jim Stirling's home was. These early yards were known locally as "The Public Pound" and probably straying stock were driven in to be claimed.

Very little is really known of them, but some early reports in 1879 tell of a sale of stock and effects from the Estate of Mr S. R. Dickson (3000 acres of the Sinclair Run) which Mr W. G. Rich had bought for £5 an acre. The day was fine and attendance of buyers very good. Keen competition was encountered and after the sheep were sold, the sundries

## A History of Fortrose

Joan MacIntosh

When a local committee formed to organise the 100th celebrations of the Fortrose school approached Joan MacIntosh to write a Centennial book for them, they had no idea how much history was connected with this southern region.

When given the official go-ahead in February 1974, the author unfolded a fascinating account of the settlement from 1834 to the present day. Because people are such a vital part of any district history, Joan MacIntosh undertook the time consuming task of researching the families of Fortrose, and an extensive and absorbing section is included here.

The book is well illustrated with old photographs of people, places and events, including colour plates. With authentic anecdote reliving the details of development, of societies, of local boards and general affairs, the story of Fortrose becomes and intensely interesting book for all readers.

COVER: A vivid water colour painting (1890) of the "Rocklands" home steading, Fortrose, home of Major Wm. Brunton and family, then George J. Fox and family.

Aerial view of Fortrose showing entrance to harbour.  
Whites Aviation Photo.



to and fro with considerable violence for five minutes, but no damage was done.

It was the flooding that occurred with uncontrollable ferocity that caused the damage and loss to the community. In the 1880's there came one of the first to be experienced which later became called, "the old Man flood." Heavy rain up country swelled the Maitara and the waters kept rising as they were joined by the tributary rivers, then heavy local rain had the same effect on all creeks and little rivers that poured into the Lower Maitara and the Titiroa which also received the waters of the Waimahaka stream. Mostly stock was lost and pasture land rendered useless for some time.

In August 1891 there was a report that a terrible gale blew on Sunday accompanied by a fall of snow and the snow continued to fall until Tuesday. The mail coach to Wyndham experienced great difficulty getting through the six inch depth of snow. Flooding was prevalent then too, and to mark the roadway, the surfacemen had put long poles along the submerged roads so that drivers could keep to the crown and travel with reasonable safety.

The most dramatic flood was the 1913 one. There were more settlers at this time of course and more stock and farmlands. The flood came up very quickly without warning. On the Western side of the Maitara river lived the Lobb family. They had just made a deal for selling 90 head of cattle for £15 a head and the animals were standing marooned on the banks. A boat load of people evacuating because of the flooding (the Stevens) were talking aloud as they rowed down the river, and the cattle rushed towards them and went into the current and were carried out to sea where most were drowned. There was another large bullock which came swimming down the Titiroa and landed at Chisholms place . . . after the flood subsided, it found its own way back home!

Some Davis family members, lived up the Maitara River and when the 1913 flood was at its height old Charlie decided he'd better go and fetch the marooned ones. He rowed a skiff across the Titiroa River and pulled it along a ditch line to the Maitara River where he got John Chisholm's boat. He found his brother and sister sitting on the kitchen table with the household pig. He loaded them into the boat (I'm not sure about the pig) and rowed all the way out to the estuary and pulled the boat up on the shore. Just as he did so, the whole of the back fell out of the old boat. As mentioned before, the Davis's were expert boatmen and this extraordinary rowing feat by Charlie was but one example of the skill they displayed.

The sawmill along the Titiroa, Robinson's, suffered the most from the floods. Tramlines washed out in long sections, timber floated away and anything moveable in the mill was swirled away. Whole haystacks

and sheds floated into the estuary and out to sea, one haystack having a solitary hen standing atop!

Four years or so later, another disastrous flood covered the lower Maitara farmlands. At this time, the Lock was being built across the Titiroa river to control tidal peak water backing up, and a group of workmen were in the hut by the high bank (it's still there today). They were having "an evening" when one chap went outside and stepped into water up to his knees. He came back in with the comment, "It's raining like hell out there . . . might be another flood."

Everyone laughed, there'd never be another flood like the 1913 one, so the talk and drinking carried on. Another man stepped outside and went up to his armpits in water. Evacuation was desperate . . . they climbed up on to the roof and by holding to tree branches they swung up the bank and to the safety of the higher ground in the darkness. There was another flood, almost as bad as the 1913. Again, much stock was lost and the sawmill suffered again.

In the daylight hours some of the farmers stood upon the higher parts surrounded by acres and acres of water flooded pastures and a theory was fostered that by making two canal cuts through the two unflooded areas between the Titiroa and Maitara rivers, the flood waters could be directed straight through to the estuary and so prevent further disaster such as they surveyed. Unfortunately, they did not realize that the fall they'd achieve with an undertaking like this would be less than eight feet, and with two tides a day, little would be gained.

Flooding is a most frustrating experience for those affected and even in the 1970s a local plan was made to blast through the "Narrows" and let the flood waters out to the open sea with explosives. But the same problem was soon apparent, the rate of fall would be so minute against tide and the enormous bank up of water.

Minor flooding often occurred after heavy rain, but not to the extent of the big floods mentioned here. Another big one happened in 1937 when a vast area was under water for several days and the Seaward Bush Branch Line railway train did not travel until the line was checked. Fortrose area was virtually cut off at peak floods like these, but people are always versatile and survive the small deprivations like a daily paper, mail, bread etc.

The Catchment Board for this river area was established in 1946 and earlier anything that was done to alleviate the flooding and drainage was attended to by the Public Works or the Southland County Council.

The Titiroa Cut Off Drain which goes through Graham Simpson's was made in 1915 and the Public Works Department designed and built the Lock on the Titiroa in 1918. Mr Hislop had the contract for the building of the Lock and a lot of men were employed on this project. In January, 1917 a resolution passed at the Southland County Council set