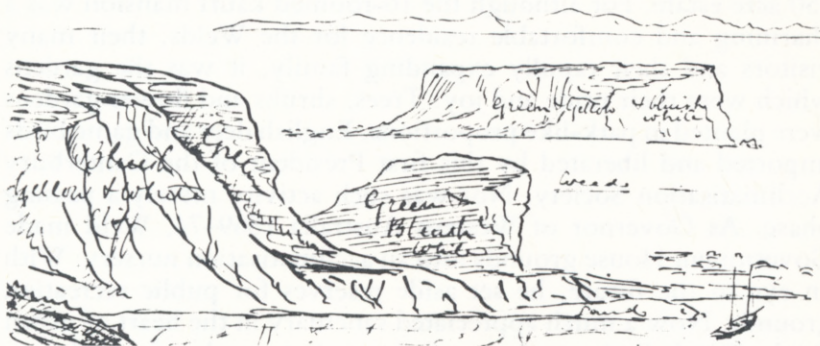




Motunau to Banks Peninsula [1850] *working sketch from Journal 28 November—16 December 1850; Trip to Canterbury of HMS Acheron . . . National Archives, Weld Papers, Box IV No. 3 (reproduced by permission)*

commissioned by the Nelson Provincial Government, probably at the instigation of Weld's friend and fellow exploration enthusiast, Superintendent Edward Stafford. It took Weld less than a week to find a short and reasonably level connection between Tophouse at the head of the Wairau Valley and the Acheron track to Canterbury. This route to Christchurch by way of the Wairau and Tarndale reduced travelling time between Nelson and the southern settlement to a comfortable six days. Not all of Weld's explorations were quite as successful. A mistake concerning the Guide and Dillon rivers in 1850 led to the loss of some 730 sheep when Charles Clifford's younger brother, Alfonso, endeavoured to overland stock from Flaxbourne to Stonyhurst with the aid of Weld's directions. The sheep were abandoned within what was only a few miles of the new station but they were never retrieved. Charles was left to bemoan the stupidity of all those involved—and the inaccuracy of his partner's maps. The 1855 expedition redeemed Weld's reputation. In the process of that exploration he also discovered and named Lake Tennyson after his favourite poet. Weld's journals of his various explorations, especially those of 1850, are now in National Archives.⁴ They are full of pen and pencil sketches, some of which were later realised as finished water-colours: 'Pass, Upper Wairau', 'Head of Valley, Upper Wairau', 'Clarence River', all in the Scrope/Weld collection. The sketches give a useful insight into Weld's most common method of painting. Working sketches drawn en route would contain detailed information concerning colours and particular features of the