

to move quite extensively and regularly around parts of the colony. The paintings relating to Queen Charlotte Sound (1858) and Pelorus Sound (1861) were probably done as a consequence of a visit on a government brig or the steamer service, though Weld regularly sailed between Cloudy Bay and Port Nicholson in the firm's own ketch. Missing from the Scrope/Weld collection is an indication of the frequency with which Weld visited Christchurch and Lyttelton in the 1850s. The Weld collection in the Canterbury Museum contains twelve paintings of Lyttelton and of Ilam farm, Riccarton Bush. The number reflects Weld's friendships with Canterbury Association settlers, of whom Charles Christopher Bowen was probably the closest. Apart from the artistic merits of the collections therefore, they form a most valuable adjunct to written records as a tool for the biographer.

Many younger sons found improved circumstances by emigrating to the colonies but Weld's success story is still a fairly remarkable one. Reared in a large and closely knit Catholic family in Dorsetshire, he was educated at the Catholic schools of Hodder and Stonyhurst before attending the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. Weld's decision to come to New Zealand was the consequence of limited alternatives. He could not afford a life in the army and he did not wish to seek employment beyond the shadow of the British flag. He decided to follow the example of cousins who had already emigrated under New Zealand Company auspices. Relatives were a little sceptical but their doubts concerning his suitability for colonial life were to prove unfounded.

Weld quickly demonstrated that he had the successful colonist's capacity and readiness to adapt. Within weeks of his arrival in the colony, he had volunteered to assist his cousins, Charles Clifford and William Vavasour, with the establishment of a sheep station in the Wairarapa. That he knew nothing of sheep husbandry did not deter him. That ignorance he had in common with those financing the venture. The beginnings of Wharekaka, a 30,000 acre station near present-day Martinborough, were inauspicious. Food supplies were short, living quarters primitive, the mosquitoes damnable. The sheep were in a pitiful condition after their voyage across the Tasman and the whole enterprise in imminent danger of collapse during its first six months. Only the timely employment of Tom Caverhill, a Cheviot shepherd with New South Wales experience, ensured Wharekaka's survival. It also paved the way for Weld's instruction as a sheep farmer. The one painting extant from this phase of Weld's career is in a private collection. It depicts the 30 × 12 feet bark and reed whare built by the local Ngati Kahungunu Maoris for the squatters. The thatched roof looks secure; the Ruamahanga is well within its banks. Journal entries tell a different