



John [James] Benn Bradshaigh Bradshaw was born about 1832 in Barton Blount, in Derbyshire, the son of a clergyman. Oh his early years, little is known, but he arrived on the Victorian goldfields in 1855. As a miner he enjoyed considerable success, especially at Eaglehawk and New Bendigo. By April 1863, Bradshaw was in Queenstown, working as a metallurgist and assayer for the Union Bank of Australia and as editor of the *Lake Wakatip Mail* – and it was through its columns that he dealt with some of the issues he would pursue through his political career. By early 1866 Bradshaw had established himself in Dunedin as a mining agent, metallurgist, and mining company promoter and in that year was elected to Parliament as the member for Goldfields Towns. After a brief spell on the Thames goldfield, Bradshaw returned to Dunedin and set up as a sharebroker, while gaining election to the Otago Provincial Council. From 1871 to 1875, as the MP for Waikaia, Bradshaw vigorously pursued the matter of labour law reform – arguing that the struggle between labour and capital was ‘an unequal contest’ – and insisting that the employment of women, children, and young persons necessitated both trade unions and regulation of the labour market. His efforts resulted in the *Employment of Females Act, 1873* – otherwise known as Bradshaw’s Act – which regulated the hours and working conditions of women employed in factories. The passage of that measure led ‘young women employed in Dunedin’ to present a testimonial to Bradshaw expressing ‘their most sincere and grateful thanks for your exertions happily crowned with success to secure for us and all similarly situated ... a diminution of the hours of work.’ Bradshaw continued to press for labour market reform and for the creation of a trades and labour council. He was described as ‘a capital horseman, a good shot, an expert swordsman, and a general athlete’ – and was keenly interested in cricket as both player and umpire – and in fact in 1864 played two matches for Otago against the first English cricket eleven to visit New Zealand.

He died on 3 September 1886 and is buried in Dunedin’s Northern Cemetery.