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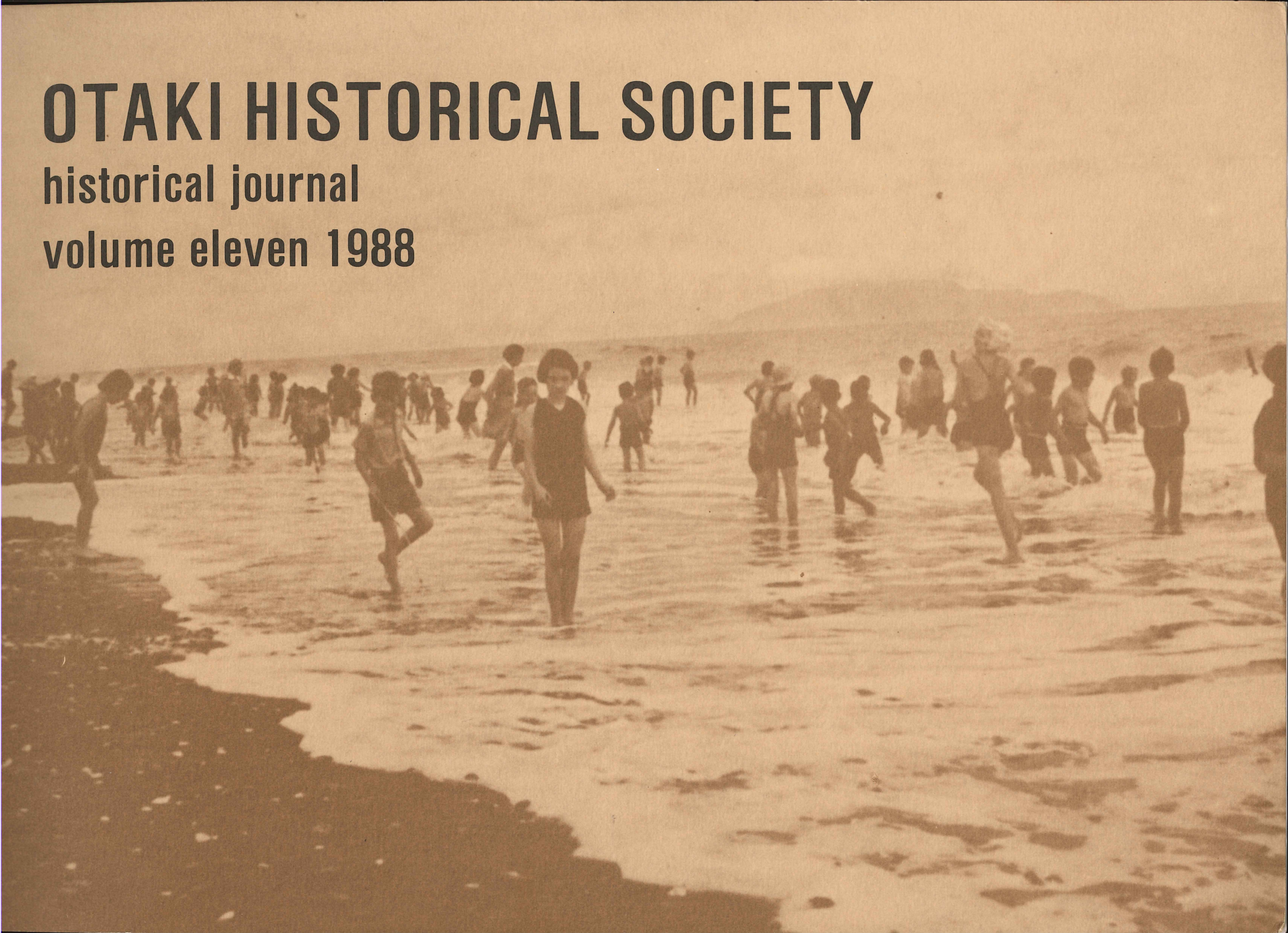

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Cover photograph:
Children from the Otaki Health Camp enjoying a wade in the surf — Otaki Beach 1932.
Courtesy Alexander Turnbull Library.

EDITORIAL

INTO THE SECOND DECADE

LOCAL history has a fragile quality. It remains on paper, in photographs and in people's memories — all of which are doomed, sooner or later, to become dust.

Local history is a progression of everyday events, where what happened today seems very much like what happened the day before.

One has to look at the chronological listing of events in and around Otaki in 1987 to realise just how much has, in fact, occurred. But little remains as a record. A collection of independent, fragile moments.

National history, on the other hand, probably suffers from a surfeit. The media make sure such things as the pros and cons of purchasing four frigates, cabinet wrangles and Middlemore Hospital are all thrashed to death in thousands upon thousands of preserved words. Bureaucratic empires ensure that future historians have more facts than they can shake a stick at.

A tribute must be paid to local historians — to both those who chronicle events as they happen or retain tangible reminders and to those who, decades later, set themselves the task of blowing away the dust and reconstructing the pattern of times past. For a local historian it can become something in the nature of an archaeological jigsaw puzzle.

The process can be time consuming. Few would have any idea of the hundreds of voluntary hours that have gone into the volume you have before you. Thus — when people unthinkingly complain about lateness — bear with us if we clench our teeth and breathe heavily. Perhaps you may be inspired to think about a contribution of your own.

Our editorial team remains at four — four because one member has had, due to pressures of work, to resign and four because we have been joined by another who brings fresh ideas and skills to the team.

Thank you Jeanette for your years of assistance, enjoyed and appreciated, and welcome to Margaret — joining us to plan, gather and publish more of the rich vein of history that lies under the Horowhenua.

To Barbara I would say thanks for the use of your dining room table for six months of the year, your articles and your ever ready hospitality. To Ray, thanks for the ideas willingly shared.

We all take great pleasure in presenting you with Volume 11 of the Journal of the Otaki Historical Society. Our sincere thanks to the contributors who made Volume 11 possible.

Ross Macpherson
Barbara Swabey
Margaret Long
Ray Lawson

OTAKI HISTORICAL SOCIETY (INC.)

HISTORICAL JOURNAL VOLUME 11

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