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CONTENTS

	Page
EDITORIAL	1
SCOUTING IN THE HOROWHENUA — by Len Moss	2
THE WAIKANAE HACK RACING CLUB — by Mary Mountier	8
LETTERS FROM REIKORANGI — Selected by Richard Woodd	16
AN EARLY NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLMASTER — by Doug Olson	20
IDENTITY RECOVERED	25
A POST OFFICE JUNIOR IN OTAKI — by Bob Whetren	26
CASUALTIES OF HISTORY — Waikanae's Lost Buildings — by Joan Maclean	30
DAN WILKINSON AND INIA TE WIATA — a fragment preserved by Len Moss	37
TE HORO ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO	38
THE SORROW AND THE PRIDE — The War Memorials Of The Horowhenua — by Chris Maclean	41
THE HISTORY OF LAKE PAPAITONGA — by F.C. Swanwick	46
ELIZABETH COLENSO (NEE FAIRBURN) — by Barbara Swabey	50
EXCITEMENT AT OHAU — Maori Weapons Located — Reprinted from Otaki Mail, 31 May 1920	60
OLD PHOTOS GIVEN NEW LIFE	62
RANGIATEA CHURCH RENOVATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS — compiled by Barbara Swabey and Hemi Nikora	66
THE CRAFT OF THE WHEELWRIGHT — by Ken Wilson	71
OTAKI 1989 — compiled by Anne Murphy	75
THEN ..... AND NOW — by Ross Macpherson and Barbara Swabey	80
JOHN ROCHFORT — Adventurous Surveyor — by RML	84
THIRTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 1990	87
MEMBERSHIP LIST — 1990	89
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	91

EDITORIAL

ONCE AGAIN people of the area have come up with sufficient material to complete the 13th journal of the Otaki Historical Society. My thanks to all contributors.

History is a constant recovery as well as a constant reinterpretation of information. Certain recoveries are illustrated in this journal from the dramatic find of patu paraua at Kuku to the identity recovery of two more members of the Hautere Defence Rifle Club of 1952. An unusual war memorial at Te Horo has been told of, but a sleuth from the committee has to do more work to authenticate this, I hope for 1991.

One of the new developments among historians has been the exploration of the lives of ordinary people. It is marvellous to have the early work experiences of Bob Whetren recreating an Otaki of the thirties that will be familiar to many readers and which may stir up further memories. Add to this the recollections of a child in Te Horo of the 1890s, of a young man and his brother battling for a living in Reikorangi during the depression of the thirties and of the scouts of Otaki shifting from one set of impermanent premises to another and camping on sites later washed away by floods — and the past lives again.

In some of the stories Otaki touched the players lightly or for a short time only. John Rochfort passed admiringly through, William Browne was fortunate enough to marry Erena, daughter of Otaki's 'own' whaler, William Jenkins, and Elizabeth Colenso lived out the final years of a sterling life at Forest Lakes. Descendants of both Erena and Elizabeth live in Otaki and are on the Historical Society Committee.

Sometimes what appears to be a set course in history changes. Two references in this journal to the imminent demolition of the Otaki Beach Pavilion, true when they were written, happily are no longer so. The pavilion has been saved by the efforts of Otaki citizens and a little more of Otaki's history will stand. There has been much written in past journals about Otaki taonga, Rangiatea Church; there is something in this journal and this will, I am sure, not be the last.

Although Barbara Swabey and Ross Macpherson are no longer officially on the journal committee, they gave me, unstintingly, the help I needed as the first-time editor. Fran Young typed and typed and when she thought it was over typed some more. After that she proofread.

Dear readers, I invite you to see yourselves not only as readers, but as writers too, for the 1991 journal, uncovering for us lost remnants, endlessly fascinating, of ordinary lives.

Margaret Long
16 November 1990