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Editorial

THIS YEAR a number of anniversaries have been marked in Otaki – 50 years for the Otaki District Commercial Gardeners' Society, 75 years for the Otaki Voluntary Fire Brigade and 100 years for Te Horo School. These are recorded in the Journal.

On the national scene New Zealand celebrates 100 years of women's suffrage. Thanks to some funding and several hundred hours of voluntary work, Otaki women have held events which are also noted in the Journal. Much to the pleasure of the Society, Barbara Swabey was awarded a suffrage centennial medal.

Because it is 1993, more articles than usual focus on women. We see women tramping and climbing, golfing, racing and training horses, breaking in land and making land deals and forging a career in the post office. Many women are featured in their conventional roles as wife, mother, helpmeet, gardener, community provider, church activist and negotiator and peacemaker. The two latter roles may be in a family setting as in the case of Maria Atkinson, or for her iwi as in the situation of Te Pikinga.

There are women who broke with tradition because it stood in the way of what they wanted to do, for instance Bella Button. Some consciously set out to achieve social change while they also carried out traditional duties. These included Jessie Williamson, Margaret Bullock and Emma Ostler.

New Zealand is only beginning to recover women's history. Perhaps we should all read Bronwyn Labrum, reviewed in this Journal, and dig into our female past. Was the Annie Knox who, almost inadvertently, was the first woman to make the Southern Crossing the same as the Annie Knox on the 1893 electoral roll?

This year the Society applied for and received two subsidies of $2000 each towards the cost of producing this Journal. We record our thanks and appreciation to the Heritage Fund of the New Zealand Lottery Board and to the Kapiti Coast District Council. This subsidy has allowed us to keep the price at $20 and has brought happiness to our auditor who felt we were too near the the financial edge.

The Committee has pleasure in bringing you the 16th issue of the Otaki Historical Journal.

Margaret Long
Editor