



Paddlewheels

Journal for The Whanganui Riverboat Restoration & Navigation Trust Inc. Winter 2009

P/S Waimarie completed her ninth summer season since returning to service after restoration on April 30. Winter timetable began on May 2. During the following weeks staff took holidays and work began on scraping, painting and general refurbishment of the vessel before the winter weather made such tasks all but impossible. At this time we received the news from Jamie Shedden that P/S Waimarie had been featured on the front & back covers and in a 5 page article inside the Paddle Steamer preservation Society of Great Britain's magazine, Paddlewheels summer issue. This was wonderful news as it gave us world wide recognition and exposure. The article written by Daniel Eichenberger who visited and traveled on P/S Waimarie in March 2009 is excellent and has some encouraging things to say about P/S Waimarie's contribution to Wanganui's tourism efforts.

A computer and Cash register have been sponsored by Cohen's Business Centre and these items are a big help in keeping the administration and operation of ticket sales up to a high standard. When Cohen's installed the replacement computer they commented that our old one was in such a poor condition that we would have been very lucky if it lasted another week. A big thank you to Cohen's for their support.

When the late Mark Campbell, one of the projects original founders and former chairman passed away he bequeathed a number of items from his collection of river memorabilia to the trust. One of these was a large Maori figure carved many years ago by Austin

Brassel for Wanganui River Jet Tours. This carving used to stand at the base of the flagpole at Jet Tours headquarters on Anzac Parade. After the flood of 1990 the flagpole and carving were removed. It was restored by Martin Emerson, given the name of Koa and is now helping to hold up the ridge pole at the Riverboat Centre Museum. This erection of this Pou was blessed by John Maihi and at the blessing former Chairman Jens Bukholt spoke of Austin Brassels contribution to reviving carving in our district.

We have had a full audit carried out by MNZ and the vessel and our systems passed this inspection successfully. P/S Waimarie also appeared on Scottish TV in a programme about travel in New Zealand.

In June crew member Steve Monk attended Navigation School at Walkworth and successfully completed studies and passed his examination for Inshore Launch Masters Certificate. Congratulations to Steve and a big thank you to Solid Energy for Sponsorship towards the costs involved.

In August P/S Waimarie was withdrawn from service for the main survey and boiler survey. The boiler was dismantled, inspected and overhauled and the floats on the paddles were serviced and the pins and bushes were replaced. Throughout the vessel numerous other maintenance tasks were carried out including completion of the painting and varnishing programme as we were so lucky with weather this year. The main parts of the survey were completed by Thursday 3rd September.



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Then steam trials, river trials and an audit were carried out by our SGS inspector. On Saturday the 5th of September P/S Waimarie returned to service as planned. A big thank you to Taylor Engineering, Steves Steam & Machinery, Tate Engineering, Emmetts Civil Construction, McDonald Equipment, Edmonds Industrial Coatings, Altex Paints, Walker & Thomas Electrical, staff and volunteers and everyone who helped get our survey completed. We now look forward to a busy spring and summer, with some first class weather to help entice people to want to cruise on the Whanganui River aboard New Zealand's Last Paddle Steamer.



Museum News

Jack Turner who has been involved in fishing here at Wanganui for many years has kindly donated his marine and river related collection to our Museum. This is an important and gratefully received contribution to our Museum collection.

Obituary

River enthusiast lives to see dreams fulfilled.

In 1986, noted Whanganui River historian Arthur Bates wrote an article for the Wanganui Chronicle headlined "Tangahoe the cry of their hearts".

It was an interview with Howard Davey, who died recently at the age of 90. Howard was associated with the Whanganui River for many years and in many ways. He could be classed as a pioneer by the course his life took. Born in 1919, Howard lived at Cherry Orchard Farm owned by his parents Albert and Coral-Amelia. The was originally the famous cheery orchard behind the mission church at Jerusalem, planted out in the 1880's by Mother Mary Aubert and her nuns. Howard studied with the correspondence school and worked long hard hours on the farm from an early age. This would have prepared him for his future life and would be why people always recalled him as a small but nuggety energetic person with a craggy face. He could recall the famous river historian T.W. Downes and his motorised waka Tangahoe. He helped him plant out an orchard at his hut – now known as the Downes Hutt near Atene. Eventually Howard decided to go out on his own and took over the lease of the 2300-acre Tangahoe Station, which had been abandoned for eight years, a few kilometres downstream and on the opposite bank from the Mangapurua Landing. It was dawn to dusk work bringing the farm back to production level, scrub cutting, fencing, track making and controlling pests. In 1941, Howard was called up for war service. Prior to leaving for overseas he called on a young girl living at Parinui named Kath Plummridge, who had caught his eye, he asked her to marry him when he returned. Return he did and married Kath, setting up a wonderfully happy partnership of 57 years. Howard and Kath were friends with many upriver personalities of the time, including Fred Bettjeman, the last farmer in



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Mangapurua (Bridge To Nowhere) Valley, Frank Shist, who built the mystery hut at Mangawhaiti and Andy Anderson, the famous riverboat captain. All the hard work paid off and eventually the stocking rate of Tangahoe reached 2000 sheep and 100 cattle but it was always hard with scrub and pest control demanding a great deal of time and energy. Getting cattle over the river and out to Raetihi for the stock sales was a major exercise. Howard and Kath always believed the Whanganui River had the potential to again become one of the country's leading tourist attractions, as it had been in the first quarter of the 1900's. They had been asked by Ron Hatrick if they were interested in taking over Pipiriki House and his company Wanganui River Services, but it was financially beyond them at that stage. However when Andy Anderson was drowned in the river in 1958 and River Services was wound up, they bought two of the Riverboats, Waireka and Otunui as the river was the only access to their farm, which was over two hours upstream from Pipiriki. As well as servicing the farm they ran tourist trips upriver from Pipiriki. In 1960 they brought Waireka down to Wanganui to run trips to Hipango Park. This was the restart of river tourism in the lower reaches of the river. With a growing family and worry about their children's education the Davey's purchased a farm in the Manganui a te Ao Valley so their children could attend the Makakahi School. After working together on many enterprises, Howard and Kath eventually retired to a farm near Mercer, strangely enough not far from the Waikato River where the hull of another famous part of Whanganui River history lies – Paddle Steamer Manuwai. In line with changing times,

eldest son runs Tangahoe Station, he lives in Taupo and in a few minutes flight he can be on the property. Tourists in their thousands, both canoeists and jet boaters, enjoy the beauties of the Whanganui River, fulfilling the dreams Howard and Kath had all those years ago.

Howard is survived by Kath, 7 Children, 12 Grandchildren and 10 Great Grandchildren. Howard Davey has left this life and his beloved Tangahoe, but his wairua (spirit) will surely be looking down on it forever.

This article was written by John Gray of the Whanganui Riverboat Centre Museum.

From the Museum

Bledisloe

Well the rugby season is over and the Bledisloe Cup is where it should be. Lord Bledisloe (pronounced Bleslow) or actually Viscount Lord Charles Bathurst Bledisloe, was Governor General of New Zealand 1930 to 1935 and his experience as a farmer made him a popular choice for the job. His donation of a cup for rugby supremacy between Australia and New Zealand is perhaps what he is best remembered for. He was a remarkably generous and likable man, and his finest gesture was to purchase the Treaty House at Waitangi for the nation in 1934. The Treaty House was of course the venue for the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 – February 6th.

What's all this to do with riverboats you say!

Well in 1933 Lord Bledisloe, his wife and entourage did a 'meet the people' trip down the Whanganui River. It started on the 11th January when they travelled



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from the Chateau to the Houseboat which was then moored in the Retaruke Stream close to the confluence with the Whanganui River. After lunch the party hosted by Ronald Hatrick boarded Wairua for the trip down to Pipiriki. There they were welcomed by Captain and Mrs. White managers of Pipiriki House. Eunice their daughter presented Lady Bledisloe with a bouquet. Eunice who lives in Auckland remembers the day well. The local Maori community also gave the visitors a fine welcome with Wivi Akihona reading an address to which the Governor made a suitable reply. Next day the party visited Raetihi where the mayoral welcome was interrupted by a group of unemployed men singing the Red Flag. The slump and its devastating effects were being felt in 1933, there were over 150 impromptu singers voicing their protest. After a visit to Ohakune the party returned to Pipiriki for the night where they were entertained with poi dances and a Haka performed by the Maori Community. Next morning as the Maori group sang the beautiful Haere Haere Ra the Wakapai captained by Willie Robertson swung out into the current made for the first stop of the day at Jerusalem where they met the Sisters of Mercy and local inhabitants. Again the vice regals were farewelled in song as Wakapai headed downstream and rounded the bend in the river, it was very poignant scene as the voices faded away. Next stop was Ranana where the Governor paid a quick visit to the Morikau Maori Farm then off downstream for stops at Karatia and Koroniti. Approaching Parakino, Wakapai was met by a waka crewed by 14 warriors which escorted them to Parakino where flags of welcome were flown, including the

historic Moutoa Flag made by the women of Wanganui to commemorate the battle at Moutao Island. The Governor and party left the boat at Parakino to motor down to Wanganui and spend the night at Fosters Hotel. The Governor was very busy all the way down the river recording the scenery as he was a keen photographer. He and his wife impressed the Valley's citizens with their friendliness and their sincere interest in their music, work and activities. And young Eunice White received a signed photograph from the Governor himself, showing the citizens of Pipiriki waving him farewell as Wakapai pulled away from the wharf at Pipiriki.

She still has that photo to this day.

AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Whanganui Riverboat Restoration & Navigation Trust will be held on Wednesday the 2nd of December at 7pm at the Whanganui Riverboat Centre. Members are reminded that nominations for two Members Trustees are required. Nomination forms are available from the office at the Riverboat Centre. Nomination close on the 30th of November.

Merchandise

We now have Greenstone and Bone Carving in stock.

The Bridge to Nowhere

By Arthur P. Bates

Has now been reprinted and is available at the Riverboat Centre

Price: \$29.95