3 February 1931
The day that changed
Hawke’s Bay forever

The 1931 Hawke’s Bay
Earthquake
80th Anniversary
In a major disaster such as a flood, earthquake, tsunami, storm or volcanic eruption, help may not reach everyone as quickly as needed.

**You could be on your own for 3 days or more.**

**Plan ahead for what you will need if:**
- There’s no power or water supply for 3 days or more
- You can’t leave home or get to the shops
- You have to leave home in a hurry

**EMERGENCY SURVIVAL ITEMS**

- **WATER** - 3 litres per person per day non-perishable and canned food
- **EMERGENCY TOILET, FIRST AID KIT, TORCH, RADIO AND BATTERIES**
- **GETAWAY KIT IF YOU HAVE TO LEAVE IN A HURRY**
- **...AND DON’T FORGET COOKING EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES FOR BABIES AND PETS AND ESSENTIAL MEDICATIONS!**

**You should have:**
- A Household Emergency Plan
- Emergency Survival Items
- A Getaway Kit if you need to be evacuated

visit [www.getthru.govt.nz](http://www.getthru.govt.nz)
or contact your nearest council

Napier City Council Ph: 06 835 7579
Hastings District Council Ph: 06 878 0500

CHB District Council Ph: 06 857 8060
Wairoa District Council Ph: 06 838 7309

[www.hbemergency.govt.nz](http://www.hbemergency.govt.nz)
I never understood how man could dare
To watch a city shaken to the ground,
To feel the tremors, hear the tragic sound
Of houses twisting, crashing, everywhere
And not be conquered by a sick despair.
Although his buildings crumble to a mound
Of worthless ruins, man has always found
The urge to build a stronger city there.
Within my soul I made my towers high.
They lie in ruins, yet I have begun
To build again, now planning to restore
What life has shaken to the earth: and I
In faith shall build my towers towards the sun
A stronger city than was there before.

This poignant poem by Gertrude Ryder Bennett is displayed on a plaque behind the nameplate of the Veronica Bell at the Colonnade in Napier.

In 1931 Mission Estate was rocked by the Napier earthquake.

In the true spirit of The Bay, we rebuilt and continue to craft award-winning wine to this day. Visit our cellar door to take a historical tour including photos from the 1931 earthquake and taste our extensive range of wines!

The birthplace of New Zealand wine... since 1851

www.missionestate.co.nz
The day of destruction

"Medical assistance required - fear considerable loss of life"

Hawke’s Bay had known disaster. There had been floods, and a great fire in 1886 had destroyed much of Napier’s business area. But nothing was as shattering and total as the devastation caused by two mighty shakes, just seconds apart, at 10.47am on Tuesday, February 3, 1931. The province was paralysed and 258 people perished in New Zealand’s greatest natural disaster.

Rail and road links to the outside were severed, telephone and electricity supplies cut, Napier’s inner harbour port crippled, and buildings demolished from Wairoa in the north to Waipukurau in the south.

For Napier, still worse was to come. Within minutes of the first earthquake - magnitude 7.8 on the Richter scale - fires started in the main business areas in Emerson Street and Ahuriri. By the time they finally spluttered out, 10 acres of Napier’s central business District had been gutted. Over the next two months 674 aftershocks were a constant reminder of the trauma of those first hours.

The earthquake and fires caused damage assessed in 1931 values at $9.7 million. In the currency of 2011 it would have been about $896 million. Napier bore the brunt of the earthquake, and 162 of its people perished, but Waipukurau, Hastings, Waipawa and Wairoa were also hit hard.

In just a few seconds 900 chimneys came crashing down in Waipukurau, the post office clock tower was wrecked and the brick frontages of many businesses collapsed.

Fireman, Hastings Street, Napier.

In Wairoa the huge upheaval saw shop fronts give way and wooden buildings close to the waterfront collapse, while the town’s traffic bridge across the river was destroyed. Three people lost their lives in the Wairoa area.

In Hastings, a large portion of Heretaunga Street was laid to waste as buildings collapsed, and more than 90 people died. Those who emerged unscathed were stunned and shattered by the experience. Few escaped the loss of a family member, relatives or friends.

The tumble of masonry which caused the first casualties was vividly remembered by Miss Nancy Hobson, who was inside her father’s chemist shop under Napier’s old Masonic Hotel. She recalled she felt it coming.

“My first instinct was to run outside. I had barely got on to the road when the whole face of the hotel fell. “It was like being on the deck of a ship in rough seas.

You didn’t know where your feet were going to hit the ground.

“I tripped on wires and fell over people. I couldn’t control my walking at all. It was very dark and there was this extraordinary roar of falling masonry that went on for a very long time.”

These were the conditions which killed so many people fleeing to escape the violently rocking buildings. Facades, cornices and parapets - popular architectural decorations of the time toppled killing people below.

Several days later a journalist witnessed workmen removing a mound of rubble from what had been the entrance to the Masonic Hotel. He told readers that seven bodies were found “huddled together where they had tried to rush from the building”.

In some ways an even more horrific fate awaited many who never made it to the streets.

Maimed, pinned down, or simply trapped inside
buildings, they were at the mercy of fires which broke out in several chemist shops around town and which soon engulfed the whole main business centre of Napier. Desperate attempts to save them were doomed by the heat of the fire or the weight of the rubble. Firemen, sailors, policemen and civilians heard the screams of people perishing in the flames.

The search for survivors began immediately. Townspeople were joined by crew from HMS Veronica, which happened to be berthed at the port. Fire-fighting soon became almost impossible, mainly through a lack of water resulting from broken water mains. Residents left their homes. Many camped on the beachfront and others gathered in groups on front lawns or open spaces as the smaller earthquakes continued.

Open areas, such as the racecourse at Greensmeadows, became a field hospital and Nelson Park was designated a refugee centre. As Napier and Hastings started to organise relief work, offers of assistance poured in from all over New Zealand.

The naval vessel HMS Dunedin and Dicomed sailed from Auckland with relief equipment and rescue workers. Within hours, medical and relief work quickly got underway with volunteer agencies such as the Red Cross at the centre of activity.

Initially the earthquake cut all road communications between Napier and Hastings and the rest of the country, with the exception of what is now State Highway 2, from Hastings to Wellington. The Wellington-Napier railway line remained intact up to Ormondville in Central Hawke’s Bay.

The severity of the shake put much of the automatic telephone equipment out of alignment - rendering it useless - and the disruption to power services from the Waikaremoana and Mangahoa power stations left much of the province without power. Outside assistance was desperately needed and no time was wasted in getting the vital telegraph lines and railways back into operation. Though most parts of New Zealand had felt the quake to some extent, the only immediate word to the outside world hinting at the severity of what had happened in this area was a radio message from the Veronica. One of its signalers relayed the message: “Medical assistance required; fear considerable loss of life.”

The Post Office moved quickly to re-establish telegraphic links. Repair gangs left Wellington by road within hours of the alert and reached Hastings the following day.

Above: A young man stands at the ruins of the office where his wife used to work.

Below: Marine Parade, Napier

Photos courtesy of HB Today Library

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From the Daily Telegraph news bulletin February 4, 1931

SHOCKING DISASTER

1. Heretaunga Street Hastings. 2. A scene in Hastings. 3. Stunned people in rubble strewn Hastings Street, Napier, watch the daunting task facing firefighters. 4. The Harbour Board tractor transports sailors through a ruined Napier. 5. The cleaned up ruins of Napier, nearest is Tennyson Street, Emmerson Street is beyond. 6. People flee their homes – this is Browning Street, Napier. 7. The shattered quayside in Napier’s inner harbour, with HMS Veronica still alongside.

Water closets MUST NOT be used. Use bucket and bury or dig pit in garden.

The death toll. List of the identified dead numbers over 50.

Built on reclaimed land raised by the 1931 Earthquake, the iconic tannery – Classic Sheepskins - has been producing top quality Sheepskin products for the past 43 years.

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Photos courtesy of HIBMT, Hastings Library & HB Today Library.
The scene is set

Europeans had been properly settled in Hawke’s Bay for less than 100 years when the earthquake struck. They had established themselves in Napier and Hastings, with smaller settlements at Havelock North, Taradale, Waipukurau, Waiapaoa and Wairua. Hawke’s Bay was not heavily populated with Napier’s population being just over 16,000 and Hastings about 11,000 in 1931.

Both towns were service centres for the rich Heretaunga Plains, where there was mixed and pastoral farming, fruit growing, modest processing and manufacturing industries. The 1920s had seen a building boom and an upsurge in motor traffic, and Napier was also served by electric trams.

Napier was established at Onepoto Gully in 1844 and grew over the years around Scinde Island, a dominating limestone hill known by the Maori as Matarahou. The business heart of the town was, as it still is, immediately to the south of Scinde Island.

Housing extended further south, narrowing to an isthmus near the Napier Boys’ High School. Inland of the isthmus was marshland straddled by a road running through Taradale. There had already been some reclamation here of the shallow, salt-water, marshy lagoons believed to harbour noxious and pestilential gases.

On the west side of the island was the Ahuriri Lagoon, 3000 hectares of tidal mudflats, a popular area for beach picnics and yachting. The Port of Napier was divided into an inner harbour and an outer one. Much of the development in and around Napier took place during the latter half of the 19th century. In 1852 the first post office was established, at Port Ahuriri.

Coach links with surrounding areas were established and the construction of the Taupo road started. Electric telegraph links with Wellington were established in 1867 and in the 1870s Napier came in line for railways development.

In February 1875, the nine member Napier Borough Council had its first meeting and about the same time, the Napier Gas Company was established.

Improvements to the Marine Parade were carried out in the 1890s, and in the early 1960s the borough council began raising major loans to pay for various civic amenities such as cemeteries, bridges, parks and a library and fire station.

Hastings experienced slightly later growth but by 1883 there was sufficient growth to have the right to elect a town board. The work of 30 years was virtually destroyed in 1893, when a fire ravaged much of the town. However, in time new buildings were erected, the town was beautified, permanent streets were razed the public hall and library at Clive, the jailing and release of Mahatma Gandhi in India, the emergence of Mussolini in Italy, the United States successes of racehorse Phar Lap, and Hawke’s Bay cricketer Tom Lowry’s election to captain a New Zealand team to visit England.
Door opened to expansion

It is surely ironic that the earthquake which virtually demolished Napier in 1931 was ultimately the town’s salvation for it was the devastating quake, and the subsequent fires that paved the way for Napier to progress.

Before the quake Napier had been hemmed in, its expansion blocked by sea and swamp. Following the disaster of February 3, 1931, the town’s civic fathers acted to redevelop the town and make the best of land nature had enforced on them. Not only did the disaster give the town much needed space for growth - it also led to new approaches in civic planning, in architecture and in roading.

Some had described Napier before the earthquake as dramatic-a town nestled up against Scinde Island with the Pacific Ocean to the east, inland waterways to the west. But another early assessment, from 1860, described the area then as “a barren, uninhabited, hopeless spot for a town”.

Whichever, the earthquake certainly changed it all. In 1925 Napier couldn’t have expanded without significant investment in land reclamation. But with the violent upheaval of 2800 hectares of the lagoon area and the improvement of a further 1100 hectares, Napier’s future was virtually unlimited and it quickly began to expand in earnest. A definite town planning process sprang into being and the land famine which had threatened Napier was over.

Engineers diverted the Tutaekuri River, reducing the danger of flooding and opening up a massive new area of safe land for housing and industry. The Napier Harbour Board, which had a massive land inheritance from the quake, leased 190 hectares to the Napier Borough Council in 1934 which was developed to become Marewa. Negotiations between the board and council continued over the years to free up more land for housing.

Over the following decades, the airport and the Pandora industrial area were all established on what had once been submerged or at least so swampy as to be useless for development.

The Napier harbour was also completely changed by the earthquake. In 1931 the town had two harbours - the Breakwater and Inner harbours - both separate and both inefficient. And the earthquake left both in a shambles.

The day after the earthquake it was obvious the Inner harbour at Ahuriri would be useable only by small ships. The order went out to the board’s staff to make the Glasgow wharf at the Breakwater and its approaches serviceable. This was achieved inside a 10-day deadline. The following years saw a steady and well-planned transition from the two separate harbours to the harbour which the Port of Napier represents today.

Perhaps the most obvious and inevitable result of the disaster was in the buildings of Napier. Pre 1931, Napier was endowed with many buildings of interesting design, rich in the detail of the Victorian era. Styles ranged from Gothic revivals and various classic revivals to some early colonial. But much of this was demolished in the earthquake, by the fires which followed, or in the wave of demolitions of damaged buildings.

The 1931 earthquake and consequent fires in Hawke’s Bay emphasised the need for not only up-dating and improving building bylaws but also the enforcement of design standards.

While the effects of the earthquake and fire of 1931 are evident throughout Napier as it is today, there is only one specific memorial to the earthquake. This is the bell and nameplate of HMS Veronica, which have been placed on Marine Parade.

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Salt drainage trenches 1936. Photo courtesy of HBMT

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- Our experience with past earthquakes, including the 2007 Gisborne and the 2010 Christchurch quakes show that much of the damage to buildings and to stock and much of the business disruption is avoidable.
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Long-term burden on businesses

The record of Hawke’s Bay’s 1931 earthquake can still provide a shock. In today’s terms the value of losses and damage in Napier and Hastings on that fateful February 3 was a staggering $1 billion. And it was the business community in both cities which was forced to bear the brunt of that cost. The burden hung like a millstone round the necks of retailers for more than 20 years. Its weight finally dragged some to a premature end.

Wally Ireland’s dream of becoming a prosperous retailer was shattered in a few brief moments that day – he had only been 11 days in business as a picture framer and art supplier. The first tremor sent stock hurtling around his Dickens Street store; the second hurled him bodily into the street and, as he lay ‘paralysed’ in the convulsing roadway, Napier’s thriving retail area collapsed, then burnt.

The front section of Harston’s building, which was built to specifications prepared after the disastrous Murchison earthquake, withstood the earthquake but the back section was destroyed. They had planned to rebuild that section but someone stole the bricks before construction started.

The story of losses both in the earthquake and ensuing fires was repeated throughout the entire city. Business records became of paramount importance because those firms unable to prove their solvency on the day of the earthquake were debarred from assistance.

The loss of bank records added further complications to the business world and several businessmen, even half a century later, were still adamant that they repaid pre-earthquake mortgages twice. Unfortunately, the disaster occurred at a time of depression. The government’s grants amounted to about a fifth of the estimated total losses in Napier and Hastings, though it did make some loan concessions in later years. Although loan moneys, through the Napier Rehabilitation Committee, were made available to businessmen for the re-establishment of the retail area, it was generally not enough.

One borrower, who needed $150,000 to re-build and another $26,000 for stock, received a loan for only $59,000. It was the support Napier received from the wholesale industry that played an important part in the restoration of the business sector.

Wholesalers and other large business interests throughout the country rallied around and while they were not always able to provide monetary aid, gave help in other forms.

In the first weeks after the earthquake, efforts were concentrated on restoring essential services and repairing homes and there was little help for the businessman. Some optimistically opened up again in undamaged backrooms or erected their own temporary premises on their devastated sites. The first tangible sign of a return to normal in retailing came with a

Continued Page 10

Sleepers and railway lines go round a brand new bend between Napier and Bay View.

Photo courtesy of HB Today Library
$20,000 loan from the government for the building, by the Fletcher Construction Company, for temporary premises in Clive Square.

On March 16, nearly six weeks after the disaster, "Tin Town" was opened with provision for 54 shops. The actual reconstruction of the business area was delayed while planners widened the three major streets, Tennyson, Emerson and Dickens, and set aside space for service lanes in the business area.

The rebuilding of Napier was the greatest programme of concentrated building New Zealand had seen, and, in the first two years after the earthquake, permits for the construction of new buildings worth nearly $1.6 million were issued.

The government may have dragged its feet over financial aid to the province's commercial interests, but its departments moved much more decisively to restore transport and communication links.

At 1.35am on February 4 the first telegraph communication from Hastings to the south was arranged and 12 hours late Napier was reconnected. A regular air service started between Auckland, Gisborne, Hastings and Wellington, which carried mail, messages and supplies regularly until February 9. Postal and telegraph services were also carried by motor vehicle to post offices at Waipawa, Waipukurau and Dannevirke, where they were directed on to their destinations.

Some of the Hastings and Napier staff were transferred to the branch offices to cope with the rush. Nearly all telegraph communications had been restored to some semblance of normality by February 5, although telegrams into the stricken area were still being accepted at the "sender's risk", due to the displacement of so many people.

By February 7, mail services had been resumed from temporary post offices at the Hawke's Bay Farmers' Buildings in Napier and the railway station in Hastings.

As soon as it was discovered rail communications were interrupted from Omoriwahi north, repair gangs were rushed into the district and a train service to Hastings was restored the day after the 'quake and to Napier the next day. Although the early trains using the line had to proceed with caution - much of the line had shifted its alignment at various points - the rail service was to prove invaluable for taking refugees to other provinces.

Within a week, damage to the track had been repaired to a standard almost equaling that preceding the quake. To the north, the incomplete Napier-Gisborne railway escaped major damage. Work on the Mohaka viaduct, the largest in the southern hemisphere, had only just started. On the unfinished line some sections were badly twisted, but the main problem was the slumping of embankments. The line was to take until 1939 to reach Wairoa. It wasn't until February 16 that a regular Hawke's Bay Motor Company vehicle negotiated the Napier-Wairoa road, although access had been gained several times during the previous week by one or two adventurous motorists.

At Wairoa the main road bridge across the Wairoa River was badly damaged in the first quake. It was completely destroyed by a later quake, in September 1932.

The Napier-Taupo road was blocked by slips and was not negotiated for more than a week.
Earthquake Tour of Hastings, and Six Shaken Roads – how the earthquake affected Havelock North.

By local historian Michael Fowler

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the 1931 Hawke's Bay Earthquake, I will be taking a special earthquake tour of the Hastings CBD. Several years ago when I wrote my book From Disaster to Recovery I attempted to find out what happened to every business during the earthquake in the 15 blocks of the Hastings CBD. The tour that I have developed of the Hastings CBD draws from the book, and new material I have gathered since 2007.

On the tour there are tragic stories, like a husband discovering his wife and two young children dead – crushed by a falling overhanging roof. There are stories of great courage, when the husband of the dead woman and children volunteered to be a special policeman – guarding against looters in the CBD. There is what I call ‘earthquake scars’ – reminders of the 1931 event in Hastings, and these too will be visited, as well as photos shown, along with a free booklet. The Hastings Earthquake tour takes around 90 minutes, and bookings can be made at the Art Deco Trust.

Havelock North and other localities are often forgotten in the earthquake story of 1931. One of the main concerns of Havelock after the disaster was getting politicians and others to recognise that Hastings and Napier were not the only ones that needed help. The rebuilding of the Hastings-Havelock Bridge was one major issue, and the fact that editor of the Hawke's Bay Tribune, W C Whitlock lived in Havelock North ensured this received a fair share of printer's ink. No deaths were recorded in Havelock North itself, although many buildings were wrecked. However, several Havelock North people working in Hastings were killed. Most living in Havelock North did not realise the extent of the disaster until they saw the smoke from Napier, and then from reports of those escaping from Hastings.

My talk: Six Shaken Roads: Havelock North and the 1931 Hawke's Bay Earthquake will be held from 7.30pm until 9pm, on 3 February 2011 at the Havelock North Community Centre. Tickets are $10, and available from Poppies Bookstore in Havelock North, or the Hastings i-Site.

A bridge on Hastings Havelock North Road collapsed, bringing down a water main.

93 lives lost in Hastings

The earthquake which struck Hawke's Bay in 1931 is the single greatest natural disaster in the region’s recorded history.

There were 93 lives lost in Hastings as buildings such as the Cosy Theatre and Roach's Ltd collapsed. However, Hastings Mayor Lawrence Yule says out of the loss and devastation that day came a great deal of growth, a strengthening of community spirit and, of course, a whole new look for the region's buildings.

"Eighty years has brought many changes to Hastings, but we will never forget the day which tore the bricks and mortar of our city apart, and united its citizens with a determination to rebuild.

"In 1995 Hastings District Council installed plaques on the Hastings Clock Tower, engraved with the names of those who lost their lives in the Hastings District," Mayor Yule says.

The inscription reads "Their sun went down before it was noon."

"On Thursday, February 3 we will again gather at the Clock Tower to remember all those whose lives were lost and those that changed forever exactly 80 years before," he says.

Hastings District Council welcomes survivors, families of survivors and Hastings residents wanting to commemorate the earthquake to the Hastings CBD by the Clock Tower.

There will be a short commemoration service led by Reverend Graeme Pilgrim of St Matthews starting at 10.30am prompt, followed by a flyover and display by vintage planes and a speech by Hawke's Bay Today editor Antony Phillips on the role played by the Hawke's Bay Tribune and the destruction the newspaper suffered directly.

In the CBD there will be vintage cars of the era, a traction engine and a display about the earthquake and how it was reported around the world.

Earthquake survivor Ron Draper from Hastings, and Lawrence Yule Mayor of Hastings lays a floral tribute on the steps of the Hastings clock tower.
EARTHQUAKE

NAPIER

COMMENORATIVE SERVICE NAPIER
A civic commemorative service to mark the anniversary of the Hawke's Bay earthquake which struck at 46 minutes and 46.3 seconds after 10:00am on Tuesday 3rd February 1931. Other activities will be taking place at the service including a vintage plane fly over, traction engine display and more.
Thu 3 Feb at 10.30am at the Sound Shell, Marine Parade, Napier.

COMMENORATIVE CERTIFICATES
Get your commemorative 80th anniversary certificate printed on an original 1930's printing press. Just call into HBS Building Society in Napier on Thursday 3rd February or Hastings on Friday 4th, make a gold coin donation and they will print a certificate for you.

DISPLAYS AT THE NAPIER LIBRARY
Join us at the library and view a variety of earthquake displays in the reference department sourced from their newspaper clippings archives and indexes. Library opens at 9am. Display 3-6 February 2011.

EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS' AFTERNOON TEA
Whether you were only on day old at the time or remember the earthquake well, this free event is a place for you to catch up with old friends and share your memories over a cup of tea, sandwiches and cake. Includes an address by the Mayor of Napier, an earthquake related presentation and musical entertainment. You will be hosted by Napier Boys High School which has its own earthquake survivors' stories. Carers welcome. Sponsored by Hawke's Bay Regional Council, Napier City Council, Hastings District Council, Art Deco Trust and The Tennyson. Sat 5 Feb from 2.30pm – 4pm at Napier Boys High School Hall, Chambers St entrance, parking available and disabled access.
To register please phone the Mayor's office on (06) 834 4988.

NAPIER EARTHQUAKE WALK
Join the Art Deco Trust guides for a 1.5 hour guided walk on the 80th anniversary of the 1931 Hawke's Bay Earthquake. The walk will focus on how the earthquake affected Napier City. Please assemble at the Veronica Sun Bay at the Sound Shell at 11.30am, after the Earthquake Commemoration Service.
Thur 3 Feb at 11.30am. Price of $20 includes a Jubilee Pin and walk booklet.
Book at the Art Deco Trust.

SCHOOLS SPECIAL SERVICE NAPIER
Proudly sponsored by Uniison - The Powerline People
Schools will be invited to the screening of the Hawke's Bay Earthquake movie and to listen to renditions of earthquake survivor stories.
Thu 3 and Fri 4 Feb. For more information phone the Art Deco Trust
(06) 835 0022 Ext 720

SURVIVOR STORIES – NAPIER CAFES
Come along and listen to survivor stories while enjoying a lovely cuppa and a treat before and after the Commemorative Civic Service. Be amazed and touched by those brave souls who survived the 1931 earthquake.
Zigg Zagg Cafe, 279 Emerson St, Napier
Raffles Cafe, 72 Raffles St, Napier
Thaps Cafe, Hastings St, Napier
Thu 3 Feb and Fri 4 Feb at 9.30am & 11.30am

Emerson Street 1935, Photo from the collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust

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COMMENORATIONS

HASTINGS

COMMENORATIVE SERVICE HASTINGS
A civic commemorative service to mark the anniversary of the Hawke's Bay Earthquake which struck at 46 minutes and 46.3 seconds after 10:00am on Tuesday 3rd February 1931. Other activities will be taking place a the service including a vintage plane fly over, traction engine display and more.
Thu 3 Feb at 10.30am. City Stage, Hastings City Square, Heretaunga Street, Hastings

COMMENORATIVE CERTIFICATES
Get your commemorative 80th anniversary certificate printed on an original 1930's printing press. Just call into HBS Building Society in Napier on Thursday 3rd February or Hastings on Friday 4th, make a gold coin donation and they will print a certificate for you.

DISPLAYS AT THE HASTINGS LIBRARY
Join us at the library and view a variety of earthquake displays in the reference department sourced from their newspaper clippings archives and indexes.
Library opens at 9am. Display 3-6 February 2011.

HASTINGS EARTHQUAKE WALK
Join Michael Fowler for an hour long guided walk on the 80th anniversary of the 1931 Hawke's Bay Earthquake. The walk will focus on how the earthquake affected the Hastings City. Please meet after the earthquake commemoration service. Price $15 includes a souvenir booklet. Book at the Art Deco Trust.
Thu 3 Feb 11.30am with Michael at the Hastings Clock Tower, Heretaunga Street, Hastings

SCHOOLS’ SPECIAL SERVICE HASTINGS
Proudly sponsored by Union – The Powelites People Schools will be invited to the screening of the Hawke’s Bay Earthquake movie and to listen to renditions of earthquake survivor stories.
For more information phone the Art Deco Trust (06) 835 0022 Ext720
Thu 3 and Fri 4 Feb

SIX SHAKEN ROADS:
HOW THE 1931 HAWKE’S BAY EARTHQUAKE AFFECTED
Havelock North
Michael Fowler will talk on how the 1931 Hawke’s Bay Earthquake affected Havelock North for a special 80th anniversary commemoration event.
Thu 3 Feb at 7.30pm – 8.30pm. Havelock North community Centre, Te Mato Road. Tickets available on the night or at Poppies Book Store, Havelock North. Tickets $10 each.

SURVIVOR STORIES – HASTINGS CAFÉS
Come along and listen to survivor stories while enjoying a lovely cuppa and a treat after the Commemoration service at the Hastings City Stage. Be amazed and touched by those brave souls who survived the 1931 earthquake.
Warrens Bakery, 123 Russell Street North, Hastings
Taste Comupcu, 219 Heretaunga Street East, Hastings
Café at Westermans, 104 Russell Street South, Hastings
Thu 3 Feb from 11.30am

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After Words

After Words is a treasure trove of stories by ordinary people who survived the Hawke's Bay earthquake. The stories, reflecting the effects of the earthquake on the lives of survivors, were gathered by Archivist Helen McConnochie and published as *After Words* in 2004. Helen had been collecting oral histories for several years before her decision to publish the material. Helen, a former Radio New Zealand presenter, producer, tutor and script editor compiled the records, stories, letters and images using material in the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust Earthquake Archive. Former Hawke's Bay Herald-tribune sub-editor June Clark, a good friend of Helen's, edited the book. The book highlights the courage of those affected and the ability of many to retain a sense of humour, even in the face of extreme adversity. After Words is inspiring and educational read that includes more than 100 interviews and a collection of letters. Below is just a small selection of anecdotes from the book.

**Alberta Lilian Gill**
Sister Guffie’s Private Hospital was on Bluff Hill. At 10.50 Alberta Gill was on the operating table. Dr Scouler was my surgeon. The operation was finished. The doctor told me afterwards that he hung on to me on one side while the other doctor (anaesthetist) held my feet, and they hung onto me and to the bed until it was over.

A nurse took me to my room, just next door to the theatre. She had pushed me through the door when all at once there was a jolt and the wardrobe toppled over me and rested on the dressing table with my bed underneath. The nurse fainted, but the doctor pulled me out, and when I came round there were a lot of people on mattresses in the back yard of the hospital. I thought “I’m dead. I’m with the angels.” …The doctor came in the morning and put me out in the sun. He said “Do you want a drink?” and the only drink he could get was from the burst pipes on the ground. I had the drink but didn’t get any infection.

**Wendy Doole**
When I was first married, I lived in a little flat in Brewster Street in Napier, and our landlady was a Mrs Terry. She told me her husband was an ironmonger selling taps, pipes, nails and chamber pots. That fateful day, Mr Terry went to shop with his horse and dray, and loaded all the chamber pots because he knew that a tent town had been established in Nelson Park. He got to the gates and people who were desperate for toilet facilities, called out “here’s Mr Terry with his Jerries.” He went around the tents delivering them. He was a practical man.

**Ken Spiller**
After the quake, when the fire had burned itself out, you couldn’t go into Napier for a few days because of the intense heat from the fire. The bricks held the heat, plus it was February, a drought year and terrifyingly hot. The brickwork felt like a baker’s oven when you went near it. For weeks afterwards if you dug down you could feel the heat in the bricks.

**Lawry Spackman**
One of the things I learned, and have remembered all my life, was the necessity of keeping petrol in the car. Since the earthquake I have never let the car get below half full.

The public will have an opportunity to hear some of the fascinating stories at several cafés in Napier on Thursday 3 February and Friday 4 February. See the Art Deco Trust events listing for further details.
Earthquake tragic - but a cloud with a silver lining

By Art Deco Trust Heritage and Consultancy Services Manager
Robert McGregor

The great Hawke's Bay Earthquake of 1931 brought havoc, death and destruction to Hawke's Bay, with 261 deaths, almost 600 people hospitalised and countless others with less serious injuries. Central Napier was virtually destroyed by the tremors and the fires which followed, and many buildings in Hastings, where the water supply was maintained, were destroyed or damaged. The effects were felt as far away as Gisborne and Dannevirke, and of course in the smaller centres closer to the Heretaunga Plains.

But it brought benefits too. Not so much for Hastings, perhaps, although it resulted in a modern, stronger and safer city, but for Napier, hemmed in as it had been by swamp and tidal lagoon; it brought the gift of land. Three thousand hectares of flat land arose as if by magic from the sea floor, making it unnecessary for Napier to continue the laborious and expensive process of reclamation which had produced the suburb of Napier South between 1900 and 1908. The town beach was effectively doubled in width by the uplift, enabling Napier's famous Marine Parade to be developed, the unusually narrow streets of the Central Business District were widened, corners spayed, power and telephone lines buried and new modern buildings erected, creating what was for a time the "newest city on the globe". Who would have known then that decades later the architecture of the two cities would attract world-wide interest? Without the earthquake, the history and development of Hawke's Bay would have been very different.

The Hawke's Bay Earthquake, following the 1929 Murchison earthquake with the same 7.6 intensity, was the first in New Zealand to take place in a well-populated area with concrete and masonry buildings, and brought a recognition that earthquakes were going to be a regular occurrence in New Zealand, with grave implications for public safety. It therefore also brought benefits to the country as a whole. New Zealand's first model building by-law was introduced in 1935 and has been updated a number of times since then. After 13 years of argument, compulsory earthquake insurance was introduced in 1944. A civil defence infrastructure took longer to establish but the need for it was recognised immediately after the earthquake. And the rebuilding of Napier and Hastings in simple, modern styles was almost certainly responsible for an acceptance of modernism not seen in many other countries.

Marine Parade, Napier, 1940

The Hawke's Bay Earthquake was tragic, but it was also, without doubt, a cloud with a silver lining.

Firms which survived the earthquake and still exist today
(Some will have different names)

Russell Greer Motors (originally Stewart Nash Motors)
Mission Vineyards
Sainsbury Logan & Williams, solicitors,
AMP Insurance
Masonic Hotel
State Insurance
NZI Insurance
Somerset Smith Partners
National Insurance
Cox Real Estate

The Crown Hotel
McClurgs
Frederick Swain Optometrist (formerly Azzopardi & Holland)
Union Hotel
National Café
Automobile Association
Public Trust
Hannahs
BNZ (Bank of New Zealand)
Criterion Backpackers (Criterion Hotel)
Hallenstein's
Deco City Amcal (UFS Dispensary)
Westpac Bank (Bank of New South Wales)
Cosmopolitan Club
National Bank of NZ Ltd (Possibly)
Guardian Trust (Possibly)
Gordon Vogtherr remembers

February 3, 1931 was five-year-old Gordon Vogtherr’s first day at Mahora Primary School. Gordon will never forget that day and can still recall “the pervading smell of bricks, dust and smoke.”

It’s a smell you can never get rid of, he says.

His father, Ernest Vogtherr worked at the family business, The Elite Mild Cure Bacon & Ham Factory at Storford Lodge which contained a fruit cool store, an ice factory, the bacon factory and, at the corner a butchers which later became a petrol station. The Elite Delicatessen was situated at 128 Heretaunga Street East and the family lived upstairs.

When the earthquake struck the other children were outside at school while Gordon was still indoors. The doors were rattling and he didn’t know which way to go.

“I could see the water washing over the swimming pool and kids were yelling and screaming. I made for home. One girl was killed when a chimney fell down; I think it was Shona Spence.”

His father, who had narrowly escaped serious injury when the Cosy De Luxe Theatre in Heretaunga Street collapsed, was very worried about Gordon. He rode his bicycle towards Mahora School but could see no sign of the boy so he rode home hoping Gordon had taken a different way home. When he arrived home Gordon was safe and with his mother. When asked what he did when the earthquake struck Gordon said to his father “Grabbed my hat and ran.”

When the aftershocks came along he’d jump into his father’s arms and say “Spear it daddy, spear it.”

All the chimneys came down during the quake including the Vogtherr’s which ended up in their living room.

“The scullery was awash with jam jars.”

The family retrieved what they could from their home, like may others, even though the aftershocks continued. Before they were able to retrieve all their possessions a fire that night destroyed the building

and they lost everything including the Austin 12 car which had been undamaged but pinned in the garage by a fallen beam.

For years afterwards when a quake hit, Gordon’s heart would start racing. He’s not worried so much now but always looks up at the chimney just in case!

Dr Tony Foley reminisces

Home in 1931 for young Tony, his parents and four siblings, was on the corner of Shakespeare and Clyde Roads - just a short distance to the convent on the hill.

February 3 was Tony’s first day at school - he was “three days short of five”. His younger brother was almost four and the runts at the convent said they’d take him too! So the Foley Twins that weren’t went to the convent on the hill.

When the earthquake struck a nun shouted at them “to get out, get out” then told them to get on their knees and start praying.

The children evacuated pretty smartly onto a grassy bank outside. Tony remembers being eventually lifted over a corrugated iron fence into Cobden Road. Part of the Convent Road had collapsed and they had to get out of the college the back way.

His father, a doctor, worked at the hospital and came to pick the boys up from school. It was a busy time for his father and that was the last Tony saw of him for many days.

At home the brick chimney had toppled and some bricks had come through the corrugated iron roof. His baby sister slept in a drop side cot which had a huge dent from a falling brick. The family moved out of the house for safety and camped in a tent in a nearby driveway for a few days.

The Marist Brothers School at the bottom of the Convent Hill had collapsed, as had part of the adjacent hillside roadway. Tony remembers sailors from HMS Veronica driving along Shakespeare Road on the back of an open deck, large trailer with solid rubber tyres being towed by a tractor and throwing tins of food to people. He also remembers Tin Town, the temporary shopping area built in Memorial Square. For years after the earthquake there was evidence of the horrendous event throughout Napier, he says.

1931 Earthquake Talk – SIX SHAKEN ROADS

Historian Michael Fowler will be giving a presentation on 3 February 2011 called Six Shaken Roads to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the 1931 Hawke’s Bay Earthquake. The presentation will focus on Havelock North, and include an extensive use of photographs.

Topics included are: Havelock, Hereworth, Tona and Woodford schools; fire brigade; Havelock Hastings Bridge; water supply; village shops; notable residential dwellings; those who died from Havelock North; Havelock North Town Board’s administration of the recovery effort – and the controversy surrounding an earthquake volunteer worker from Havelock North.

The talk will take place at the Havelock North Community Centre from 7.30pm until 9pm, on Thursday, 3 February 2011. Tickets are $10, and are available from the Hastings site or Peppi’s Bookstore in Havelock North.

SUPPORTED BY THE ART DECO TRUST
The importance of retaining heritage buildings

The Canterbury earthquake and ongoing aftershocks have underlined the importance of retaining our heritage buildings and earthquake strengthening them, says the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (NZHPT).

Within hours of the 7.1 magnitude earthquake that struck on 4 September — and with no loss of life - focus turned to how best to retain, reassess and restore the region's heritage treasures. As New Zealand's lead heritage agency NZHPT staff worked alongside structural engineers, council staff, Civil Defence and Urban Search and Rescue to assess the damage, with public safety the first priority.

Malcolm Duff, NZHPT Southern Region General Manager said that although the Civil Defence authorities were well organised it was important a co-ordinated approach to damaged heritage and character buildings was established quickly.

“The Canterbury earthquake hit at 4.35am and within a few hours the NZHPT was working alongside a range of experts assessing site damage. Decisions had to be made quickly in the first few days to ensure character buildings that could be saved were saved.

“It is very important to have knowledgeable people available to provide immediate advice to owners on the need to stabilise damage quickly as this provides time to carefully consider how to restore their properties.”

Mr Duff said the Canterbury earthquake had reminded people of how important and valued heritage and character buildings are, not only in their appearance and place in the streetscape but in recording the region's history. In Napier and Hawke's Bay that is reflected in the Art Deco buildings that sit alongside a small number of pre-1931 buildings.

“Hawke's Bay is known worldwide for its fabulous Art Deco architecture, but it's also perhaps timely to remember the reason it exists. We can avoid the sort of damage and destruction the area experienced through earthquake strengthening and good maintenance of heritage buildings. It is important that councils and potentially central government look at what financial assistance and incentives can be offered to building owners for earthquake strengthening. It's an investment worth making. The public response to the damage across Canterbury has been strong and there's a real sense of loss.”

Mr Duff said the ongoing aftershocks, including the sharp 4.9 magnitude jolt on Boxing Day, has caused more damage to already affected buildings, and caused damage to buildings that had shown no damage from previous seismic activity. The NZHPT has guidelines on its website (www.historic.org.nz) on what to do to preserve properties and where owners can go for further advice.

“It is advice that applies not only to Canterbury, but Hawke's Bay and all of New Zealand,” said Mr Duff. “As history tells us, once a heritage building is gone, it's lost forever. From the public response and support we've had that's not what people want.”

Just Jack

Jack Barnes is an apprentice jockey desperately trying to prove himself to his family and older brother, yet he thinks he'll never succeed in their eyes - that is until the earthquake strikes on that fateful February day back in 1931.

Adele Broadbent, a local children's author, has timed the launch of her latest book, Just Jack, to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the Hawke's Bay earthquake.

It's a book for "Tweens" (8-13 yr olds) but may have much wider appeal, as it's set during the 1931 earthquake.

Adele's grandfather was an apprentice jockey back in the 1930s although he didn't discuss the earthquake very often. Inspired by some of his stories of his life as a jockey Adele wrote the first draft of Just Jack in 2004 and before he died promised him she'd finish the book.

The major action for Just Jack is set during and immediately after the earthquake and to keep it credible Adele totally immersed herself in researching the era and tragedy. She says both the Napier Library staff and the Hawke's Bay Museum were extremely helpful with "wonderful resources".

She absorbed all her research and applied it to what Jack would see and how he would react. For example, readers will find mention of cracks in the road, toppled chimneys and the eerie silence. Jack encounters smoke, stock and horses escaping and constant aftershocks. Set in Taradale the book gives a good feel for the era and the earthquake. And through his actions in the earthquake - Jack finally achieves his goal.

Servicing Hawke's Bay for 82 years. 1929-2011

The tow truck of Stewart Nash Motors.

Stewart Nash Motors Ltd in Dickens Street, Napier, after the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake. The photo was taken by the insurer whose caption read: "Exterior wall useless, roof on steel frame can be used again. Front recently built is badly cracked."
Complete collapse of iconic brick building

On the day of the HB Earthquake, it was business as usual in the Hastings Public Library; older gentlemen from the community gathering in the 'reading room' to peruse the newspapers, staff busy shelving, cataloguing and stamping books and members of the public leisurely thumbing through items on the shelves. When the earthquake struck, the Hastings Public Library building collapsed and became a tomb.

By the early 1900s the Hastings Library building in Market Street, then called the Athenaeum, had become too small and so the Council obtained a grant from Andrew Carnegie to build a new library. A two storey brick building was opened on the site on 16 September 1907. In the aftermath of the terrible fires of 1905 brick was considered by many as the preferred building material in Hastings. Unfortunately, these brick buildings were not reinforced and it appears no consideration was given to the possibility of them collapsing in an earthquake.

While it is unclear officially how many people perished in the collapse of the library, it is believed that seven people died with only two of these named by sources.

Hastings District Libraries' collections include many resources and information on the '31 Quake including local history books and numerous photographs, some of which can be viewed online. The archives include previously unpublished copies of the vouchers that volunteers were given entitling them to rations, as well as records of individual contributions to rescue and cleanup efforts, and ledgers showing aid distributed via the Borough Council-appointed committee.

Before and after photos of the Hastings District Library.

Photos courtesy of Hastings Library.

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Working together to support the quality of life and well-being for older people in our local community

NAPIER
99 Vautier St (in Senior Citizens building)
Phone 835 0346
Sarah, Erin & Morag

FLAXMERE
30 Swansea Rd (alongside the Community Centre)
Phone 879 7003
Neil, Pat & Jaala

HASTINGS
415 Heretaunga St E (opposite New World)
Phone 870 9060
Ruth, Tania & Diane

HAVELOCK NORTH
St Columbas Church Hall - Te Mata Rd (opposite Library)
Phone 877 6488
Ria & Jenny

CENTRAL HAWKES BAY
3 Porangahau Road Waipukurau
Phone 858 9158
Maureen & Sue

We are all here to provide information, services and activities for you in your community - just ring us and we can help!

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Hastings District Libraries
Hastings Public Library, Market Street, Hastings
Destroyed in the 1931 earthquake

Preserving the past for future generations

- Archives
- Photographic Collection
- Microform Collections
- Early Hawke's Bay Newspapers
- Genealogy Collection
- Local History Collection

www.hastingslibrary.co.nz
Diomede sailors deserve thanks

Bay historian Michael Fowler takes a look at the role sailors served in Hastings following the 1931 earthquake

The HMS Veronica's role in assisting the citizens of Napier after the 10.47am, 3 February 1931, Hawke's Bay earthquake is well-known. However, less documented was the part played by the Royal Navy in Hastings, in particular that of the HMS Diomede. When Commander HJ Morgan of the HMS Veronica, which had arrived at the Napier Port on the morning of February 3, realised more assistance would be required for the quake-devastated Hawke's Bay region, a distress signal was sent to the naval base in Auckland. The HMS Diomede and Dunedin, which had been preparing to leave for manoeuvres with the Australian Navy, were given new orders and dispatched to Napier at 2.30pm that day.

The HMS Diomede and Dunedin arrived in Napier at 8.30am on February 4, and sailors and marines were immediately sent to Hastings to fulfill duties which included: searching for survivors; recovery of dead bodies; assisting with law and order and demolishing unsafe buildings.

Some of the marines relieved several of the special police (sworn-in civilians) at guard posts in the CBD and were armed with rifles — looting was still a threat.

After the sailors completed their search for survivors and bodies, around February 6, (bodies were still being found up to five weeks later) and the threat of looting subsided, as most shopkeepers had recovered their stock, attention turned to the demolition of unsafe buildings. Thousands of pounds of explosives had been transported on the ships for this purpose.

Sailors of the HMS Diomede entered the building of WC Whitlock, the editor of Hawke's Bay Tribune (now Hawke's Bay Today), on the corner of Queen Street Karamu Road, and told him they were to demolish his building with explosives. WC replied, "Well you will have to blow me up as well." Needless to say there was no demolition that day. WC had a paper to get out, and the destruction of his building would not help that cause. (The top floor was later removed but the ground floor was salvaged.) However one building that was demolished was Griffiths Boot Importers (which exists today as Griffiths Footwear) which was situated next to the BNZ building in Heretaunga St West (where BJ's Cafe is now). The building had partly collapsed during the earthquake killing young cashier Gwen Butler. Owner Charles Griffiths calmly photographed his business being blown up by the HMS Diomede sailors, and then removed salvageable shoes that looters had not taken, before setting up his shop where he lived at 607 Hastings St North. One sailor who was sent from the HMS Diomede to Hastings on February 4 was Henry (Bill) Forrest (1912-1966), who was born and bred in Napier. Bill was destined for a life at sea according to a nurse at a private maternity home, when she remarked on his tough skin. As a youngster, when his family lived in Battery Rd, Napier, he sold newspapers to sailors at the port. He got in trouble once with the Harbour Master after swimming out to a vessel with newspapers protected in tin cans, only to be retrieved by some angry port staff. While Bill was in Hastings over the days of February 4-6, he was anxious to hear of his Napier family's welfare. Bill, however, was not granted leave to enquire of their fate, so he left Hastings absent without leave (AWOL), and made his way back to Battery Rd where he found his family safe, his sister May had had a fortuitous escape when the Napier Technical School collapsed. With the Navy interested in his whereabouts, Bill made his escape to Wanganui, and was working as a white washer (cleaner of walls and ceilings) when the Navy caught up with him later that year, and he consequently served 90 days in Mount Eden Prison. Eventually Bill returned home to Napier and resumed an affair with the love of his life — the sea, on his fishing vessel Kotuku. While Napier's appreciation for the HMS Veronica has been expressed over the past 80 years, since the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake, Hastings in its quiet, laid-back style, could also say along with Napier — "Thank God for the Navy".

The grim task of body recovery by HMS Diomede sailors outside Wasterman's in Heretaunga Street, Hastings.

Photo courtesy of HRMAG

DUNSTALLS funeral services

"The Dunstall Family were there to help families during the 1931 earthquake and are proud to be helping Napier Families today" 

Phone: (06) 835 7196

The Dunstall Family 

Ivan, Walter, Roberta and Colin Dunstall, Paul's Grandparents, Uncle and Father in the back yard after the Earthquake.

Colin Dunstall standing beside Nelson Cres premises
The Veronica Sun Bay and Bell

The iconic Sun Bay on Marine Parade is possibly one of the most visited, admired and photographed attractions in Napier. The original structure was built in 1934, and was named the "Veronica Sun Bay" when the bell from HMS Veronica was presented to the city as a memento of the assistance given by the ship's personnel and crew in rescue work in the aftermath of the 1931 earthquake. It is also the scene of a moving annual ceremony at the end of every Art Deco weekend when the Veronica Bell is rung in memory of those who perished in the earthquake. It is also rung to herald in the New Year. Thousands watch the parade and join in the ceremony during which the Veronica Bell is hung and tolled, the navy fire a volley of shots while overhead old aircraft ply the sky.

It is a special tribute to those who died in the disaster and those on the HMS Veronica who came to help. The sailors found food, bedding and clothing. They battled blazes, patrolled streets and transported the shocked and injured to hospitals and shelters while calling on other ships for assistance.

Due to dangerous corrosion the structure was replaced with a replica in 1991. Rebuilding of the Sun Bay was a combined effort between the Rotary Club of Napier, the citizens of Hawke's Bay and the Napier City Council. A plaque was unveiled at the dedication of the rebuilt memorial which took place on the sixtieth anniversary of the earthquake – 3 February, 1991.

The second bell

Few people realise that two bells were presented at the ceremony in 1934. In 2007 Hawke's Bay Today journalist Roger Moroney reported that the hunt was on to locate the second bell which had been missing since Captain Horace White Parsons, harbourmaster at the Port of Napier from 1914 to 1918 passed away in 1938 and with it presumably the bell along with other personal effects.

Evidence of the existence of the second bell was published in 1934 under the small headline "Presentation to Harbourmaster". It said: "The next procedure was the presentation to Captain Horace White Parsons of the Veronica's other bell, as a gift from the British Admiralty." Royal Navy Captain Oliver Bevir praised the skill of Mr White Parsons in getting the HMS Veronica, which had been tied up in port when the earthquake struck, back to sea and safety.

"For this reason I have much pleasure on behalf of the Admiralty in presenting this bell to Captain White Parsons." Mr White Parsons hung the bell from a hook at his hilltop home. He died, his wife and daughter passed away and the bell was nowhere to be found.

The second bell was found later in February 2007 tucked away in a store room at the Port of Napier. Port staff suspected it was somewhere on the premises after it had been taken down during office renovations in about 2004. It had been handed down to the port about five years earlier by one of Mr White Parsons' two daughters, who have both since died. A retired harbour master talked about the bell and said it had been the smaller, stern based bell from HMS Veronica. When the ship was withdrawn from service the two bells were salvaged.

In 1934 the main, large bell was presented to the city of Napier while the smaller one was given to Captain White Parsons.
Rebuilding Napier and Hastings

Napier’s rebuilding in permanent materials began in August 1931 with the start of the Market Reserve Building, for which design work had begun before the earthquake. The building, owned by the Borough Council, would be a statement of faith in Napier’s future.

As it rose above the town’s centre, almost deserted both day and night, the din of its construction breathed life into Napier. Architect Rene Natusch had altered the documents to specify a riveted frame instead of a welded one. Crittalls, the English metal window manufacturers, supplied bronze windows for the price of steel ones as a gift to Napier and to set a standard for the rebuilding.

Rene Natusch was the Chairman of the Napier Associated Architects, formed to share resources and to bring a unity of purpose to the immense task of rebuilding the town.

Finch & Westerholm’s designs were often in Spanish Mission style. E A Williams designed some of the most striking buildings, like the Daily Telegraph and the Hotel Central, but also used the Mission style as in the Criterion Hotel. Louis Hay was an admirer of the pioneer modern American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and almost all of his buildings reflected Wright’s designs of the period 1900 to 1910. Natusch & Sons’ buildings tended to be simple in style, often using arched windows.

The T&G Building was built in 1936 making an impressive, visual statement on Marine Parade, and it still does so today. Fortunately for Hastings, its beautiful Municipal Theatre, highly regarded in the theatre world, survived the Quake although major reconstruction was required to the backstage area. The bells from the Post Office were housed in the well known iconic clock tower, the subject of a design competition won by young Hastings architect Sydney Chaplin and completed in 1935. Chief among the Hastings architects was the firm of Davies, Garnet & Phillips. Edmund Anscombe of Wellington, who had designed the Hawke’s Bay Farmers Building, was also the architect for Westermans and several other buildings.

Out of the disaster and tragedy, came two cities which were once the newest in the world and today are recognised as unique heritage townscapes.

Photo: Chrys Akeley


Photos: HB Today photographers.

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www.pmarchitects.co.nz
New Zealand is Vulnerable

New Zealanders who lived through the 1920s and 1930s must have wondered if Mother Nature was out to get them when the country was hit by five large earthquakes in six years.

All the quakes were larger than magnitude seven, and at magnitude 7.8 the Hawke's Bay earthquake of 3 February 1931 was the largest of the sequence. In fact it ranks as New Zealand's second largest quake since European settlement. The largest was the magnitude 8.2 quake centred in Wairarapa on 23 January 1855 but the 1931 quake caused much more damage and many more deaths.

While the string of quakes of the late 20s and early 30s may have seemed like random events at the time, seismologists now know that big quakes can sometimes trigger quakes on other faults. The phenomenon of stress triggering has been observed worldwide.

Changes in the stress regime in the earth's crust after a big quake can advance or retard earthquakes on other faults in the vicinity.

In the 1930s there was little appreciation of active faults or tectonic plates. Scientists now know that the Hawke's Bay earthquake occurred on a buried, or blind thrust, fault. These are earthquake generating faults that do not extend up to the earth's surface. They occur in most of the tectonic plate boundary zones of the world. The earthquake was the sudden release of hundreds of years of accumulated strain on a blind thrust fault that, until 3 February 1931, was unknown. As well as being hidden, blind thrust faults also pack a big punch when they rupture. Because the two sides of a thrust fault are being compressed like a vice it takes a lot of energy to rip them apart. It is the explosive release of this energy that produces high intensity ground shaking.

Scientists consider them to be a particularly lethal type of geological fault because they show little or no evidence at the surface and, even when detected, they are difficult to study. Blind thrust faults tend to predominate on the North Island's east coast between Wairarapa and East Cape. Some have been identified but it is likely many will remain undiscovered.

Geologists from GNS Science studied two faults in central Hawke's Bay – one in Otane and the other just north of Waipawa to learn more about the rupture history of the faults-determining when they produced earthquakes and the estimated size of the earthquake.

The work was conducted for the Hawke's Bay Regional Council to gain a better understanding of hazards in the region.

Territorial authorities need good intelligence about geological faults to help reduce vulnerability of critical facilities such as hospitals and schools and infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water and gas supply, and telecommunications networks.

Seismologist Warwick Smith, of GNS Science, says historical evidence and scientific research show that the risk to New Zealanders from geological hazards is significantly higher than the last 60 years would indicate.

If an earthquake on the scale of the 1931 Hawke's Bay jolt occurred anywhere near a population centre today it would cause devastating losses.

"There are many New Zealand communities located within 10km of an active fault. So it's fair to say that many parts of New Zealand could experience an earthquake similar in size to the 1931 Hawke's Bay event. Denier populations mean potential losses would be greater."

"However, on the positive side scientists have made huge advances in monitoring earthquakes in recent decades. There is now an extensive seismic monitoring network throughout New Zealand, with instruments recording in real time and sending data via satellite."

"The network, GeoNet, is core funded by the Earthquake Commission (EQC) and operated by GNS Science on behalf of the EQC and all New Zealanders."

Dr Smith says New Zealand's earthquake activity is comparable to that of California.

"It's inevitable when two massive slabs of the earth's crust are converging at a rate of 40mm a-year, as they are under the North Island, the accumulated strain will release periodically causing a large earthquake."

"A major earthquake, no matter where it was located, would affect the whole of New Zealand society and economy."

Historical records and geological studies show that, on average, New Zealand can expect one magnitude 6 quake every year, a magnitude 7 quake every decade, and a magnitude 8 quake every century.
GeoNet and Earthquakes

GeoNet analyses, locates and archives over 15,000 earthquakes each year within the New Zealand region. It also provides locally recorded data from global earthquakes to the International Seismological Centre in the United Kingdom, and preliminary earthquake information to the National Earthquake Information Center, part of the United States Geological Survey responsible for locating major earthquakes worldwide. The waveform data and the located hypocentres are freely available to the worldwide community of researchers through the Resources section of the GeoNet website.

For the over 250 significant earthquakes felt in the New Zealand region each year, GeoNet provides the location and magnitude of the events within one hour of their occurrence.

http://www.geonet.org.nz

We acknowledge the New Zealand GeoNet project and its sponsors ETC, GNS science and LINZ, for providing this information.

Above Faraday Street, Bluff Hill, Napier. Photo courtesy of HBM1.
The government may have dragged its feet over financial aid to the province's commercial interests, but its departments moved much more decisively to restore transport and communication links.

At 1.35pm on February 4 the first telegraph communication from Hastings to the south was arranged and 12 hours late Napier was reconnected. A regular air service started between Auckland, Gisborne, Hastings and Wellington, which carried mail, messages and supplies regularly until February 9. Postal and telegraph services were also carried by motor vehicle to post offices at Waipawa, Waipukurau and Dannevirke, where they were directed on to their destinations.

Some of the Hastings and Napier staff were transferred to the branch offices to cope with the rush. Nearly all telegraph communications had been restored to some semblance of normality by February 5, although telegrams into the stricken area were still being accepted at the "sender's risk," due to the displacement of so many people.

By February 7, mail services had been resumed from temporary post offices at the Hawke's Bay Farmers'Buildings in Napier and the railway station in Hastings.

As soon as it was discovered rail communications were interrupted from Omouondville north, repair gangs were rushed into the district and a train service to Hastings was restored the day after the quake and to Napier the next day. Although the early trains using the line had to proceed with caution - much of the line had shifted its alignment at various points - the rail service was to prove invaluable for taking refugees to other provinces.

Within a week, damage to the track had been repaired to a standard almost equalising that preceding the quake. To the north, the incomplete Napier-Gisborne railway escaped major damage. Work on the Mohaka viaduct, the largest in the southern hemisphere, had only just started. On the unfinished line some sections were badly twisted, but the main problem was the slumping of embankments. The line was to take until 1939 to reach Waioha. It wasn't until February 16 that a regular Hawke's Bay Motor Company vehicle negotiated the Napier-Waioha road, although access had been gained several times during the previous week by one or two adventurous motorists.

At Waioha the main road bridge across the Waioha River was badly damaged in the first quake. It was completely destroyed by a later quake, in September 1932. The Napier-Taupo road was blocked by slips and was not negotiated for more than a week.

**Keeping Hawke's Bay's bridges safe and sound**

Eighty years on from the Napier Earthquake, we've come a long way when it comes to looking after vital infrastructure that a whole region relies on. We have better technology and expertise at our disposal than ever before to help protect Hawke's Bay from the effects of natural disasters.

The NZ Transport Agency is responsible for looking after Hawke's Bay's state highway network. Bridges on the state highway network are crucial to the region in the event of an earthquake or other major emergencies, and we've got an extensive seismic retrofitting programme to make sure these bridges are structurally sound and capable of weathering some mighty shakes. This means when an earthquake strikes, the infrastructure we all rely on is better prepared to safely maintain transport links and supply chains when they're needed most.

Here's what we've been doing to keep Hawke's Bay's bridge network secure:

**SH2 Matahorua Gorge Realignment**

Nearing completion, this project will provide a shorter, more secure route over the Matahorua Gorge, a vital link between Hawke's Bay and Wairoa and Gisborne. The brand new bridge bypasses the precarious Gorge and is engineered to endure a one in 2500 year earthquake.

**SH5 Mohaka River Bridge**

We've just finished the seismic strengthening of this crucial bridge on the Napier-Taupo road. The work has involved strengthening the steelwork and stabilising the embankments through soil nailing and rock bolting, and will help to secure this important link between Hawke's Bay and Taupo.

**SH2 Westshore Bridge**

Westshore Bridge on SH2 in Napier is a strategically invaluable bridge that not only carries traffic and pedestrians, but also carries a number of critical services. Our recently completed seismic upgrade of this bridge involved strengthening the links at both piers and stabilising the embankment through the construction of a retaining wall.

Investigations are currently underway to strengthen Frasertown Bridge on SH3B, and investigations have been completed on SH50's Tukituki Bridge, where physical works are proposed to begin soon.

Upgrades of these bridges will complete our current seismic retrofitting programme for Hawke's Bay, and leave us in excellent shape for the future. Our seismic retrofitting programme is an ongoing national programme that will continue to target and upgrade the most crucial strategic links for New Zealand's transport needs. We also regularly inspect and where necessary upgrade bridges as part of our routine maintenance programme.

As the manager of New Zealand's state highway network, we're responsible for helping to keep communities safe and connected in the event of an earthquake. We're proud of how well our infrastructure held up following the Christchurch earthquake, and it's the same rigorous commitment to ensuring our network is safe and structurally sound that will ensure Hawke's Bay has never been better prepared in the event of an earthquake.

Mark Kinzig
State Highways Manager
Napier