



Napier and Hastings Rotary turn 75 years old



From left, Jane James, Hastings president Brian James, Sir Douglas Graham, Lady Graham and Napier president Brian Williams.

Rotary's Hastings beginnings

The first "interest" meeting of the Hastings Rotary Club was held in the Chamber of Commerce Rooms on Monday, April 7, 1924.

Attending from Auckland were George Fowlds, a former Minister of Education, and prime mover of the introduction of Rotary into New Zealand, and Charles Rhodes, a director of Rotary International. Also present were

Charles Odlin, president of the Wellington Rotary Club, and J Edmundson, president of the newly formed Napier Rotary Club.

The aims and purpose of Rotary were explained, the proposals formally endorsed, and the first committee elected. W Richmond was voted as the first president, C Gardner, vice president, WJ Rowe, treasurer, and G

Roach, secretary.

Many familiar Hastings names were among the first members. They included: Hallett, Phillips, Chambers, Bone, French, O'Meara, Hislop, Rainbow, Maddison, Whitlock, Hobbs and Westerman.

The first luncheon meeting was held at the YMCA Rooms, on the site now occupied by the County Club, on Tuesday, April 15.

Rotary's Napier beginnings

The Napier Rotary Club is older than the Hastings Rotary Club — but by two days only!

President of the Auckland Rotary Club, George Fowlds, and vice president Charles Rhodes, together with the Wellington Club President, Charles Odlin, made a personal canvas of Napier's professional and business community, the result of which was the formation of the Napier Rotary Club on Saturday, April 5, 1924.

There were 22 foundation members, and they elected Nat Kettle as their first president, JI Cato, vice president, AJ Dixon, treasurer, and RM Chadwick, secretary.

A letter of apology was received from Nat Kettle with a notice of his resignation as president, due to pressure of business, and JH Edmundson, founder of Industrial Gases (NZ) Ltd, was elected in his place.

The first regular luncheon

meeting was held in the Napier YMCA on April 14.

In the list of foundation members are the well-known Napier names of Geddis, Hobson, McClurg, Peters, Reaney, Spackman and Gilray.

After meeting in the Caledonian Hotel, the club shifted to Blythes Department Store, where the luncheon charge was 1/9d, and they remained there for 19 years.

Rotarians celebrate 75th anniversary

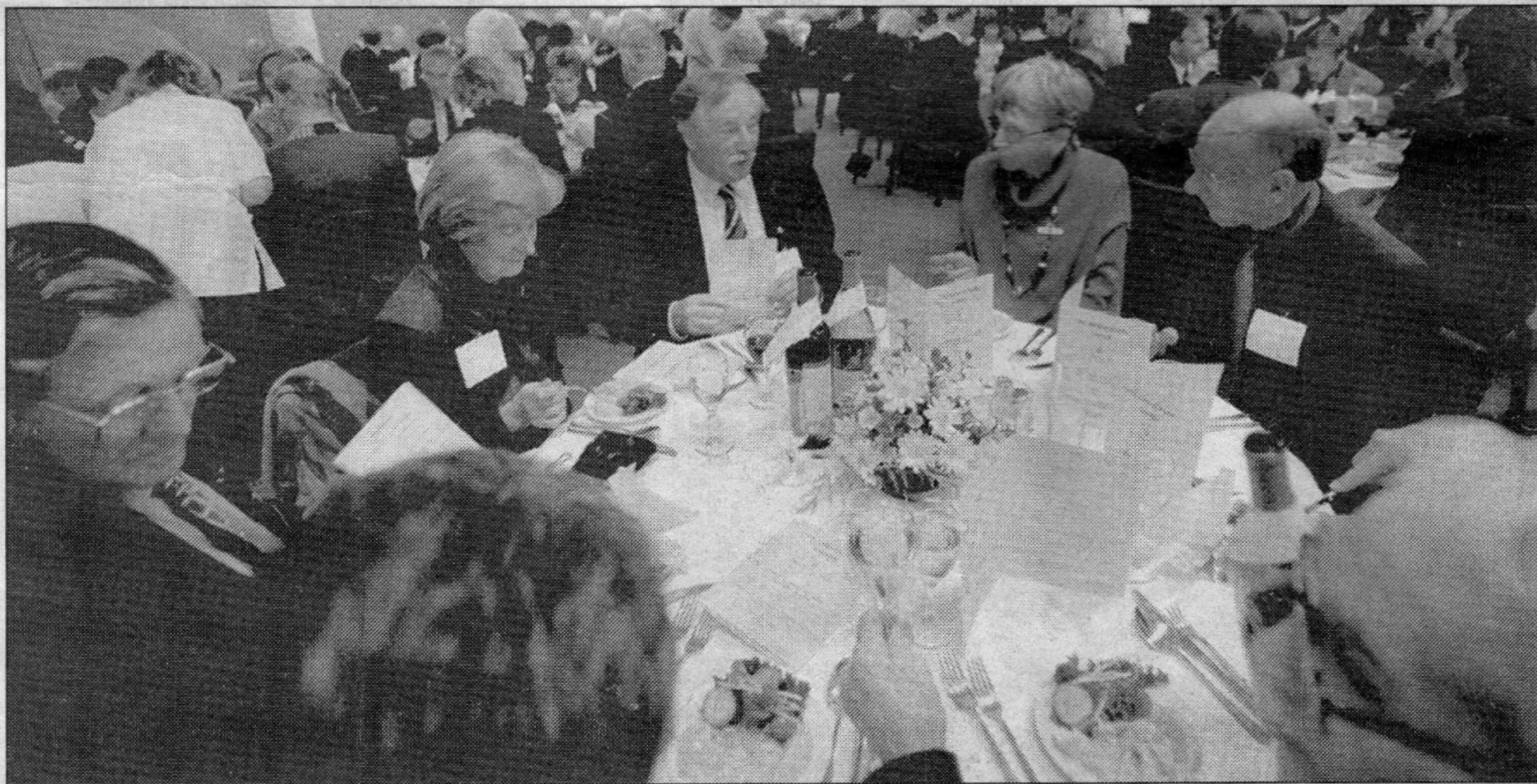
The Hastings and Napier Rotary Clubs celebrated their 75th anniversary with a combined dinner at the Havelock North Community Centre on Thursday, June 10.

Highlights of the evening were a talk on the Treaty of Waitangi by Minister of Treaty Negotia-

tions Sir Douglas Graham; brief histories of the Hastings and Napier clubs by long-time members, Frank Crist, Hastings, and Rodney Wimsett, Napier; and the presentation of Rotary's highest award to two Hastings' members, Bryon Higgins and Gordon Lee. These awards were presented by

the district governor and former All Black, Ron Horsley of Taupo.

One hundred and fifty people attended the function which was jointly hosted by the president of the Hastings Club, Brian James, and the Napier president, Brian Williams. John Peryer was master of ceremonies.



Above: The anniversary dinner was held on Thursday, June 10.

How it all started

In the early 1900s, Paul Harris, a 36-year-old lawyer practising out of Chicago, felt a need to "escape" the pressures of the big city, even if only for an hour or so, and recapture the easy-going, care-free friendliness he had known in the small town he had come from.

He decided to invite two or three of his friends to meet with him one evening, and see what they thought of his idea of weekly meetings in each other's offices, to share their business experiences and problems, and enjoy fellowship with each other. It was

agreed there would only be one man from each occupation, and a criteria for membership was that "they be friendly".

The first meeting was held in February, 1905, with four in attendance.

From that small beginning, Rotary has grown into an international organisation with more than a million members. The organisation funds worldwide programmes such as "Polio Plus" for the eradication of Poliomyelitis.

Rotary first came to New Zealand in 1921 when clubs were organised in Auckland and Wellington.