

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT
HASTINGS DISTRICT BEAUTIFYING SOCIETY
1974/75

When our Society was formed in 1969, our objective was simply stated as an endeavour to improve the appearance of Hastings and its environs as a place to live and work, by fostering the preservation and the planting of trees, and by encouraging better standards of town planning and architectural design.

Aided by a small but enthusiastic band of members, your committee has struggled to gain acceptance by Council and public alike of the concept that streets are pleasanter when they are tree-lined, and we have consistently pressed our view on Council that new developments such as Flaxmere should incorporate tree planting as an integral part of street design.

We have carried out a number of campaigns, aided from time to time by the enthusiastic support of high school pupils, to persuade householders to plant trees on their front sections, and in this we have met some limited success as may be seen in parts of Karanu and Grove Rds; however by and large we have met with little success in our efforts to reintroduce trees in the streets of Hastings, and the demands of the motor car on the one hand, and underground reticulation on the other, have largely nullified our plans.

We do however applaud the efforts of Council to establish trees in the central part of Heretaunga St., and we may yet see an ordinance established such as exists in New Plymouth and Invercargill for the registration and protection of notable trees within the city boundaries.

In 1970 we convened a town planning seminar to discuss the future development of Hastings, and in particular the then-new suburb of Flaxmere, many of whose features have disturbed us profoundly as shortsighted and likely to lead to sociological and environmental disasters, and we tabled a number of suggestions to overcome these undesirable tendencies. Although not all our ideas have been accepted, some at least appear to have filtered through to the planning authorities, and we believe that not all our efforts have been in vain.

In recent years, much of our efforts have been directed towards the establishment of the Pakowhai Country Park, which began in a small way in an effort to create an area of native bush and bird reserve on the banks of the old Ngaururoro River, and which has grown to a much larger project with the formation of a Trust Board incorporating many different groups drawn not only from Hastings but Hawke's Bay as a whole, and this is now progressing very satisfactorily indeed though further financial support is still urgently needed.

Apart from Pakowhai, the past year has been marked by little activity in the tree planting field, but several public meetings have been called, notably on October 8th 1974 at which the three mayoral candidates were invited to express their views on tree planting and designation for protection, at which the successful candidate coined the felicitous phrase that "a city without trees is a city on its knees"; we hope that now in office Mr. O'Connor will not forget this implicit promise.

Over the last two years a number of objections were lodged by Mr. Mark von Dadelzen and Mr. Martin Brown on behalf of the Society against the Hastings City Council in the matter of the Town Planning Scheme, and a public meeting was called to discuss the District Scheme.

The objection relating to the pleasantness of the Hastings Central Business District resulted in the Council adopting a new statement of policy, but Council declined to adopt a time scale for the implementation of proposed pedestrian malls.

The objection relating to the provision of more small reserves in the city was taken to the Town and Country Planning Appeal Board without success.

Because the provisions for the preservation of historic and aesthetically interesting buildings were considered inadequate, the Appeal Board amended the District Scheme to improve the relevant ordinances.

An objection and appeal relating to planning for the needs of the disabled and elderly involved a great deal of research, and the Society records its grateful thanks to those many persons throughout New Zealand who assisted in the presentation of the submissions and evidence. The Appeal Board was entirely sympathetic with the Society's concern, relating as it did to the safety of everyone in the community and the rehabilitation of the disabled. However the Board considered its powers to be limited, and concluded that considerable research was required before ordinances could be adopted. Mr. Mark von Döbelzen subsequently made submissions to a Parliamentary Select Committee on the Disabled Persons Community Welfare Bill, and this Bill has now been passed and the Act required that the needs of the disabled must now be protected in the design and construction of streets and buildings. The Havelock North Borough Council is considering adopting planning provisions to protect the interests of the disabled in its coming review of the Borough District Scheme, following representations by the Society.

The Patron's Cup for the best commercial planting was awarded last year to Firth Concrete Ltd., Karamu Rd., while the Rosser Cup for the best private planting went to Mr. & Mrs. Ramage, 700 Rainbow Avenue. A proposal by the Railways Department to remove the oak trees bordering Otene Road between Tomoana and Raahapia Road was modified thanks to the efforts of Mr. Bill Mathewson, and this fine stand has now been relieved after extensive pruning and selective felling.

The Society's planting of Acer Negundo Variiegata on the Great South Road continues to grow, and is now in fine spring leaf, although many casualties have occurred during the year, apparently largely due to careless verge cutting.

Annual General Meeting. Hitherto our AGM has been held in mid-winter, and this may have contributed to poor attendances; this year we have decided to hold it in a warmer month, and the date has been fixed for Tuesday, November 18th at 8pm in the Hastings City Council Chambers. Please make an effort to turn out, since important decisions for the future of the Society must be made. In particular I feel that I have been President long enough, and fresh leadership is urgently needed if the Society is to regain its initiative and make its views effective. We have now been without an Hon. Secretary for two years, and this key position must be filled if the Society is to function at all. Our patron, Mr. Duncan MacIntyre, is now leaving the district to pursue his political career elsewhere, while of our two vice-presidents, the death of Sir James Wattle comes as a sad blow, for his practical assistance and encouragement was a constant support. Our other vice-president, Mr. Bernard Chambers, resigned last year, and both these offices are now vacant. Of our original committee of ten members, many have since left the district or for other reasons resigned, and for this reason nominations for the following offices are called for: Patron, President, two Vice-Presidents, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer (presently Mr. Bruce Pippard), ten committee members.

A statement of our current balance sheet is enclosed.

Annual subscription (72) is now due, and should be paid direct to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. B. Pippard, Messrs. Carr & Stanton, 120 Karamu Rd., Hastings.

M. J. Bostock
N.J. Bostock, President.