

KEPT PLEDGE

Club has left its mark

It kept its pledge, achieved more than its founders' wildest hopes and now, in the face of modern pressures, bows out with a final flourish. But behind it the Napier Thirty Thousand Club leaves a chapter in history.

It has also provided years of pleasure for the people of Napier and the thousands of visitors who stay in the city during the year.

When the Thirty Thousand Club was formed in 1913 its members pledged to keep it alive until the population reached 30,000. Just 62 years later, with the population nearing 50,000, the club winds up with a

colonnade, the Sound Shell, the gazing bowl and the world-renowned statue of Pania.

In affairs further afield the club assisted the Hukarere Maori Girls' College chapel fund to the extent of \$5000; helped to develop the Tangolo Falls reserve (destroyed a few years later in the earthquake); added its weight to the Hawke's Bay Science Fair and Wool Week; and provided free trains from Central Hawke's Bay for Shopping Week.

The club also sponsored the junior wildlife organisation, gave \$200 to Hawke's Bay swimmer Keith Hancox to cover expenses on his English Channel swim, and provided an "incentive" donation to anyone prepared to start a Napier aquarium.

"FUN SESSIONS"

As well as the popular Christmas Mardi Gras, there were the "fun sessions" in the Municipal Theatre, Napier, which raised more than \$16,000

for the Second World War effort.

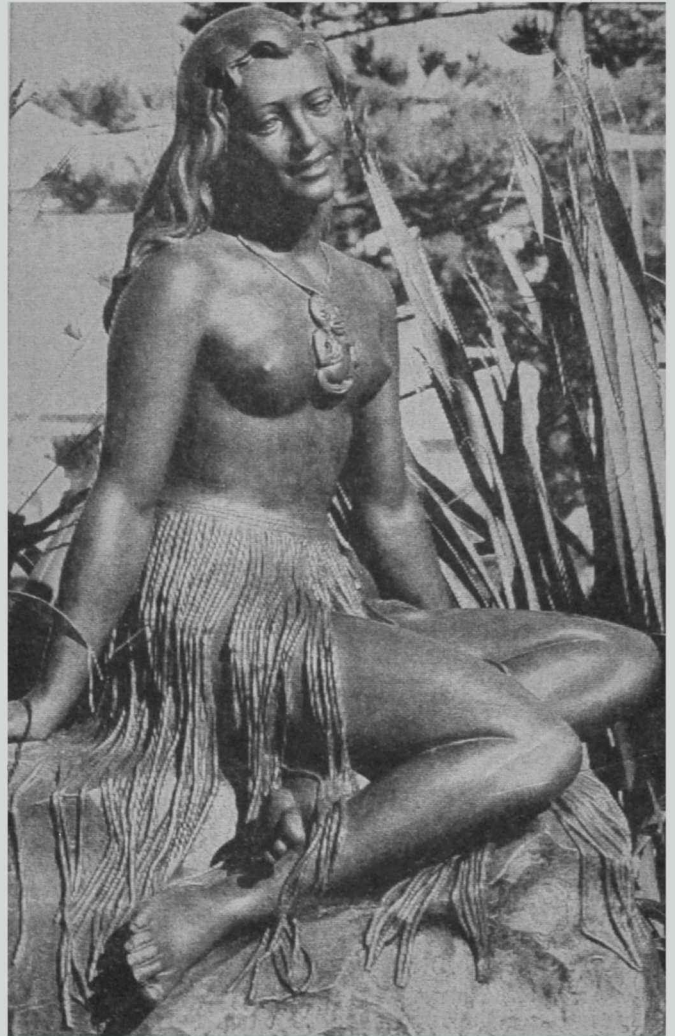
During its history the Napier Thirty Thousand Club has sponsored a number of New Zealand "firsts". These include:

- The first queen carnival.
- The first Sound Shell.
- The first open-air skating area.
- The first paddling pool.
- The first statue to perpetuate a Maori legend.

But indicative of the wide ramifications of this organisation was its interest in arranging the London Wax Museum exhibition and the New Zealand-wide tour of the Adi Cakabou Girls' College Choir, and the purchase of the Bishop's throne and prayer stool for the cathedral.

It also supported the Napier Competitions Society.

All this, and more, because a group of citizens banded together in 1913 to provide entertainment during the visit of HMS New Zealand to Napier a year earlier.



"AS SHE LINGERED ON THE SEA SHORE, sunning her dark waving tresses . . ." A line from the poem Pania of the Reef by V. May Cottrell. Mrs Cottrell based her poem on the old Maori legend of Pania and her Maori lover Karitoki, the legend chosen by the Thirty Thousand Club for its gift to the city.



KEITH HANCOX

final gesture to the city — a donation of nearly \$15,000 to various cultural and community organisations.

Ironically, the club, which was formed to serve the community, is winding up because of the upsurge in the number of other service clubs in the city. It has outlived its usefulness.

FIRM MONUMENTS

For a club which started with very little else but enthusiasm, it leaves to the city of Napier firm monuments of its achievements. Many of these monuments are built on land pushed up by the 1931 earthquake, covered by debris from the stricken town and developed into beauty spots and attractions known throughout the world.

The record of early fundraising achievements are not complete because they were lost in the fire which followed the earthquake.

However, many of the club's gifts give daily pleasure to residents and tourists alike. They include the Tom Parker fountain, the floral clock,

The statue of Pania was presented to the city in 1954. Its cost has never been revealed.

Pania was the idea of Mr Via Wallis, a member of the Thirty Thousand Club for almost 40 years, and Mr Horace Cottrell.

A group of six students from Hukarere Girls' College were chosen to pose for the original photographs, with the final honour going to Miss May Robin.

The work was contracted to an Italian firm and, after three preliminary sketches — one depicting Pania with a Hawaiian lei — the final design was reached and the statue (one and a quarter times life-size) was placed in position on a piece of rock quarried from Battery Road.

FINAL TOUCH

A final touch to the history of Pania was added during Napier's centennial celebrations in 1974 when the daughter of Miss Robin, Joanne Pania Whatiri, sat beside a model of Pania on the Napier City Council's float. She even wore the tiki belonging to her mother

Romantic

Maori

legend . . .

when she modelled for Pania.

Of the many interesting Maori legends and historical tales of the East Coast, no story is more romantic than that of Pania, the beautiful maiden of the sea people, and Karitoki, her handsome Maori lover.

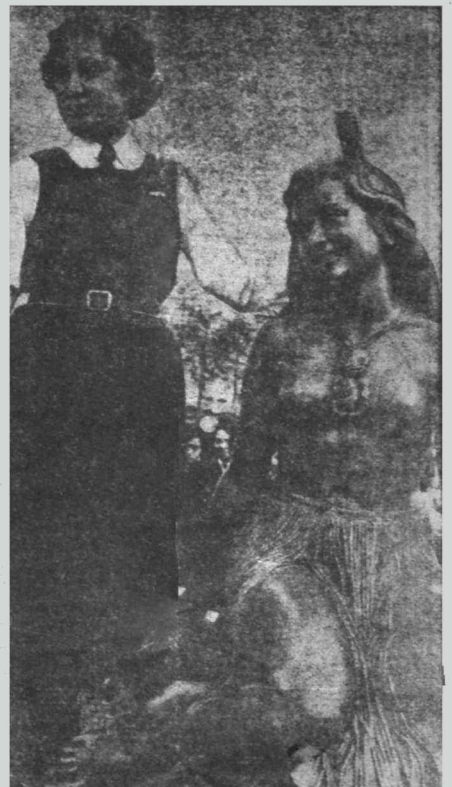
It is said that Pania lived with her lover-husband in a whare at a spot now known as Sturm's Gully, near the

foot of the Napier breakwater. But the sea people were for ever calling — at the sunset hour and at the dawn, when storms broke in fury on the shore or tranquil moonlight gleamed upon the waters of the Pacific.

NEVER TO RETURN

She resisted their call for a long time, but the lure of the underworld of the sea people became irresistible, and she swam out to meet them — just once. The sea people came from the depths and surrounded her; they drew her down into the caverns of the sea, never to return to the land of mortals.

And now, in these modern days, if you pass over the reef where the kingfish shoal and the fishermen in their motor-boats catch them at dawn, if you gaze into the depths you will see Pania with arms outstretched, ever striving to return to the lover she left on that fateful day when she heeded the call of the sea people.

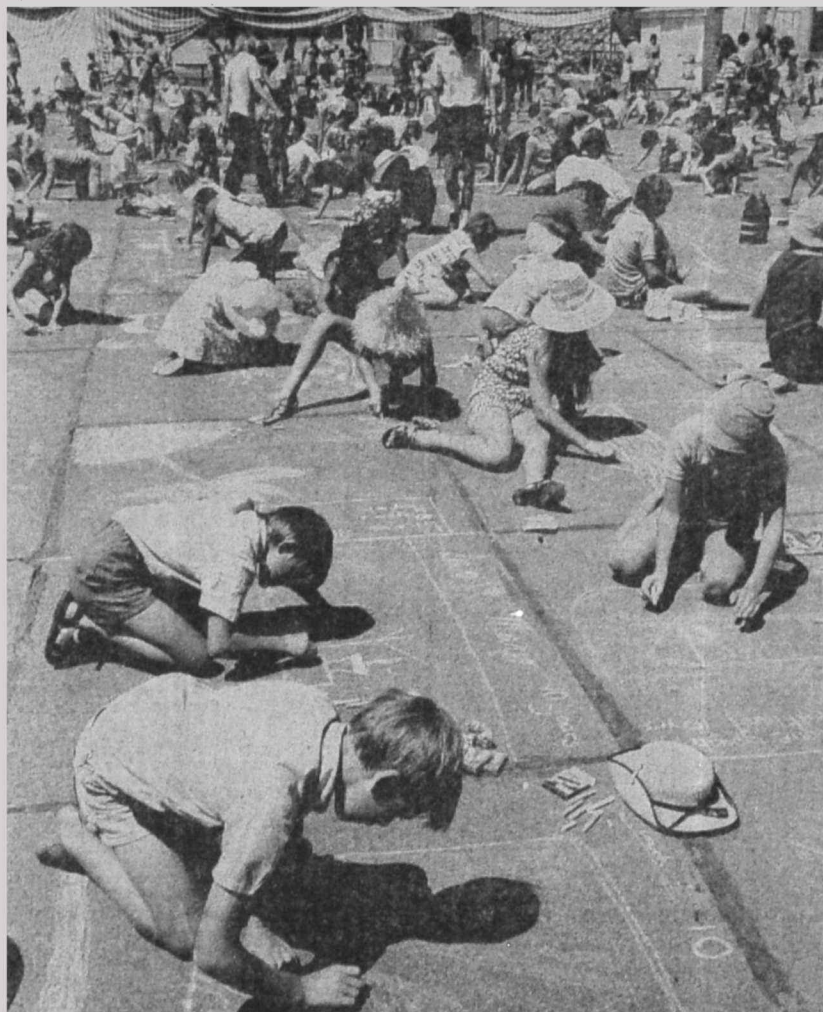


MISS MAY ROBIN with the statue she modelled for — Pania.

CLUB'S LEGACY



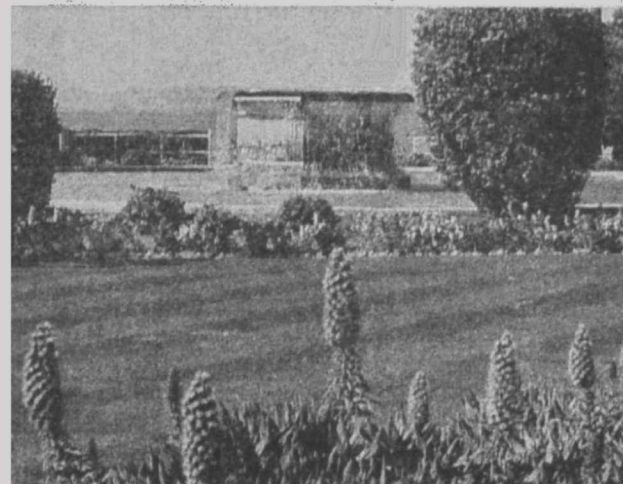
THE UPTHRUST OF THE 1931 EARTHQUAKE caused the sea to recede, leaving a vast expanse of shingle on the foreshore. The earthquake ruins were shifted to this area to allow a start to be made on rebuilding the town. Today the Marine Parade — Napier's "golden mile", with many of its attractions provided by the Napier Thirty Thousand Club — provides beauty and fun for everyone.



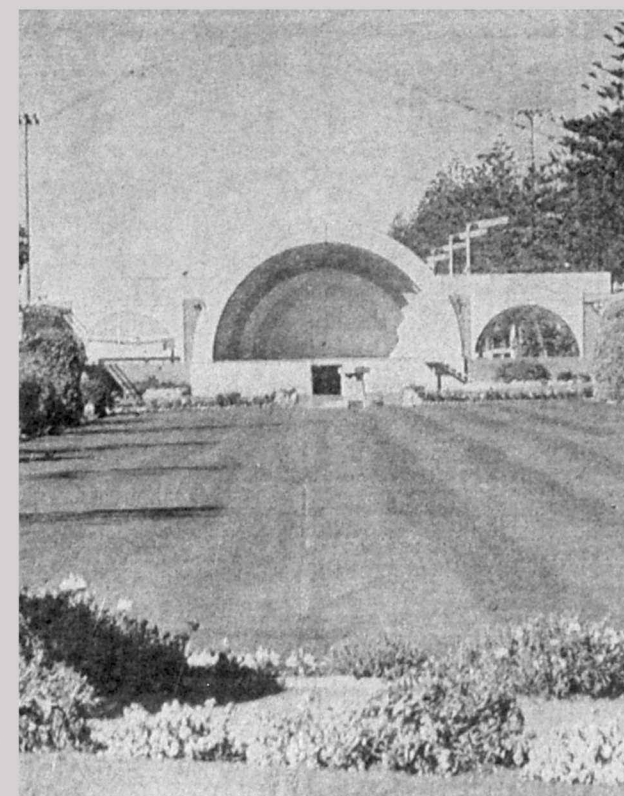
THE CONCRETE SLABS IN FRONT OF THE SOUND SHELL, which are used annually for the pavement artists' competition, were donated by citizens already hit by rebuilding costs after the earthquake. The price for the large slabs was \$2 and, for the smaller ones, \$1.50. The area was built to provide a place for people to gather for functions.



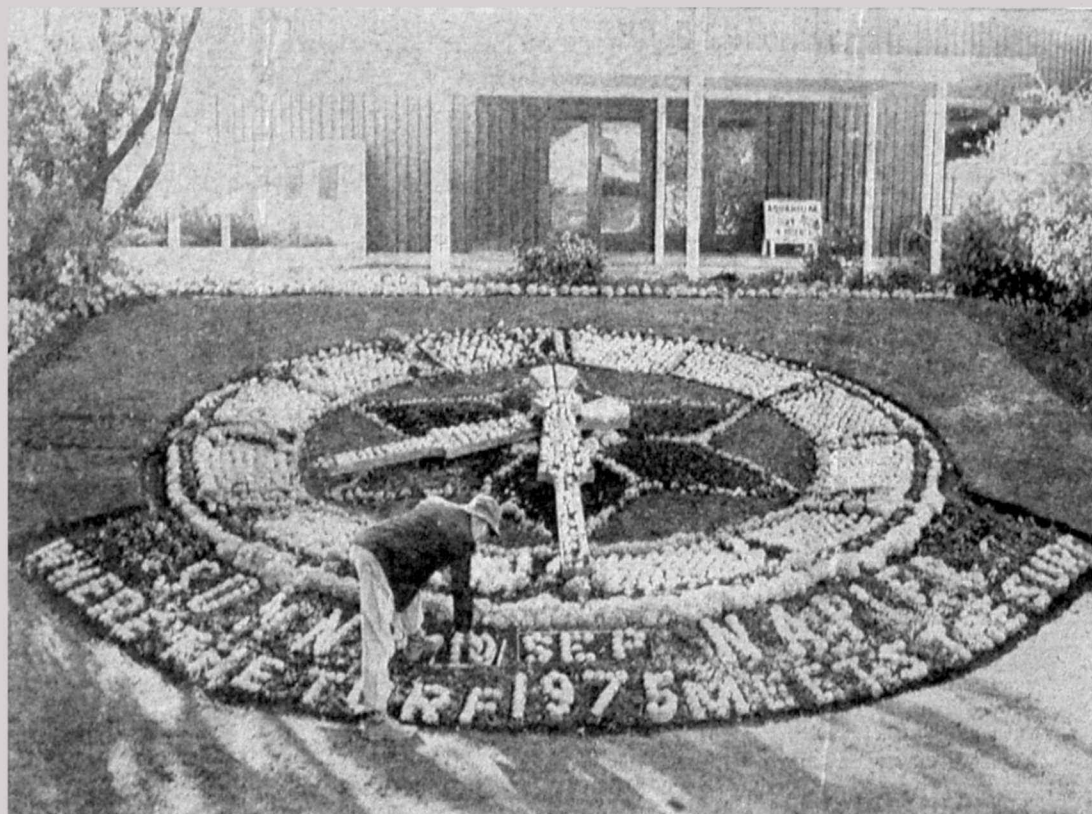
WHILE THE PESSIMISTS FORECAST that Napier was finished after the earthquake, others had the determination to rebuild a better city. Under the guidance of Mr Charlie Morse, as Mayor, a period of considerable activity took place and a municipal theatre was planned. A widespread appeal by the Thirty Thousand Club provided the seating for the theatre.



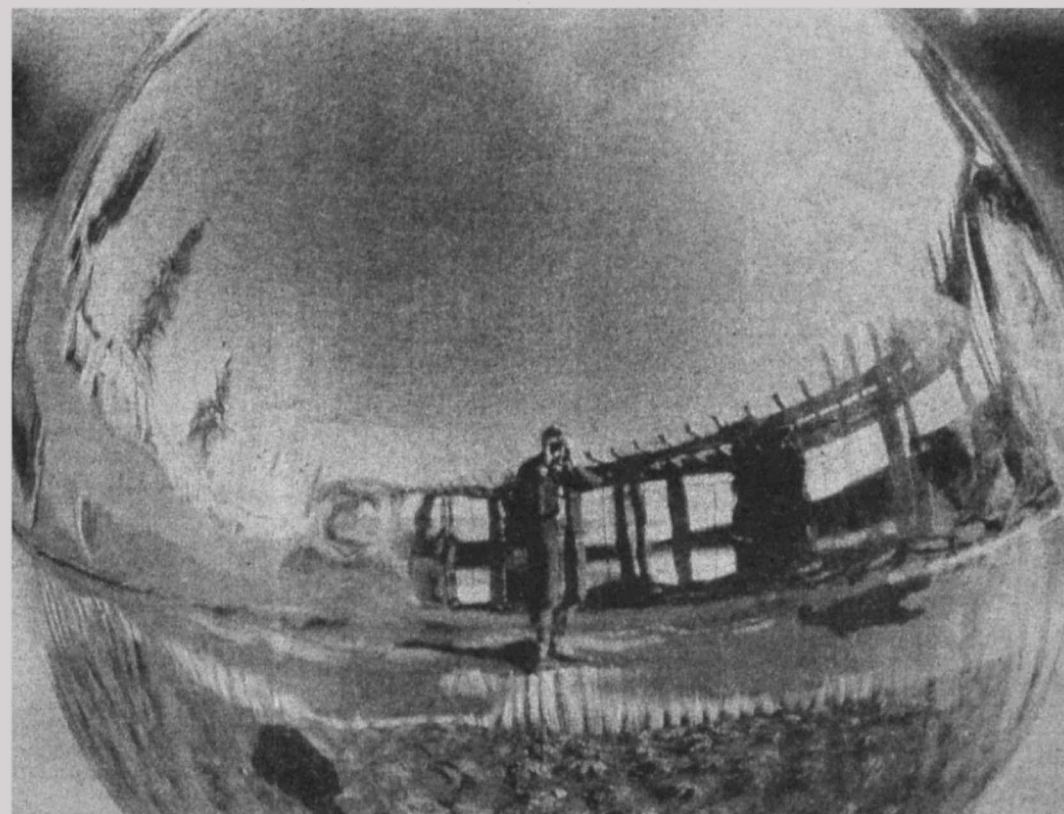
THE TOM-PARKER FOUNTAIN was given to the city by the former vice-president of the club.



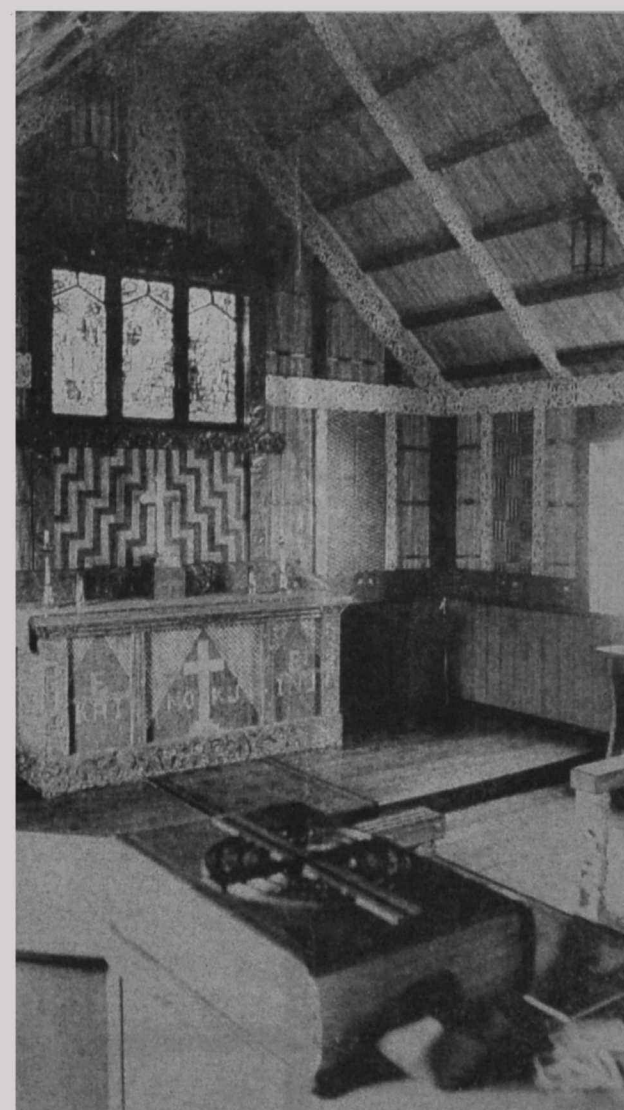
BUILT ON SPOIL COVERING EARTHQUAKE DEBRIS, the green lawns and flower gardens north of the Sound Shell area provide a peaceful spot for relaxation or a quiet lunchtime stroll.



A FORMER PATRON, MR A. B. HURST, AND MRS HURST provided the floral clock, which is set in the sloping lawns outside the War Memorial building. The clock carries the inscription "Napier — Where the turf meets the surf".



"WHAT IS THIS LIFE IF FULL OF CARE we have no time to stand and stare?" The Gazing Bowl, set in the gardens below the Veronica Bell, was donated by Mr W. Harvey, a former vice-president of the Napier Thirty Thousand Club.



PART OF THE CHAPEL at Hukarere Girls' College, Napier, which the club assisted with a donation of \$6000. The college, which now acts as a hostel for Maori students at Napier Girls' High School, recently celebrated its centennial.



THIS PARADE MUST SURELY WARRANT PRIDE OF PLACE IN the many "firsts" the Thirty Thousand Club achieved during its lifetime. The date was 1913 and the event was the first Mardi Gras ever held in Napier, when even the horses were decorated. Crowds of people lined Emerson Street to see what was to become an annual event.

Some of the men behind the club

During its 62 years of publicising Napier and organising a full programme of events throughout that period, the Napier Thirty Thousand Club has had only four secretaries.

Mr Douglas Wilson was appointed when the club



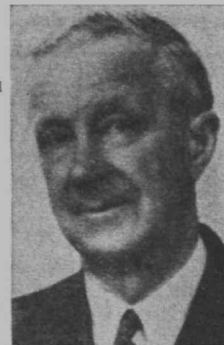
MR ARTHUR PAXIE
1971-1975

became an incorporated society in October 1913. He retired after two years due to pressure of work in his young accountancy practice.

The following year a paid organiser was in charge of arrangements, but then the club came into contact with a young man of boundless energy — Mr Percy Spiller, who was also instrumental in forming the Napier Frivolity Minstrels.

Mr Spiller was at the time secretary of the Napier Competitions Society and went from there to being secretary to most active organisations in the town, including the Fire Brigade.

During Mr Spiller's time as secretary of the



MR S. PERCY SPILLER
1915-1950

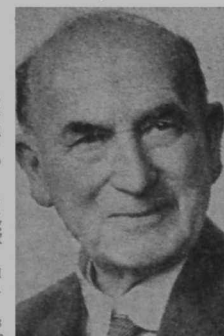


MR J. VICTOR WALLIS
1950-1971

Thirty Thousand Club, he was closely allied with a man whose name was to become synonymous with the club — Mr Vic Wallis.

When Mr Spiller died, Mr Wallis became secretary and retained that position for the next 21 years resigning only when his health began to fail.

He was succeeded by the present secretary, Mr Arthur Paxie.



MR C. DOUGLAS WILSON
1913-1915

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THE FINAL GESTURE — GRANTS TO NAPIER

Grants totalling nearly \$15,000 mark the final gesture to the city by the Napier Thirty Thousand Club.

Older and younger members of the community, plus the arts and music will all benefit from the club's generosity.

The largest single grant — \$3000 — goes to the Hawke's Bay Art Gallery and Museum's centennial project.

The Napier Development Association and the YMCA are among other major recipients.

The complete list of grants is:

- Centennial project, for seating \$3000.
- Napier Development Association, for tiered seating, forms, piano and cur-

tains for entertainment, and Christmas holiday programme \$2500.

- YMCA, for youth activities \$2000.
- Napier City Council, for work in the Sound Shell area \$1000.
- Atawai Home, Taradale, for lounge furniture \$1000.
- Frivolity Minstrels \$1000.
- Napier City Band \$1000.
- Caledonian Society and Pipe Band \$500.
- Napier Competitions Society \$500.
- Napier Repertory Society \$500.
- Friendly Neighbours \$500.
- Birthright \$500.
- Hawke's Bay Childrens

Home, for day-care centre \$250.

• Napier Aquarium Society, a sum for the Percy Spiller memorial tanks, and tanks to commemorate the work of Mr J. V. Wallis as secretary of the Thirty Thousand Club.



THE GAZING BOWL on the Marine Parade. The bowl was presented by the Thirty Thousand Club.

Queen carnival 62 years ago

The club's first Mardi Gras festival, in 1913, was spectacular, and introduced the first queen carnival the country had known.

Not perhaps the queen carnival known today, but a carnival full of pageantry, pomp and ceremony.

The queen was not chosen on her vital statistics but on the number of votes recorded during a six-week voting campaign. The winner, Mrs J. A. Rosewarne gained 23,864 votes, becoming Napier's first, and also the country's first, "queen".

The 1913 programme lists among its attractions a singing competition which required the competitor to hold a live pig during his "vocal effort". It also re-

quired the artist to sing "lustily that the rotundity of his tones could be heard by all, to charm not only the ears of the pig but also the people".

Tilting at the bucket, javelin events for both men and women, and bobbing for buns were all part of the fun.

The buns were covered with treacle to make them more palatable. Fastidious competitors who wanted golden syrup or jam were asked to provide their own.

The welfare of citizens was paramount also, as it was recorded that "at the hour of 12.30 the Queen's Court shall dissemble and all people shall return to their homes for purposes of resuscitation".