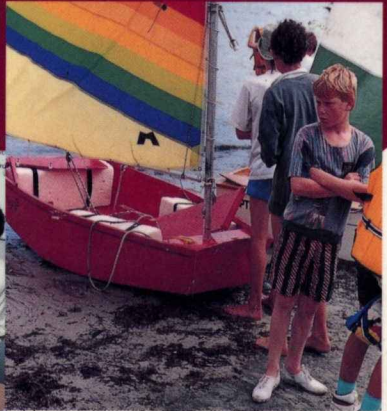
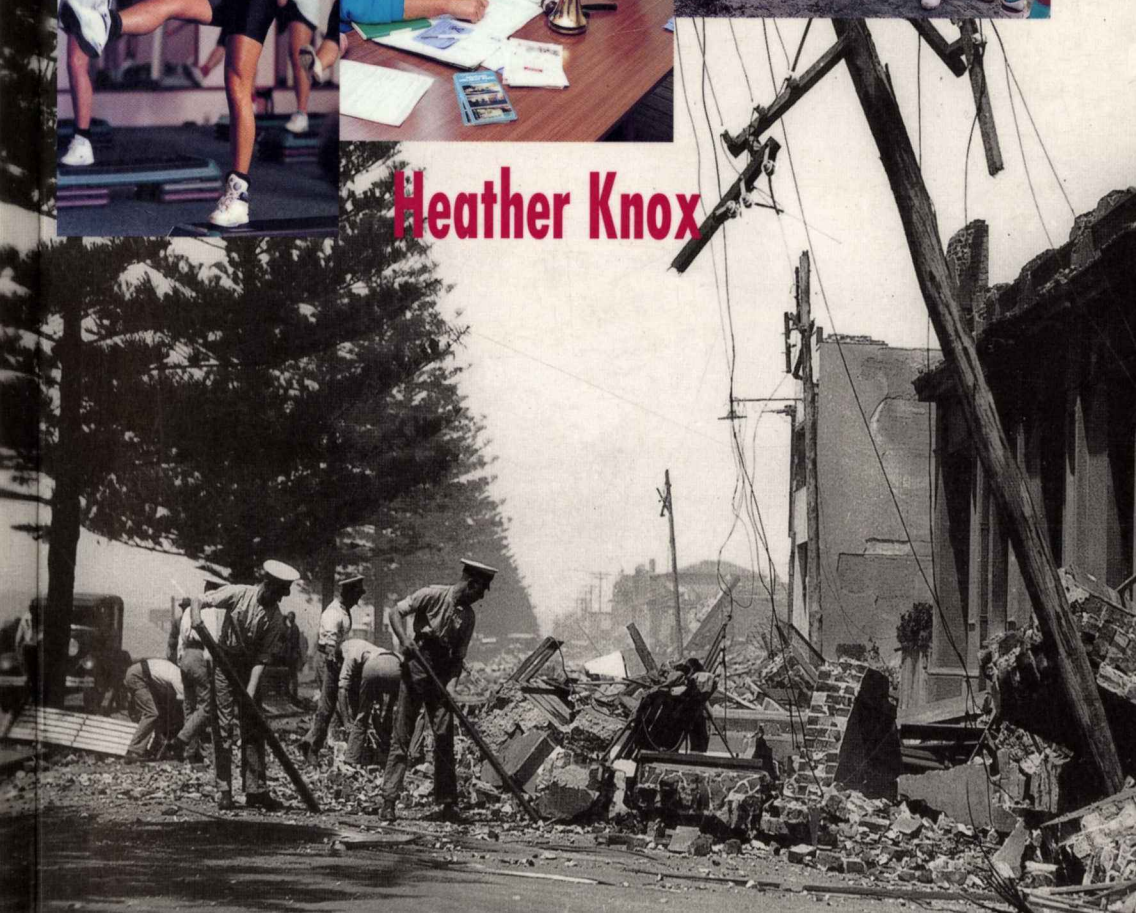


# YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD IDEA DOWN

*A celebration of the YMCA in  
Hawke's Bay 1890 - 1995*



**Heather Knox**



## *Foreword*

In 1994, the Board of Directors of the YMCA of Hawke's Bay decided to have the story written of the YMCA's in the Hawke's Bay. There were two events which prompted that decision. In the first place, 1994 was the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the first YMCA in London, England. Secondly, in March of 1994, the YMCA's of Napier and Hastings amalgamated to form the YMCA of Hawke's Bay. There had been talk of an amalgamation for several years and a trial had operated since 1992. The amalgamation was prompted by a desire to save the expense of employing two Executive Directors who were only twenty or so kilometres apart, but also by the fact that there was a call to extend the work beyond the confines of the two cities. Subsequently, the work has now been established in Central Hawke's Bay and Wairoa.

Reading the story of the work in the Bay over the past 105 years, I have been somewhat humbled by the example of countless scores of local people who have given of themselves in the service of their community through the YMCA. Time and time again men and women over the century have enhanced the quality of life of local citizens by sacrificial service counting neither the time nor resources they contributed. Their effort has been the glue that sticks a community together and has made this small patch of the world a better place to live. This is the stuff that community organisations are made of.

Choosing a title for the book was an exercise that tested the imaginations of several meetings of YMCA people. Some of the suggestions were, "The Y's Way", "The Y in the Bay", "Working from the heart", "The Innovators". Finally the title "You can't keep a good idea down", was settled on for the following reasons –

The YMCA is, in its essence, simply an idea . . . it includes a group of local people inventing and operating programmes to enhance the quality of life of those taking part . . . The work is based on Christian values and the teachings of Jesus ("that they all may be one . . . do these things unto the least of these my brethren") . . . it is locally autonomous yet affiliated to a world body through a National Council . . . as needs change, so too must the organisation and its programmes change . . . its primary focus is the development of the whole person, body, mind and spirit . . . And those are the main elements of the YMCA, an idea which can't be kept down.

This emergence of the YMCA, the 'good idea', is happening all over the world. Since the collapse of the Iron Curtain, YMCA's are popping in every Eastern European country. Over the past few years, YMCA's have been emerging in China. And in Hawke's Bay, who can tell when next the work will emerge as a community identifies a need and forms a YMCA as an appropriate response.

Dennis Oliver

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## *Introduction*

One day in 1844 a small group of English drapery apprentices gathered for prayers after work, and started a social movement which was to spread throughout the world. The group called itself the Young Men's Christian Association and grew from prayer services to evangelical meetings to lectures, always aiming to improve young men's spiritual conditions. Between word-of-mouth and the work of founder George Williams, the idea spread to other parts of England and eventually overseas. R.B. Shalders, a London member, emigrated to New Zealand in 1855 and established a YMCA in Auckland, which was followed by Associations in Wellington, Christchurch, Nelson, Dunedin and Invercargill.

The YMCA movement reached Hawke's Bay at the turn of the century, and quickly became established as a strong community organisation, a profile which has endured to the present day despite the vast social changes of the past hundred years. In the 1890s, the area boasted a thriving agricultural and pastoral economy, and a population of around 15,000 settlers. Wealthy Pakeha landowners and businesspeople enjoyed a middle-class Victorian culture of genteel grandeur, while the majority of Maori lived a traditional lifestyle on the land. Over one hundred years later the Hawke's Bay community is radically different, yet the YMCA is still an active force in the area. In 1995 the organisation runs forty programmes ranging from employment training to health and fitness to youth work, and employs thirty full-time and twenty-one part-time staff.

In the intervening years the organisation has been destroyed by earthquake and fire, forced to close through lack of funds and alternately praised and condemned for its social policies. The movement has operated in main centres and rural localities, opening and closing facilities according to local needs. Throughout these changes the YMCA has retained community needs and individual development as its priorities for action, and has consistently worked from a basis of Christian values.

This book is an attempt to record these stories of continuity and change in the life of the YMCA in Hawke's Bay. The inevitable constraints of time and resources have limited the depth and breadth of investigations on numerous occasions. There are also many instances where a lack of written records or memories means we know little of the organisation's activities or people. While every effort has been made to obtain full and accurate information, omissions of names, dates and projects have nevertheless been unavoidable, and many worthy people and events remain unacknowledged.

The book is organised around the three main goals of the international YMCA movement - to develop the body, mind and spirit of members. Two further elements of the organisation in Hawke's Bay have been significant enough to warrant separate chapters; firstly, the contribution of the YMCA in Hawke's Bay to its local community, and secondly the people behind the organisation's activities. It is hoped that this first published record of the YMCA in Hawke's Bay provides a comprehensive description of the local movement's development, and will lead to further research on the role of the YMCA in New Zealand's past.

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## CHRONOLOGY

1890 YMCA established in Napier, calling itself the "YMCA of Hawke's Bay", with 37 inaugural members. Meetings held at Atheneum Hall.

1910 YMCA established in Hastings. Meetings held at Council Chambers.

1911 Hastings YMCA moves to leased building on corner of St. Aubyn Street and Station Street.

1920s Napier YMCA moves into premises upstairs from Murray Roberts & Co., corner of Emerson Street and Marine Parade.

Early 1920s Hastings YMCA operating from Queen Street.

1931 Earthquake severely damages both Napier and Hastings YMCAs. Napier building destroyed, and with no security for mortgage the association was declared bankrupt. Hastings building damaged and sold, and association went into recess with a Trust Fund for re-establishment held by joint Trustees Gordon Roach, Norm Tifford and Sir Edwin Bate.

Early 1950s Hastings YMCA re-established by Ray Whiteman and Guy Baillie.

1955 Camp Opoutama established by Hastings YMCA.

1960 Hastings YMCA stadium built in Railway Road.

1963 Napier Police Youth Club transferred to newly-formed YMCA. Operating from the recently closed Hastings Street School.

1967 Napier YMCA purchased Latham Street property from Hawke's Bay Milk Treatment Company.

1983 Hastings stadium and hostel sold to Hastings District Council.

1985 Napier Health and Fitness Centre moved from Dickens Street to Latham Street.

1991 Fire at Napier Health and Fitness Centre.

1994 Hastings and Napier YMCAs amalgamated to form YMCA of Hawke's Bay.

## *Chapter One - The Body*

*Get out of doors! 'tis there you'll find  
The better things of heart and mind  
Get out beneath some stretch of sky  
And watch the white clouds drifting by  
And all the petty thoughts will fade  
Before the wonders God has made.*

- "Camping for Boys", Hastings YMCA brochure, 1932.

The YMCA is probably best known in Hawke's Bay for its physical recreation programmes, run either through gymnasiums and stadiums or in the outdoors. As with all YMCA activities, the particular focus of physical recreation programmes has shifted with social trends and current needs. At the turn of the century, the YMCA offered structured classes in gymnastics only, and initiated group camping. In later years, sports clubs proliferated as community needs widened, and camps were further developed. Since the 1970s, physical recreation programmes have diversified still further to accommodate the needs of people of varying abilities and ages. Throughout, however, the goal has been not only to develop and strengthen the body, but also to promote the healthy growth of spirit and mind.

The YMCA's earliest physical recreation programmes were structured group events, in line with the organised nature of early twentieth-century leisure. From 1910 Hastings YMCA ran a Swimming Club at the Maddison Baths, and from 1912 Hastings YMCA ran gym classes for young men and women in their Station Street premises. The gym classes were particularly popular, and attracted youths and senior high school students from Napier, Hastings and surrounding districts. In a few years numbers grew from a single group of seventeen members to over sixty. The small number of girls were grouped together in a "Ladies' Class", while the boys were split into age groups. A full-time physical director was required, as well as the voluntary assistants, and Napier YMCA agreed to share the expense of the wages with Hastings.

With an increased membership, the gymnasium moved to a building on the corner of Market Street and Avenue Road. George Kemp remembers going to gym classes there on Saturday mornings in the mid 1920s:

*We would do exercises, lunging and arm stretching, you name it we had it. We had the springboard, we had the parallel bars, we had the vaulting horse and the rings, and the big mattress to land on. We thought this was marvellous.*

These classes were led by Duke (Clarence) Maddox, and his younger brother Max, assisted by a Mr Spooner. Duke had previously toured New Zealand and Australia as a professional boxer, and was hired as an instructor in 1923 to replace

H.L. Firth. Firth had resigned to take up a similar post as physical instructor at the Hamilton YMCA. Ladies' classes, which had first begun in 1912, also boomed and one of the first female members, Ivy Thompson, became Ladies' Instructor in 1922.



*"Ladies' class at the Hastings YMCA gymnasium, 1912".*

*Top row: Doris Corban, Vi Pitt, Alice Corban, —, Leila Pitt, Chloe Bush.*

*Second row: Jean Thompson, —, Ivy Thompson, Mr-Buchanan, Elsie Pitt, Amy Watts, Miss Read.*

*Third row: Bunty Mitchell, Bessy Mitchell, — Horton, — Reed.*

*– Reproduced with the permission of the Hastings District Library.*

In the late 1920s the Hastings YMCA gym club performed regular public displays of members' abilities at the Hastings Municipal Theatre, and George's group was one of those involved:

*Tom, my brother, led the group of boys onto the stage, and we formed ourselves, eventually, after a little bit of a muckup, into a proper line and we did our routine of exercises. Max [Maddox], the clown . . . one guy would come along and grab hold of the bar and do his exercises on it, ups and downs and twirling around and straddling it, and Max would come along and make out that he was going to grab it and purposely miss it, and land flat on his tummy on the stage.*

Being the smallest of his group, Tom Kemp had some particular roles in the display. Duke Maddox would show his strength by walking about the stage doing his exercises with Tom on his shoulders; and for the finale:



*There was a pyramid of six or seven [boys] high, and I [Tom] was at the top. The whole thing would dismantle, tumble, tumble, tumble, til we all finished up in a square at the bottom. It must have been quite spectacular.*

With the arrival of Eric Price as Hastings YMCA director in 1929, the boys' clubs, numbering 120 boys in all, were rearranged and renamed. Each "natural group" was from the same school - Parkvale, Mahora, West - or from the same work area, such as the Newsboys. Tom's group became the Tuxis Boys. At the end of each gymnastics session, the boys would stop for prayers and devotions and sing the Tuxis song:

*Tuxis boys, up and on  
Up to victory, on to fame  
Watch your step and play the game  
Tuxis boys, spell that noise  
T-U-X-I-S, Tuxis, Tuxis boys*

George Kemp remembers, too, the Bible verse his group of boys recited - "Luke 2 and 52: Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and Man". This was repeated after every devotion, following which the boys would have a mug of coffee and half a cabin lunch biscuit. The cabin biscuits were renowned for their hardness, "a little better than a dog biscuit", as George puts it, but were nevertheless "gorged down marvellously".

Organised YMCA camps also originated in these early years as a place for physical fun and growth. Hastings YMCA ran camps at Clive Grange from 1918, with members Fred Musson, Bert Heaton and Flewellyn King serving as the first leaders. Groups of eighteen to twenty boys from the surrounding districts, aged from twelve years, were taken out for up to six days. Camp programmes included explorations of the local area, hikes to Cape Kidnappers, and outdoor skills. In the 1920s YMCA camps were expanded to cover both summer and Easter holidays, and fifty to sixty boys each year spent up to ten days at Te Mata Peak and, from 1929, Waipunga, Eskdale. The Eskdale campsite was on the property of YMCA member D. Yule, and consisted of permanent sleeping quarters, a dining-room and cook-house, playing fields and a swimming hole. The swimming hole was not only for swimming though - it was the compulsory early morning bath for campers, despite the often bitter cold of the Esk River.

Campers were warned to "Wear only Old Clothes!" and instructed to pack their gear in a sugar sack. Cycling camps were popular, with groups sometimes cycling to Waipunga, twelve miles from Napier, exploring the area by bicycle, and cycling home. Camp food was plentiful, beginning with huge cooked breakfasts of porridge, chops, eggs and sausages, and sometimes supplemented by crayfish caught by the boys with reeds. The camp programme was always a full one, including climbing, hiking, swimming, cricket, first-aid lessons and farm work for the Yules. Small parties of boys left the main camp, with an adult leader, to spend a night



*YMCA camps were based at this hay barn at Waipunga, Eskdale, from 1929 to 1932. Boys slept on straw palliasses upstairs in the barn, and bathed in a swimming hole behind the poplar trees.*

under the stars, and day or overnight trips were made to nearby attractions. Popular trips included Tongoio Falls (eleven miles distant), Darkey's Spur, Lake Tutira, Waipatiki Beach and Rocky Basin. Tom and George Kemp recall one memorable trek to White Pine Bush:

*It took all day, up hill and down dale, and we got there about nightfall. The highlight of going was picking blackberries, and we ate what we could on the way. There was one very long-legged guy from Mahora, Trevor Watts, and apparently he knew nothing about hills. One thing you don't do on the hills is run downhill, unless you're completely controlled; well, he had no idea about this. He had very long legs, and going down the hill he just got faster and faster, until he was a blur, completely out of control, going flat out. We could see it coming - down the bottom of the hill was a blackberry bush about half the size of a house, and he had no show of stopping. He didn't have many clothes on, and he went straight into the bush. It took a long, long while to get him out, with hands and an odd knife, and we had to get sticks. He was really torn all over, and I think they had to get him to hospital. There was only one way to describe him - "a bloody black mess".*

Sid Coles remembers a similar overnight trek to Te Puhoe:

*It was a mighty long hike. I remember when we got to lunchtime, one of the things we had was a leg of mutton, and we had a bottle of milk. When we opened the mutton to have a slice each, it was absolutely crawling! We really didn't have a lot of tucker. It was really crawling and we had to throw it away. The milk, with all the travelling, well all you could see was a little knob of butter.*

For some boys, the ghost stories told round the campfire were particularly

memorable. Tom Kemp remembers a story being told of a phantom horserider who rode across the bridge beside the Waipunga woolshed every night. At the moment this story was told, an accomplice of the storyteller would ride a horse across the bridge behind the campfire, to the shock, surprise and general fear of the young campers. The stories apparently “spooked” some Hastings parents too, as Len Webb recalls:

*I was never allowed to go [to camp]. There were horrific stories that came out about what went on there, nothing immoral or anything, but ghosts parading around the place. Something in that place was meant to be haunted. As a youngster, when I went home and told the family about these ghost stories and how kids got frightened of it all, well my mother wouldn't let her little darling go to a camp.*

In addition to physical fun, early YMCA camping was also a place for educational and spiritual development. While the summer camps were run by “the Director”, usually Eric Price, and two young leaders, the Easter camp was run entirely by the boys themselves. The youths chose the campsite, planned the programme, budgeted for expenses and distributed the surplus of funds after camp. In addition to these lessons in organisation and management, Waipunga camps were intended to be thoroughly Christian camps. Daily chapel services were included in the programme, the New Testament appeared on the boys’ kit list, and the purpose of the camp was set out as “helping boys discover the better way - His way - for every activity.” This goal was frequently attained - the Hastings YMCA Annual Report of 1931 recorded that “eleven decisions to live for Christ were made in this period [of the Summer Camp] by eleven boys who would not be satisfied with less than the best.” As the information brochures proclaimed, “Camping and Character Go Hand in Hand At Waipunga”, and Eric Price, Hastings YMCA Secretary, described camping as a method through which boys are coming to love nature, to learn afresh how to live simply and take care of oneself, to experience the skill of friendship and comradeship, and to listen to the voice of God as He speaks to them in the quiet of the out-of-doors.

After World War II, twenty five years after the destruction of the YMCAs of Hawkes Bay in the 1931 earthquake, the movement was reformed and physical recreation programmes were amongst the first to be resurrected. During this period, sports were largely organised as individual clubs in response to community demands. Buildings and facilities were upgraded as numbers and needs grew, and YMCA camps also expanded further with the development of Camp Opoutama at Mahia.

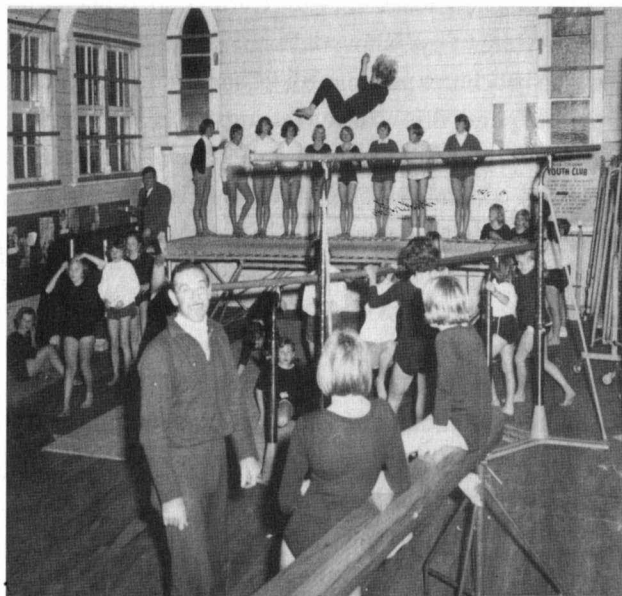
Numerous YMCA clubs opened, operated, and sometimes closed, in the immediate post-war years. In Hastings, Ray Whiteman restarted the YMCA with a gymnastics club and youth group. Ross Duncan, who later became involved with the YMCA as an adult, remembers going to gymnastics at the Y:

*We would meet regularly, and I'm pretty sure it was a Friday night, because I have vivid memories of going into the Wesley Hall in Hastings Street and getting really hot and thirsty and at the end of the night along with chaps like Graeme Richardson, Bruce Jans and Warren Thom and some of those who were members at that time going down to the Excel milkbar and having a milkshake, and that was a regular Friday night activity. I guess that was where my love for gymnastics was born.*

Representatives of the Hastings gymnastics group later travelled to compete at national YMCA Older Boys' Tournaments. These tournaments also involved debating, volleyball and table tennis teams and were ideal places for boys to enjoy physical and social recreation simultaneously. Club member Graeme Richardson recalls the Hastings Club's trips to Christchurch and Wellington, when the boys would travel by train and ferry, be billeted by locals and marvel at such local wonders as Canterbury's mid-winter frosts. Club members also performed public displays of gymnastics on regular occasions, including the annual Gymnastic Display held in the Hastings YMCA Stadium. These programmes provided the public with a valuable insight into the activities of the YMCA, with children from five years old demonstrating folk dances, pyramids, rythmical work and apparatus use.

In Napier, the newly-formed YMCA carried on the gymnastics classes run by the Police Youth Club. The success of the group was partly due to the instruction of Rex Smith, General Secretary of the Napier YMCA.

Rex had taught gymnastics at Lower Hutt YMCA and at Linton Army Camp,



*The Napier YMCA gymnastics group first met at the Hastings Street School as the Police and Citizens Youth Club. Here Rex Smith, Napier's General Secretary, coaches the group in the school hall in the early 1960s. – Photograph courtesy of Rex Smith.*

and his skills and enthusiasm helped create a large and popular club. Members travelled to National Older Boys and Older Girls Tournaments, and a special Silver Squad of children wanting individual, specialised coaching was formed. Doug Fraser, whose children were club members, became involved with the gymnastics group as a voluntary assistant. Doug also served on the Napier YMCA

Board, as Executive Director from 1975-1976, and in 1991 was made a Life Member of the Napier YMCA. A host of other voluntary assistants helped keep the clubs running with support, leadership and administration, including girls' gymnastics instructors Elizabeth Gollop and Miss J. Wright. In 1968 the club moved from its original site at the old Hastings Street School to a new, larger YMCA facility on the site of the old milk treatment station in Latham Street. With more space the club boomed, increasing from 145 members in 1966 to 300 in 1967. Classes were also run from mid-1967 at the Taradale Rugby Club gymnasium, where a further 320 children were involved. Some of the club's members were also regularly winning awards at the Hawke's Bay Gymnastics Championships.

Trampolining was a popular part of the club, and later operated separately from the gymnasts. One especially talented member went on to be a New Zealand Trampolining Champion. Cyril Whitaker's daughter was one of the YMCA trampoliners in Hastings, and Cyril, like Doug in Napier, became involved with the YMCA through his children. Cyril has served on the Hastings YMCA Board, as Hastings' President, and in 1995 is a Hawke's Bay YMCA Board member. The gymnastics clubs declined in the mid-1970s as schools began teaching gymnastics and the need for YMCA clubs disappeared. Rex Smith also sees the advent of televised trampolining as a blow to the previously popular trampolining and gymnastic displays provided by the club at schools and carnivals.

While Napier's youth were enjoying gymnastics and trampolining in the Hastings Street School hall, the school's classrooms were used for judo, wrestling and boxing lessons. The Judo Club, under Bill Madore's guidance, was particularly active. The group had begun in Richard Bayliss' Taradale garage in 1954 under the instruction of Kurt Dobrew, and as numbers grew it had moved around several temporary premises. When Bill Madore, the club's Secretary/ Treasurer, joined the Napier YMCA Board at its inaugural meeting, he recognised the potential for co-operative growth. The Y wanted to encourage youth sports, and the Judo Club needed a more permanent support base, so the Judo Club affiliated with the YMCA, and moved into the Hastings Street School rooms. At Hastings



*A human pyramid, the finale of a gymnastics display by Hastings YMCA at a Pipe Band display, Easter 1966. – Reproduced from The Hawke's Bay Photo News, May 1966.*

Street the club was able to expand, and taught up to forty members. Bill Madore recalls one early member particularly well:

*We had one chap who came along, he was still at school, and he stuttered very badly. He came and took up judo and just with the self-confidence he had from judo, he lost his stuttering. Six months after he started he'd improved so much that his mother came along and thanked the club for helping him.*



*The Hastings YMCA Trampolining Club gave public displays at events such as this Blossom Parade in 1967. Here Grant Bridges is on the trampoline while the public waits for their turn – one shillings per 1 1/2 minute bounce.*

The Napier Club also hosted two visiting Japanese judo experts, and when Japanese ships were in port Bill Madore and Frank Price, who was fluent in Japanese, arranged for crew members to come ashore and practise with the club. In 1957, the North Island Judo Championships were held at Napier, again largely due to Bill Madore's organisation. Also at Hastings Street, Trevor Reed tutored wrestling, and T. Halpin coached boxing.

Both these teams made regular visits to other similar clubs, and entered members in regional competitions with some success. A highlight of these three



*Junior wrestlers Barry Patchett and Stephen Ulyatt in action, watched by the rest of the junior class. – Reproduced from The Hawke's Bay Photo News, March 1956.*

YMCA groups' early years was an invitation in the early 1960s to visit the Sydney Police Youth Club. Twenty eight youths representing judo, wrestling and boxing, and accompanied by Ray Frederickson of the Judo Club and Doug Fraser of the gymnastics group, were hosted by the Sydney club. The group stayed in the Police Youth Club

dormitories, enjoyed sports matches with the Youth Club teams under the banner of “The Trans-Tasman Mat Games”, and had several days sightseeing around Sydney before returning to Napier. The Sydney group later made a reciprocal visit to Hawke’s Bay and were taken on rural activities such as sheep-shearing and top-dressing.

Both Napier and Hastings YMCAs found after a few years that their physical recreation facilities were unable to meet the demand from local youth, and both moved into larger premises and new programmes in the 1960s. The Napier YMCA acquired a fully functioning fitness studio through the work of supportive local men. A group of Napier businessmen purchased the failed Dickens Street Silhouette Club from its receivers in 1965, with the belief that such a facility was needed by the local community and should not be lost. Calling themselves the 325 Club, these men estimated that 325 members were required to keep the Health Studio solvent. Local businessmen Pat Magill, Doug Fraser, Gary Crichton, Brian Buchanan, Lloyd Duckworth and others canvassed their friends and colleagues for prospective members. One of the original Silhouette Club owners, Graeme Gardiner, joined as a subscriber and instructor, and later became involved with the Napier YMCA itself. In 1995 Graeme is an active Board member for the Hawke’s Bay YMCA, and has served the YMCA for many years. Harold Beer, who is still a keen YMCA gym member in 1995, was also one of the 325 Club. Harold remembers Pat Magill, one of his business clients, approaching him for a subscription.

*Pat came around, roped me in on the 31st March 1966, coming in to where I was working and saying to me, “Harold, Silhouette’s gone bung, we’re going to start a 325 Club and you’re always selling me something, so sign here!” So I signed up, one of the best things I ever did in my life.*

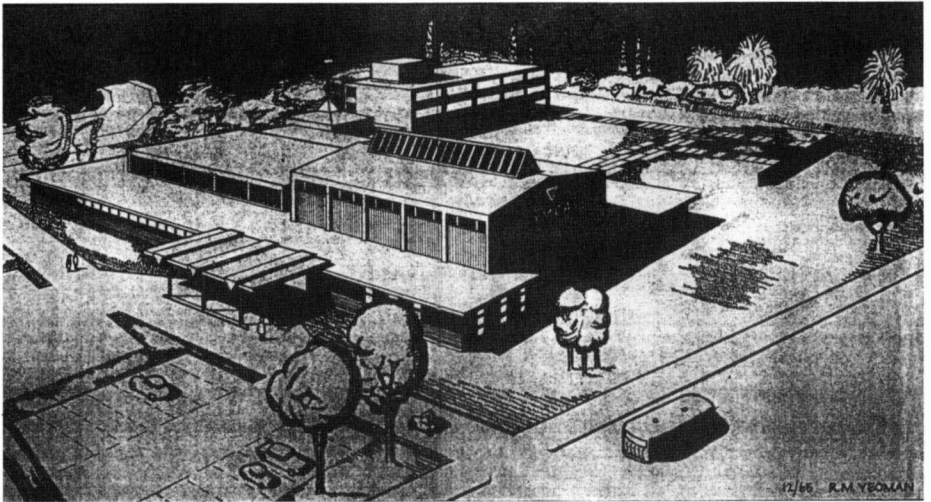
Under the management of the 325 Club, the Dickens Street Studio cleared its debts within twelve months, but soon began to feel that stronger backing was required for the business to continue. Members such as Doug Fraser, who were also involved with the YMCA, suggested that the Club be gifted to the Napier YMCA as a going concern, which it was in 1967. Initially the YMCA Board did not want to be involved with such a potentially insecure undertaking, and declined the offer. However, following negotiations, the YMCA Board agreed to take over the running of the 325 Club provided that the Club guarantee any losses in its first twelve months. In the event, the Club returned good profits and was able to transfer sums of money to the YMCA on several occasions.

In 1967, the Napier YMCA Board purchased a four acre section in Latham Street from the Hawke’s Bay Milk Treatment Company. The existing structure consisted of a solid concrete building with several cool storage rooms and a loading platform, and considerable extensions were required. The original plans for rebuilding were drawn by a Mr J.W. Ogg, a friend of American YMCA man and professional fundraiser Hal Lucas. Mr Ogg had previously been a member of the

North American YMCA Building Advisory Service, and devised a three-stage plan of building. In its entirety, the project included a chapel, cafeteria, squash courts, auditorium, handicraft rooms, youth lounge and a 22-bed hostel, although none of these were actually erected.

Instead, a temporary gymnasium was built around the existing Milk Company cool store. The YMCA provided materials, Bill Madore and Les Dobson co-ordinated a pool of voluntary labour, and a hall with separate judo rooms was eventually built. Bill remembers the work involved in building the judo rooms, which was done largely by club members and supporters:

*Members' wives used to go down there during the week while their husbands were working, with their hammer and nails. There was always*



*One of the original plans for the YMCA building on Latham Street. This complex included a chapel, squash courts, hostel, and youth lounge, none of which were actually constructed.*

*someone there to show them what to do. The wives put a lot of work into that building, perhaps more than the men because they had more time.*

Club members and builders Peter Chambers and Peter Cavill provided their professional expertise, while others such as Ishpel Strandle and Barry Richardson provided the labour.

Also in the 1960s, the Hastings YMCA moved into a house in Railway Road and later built a stadium on the section. The house had belonged to local G.P. Dr Moore, and Graeme Richardson, a member of the YMCA youth group at the time, remembers the building when it was first purchased by the YMCA:

*It was quite fascinating, there were all these rooms, and little handbasins in all the rooms. There were lots of stories about what used to go on there, and where the abortions went on. The rooms were full of old magazines and newspapers, the place was filthy dirty. You didn't like to go in there,*



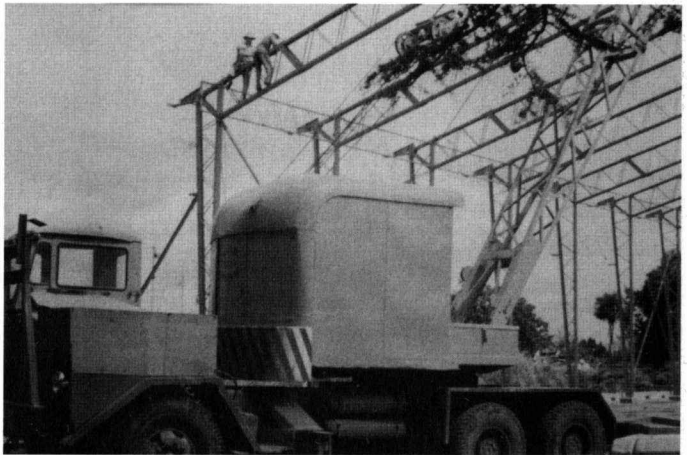
*it was all these rooms filled with newspapers and old furniture, and incredibly dirty.*

After many days of cleaning, and some building alterations, the main area of the house was used for gymnastics. An asphalt basketball court was laid behind the house; for some local youth this was their first experience of the new game, basketball. The Hastings YMCA Board built a sports stadium on the same site in the early 1960s. George Curtis, a Board member at the time, remembers the initial design of the building as “very elaborate, with a great domed roof”. This plan was eventually abandoned due to the excessive building costs involved; George remembers that the drawings themselves had cost £3,000. The stadium was redesigned, and opened in 1963, although it was “pretty stark” to begin with. It was largely built of concrete block, supplied at a reduced cost, along with construction advice, by Firth Concrete Ltd. In later years a tongue-and-groove matai floor was laid at the cost of £4,000, followed by seating for 500 spectators and an ablution block.

These new premises enabled new YMCA clubs to open, and older ones to expand. In Napier, Rex Smith began to tutor fencing for a small but enthusiastic group. Hastings members participated on alternate weeks, and in 1968 merged to form a joint Hastings-Napier Fencing Club.

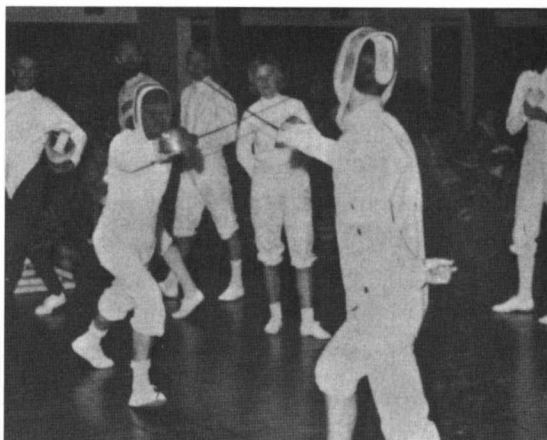
The existing Napier YMCA Judo Club boomed, and with its own rooms at Latham Street and new classes at Taradale and Greenmeadows attracted an

additional 100 members in 1967-68. Several went on to success at the Hawke’s Bay Championships, and an adult member, David Christie, represented New Zealand in international judo competitions. The club made regular visits to judo groups in Palmerston North,



Wanganui, New Plymouth, Taupo, Wairoa, Gisborne, Waipukurau, Waipawa and Dannevirke, and ran a training weekend every two months for all East Coast clubs. These trips were organised by club secretary Bill Madore, who was also East Coast Area Director for the New Zealand Judo Federation, and was responsible for overseeing all the judo clubs in the area. The visits were usually weekend events, and always reciprocal, with the visited club later coming to Napier and being billeted

there; as Bill says, “quite big friendships were built up”, both between adult officials and amongst the younger members. Although classes were segregated, the club was open to males and females, and by the late 1960s girls and women made up approximately half the group’s membership. Initially, women were taught a more “graceful” and technique-oriented style of judo than the men’s competition-style, but



*A fencing demonstration, part of the Napier YMCA’s end-of-year Gymnastics Display at the Majestic Hall, December 1966. The fighters were Lewis Harrison of Hastings (facing the camera) and John Joanes of Napier. Reproduced from The Hawke’s Bay Photo News, December 1966.*

but women tended to prefer the male style and the women’s section was eventually disbanded in favour of mixed classes. Bill Madore continued to oversee the club as Senior Instructor and Secretary until 1968, with Bill Wickstead and Brian Davies assisting him. Mrs E. Crosbie tutored the women’s section, and at Greenmeadows John and Ulia Hadfield and Richard Bayliss, one of the club’s founding members, provided coaching.

YMCA volleyball and basketball teams, relatively new sports, were also begun in the 1960s. These were strong clubs, particularly after the building of the Hastings stadium provided the basketball players with an indoor venue. They had previously been playing on an asphalt court on the Railway Road section. Both Napier and Hastings YMCAs had girls and boys teams, under the leadership of John Hamson



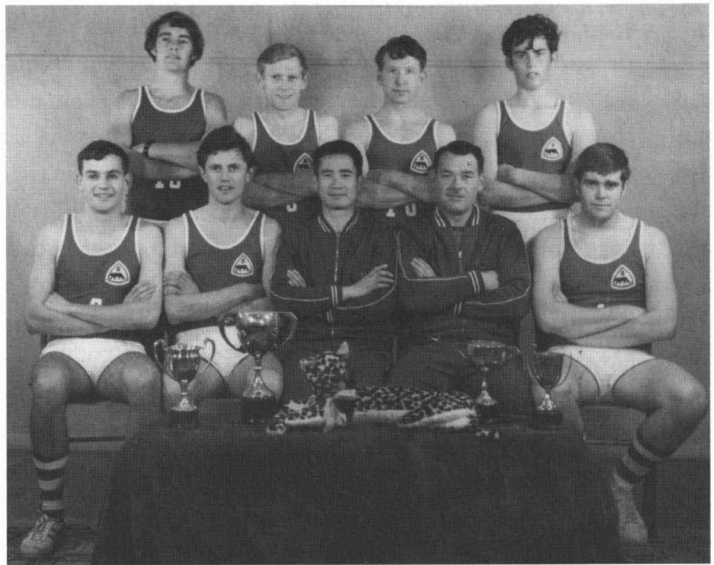
*An early photograph of the Napier YMCA Judo Club showing three of the founding members. From right in the front row are Bill Madore, Ray Frederickson and Richard Bayliss. – Photograph courtesy of Bill Madore.*

and Fred Chu. In 1964 Hastings YMCA hosted the North Island Indoor Basketball Tournament. The YMCA Basketball Club eventually moved out of the stadium as a result of a disagreement over rental fees and continued to operate elsewhere under a different name.

A third popular and strong group was the

Hastings YMCA Badminton Club which opened in the early 1960s. Bill Cummins, who had already started a club at Colenso High School in Napier, started the Hastings group at the stadium even before the wooden floor was laid. The asphalt was painted with the court markings and played on regardless. Bill and his wife Trish, also a keen badminton player, were the mainstays of the club, and worked hard to develop the club. Together, they ran training weekends for young badminton players from around the country. The players would sleep in the house at Railway Road, with Trish and Bill as chaperones. Trish remembers that the girls slept upstairs and the boys downstairs, and “there were always footsteps running up and down the stairs at night”. Peg Thom, one of the camp caterers, came in to do the cooking for these weekends. Bill and Trish also organised inter-club tournaments with

those Hastings clubs which had not amalgamated with the YMCA group. The Hastings club travelled further afield too, and made regular exchange trips to clubs around the Wairarapa, Manawatu, Mangakino and Taupo. Bill later became involved at a national level, and served a term as President of the New Zealand



*The Hastings YMCA Indoor Basketball team the “Leopard LLs”, 1970.  
Back row: (L-R) G.T. Willis, B. Godber, .W. Nash, I.L. Hampson.  
Front row: (L-R) C.W. Daly, P.M. Tegg, F. Chu (Coach), J.O. Hampson (President), B.R. Hooker (Captain).*

Badminton Council, as well as organising two New Zealand Championship tournaments and an international New Zealand-Australia tournament in Hastings. Under Bill and Trish’s guidance the Hastings YMCA stadium became known as the centre of badminton in the central North Island, and indeed still is a strong club in 1995.

In addition to these clubs, the YMCAs also ran general “keep-fit” programmes in Napier and Hastings. Napier’s Dickens Street Health Studio catered for over 400 members in 1967, providing all the standard fitness equipment and classes to members. Facilities included an exercise room, steam room, sauna bath, sunroom and massages, and sessions were segregated, allowing men-only and



*The Hastings YMCA Orbits team, pictured after the North Island Indoor Basketball Tournament held at Hastings in October 1964. The players are: Bernice Smith, Margaret Morris, Lynn Robinson, Ngaire Tinning, Heather Flack and Yvonne Cosford.*

women-only times. Originally, the Studio was only open to members who had joined and paid for twelve months' membership. However Board member Dulcie Malcolm argued that women were less likely than men to have the funds for a twelve month membership, and suggested that the Studio also offer casual memberships and per-visit charges. This idea was a great success, with women's gym memberships booming to over 200 within a few months. Dulcie Malcolm was also a strong force behind the introduction of women's yoga, ante-natal and post-natal classes at the Health Studio in 1967. Keep Fit classes for women were also taught at the Latham Street gymnasium. Classes were taught by Mrs H. Lloyd and covered a variety of exercises; although the General Secretary reported in 1964 that "strangely enough, it is the trampoline which is the main attraction" of the Married Women's class. In Hastings, Fred Chu and Don Nordhaus taught fitness classes at the YMCA stadium. These classes included jogging, calisthenics, trampolining, gymnastics, stretching exercises and general fitness and aerobic work. Both evening classes and morning classes, where children were welcome, were held. A journalist from the *Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune* visited the daytime class in August 1965 and reported:

*Most of the women had young families and felt that they didn't keep fit enough just doing the housework. Quite a number had been involved in outdoor sports before being married and wanted to keep active. Others simply wanted to lose weight.*

Saturday mornings were also busy times at the stadium, when up to 150 children attended gymnastics sessions. A "round-robin" circuit was set up, with the children rotating around activities such as tumbling, running and trampolining. Few schools owned stadiums at this time, and for many children the YMCA gymnasium was the only place for them to enjoy indoor gymnastics activities.

YMCA camping flourished in the post-World War II years also, perhaps partly as a natural result of the post-war baby boom. Hastings YMCA took a lease on land at Opoutama, near the Mahia Peninsula, from the Department of Conservation in 1954 and developed a campsite there for the youth of Hawke's Bay. Bill Cummins, later a Hastings YMCA member, remembers taking a group of Gisborne YMCA

children camping at Opoutama in 1954 while he was living in the town:

*There was nothing there. There was a trench to put a fire in, and that was where you cooked, and you had old tin walls around a space and that was your toilet.*

Ray Whitemans son, Murray, recalls the early days of Camp Opoutama; *“Camp Opoutama was begun the first year we were at Hastings. We used the area near the Blue Bay Park Motor Camp to begin with until the present camp site was found. The camps were an amazing achievement. Each year an advance guard party would arrive at camp to prepare for the arrival of the first group for Campers. For many years the camp was run prior to Christmas and for all of January and consisted of ten day spells with 150 children being the normal number in camp. They all used to arrive from either Hawkes Bay or Gisborne by railcar and arrivals and departures occurred on the same day. The boys walked to camp from the railway station but their luggage was taken on a truck driven by Mr Todd. “Old Todd’s Truck” was sung at camp many times. He also helped get the gear from overnight camps at Morere where the boys made bivouacs and generally learned to rough it outdoors, swim, abseiling and trek, then hot pools before heading back to Camp Opoutama. You may be aware that all camping was done under tents for the whole ten years that my father ran the camp. The only buildings on site were the cookhouse, food storage shed and eventually, the directors cabin apart from the structures built for pit toilets. Camp activities were as follows, Archery, rivalry, commando course, trampoline, swimming, boating, surf skiing, fishing, morning devotions at a chapel under the trees, tennis quoits and other similar activities. A day trip to Mahia and back by foot was also a firm favourite.*

*I can remember one year when it rained for the entire 10 days that one group of boys were in camp. As they were all under canvas we had to use the local school hall for sleeping eating and general activities which included many movies. A ten day camp for girls was trialed after a number of years, and these proved to be a great success. I can recall an amusing situation on the first night after all the girls camp was sent to bed that an orderly procession of lights could be seen coming down from the tents. Upon investigation it was discovered that they were all coming to have a wash. They were soon put right on that as water was a scarce commodity at camp”.*

Soon after, George Curtis and a team of voluntary builders began the development of the camp and erected sleeping shelters, a dining hall, confidence course, ablutions and toilet blocks. Fred Chu, of Hastings YMCA, invited Napier’s Rex Smith to assist in camp work, and together with numerous parents, members

and staff who volunteered their time and expertise, a strong and popular camp was established. Cyril Whitaker, Randal Hart, Ray Whiteman, John Harris, David Bullock and Elizabeth Gollop were some of the many who also contributed their time. Leaders were mainly young male teachers to begin with, and camp staff was generally wholly male. Local residents helped with camps too; a Mr Todd voluntarily appointed himself caretaker, and would bring in the milk, meet the train and clear away rubbish; George Foster at the local garage repaired the camp equipment and vehicles. Camping was also perhaps one of the first YMCA activities to involve a substantial number of women participants working alongside men, such as nurses Ngaire Bone and Fiona Whitaker, and cooks Nell Drown and Peg Thom (or “Thommie”). These women provided often crucial services, as well as creating a “family” atmosphere within the camp. Rex Smith remembers that a homesick young boy would be sent to the camp kitchen “for chores” on the understanding that the cooks would “make a fuss of him” and he would soon “come right”. Indeed, Camp Opoutama was often literally a “family camp”, as whole families would sometimes be in residence together. Cyril Whitaker, a Board member, and his wife Fiona, camp nurse, would on occasion have all five of their children in camp simultaneously as leaders, helpers and campers. One of the Whitaker daughters even met her future husband at Camp Opoutama when they shared camp leadership responsibilities one summer.

Camp groups were split into Seniors and Juniors, Boys and Girls, with Seniors staying ten days and Juniors seven days. Programme activities were firmly centred



*A tent group – Opoutama 1956.*

on the outdoors, such as archery, fencing, hiking, climbing, outdoor skills and swimming. Overnight out-camps at Mourere were also popular. Campers would sleep “rough” in a bush bivouac, and cook their own meals from provided rations. Other treks included waterfalls, pools, caves

and hot springs and Maumakai Mountain. Spiritual development was not neglected, though, and camp leaders held daily prayer meetings for all campers. The post-war camps also saw the establishment of special Camp Opoutama traditions, many of which endured for some time. The campfire ghost stories of Ray (“Soapy”) Whiteman were particularly memorable, as was the special campfire on the last night

of camp, as Fiona and Cyril Whitaker remember:

*There was one campfire that had a special place, you had to go there through the pines in a special way, and that was kept for the last campfire. They'd all go there, and the campfire would all be set. They told the story of the ghost of a little lad who went to camp, and they called on the ghost to come and light the campfire. Everybody would be sitting round in a circle, the campfire had been set, all ready to go, nobody was near it, and at a certain time all of a sudden this wisp of smoke came up out of the fire and it started to go. They'd been sitting there for an hour or more! It was a case of Condy's Crystals and paraffin in a tube, and the person telling the story just pulled the cord and let the Condy's Crystals drop into the paraffin and away it goes!*

Since the 1970s, Hawke's Bay YMCA's concept of physical recreation has broadened to include groups not previously active in the predominantly male, able-bodied YMCA. The special needs of women, the disabled, children and the aged have increasingly been catered for in addition to mainstream programmes, and smaller facilities have replaced the stadiums and gymnasiums.

The YMCAs of Hawke's Bay have trialled and adopted a variety of programmes especially designed to fill the physical recreation needs of specific groups. In the early 1970s women's self defence classes were taught with some success, and ante-natal and post-natal exercise classes have been run intermittently. The pregnancy classes held in 1990 involved a no-impact exercise class to music, followed by an informal discussion group with invited childcare speakers. These classes, run by midwives and a physiotherapist, were designed to maintain fitness, strength and flexibility for expectant women. The Napier Health and Fitness Centre also recognised the needs of mothers in its decision to provide child-minding facilities during aerobics classes, with fully-qualified supervisors on the staff. The YMCA has also occasionally offered physical recreation programmes tailored to specific groups such as intellectually handicapped youths in the 1970s, ACC rehabilitation clients in 1988 and cardiac patients since 1992. Jim Thorne, programme director at Napier YMCA, was particularly active with special needs



*Around the campfire.*

children in the mid-1970s, teaching members of Marewa Special School, Disabled Workshop, Fairhaven School and the Intellectually Handicapped Children's Society weekly for several years. Pre-schoolers were first invited into the YMCA in the early 1970s, with the "Tiny-Ys" programme. The Napier Tiny-Ys group began with over 100 children aged between 2 and 5 years, but it is not clear exactly how long the group operated before closing. A "kindergym" was also run by Philip Ferrier of the Hastings YMCA at Flaxmere Church Centre from 1976. Philip constructed the necessary equipment himself, including a mini-vaulting box and mini-beam, and the group attracted up to 35 children each week. A similar group was also run at Havelock North from 1977. In 1995, YMCA youth worker Debi Robinson revived pre-school gym classes and runs twice-weekly "Ys Gym" sessions for fifteen to twenty pre-school children.

The 1970s was also a boom time for YMCA sports clubs. Ian Johnson coordinated canoeing groups in both Hastings and Napier, taking groups on weekend expeditions during 1977 and 1978. In Napier, brothers Bruce and Derek Campbell led a badminton club, and Tong Too instructed a Tae Kwon Doe club. A judo club, under Mrs Davies, a trampoline group (with Rowan Shields and Simon Daly) and a tennis club also operated from Napier's Latham Street premises. The Napier YMCA wrestling club continued to operate with the guidance of father-and-son Trevor and Kevin Reid, although by 1978 the club had outgrown the YMCA facilities and shifted to a larger venue. The YMCA boxing club was the only one in Napier, and grew to forty members by the late 1970s. In Hastings, Brian Lee ran a weightlifting club which grew to over fifty members. This wide range of clubs offered a greater variety of recreational options to the Hawke's Bay community than in previous decades, and enabled a greater diversity of people to become involved in YMCA activities.

Physical recreation programmes have traditionally neglected the needs of older people; however the national YMCA Ys Walking programme attempted to fill this gap. Begun in Hawke's Bay in 1983, the Hastings group foundered and closed within a few years. The Napier group, however, has had a particularly dedicated committee and instructors, and is still active in 1995 with up to twenty six regular walkers, all over the age of fifty. Ys Walking involves twice weekly walking groups and exercise programmes, and occasional half-marathon events. The aim is to provide low impact aerobic exercise, develop an active lifestyle for older people and introduce a new interest for the retired. Or, as a local promotional pamphlet put it:

*WHAT IS ALL THIS Y'S WALKING ABOUT?*

*Men and women mostly on the high side of 50 pounding the pavements of Napier's reserves and streets! Striding it out!*

*IT'S ABOUT people beginning to feel good, losing weight, lowering blood pressure, feeling relaxed, having fun, enjoying the sociability.*

The Napier group also has a Sunday Club which makes longer walks and



hikes, and the group's committee organises social functions during the year. Much of the success of the group is due to its co-ordinator Doug Fraser, who resigned as Instructor in 1993. The strong committee led by Bill Creek and Paul Rowling have continued to lead the group.

The YMCA interest in the value of walking as physical recreation is also apparent in the formation of the Napier YMCA Tramping Club. The idea for a club was first discussed by Doug Fraser and Pat Magill while on the 1971 Napier-Taupo sponsored walk to raise funds for the YMCA's "Pub With No Beer" project. Both Doug and Pat felt that the public of Napier would benefit from exploring the natural attractions of their surrounding area, and resolved to begin by offering an organised walk around Lake Waikaremoana. After much planning and help from many people, the walk took place in January 1974, as Doug Fraser remembers:

*107 walkers ranging in ages from 70 to 7 years met at Mokau Landing where tents and food were ready to greet the participants. Each day for four days the walkers travelled a section of the Lake walk carrying lunch and day packs. Willing helpers dismantled camp sites and transported them to the day's destination and when the weary campers arrived tents and food were already waiting for them.*

The event was such a success that during the walk participants suggested that the walk become an annual event to enable Napier people to enjoy the bush and mountains. Although Hastings people had a well-established Heretaunga Tramping Club, Napier had no similar group to organise such an event. So, as Doug reports,



*Ys Walking Group outside Napier YMCA and Michaels Place, Latham Street. From left: Bill Creek, ?, Roz Jones, ?, ?, Bette Creek, Eileen Perry, ?, ?, Doug Fraser. – Photograph courtesy of Bill Creek.*

*the embryo of the Napier YMCA Tramping Club came into being, around the campfire, in the stillness of the Urawera bush, with the sound of long tail cuckoos screeching their song and the moonlight glistening on the "Sea of Rippling Waters".*

On the group's return to Napier, the idea of a Tramping Club was put to the YMCA Board and the Club duly formed. Its first office-holders were Doug Fraser, Ross Keating, Merhyl Anderson and Tony Des Landes, with the assistance of Alan Lee, Christine Sinclair and Ed Smith. The Club's first tramp was a day trip to Kaweka J, the highest point in Hawke's Bay, on 5 October 1974; every following year on the club's anniversary members have re-enacted the same walk. The Waikaremoana walk also became an annual event, although in some years, such as 1975, the event was expanded to a family camp with day trips from Mokau Landing. The club operated successfully in association with the YMCA for some years, enjoying social events, educational lectures and regular day, weekend and longer tramps, all of which Harold Beer faithfully recorded in the club logbook. Impressions of one of the earliest tramps, a three-day trip into the Urewera National Park led by Doug Fraser, were reported by party members in the first club newsletter in 1974:

*Some glorious impromptu swims in waterfalls and river (even one by our leader); lots of fun negotiating upstream, narrow difficult gorge complete with waterfall; dramatic readings from Jonathon Livingstone Seagull; those delightful little orange huts appearing through the foliage, a death defying crossing of a flooded river by swing bridge, and on a more earthy note "The Loo with a View" - best view in the Ureweras!*

The importance of junior members was always acknowledged, and youth took an active part in the running of the club. In 1980 the club formally broke away from the Napier YMCA, and continued to operate as the Napier Tramping Club.

The majority of these ~~post-1970s~~ YMCA physical recreation programmes have been centred in Napier, as the Hastings YMCA moved away from physical recreation in the early 1980s. The Napier programmes were shifted from Dickens Street to the YMCA's Latham Street building in 1985, but have continued in a similar manner. The shift was a cost-cutting measure following the financial burden of the Pub With No Beer project, and aimed to utilise existing YMCA space and remove rental costs from the Studio budget. In Hastings, the Railway Road stadium was under-utilised, with only two YMCA groups, basketball and badminton, using the facility on a regular basis. Outside groups rented the building for the remainder of the time, relegating the YMCA to the role of "a property developer", as Dennis Oliver described it. The stadium also required extensive, costly maintenance work that the debt-ridden Hastings YMCA could not afford. The Hastings Board, working with Dennis Oliver who was then the National YMCA Council's Management Consultant in Hastings, refocused the organisation towards training

and education, and the stadium became superfluous to the Association. After several months' negotiation, the Hastings City Council purchased the building for \$580,000 in February 1983. The Board and the public had some initial unease regarding selling a facility that the community had contributed to financially for many years. However, the burden of debt on the Association was so huge that the sale came to be seen as helping the people of Hastings, by returning the YMCA to an economically viable and efficient organisation capable of serving the needs of its community. The proceeds of the stadium sale were sufficient to pay off the Hastings YMCA's considerable debts, and to purchase smaller properties more appropriate to the Association's new direction.

Since the 1970s YMCA camping has undergone few changes and continues to grow and strengthen. Camps are no longer segregated, and places are reserved especially for underprivileged children who are sponsored by local service groups to attend. Camps have been held at Waikaremoana and on the property of Darcy Wareham at Awapawanui in addition to the Opoutama site. New activities have been introduced to camp programmes, often through the generosity of service and community groups. In 1990 a fleet of Optimist yachts were donated to the camp by the Napier Lions Club and the Havelock North Rotary, at the cost of more than \$10,000. The latest camp project is Dennis Oliver's plan to purchase and run a YMCA train to take campers to Opoutama. Since the 1988 Cyclone Bola disaster destroyed part of the East Coast railway line, the passenger rail service has been discontinued and campers have travelled by road; a much less enjoyable and more expensive means of travel than the train. As of 1995, the project has involved the purchase and conversion by volunteers of two guard's vans for passengers, and negotiations continue for the purchase of two further units.

The emphasis of the YMCA Hawke's Bay on the physical development of its members has been consistent in all its operations since the 1890s. Its particular nature has responded to changing needs and interests, with the result that YMCA recreation has always been topical and popular. From its gymnasium classes in the nineteenth century, through the first camps in the late 1910s, and on to the expansions and diversifications of the post-World War II years, the YMCA has reflected wider social changes in recreation choices to remain a relevant and popular physical recreation provider for the local community.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*Building on the international heritage of Christian Action and believing in the infinite capacity of people to grow and change when they are treated with trust, love and respect.*

*The Mission of the YMCA in Hawke's Bay is the development of people towards the fullness of their potential, through the creation of special programmes, towards a community based on diversity, equality and service.*

## **BICULTURAL STATEMENT**

**In New Zealand the YMCA:**

- Recognises that the Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of New Zealand.
- Agrees that New Zealand is a bicultural country with a multi ethnic society and that acknowledging biculturalism is to accept a willingness to share power and resources on a fair and just basis.

**The YMCA in Hawke's Bay endorses the National YMCA statements and further:**

- Seeks to have on the Board and staff a balance of Maori and Pakeha that reflects the local community and the people it serves.
- Encourage each person to acknowledge their own uniqueness and appreciate the uniqueness of others.

## *Chapter Two - The Mind*

*"I don't think anyone ever stops wanting to learn whatever their age."*

*- Jill Rhodes, founding member of Hawke's Bay U3A.*

In addition to the physical development of YMCA members, the Hawke's Bay YMCAs have also maintained a consistent interest in members' mental stimulation and development. As with physical programmes, YMCA courses have been adapted to meet the particular educational requirements of the local community. In the nineteenth century, this meant supplying reading material and newspapers to members; in later years the community needed more specialised knowledge, and since the early 1980s the Hawke's Bay YMCA has focused on the education of people for specific vocations and employment.

From its first opening in 1890, the Napier YMCA reserved a room in its premises for reading and study to "afford instruction and enjoyment to the young men". Members donated books, periodicals and newspapers to form a library, and the YMCA committee subscribed to British periodicals on behalf of the library. The YMCA reading room was a useful source of books and reading material for Napier people; British periodicals in particular were much sought after by colonists for their news of Home, and ready access to them at the YMCA would have been considered valuable.

At the turn of the century, Hastings youth had only limited educational facilities available to them, and as a result the Hastings YMCA provided a source of training and education. Napier was considerably better off, with both public and private high schools, but Hastings had only a technical secondary school in the area, and demand for this type of education was low. For much of the 1910s, then, the Hastings YMCA taught night classes in commercial subjects such as book-keeping, shorthand and clerical duties from its Station Street rooms. The first tutors were local men H.E. Stanton, T. Atkinson, T.H. Gill and Mr Sheffield. Mental stimulation was also provided in the form of literary and debating clubs, and a "mock parliament" group.

Following World War I these classes were in even greater demand, as returned servicemen needed retraining to re-enter the workforce. YMCA Huts were constructed in 1919 at both Napier and Hastings Hospitals for outpatients of the Soldiers Wards, and a range of lessons were taught there. Trades such as bootmaking, wool-cleaning and carpentry were offered in addition to commercial subjects, and crafts such as basketry and leatherwork. In the first four months of the Huts' operations 125 soldiers passed through its doors. From 1921 a Repatriation Farm at Tauherenikau trained up to forty war veterans in agricultural work.

Vocational guidance work was first trialled by the Hastings YMCA in the late 1920s. Lectures were delivered to high school classes in an attempt to give boys

some knowledge of different careers. The 1930 programme of lectures each attracted one hundred students, and included electrical engineer Mr J.H. Scott, accountant Mr V.A. Thompson, and orchardist Ralph Paynter. These lectures were particularly valuable to students as career counselling was unknown at this time, and most young people followed their parents' advice or direction into "suitable" work.

The post-World War II rebirth of the Hawke's Bay YMCAs occurred at a time of national prosperity and full employment, and social and recreational programmes were in far greater demand than educational classes. However, by the 1970s times had changed and vocational education and training were increasingly important community needs for the YMCA to meet. Napier responded to these needs with unconventional but successful education programmes. In Hastings, the town's early 1980s unemployment rate was the highest in the country, and the area reported the second lowest response rate to training courses. The Hastings YMCA took up the challenge to train these unemployed, and taught Government-funded courses on a contract or sometimes pilot basis, as well as initiating programmes specifically tailored to the needs of Hawke's Bay job-seekers.

The Downtown Y drop-in centre in Napier, although established in 1971 as a youth centre, also developed an alternative education programme for its youth in the 1970s. Many of the youth going to the Downtown Y had behavioural problems and were either failing school or not attending at all, and some had been placed in borstal. Pat Magill and the Downtown Y committee, with the agreement of the Social Welfare Department, decided to offer these youth an alternative learning environment more suited to their needs. Two school teachers, Mr and Mrs Titchener, from Hiliary College in Auckland were hired to teach students, and classes began at the Downtown Y in 1974. Lessons were designed to interest and stimulate the students, develop confidence, teach skills and strengthen their identified abilities. Maths, for example, was taught by playing darts. Other classes included reading, spelling, typing, art, speech, physical co-ordination, sewing, hygiene and personal appearance, shopping and budgeting. Craft classes were also held, as a report submitted to the local Education Department Inspector by the Titcheners in August 1974 described:

*Activities at the workshop-school have varied according to individual students but all have been involved in making mats, cushions and oven-mitts with materials supplied through Mr Magill's furnishing business. This common activity is of social value in giving unity to the group which has grown to about five students. The craft nature of the work is relaxing and confidence developing and gives the group an opportunity to contribute to the workshop-school's finances.*

Students were also given help with job-seeking skills and helped into jobs when they were prepared. After twelve months the classes were proving highly successful, and the Minister of Education, Phil Amos, and the Minister of Maori

Affairs, Matiu Rata, were invited to visit in July 1974. Both officials were impressed with the progress and performance of students, and had the students filmed at work. The curriculum and style of teaching of the unit was also incorporated into the state education system on a trial basis. In 1974 the school was renamed the Napier Community Activities Centre, and was taught by Marian Tait and later Judie Booth. Around 1980 the school was shifted to Napier Boys' High School, and in 1995 operates as the Napier Community High School, catering for dysfunctional and problem boys.

The Napier YMCA also branched into cultural education courses in the 1970s. As increasing numbers of rural Maori moved into towns and cities, their contact with marae life and culture disappeared. For many Maori, it became difficult to continue practicing their culture and language, and classes such as those at the Napier YMCA were a successful alternative to marae-based lessons. Te Rina Sullivan-Meads tutored a junior Maori culture class on Maori mythology and waiata, while Tui Cunningham led a senior group. Sam Paenga coached a men's haka class, and M. Waapu and A. Nuku taught Maori craft. This latter group produced kowhaiwhai for the Matahiwi meeting house, taniko belts and feathered bags. These classes were popular during the late 1970s, attracting up to 35 members each, but appear to have declined and disappeared in the 1980s.

From the 1980s Hawke's Bay YMCA education programmes have been run on a contract basis with Government agencies such as the Regional Employment Advisory Council (REAC) and the Education and Training Support Agency (ETSA). As Government personnel and priorities alter, these courses have changed in both their title and goal. The first work schemes such as PEP were superseded by the skills-based programmes Steps and Tracks, followed by Tap, Access and Tops. These changes have generally been accompanied by an increase in government demands for planning, paperwork, documentation and bureaucratic procedures, and trainers now spend much of their time on administration. While some courses have survived these changes and continued to operate regardless, others have come to an end due to changing government requirements and community needs.

The earliest courses, PEP, TEP, YPTP and the Work Skills Development Programme, were run with the Department of Labour and focused on providing work opportunities for youth. Those on the schemes were most often engaged in general labouring work, such as digging ditches and painting fences, including some work establishing the Hastings YMCA's Maraekakaho orchard. This was work which kept people occupied, but didn't necessarily help them develop marketable work skills. In an attempt to provide more skills-based training and employment preparation, the STEPS (School leavers' Training and Employment Preparation Scheme) programme for 15-16 year olds was initiated in the early 1980s. The pilot programme was run at Hastings YMCA by a staff of six for forty participants. The course involved a series of training modules such as Home Management,

Woodwork, Communication, Career Selection and Bushcraft. The course exceeded all expectations and was acknowledged by the Government as a “model scheme”. In the twelve months to May 1984, 98% of the 105 trainees who went through the Steps programme had no school qualifications. The success of the course is proven by the fact that 53% of these trainees found employment within two months of finishing the course. Steps continued through the mid-1980s as an extremely popular course, with up to 80 young people participating in the course each year. In 1985, the Pathways life skills course began operating at the Hastings YMCA. The programme, initially run by Shelley Oliver, focused on enhancing life skills and work readiness and aimed to develop participants’ “confidence and a belief in their worthiness within a positive climate for learning”. Modules in driving lessons, outdoor pursuits, mechanical skills, literacy and job search skills were taught, and in 1992 a group called Awhina-Koka-Tamariki was formed to teach parenting skills. The group, of about twenty young mothers, has sessions in childbirth education, dealing with Social Welfare, Plunket clinic visits, and general motherhood and parenting education. Trainees have always been encouraged to set goals and work toward them, no matter how difficult they might at first appear; a *Herald-Tribune* article in March 1987 reports a trainee who told her supervisor:

*“I’d love to be a pop singer, in black leather and high heels, but it’s only a dream. It could never be.” But the trainer told her charge that if she wanted a pop singing career to “go out and get it”. The trainee did just that. She organised guitar and singing lessons and is now on the way to acquiring the necessary career skills.*

In addition to running these courses on government contracts, the Hastings YMCA also took an active role in developing a skill-based training course for the government, called Tracks. A National YMCA team designed the programme, pointing out that

*Where jobs are available, current employment programmes often have little relevance and are frequently unrelated to the local job market. This is, in part, due to a lack of research based planning and lack of consultation with employers.*

Therefore Tracks aimed to develop skills which had been identified by local employers and unions as necessary for employment in the local industry. Job market research was to be carried out in each locality to identify growth industries for training, and local industry representatives were to be consulted in the planning of the training units. Hastings YMCA ran the pilot scheme for the Tracks programme in 1985-86, and taught sixty trainees in units of Horticulture, Hospitality, Construction and Forestry. Trainers and supervisors were supported by a committee of employer, union and YMCA Board representatives, and a Local Standards Advisory Group, and co-ordinated by Programme Manager Ron Sharp. The course was open-ended, and trainees could leave whenever they had learnt the necessary



skills, and move on to work-based training. The first full year of the programme saw 162 trainees pass through, 68.5% of whom secured jobs or further training on completion of the course. Tracks was later adopted as a national programme, although the role of Hastings YMCA in developing the course to this level was not always acknowledged by government agencies.

Despite several name and administrative changes, some Tracks and Steps courses have continued to be taught by the YMCAs in Hawke's Bay in a relatively similar form. The Hospitality Unit has experienced fluctuations in programme content, location and trainee numbers, yet has continued to produce high calibre graduates with a high rate of post-training employment. Cyril Whitaker, chair of the Hospitality unit committee, reported in 1988 that of all the unit's success stories, the "biggest success is Tonto who came to us from 10 years at Whakatou and who is now a full-time barperson at the Mayfair Motor Inn." Melanie Jacobs, a graduate of the Bar Services course, became in 1992 New Zealand's first certified woman Cellar Master. The unit first operated from Michael's Place in Napier, then from a coffee shop in Flaxmere and since 1988, from Rainbow Cottage in Eastbourne Street, Hastings. In 1995 YMCA Hospitality training was extended to Wairoa, where tutor Colleen Sullivan opened the Rainbow Cafe.

The Horticulture Unit has operated from Maraekakaho since 1982, when the proceeds of Hastings' stadium sale were redistributed to new projects. The Hastings YMCA purchased 28 hectares of land on Highway 50 at Maraekakaho and seconded community worker Wally Hunt from the Hawke's Bay Community College for six months to establish the orchard. PEP workers planted shelter belts, laid irrigation pipes, cleared land and generally prepared the section for its first intake of trainees. The project attracted some criticism from local fruitgrowers who predicted that the competition of a low-budget orchard would "disrupt normal market forces" and force local growers out of business, despite the comparatively small quantity of produce expected from the land. Nevertheless, the Rural Training Centre received approval first from the Hawke's Bay County Council and the Department of Labour, and later from REAC and ETSA, and has run horticulture, orchard and farm skills courses for over ten years. In this time the Unit has received National Certification, diversified into crops such as asparagus and herbs, exported produce to Japan and in 1995 prepared a proposal for a viticulture course. The emphasis of the training courses is on encouraging a sense of responsibility in the trainees; the orchard is divided into four farmlets, with five trainees pooling their knowledge to work together on each section of land. Two stories typical of the Rural Training Centre's outcomes were reported in the *Herald-Tribune* in January 1986:

*Raewyn Hill is rapt with the job opportunity the programme has given her . . . She is on a six-week trial employment with a nursery in Havelock North. "It's really good and I've learnt heaps in the weeks I've been here," she said. "I knew a little but they've taught me propagating and picking*

*and planting methods.” Another trainee, Graeme Tekuru, also 16, spent six months learning basic horticultural techniques under Tracks. He now has a job with an orchard in Hastings. “I like the job . . . The orchard here is helping me.”*

The Te Rito programme, which began in the early 1980s, operates in an expanded form in 1995. Napier youth workers Mo Ropitini and Toro Waaka developed a twelve-week course in the 1980s, which covered life and work skills including personal development, leadership skills, work readiness, first aid, driving



*Trainees at the Hastings YMCA Rural Training Centre display their handiwork – a sprayer for use at the training orchard, built in September 1986. Left to right: Dave Whitfield, Anzac Hawkins, Paul Trower and Mike Prebble. — Photograph courtesy of Daily Telegraph.*

and budgetting. In 1994 this curriculum was expanded to a twenty four-week course including sexual harassment, cultural identity and discrimination and stress management. The course caters for up to twelve at-risk youths, usually aged sixteen or seventeen years, and aims to prepare trainees to undertake further, more specialised training.

The YMCA Literacy and Numeracy programme has also run continuously since the Association first began offering training courses. Individual tutoring is available to all trainees in all courses, and follows the philosophy of South American literacy trainer Paulo Freire. Rather than using the same programme with all trainees, each trainee is taught words and sentences around a topic of personal interest to them, whether it be motorcycles, gardening, or surfing. Classes include word games, puzzles, “Trivial Pursuits”-type board games, and crossword exercises. The programme occasionally produces “miracle” students, as Dennis Oliver

describes them: "it's quite marvellous - the whole world opens up for them."

Some YMCA training courses, however, have been more transient in their operations as needs and requirements shift. Napier YMCA taught a sales and marketing course briefly until its contract was not renewed in 1992. The Hastings YMCA's Forestry Unit, established in 1986, ceased to operate in 1991, partly as a result of an unstable industry. A Construction course to train people as building labourers was set up in 1985 at Ruahapia Marae, and from 1988 House Maintenance and Child Care courses were run at Waipatu Marae. In January 1990, Waipatu Marae decided to manage the courses themselves, independent of the YMCA. Since 1991, the YMCA has also intermittently run Conservation Corps projects with the Department of Conservation and the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Each course takes ten people, and teaches job search and recreation skills as well as completing a major environmental project. Past projects have included the construction of a footbridge and boardwalk at Tongoio, the eradication of noxious weeds from the Maraetotara Valley, and improvements to Riverland Park. Future plans for Conservation Corps projects include the construction of a firebreak around Camp Opoutama and a fish sampling scheme.

The YMCA has also become involved in programmes run by other community groups. In 1989, Hastings YMCA joined Operation MOTivated, a Ministry of Transport-sponsored scheme which aimed to help people convicted of driving offences gain their driving licences. Many of these people had no licence due to their illiteracy. Lily Morgan at the Hastings YMCA, along with other community



*Aaron Gardner a trainee at the Ruahapia Construction Training Unit, on work experience with a roofing contractor. Tracks training courses included a six week period of work experience during which employers supervised trainees and provided extra training.*

groups such as Maatua Whangai, ran driving and literacy classes for them. Hera Marshall, who later took over as driving instructor, remembers the students as a “pretty rough bunch”. On one occasion,

*I was in a room where this young man, who was prospecting for the Mongrel Mob, and getting pretty close to getting his patch, was reading from the Road Code. One of the girls teased him, and he leaned across the table and picked her up by the scruff of her neck. With one hand, he had her in the air. I had to keep my cool, but all the swearing and the carrying on and all the emotion in that situation . . .*

Many of these people went on to learn to read fully, and even progressed to further courses such as YMCA Life Skills courses, study and job opportunities.

The YMCA is constantly trialling new training courses in the Hawkes Bay area, some of which have recently developed into successful and strong programmes. The Work Based Training programme commenced in September 1989 and provides work preparation skills and experience. Unemployed are placed in workplaces where they can be trained “on-the-job” and thus acquire valuable work experience and practical skills in the area of their choice. Work Based Training Units operate at both Hastings and Napier YMCAs with a staff of three, and deal with an average of 185 clients each year. Small Business training was first trialled in 1989, when a twelve-month pilot programme helped 115 people into self-employment. Over the next six years the programme developed to such an extent that in 1995 Be Your Own Boss courses are offered in both Hastings and the Central Hawke’s Bay YMCA Enterprise Centre at Waipukurau. The courses help participants formulate a business plan, perform feasibility studies, arrange finance and devise advertising for their proposed business, many of which are later established as successful firms. Ongoing support and advice is also available to graduates once they open their business.

In 1995, two further courses are being piloted by the Hawke’s Bay YMCA. Alton Waretini and the YMCA Enterprise Centre are piloting a Graduate Placement Programme, and Sonia Hughes is trialling a Recognition of Prior Learning course. In 1993, it was noted that graduate unemployment was a growing problem, with 16% of university graduates unemployed, while general unemployment was around 10%. A major factor in this problem was seen as graduates’ lack of work experience, despite their qualifications. The Graduate Placement programme aims to provide graduates with six months’ work experience in the area in which they qualified. The pilot programme runs from February 1994 to October 1995, and is funded by a contract with the Community Employment Group of the Department of Labour. As at mid-1995 the programme has had seventeen graduates, ranging from lawyers to nutritionists to podiatrists, registered with it. The Recognition of Prior Learning pilot programme is co-ordinated by Sonia Hughes and Cathy Parker, and aims to help people with horticultural work experience, but no formal qualifications, gain

credits toward a National Certificate in Horticulture. The pilot is one of three in New Zealand, and runs from April to August 1995 on a contract basis with ETSA. Sonia Hughes hopes the course will later be extended into other areas, to enable more people to have their work-based experience formally recognised with a qualification.

While these programmes have largely attracted local youth, the Hastings YMCA has also been involved with the educational needs of older people. The YMCA sponsored the establishment of the Hawke's Bay University of the Third Age, or U3A, in 1992, which aimed to educate retired people on a self-help basis. U3A members with knowledge to share run informal classes or discussion groups for other members interested in their area of study. In this way the knowledge, skills and experience of older people is utilised and shared, and retired people have a ready source of mental stimulation and discussion. As founding member Trevor Norton described the group, "U3A allows groups of mature people to meet together for learning experiences and is a means of improving the quality of their life". The initial steering committee, chaired by Jill Rhodes who had already established a U3A in Darwin, held meetings of interest in Taradale and Havelock North in 1992. These attracted forty and eighty people respectively, a great deal of interest, and long lists of possible

study courses to be run. Since then the groups have flourished, largely as a result of Jill's leadership, and in 1995 branches in Hastings and Napier-Taradale cater for 250 people in 25 study groups. Topics range from Fossil Geology and Scottish History to Weaving and Coastal



*Members of the University of the Third Age (U3A) actively engage in a Mah Jong class. Taken at Atawhai, Taradale 1994.*

Navigation, and new groups are formed to meet the requests of members.

The educational programmes of the Hawke's Bay YMCA have been extended under Dennis Oliver's Directorship to include YMCA staff as well as clients. All staff are encouraged to enrol in extramural courses with Massey University, and their fees are paid for by the organisation. As Dennis puts it,

*the big thing, is recognising that we're an organisation that's concerned with the development of human potential and that this includes me and the staff and the board. It's not just a case of the learned teaching raw*

*recruits. Here we're all learners.*

Some of the staff left school without qualifications, and to return to formal education years or decades later can be a challenge and a struggle. Although staff generally enjoy the courses, and find them worthwhile, it is also often difficult for them to devote the necessary time and energy to their studies while maintaining a full-time job, family commitments and personal interests. Dennis' commitment to staff development also involves sending selected staff to the American YMCA Programme School in Honolulu. Staff participate in five days of workshops on topics relevant to their work area, such as group dynamics, executive development or programme planning. These trips are fully funded by the Hawke's Bay YMCA through Community Management Associates (CMA). CMA began in the mid-1980s when Dennis Oliver began receiving requests for training seminars from other community groups. Dennis established CMA as an off-shoot of the YMCA, and contributes half of the profits from these trainings to the Board's staff development fund. CMA won a contract from the East Coast REAC in 1987 to run training sessions for East Coast Access trainers, and Dennis and Hera Marshall trained local people in Gisborne, Tologa Bay, Ruatoria, Puha and Rongopai Marae. These people often "came with nothing", as Hera remembers, and were taught the organisational skills required to recognise the needs of their community and to prepare a training proposal for REAC. Dennis has also won contracts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and provided training courses in Samoa and Fiji.

The YMCAs in Hawke's Bay have become particularly involved with the educational needs of the community since the early 1980s. However, this interest had been an ongoing one since the Napier YMCA first opened in 1890. The YMCA philosophy of developing people as whole beings has clearly endured over many years of social change. Educational programmes have succeeded in helping people towards both mental development and work-based change, which has often also led to lifestyle and social changes. As David Lange commented admiringly of the Tracks trainees he met in Hastings in 1986: "it's good to see the forthrightness of these people. I don't often go to places where young people have the assurance to come forward".

## Chapter Three - The Spirit

*The Young Men's Christian Association seeks to unite those young men, who regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their faith and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.*

*- "Paris Basis" of the World Alliance of YMCAs, adopted 1855, and part of the Hawke's Bays' YMCAs Constitutions from initiation to the present day.*

An interest in spiritual growth and practical Christianity has always been a part of the YMCA's operations in Hawke's Bay. The particular form in which these values have manifested themselves has, however, changed markedly over the years. In the early days of the 1890s, the Napier YMCA held regular prayer meetings and street corner services, and aimed to "save souls for Christ". The Hastings YMCA, inaugurated some twenty years later, described itself as "purely undenominational" and above "the limitations of various dogmas" although it too promoted a thoroughly Christian lifestyle. In more recent times, such explicit forms of Christianity have receded from the organisation and been replaced by broader ideals of character development along Christian principles. Traditional Christian values such as charity, love and a concern for human suffering are apparent in much of the YMCA's community and youth work.

Nineteenth century Christian evangelism was a strong force behind the establishment of the YMCA in Napier. Protestantism in particular was undergoing a revival in New Zealand, and the conversion of souls was a central activity of the church. The first year's operations were described by YMCA President James Todd as "almost entirely spiritual", although it was hoped to broaden these activities for both social and mental benefits in the following years. Meetings aimed to bring together young Christian men in fellowship and friendship, and to attract uncommitted men to a Christian life. Three YMCA church services were held on Sundays at the Atheneum Buildings in Browning Street, as well as Saturday night open-air meetings and Bible study classes on Sunday mornings. Tuesday and Thursday night social meetings were also held to "attract others and lead them to take a loving interest in the work". During summer Sunday evening meetings were held outdoors on Marine Parade, and for some time in 1890 a Daily Prayer Meeting was held every morning from 8.45am to 9am. Invitations from the international Evangelical Alliance to hold weeks of prayer were also readily responded to and duly observed. These gatherings were reported in the First Annual Report of the "Hawke's Bay" (Napier) YMCA in March 1891:

*Many fruits have been seen as a result of these meetings, and those members who are on the watch for opportunities of speaking for their Master have often been cheered by being permitted to lead souls to Jesus at*

*the close of the meeting. Nor is that all, for Christians are built up, encouraged and cheered by these bright, happy gatherings.*

Whenever it became difficult to attract strangers to these meetings, YMCA members held street meetings at “Hannah’s Corner” to “carry the gospel message to those who would not come in to hear it”. While some opposition was experienced to these crusades, the rewards of new members were considered worthwhile. YMCA members also conducted similar services at Gisborne and with the Church of England at Meane, with some success. A further group of members determined to seek out souls for Jesus called itself the “Soul-winning Circle” or “King’s Sons” and met monthly for prayers and to discuss progress.

Many aspects of Napier YMCA’s early operations were infused with spiritualism, including its social gatherings, administration and educational programme. The 1891 Boxing Day Monster Picnic, held at Petane Grange for nearly 130 members and friends, for example, began with boating and games in the morning followed after luncheon by:

*an hour spent with God, and as the party were seated under the trees by the river bank, the glorious sounds of prayer and praise intermingled with passages read from God’s word and several bright happy testimonies, must have shown that in very truth a Christian’s highest happiness is found in his Master’s service, and that that happiness surpasseth all that the world can afford.*

Soirees and tea meetings, held mainly as social events, were similarly peppered with sacred songs and devotions. The healthy Association finances of the first year’s operations were cause for thankfulness of the Lord’s provision, and the purchase of a good quality organ was also an occasion for “great praise to our Father”. The Napier YMCA also invited inspirational speakers, usually clergymen, to address public meetings on such topics as “The Christian Community”, and the importance of personal characteristics such as earnestness and tact. A number of local clergy either served on the YMCA Boards, or were regular attenders at YMCA events.

Over the following decades, such staunch evangelism centred solely on the spiritual dimension lost favour and was replaced by a more general, character-focussed form of personal Christian growth. The Hastings YMCA, inaugurated in 1910, reflected this shift in priorities. The Association was promoted on the basis of its “refining, elevating influence on young men’s character”, and at an early meeting explicitly stated that it was “not evangelistic, but sought the allround development” of youth. While it was admitted that those at the head of the organisation “crown Jesus King and Lord”, secularists were equally welcome to enjoy the benefits of Association membership. The Hastings YMCA was also careful not to favour any one denominational group over another, with equal numbers of Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian and Baptist members on the Board, and alternating attendance at each local church.



The Hastings YMCA, like Napier, held public meetings and panel discussions to promote Christian values in the community. One such open meeting in 1910 stressed the need to lead a Christian life, besides merely talking of it, and urged men to stand up for straight, clean living and not be “mere jelly-fishes wobbling with every wave or tide”. When a mass meeting of 450 was held the following year at King’s Theatre to launch a fundraising campaign, it was addressed by several speakers of a similar ilk. Mayor James Garnett presided over the meeting, at which Mr H.N. Holmes spoke on “Temptation” and Mr C.M. Luke on “Neighbourly responsibilities”. Mr Holmes emphasised the importance of congenial company, such as that provided by the YMCA, to lessen young men’s temptations. However he also recommended the presence of minor temptations as a means of making men strong: “backbone is gained through fighting temptation”.

Spirituality was however much less of a priority for Hastings YMCA than it had been for the early Napier YMCA. While Napier’s members were almost wholly involved with bringing more souls to God’s flock, the Hastings Association saw Christianity as providing a base of values and ideals to aim for in life. Further, Hastings YMCA placed spiritual development on an equal footing with physical, mental and social development and devoted energy to all of these areas equitably.

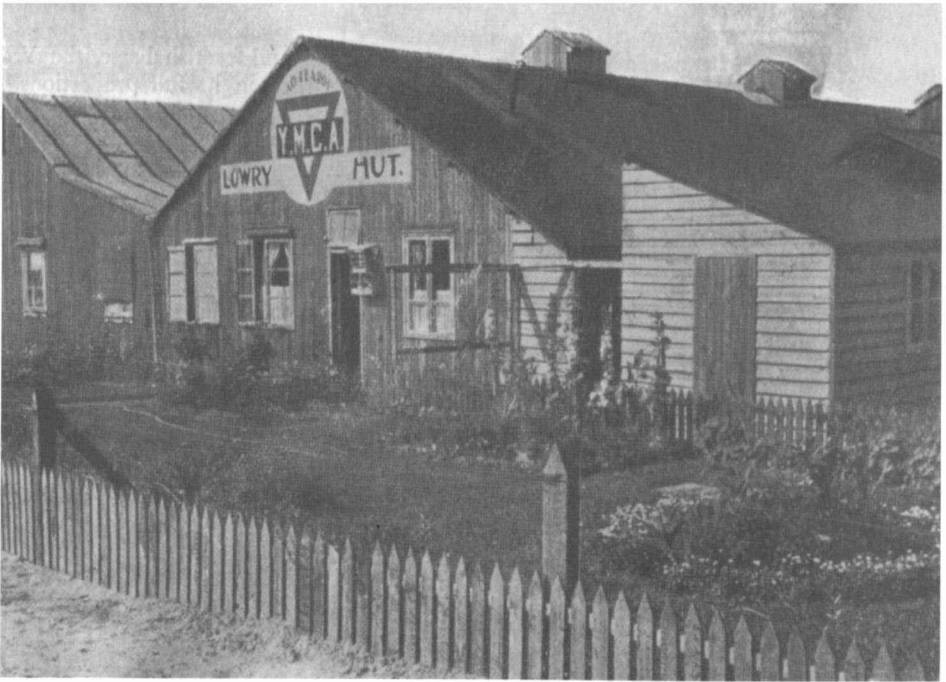
During World War I the YMCAs of Hawke’s Bay and New Zealand carried out numerous practical acts of Christian charity. YMCA huts were established at the front lines of battle in Europe to provide soldiers with comforts such as cigarettes, chocolate, hot drinks and friendship. The work of these front-line YMCAs was appreciated enormously by soldiers; Lieutenant Pitt, of Napier, wrote home:

*The YMCA have had a man distributing cigarettes, so most of the boys who could smoke got some. They are a fine crowd, the YMCA, and had biscuits done up in packets for the wounded. They seem to think of everything.*

One of these huts was donated and entirely funded throughout the war by Mr and Mrs Lowry of Okawa, with occasional donations from the Hastings and Napier YMCAs. The Lowry Hut was at Etaples, France, and all New Zealand troops passed through the base either to or from the trenches. Often, the huts were right at the front and might be the first stop for wounded soldiers retreating from battle, or the last stop for those going into the trenches, as one unknown soldier reported in the Napier *Daily Telegraph* in March 1918:

*The “Y.M.” is the nearest thing to home we boys have. It is the last evidence of humanity as we go forward to our grim job in the trenches, and on “over the top” is the last sign that anybody cares for us.*

Throughout the war years the Hastings and Napier YMCAs maintained continuous fundraising events to help sustain the international YMCA work being carried out overseas. The annual Red Triangle Day aimed to raise £10,000 each year, this being the sum required to carry out YMCA war work for one month.



*Mr & Mrs Lowry of Okawa, funded this Y.M.C.A. Hut at Etaples, France, during the First World War. — Photograph reproduced from “Buckshee”: A Pictorial Record of the New Zealand Y.M.C.A. on Active Service, New Zealand Y.M.C.A. National Council 1919.*

Fundraising occasions tended to involve the whole town: a favourite Napier event was a torchlight procession with the Fire Brigade, Regimental Band, Pipe Band and City Band to the Marine Parade rotunda for an “Al Fresco” concert, while Hastings people followed the town band in a procession from the Princess Theatre to a rally at Railway Crossing. Local theatres, the Gaiety and Everybody’s, held special programmes with the proceeds going to the Red Triangle fund. The targeted day itself, known as the “Day of the Big Give”, involved door to door collections and street appeals. At all events there was mention of the “wonderful Y.M.C.A. war work” at the front, and much praise for the organisation’s caring attitude and ceaseless dedication to the soldiers’ comfort. As a result, appeals were regularly over-subscribed, and it was reported that “there seemed to be no trouble at all in relieving the general populace of their spare cash, and, in some cases, of substantial cheques.”

Throughout the 1920s the YMCAs of Hawke’s Bay continued to promote and practice adherence to Christian values. Returned soldiers were received back into the Hawke’s Bay community by the YMCAs with affection and warmth. “Welcome home” teas and socials were held regularly and soldiers’ health and retraining needs were met with Y.M.C.A. Huts at hospital Soldiers’ Wards. The Huts provided educational classes and also the services of a doctor, nurse and dispensing

chemist. A Big Brother network was established by the Hastings YMCA to help young offenders in the courts. The YMCA Secretary attended every sitting of the Juvenile Court and linked up each “delinquent boy” with a “Big Brother”. The Big Brothers were usually members of the YMCA’s service club, Ys Men, and were young men of “good character” who “through their interest, show a way of life which is better”. Up to fifteen young offenders, described by Hastings Secretary Eric Price as society’s “problem boys, the lawless, sex-offenders and those who lie and steal”, were helped each year.

The Hastings YMCA Boys’ Groups, active throughout the 1920s, were also effective in helping “problem” boys. Children from underprivileged homes, often raised by war widows, were welcomed into the YMCA clubs and received strong character training in service, citizenry and Christian standards. Tom Kemp, a member of the Hastings YMCA Boys Club in the mid 1920s, believes that the organisation and its “moral teaching . . . had a very decided influence on the guys. I’ll guarantee that the vast majority of the guys that went to YMCA didn’t get into any trouble. It was a very very good influence on their lives, a tremendous influence”. Indeed, the 1930 Annual Report noted that local headmasters and teachers had reported a marked change in boys’ behaviour and language since attending the YMCA groups.

The post-World War II rebirth of the YMCA in Hawke’s Bay saw a greater emphasis on general character development and a less concerted effort to promote Christianity per se. At some times, however, spiritual values have acquired increased prominence as a result of the particular members and office-holders active in the organisation. The Hastings YMCA’s Saturday morning gymnastics classes in the 1960s included a session of religious instruction, and in the mid-1970s the Hastings YMCA included a Christian Emphasis Committee. The committee sought to involve local churches in the YMCA programmes. Church members, coordinated by local minister Edgar Hornblow, regularly attended Saturday morning youth sessions and provided a spiritual dimension to the activities with music and story-telling. Although such initiatives have become the exception rather than the norm for YMCA programmes, Christian values and characteristics have continued to form the basis of the organisation’s operations and philosophy to the present day. As Pat Magill described YMCA youth work, for example, the organisation aimed to “care for those youth not welcome or not cared for elsewhere” in a form of practical Christianity.

The primary aim of the Napier YMCA on its formation in 1963 was to take over the activities of the Police and Citizens Youth Club. The Youth Club had been operating successfully at the old Hastings Street School buildings since 1958. Both police and civilian people were involved in the club, teaching gymnastics (Ray Kemsley), wrestling (Constable M. Batt), boxing (Joe McIvor and Constable Green), trampolining and physical training. The club also held occasional special

events such as swimming carnivals, magic shows and film evenings, and challenged Police Social Club sports teams to competition matches. The overall goal was to establish mutual trust and confidence between the youth and authority figures, and to provide a recreational facility for the youth of Napier. Further, feedback from parents indicated that youth behaviour improved as a result of club attendance. The club was so popular, however, that numbers quickly outgrew the capabilities of the premises, and the need for new premises and funds was discussed as early as 1960. Following an approach to the National Youth Council, George Briggs of the National YMCA Council suggested the formation of a Napier YMCA to run the club, and this idea was duly accepted by a public meeting in Napier in 1963. The newly formed YMCA continued the work of the Police Club in teaching physical recreation programmes and added its own brand of Christian action in the form of youth leadership training, church parades and world YMCA service.

From the 1970s, the youth work of the YMCAs of Hawkes Bay has centred on at-risk youth. This has not traditionally been an area of concern for YMCAs, and as a result the first programmes were often run by small groups of YMCA people with little support from the wider YMCA community. Pat Magill, speaking of the Napier YMCA's relationship with the Downtown Y drop-in centre, said:

*The Y Board in no way would have voted for that sort of work if it involved cash, (a) because they didn't understand it, and (b) they didn't want to go broke doing that sort of work. Most of the suggestions were that they [the youth] were their parents' responsibility. There was no talk then of urbanisation or marginalisation or loss of land or those sorts of things. When it came to a buck, it wasn't our work. There was never a debt on the YMCA to underwrite losses from Downtown Y, it was private YMCA members who ran that programme.*

The Rydum programme, operated by Hastings YMCA from 1977, targeted a similar social group as the Downtown Y in Napier, although it was more character-based than Downtown's broader social and community agenda. Rydum was a national YMCA project, piloted in Camberley and Flaxmere (where the group was known as the "Flaxmere Flyers"), and aimed to redirect youth development through the use of mini-bikes. The ten-week course was based on the use, maintenance and safety of mini-bikes, supplemented by other community activities such as farm explorations and weekend campouts. Youth worker Jody Scott was hired to run the programme, with the support of a YMCA committee chaired by Ross Duncan. Children, usually aged between eleven and thirteen years, who showed behavioural or scholastic problems were referred to the programme by their school teacher. One of the major contributing schools, Heretaunga Intermediate, reported after the first twelve months that participants' attendance at school had improved, and identified the following advantages of the programme to the children involved:

*the programme is providing an object which they are not only involved with, but:*

- (a) they can feel success (learning to ride)*
- (b) they have something worth caring about (peer group approval of machines)*
- (c) they can feel pride (ability to ride)*
- (d) they grow in confidence (learning to fix bikes)*

The programme also attracted strong parental support and approval, and was popular with the participants. Previous members frequently returned to help with the programmes, providing younger children with positive behavioural role models. In later years Dennis Reeve and Connie Goetz ran the programme, but the project's expense eventually became too large for the Hastings YMCA to maintain. Although Honda New Zealand sponsored the bikes, and local Honda dealer David Whitaker supplied discounted parts, maintenance costs were high and Rydum was wound up in May 1982.

The Tu Tangata programme was initiated in 1983 by the Napier YMCA as a personal development course for eleven to fourteen year-olds. The YMCA recognised that a large group of youngsters who were not involved with other organisations or programmes were becoming bored in their leisure time and seeking excitement in anti-social activities. The Tu Tangata programme aimed to provide a positive alternative to such activities, which at an impressionable age could set a life-long pattern. Youth worker Wally Hunt set up the programme, and as Mark



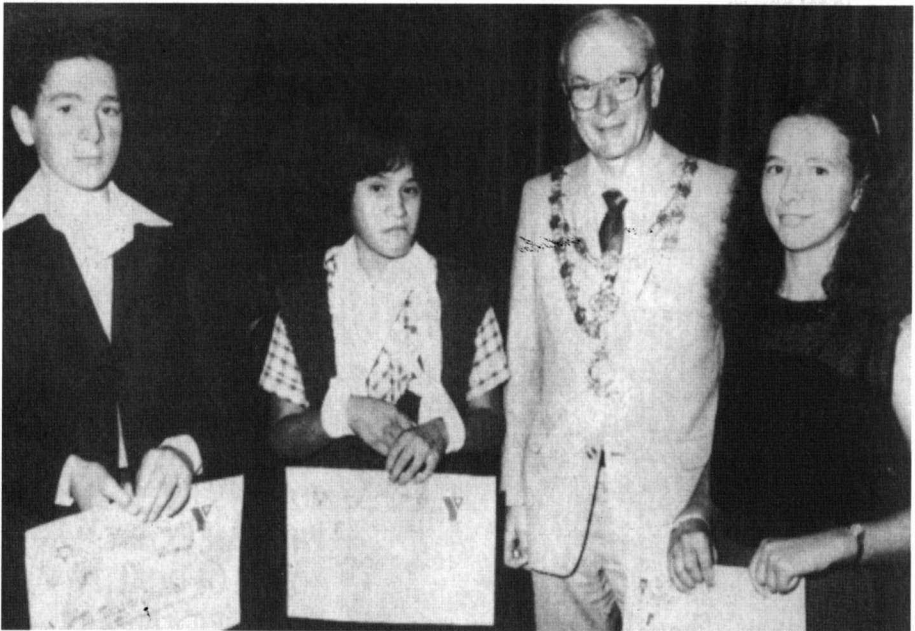
*Jodi Scott, Rydum co-ordinator (third from left at back) and the Rydum team before demonstrating their skills at Lions Club trailer presentation. — Photograph courtesy of Ross Duncan.*

Kururangi, then also a YMCA youth worker, describes the Tu Tangata scheme:

*It was about bringing in all these loose youth programmes and putting them into one package and saying “this is what we’ve got to offer”. Then the terminology started coming in about “at-risk youth”, and this was what we could do for them five or six days and three nights a week.*

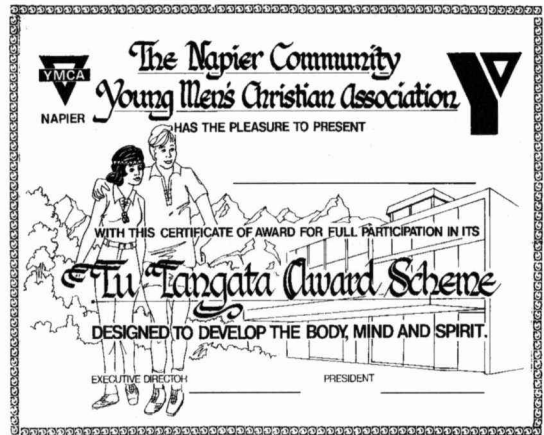
The programme consisted of seven modules aiming to develop self-confidence and extend individual skills in physical activities, personal relationships, resourcefulness, planning skills, spiritual and cultural values, communications and leadership. Typical activities included abseiling, hiking, a day trip to the Te Waka Desert, and an odd job day to raise funds for a trip to Taupo. Although those children involved with the programme benefited greatly, the amount of resources necessary to run the project became excessive when linked to numbers. The programme was wound up in 1989, but revived in a less structured form by youth workers Marie Clark (1994) and Debi Robinson (1995).

A further character development project for the YMCAs of Hawke’s Bay has been the utilisation of young people as group leaders for camps and holiday programmes. Youth have been encouraged to take leadership roles in the YMCA since Eric Price’s days in Hastings (1929-1931), when boys’ groups were led by older boys. Similarly, when the Hastings YMCA was resurrected under Ray Whiteman in the early 1950s, older boys were trained by Ray to take the younger boys for gymnastics. Some of these boys, such as Ross Duncan and Warren Thom,



*The first recipients of the Tu Tangata Award at their presentation evening, March 1983. From left: Pierre Vermunt, Yvonne Henry, Napier Mayor Clyde Jeffrey, Annalicia Vermunt. — Photograph courtesy of Daily Telegraph.*

later became involved with the YMCA as adults. Leadership training was first formalised in the late 1960s, when a National Voluntary Leaders programme was established and successfully run at both the Napier and Hastings YMCAs. The four-year programme consisted of forty theory lessons on subjects such as groupwork, the structure of the body, camping, recording



*The Tu Tangata Award certificate presented to all those who completed the programme.*

information, YMCA history and philosophy, problem-solving, programme planning and growth and development. These lessons were supplemented by a monthly practical training session where leaders were taught the techniques of command and control, class organisation, teaching and the voice projection. In addition, Leaders Groups were able to enjoy their own social events, camping weekends and sleepovers, as well as planning and organising events for others. Leaders organised and staffed displays at the local Come Alive Days, where YMCA activities were on show for the community, Downtown Y camps and sleepovers, youth dances and events involving other community groups such as Red Cross. Some of these leaders were Downtown Y youth themselves, and went on to become professional youth workers. YMCA Leaders Clubs went into recess in the 1980s, but were relaunched in Hastings in 1989 and Napier in the 1990s with more structured leadership training programmes to prepare the leaders for youth work.

Christianity has retained a consistent, though ever-changing, presence in the YMCA in Hawke's Bay throughout the Association's existence. Christian values have led to prayer meetings, community service, fundraising campaigns and character development programmes. This diversity can give the impression that the organisation has lost its spiritual side, or as some say, that "the 'C' has gone out of the YMCA". However, the changes in the YMCA's promotion of Christianity have simply mirrored similar changes in the community and are an indication of the organisation's flexibility in adapting to social flux.

The breadth of the YMCA's Christianity is apparent in the movement in 1995, when members have widely differing interpretations of their organisation's spirituality. Some, such as Cyril Whitaker, a Hastings and Hawke's Bay YMCA member, see the YMCA as part of their Christian life:

*I believe that there is room in the Y for everybody and as I look at it, Jesus Christ states in the Bible that if you did this to one of these people, you did*

*it unto all. If people are looking after people, then they are doing that for the Christian way of life. I can see the Christian values in the YMCA because I think there's more to Christian life than sitting down and looking at a book and saying "this is the Bible".*

Other Christian members see their YMCA work as an extension of, or even a replacement for, their church worship:

*Every Christian organisation I was involved with outside the Y, i.e. the church, all had finite doctrines. Finite doctrines, to me, didn't seem to be the complete answer. The Y seemed to me to be an organisation that has Christian beliefs but no doctrine, working beliefs and no doctrine, and that seemed to suit me better. You're not locked in to a box of doctrines, like the Baptists or the Anglicans or anybody else, they all have their own specific things; and yet the YMCA has no sectarianism. That's quite unique.*

*I get really angry, and feel very uncomfortable with my own congregation in my own Presbyterian church now, who praise the Lord and do all the nice things on Sunday, but then don't put one hour of effort or one dollar of money through the week into helping the world become a better place and to help in a Christian way. I have lost some interest in the church, and though I feel I need it for spiritual strengthening, I don't see it as a means for doing the Christian work that I feel my spirit needs to express, so I do this in other ways, mostly through the Y. And I'm very comfortable with that.*

Still other YMCA people have seen the Association's Christian values as very subtly present. Hera Marshall felt that while these values underlied the activities of the movement, the organisation outwardly denied its Christianity, both locally and nationally. Similarly, Newton Angove says:

*The Christian ethic of the YMCA Charter was there, but it wasn't there in name, it wasn't done as a Christian organisation per se, that wasn't the reason. But they were performing their Christian duty. They may have called it other things, but they were doing their Christian duty.*

While these people have each interpreted the YMCA's spirituality differently, they all acknowledged the Christian basis of the Y philosophy and felt comfortable within it. It is this broad base, along with a degree of flexibility, that has enabled the YMCA to continue to serve its community according to Christian values despite constant social change.



## *Chapter Four - The Community*

In addition to addressing the body, mind and spirit of individual members, the YMCAs of Hawke's Bay have made significant contributions to the development of the local community. Social activities and facilities have been created and maintained to fill current needs, from the musical soirees of the 1890s to the more recent Downtown Y, Pub With No Beer and children's holiday programmes. Service has been unstintingly offered, such as the considerable post-earthquake work of 1931. Through this close contact with the local community, the YMCAs have been able to maintain a realistic perception of the nature of its community. The need to continually adapt to social change has also been keenly felt, and the YMCAs of Hawke's Bay have responded to community change with organisational change, as in the case of its increasing bicultural awareness.

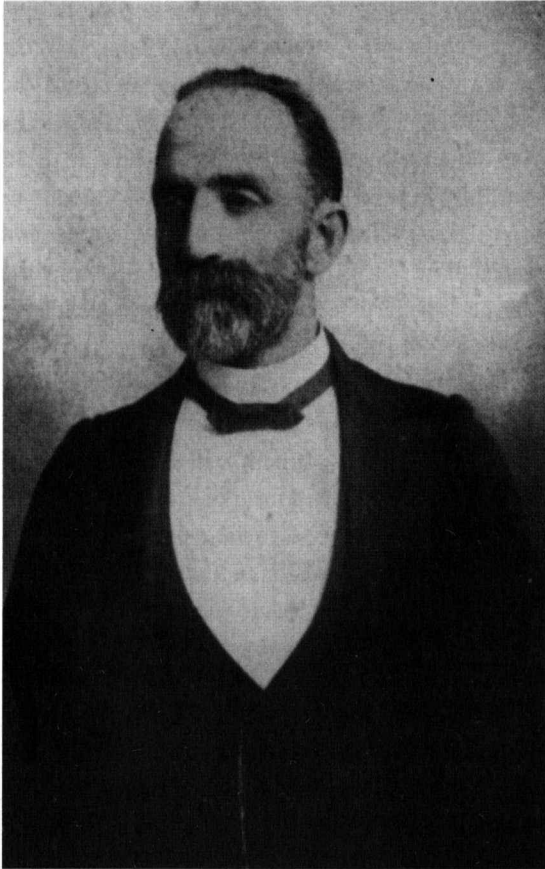
At the turn of the century Napier YMCA held regular social events for members in the form of musical soirees. Quarterly soirees were held for the public, often accompanied by coffee and cakes, and more frequent evenings were held for smaller groups of members. Local clergymen, members and women friends of the Association contributed addresses, recitations and songs to these evenings. The YMCA committee had purchased a piano and an organ (the latter at the cost of 35 pounds) in 1890 and these were played by Hugh Aplin and Henry Spackman.

Both men were particularly talented musicians: Aplin was a music teacher and Spackman the Napier Cathedral organist. The Hastings YMCA held similar concerts during the early 1910s, known as "Free and Easy" concerts. These evenings seem to have brought out the less well-known local talents, such as Mr Yarr who performed mouth organ solos, and Mr Jameson who provided negro melodies. Recitations, instrumentals, vocal solos and duets, and "humourous recitals" also featured on the programmes. While women friends of members were welcome at these evenings, and indeed often provided programme items, the Ladies' Auxiliaries of both the Hastings and Napier YMCAs held afternoon social meetings especially for women during the 1910s. These were all-women affairs, with women vocal and instrumental musicians and speakers. The YMCA musical soirees were almost the only musical entertainment available in Napier or Hastings towns at the time, and were apparently much appreciated by public and members alike.

Social events were also operated by the YMCA in small rural localities around Hawke's Bay, although it is not clear who initiated or ran these organisations. One such group was at Kotemaori, a railway settlement on the Napier-Wairoa road, active in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The township was a busy one, with Public Works employees engaged in building the East Coast railway line as well as road and rail bridges and tunnels. A Salvation Army family, recently arrived from England, is remembered as a strong force in the YMCA activities. A YMCA Hall was built near the local school, and used for socials, dances, movie screenings and billiards games.

People such as Ray Neill, who grew up in Kotemaori, recall adults dressing up and going to the YMCA Hall for dances, and remember the YMCA as the “centre of Kotemaori’s social life”. Kaiwaka, a farming community southwest of Tongoiio, also had a YMCA Hall, and held socials and dances there in the 1920s. Families from the neighbouring railway settlements of Waikoau and Waipunga travelled into Kaiwaka for these dances, some of which were fundraising ventures in aid of local projects such as the primary school. YMCA officers were also involved with the Kaiwaka Debating Society and frequently acted as mediators for their debates, which were held in the YMCA Hall.

The 1920s were also active times for the social side of the Napier YMCA. A YMCA orchestra was formed, and performed with the St Paul’s Presbyterian Church Choir at regular musical evenings. These performances were frequently followed by a “community sing”, when members of the public joined together for a session of



*Henry Gould Spackman, organist at the Napier Cathedral for 10 years, member of Napier Orchestral Society and YMCA Board member in the 1890s. — Reproduced with permission from the collection of the Hawke’s Bay Cultural Trust, Hawke’s Bay Museum.*

group singing of hymns. These sing-songs were particularly popular with locals, and the “hearty singing” and large attendances were regularly commented on in newspaper reports. A series of special social evenings were held to entertain the staffs of local warehouses and firms, friendly societies and the local fire brigades, and the crews of visiting ships were similarly entertained at the YMCA rooms. Visiting sailors also received “comforts” from the Napier YMCA, and amusements such as football matches were organised for them. The provision of these regular social events, held in a friendly, welcoming venue, filled a need for the contemporary society which otherwise would have lacked a community-based venue in which to socialise.

The YMCAs of Hawke's Bay have also served their communities in more serious ways than entertainment, as in the case of the 1931 earthquake relief work. The Hawke's Bay earthquake of February 3, 1931 largely destroyed both Napier and Hastings towns and the surrounding districts. The devastation of the massive earthquake was followed by widespread fire which could not be fought as water mains had broken. The Napier YMCA's rooms, then in a building on the corner of Marine Parade and Emerson Street, crumbled to the ground and were destroyed.

The YMCA secretary, Fred Main, was trapped in the Napier Cathedral and badly injured by falling debris, and was unable to resume his duties for several months. A National YMCA man, J.A. Duffy, took over the YMCA leadership for the first ten days and established an Enquiry and Information Bureau. As hundreds of enquiries flooded into the town from concerned friends and relatives of local people, it became the YMCA's task to determine the whereabouts and safety of these people. In the first three weeks of operation, the Bureau dealt with nearly 6,000 enquiries either by telegram, letter or verbally, relating both to Napier people and to those in outlying rural areas. Six committees were formed to cover the rural areas alone, and up to fifty volunteer messengers were involved in the work. The Napier YMCA also provided recreational facilities in the form of a games tent at the Nelson Park refugee camp, where 15,000 homeless people were housed immediately after the disaster. This work, particularly the Enquiry Bureau, was greatly valued by both the local and national public, and numerous messages of appreciation such as these were received:

*It is with a sense of deep gratitude that I acknowledge your wire which informs me as to the whereabouts of . . . all of Napier. Needless to say my anxious mind is quite at rest concerning them. In heartily thanking your Association for what it has done for me I congratulate it upon the speedy manner in which it gained for me the information I required concerning my relatives.*

*Please accept our very best thanks for your kindness in advising us of the safety of . . . The wire arrived tonight and was more than welcomed as no word had come from them. Again thanking you.*

*I have to thank you for your wire of yesterday re . . . and advising us of his safety, and to express our appreciation of the good work you are doing, and the prompt and thorough way in which the whole sad business is being handled.*

In Hastings, the YMCA building survived with only moderate damage, and the gymnasium became the town morgue. Members of the Hastings YMCA Boys' Club became volunteer couriers and messengers for the morgue, the police and the Telegraph Office. Under the direction of Eric Price and Don Miller, an Auckland YMCA worker sent by the National YMCA to help with the relief work, an Enquiry and Information Bureau similar to Napier's was operated. Tom Kemp, who was

fourteen at the time of the earthquake, was one of the YMCA volunteers and remembers some of his assignments:

*The place was flooded with telegrams and cablegrams from all over New Zealand and all over the world, they came in by the thousands, and so that mob of boys was busy, we were working up to ten or twelve hours a day on our bikes trying to track down the people. Every one was a sort of a detective, they had to explore absolutely every avenue, to try and find out where these people had gone. Eight of every ten of the houses must have been empty, and it was very very frightening for the young fellas, to be out in the country, way out the back of Havelock or out at Maraekakaho trying*

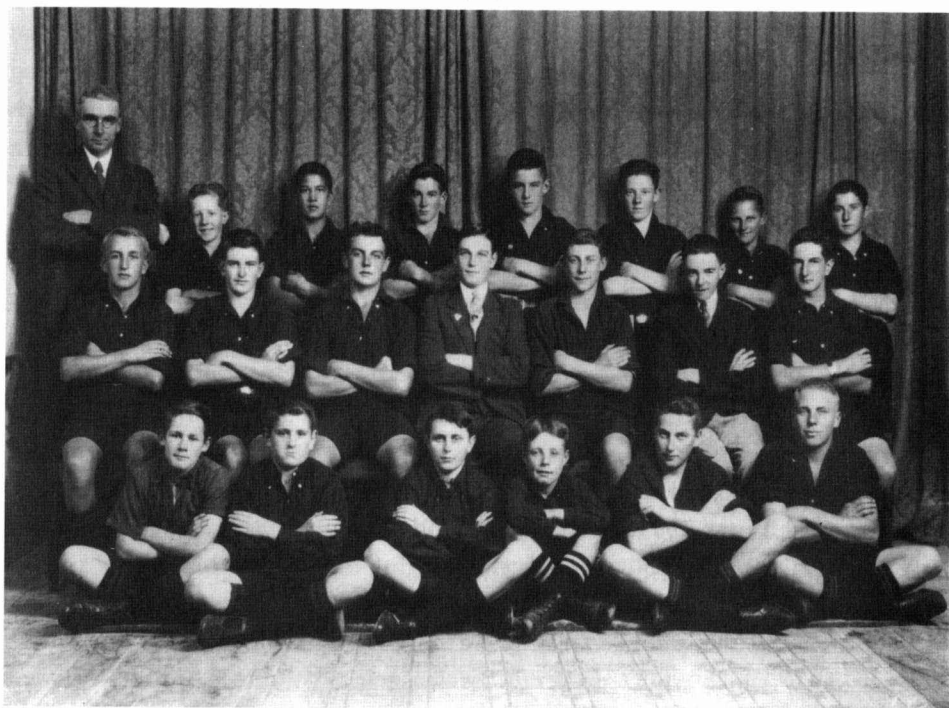


*Remains of YMCA building, Marine Parade and Emerson Street, February 1931. — Reproduced with permission, from the collection of the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust, Hawke's Bay Museum.*

*to check up on people, and go to these great big empty places with animals running round half starved. There's one place I still look at, over at St. Aubyn Street West. It had a big high tin fence around it. It was getting on for March or April, and the leaves were falling down. I remember going round the back and everything was overgrown, the grass was higher than myself, and I was knocking on the doors and going round to see if there was some way of getting in or attracting attention. There were*

*starving cats round there as well. I really had a great sense of fear, but I still had to find out what was what.*

The first three weeks after the earthquake saw 1,000 telegrams of reply sent from the Hastings Bureau, and the search and identification work was carried on for much of 1931. The YMCA boys also acted as couriers for the morgue, and were frequently required to take parcels of bodies or bones to the police station for identification.



*Hastings YMCA Earthquake Relief Volunteers, 1931.*

*Back: Eric Price, General Secretary Hastings YMCA; Tom Kemp, Earl Lee, Ron Hooper, Jack Cowbrick, Eddie Webb, Ken McKay, Hugh Patterson.*

*Middle: Sid Coles, Jack Borden, Guy Coles, Sid O'Neill, Cliff Bewley, Ken Hopkins, Len Webb.*

*Front: Reg Hodgetts, Phil Tritt, Ian Moran, Joe Stenson, Jack Stewart, Ray Vesty. — Information courtesy of Sid Coles.*

The efforts of these young boys was much appreciated by authorities and the public, and in a citation of gratitude, the YMCA Board of Directors thanked each boy individually for their work, concluding:

*We earnestly hope and pray that, out of the tasks and losses of the disaster, a truer sense of values may have been developed, and you will go forward in life seeking those things which are beyond the reach of earthquake and death.*

On the renewal of the YMCA movement in Hawke's Bay in the 1950s, it was recognised that local youth needed a venue to socialise other than on the streets. Much of the YMCA's post-war activities have been centred on providing such

facilities for youth, as a service to both the young people themselves and the good of the wider community. For example, the Napier Police Youth Club, which the Napier YMCA evolved from, aimed to provide activities and interests for youth as an alternative to anti-social and aggressive group behaviours. As social needs and preferences have changed over the years, the facilities and programmes provided for youth socialising have been adapted to meet current needs.

Since the mid-1960s Hastings YMCA has run school holiday programmes for children. These programmes, initially designed simply to entertain and amuse young children on holiday, have become increasingly necessary and popular as more and more parents work outside the home and are unavailable for their children during school holiday periods. Activities have included visits to places of interest, such as the police station and local factories, bus trips, games, gymnastics and crafts. Although the programmes of the late-1960s were segregated, with boys being invited to make fishing gear and kites, and girls to make dolls and doll dresses, in later years groups have been mixed. In conjunction with Napier YMCA, Hastings YMCA also held holiday day camps from the late-1960s. Day camps provided all the activities and atmosphere of camping for younger children who were not yet ready to camp overnight. The 1969 day camp, held at Maraekakaho Domain, offered swimming, archery, trampolining, cricket, softball, darts, badminton, athletics, hiking, a commando course and games for up to 400 children. Parents were invited to an evening picnic and campfire on the last day of camp.

From the mid-1970s, Jim Henderson and a team of volunteers at the Hastings YMCA ran twice-weekly Activity Nights for local youth. Sports such as volleyball, badminton, table tennis and boxing were available, as well as a canteen, slot car area and television. Overnight camps were also run, including one in February 1977 which attracted over 220 teenagers, as volunteer leader Gloria Lee reported in the Hastings YMCA Annual Report:

*We gave these kids an evening's programme of games, Bar-b-que, lolly scramble, film, supper and other exciting games and food during the course of the evening. The next morning the red-eyed, tired staff managed to get breakfast and packed up to go home at 10 a.m.*

Older teenagers were encouraged to join other YMCA programmes, and other community groups, in an effort to involve the youth in the activities of their community. The Hastings YMCA also supported the work of other youth groups in the area, and a strong network of youth groups and youth workers developed. According to Mark Kururangi of Hastings YMCA, "they were great times - any youth group could call on others and the support would be there". For example, when it became known that the YMCA house on the Railway Road site was to be demolished, a house that the Hastings YMCA youth group used:

*We heard the "May-Day" call come out, "the bloody bureaucracy wants our building teared down", and these groups from around Napier,*

*Hastings, Flaxmere, Bridge Pa, Omaha, Havelock North converged with a sit-in at the building. It was "How dare they! Where the heck were we going to play table-tennis?"*

Actually, the sit-in never eventuated: "We all arrived there and it was too cold for the sit-in so we all got into the basketball stadium and just played sports."

The Hastings YMCA provided an additional community facility with its Guy Baillie Youth Hostel, which opened in 1977. The hostel was designed to fill a need in the Hastings area for low-cost permanent and semi-permanent housing, and gave priority to 17-23 year olds as tenants. George Briggs of the National YMCA Council had found a government scheme which provided funding for such projects, and as a result 80% of the \$102,000 cost was paid for by the government. Under the supervision of Board member Jim Durand, the complex was built alongside the Railway Road stadium, and consisted of ten three-bed units with toilet and teamaking facilities, a larger communal kitchen, a dining area plus laundry and store-room, and a manager's flat. However, the project was not entirely successful: the YMCA Board had difficulties finding a suitable manager and good tenants, and the hostel was later sold to the Angus Inn for use as motel units.

In Napier, the 1970s saw a growing awareness by the YMCA of the special needs of Maori youth. Large numbers of predominantly Maori teenagers were congregating in town on Friday and Saturday nights and engaging in aggressive, destructive and anti-social behaviour. A YMCA committee, including Doug Fraser and Pat Magill, responded with highly successful Friday and Saturday night dances at the Majestic Hall in Dalton Street. Later, when the City Council required the hall for a new library, the old library building in Tennyson Street, now the Criterion Hotel, was offered to the YMCA. With help from the Napier Jaycees, walls were knocked out and the interior was painted to become the site of a drop-in youth centre.

The centre, the Downtown Y, was opened in 1971, and was used as a social venue at the weekends, with dances and entertainment, and was also open during the week for craft lessons and socialising. A full-time cultural officer was employed to teach leatherwork, tukutuku, pottery, guitar and painting, and both paid and unpaid youth workers supervised activities. For the first four months the centre was monopolised by Pakeha youth, then as increasing numbers of Maori began attending, racial conflict and fights broke out. Maori youth eventually came to dominate the centre, although Pakeha were not made unwelcome. Douglas Bray, a specialist in Polynesian education at Massey University, visited the centre in May 1973 and reported on his visit:

*I was most impressed by my visits to the "Downtown Y". It was encouraging to find such a preponderance of Maoris participating in the social activities, games, painting and craft on the Friday evening. They clearly felt at home, they were there because they wanted to be there and*

*were doing worthwhile things; they obviously felt the place to be "theirs" in contrast to the outside world where they are members of a minority group and in contrast often to school which is frequently associated with failure. It was encouraging to find that some were taking a modicum of responsibility by helping with the running of the activities.*

A Maori boy, one of the regular attenders, described the centre to Douglas Bray:

*The first time you go to the Y you think it's mighty. Lots of games to play and people to meet. If you like pool, you can play it til you're sick of it. But you might like ping-pong or dancing or you might like TV. The people up there are friendly. Once or twice might be a fight up there. I found that the Y keeps most of the people off the streets. You can have something to eat or drink. It's a good place to go to.*

The centre was soon proving its worth to the community: when it closed over Christmas 1972, the juvenile crime rate soared and local police requested the centre never close again. Early members began to return as leaders and helpers, with noticeably improved interactive behaviour and social attitudes. Educationists, youth and social workers and psychologists from around New Zealand began to take an interest in the centre's success, and groups of academics and professionals regularly visited the centre to observe activities. Similar centres were planned for Porirua, Gisborne and Auckland suburbs as a result of these visits. Although a wide range of local agencies such as the Social Welfare Department, Education Department, Jaycees, Police Youth Aid, Maori Affairs Department and Ministry of Recreation and Sport provided support and encouragement to the project throughout its existence, it was the Downtown Y youth workers themselves who were most important to the youth. Mark Kururangi was a Downtown Y regular in the early 1970s and remembers:

*Going to school everyone was talking about the Downtown Y. Everyone made an honest attempt to get there, or else they'd climb out the window and get the free bus that used to come. It was popular. You had people like Chris Mills from the Maori Wardens, Pat Magill, Jim Barnes, Buster Harvey, and you had a number of people coming in. Wally Hunt was a youth worker but I suppose he was a "big youth", he was as young as the rest of us. We didn't know whether he was hired as a minder, or a bouncer, or a friend, but he seemed to fit all those roles.*

The Napier YMCA extended its work with Maori youth in the 1970s through its Outreach programme. This committee, headed by Pat Magill, aimed to increase the effectiveness of Napier's community workers through co-ordinated and co-operative projects. Representatives of the Community College, Police Youth Aid, social welfare agencies and YMCA youth workers Wally Hunt and Chris Mill worked together on community goals. One of these projects was based in Moteo, a small



Maori settlement twelve miles from Napier, and another in the suburb of Maraenui. At Moteo, a high proportion of the young people were involved in truancy, burglary, conversion and aggressive destructive behaviour and the Police Youth Aid Officer, George Newcomb, was having three to four youths referred to him every week for offending. George enlisted the help of the YMCA to stem the problem, and following meetings with local youth, parents, kaumatua and Maori Affairs Department staff, the Moteo Youth Group was established in May 1973. The programme aimed to help youth with their school studies, provide lessons in Maori art and culture, and provide youth with an alternative social environment to that of offending and crime. The group originally operated from Hamuera Marae, but due to booking clashes with other events the disused Timi Kara Marae was used instead. The local youth, who had previously vandalised the Timi Kara buildings, undertook to restore it themselves. The grounds were cleared and tidied, walls were relined, windows replaced, kowhaiwhai and tukutuku work done and money raised for rewiring, plumbing and rebuilding costs. Wally Hunt, a YMCA youth worker, ran and organised the group, and Sonny Abraham, the YMCA cultural officer, taught Maoritanga, including waiata, haka and carving. A married couple, one a teacher, voluntarily helped students with their homework and gave lessons in Maori language. Sonny's classes were renowned for their high standards of performance, as Douglas Bray observed during his visit to the marae:

*Quite remarkable was the performance of the 15 boys and 24 girls who, without a single break, practiced Maori song-dance activities under the demanding tutorship of the YMCA cultural officer, Sonny Abraham for a full two hours. The slightest flicker of inattention received a blast of invective. The highest standards of precision were demanded. The youngsters clearly enjoyed performing the vigorous or rhythmic precise movements under conditions of heightened tension and excitement cultivated by an authoritarian tutor who has mana in their eyes. Each week they come back avidly for more.*

The reduction in delinquent behaviour following the establishment of the Moteo Youth Marae was remarkable - from three to four offenders being ider per week prior to the Marae's existence, in the twenty months following only Moteo youth were brought to the notice of the Police Youth Aid section. Moreover, all four were living away from their Moteo homes at the time of offending. Local school principals also reported a reduced truancy rate and less troublesome behaviour amongst Moteo youth in the months following the Youth Marae's establishment.

Police Youth Aid Officer George Newcomb also initiated the formation of the Maraenui youth groups later in 1973. The local community was troubled by the anti-social behaviour of a group of youths known as the "Black Shadows" and a public meeting agreed to trial a youth group scheme. Chris Mill, a YMCA youth

worker at the Downtown Y, helped establish and run the groups, which were based on the idea of children and families working and playing together in small groups. A woman had girls who wanted to learn sewing come to her home, while a group of boys worked in gardens to raise money for band instruments. Carpentry, motor mechanics and literacy groups also operated, A “junior discussion group” was especially popular. A group of about ten 14-16 year olds met together to discuss topics such as education, sex, race relations, relationships, parents and crime, and on alternate weeks met with their parents and teachers to share their thoughts on the week’s topic. These groups brought youth together in a constructive social setting; in a discussion with researcher Douglas Bray, one female group member reported that “from these discussions I found that these boys became my brothers which was one powerful thing”. She also felt the YMCA workers involved in the groups were “fantastic”, interested in the youth, and helping the local Maori to “realise they are somebody”.

As the youth involved with these programmes at the Downtown Y, Moteo and Maraenui outgrew the facilities, it became apparent to the Napier YMCA that the only available social venue for them was pubs. In an effort to provide a more positive alternative, the idea of opening a “Pub with No Beer” was suggested. The planned venue was to provide all the social attractions of a standard pub - live entertainment, pool tables, space for socialising and dancing, food - but would serve only non-alcoholic drinks. Backing was sought from other community groups and social researchers, all of whom enthusiastically pledged their support for the project. Numerous groups such as the Department of Health, the Council for Recreation and Sport, the local Napier police, the Alcohol Liquor Advisory Council (ALAC), and individuals including the Mayor of Napier Clyde Jeffrey and Race Relations Conciliator Hiwi Tauroa all endorsed the concept from the beginning. With this support behind them, the YMCA Board began fundraising to build the facility on its Latham Street property. Board members Pat Magill and Doug Fraser organised a sponsored Taupo-Napier walk and pledges were solicited from local business to raise the required funds. The Napier City Council, the Lottery Board and ALAC all provided substantial loans. The original design of Yeoman Julier and Associates was upgraded by Raiford Gardner, and Linnell Builders began construction in 1976 under the close supervision and general organisation of Building Committee chairman Cedric Alexander. A poor estimate of costs, however, meant a lack of funds halted construction the following year and the building was eventually completed in 1982-83 after further fundraising efforts. One particularly notable event was the Rotary Radiothon run by the Napier West and Taradale Rotary Clubs, which raised \$50,000.

The early years of the “Pub with No Beer”, or Michael’s Place, were highly successful in terms of filling a social need of young people. The venue attracted up to four hundred young people on Friday and Saturday nights, and it gained a

reputation as the fashionable place to go in Napier. Dress and behaviour standards were monitored, and maintained at a high level, and offensive language was outlawed. As a result, both parents and youth were enthusiastic about Michael's Place, as YMCA member Harold Beer discovered when he interviewed local families for an advertising spread on Michael's Place in 1984. Parents reported:

*We're happy about them going there without our direct supervision. If there was nowhere like Michael's Place they'd go up town and then we would be worried. We feel we can let them go to Michael's Place without us being on their backs.*

*These young kids have no way of meeting socially except perhaps at sports meetings with other schools. At Michael's Place they meet others from outside Napier as well. Girls from Iona College, Havelock North High School, boys from Hastings Boys High and St John's College.*

*Although the boys are involved in sport right across the board we see Michael's Place as a less structured way of life. At Michael's Place they can do it without us - can go with the family car - and we've got no worries.*

Young people, such as this seventeen-year old male, were equally keen: *I enjoy dressing up - slacks, not jeans - tie sometimes and dress shirt. There's a lot of fashion there. At Michael's Place even though you may go with a group you can still be an individual.*

Even his twelve-year old brother, who had not attended Michael's Place himself, had heard good reports of the facility and was looking forward to when he could go there. Local authorities, youth and community groups and social researchers likewise all commended the Napier YMCA for its innovative new facility. A number of community groups around New Zealand and Australia were very interested in the concept and visited Napier to learn more about its formation. Newton Angove, YMCA Director at the time, remembers a government-sponsored Chinese group which came to Napier to observe the Pub With No Beer in action.

Unfortunately, this high level of community support did not manifest itself in financial terms and Michael's Place encountered problems just a few years after opening. While the venue was heavily used at weekends, few week-night functions were held and as a result incomes were low. Debts incurred in the construction of the building were still unpaid, and the local neighbourhood began to complain about excessive noise and behaviour disturbances. As other youth venues such as roller-skating rinks opened, attendance and revenues declined. By 1986 Saturday night attendances were so low that Michael's Place ceased to operate as a youth venue, and the facility was let to a catering firm, Robin Potts Ltd, on the understanding that it would be run in a "socially desirable" manner. The building was used to teach the Hastings YMCA's hospitality course, and operated as a conference and reception centre. In 1990 Michael's Place was let to its present tenants, also a catering firm, while remaining YMCA-owned. Included in the lease

is a clause stipulating that liquor will only be served “in moderation”, in keeping with the building’s original usage and Alcohol Advisory Council funding.

The fact that the Michael’s Place complex closed its doors as a community facility has led to some discontent amongst local Napier people. There was strong feeling in parts of the community that the YMCA had no moral right to lease out a building paid for with community funds and built with community labour. Newton Angove, the Director of the Napier YMCA at the time of the leasing, remembers: “We had a number of people, ex-Board members and a number of the public who had put money towards it, who felt very very disappointed and disillusioned for a number of years.” Indeed, some still feel disillusioned ten years later; one ex-YMCA person said in 1995:

*Get those people out of that restaurant. It’s a community building. I’m afraid we didn’t come together years ago and buy bricks and put public funding in just to have a building leased out as a restaurant.*

While the financial and attendance problems of the Pub With No Beer concept are acknowledged by critics, there is nevertheless a strong feeling that the YMCA could have taken other initiatives to keep the facility in community use. Some people associated with the YMCA have pointed out that young people in the 1990s need an alcohol-free venue as much as those of the 1980s, and suggestions have been made to resurrect the Pub With No Beer using the Michael’s Place building.

While Maori youth work was new to the YMCA in the 1970s, and often amounted to YMCA staff working on Maori community projects without the involvement of their YMCA Board, in later years bicultural issues have come to the fore of the YMCA’s operations. This has been due in large part to the influence of Dennis Oliver, who brought his experience with Pacific Island cultures to his position as Executive Director of the Hastings YMCA in the early 1980s. Dennis, with YMCA trainer Hera Marshall, ran bicultural workshops for the YMCA Board and interested members in 1983, titled “Improving Communication Skills” and “Understanding Prejudice”, and again in 1988 on “Towards a Bicultural Society”. These workshops discussed the nature of personal prejudices, of culture and possible ways to achieve tolerance of different cultures. Hera felt that Pakeha needed to recognise and accept their own culture, so that they could more readily understand the need for respect for other cultures, and the rights of co-existence between Maori and Pakeha. These workshops had a limited influence on the organisation; on reflection, Hera sees them as “too subtle” at a time when there were many other issues of race relations to be resolved. Nevertheless, the increased level of YMCA involvement with Maori communities and projects led to a formal bicultural policy being adopted by Hastings YMCA in 1988. The policy aims to create a community built on diversity and equality, and “encourages each person to acknowledge their own uniqueness and appreciate the uniqueness of others”. The policy is

implemented internally in an employment programme which calls for an equal mix of Maori and Pakeha employees at the YMCA. Employment conditions also acknowledge cultural difference; for example, in offering extended bereavement leave. Hera acknowledges in particular the opportunities provided Maori women staff in the YMCA:

*Dennis has a wonderful way of helping them [Maori women] to realise their potential. What he does is he just keeps you stretching and reaching . . . It's an experience that I have encouraged other women, in particular Maori women [into]; if you want to build on your strengths and if you want to realise your potential, then the YMCA under Dennis' management is an ideal place to start.*

The response of the Maori community to the YMCA's increasing bicultural interests has been mixed. Mark Kururangi, a past YMCA youth worker, sees the YMCA as one of the few community groups that truly embraces other cultures, and congratulates the organisation on its stance. However, Hera Marshall recalls criticism from some local Maori who believed that she had "sold out" by working for a Pakeha organisation. These people saw the Y as a threat to Maoridom, as it attracted Maori and used their strengths to the organisation's, not Maoridom's, gain. To Hera, these accusations were unfounded and she regrets that Maori have not always "seen the YMCA for what it is".

The YMCA has not always been popular with its local Hawke's Bay community: there have been times when the Association has been criticised for its programmes, its management and its policies. However, the YMCA has remained committed to serving community needs in all their guises, from civil defence to socialising. The bonds of community have thus been strengthened, or in some cases created, and it is likely that the potential problems of social breakdown have therefore been averted.

## *Chapter Five - Behind The Scenes*

*“You can take away the funding, you can take away the programmes, but you can’t take away the YMCA. The people will always be there.”*

*-past youth worker and Board member of Napier YMCA.*

The local community’s view of the YMCAs of Hawke’s Bay has generally been limited to the services and activities that the organisation provides for them. However there is more to the YMCA than even its many publicly visible features would suggest. The organisation has always relied heavily on the work of men and women volunteers. Despite variations in their social class, wealth, gender and race, all have worked together, often through financially difficult times, for the best interests of the YMCA in Hawke’s Bay. Their work on committees, fundraising, maintaining international contacts and support services has been largely invisible. The paid staff and management have also maintained a low public profile despite their valuable and enthusiastic contributions to the organisation.

The decision-makers behind the YMCAs of Hawke’s Bay have traditionally been Pakeha, middle-class men, with women working in support roles. Since the 1970s, however, this membership has broadened to enable a wider social group to enjoy equal responsibility in running the organisation.

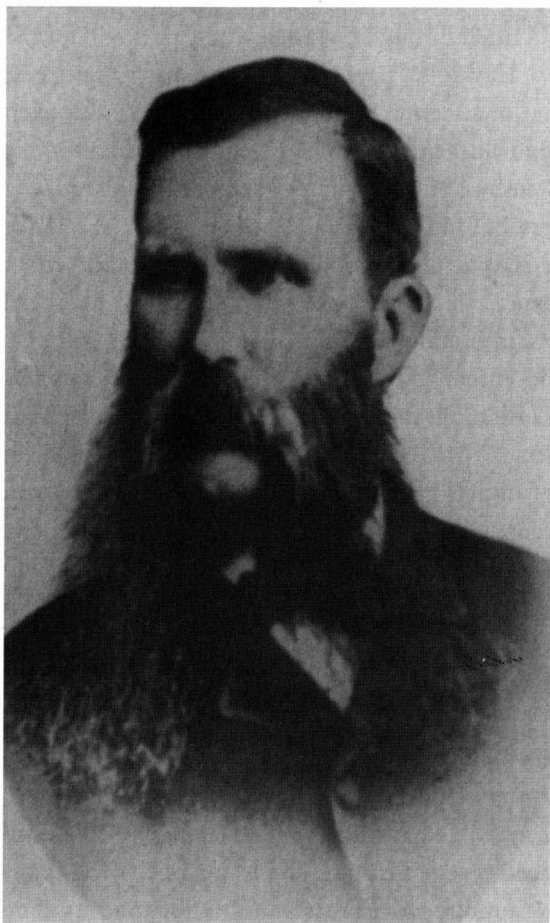
From the turn of the century to the 1930s, the YMCA attracted new members either through personal invitations to friends, or through organised public membership campaigns. The Hastings YMCA ran a concerted membership drive on its formation in 1910: the seventy original members were divided into four groups, each of which was required to secure at least ten new members. Within just a few days, all but one of the groups had well over ten new names, with one group attracting forty-six new members. These campaigns, which drew largely on members’ existing social circles, resulted in a membership of generally similar men: largely church-oriented business and professional men. The 1891 Napier YMCA President James Todd was a clerk, and other members included an accountant, an architect, and several government employees.

Some, such as Thomas Horton of Horton & Son Tailors, were self-employed, and a small number of YMCA men worked as tradesmen or labourers. Nearly all were committed Christians; indeed, even Hastings, the less explicitly religious YMCA, stipulated in its 1914 constitution that members must be “of good standing in evangelical churches”.

The 1914 Hastings constitution restricted membership to men and boys, although women were closely involved with both the Napier and Hastings organisations through the Ladies’ Committee. These women were often the wives and daughters of male members, and were clearly ladies of leisure with sufficient free time and energy to devote to a charitable community group. While they had

apparently no input into the running of the organisation, they performed essential support roles such as catering and fundraising, and joined the men for social events such as musical evenings. Matilda and Georgina Bowman, daughters of a Napier YMCA member, regularly provided items at the YMCA's musical soirees, as did Miss Gibson, the daughter of Alf Gibson, 1892 Napier YMCA Treasurer, and both Miss and Mrs Martin, daughter and wife of Alex Martin, 1892 Napier YMCA President.

A small number of full-time, paid workers were employed by the YMCAs of Hawke's Bay at this time. Often employees worked for both the Napier and Hastings organisations, with the wages bills split between the two, as in the case of physical instructors. Although these positions were sometimes advertised locally, the



*George Kelly, a member of the Napier YMCA Board in the 1890s, was also a keen sportsman. He served as Vice-president of the Caledonian Football Club, as president of Napier Sailing Club, and was an enthusiastic athlete. George worked for the Government as Native Interpreter to the Magistrate's Court, and Native Land Purchase Officer. — Photograph reproduced with permission from the collection of Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust, Hawke's Bay Museum, Napier.*

National YMCA Council was frequently approached for advice and many of the Hawke's Bay employees were transfers from other New Zealand YMCAs. Eric Price, the Hastings Secretary from 1928 to 1931, for example, was sent to Hastings by the national body.

The post-World War II rebirth of the YMCAs of Hawke's Bay was initiated by a quite different, and more diverse, group of people in comparison to the earlier movement. The organisers of the Napier Police and Citizens Youth Club realised the need for greater community support for its booming club, and approached the National Youth Council for advice. George Briggs, of the National YMCA Council and a member of the Youth Council, suggested that a YMCA might be formed to take over the running of the group. George came to Napier to oversee the process,

and brought with him a visiting American YMCA man, Hal Lucas. As Pat Magill remembers, Hal and George held public meetings and dinners, and spoke with existing service and community groups to eventually “sell” Napier on the idea of a YMCA. However, the type of YMCA promoted by Hal and George was an American-style one, with less emphasis on youth work and more on recreation. The resultant membership of the Napier YMCA, then, consisted of those people who supported the youth work of the Police Club, such as social workers and police youth workers, and others who saw the role of the YMCA as a recreational facility. Claude Snow, Ray Kemsley, Constable Nathan and other ex-Police Club members became involved with the YMCA during the transition from Youth Club to YMCA, and were joined by new members such as judo instructor Bill Madore. In addition, the “new” Napier YMCA included Dulcie Malcolm who was determined to actively involve women and girls in the movement, and Pat Magill who was interested in bicultural issues. This initial diversity was to remain a strong element in the Napier YMCA’s membership throughout its post-war activities.

The Hastings YMCA was initiated a few years prior to Napier by Ray Whiteman. Ray was sent to Hastings by the National YMCA Council for the express purpose of establishing a YMCA there. Little is known of the National Council’s motivation for this decision; but Ray had previously worked for the Hamilton YMCA, and came to Hastings with great enthusiasm and energy for the cause. Along with Guy Baillie and a host of volunteer workers, Ray established a YMCA based on gymnastics, youth leadership and outdoor camping.

The paid staff of the Napier and Hastings YMCAs increased dramatically in numbers from the 1970s. In 1969 Rex Smith was the only paid worker at the Napier YMCA, fulfilling the jobs of Secretary, youth worker and physical instructor. Since then the YMCAs have employed a growing number of specialists and professionals, such as youth workers, vocational trainers and fitness instructors. Many of these have been short-term contract positions, such as Jody Scott who was employed solely to run the Hastings Rydum programme. As the organisation has flourished and diversified, administrative duties have grown accordingly, and in 1995 the work previously handled by the Secretary alone is shared amongst three people - the Executive Director and two Deputy Directors. The complete 1995 staff team numbers 30 full-timers and 21 part-timers.

These volunteers and employees have been responsible for the organisation and execution of YMCA activities in the Hawke’s Bay. Much of their work has been within the organisation itself, and is largely unknown and unappreciated by the wider community.

The role of women in the YMCA is one such area. Since the movement’s formation in the nineteenth century, women have performed essential work for the organisation. Initially, they had no input into the running of the Association and worked instead in a support role through the Ladies’ Committee. Like the YMCA



in general at this time, the Ladies' Committee was entirely Pakeha and middle class. One of the Ladies' Committee's main tasks was the provision of decorations, teas and refreshments at the many social events and public meetings organised by the YMCAs, all of which were regularly commented on with admiration. The 1891 Napier YMCA Annual General Meeting was described in *The Daily Telegraph* as

*a most successful gathering. The tables at the tea were brimming over with good things, while the ladies in charge had plenty to do. The Theatre [Royal] was suitably decorated with flags, flowers, etc., which, together with the gay assemblage, and the tastefully arranged tables, gave the building a very pretty appearance.*

The following year "nearly three hundred sat down to an excellent tea provided by the lady friends of the Association" at the second Annual General Meeting of the Napier YMCA. A team of sixteen ladies presided over the meal. The YMCA ladies also provided "comforts" for the YMCA rooms in each town, and Mrs Weber in Napier cleaned and tidied the rooms at the Atheneum Building. During the First World War, the Ladies' Committee organised numerous fundraising events for the international YMCA's soldiers' comfort fund. A Garden Fete, for example, was held in 1918 on the Hastings YMCA section in Market Street, and included a musical performance, side shows, and sweet, fruit, cake and flower stalls. The Ladies' Committee also collected door-to-door on appeal days, and held "snowball teas". These teas were held by each woman for a group of friends. Each guest brought a donation for funds, and agreed to host a similar tea party for a group of her own friends, who in turn would each hold teas themselves, thus creating a never-ending chain of teas and donations. The work of these women was an integral part of the YMCA operation in these years, as the ladies provided essential services - catering and fundraising - that the male members lacked either the time or expertise to perform themselves. The YMCA ladies also enjoyed social events, either with the men at their musical soirees and concerts, or by themselves. The Ladies' Committee held socials for women throughout the 1910s and 1920s, with women speakers and local women musicians.

Since the 1950s, a growing diversity of women have taken an increasingly active decision-making role in the YMCAs of Hawke's Bay, in addition to continuing their support work as the Ladies' Auxiliary. This support role was clearly defined in the 1964 Constitution of the Napier YMCA:

*The objects of the Ladies' Auxiliaries shall be to further the ideals and purposes of the YMCA . . . and, in particular, to stimulate and extend the voluntary service of women in the work of the YMCA within the City of Napier. They shall help in making the facilities attractive and comfortable; assist with the development of programme activities; and co-operate in raising funds needed for the work of the Association.*

Women's role in the YMCA was clearly seen as one of supporting men to

better themselves and the community, with little or no allowance for women's own personal development or fellowship through YMCA work. Further, despite these expectations of service, Ladies' Auxiliary members were not permitted to receive the benefits of YMCA membership, were not accorded voting rights at Association meetings, and all decisions regarding the running of the Auxiliary were subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. Nevertheless, Ladies' Auxiliary members appear to have used the group as a social centre, and enjoyed friendship and fellowship through their involvement.

As in the early years of the YMCA, the women of the post-war Ladies' Auxiliary were frequently the wives of YMCA men, or became involved as their children joined YMCA activities. In some cases, it seems to have been expected that wives would be involved in the YMCA. When Napier Secretary Colin Coates married in 1967, for example, the Annual Report notes that "we are pleased to gain another "Y" member". In its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s, the Ladies' Auxiliary supplied the YMCAs with much-needed funds and resources acquired through a wide range of fundraising events. Lemon Drives, Fashion Parades and jumble sales were popular in the 1960s, and raised sufficient funds to contribute to the purchase of a YMCA van. The group also raised \$1,500 for the 325 Club's Health Studio venture and established a children's corner at the studio when it opened. Youth dances were another popular event, and up to six dances were held each year in the late 1960s. Money from these dances bought a tape recorder and crockery for YMCA premises. The Ladies' Auxiliary also supported YMCA events; providing nurses and cooks at holiday camps, and staff and refreshments at the annual Walkabouts during the 1970s. Some of these women served the YMCA for many years; Nell Drown, Peg Thom, Ngaire Bone and Fiona Whitaker were all involved with Camp Opoutama work while their children were YMCA campers, and continued after their children had grown up.

From the late 1970s, however, the regular social meetings of the Ladies' Auxiliary became more frequent than their service activities and eventually the group wound up in the early 1980s. The older members were losing interest in the organisation, while



*Members of the YMCA Women's Auxiliary worked at YMCA summer camps as cooks and nurses during the 1950s and 1960s. Here Mrs Tait of Hastings attends to a minor injury at a 1964 camp at Opoutama. — Reproduced from *The Hawke's Bay Photo News*, February 1964.*

the younger members sought a more active involvement in the YMCA. The Ys Service International Club has attracted some of these younger women, while others have taken up traditionally male YMCA roles such as committee members. As early as 1967 the Napier YMCA Board of Directors included two women members, Mrs Dulcie Malcolm and Mrs S. Mason, and in 1973 Miss Wendy Lee was elected Vice-President. It was a particular milestone for the female Vice-President



*Hastings YMCA President, Christine Schmidli (right) receives the Charter from the then President of the National Council of YMCA of New Zealand, Lomand Seel (left), while National Chief Executive Ross Grantham watches on.*

to be unmarried, as the YMCA has traditionally only accepted married women as members or supporters. Although it is not clear whether these women were the first in their respective positions, the Hastings YMCA elected its first woman President, Christine Schmidli, in 1989.

Since the late 1980s the YMCA in Hawke's Bay has also seen an upsurge in the involvement of Maori women, a

group not traditionally represented in the organisation. The Hastings YMCA's bicultural policy, developed under Dennis Oliver's Directorship, was largely responsible for this change, as it was recognised that the YMCA personnel needed to reflect the diversity of its local community. Women such as Hera Marshall, who worked as a trainer and community worker in Hastings as well as serving on the National YMCA Board, were hired as part of a conscious effort to bring Maori into the YMCA. Increasing numbers of Maori women have joined the YMCA in recent years, and in 1995 they hold positions at all levels of the organisation, in both paid and voluntary capacities.

A second well-hidden secret of the Hawke's Bay YMCAs has been their financial committees. These members have often been required to provide and distribute funds in extremely difficult times of economic recession, but have

nevertheless managed to keep the organisation operating. Both Napier and Hastings YMCAs appear to have enjoyed good financial health in their early years, although both were devastated by the 1931 earthquake and depression. Prior to the earthquake, the Napier Association owned premises and equipment worth £12,500 and had a bank overdraft of £1,000, guaranteed by three YMCA directors and using the Association's assets as security. However, as Clarence Bisson, Napier YMCA President, described the situation in 1934:

*As a result of the earthquake the whole of the assets were destroyed and the land on which the building was erected has reverted to the Napier Borough Sinking Fund Commissioners [the mortgagers]. The Bank is calling upon the guarantors to meet the overdraft, but these gentlemen were also heavily hit in the earthquake calamity, and the Directors have tried every avenue to relieve them of the crippling effect of this liability. In Napier, however, apart from the effects of the prevailing depression, the personal losses of the citizens through the earthquake has made a community appeal impossible, and other centres in the Dominion have been so far up against financial difficulties of their own that they have been unable to render any assistance.*

Thus, after three years of negotiations with the bank management and numerous appeals for funds, the Napier Board was still struggling to clear its debts. Local institutions such as the Rehabilitation Committee declined the YMCA's applications for funds, and almost all other New Zealand YMCAs were destitute and near closure themselves. Fred Mains, Napier's Secretary, was sent to England to recuperate following mental and physical injuries sustained in the earthquake, and while there approached English YMCAs for financial contributions with no success. The National YMCA of England was itself heavily in debt, as were the American YMCAs which were also contacted by the Napier Directors. Eventually the New Zealand Government provided the Board with £750 from the Art Union fund late in 1934. This enabled the Napier YMCA to pay each of its creditors, including the bank, half their due amount, which all were persuaded to accept as a final payment. Following this protracted struggle to clear itself of debt, the Napier YMCA Board wound up the Association, predicting:

*There does not seem to be any prospect of the Association carrying on in Napier again for a very long time. As the whole of the capital funds and a large portion of the annual expenses must come from public subscriptions, it is quite clear that there is no prospect whatever in view of the economic conditions of the country in general, and of our own district in particular, of obtaining such funds for a long time.*

A small amount was left in trust with the National YMCA for the re-establishment of a YMCA in Napier; by 1963, when the YMCA was reformed, this sum had accumulated considerable interest and amounted to £443. The money was

specifically for the construction of a YMCA building, and therefore was not used until the 1967 purchase of the Latham Street site.

The Hastings YMCA fared slightly better in the earthquake, although it too went into recess after clearing its financial problems. The YMCA building was able to be sold in 1932 to the National Service Club and after a few children's holiday camps were held for earthquake survivors the Association was wound up. It is likely that the impact of the Depression reduced the YMCA's income and it became inoperable due to lack of funds. The proceeds of the building sale were held in trust until the 1950s when the YMCA was revived, and contributed to the building of the Railway Road stadium.

Since the 1950s, numerous financial crises have been experienced and dealt with by the YMCA Boards. The nature and clientele of many YMCA programmes - working to improve the lot of the disadvantaged, particularly youth - does not involve the collection of fees or financial contributions, and as a result the most worthwhile and effective programmes have often experienced financial difficulties. The Pub With No Beer project, the Downtown Y, and the Tu Tangata programme, all suffered from a lack of funds. The Hastings YMCA as an organisation was heavily in debt and losing \$4,000 a month by 1982, while the financial drain of the Pub With No Beer led the Napier YMCA into considerable debt also. However whenever possible YMCA volunteers have organised fundraising ventures, and staff have developed their management techniques in order to alleviate the stress of financial loss. The Associations have also called on the National YMCA Council to advise them in times of acute financial crisis.

These fundraising efforts have taken on a variety of forms. In Hastings, a substantial cash donation was used to purchase thirty acres at Longlands in the 1950s, and YMCA members operated an orchard as a fundraising venture for about ten years. The orchard was planted in peach and pear trees, and later a separate piece of land, leased by Board member Don Wilson, grew tomatoes.

A neighbouring landowner, orchardist George Curtis, remembers breaking in the ground for the orchard:

*They came out to the farm, they ploughed it with, well I don't know what they ploughed it with, might have been a swamp plough, it was whopping great furrows. They had nothing to work it up, so Dad and I went down with our tractors and worked it up for them that first year.*

Ray Whiteman, who was then YMCA Secretary, was not an orchardist himself, and helpful neighbours such as George provided much advice and practical "know-how" to keep the orchard running. It was through this involvement that George became interested in the YMCA, and asked Ray if he could join. Ray replied "I've got something better than that for you", and made him a Board member; George worked for the organisation for the next twenty-five years, primarily on the building of Camp Opoutama, on the Board and as President. George remembers

Ray as a hugely enthusiastic amateur orchardist:

*He had no vehicle way back then, but he had a pushbike, and whenever he came out to the farm, he strapped a shovel, a fork and a rake onto the bar of his bike and biked out to the farm and did whatever work he had to do. But also with a lot to learn:*

*We [George and his father] worked the farm, and planted whatever we had to plant with our gear, and then after a couple of years, finally the Y bought a brand new Ferguson tractor. Ray was so scared of it that when he first started to drive it, he opened the throttle about halfway and took off. He had one foot on the brake and one on the clutch, and he slipped the clutch so bad that inside a week a brand new tractor had to have a new clutch. Poor blighter, I really felt quite sorry for him. But never mind, we got him going on the tractor after that.*

Despite so much help and advice, the orchard only ever did “reasonably well” financially. In some years a small profit of a few hundred pounds was made, and other years losses of up to £600 were recorded. Indeed, George ruefully remembers that one of the best



*Ray Whiteman and Ross Duncan picking tomatoes at the YMCA farm, Hastings, 1959. — Photograph courtesy of Ross Duncan.*

earners for the orchard was removing peach trees that Watties had mistakenly advised them to plant: “we were paid four or five pounds a tree to pull them out!” Bill Cummins, a YMCA member who worked on the orchard, believes that the project simply grew too large for YMCA volunteers to manage.

*We planted the orchard, and looked after it til it was beginning to bear fruit. Then it got to that stage where we couldn't do it with voluntary labour, you'd have to put somebody on it. But if you were going to put somebody in charge, you'd have to build a house. And then you'd have to build a packing shed. We could see the future of it, but it was going to be too big a project to do it with voluntary labour.*

The land was eventually sold in the mid-1960s.

Guy Baillie, Hastings YMCA President in the 1960s, raised funds by a more direct method - simply approaching local businesspeople and asking for contributions to YMCA projects. Guy recruited Board member George Curtis to help him. although George was rather apprehensive about his ability to "cadge":

*He grabbed me to give him a hand with this fundraising. I said, "Oh, I can't do that, Guy"; "Of course you can do it", he said, "if I can do it, you can do it." But he had the gift of the gab! Everybody in Hastings knew Guy Baillie, he had a motor firm here, and he was a hard case bloke, he really was; one of the hardest salesmen that you could meet. Anyway, I found it not quite so bad after all, once I got into it. We would go to his showrooms and we'd go from about seven to nine o'clock, ringing up people we knew trying to cadge some monies out of them.*

Guy obtained large sums of money through these campaigns, including some of the costs of building the stadium. Further funds for the stadium project were acquired through the Lotteries Board, which granted the YMCA £12,000. However, Bill Cummins, a Hastings YMCA Board member at the time, remembers that Guy took some persuading to accept the money:

*Guy Baillie was a little bit against us uplifting this money, because it was gambling money. I said, "no way, it's not gambling money. You can't refuse that £12,000, then go back to the people in the street and ask for a donation. You can't do it." In the end, they uplifted the £12,000.*

The YMCA has also benefited from generous individual benefactors over the years. Rhoda Holt (later Burr) contributed financially to the growth of Camp Opoutama, and Guy and Ruby Baillie established a trust fund for YMCA work. The Baillie trust was formed after Guy's death in 1969 and consisted of a portfolio of shares, including a large number of shares in Guy Baillie Motors Ltd. Trevor Willis, Ross Duncan and George Curtis were nominated trustees and distributed the funds to YMCA projects such as leadership courses and the development of Camp Opoutama. Eventually Baillie Motors declined and the shares became worthless, bringing to an end over twenty years of Baillie involvement with the Hastings YMCA.

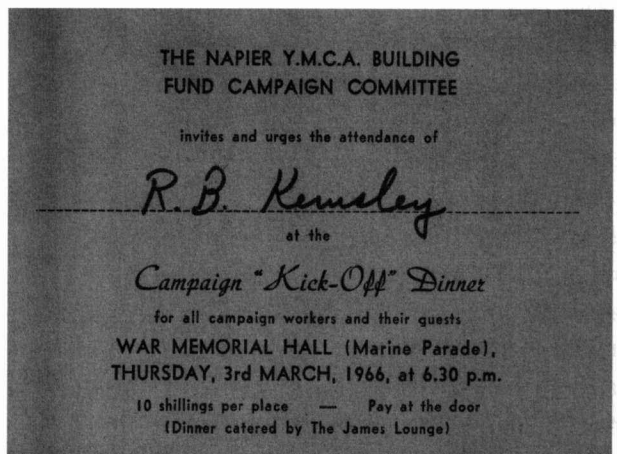
The ever-popular jumble sales, "bring-and-buy" stalls and youth dances were also run, usually by the Ladies' Auxiliary, on a regular basis. Other regular fundraising events have included the annual Walkabouts between Hastings and

Napier, and the weekly Flea Market at Napier. The walks attracted up to 3,000 walkers each year between 1968 and 1975, and raised thousands of dollars annually for the YMCAs through sponsorships. YMCA members also raised over \$50,000 through a Napier-Taupo 100 Mile Walk in January 1971. The Deerstalkers' Association planned and administered the walk, which attracted 84 walkers. The Flea Market began operating from the Latham Street premises in the mid-1980s and has since supplied the YMCA with a small, but regular weekly fee. More unusual schemes have also been trialled; in 1980 the Pub With No Beer committee organised a "Donate a Lamb" scheme. With the co-operation of local freezing works, farmers were able to nominate a number of lambs whose sale price would be contributed directly to the YMCA Building Fund. From 1987 to 1990, Hastings YMCA took a contract with the Hastings City Council to sell advertising for town parking meters, with the proceeds being split between the Council and the YMCA.

In addition to these "one-off" events, co-ordinated mass efforts to raise funds for certain projects have been organised. A committee of thirty citizens, led by George Doole, ran the Building Fund campaign in the 1960s to raise £50,000 for the purchase of the Latham Street site and for Napier's new YMCA building. With advice from Hal Lucas, a professional YMCA fundraiser, seven "Divisions" totalling 125 canvassers approached local businesses and individuals, and co-opted other community groups to support the venture. The Napier Lions Club, for example, held the premiere screening of "My Fair Lady" and raised £800. The committee also invited local people to subscribe as sustaining members of the YMCA. Individuals agreed to contribute a set sum every year, thus providing the YMCA with a guaranteed source of income.

The Pub With No Beer committee mounted a similarly large campaign to seek funds and sponsorship for the building of its facility in the 1970s and 1980s. Local and national funding agencies were approached for grants, as well as government departments and local business houses.

In more recent years, the YMCAs in Hawke's Bay have been run on increasingly business-like terms, and fundraising has become



*The 1966 Napier YMCA Building Fund Campaign was a massive undertaking by a very young organisation. A committee of 30, hired a professional fundraiser and co-ordinated 125 volunteers to raise £50,000 to build the Latham Street complex. — Card courtesy of Ray Kemsley.*

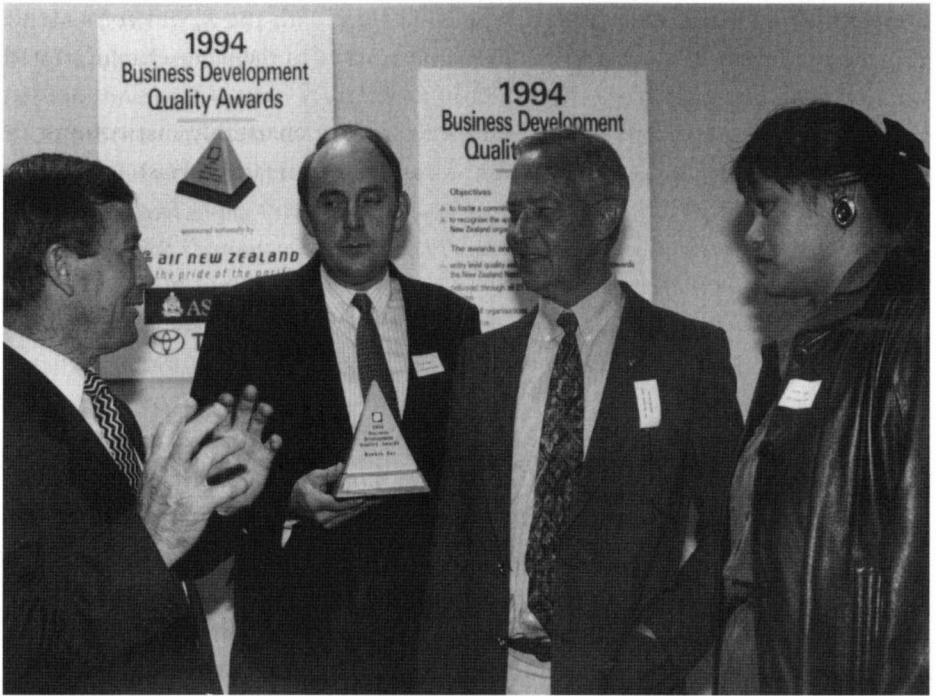


almost nonexistent. In 1991 the YMCA became a registered private training provider under the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and its training courses are now purchased by the government on a contract basis. Children's holiday programmes are sponsored by local businesses and charitable institutions are approached for grants. As Ross Duncan, a past President of the Hastings YMCA, described the changes:

*The government-funded programmes that we ran gave the YMCA the stability that it never had. We could budget, we could plan, and although we didn't have money to spare, we could work within our budgets and progress . . . We've been able to look ahead, and we've had time to sit back and look at mission statements, look at directions, look at strategic plans, and get ahead of the action, rather than having always been behind the eight-ball and responding to crises.*

The success of these management changes has been largely due to the initiatives of Dennis Oliver, previously Executive Director of Hastings YMCA and now of Hawke's Bay YMCA. Dennis was sent to Hastings by the National YMCA Council following a request for management advice from the Association. He introduced new management systems and procedures to the organisation, provided staff with management and budgeting training and gave staff increased responsibility and accountability for their projects. Property ownerships have been rationalised, with superfluous buildings being sold and more appropriate facilities developed in their place. The Hastings and Napier YMCAs have amalgamated, enabling the organisations to share management costs, pool resources and increase efficiency. The results have been as Ross described - an organisation which is financially stable and operable, and capable of moving with and adapting to change. This transformation was acknowledged by the business community in 1994 when the Hawke's Bay YMCA was judged regional winner of the Business Development Quality Awards.

The public is also probably unaware of the extent to which the YMCAs of Hawke's Bay have kept in contact with the international YMCA movement throughout their development. The early meetings which established the Hastings YMCA in 1910 stressed the fact that Hastings was joining a worldwide movement, and that the town, like other cities around the world, could progress "onward and upward" with the existence of a local YMCA organisation. The message was reinforced later the same year, when Harry Lang addressed 150 Hastings members on the "Worldwide YMCA Movement". Harry was shortly to take up a YMCA post in Hyderabad, India, and linked the work of the YMCA in London, America, Canada, Australia and the Far East to the possibilities in Hastings. Further speakers on the YMCA's overseas activities followed in later years. Each was enthusiastically welcomed to Hawke's Bay and each often spoke on several occasions. Harry Holmes, a former secretary of Wellington YMCA who had taken a position with the



*Minister of Economic Development, Hon Roger Maxwell, presents the Business Development Quality Award to YMCA President John Donkin, Executive Director Dennis Oliver and Deputy Executive Director Cathy Parker.*

Federated Council of Churches in New York, visited Hawke's Bay in 1925 and addressed several audiences. He spoke on "Britain and America and the Present World Crisis", his YMCA experiences in South Africa, and also on the virtues of prohibition. Perhaps as a result of this increased awareness of international YMCAs, a number of Hawke's Bay staff took positions with overseas YMCAs. S.L. Peck, Hastings' General Secretary, for example, toured United States YMCAs and studied their "modern programmes" in 1923. In addition, a brief attempt at establishing a Ys Men's Club in Hastings was made in 1930 and each meeting featured addresses on international YMCA work. By the end of the year it was reported that the thirteen members were "thinking in international terms".

This interest in international YMCAs has grown in the post-World War II years into practical aid, through the development of Ys Service Clubs, and an increased interchange of personnel. A Ys Men's Club was first trialled in Hastings from 1963, but foundered soon after, perhaps due to a lack of sufficient opportunities for fellowship amongst members. Ivan Linnell served as first President, with Allan Bruce, Warren Thom and John Morris also holding office. In 1989 a second Ys Men's Club was formed in Hastings, using the self-styled name Ys Service International Club. The large number of women wanting to join the club refused to be called "Ys Men-ettes" as other women members of New Zealand Ys Men's Clubs were called, and the group created an alternative name. Founding

President Ross Sheard had previously been involved with the Bryndwr Ys Men's Club in Christchurch, and remembers the controversy that the name change created amongst the more conservative members of that club:

*When you set up a Ys Service Club, you have to be chartered by some other existing club, so Christchurch became the chartering club. The Christchurch people got to the point where they weren't going to charter us if we didn't change the name to Ys Men's Club. Fortunately for us, we happened to have the international President of Ys Clubs here, Lars Gustaf Winberg from Sweden. He came up to a meeting at Havelock in one of our member's houses, prior to the charter function that was going to be held that night. The Christchurch guys were there, and we were there, and the international President was there. And he simply said to them, "Look, if there is a need for a change in the name to suit the situation, as worldwide President I can't see anything wrong". We were very grateful that the worldwide President was here, otherwise I don't think we would have chartered, we wouldn't have been a club.*

The name change has proved popular with women in the YMCA movement, and since the Hastings club began, other New Zealand and Australian clubs have begun to consider a similar change.

The club has focused on providing aid to the recently-formed YMCAs of Fiji and Samoa, and the YMCAs of Hawke's Bay, although service has also been given to other community groups such as the Braille Society. A Fijian Magiti Night, complete with Kava Ceremony and Taralala dancing, was organised in 1993 as a fund-raising event.

Later the same year, club members held a fundraising stand, complete with wigwam, at the Hastings A&P Show, where they sold Indian headbands made by club members, and ran a Deer Roaring Competition.

The Hastings club organised the New Zealand Ys Service Clubs' Convention in 1993, and has hosted numerous YMCA people from all around the world, including Terry Waite



*The Hastings Ys Service International Club combines fundraising with fun. A Fijian Magiti night, with Fijian food, music and entertainment, was held at Hastings YMCA in January 1993. — Photograph courtesy of Ngaire Duncan.*

who visited in 1994. The club has also become involved with YEOP, the YMCA Youth Educational Exchange Programme, and hosted two Danish students in the early 1990s.

Ngaire Duncan, a past President of the Hastings Ys Service Club, is the New Zealand co-ordinator of the programme, and



*Members of the Hastings Ys Service International Club make Indian headbands to sell at the Hastings A&P Show, October 1993. — Photograph courtesy of Ngaire Duncan.*

has sent one Hawke's' Bay student on a YEOP exchange - Fiona Duncan, who went to Denmark in 1995. Japanese links have been developed too, with a group of Tokyo YMCA youth visiting Hawke's' Bay in 1993, and Japanese youth leaders working at Camp Opoutama in 1985. This increased international contact has provided the Hawke's' Bay YMCAs with a new perspective on their activities, as Ross Duncan, an active club member, describes:

*we looked upon the Y as just a little place here in Hastings, but now through our involvement with Ys Service International we've had the experience of going to Oslo, the experience of meeting people in Australia and in other parts of the world and right now are planning to go to Australia to the Area Convention there. Next year in Canada we're planning to go the World Convention there. So whereas we started with our own little YMCA here, our interest has grown and now we're finding great satisfaction in bringing the world into a much smaller place.*

However, although the level and nature of the Hawke's' Bay YMCA's internationalism in the 1990s is new, the underlying philosophy is reminiscent of the original YMCA motto - John 17:21, "That they all may be one". As Ross, who is himself the Regional Director for Ys Service International, sees it,

*we were one as schoolboys, we were one as we grew up through our sporting teams, and now we're all part of a New Zealand movement and now we've grown even further and we're trying to break down the barriers of the world.*

The international aspect of the Hawke's' Bay YMCA has been further developed since the arrival of current Executive Director Dennis Oliver, who has spent several years developing YMCA work in the Pacific Islands. Dennis has taken two groups of YMCA staff and members to Fiji, and one to Samoa, to observe the

YMCA at work in the rural villages and outer islands.

These trips have often proved enlightening for Hawke's Bay people; one trip member describes a conversation he had with a group of boys in the village of Burenitu:

*We stopped them in the village and asked them "Where's the YMCA?" They*

*all looked at each other and chattered away, so we asked again, "Where's the YMCA?" Finally one of them said, "We are the YMCA".*

"For the first time", says Dennis, "the Hastings man realised what the YMCA is all about". Attendance at the American YMCA training school in Honolulu, and international YMCA conferences, has also opened the eyes of many Hawke's Bay YMCA staff to the internationalism of the YMCA movement, and exposed them to the stimulation of new ideas and new people.

Numerous other committees and individuals have given many valuable hours of service to the YMCAs in Hawke's Bay. The building committees have built and maintained the many YMCA properties and buildings, including Camp Opoutama. The present-day camp buildings were completed over a period of twenty years, with a new project being tackled each year. The original buildings, the cookhouse and a leaders' hut, were built of pre-fabricated concrete fertiliser bins donated by Firth Concrete Ltd in the early 1950s. The local manager of Firth was a friend of Guy Baillie, who was well-known for his ability to persuade businesses to support YMCA projects. These facilities were added to by weekend working parties of YMCA members, particularly George Curtis, Jim Durand, Bill Cummins, Noel Bone and John Briggs. These working bees were often joined by local Mahia residents such as Charlie Todd. Charlie was "as strong and big as a gorilla", and lifted timber framing single-handedly while others nailed it in place; Charlie Blake, also a local resident, did all the levelling of land with his bulldozer.

On one occasion, George and Jim took some of George's orchard labourers up to Opoutama:

*I had Fijians working, and I said to them, "would you like to go up to Opoutama for the weekend; I'd pay you". We wanted to do some*



*Hastings YMCA members visiting YMCA members in Nakorosule village in Fiji. From the left: Ross Duncan, Meli Senokonoko, a Fijian member, Dennis Oliver, Hera Marshall, Toni Marshall, Fiona Duncan and Delwyn Cameron. — Photographer Ngaire Duncan.*

*concreting, and they said yes, they'd come. So up we went on a Friday and got everything worked out, and started on the Saturday. We poured like mad, this whopping great floor, and we couldn't quite get it finished. When we got up Sunday morning, these blokes shook their heads, and no, they weren't going to work on Sunday. So there was the two old Pakehas going flat out, mixing concrete and pouring concrete by ourselves, and these three Fijians just sitting on the ground with big grins on their faces watching us work.*

George was also largely responsible for obtaining the necessary building materials, some of which were donated. George Briggs, the National YMCA Secretary, had a supplier of plywood at the Todd Motor Company in Lower Hutt, where cars and car parts were received in large plywood boxes. George Curtis made several trips to Lower Hutt and hauled the plywood up to Opoutama, where it was used to line the cabins. Other building projects included the



*The inscription on the back of this photo reads "Our Best Friend Mr Todd and our transport". Mr Todd, a local Opoutama resident, was a self-appointed caretaker at the camp in the 1950s. — Photograph courtesy of Ross Duncan.*

building of canvas canoes for campers by George and Ross Duncan, and the transportation of the main hall. Jack Linnell built the hall in Hastings, and George and Jack transported it to Opoutama on their trucks.

YMCA members and staff have also spent many hours deliberating over how best to improve the structure and efficiency of the organisation. The merging of the Hastings and Napier YMCAs, for example, was first discussed in the early 1980s and involved numerous joint and separate meetings for members of both YMCAs leading up to the eventual merger in 1993. Many of the joint meetings were held on neutral territory at Clive, and considered both the advantages and disadvantages of a merger and the several possible plans for joining the two YMCAs into one.

The hours contributed to such projects have often been innumerable. Some YMCA workers, such as Rex Smith, feel they spent time and energy on YMCA projects at the expense of their families, and eventually resigned in order to have more family time. Basil Johnson remembers the time involved in planning and building the Pub With No Beer in Napier:

*It was pretty time-consuming, that period, trying to get things going. I*

*had a bit of a rough stab at the time I put in on it and I reckon I spent about a day and a half per week of office time for two years. The only reason I remember that was that our partnership had a scheme whereby you could qualify for a couple or three months sabbatical. I put in so much time to the YMCA that I felt it wouldn't be fair on the other partners to take my sabbatical as well.*

Nevertheless, those who have worked with the YMCA rarely regret their involvement, whether it was for a few hours, a few months or a lifetime. Although Basil remembers the Pub With No Beer project as “frustrating” and “jolly hard work”, he also saw the project as extremely worthwhile and never begrudged the time he spent on the project. Doug Fraser has found the ongoing diversity and change of the organisation stimulating and rewarding. Asked what he enjoyed the most about his years with the YMCA, Doug replied:

*The cut and thrust of being involved in the Board in many different ways. We've gone through some traumatic periods, we've gone through some exciting periods, but throughout it all you've seen results, you've seen young people coming through with flying colours, and developing.*

Other YMCA members stress the people of the movement as their fondest memories. Cyril Whitaker, a past Chairman of the Hastings YMCA Board and current Hawke's Bay YMCA Board member, says:

*I have met some wonderful people who really care about other people and I think this is the greatest bonus that I could have had, to meet these people and work with them and learn a lot from them. They have the other people at heart; it's been a very rewarding experience.*

Staff, too, have found their time with the YMCA of personal benefit. Hera Marshall, a trainer and later Deputy Executive Director of Hastings YMCA in the late 1980s, remembers her years there as “laying a really strong foundation” for her future career:

*I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for the Y and Dennis. What it has taught me is to dig deep within yourself, believe in yourself, look for your potential and realise that potential. I think it's helped me be more confident in where I'm going.*

Despite their diversity of interests and goals, and throughout financially and socially difficult times, the workers behind the YMCAs of Hawke's Bay have continued to faithfully serve the organisation and thus the local community. That much of this work has been invisible, and often unrecognised, gives emphasis to the fact that YMCA people do indeed “work from their heart” for the good of others, rather than for any great personal gain.

## *Onward and Upward*

The YMCA in Hawke's Bay clearly has a long and colourful record of activity and achievement. That the YMCA will continue to operate in the Hawke's Bay is a unanimously accepted fact amongst YMCA people. At the time of writing, the Association is financially solvent, has a strong, committed group of staff and volunteers, and is attuned to changing community needs. However, the nature of the Association's future development is a matter of some speculation. Some people have firm ideas:

*I believe that they have to get back out there to where they were working, they have to get back to the heartland, back to the heart of the community. What they're doing at the moment is great, but they need to get back to the crux of the community or we'll start losing it again and it could start becoming a very middle-class thing.*

Others have no clear idea. One longtime YMCA member says: "Where to from now? Well, the YMCA can't answer that because we'll respond to the needs of the community." Still others see the Christian basis of the organisation as its strength for progress and development:

*People often say to me "where will the YMCA be in ten, fifty or a hundred years' time?" I'm so convinced that because of our Christian thread, the YMCA in that time, say a hundred years, will be quite a different animal than we know now, but I know it will be there. It'll long outlive us, and the buildings that we've built, because it's a spiritual thread and it will be taken up and carried on by others after us. . . They will take what we've built and go on to better and more pressing activities to meet the needs of the people in their community.*

Whichever way the YMCA chooses to serve its community in future decades will be determined by the type of people who make up the organisation. Through all the changes of name, location and programmes of the past, the YMCA's members have consistently been people with an interest in their community and a desire to help others towards personal development and a better lifestyle. There is no indication that this pattern is destined to change; indeed, the Hawke's Bay community can look forward with confidence to many more years of service and aid from the people of the YMCA.



# *Appendix*

## PRESIDENTS, SECRETARIES AND LIFE MEMBERS OF YMCAS IN HAWKES BAY

### **NAPIER**

<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
1890	James H. Todd	John D. Russell
1891	Alex Martin	John D. Russell
1892	Alex Martin	H.A. Mossman
1893	Alex Martin	J. Lang
1918	Cecil Duff	
1925	Clarence Bisson	D.B. Clough
1931	Clarence Bisson	Fred C. Mains

### **IN RECESS**

1964	Claude Snow	Colin Coates
1965	Ray Kemsley	Rex Smith
1966	Ray Kemsley	Rex Smith
1967	Ray Kemsley	Rex Smith
	Colin Coates	
1968	Ray Kemsley	Colin Coates
1969	George Doole	Colin Coates
	Pat Magill	Colin Coates
1970	Pat Magill	Colin Coates
1971	Pat Magill	Colin Coates
1972	Pat Magill	
1973	Pat Magill	
1974	Pat Magill	Doug Fraser
1975	Pat Magill	Doug Fraser
1976	Pat Magill	Doug Fraser
1977	Pat Magill	Jim Thorne
1978	Mike McAllum	Jim Thorne
1979	George Spence	Jim Thorne
1980	George Spence	
1981	Basil Johnson	
1982	Basil Johnson	Joe Bondin
1983	Basil Johnson	Joe Bondin
1984	Basil Johnson	Newton Angove
1985	Basil Johnson	Newton Angove
1986	Wally Hunt	Alan Dick
1987	Denis Hoy	Alan Dick
1988	Denis Hoy	Alan Dick

1989	Denis Hoy	Alan Dick
1990	Denis Hoy	Graeme Taylor
1991	John Donkin	Graeme Taylor
1992	John Donkin	Graeme Taylor
1993	John Donkin	Dennis Oliver

### *HASTINGS*

<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
1910		W. Gordon Turner
1911		H. Armstrong
1912		
1913		
1914	John Holdsworth	Flewellyn King
1915		
1916		
1917		Flewellyn King
1918		
1919		
1920		
1921		
1922	Harding	
1923	Duff	S.L. Peck
1924		Colechin
1925		
1926		
1927		Gerald Wheatley
1928		Gerald Wheatley
1929		Eric T. Price
1930	R. Harding	Eric T. Price
1931	R. Harding	Eric T. Price
<b>IN RECESS</b>		
1952	Guy Baillie	Ray Whiteman
? Paul Holman		
? Russ Manning (1965?)		
1965	Guy Baillie	David Glen
1966	Guy Baillie	
1967	Guy Baillie	
1968	Guy Baillie	
1969	Guy Baillie	
1970	Trevor Willis	Colin Cottrell
1971	George Curtis	Fred Chu

1972	George Curtis	Fred Chu
1973	George Curtis	Chas Rawlings
1974	George Curtis	Don Nordhaus
1975	George Curtis	Don Nordhaus
1976	George Curtis	Don Nordhaus
1977	Cyril Whitaker	Don Nordhaus
1978	Cyril Whitaker	Charlie Deacon
1979	Cyril Whitaker	Tom McGarry
1980	Ross Duncan	Tom McGarry
1981	Ross Duncan	Tom McGarry
1982	Ross Duncan	Tom McGarry
1983	Peter Barnett	Dennis Oliver
1984	Peter Purchas	Dennis Oliver
1985	Ross Sheard	Dennis Oliver
1986	Ross Sheard	Dennis Oliver
1987	Grant Spackman	Dennis Oliver
1988	Grant Spackman	Dennis Oliver
1989	Christine Schmidli	Dennis Oliver
1990	Mike Whelan	Dennis Oliver
1991	Mike Whelan	Dennis Oliver
1992	Lesley Walker	Dennis Oliver
1993	Cathy McGregor	Dennis Oliver

#### **HAWKE'S BAY**

1994	John Donkin	Dennis Oliver
1995	Cathy McGregor Mike Burns	Dennis Oliver

#### **LIFE MEMBERS**

Trevor Willis  
 Jim Durand  
 Bill Cummins  
 Doug Fraser  
 Ross Sheard  
 Pat Magill  
 George Curtis  
 Harold Beer  
 Basil Johnson  
 Cyril Whitaker  
 Denys Heaton  
 Ray Kemsley  
 Peter Barnett  
 Ross Duncan

***Υ's SERVICE CLUB***

Year	President
1963	Ivan Linnell
IN RECESS	
1989	Ross Sheard
1990	Ross Sheard
1991	Hera Marshall
1992	Hera Marshall
1993	Ngaire Duncan
1994	Ngaire Duncan
1995	Malcolm Haynes

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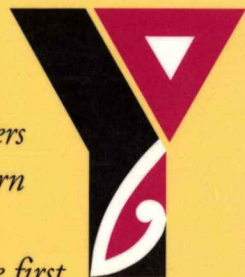
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*The YMCA means many things to New Zealanders - a bed while away from home, a stadium to learn gymnastics, a training programme to help find employment. This ground-breaking book is the first to record and describe the many aspects of a local YMCA at work, from inauguration in the nineteenth century through economic failure to resurrection and growth. Heather Knox tells the story of the YMCA in Hawke's Bay as a story for the Association, and for the Hawke's Bay community, but it is also a story for anyone who has been involved with a community organisation in New Zealand. Laced with personal memories and anecdotes, and illustrated with both historical and contemporary photographs, this is a book that fills a gap in our knowledge for local voluntary associations, their members and their achievements.*



**Heather Knox.** *Born and raised in Christchurch, Heather Knox holds a First Class Honours degree in History and Journalism from the University of Canterbury, and a Master of Arts degree (with Distinction) in History from Massey University. She has specialised in New Zealand social history, particularly gender issues, and wrote her Masterate thesis on "Feminism, Femininity and Motherhood in Post-World War II New Zealand". Heather is currently employed as Director of Studies at an English language institution in southern Thailand, and hopes to return to New Zealand for further research and writing projects in the future.*