

stout timbers is the mainstay of the entire fabric, they take the thrust of a huge flow of rushing water. On one occasion the writer saw 6ft of rolling waters flowing over that part of the river-bed. Strength is needed to enable a weir to stand up under such an assault.

On the upper side of the weir fence are fixed backstay struts of lighter nature than the noko. These kumekume as they are called, have one end lashed to the fence-posts about 3 ft from the ground, while the other end, upstream, is lashed to one of the firmly driven pegs securing the whariki or scour mat.

Being firmly secured at both ends, these holding-braces assist in strengthening the fence. The name kumekume is derived from kume (to pull).

In this case the scour-mat (whariki and whakareinga) extended some 25 ft up-stream from the weir-fence, and about 6ft from it downstream. In some weirs it extends much farther downstream, the distance depending upon the likelihood of scour in the riverbed.

The scour-mat itself consists of manuka brush of straight growth laid down on the riverbed in a layer, as far out as the kaiau, or outermost post of the weir-fence.

Across this mat of close-laid brush are laid several rows of poles, called in this connection karapi, which are pinned down by several series of crossed pegs driven firmly into the riverbed in the form of an X, so as to ride the karapi, the latter being also lashed to the pegs.

In the 25ft whariki there are five series of these pegs to each karapi. In this weir the bottom rail of the weir-fence is about 18in above the whariki, and the upper rail about 3ft above the lower one. The brush worked into the fence is called the pawai.

In this weir are five ngutu, or openings. It is at these openings that the nets and pots are set in which the lampreys are caught.

We will now endeavour to catch some of those piharau, a dish highly prized by the gourmards of Te Awa nui a Rua. In setting pots to take eels coming downstream we have a simple task to perform. To catch the lamprey going downstream is by no means so easy. We cannot set pot and net on the upper side of the weir facing downstream, several natural laws interfere with such a method.

These appurtenances must be set facing up-

stream, the direction in which the fish is travelling. How is the wily piharau to be persuaded to turn back on his course and enter the trap? Parawhenua, the daughter of the sun-god Tane, she who personifies the flowing waters, will attend to that.

It will readily be seen that, blocked by the pawai of the weir, the baffled waters of the freshet surge through the ngutu openings with much force. It is this rush of swift waters that serves to trap the lampreys. In this wise: A little distance below and immediately opposite to the opening, two stout stakes are driven firmly into the river-bed in an upright position. These are represented by BB in the diagram, while A is the ngutu, or opening in the weir.

The poha, or guiding-net, is a funnel-shaped net, the mouth of which is distended by a stout hoop to which it is secured. This hoop is secured to the upright stakes, the small end being downstream (see C on diagram). The hinaki, or trap-pot, is secured to the lower end of the guiding-net, and is marked D.

The small lower end of the net is placed within the conical entrance of the pot, and so any fish passing through the net must enter the pot trap. Now, when the lampreys encounter the weir fence they seek a place to pass through it and so continue their way up-stream.

Coming to a ngutu, they endeavour to pass up through it, but the strong rush of water throws them back and forces them down the tunnel net into the waiting pot trap. From this place there is no return to the world of life, the life-history

of the trapped lamprey ends with great abruptness.

The hinaki, or pot traps, employed in taking lampreys are not so large as the majority of eel-pots. In the Whanganui district they are made of the long, tough, and durable aka kiekie, or aerial rootlets of the kiekie, a forest climbing-plant (*Freycinetia Banksii*). These slim, pliant roots are stripped of their outer bark covering by being drawn through between the tightly compressed halves of a split supplejack (*Rhipogonum scandens*).

They are then split down the middle with marvellous exactitude. Two of these lamprey-pots measured were 28in in length. The whiti, or hoops that form the body of these trap-pots, are pliant stems of climbing or creeping plants, notably those of aka-tea (*Metrosideros scandens*) and aka torotoro.



Te Kehu (left) and Tau Tamakehu lash the top rail of the fence with split kareao.

The men hold the old native ta or maul used to build the lamprey weir.



Sports rivalry added to social life on Whanganui River

Every village and pa had a rugby football team.

By ERIC FISHER

In the years 1920 to 1923 rugby football became a great winter sport. Every village and pa had a football team, even the Mangapurua soldiers' settlement had one in those early days. Matches were played with each other in friendly games. These were usually followed by being entertained by the host team to tea and a dance in their hall.

These meetings became very popular and added to the social life of the Whanganui River in the days when the only means of transportation was by river steamer, motor canoe, horse or on foot.

In 1923 it was decided to co-ordinate their activities, so a meeting of various representatives of proposed clubs was held at Jerusalem. This inaugural meeting was also attended by young and old from the various pa. After discussion, it was decided to form a rugby football union as a sub-union of the Whanganui union of teams from the river.

After the formation of the union, a name was required to designate the sub-union. The young people left this decision to the elders, as they were more concerned with the game

than the name.

After considerable discussion by the old folk, both Maori and Pakeha, several names were suggested. Finally Mr Gregor McGregor (who was the first manager of Morikau farm and who had been elected president of the sub-union) put forward the name of Te Wainui-a-rua.

Mr McGregor was a prominent Maori linguist and historian, so he gave his reasons for his choice, and the interpretation of the name. After a short deliberation, the elders all agreed, thus the



The Mangapurua rugby team which played against sides from Ruatiti, Retaruke and Pipiriki. An article in the 1992 Annual quoted settler Jack Ward about how the Mangapurua team was formed.

name of Te Wainui-a-Rua Rugby Sub-union was officially adopted.

Later, basketball (netball) and tennis teams were formed and

their respective associations also took the name of Te Wainui-a-rua. After this the name gradually came into general use and the old tribal name just faded away, and the Whanganui River people became known as the "Te Wainui-a-rua Tribe."

Over the years the name of Te Wainui-a-rua has spread in an easterly direction from the river towards Karioi, and we now find various other organisations, such as Maori Women's Welfare League, Jaycees, and the Anglican Maori Pastorate with the title of Te Wainui-a-rua.

Before 1923 all the above area originally bore the name of Te Atihau-nui-a-Paparangi and during the few years prior to 1970 this name was again revived by the Maori people of the area.

The interpretation of the name Te Wainui-a-rua is not recorded, though many versions have been given. It probably relates to history of the river many generations ago.

Editor's footnote: This article is from the journal of the Whanganui Historical Society in May 1971.

By 1935, Hatrick River Services was finding things difficult as were many transport services. An advertisement of that date shows that the service to Pipiriki had declined to a weekend service, the charge was \$4.50, including accommodation. On Sundays and holidays, a steamer left for Raorikia, advertised as Whanganui's new picnic ground. One always thinks of the river steamers going up river, but at this time they were going down river to South Beach. The fare was 10c for adults return, or 5c for children. When the airport was opened, the steamers conveyed the public of Whanganui to South Beach to witness the air pageant. The erection of Cobham Bridge stopped river traffic south of the bridge.

Friends' Trips in 2011

Boat & barbie outing another winner

BY PAM KITSON

February 12 2011 was a fine, warm, windless day and at 5.15 pm, 24 Friends boarded the MV Wairua at its mooring, with Captain David and crewman Stuart. We pulled out in the midst of a flotilla of dragon boats which were staging races as part of the Masters' Games with spectators lining the riverbank.

A very pleasant journey was enjoyed by a happy group of folk, almost everyone knew everyone else, or very soon did and pre-dinner snacks were served by Pauline and Pam while the Captain told us the Wairua's history and some interesting stories.

Experiencing our city from the middle of the river is a unique feeling, especially in a historic and beautifully restored old river-boat.

The staff at the Avoca Hotel, Upokongaro, welcomed us into their newly-built outdoor area with a river view and we enjoyed a social drinks and chat time before our barbeque at 7pm. The meal was plentiful, well-cooked and appreciated by us all. We sat on as twilight descended on the river and finally trooped back to the landing with just enough light left to see where we were going.

The trip back was magic. The river was like a mill-pond, the reflections superb and we doused all the lights except the navigation ones, arriving back in

the city about 9 45pm. We turned around by the City Bridge, allowing us to appreciate all the lights along the riverbank and in the trees, just stunning.

The group thanked David and Stuart for a truly wonderful evening, some advocating repeating the trip on a yearly or even six-monthly basis! What a fantastic River City we live in.



Pam Kitson and Murray Laing were among the 24 Friends who made the midsummer cruise to Upokongaro under perfect conditions.

Photo by Pauline Walton.

River man entertains at AGM

BY DAVID SCULLAR

The tradition of lively speakers at the Friends of the Whanganui River's annual general meeting was maintained by David McDermid, former manager of the Whanganui Riverboat Centre, at the 2011 event on 3 April.

David, who lost his job in 2011 when his position was dis-established, entertained for nearly an hour describing the

recovery from the Whanganui River of the Wairua and Waimarie and also backgrounding aspects of the Hatrik riverboat fleet, its operation, adventures and mishaps.

He thanked the Friends for their support during the recovery of the vessels and for the operation of the Riverboat Centre over the years and also outlined future

plans for the Wairua.

Chairperson Pauline Walton gave a short rundown on the group's activities in 2010-11. She has been succeeded by her deputy, Murray Ware, but remains on the committee. The new deputy chairperson is Alan Donald. Otherwise the executive remains unchanged. The annual meeting was attended by 21 people.

Although deaf and dumb, two brothers from New Plymouth joined in the fun of the cruise. Their willingness to help was typical of the spirit which prevailed. - Auckland Star, January 1956

Sharing Parikino paradise with Wickham family

BY DAVID SCOLLAR

A day at Parikino was an irresistible drawcard for 19 Friends who enjoyed a great autumn outing visiting Don and Petrine Wickham on Sunday 22 May 2011. With the absence of regular bus driver Ridgway Lythgoe, we travelled in two vans and this proved to be fortuitous as they were able to go where a bus couldn't.

We arrived at the Wickham homestead to be treated to a lavish morning tea of hot drinks and home-baked food. Also greeting us was Don and Petrine's son, Mark, and daughter-in-law Claire.

Reminding us of the 1959 proposal to build a 540ft earth dam at Parikino, Pam Kitson read aloud the submission of the Wanganui River Association, which was set up at that time with the aim of preserving the river in its entirety and of the identity of the river people. As we sat enjoying ourselves beside the tranquil Whanganui River, there was a realisation of how much we would have lost had the dam been built, creating a lake running 90 miles inland.

Don Wickham said two of the dominating factors for the dam not going ahead were that it would flood a number of urupa and also scenic reserves which had been given to the Crown on the understanding that they would never be destroyed.

Don described how his father, Phil, who died when he was a child, came to the river, his early business dealings and how he had accumulated land there. At one time he had 18 men working for him.

Later we visited a cutting beside the former Parikino School to view strata dating back to the Taupo eruption before going on to Wickham land

nearby, driving past a huge maize field and observing the old bed of the river. Next came a call at Mark and Claire's new riverside home a few kilometres further up the River Rd where we also looked over the family's avocado orchard next door.

Last on the agenda before we reluctantly headed back to the River City was a display of sheepdog skills from Don, plus heading and huntaway dogs. Yes, we had to dodge a few light showers, but this was a terrific day being hosted by a family with its roots firmly in the soil of the Whanganui River Valley.



While Friends enjoy a cuppa at Wickham's, Pam Kitson (standing at right) reads from the Wanganui River Association submission opposing the proposal to dam the river.

Friends describe trip to Peru

BY DAVID SCOLLAR

events and spoke warmly of their encounters with the local people.

There was one small link between our group and the Peru visit – Ray Walton (husband of Pauline) wore his blue Friends of the River cap on the tour. The talk drew an audience of 17.

In something of a departure for our group, we were treated to an event on 14 August 2011 on a subject that had nothing to do with the Whanganui River. Murray Laing and Pauline Walton, both members of the Friends' executive, presented an illustrated talk on a recent visit to Peru.

The pair were in a party of 15 people who spent 27 days travelling widely in Peru, including the capital city of Lima, Cusco, Lake Titicaca and the famous Inca ruins of Machu Picchu. Though their visit coincided with ash clouds and unrest during the presidential election, they were not adversely affected by these

Taking stock with DoC Maori national park close

When the Whanganui National Park was created in 1986, the Whanganui iwi wanted and expected to get involved in day-to-day park management. This is likely to come to fruition soon following long-running dialogue between DoC and iwi.

In November 2011 the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board approved the Whanganui National Park Draft Management Plan which paves the way for the first Maori national park. The plan next needs approval from the New Zealand Conservation Authority, which is likely to go back to DoC to get its view.

Board chairman Darryn Ratana said a Maori national park will bring huge opportunities to the community with nearby settlements becoming tourist drawcards.

SLIP CLOSES TRAIL TEMPORARILY

A massive slip which closed the Mangapurua section of the Ruapehu-Whanganui cycle trail in July 2011 wasn't cleared until nearly two months later.

DoC staff discovered the slip 500m upstream from the Bridge to Nowhere in an area not previously hit by slips. Approximately 60m wide, the slip was large enough to block the Mangapurua Stream for a while.

Reopening the track took about eight people three weeks working mostly by hand and without explosives. The slip became an ongoing problem with a report in November that it was still on the move but workers were keeping the track open.

ONLINE BOOKING FOR AWA

Online booking for the Whanganui Journey which came into force in October 2011 will be more convenient for users and allow DoC to keep better records, according to Whanganui Area manager Nic Peet.

People using river huts and campsites have to book and pay online to reserve a place – or pay double when they arrive without a booking. People unable to book online can go to DoC's Whanganui Area office to book or can book through tour operators.

The online system is expected to avoid bottleneck situations such as 65 people at John Coull Hut, which occurred one night last year.

DOC JET BOATING SKILLS TESTED

Twenty-one DoC and Hikenakau staff members were put their jet boating paces in Taumarunui, covering a wide range of skills and experience levels. For the past five years DoC has run its own boat training days for staff from the central to lower North Island to refresh existing qualifications and complete competency training.



DoC jet boat drivers put through their paces on the Whanganui River.

In July 2011 the training was held in conjunction with Maritime New Zealand. After a day of theory course members hit the Whanganui River with night driving for the experienced drivers and the rules of the river for those less experienced.



The Mangapurua slip, about 60m wide, tore a massive hole in the bush. It was in an area which had not previously been known for slipping.

NEW SIGNAGE IN PARK

Whanganui National Park received a new set of about 10 interpretative panels which were blessed and unveiled in late 2011. The location of the panels includes John Coull hut, Tieke kainga and the Pipiriki shelter. A new sign at the Bridge to Nowhere was funded by the Friends of the Whanganui River from Arthur Bates' bequest.

The artistically presented panels with updated information replace signage which was well passed its use by date.

JOB LOSSES CAUSE ANGER

DoC's announcement of nationwide job cuts in September 2011, which included 13 technical and support jobs from the Whanganui office, prompted community anger. At the same time it was confirmed that the main office for the new Taranaki/Whanganui/Tongariro Conservancy would move to Taupo.

Meanwhile, DoC staff in Whanganui moved to leased properties in Taupo Quay in December 2011 in a ceremony said to signal a growing partnership with tangata whenua.

PEOPLE AND PLACES - NEWS BRIEFS

Brand focus on awa

The Whanganui River will be the basis for the district's new brand. Mayor Annette Main said the river was the best-known feature. The Wanganui District Council confirmed in October 2011 that the overarching branding will be "Whanganui" which portrays a direct link to the river. The key elements of the brand are river, culture, heritage, lifestyle and people.

Major step on claim

Whanganui iwi took a major step toward settling their 138-year-old Whanganui River grievances in October 2011 when they signed a record of understanding with the Crown, listing items for discussion in their Wai 167 Treaty of Waitangi claim over the river. The record of understanding precedes formal negotiations which are expected to begin early in 2012.

Pair at park

Long time river watchers could have been forgiven for thinking they had been transported back in time on February 20 2011. The rare sight of PS Waimarie and MV Wairua heading up river to Hipango Park would have gladdened the hearts of many. The trip was believed to be the first time in at least 70 years that the vessels had travelled together to the park.

Waste water bid fails

Open Country Dairy processing plant's bid to discharge waste water into the awa got a thumbs down from Horizons in September 2011. Most submissions, including one from the Friends, opposed the application. Gerrard Albert, of the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board, said the community no longer saw the river as a mere utility. Open Country decided not to appeal the ruling.

Riverbank sculpture

The river is depicted in an impressive new spherical sculpture placed on the Whanganui riverbank in March 2011. Weighing 800kg and constructed from 4mm stainless steel sheets put together like a beach ball, the sphere is highly polished and features a fissure representing the



David McCracken with his 800kg spherical sculpture on the Whanganui riverbank.

river. It is the work of Auckland-based artist David McCracken.

Floating restaurant proposed

Former Riverboat Trust chair Jens Bukholt remains hopeful that Waimarie will become a floating restaurant when it is not cruising. He believes that using the vessel for this purpose would solve its financial problems and points out that the galley was extended to cater for meals and conferences. Mr Bukholt chaired the trust when Waimarie was launched.

River banks tidied up

The Whanganui River bank area received a clean up as part of the Sir Peter Blake Trust's "Care for our Coast" programme in March 2011. A team from Westpac Wanganui and the trust turned out as part of the philosophy that gems of our coastline, such as the river banks, must stay intact for future generations to enjoy.

Green boat award

Spirit of the River Jet, owned and operated by Claire and Bent Firmin, has received a Qualmark Enviro-Silver Award. Mrs Firmin said this is the highest environmental award a jetboating business could get. They operate on the whole length of the river and their boats use low octane fuel and are regularly tested for emissions.



Brent Firmin takes students for a run on the Whanganui River.

Bylaws plan scrapped

After more than a year of consultation and assessment, Horizons Regional Council upset some river users by deciding to scrap plans to establish new navigation bylaws because of the cost and opting to leave jurisdiction over the area to Maritime New Zealand. Horizons will, however, upgrade navigation markers and remain closely involved with regular river users.

Booklet on Morikau

Morikau Station marked its centennial in May 2011, and a booklet covering its operation was produced for shareholders, compiled by Whanganui author Penny Robinson. She said the farm was an important part of the history of the Ranana area and

“highlights in a way the strength of Iwi and the vision Iwi members had in terms of regaining control of their lands.”

Doco wins awards

A documentary about the Partington photographs of Whanganui River Maori in the 19th century was a major winner in New Zealand's Documentary Edge Festival in 2011. *I Am the River*, directed by Mark McNeill and Luigi Cutore, won the award for the best New Zealand feature and also the awards for cinematography and editing.

60th wedding anniversary

Winiata Tapa, at 85 the oldest kaumatua on the Whanganui River, and wife Christina, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in May 2011. They reaffirmed their vows with their eight children and mokopuna on Ranana Marae. Koro Winnie and Kui Christina say their marae, which is the focus of their village, keeps them busy.



*Longtime partnership ...
Koro Winiata and Kui
Christina Tapa of Ranana.*

River song a winner

A classic tune about the Whanganui River took the Whanganui Musicians' Club's prize for best original song in May 2011. The song was presented by Wizz and the Naturals and won the prize of \$10000 of recording time from the Whanganui studio of their choice. The night raised funds for earthquake-stricken Christchurch.

Gallery showcases art

An old school room, the generosity of a marae and a determination to make it work are driving the success of the Matahiwi Gallery and cafe. The gallery opened in October 2010, and is giving locals an outlet for their craft, and, more importantly provides them with work. The gallery runs

The driving forces behind the Matahiwi Gallery are, from left, Marlene Ranginui, Tema Butler and Theresa Te Huia.



on a trust basis and the artwork has a strong Maori inspiration.

Locals on film

Whanganui River settlements figured prominently in an exhibition by Ans Westra, the well-known Dutch-born documentary photographer, at the Sarjeant Gallery in Whanganui for three months in 2011. She made her first trip up the river in 1960 and began an engagement with the people of the region that continues to this day.

Final journey by water

The Whanganui River provided an unusual route when Trevor Smith's ashes were taken to Aramoho Cemetery in June 2011. After a memorial service in the Aramoho Rowing Club rooms, a men's rowing eight ferried Mr Smith's ashes to the cemetery. He had been a passionate rower and coach as well as a champion for the environment.

Suzanne Aubert Scholarship

Damien Kiddie of Matahiwi was presented with a Suzanne Aubert Tertiary Scholarship to attend Waikato University in 2011. His grandparents and parents were taught by the Sisters of Compassion at Ranana, so Damien's connections to the sisters date back a long way. The former Wanganui City College student is studying for a Bachelor of Education.

Focus on Baxter

The Whanganui River and specifically James Baxter featured in the Whanganui Literary Festival in September, 2011. The public was able to follow in the path of Baxter on a bus trip up the River Road to Jerusalem, listen to local people sharing their experiences of the poet, view significant sites, visit his grave and hear his poetry. Baxter died in 1972.

Best service ... again

Brent and Claire Firmin's jet boat tour business on the Whanganui River was in 2011 voted the best in New Zealand for the third year in a row. Voting is done online by travellers at www.rankers.co.nz. The craft, Spirit of the River Jet, also got the Qualmark Enviro-Silver Award in 2011 for its environmental practices.

Slow on erosion plan

A catchment that sheds a lot of silt into the awa is proving slow to take up a Horizons erosion-reduction initiative. The Ohura River's catchment is one of Horizon's priorities for erosion control using the whole-farm plans that are part of its Sustainable Land Use Initiative. Only one per cent of the

Old Whanganui

(SING TO THE SONG STREETS OF LAREDO)

As I canoed down the old Whanganui,
As I was canoeing that river one day,
I spied a young tramper all lost and forsaken,
And took her canoeing on that very day.

“You see by my ice axe that I am a climber.”
These words she did say as I boldly swept nigh.
“Come sit down beside me and hear my sad story,
Lost in the bush where I thought I must die.

“T’was far from the homestead when darkness came o’er me,
Far from the summit I’d wended my way,
O’er valley and hilltop the bush trails had led me,
By village and fortress, deserted today.

“Dark mountains of mystery, through caves had I wandered,
To riverside landing where muskets once prey.
Now peacefully flowing, the river glides slowly,
Canoes drifting shorewards, how welcome that day!”

Through gorges we bore her, with waterfalls silvered,
Deep canyons where walls reached the sky far away,
Past high towering fortress in Te Wahi Pari,
Deep caves where the legendary taniwha lay.

Oh paddle on slowly as tui sing softly,
Deep river murmuring sweeps ever on,
On chatters so cheerfully where rapids sparkle,
The flash of a blade thrust drives us along.

Ngaporo passed safely, fern-draped Manganui,
The Drop Scene with steamer and tourists at play,
Dark Puraroto, fierce-sounding Autapu,
Then on for the village – big hangi today!

Past Holy City and riverside London,
To Athens where clouds round the Capitol lie.
Now rapids more softly, insistently, saying,
Come hear us again, once again, ‘ere you die.

Editor’s footnote: These words, founded in fact, record what the Canoeing Association calls “the post-World War Two revival of canoeing in New Zealand.” The advance guard of a Christmas cruise party, drifting through the central “wilderness area” of the river, was amazed to see not one but two fair maidens sitting forlornly by the riverside. They were subsequently rescued, prompting these words which have been taken from the association’s journal.

Obituaries

They were real authority figures on the awa

BY DAVID SCOULLAR

Many people with great knowledge of the Whanganui River have died over the years, but 1980-81 was a particularly sad time with the loss of no less than five figures of great mana.

RANGI POKIHA died in February, 1980, aged 84. A nationally recognised authority was a direct descendant of Turi, the captain of the Aotea canoe in the Great Migration, and the chief of the Ngati Pamoana of Koriniti.



Rangi Pokiha was steeped in genealogy, lore, history, legends of river.

In the whare wananga (school of learning), he was drilled in matters of his special heritage. He later conducted tribal wananga to drill selected Ngati Pamoana in the ways of old. Mr Pokiha was sought out by universities, training colleges and historians and willingly shared his knowledge with them.

He also dictated the information used to compile a booklet entitled Ngati Pamoana, which outlined the major facts of a tribal history. At the time of his death he was acknowledged as the greatest authority on the genealogy, lore, legends and history of the river.

RUAHUIHUI KEREMENETA died in a motor accident in August, 1980, aged 78. Known as Auntie Rua, her death deprived the people of Aotea of one of their most expert weavers, whakapapa exponents and storytellers.

After spending much of her early life south of Taumarunui, she returned to Matahiwi at the age of 15 with her father who was a noted Anglican lay preacher. From him she gained most of her extensive knowledge of traditional Maori medicines and methods of healing.

Mrs Keremenata broke through several male bastions in her younger days and engaged in many activities which were then considered to be for men only. She went pig-hunting alone, did eeling, fencing and other heavy farm work and was also a proficient carver. She later travelled throughout the district teaching flaxwork.

WILLIAM P MEAD died in August, 1980, aged 90. Born in Northland, he arrived in Ohakune in 1910 as a young engineering cadet with the New Zealand Railways. From there he visited Taumarunui to see the tunnel boats which triggered a lifetime interest which was to make him an authority on the river.

He was a co-founder of the Wanganui Canoeing Club, wrote a canoeists' guide to the river and his river experiences figured in his illustrated book, *Memories of a Mountain and a River*. (The mountain was Ruapehu where he pioneered skiing).

When the Wanganui River Reserves Board was formed in 1957, he was one of the first appointed an honorary ranger. Mr Mead's obituary in the Wanganui Herald was headed "Wanganui River's grand old man dies."

ERIC FISHER died in September, 1980, aged 81. Born in

New Plymouth, he became a farm cadet to Morikau Station at 15 and spent most of his working life on farms in the Whanganui River area, in the course of which he became an authority on the river.

Wherever he went, Mr Fisher talked and became friends with Maori people and much of what he learned he recorded in an unpublished book which contained a wealth of information on the river, its pa, European settlements, people and sports groups.

Mr Fisher provided information when the Wanganui River Scenic Board researched the history of the Colonial House at Pipiriki. He was treasurer of the Koriniti Marae committee and organised the erection of a monument to Sister Elsie, the Anglican deaconess who worked with the Maori people until her retirement in 1962.

RANGI MOTUHIA KATENE died in February, 1981, aged 87. He was regarded as the senior elder of the river and was connected tribally with the people of Whanganui and Taranaki. He was esteemed throughout the country as an expert on the genealogy, poetry and songs of the river.

From his home at Jerusalem, he was a staunch supporter of land development schemes as promoted by Sir Apirana Ngata and was a key figure in the development of Maori incorporations in the Whanganui district.

In his later years he moved to live at Maungarongo marae at Ohakune to conduct schools in traditional learning for the Ngati Rangi subtribe of Atihau.

