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A weekly feature on the
communities in
Horowhenua & Kapiti

Caring for Our Community

This week's feature – Kapiti Historical Society

After a time in recess, the Kapiti Historical Society was re-formed in 2000 by a group of people eager to see Kapiti's history researched and recorded.

The society has worked closely with other historical groups – the Wellington Regional Heritage Promotion Council, the Otaki Historical Society and the Paekakariki Rail Precinct Trust. It has been associated with the Heritage Trail upgrade committee and with the wealth of local museums.

In 2002 the Kapiti Historical Society launched a major project to research the origin of local street names, to interview old identities and to collect information. This would be added to a database which would collect knowledge in one place to form a basis for historical information and the development of timelines.

Martin and Alycen Kaiser, who are working on the project, said there was a deal of detective work involved in searching documents and finding people with knowledge of earlier days on the Coast. They said valuable sources of information were people who used to travel out to the family bach



"Dilkoosha" built in 1888 by W.L.T. Travers is one of Kapiti's historical homesteads. The Valley Road home is now Te Nikau Bible Training Centre.

for their summer holidays and had recollections of those early days."

They hoped to produce a series of leaflets relating to the different parts of the Kapiti Coast area.

A tape recorder had been purchased with the assistance of a grant from the Kapiti Coast District Council and was being used to collect oral histories.

Searches of the Hutt District Council records, held in the Alexander Turnbull Library archives, had revealed some early information, as had some publications about the coast such as *The Celebration History of the Kapiti Coast*, written by Olive Baldwin.

Mr and Mrs Kaiser said they were having a very good response to their requests for historical data and street name information.

"There is a great deal of information known

about Raumati South, Raumati and Paraparaumu. Some of the street names are based on the family names of people who owned land in the district like Howell Street and MacLean Street in Paraparaumu Beach, and Ames Street in Paekakariki. Learning about the street names and historic buildings gives many insights into the social conditions of the day."

"Few areas in New Zealand have adopted the American practice of naming street names such as 5th Avenue or 42nd Street, but here in Paraparaumu Beach we have Tahi Street, Rua Street and Toru Road (one, two and three in Maori)," Mr Kaiser wrote in an early set of notes. "We haven't had many phone calls from Waikanae and we would be very interested to hear more history from that part of the Coast. Mr and Mrs Kaiser would welcome a call from anyone with information to add to their street names. They can be contacted on 298 6998.

For more information about the Kapiti Historical Society contact the president, Neil Curgenven 905 4730.

Kapiti Historical Society AGM

Wednesday September 1

7.30pm

Speaker Rosalind Darby.

Topic: 'Urban Design Based on the Identity of Kapiti'

Te Kupe Road Scout Hall,
Paraparaumu Beach

Business Breakfast

Wednesday 1st September

7.30am

SOUTHWARDS MUSEUM

Speaker - DOC MAYHEW

Former All Black's Doctor

Cost \$15

RSVP - Heather Meads 04 904 5757
heather.meads@kapiticoast.govt.nz



1922

The Horowhenua Electric Power Board forms to provide electricity to the Kapiti and Horowhenua communities.

Over the next 70 years it builds and operates an extensive network of power lines and transformers.

Its customers are spread from the small coastal settlement of Paekakariki in the south, to Foxton and Tokomaru in the north. And from the Tararua Ranges in the east, to the Tasman Sea.

1990

The Government of the day appoints an interim board of directors to establish a company that will take over the business of the Power Board. The previous incumbent, elected board members are appointed interim trustees, responsible for representing the interests of Kapiti and Horowhenua customers during the restructuring.

1991

The interim directors consult rigorously with the interim trustees and the public. From this consultation process comes a plan to establish a new company responsible for the distribution and sale of electricity to

History of Electra



Original HEPB staff in 1922

the Kapiti and Horowhenua.

The plan is put to the Minister of Energy. Recommendations include that a public unlisted company take over the business operations of the Power Board, shares in the company be held on behalf of its customers by a trust, and the trust be elected by customers.

1993

The Minister of Energy accepts the plan and the interim directors of the Power Board are appointed Directors of the new company – Horowhenua Energy Ltd.

The new company inherits the Power Board's 34,000 customers and assets valued at \$40 million, amassed since its formation 70 years earlier.

1994

The trading name of the company is changed to Electra.

Electra (the loyal daughter of a King in Greek mythology) is adopted as the company's logo.

The construction and maintenance portion of the business becomes a wholly owned subsidiary, Linework Ltd.

Electra operates the first electricity company call centre in New Zealand.

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NEXT WEEK:
Electra History 1994 to Present Day

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