At the AGM

At the AGM, the following were elected:

Chairman: Alan Donald: alan.f.donald@gmail.com
Deputy Chairman: Jon Parson: jonparson@xtra.co.nz
Secretary: Allison Corliss: alli77cor@gmail.com
Treasurer: Mari van Barsoon: mari@xtra.co.nz
Committee member: Khadisha Harvey: signalgallery@xtra.co.nz
Committee member: Robert Baldwin: trixiebaldwin@outlook.co.nz
Committee member and Editor: Jim Parnell: jim.parnell.2017@gmail.com

Next Meeting: 25th August 2018

Our next meeting will be on the 25th August at St Paul’s Presbyterian Church Hall, starting at 2 pm and finishing about 4.30 pm. We have some vintage films to show, and will have extra copies of our latest Annual for sale. Also, we will have some large mounted photographs of our river to sell. See back page for details.

Our Annual

Feed-back about our latest Annual has been very positive. We have printed extra copies so that we can sell them as well as lend them to non-members in the hope that they will become members.

Subscriptions

We thank those who have paid their subscriptions, and remind those who haven’t yet paid to do so. We rely on your subscriptions to keep us afloat and pay for the Annual.

Whanganui Summer Programme

As usual, the Friends will host two of the activities of the next Whanganui Summer Programme; the Kauarapaoa Valley trip and the Whanganui River Road trip. Dates will be announced later by the programme organisers.
Email addresses
We are working towards our goal of email access to all of our members. With postage rates now at $1.20 per letter, the cost of mailing out newsletters to those who have not given us an email address creates a huge dent in our finances. Please, if you get this by ordinary mail, and have an email address, send it to us. If you don’t have an email address, but have a friend or relative who has, and could forward our emails to you, please let us have it. The advantage of emailed newsletters is that you get them in colour, and saves us money.

The Friends’ New Trailer
The trailer that we purchased from Mitre 10 has been fitted with a waterproof canopy by Robert Hoyle and Jon Parson. It will be used to store the gazebo and all the things which we use to promote ourselves at the Farmer’s Market on Saturdays in the summer months. We can also use it anywhere else where we want to advertise the Friends.

Market Stall
In November we will recommence running our stall at the Saturday Market, which will let people know about us and give them the opportunity for them to become members. Annuals plus some books associated with the Whanganui River will be for sale. Hours are from 7.30 till 12.30 and we would like members to help run the stall even if only for a couple of hours. If you are interested please contact Khady 021 0853116

Murray Ware
We recently farewelled one of our long-standing members, Murray Ware. He had been a member for years, and was our chairman in 2011 and 2012. With the “River Rats”, he made many canoe trips down the Whanganui (the “River Rats” are a group mainly comprised of our members, whose purpose in life is to paddle the Whanganui River annually). He also had keen interests in the world of amateur theatre and so his friends in the Repertory, Amdram and Friends of the Opera House were well represented at his funeral.

Upokongaro Suspension Bridge for Cyclists
Work started earlier this year to build this bridge, but they found that the ground on the Papaiti end was softer than expected and so that end is being redesigned. Work will restart in September and the completion date is expected to be April next year.

Tourism
According to an article in the River City Press, over a thousand cyclists travel the Mangapurua cycle trail each year, nearly all needing to be jet-boated from the landing back to Pipiriki. Some prefer to canoe the rest of the way instead of jet boating.
Book Launches
A book, *Literary Whanganui* was launched in the Council Chambers recently. It is a collection of potted biographies of writers who have had some connection with Whanganui. They have either lived in the city or district (Janet Frame, Rev. Richard Taylor, Laraine Sole et al), or have passed through (Mark Twain, John A Lee, et al). Their body of works comprises fiction and non-fiction, the latter being biographical, historical, poetry, drama etc. In fact, it is amazing the talent that Whanganui has bred or inspired. Arthur P Bates, our founder, as well as myself are included in the pantheon of the 107 writers represented in the book. The author is Joan Rosier-Jones, herself, one of Whanganui’s prominent writers.

Also launched recently was Laraine Sole’s book: *Upokongaro, The Community Up-River*. It is a treasure trove, describing life as it was in the village of Upokongaro and the surrounding district. She launched it at a well-attended gathering at the Avoka Hotel in the village.

And a third book—Murray Crawford’s *Whimsical Tales of old Whanganui*, was launched in June. Our river of course, features in its contents, together with a host of other interesting stories of Wanganui’s past.

Waka Ama
This is a growing sport in Whanganui and New Zealand. There are over 70 clubs in NZ with three in Whanganui – the Whanganui Outrigger Canoe Club, based alongside the Union Boat Club, the Putiki based Te Ringa Miti Tai Heke Whanganui Waka Ama Club and the Te Kaihau a Kupe Waka Ama Club in Castlecliff. There are many overseas clubs, particularly in the Pacific area. There is much competition between them. The Castlecliff club with Coastguard support recently set out for Kai Iwi, but they had to cut the trip short because of swells. The Outrigger Canoe Club once paddled the Whanganui River from Pipiriki to Whanganui.
River photography
Mathias Svoid, a Danish professional photographer was a recent visitor to the Whanganui River. He was so intrigued by the fact that it had been given legal personhood that he thought that it might make a good story for the National Geographic, a magazine which prints 7 million copies per month and is read by about 60 million people. He pitched the story to the magazine and got an assignment. So he came here looking for a community who have a strong relationship with the river and arrived in time for Puanga, the Maori New Year celebrations. With the help of Mike Poa, Gail Imhoff, Ken Haworth and others, he visited the Blue Duck Station, Pipiriki, and other places, and has spent time on, near, and under (he tipped out of a canoe) the river and found what he was looking for. At a recent evening with Whanganui Camera Club members, he explained his mission. He now needs to show the National Geographic his images, and if they see a story in them, they will select a writer, probably a local person, to write the text for it. He may return in summer for more images. It could be a year before the story appears. We look forward to seeing it, and need to stand by for an influx of overseas adventurers wishing to canoe our river, or otherwise travel on it. With a little bit of luck, we may be able to recruit some of them as members of the Friends.

Master’s Degree Thesis
As spokesman for the Friends, Editor Jim Parnell has been interviewed by a young lady, a Master’s student of Architecture at Victoria University who is working on a thesis which asks how architectural and landscaping interventions in the flood plain can better respond to and respect the mana of Te Awa Tupua. The Friends were invited to participate because of our special relationship with the Whanganui River and local knowledge that we hold. It was a very pleasant interview, and the outcome from it, as well as from the many other interviews that she undoubtedly held will go a long way towards her degree.

Good News
The Department of Conservation has had its budget increased by 181.62 million dollars, mainly to assist in predator control and biodiversity.
**Mosquito Point road realignment**

Because of erosion of the riverbank alongside Papaiti Road near the Mosquito Point corner, the road has now been realigned to route it further from the river. Part of the old road has been turned into a car park for those visiting the Point for a swim or other purposes.

Mosquito Point as it was at the end of July this year. The rope swing has been taken away.

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**Blue Duck Station Offer:**

Tour of the damage to the Whanganui river by jet boat.
Tour to the Depot shed, which is at the Whakahoro entrance to the Whanganui River National Park.
One night’s accommodation at River Quarters.
Dinner and desert.

$220 per person, minimum 2 people required.

Upgrade to Frontier lodge for $270 per person.

There is no end date to the offer but pre-booking is essential. The Friends’ Committee will consider the offer and organize a trip for those interested. Details of the trip will be circulated by email only.
Flood Takes Big Toll on Canoes

Come in canoe No 32, your time is up. But sadly No 32 will never again ply the Whanganui River. Its wrecked hull, with the Canoe Safaris’ logo on the side, now rests on the sea shore near Waiinu Beach, up the coast from Whanganui. I saw it there in June 2018.

It was one of dozens of canoes which were swept away in the flood of March 2018. Some were recovered—Joe Adam picked up 23 and a canoe guide saw 12 go downstream within a few minutes. But many were never found, maybe ending up like No 32 or washed out to sea.

Story by David Scoullar

Death of Alexander Hatrick one Hundred Years Ago

It is a hundred years ago this month, that Alexander Hatrick passed away. He was a very prominent citizen and businessman of the Borough of Wanganui (as it was in his time). Besides operating a fleet of riverboats on the Wanganui River, with accommodation for travellers at Pipiriki, he was one of the local “captains of commerce” and was also involved in overseas trading with his own ship, the Alexa. He was on the Harbour Board for 20 years. For six years, he served as Mayor and in that time, had input into the gas works, the tramway system, and the implementation of the Okehu water supply.

He urged, in every way that he could, to get Wanganui’s burghers to make their Borough beautiful. He was the president of the Beautifying Society for many years.

Alexander Hatrick at the time that he was Mayor of Wanganui. From picture in District Council chambers

The Town Bridge at the time of the 1940 flood. Note the spectators on the footway — something that would never be allowed today during a flood. Note also the lack of headroom under the bridge
River Floods
A little over 140 years ago, in the year 1875, the railway bridge was being built and the river flooded, twice. Scaffolding and equipment was carried away which all had to be recovered or replaced.

The *Wanganui Chronicle* reporter got a bit carried away with his description of Maori, who had been camped above the town bridge repositioning themselves to Putiki:

“A very exciting scene was witnessed about 11 a.m., when some half dozen canoes, the occupants of which had been compelled to shift camp on this side, owing to the encroachment of the flood, passed down the river like a storm cloud, bound for the hospitable shores of Putiki. The crews of course were madly excited, induced by the wild nature of the surroundings and gesticulated and shouted like maniacs, as they propelled with furious and rapid paddles their canoes; the exigencies of the case compelled them to keep full steam on, in order to avoid broaching to with the current, by which steerage way would have been lost, and the frail craft would probably have come to grief. Like frightened sea birds the canoes shot through the arches of the bridge, borne upon the bosom of the turbid stream, and glided swiftly past the wharves, and onwards towards the haven of refuge at Putiki”.

The crews would have been in distinct danger of decapitation as their canoes shot under the bridge.

The *Chronicle* continued with a description of what was happening on the bridge an hour later:

“...at mid-day, [when the flood appeared to have attained its maximum height, the tide also backing it up to a considerable extent] was impressively wild and exciting in the extreme. The yellow billows were surging against and between the iron cylinders, the water recoiling yards back, the immovable piers providing insuperable obstacles to further progress; the eddying whirlpools testifying to the force and rapidity of the current. The bridge vibrated perceptibly to the rush of the water, and the noise and roar of the perturbed current was audible a long distance from the bridge. Against the cylinders of the bridge, a considerable number of the spars and piles used in the scaffolding of the railway bridge works higher up the river, lodged firmly, one after another increasing the strength and impenetrable nature of the barricade, which threatened at one time to be a formidable obstruction to the fierce current which foamed, and surged against it; and the strain induced thereby, as the debris continued to increase its original bulk, must have been very severe. A few well-directed efforts on the part of the Corporation men [council workers] dislodged the obstruction, and again afforded free and uninterrupted course to the current. The contractor for the [railway] bridge, Mr Rundle, was busily employed with a gang of men, some on shore and others in boats, in the work of salvage, and their labours were rewarded by securing a large number of piles which would otherwise have gone to sea and been irrevocably lost”.

RIVER FOOTAGE SCREENING
FRIENDS OF THE WHANGANUI RIVER

SATURDAY 25 AUGUST 2018 | 2.00 - 4.30 PM
ST PAUL’S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HALL
112 GUYTON STREET, WHANGANUI

JOIN US FOR

- Showing of Short Historical River Films
- Talk on 2017 Annual – Jim Parnell
- Afternoon Tea

THE 2017 ANNUAL WILL BE ON SALE AS WELL AS SOME BEAUTIFUL MOUNTED WHANGANUI RIVER PHOTOS.

ALL WELCOME