

1976. She is a member of the N.Z's writers, the Federation of University Women, the Te Awapuni Womens Institute, has been principal of Hukarere Maori Girl's School also Principal of Chilton St James, Lower Hutt and has taught at St Joseph's Maori Girls College.

The Reremoana Hakiwai Educational Trust Fund.

The author relinquishes all claims on profits and such money will be invested in the Trust Account. Interest generated by this fund will provide the source for annual educational grants to any suitable Maori applicants.

The Fund and Trust will be administered by three trustees, David Flashoff, son of the author — businessman; David Moxon, Anglican Priest and David Yates — Medical Practitioner, also a member of the Rongowhakaata Tribe.

Maori Religion and Mythology, Elsdon Best, Government Printer.

After being neglected for almost half a century, a classic work by one of New Zealand's most celebrated and controversial pioneer writers on Maoridom has been published.

The long promised second study of "Maori Religion and Mythology" is the last to complete the reprint series of Elsdon Best's Dominion Museum Bulletins undertaken by the Government Printer.

The 682-page book is a detailed account of the creation of the universe, the origin of man, religious beliefs and

rites, magic and folklore of the Maori.

Other major studies in Best's Dominion Museum Bulletin series were on Maori stone implements, storehouses, the pa, canoes, games and pastimes, agriculture, religion and mythology (part One), fishing methods, Maori traditions surrounding conception, birth and baptism and the "Forest Lore of the Maori".

The history of Best's study on "Maori Religion and Mythology" is a checkered one. The Turnbull Library housed the 800-page manuscript of the unpublished Bulletin 11 for some 50 years after Best's death in 1931.

An attempt to publish the text on the eve of 1940 to commemorate the centennial year of Pakeha New Zealand failed with the onset of the Second World War.

A further attempt came closer to publication in 1942. But the intervening war years saw the text, together with a series of carefully edited galley proofs of the first score or so pages, remain an unfinished legacy.

National Museum director, Dr John Yaldwyn, who wrote the foreword, explains that by the early 1970s, most of Best's classic studies were long out of print. They quickly became "collector's items" fetching high prices on the second hand market and book auctions which put them well out of the reach of the average New Zealander.

Disturbed by this trend, Dr Yaldwyn seized the opportunity in 1972 to present his case to the Government Printer who agreed to reprint the series without revision and retaining their Dominion Museum Bulletin numbers, but re-setting the texts in a uniform format.

The decision to reprint without substantial revision was not taken lightly. Dr Yaldwyn admits that Best's views "are very dated and some of them very wrong."

"But the greatest value of the texts is that they represent what Best thought, from what he had been told and from what he had gathered.

"Those were his views and all the other writings of Best's are based on this body of knowledge. This knowledge is being made readily available again to help people making similar studies to realise that this was the state of knowledge of Maori folklore and religion at the time."

Controversy surrounds much of Best's series of papers on Maori life and customs. Modern Maori ethnologists say that although Best was a methodical recorder, he was often reluctant to a fault to assess or criticise doubtful material from which he quoted extensively in later studies 'au fait'.

Other critics suggest that Best's views were too "westernised".

Best, the first white man to live with the Tuhoe tribe in the rugged Urewera Country, gained the confidence of the elders and achieved a degree of rapport seldom equalled by a later generation of ethnologists. Historian Sir Peter Buck said; "He saw things with their eyes and felt with their feelings,"

Here, Best second from left, records a part of the Maori heritage with the aid of a gramophone.

