

The New Zealand Maori Artists & Writers Society

Annual Conference — 1983

Writer Paki Cherrington
Photos. Dawn Kendall.

This year's conference was held on the Tukaki Marae, Te Kaha, on the 4th — 6th June, 1983. Two hundred people were expected but a crowd of 350 arrived from all parts of the country. Two marae besides Tukaki were needed to accommodate the overflow. They were the Whitianga and the Maungaroa maraes.

The 1983 conference celebrated the first ten years of the Society's involvement in the Maori arts, performing, visual and language arts, both traditional and contemporary. During the past ten years different maraes have hosted each annual Queen's Birthday weekend hui.

The hui this year differed in that the whole conference centred around one theme "TEKAU TAU KI TE WHAKATOTANGA I TE RITO O TE HARAKEKE" (Ten years to the planting of the flax).

All members attending within different art disciplines were asked to try to respond with contributions related to flax — stories, whakatauki, waiata, paintings, photographs, films, slides and the like. Members were also asked to bring examples of their present works for display and/or for performance at the concert on the last evening of the hui. This concert was seen by many as being a focal point of the hui. Speakers on the kaupapa of the hui were Te Awe Davis, Emily Schuster, Tungia Baker, Vivian Gregory, Toi Maihi, Dr Rawiri Tipene-Leach, and Alemein Emery. The discussions were chaired by Cliff Whiting and ranged from the medicinal value of the juices of the flax to the retail and marketing of the flax.

Distinguished visitors to the hui included Dame Te Atairangikaahu, who enjoyed all the activities of the hui. It was also pleasing to have had present the Reverend Kingi Ihaka, chairperson of the Maori and South Pacific Arts Council. Reverend Ihaka met our executive and discussed the new regional development policies of the society and also the appointment of our salaried executive officer.

Executive

There was such confidence in the executive, which constitutionally has to be re-elected each year, that the conference wished to re-elect the present executive without calling for nomina-



Tuti Tukaokao master carver

tions. One member of last years executive, Keri Kaa, resigned in order to concentrate her efforts on the regional development of the Wellington area. The 1983/84 executive committee is as follows:

President:
Secretary:
Treasurer:
Members:

Para MATCHITT
Georgina KIRBY
Ross HEMERA
Sonny KEEPA
Tungia BAKER
(new member)
Ivan EHAU
(new member)
George WARETINI
(new member)
Maaka JONES
Toi MAIHI

The new executive members are charged with the task of continuing the development of the Society within their respective areas. It is also their task to support and encourage Maori art in every field be it traditional or contemporary.

As a means of making the strengths of the Society known in areas where there is no executive member, Regional representatives were elected as liaison people for the Society. The Regional representatives for each rohe are as follows:

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|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Vivian GREGORY | MURIWHENUA |
| Ani BOSCH | |
| 2. Waireti ROLLESTON | TAMAKI |
| | MAKAURAU |
| 3. Rongo WETERE | TE AWAMUTU |
| 4. Rosemary KOHU | TAURANGA |
| | MOANA |
| 5. Ross HEMERA | WAIARIKI |
| 6. Frank HATA | WHANAU A APANUI |
| 7. Digger TE KANAWA | TE KUITI |
| 8. George WARETINI | WANGANUI |
| 9. Marjory Rau KUPA | NEW |
| | PLYMOUTH |
| 10. Tungia BAKER | OTAKI & PONEKE |
| 11. Sonny KEEPA | HASTINGS |
| 12. Jacob SCOTT | NAPIER |
| 13. Ngapine ALLEN | TURANGA NUI |
| | to HICKSBAY |
| | RUATORIA |
| 14. Ivan EHAU | |
| 15. Rawiri PARATENE | |
| Hone TUWHARE | OTEPOTI — TE |
| | WAIPOUNAMU |

Maire GOODALL

A highlight of the conference was the attendance of master carver Tuti TUKAOKAO, who gave of his expertise and knowledge to the young aspiring carvers in attendance. Tuti is very keen to establish a carvers guild under the umbrella of the Society. He sees this as a means of solving some of the unemployment problems facing our youth today as well as revitalising the art of carving. His proposals were well received by all in attendance. It would appear that more and more artists (artists in the broad sense) are beginning to see merit in being under the umbrella of the Society. This is commendable and fitting since the Society is an autonomous body which can promote and support all aspects of the Maori world.

In his President's report, Para Matchitt mentioned the need for the Society to form structures so as not to dissipate all the energy. He was referring to the energy the conference engendered in