

Unusual shield

A handsome carved shield, which takes two men to lift, has been completed in Taumaranui by the Kotahitanga Church Building Society and will be at stake during coming months for competition in Maori Cultural work.

But the shield has something special about it — carved from totara, the log has been buried for untold numbers of years under sand and water at the mouth of the Wanganui River where it enters the sea.

The huge log was discovered by the firm of Bullocks at Wanganui which was given a contract to run an under-water cable across the rivermouth.

The heavy machinery being used located the big log 15 metres under the water and it was necessary to use explosives to raise it to the surface.

A huge slab that was blown to the surface was drawn to the attention of the founder and director of Kotahitanga, Mr Alex Phillips, Taumarunui, who had it brought to him.

It was identified as totara but whereas the ordinary totara from the forest has a distinct red colouring this piece of timber has a matured dark brown colour. Mr Phillips has termed it "the totara of the underworld".

The main figures on the face of the shield represent the Maori God of the Forest, Tane, flanked by two crouching warriors on guard. All have their taiaha weapons.

Circling the inner pattern are a series of manaia each connected to the next one to provide an example to all the tribal areas of N.Z. to join together.

The same theory is contained in the next circle — a net that winds round the other figures — a net to hold the people together.

College reunion

The Te Waipounamu Maori Girls College will be holding its 75th reunion from March the 2nd to March 4th 1984. A tentative programme is:

Friday March 2nd, 6pm Powhiri (welcome) will be held at the Te Waipounamu Maori Girls College, with Karakia in the college chapel, after which kai will be served, following which everyone returns to their various places of accommodation to settle in.

Saturday, 10am. The Annual Meeting will be held, and photographs of pupils and ex-pupils will be taken at 11am. Lunch will be served at 12 noon and at 2pm leisure activities will start, e.g. sport 5pm, Dinner 8pm, Ball/Social.

A church service will be held on the Sunday and at 1pm a hangi will be lifted.

Ex-pupils of Te Waipounamu Maori Girls College wishing to attend the reunion are requested to contact Rianna Deacon, 33 Charnwood Crescent, Christchurch 5.

Call to open marae

A call for marae to be opened to provide emergency housing for homeless families has been applauded by Waikato-Maniapoto District Maori Council delegate Eva Rickard.

Mrs Rickard said marae were living places and should be used to house Maori people either homeless or forced to live in cars, tents, and caravans.

The call came from Manukau City Council employment officer Mr B. McLean, an Auckland Maori leader who said marae were lying idle while families suffered needlessly.

Mrs Rickard said the Waikato-Maniapoto District Maori Council would support the call but Government funding would be needed to make marae "liveable".

"Rural marae have tried to survive and have been built on the backs of the Maori people with no Government funding," she said.

"We will need that funding to make them liveable."

She said rural marae would be the saviour of the Maori people.

"Marae are going to play an important part in the rehabilitation, housing, and employment of our people," she said.

"Marae used to be living complexes a long time ago. If there's a return to that sort of life I think it may well be the

'Sweethearts of Yesterday' attend Ball

Queen's Birthday week-end saw a unique 'Sweethearts of Yesterday' ball held at the Te Rangimarie Centre, Christchurch. The ball, attended by about 200 guests, saw 32 elders from all parts of the South Island and the Chatham Islands presented to the special guests. These guests were the Minister of Maori Affairs, Mr Ben Couch and Mrs Couch, the Bishop of Aotearoa, the Rev. H. Vercoe and Mrs Vercoe, the Dominion President of the Maori Women's Welfare League, Mrs Maraea Te Kawa, and the Mayor and Mayoress of Christchurch, Sir Hamish and Lady Hay.

The ball was organised by the Taumutu branch of the Maori Women's Welfare League whose President, Mrs Ruku Arahanga of Taumutu, was recently re-elected to the post for the twenty-first year in succession.

The presence of Mrs Te Kawa gave the ball special significance for South Island Maori. It was the first function in the South Island she attended in her new capacity as Dominion President of the League. The immediate past President of the League, Mrs Violet Pou, was also present at the ball. At a service held on Sunday morning at the Rehua Marae, a finely woven kit was presented to Mrs Te Kawa in honour of her first official visit to the South Island.

Of the ball, Bishop Vercoe said it was a unique occasion to pay a tribute of

beginning of an era again for us."

Marae today were not being used enough and had become places for the Maori to weep, gather, and bury their dead.

They had "stood lonely" because many Maori people had migrated from rural areas to cities and returned only on special occasions.

"But I would say marae are the base of survival for our Maori people in the future because that is where pride and mana is taught, and it's not going to be taught in the cities."

She said a man made homeless by bankruptcy had been housed at Raglan's marae for a year until he had been able to afford his own home.

But if families were to be accommodated at rural marae jobs would have to be found or created for them.

Waahi marae spokesman Timi Maipi said Maori people were obligated to try to alleviate the housing shortage problem.

But Government funding would be necessary for marae to be able to house people and jobs would have to be found because the homeless would have to move to rural areas, where most marae were.

Marae were not being used enough but the return of people would "bring them back to life", he said.

honour to the old people present who were so often taken for granted. His only regret about the successful function was that more young people had not been at the ball to take advantage of being able to enjoy the dancing, talking and reminiscing of the old people.

The 32 'sweethearts of yesterday' presented to the official guests at the ball were: Mrs Muriel Orchard (Christchurch); Mr & Mrs John Stirling (Kai-koura); Mr & Mrs Bill Moses (Blenheim); Mr & Mrs George Smith (Taumutu); Mrs Ethel Walters (Christchurch); Mr & Mrs Hemi Takaiaora Williams (Christchurch); Mr Joseph Pomare (Chatham Islands); Mrs Hetty Idian (Chatham Islands); Mrs Emie Paynter Stephenson (Chatham Islands); Mrs Makere Tahuu Wallace (Little River); Mrs Hira Mahuraki Shaw (Christchurch); Mrs Maera Couch (Rapaki); Mrs May Rakena (Rapaki); Mrs Te Whe Ariki Hutana (Rapaki); Mrs Rima Te Aotukia Bell (Tuahiwi); Mr & Mrs Maurice Pohio (Taumutu); Mr Riki Te Mairaki Ellison Taiaroa (Taumutu); Mrs Alice Tairakena (Christchurch); Mrs Bridgette Meads (); Mr & Mrs Mehah Meha (Ashburton); Mr & Mrs D. Howarth (Christchurch); Mrs Malta Pitama (Christchurch); Mrs Vron Smythe (Christchurch); Dean and Mrs Michael Underhill (Christchurch).