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## EDITORIAL

I AM writing this at the base of the Art Deco tower of our National War Memorial in Buckle Street. Every Thursday I'm on duty here as information officer. Most of the time it's an undemanding job, to greet and chat with up to fifty visitors a day. Some are elderly, but predominantly they are young people – children brought by their fathers, students from neighbouring Massey University and backpackers. Recently they've come from England, Scotland, United States, Japan, Germany, Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Argentina. The Wellingtonians often say, 'I've been past here a thousand times, but didn't know that I could come in.' But of course they can.

It's our memorial – our memories. Those who are old enough remember life in the war and family members who served. The young ones, hopefully, acquire a memory of a place of symbolism, peace and dignity – qualities not so easily met with in an age of mass media and dwindling church attendance, but profoundly valuable in any society.

They will also remember something of what we tell them and what they discovered themselves from our symbols and information sources: plaques, images, coats of arms, touch screens, pamphlets, sounds. What we learn attaches to our memory.

War is dramatic. But so is everyday life. This Journal, as always, records the memories of many Otaki people, Maori and Pakeha. But, like the records at the War Memorial, it includes both personal detail and historical records. In Anne Thorpe's material from the Museum's exhibition on the market gardening industry in Otaki, both aspects come together, the particular and the general. Christina McKay brings her architectural training to bear on the town's hotels. Rose Monk continues her valuable reports on interviews with local personalities. And we welcome back Dick Roach, whose colourful writing lifts a record of his family's life to a piece of social history.

Finally, we note a remarkable group of anniversaries. An anniversary is an artificial device, but it prompts us to examine and celebrate events that changed our history, whether that be to do with church, means of transport or social customs.

Most importantly, this is our own anniversary – the thirtieth volume of the Otaki Historical Society's Journal. Our gratitude goes to the founders, to those who raised the money to pay the printer, to the skilled people who print and bind the images and text – and of course to all faithful readers. Long may the OHSJ continue to inform us about the memories haunting our small piece of New Zealand!

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