

A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION

An acknowledgement of Alister Matheson's contribution to the Historical Review Journal

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Mr Alister Matheson has had a lifelong interest in the history of Otumoetai, Maketu and Tauranga. This could be said of a number of people, but Alister's interest has been particularly deep and productive. He has published monographs on the Wairere Track and Motiti Island; collaborated with Jinty Rorke on contributions to the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*; and written no fewer than 41 articles for the *Tauranga Historical Society Journal* and *Historical Review*, an astonishing tally. He received the Tauranga Heritage Award for contribution to the area's history in 1999. One of his major contributions is to ensure the permanent preservation as a historic reserve of the Otumoetai pa site, which was his home for most of his life.

He has a depth of knowledge which would be hard to match, coupled with a phenomenal memory, and he is generous with his knowledge, always ready to help when a question about the area's history comes up. In the New Zealand Room of Tauranga Library he is regarded as a kind of honorary staff member. He has assisted unofficially in the on-the-job training and education in local history of all our new librarians as they arrive over the years, myself included. He challenges us to explore all available resources to find material relevant to Bay of Plenty history, from the contents of our own archives room to National Library's online newspaper source, Papers Past.

Whatever he writes is always thoroughly researched, and his knowledge of pictorial resources means that he is adept at picking illustrations that are appropriate to the text. His articles are also enjoyable to read. We look forward to more of them.



Archaeologists dig where the Matheson homestead was sited. The property will become a Historic Reserve. Photo: Tauranga Heritage Collection, Tauranga, NZ.