MIKE AAMODT NEW JP HEAD

HUTT VALLEY AND DISTRICTS JPS CELEBRATE SERVICE TO THEIR COMMUNITY

It was celebrations all round for the Hutt Valley and Districts Justice of the Peace Association recently. They celebrated their 40th anniversary at Premier house at the end of 2014, the same year as the bicentenary of the founding of Justices of the Peace in New Zealand and their national Federation marked 90 years of existence.

“There can be few organisations that can boast 200 years of service in New Zealand,” was how the Governor General Sir Jerry Mataparae put it when speaking to a special gathering to mark the bicentennial at Government House in November last year.

He recalled how Thomas Kendall’s appointment as the fledgling New Zealand’s first JP in November 1814- “so early in the history of European settlement here, highlighted how important JPs are in the orderly function of civil society.”

It confirmed for him Sigmund Freud’s observation that the first requisite of civilisation is that of justice.

“If Kendall were with us today, he might be astonished to see how the role has evolved since 1814, reflecting societal needs and norms. He would probably be delighted to see that JP services have been made easily accessible— in private residences, at service desks in libraries, at Citizens Advice Bureaux and at courthouses.”

What had not changed in 200 years was the need for Justices of the Peace.

“It is significant advantage the JPs come from all walks of life and represent the diverse communities in NZ. What they all have in common is a commitment to provide services to their fellow New Zealanders without fear or favour.”

HV Presentations

At a cocktail party to celebrate 40 years at Thorndon’s Premier House, the local association also celebrated the commitment and contribution of some of their own members, with Connie Olsen being conferred with a Life Membership and Loyalty Awards going to Vickie Ferguson, Avis Garner, Graham Nicholson and Bill Draper and 30 year certificates to Stephania Sondej, Alan Devlin, Bill Draper and John Pudney.

Connie Olsen was the first woman to serve for a full three year term as President and puts her involvement down to the encouragement of Ruth Hammond (who served a 6 months stint as president), the late Mollie Ngan Kee and former Registrar Vicki Ferguson.

Lower Hutt born and bred and educated at Naenae College, Connie (nee Crook) says her family hold a rare record of having three siblings serving as JPs at the same time— herself and a brother in Lower Hutt and one in the Bay of Islands.

Appointed in 1994 she has been a member of the Hutt Valley Executive ever since, is a former president and is currently Council member.

She has also been a Marriage Celebrant since 1995.

Connie says she hopes to continue to help her community in this way for many years yet. Her community-orientated and sporting family includes a nephew Luke Romano who is an All Black.

Mike Aamodt QSM new president

Replacing Rhys Morris as president after three years at the helm is Upper Hutt’s Mike Aamodt QSM. Sworn in as a Justice of the peace in Lower Hutt in 2010, two years later he became a Vice President. For over 45 years he has been involved with a large number of volunteer organisations in the Hutt Valley and beyond, from fire service up to provincial level to a stalwart of the Upper Hutt arts scene and a past member of the CAB. He received his QSM in the 2009 Queen’s Birthday Honours for services to the community.
Visit the Justice of the Peace website [www.jpfed.org.nz](http://www.jpfed.org.nz) if you want to know more about JPs in your area.