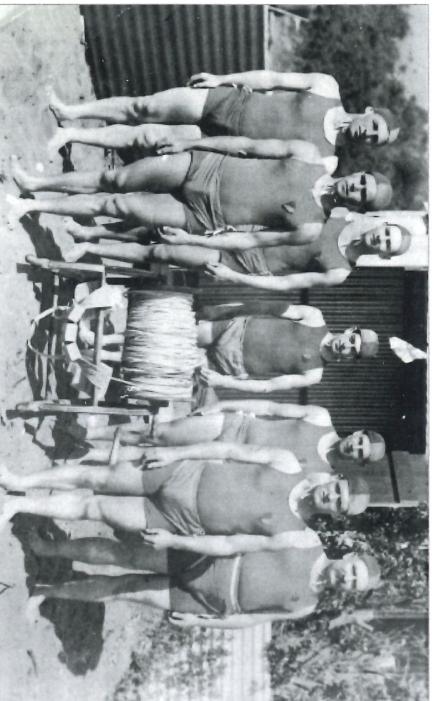


Flannagan was a benefactor



PATRICK Joseph Flannagan established the New Plymouth open water swim which bears his name in 1916, donating a trophy for the event in 1923. Ten years later, in 1933, he decided the race had grown in importance and warranted a more imposing trophy. As a keen swimmer himself, he was a foundation member of the East End Surf Club, and patron when he died in 1933. He had also been a president of the New Plymouth Old Boys' Surf Club and was a life member, and was involved in the establishment of the

Taranaki Centre of the Royal Life Saving Society. Born in Melbourne, he came to New Zealand late in the 19th century and settled in New Plymouth about 1900. He was a foundation member of the New Plymouth Aero Club and is reported to have been largely responsible for Sir Charles Kingsford Smith's decision to fly the Southern Cross to New Plymouth. He was involved in the formation of the reserve at East End Beach, made an annual donation to Pukekura Park, and was a foundation member of the Fitzroy Golf Club. A philanthropist, he gave money anonymously to families in need of support, and worked tirelessly during the 1918 influenza epidemic. He gave financial assistance to the Taranaki Swimming Centre's 'Learn to swim' week established in 1930, ensuring New Plymouth schools had transport to allow pupils to take part. He was listed on electoral rolls as a commission agent and landlord, but was remembered as a bookie. He died in New Plymouth in 1933 at the age of 61.



SURF TEAM: The 1920 East End surf lifesaving team. **P J Flannagan** is believed to be on the right.

Photo: Courtesy Puke Ariki

Many changes in Flannagan Cup race distances and venues

THE venue and distance of the Flannagan Cup open water swim has changed many times in its 90-year history.

The first race in 1916 was from Ngamotu Beach and followed the coast to East End Beach. The winner was W J Davis in a time of two hours 49 minutes. The next race was not until 1923 when race founder P J Flannagan donated a trophy.

Sometimes the race started from a launch in front of Kawaroa Park and

finished at East End Beach.

On other occasions it started at Ngamotu Beach and finished at East End.

After World War Two, the race started from the steps at the base of the Moturoa and Newton King Wharves. In recent years swimmers have raced a triangular course in the inner harbour, starting and finishing at Ngamotu Beach.



BACK IN TIME: A 1930 panorama of Moturoa and Port Taranaki.

Photo: Courtesy Puke Ariki

race committee was formed with delegates from the New Plymouth swimming and surf clubs. It is now organised by the Taranaki Swimming Centre.

Former race convenor Ray Lovett says the Flannagan Cup committee was always mindful of competitors' safety and was indebted to the Taranaki Harbours Board which for many years provided the pilot launch and dinghies to patrol the course. Many boat owners also made their craft available. In recent years Fitzroy, East End and New Plymouth Old Boys surf clubs have provided their surf boats, surf skis, canoes and IRBs.

The Flannagan Cup is one of New Zealand's oldest long distance swimming trophies. There was a six-year break between the first and second races, and the 1937 infantile paralysis epidemic forced the cancellation of the race that year. It was not swum between 1942 and 1944 during World War Two. In 1976, 1983, 1993 and 2001 the race was cancelled due to shipping movements, poor weather and/or cold water temperatures.

The race now includes separate events for masters and junior swimmers, and a section for swimmers in wetsuits.