

Lotto luck just keeps rolling on

Lotto was born 20 years ago. Wintec journalism student Emma Pottinger talks to one of Hamilton's first winners.

AUGUST 1, 1987, was a significant day for many New Zealanders.

It was Lotto's first draw. The winning numbers were 4, 8, 16, 29, 32, and 40 and the bonus number was 30.

The first division prize was \$359,808.

That first Lotto prize didn't go to a Waikato punter but several others did that year.

A Hamilton couple won \$1,096,563.40 and became New Zealand's first Lotto millionaires.

A Putaruru couple shared first division with four others, taking home almost \$400,000.

And a Hamilton grandmother shared the prize with two others, giving her a total of \$215,272. She had to check with her daughter to assure herself she was in the money.

But the story that made the biggest headlines was an unclaimed first division prize of \$72,136.60, for Lotto's sixth draw on September 5, 1987.

For two months, no one came forward and the Waikato Times ran regular updates reminding readers the prize still had to be claimed.

Several people tried unsuccessfully to convince authorities they owned the missing ticket.

One man claimed he had put his ticket into a wedding card and the bride and groom were on their honeymoon.

Another - an elderly woman - said she had lost her ticket but was convinced it had the winning numbers.

Hamilton man Paul Burroughs, then aged 36, was on a month-long holiday in Australia at the time. He had bought a Lotto ticket with his brother before he left the country.

Two weeks after he returned to New Zealand, he read one of the stories in the Times about the unclaimed prize.

"I read the article and thought that the numbers (1, 12, 17, 20, 31, 39 and the bonus number 4) looked familiar so I had a hunt around and found the ticket.

"The numbers matched up but I thought I would take it into the Lotto store to make sure. My brother didn't believe me but I filled out a claim form at the Lotto shop and they printed me out a winning voucher. I flew down to Wellington the next day to pick up the



STILL PLAYING: Lotto division one winner two decades ago, Paul Burroughs of Hamilton, still buys his tickets weekly.

Instead he became involved in the Stroke Club, a support group for stroke survivors. He is now the Hamilton secretary of the organisation and works from home.

Mr Burroughs continues to buy a weekly Lotto ticket from the Te Rapa Lotto shop, where he bought his winning ticket 20 years ago.

"I play the same numbers every week and my perspective is that it is a round-about thing. If you win then it's good but if you lose then the money could be going to someone in the community."

He says he hasn't won another first division prize but he has had "the occasional thrill" of winning lower division prizes.

He spends about \$10 a week on tickets and estimates he has spent more than \$10,000 on Lotto tickets in his lifetime. "So I'm still ahead."

He and his brother no longer share a ticket.

Many winners keep their identity secret to avoid fortune hunters. But Mr Burroughs says he has told several people over the years. "When they say, 'you can't win Lotto', I say, 'yes you can.' Funnily enough a lot don't believe me when I say I've won a first division. They think I'm making it up." He says he was never hounded by people wanting a cut. "Friends and family were just happy for us."

His advice to other Lotto winners is to take a deep breath before spending a cent. "Put the money in the bank and let it earn interest while you have a good think about what you want to do with it. Get professional advice if you aren't sure how to invest it. But mostly just enjoy the win. You don't know what is around the corner."

cheque."

He says he and his brother went to the bank together to deposit their winnings.

"We were standing side by side and (we were) served by different tellers. One lent over to the other and whispered, 'I got a Lotto winner' and the other whispered, 'me too'."

Paul Burroughs used his to visit Expo 88 in Brisbane and to pay off a big chunk of his mortgage. He says in retrospect that was a good idea because in 1993 he had a stroke and had to retire from work.

At the time he was working for a multinational company and earning a good income.

"It was a bit of a life change. I was devastated but there is no use feeling sorry for yourself."

Since Lotto was launched, there have been several additions to the strike pool. Lotto Strike was first played in 1993, and Powerball was introduced in 2001. In 2002 a second bonus ball was introduced.

In 2004 Lotto's winning wheel was added to the live show, giving Lotto players an extra chance to win a million dollars or other great prizes.

According to the New Zealand Lotteries website, the chances of winning division one Powerball, for each line played, is one in 30,707,040.

To date, Lotto has created 335 millionaires. The biggest win was a Lotto Powerball jackpot of \$17.7 million won in May last year by an Auckland man who bought his ticket in Kaeo in Northland.

Tonight's draw is number 1049.