



July 2015

Club Information	2		
Club Trip/Event Policies	2	Home from Coromandel	4
Club Banking Details	2	Poet's Corner.....	7
Kayak Hire	3	July Trips Diary.....	7
Regular Events.....	3	On the waterfront.....	8
Update Contact Details	3	Second Winter Lecture	13



Karen Holland heading for the Mt Aspiring hut.

Part I Second Winter Lecture (see page 13 for further details)

PHOTO KEVIN WOOLCOTT

Auckland Canoe Club Information

Postal Address

P.O. Box 9271, Newmarket, Auckland

Clubrooms

Marine Rescue Centre, Mechanics Bay

Website

<http://www.aucklandcanoecub.org.nz>

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<i>President</i>	Philip Noble	575 3493
<i>Secretary</i>	Rona Patterson	528 1155
<i>Treasurer</i>	Matthew Crozier	817 1984
<i>Trips Advisor</i>	Colin Quilter	360 6271
<i>Publicity</i>	Roger Lomas	846 6799
<i>Storage/kayaks</i>	Gavin Baker	528 5188
<i>Assistant</i>	Roger Lomas	846 6799
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webmaster@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz

hire@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz
(for kayak hire, or any related questions)

storage@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz
(for questions about storing kayaks in the locker)

Club Trip/Event Policies

Visit the Club website for details of safety and other important policies.

Contacting trip/event organiser

You must notify the trip organiser in advance of your intention to go on a trip. Organisers need to know numbers and to be able to contact you if the plan changes.

You must also discuss with the organiser in advance any medical or other conditions (such as your experience and ability) that might affect the progress of the group.

Cancellation

If the weather looks uncertain call the trip co-ordinator.

Club Banking Details

<i>Bank</i>	BNZ
<i>Branch</i>	Newmarket
<i>Account</i>	02-0100-0023453-000
<i>Name</i>	Auckland Canoe Club
<i>Particulars</i>	Your FULL name (Initials are not enough to identify some members with common names)
<i>Code</i>	Either SUBS, STORAGE, HIRE, OTHER (depending on what you are paying for)

If your payment is for several items, then please make **separate** payments for **each** item.

IMPORTANT

If you are depositing money to the Club Account please ensure that you include YOUR name so that the Treasurer knows who deposited the money.

Internet Banking

All major banks have set up Auckland Canoe Club as a registered payee for internet banking.

This means that you can pay to

Auckland Canoe Club

without having to enter the account number.

Check with your bank.

Kayak Hire

To book a kayak, enter details in the diary. Check diary before taking a kayak.

Kayak Hire Rates

Single kayaks

Daily hire – out am, back pm \$20.00

Half day – out am, back am
out pm, back pm \$10.00

Double kayaks

Daily hire – out am, back pm \$30.00

Half day – out am back am
out pm back pm \$15.00

- Please enter details of hire in register and on an envelope.
- Put money in envelope and place envelope in honesty box.
- **No I.O.U.s!**
- Carry or wheel kayaks to water.
- No seal launching.
- Please wash kayaks before returning to rack.
- Report faults or problems on the faults/problems sheet.

Regular Events

Vine House Weekends



On one weekend each month we have the use of Vine House. This gem in Mahurangi Harbour is a 2 km paddle from Sullivan's Bay, which is the ARC park at the end of the Mahurangi West Road, first on the right past Puhoi.

The house sleeps 10 and has all creature comforts. Bring sleeping bag, pillow case and food. A shared meal and nibbles is the norm for Saturday night, so bring your goodies.

Lagoon Bay is very tidal, so bringing a kayak trolley is a good idea. The range of paddling is endless, e.g. Waiwera, Warkworth, Kawau Island, Motuora Island – your choice. Or just rest and read and enjoy this tranquil and special place. We recommend you take a carry bag to get all your gear up the track to the house. Secure parking is at Sullivan's Bay. Leave a note on your dashboard reading "Vine House Volunteer" when you park in front of the ranger's house.

Please ring to book a bed, and for detailed directions. **Trevor 817 7357 or Matt 817 1984.**

Saturday Morning Coffee Cruise

Most Saturday mornings some club members do a short paddle from the club lock up at Okahu Bay.

We set off from the lock up at 9.00, returning by 12.30. The level is fairly easy and you can nearly always hire a club kayak. The route depends on the tide and the weather. We often paddle out to Bean Rock lighthouse and then stop at Kohi Beach for coffee in a local cafe before paddling back.

Join us for a relaxed paddle. It's a great way to meet people in the club.

Be aware: People don't go every week. You might go one week when no-one else happens to turn up.

You should have basic paddling skills to join this group, you will be responsible for yourself.

Note: Paddlers under 18 to be accompanied by a guardian!

For more information, contact either Lester Miller on 575 5942 or Chris Denith on 486 5599.

UPDATE CONTACT DETAILS

Please can everyone update their contact details, especially home and mobile numbers as many are now obsolete on our list.

email secretary@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz



Deadline for Next Newsletter

15 July 2015

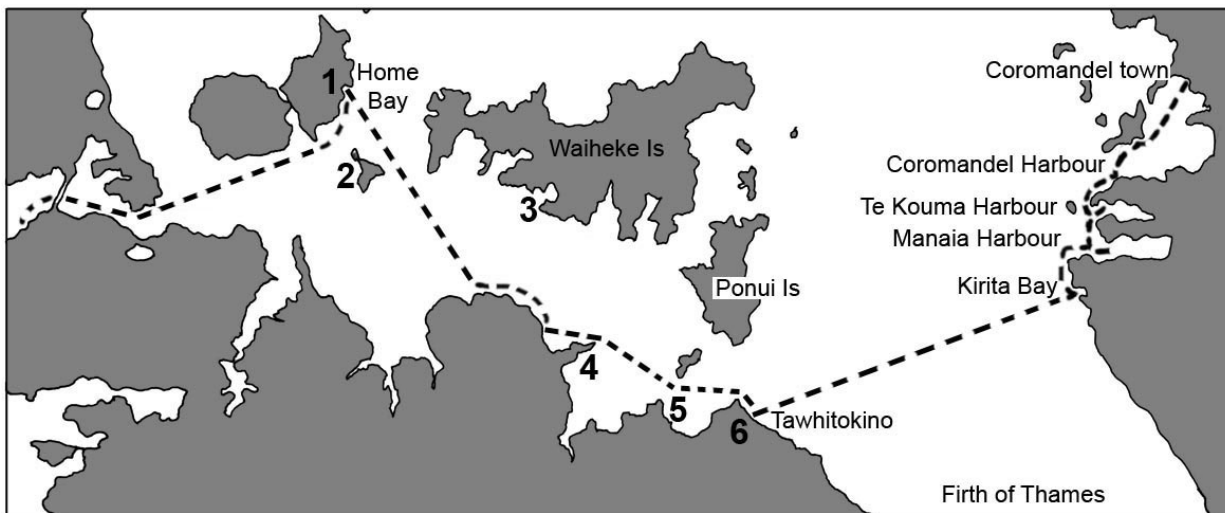
Home from Coromandel

Colin Quilter

In late February Auckland was beset by hot weather and easterly winds. I had time for a few days away in my kayak, but how to paddle out into the Hauraki Gulf against the wind? Eventually I realized that the solution was to drive somewhere out to the east, launch my kayak there, and paddle home with the wind at my back. A glance at the map suggested a good starting point: Coromandel town, where there are three interesting harbours nearby, none of which I had visited recently. So I packed food for four days, put the kayak on top of the car, and drove to Coromandel.

Near the centre of town, about 500 metres from the boat ramp, there's a small motel and camping ground. The manager agreed to let me park my car there for the duration of my trip; I sweetened the deal by paying him for a night's camping, (although he would have done it for nothing). The boat ramp and wharf dry out at low tide, (access is said to be possible for 3 hours before or after high water) but luckily I arrived a little after HW and found plenty of water. Another campground at Long Bay a few kilometers north of Coromandel town would give much better access to the water, but (for ease of getting back to my car) I preferred the town.

Coromandel Harbour is the northern one of the three which I wanted to explore, (the others are Te Kouma and Manaia). All three are shallow in their upper reaches, (at their eastern ends) so their western entrances are of most interest to kayakers. The satellite images on Google Earth give a useful preview, and you can see many beautiful white-sand beaches in the outer parts of all three harbours. Another excellent resource is the 1:50,000 topo map "BA34, Coromandel" which by chance perfectly covers the area.



My route home from Coromandel. Numbers 1-6 on the map indicate possible campgrounds; they are:
1 Home Bay, Motutapu 2 Campground on Motuihe Is 3 Whakanewha, at Rocky Bay
4 Te Wharau Campground, Duder Regional Park 5 Waitawa Bay campground
6 Tawhitokino Beach

I paddled out along the inner (southeastern) shore of Whanganui Island, which encloses Coromandel Harbour and actually forms it; without this island, the harbour would be a bay. The island is farmed and there are some attractive bays here, most of them without buildings or other development. All the beaches have old notices on the foreshore, the painted text so faded that it is unreadable, but I could guess what would have been written there. "Private property....."

Later in the afternoon I landed at a more remote beach and found a perfect wild-camping spot, where my tent and kayak were both beneath the cover of trees, and invisible. Anyone who wants to know the location can contact me, but I am not willing to make it widely known. My fear is that sooner or later some thoughtless kayaker will light a campfire there. Farmers are paranoid about fire, especially in the dry months of late summer, and a farmer finding ashes from an old fire there will immediately bang in the usual notice, ("Private property, keep off, no trespassers") and so another remote camping spot on the coast will be lost to kayakers.

Continued on page 5 ➤

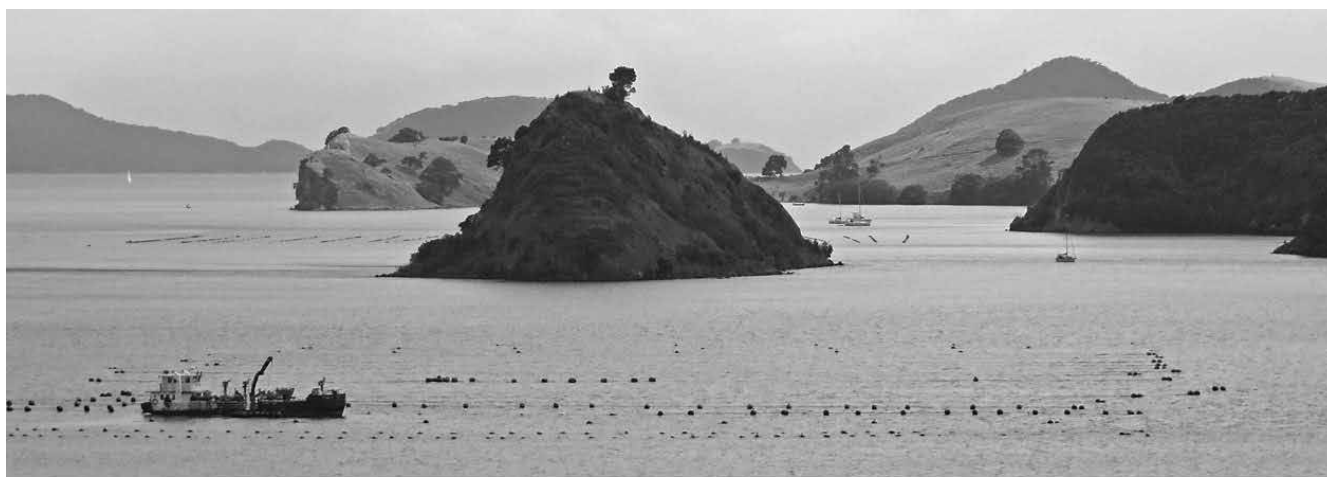
Home from Coromandel

Continued from page 4



My tent and kayak tucked away under the trees, an ideal place for a camper who does not want to attract attention!

Te Kouma Harbour is the next one to the south. It is a favourite among yachties, because one can find a sheltered anchorage there no matter where the wind is coming from, and the holding is generally good. I made a little tour of the bays on the northern side, then headed south into the mouth of Manaia Harbour, where there are more nice bays on the southern headland. South of Manaia Harbour the last deep indentation on the coast is Kirita Bay, where I landed for lunch; beyond this bay the coast becomes much more exposed and runs, with very little shelter, all the way south to Thames.



Looking north from Howell Bay across the mouth of Manaia Harbour (near) and Te Kouma Harbour (distant). The island in centre foreground is Tataweka Is. Mussel farms are a feature of this part of the Coromandel coast.

The weather forecast on VHF, which I listened to over lunch, predicted light southeasterlies for the afternoon, dying away tomorrow. With my sail I could make good use of the wind, so I decided to cross the Firth of Thames immediately, rather than waiting until tomorrow. It was the right decision. The wind held steady at 10–15 knots all the way across and I made a fast trip, just 2.5hr to travel 20km to Tawhitokino Beach, south of Kawakawa Bay. I was surprised to find moderate-sized waves banging onto the beach there, creating a soup of dirty brown foam, and I had to wait for a calm spell to get ashore.

Continued on page 6 ➤

Home from Coromandel

Continued from page 5

Tawhitokino has a pleasant campsite, (administered by Auckland Council), with grassy clearings among the trees above the beach. It was spoiled only by a stern notice from the Council, stating that campers were expected to have pre-booked and pre-paid for their stay. It will be stating the obvious to say that this requirement is a ridiculous one to apply to kayakers, who are subject to wind and weather, and can seldom say with certainty where they will end up for the night. On this particular night I could have still been on the eastern side of the Firth of Thames; or possible destinations on the western side were Tawhitokino, Tapapakanga, Waitawa Bay, or Whakanewha (on the south coast of Waiheke). The weather and my own state of tiredness decided which of those would be my destination. How could I pre-book and pre-pay? What makes the Auckland Council's rigid attitude more surprising is that Tawhitokino is one of the campsites comprising Te Ara Moana, the "sea-going pathway," which the Council has established specifically for kayakers. One can only assume that whoever developed this pre-booking policy is not a kayaker, and never consulted anyone who is.

Next morning in calm conditions I paddled east past poor McCallums Island, eaten away by bulldozers and gelignite until little of it remains, then on past Maraetai. I intended to cross the Tamaki Strait and spend a night on Motuihe Island, but part-way across a south-westerly breeze set in, and freshened sharply. With my sail sheeted in hard I was soon slashing northward through the channel between Motuihe and Waiheke. Motuihe was now too far to windward to reach easily, but by holding my course for another 20 minutes I reached Home Bay on Motutapu, tired but satisfied.

What a great place Home Bay is! To my mind this DOC-administered site is one of the nicest coastal campgrounds anywhere. The grassy expanse behind the beach would accommodate any number of campers without crowding, the bay is sheltered from southwest winds, and it gets the morning sun. Even the notice from DOC threatening those who had not pre-booked and pre-paid for their campsite with eviction or paying again at penalty rates, was not enough to upset my good humour, and I settled in for the night, the only camper there. Next morning in a windless calm I carried the flood tide all the way up the harbour to Herne Bay, and wheeled my kayak up from the beach to home.

It only remained to recover my car. This was made easy by the 360 Discovery ferry which runs between Auckland and Coromandel five days a week. The ferry leaves downtown Auckland and travels to Hannaford's Wharf on the southern shore of Coromandel Harbour; from the wharf a free bus takes you into Coromandel town. A one-way fare is \$55, and the journey takes 2 hours. This ferry makes a kayaking trip between Auckland and Coromandel easy to organize; it's a paddling trip which I would highly recommend, with the advice that you should of course pick good weather to make the open-water crossing of the Firth of Thames.

Cheers!

Colin



Ashore at Home Bay after a fast sail northward from Maraetai.

Poet's Corner

*Must surely be a record
To defer our Friday flit
Of pedal or the paddle
The day was just too wet
But undaunted by the weather
I set off in the rain
Paddle at the ready
Everything to gain
I hoped and lo
It turned out to be true
Into a balmy Westerly
The sea a greyish hue
Not a soul this Friday morn
Delights of being older
Allowing one the privilege*

*Though the sea's a little colder
Occasionally a gannet
Shags forever fishing
A solitary penguin seen
Who knows what they are thinking
A million times I've said before
Joy itself no less
To get out on the water
One surely must be blessed
So passing up our cycling
Turned loss to gleeful bliss
Traversing waves and rolling
On a wet day such as this.*

Mike Randall

July Trips Diary

Picnic on Puketutu Island

Saturday 18 July

There's a sheltered and sunny little beach on the northern side of Puketutu Island in the Manukau Harbour, perfect for a winter picnic.

Meet at the bottom of Endeavour St, Blockhouse Bay, at 10.30am for a 10.45am departure. Bring lunch and a hot drink.

It's a 45min paddle each way across the harbour – we'll be back at the cars around 2.00pm.

If the weather is unsuitable for this trip, we'll try to think of an alternative destination in more sheltered waters. Therefore **everyone interested in coming should register in advance with Colin Quilter** (colin.g.quilter@gmail.com). That will allow him to contact everyone on Friday 17 July, to advertise the new destination.

Emailing Colin does not commit you to coming, it just makes a change of plan much easier.

Long Bay

Sunday 26 July

We will launch at Long Bay at the western end of the beach and paddle straight out until we are out of the Marine Reserve. Now we can deploy our trolling lines and head west to Arkles Bay. A short rest on the beach for a stretch or to fillet any Kahawai caught, then keep paddling up the peninsula and find a suitable lunch stop.

On the way back we can follow the shore or head straight for Long Bay. Distance will be dictated by the wind and fitness of the paddlers (approx. 15 to 20Km).

Meet at 8:30 am.

If the weather is unsuitable for this trip, I will try to come up with an alternative trip.

Everyone interested in coming should email me in advance (gedfagan@gmail.com). You are not committed to come on the trip. It will make it easier for me to advise you of a change of trip destination.

Our 2015 winter lecture series is now well underway and we all enjoyed Colin's excellent opening talk. On Wednesday 15th of July, we will hear from another two club stalwarts. First up, Kevin Woolcott will be along to share with us his extensive first-hand knowledge of cycle trek trails both here and overseas.

In New Zealand, these pathways to adventure have been the tourism success story of the decade. Following on from the popularity of the pioneering Otago Rail Trail, an ever expanding national network of trails is being built to cater for demand. Once it was only the tenacious tramping fraternity that ventured into the back country. They were usually hunched down with heavy hiking packs and a dogged determination to endure harsh physical hardship in pursuit of pleasure.

This new era of back country cycling adventurers probably includes many of those early stalwarts; they are just a bit older and a lot smarter now. Who needs to haul a heavy back pack and munch on meagre rations to enjoy our stunning wilderness anymore?

Kevin will explain how there are now numerous comfort options available including: shuttle transport, accommodation, bike hire and catering. Many are budget, but higher levels of service are available. A fair chunk of your hard earned tax money has already been invested in these new trek trails. You should rightly feel a degree of entitlement to participate. Come along and hear how you could be out there, thoroughly indulging yourself, in our magnificent outdoors.

After a brief intermission break with time for refreshments, part two of the show begins. Matt Crozier will give us a good lashing of salt laden sea air as he recounts a summer sea kayak expedition along the Northland coast. Matt penned an excellent article about this trip in the March/April 2015 newsletter. Look for the promotion on page 13 to find further details.

Our hardy little early morning kayak group often encounters the ocean racing ski brigade, whilst out on our mini adventures. Most of these speedsters launch from either Okahu Bay or Takapuna Beach where they both have storage and club-house facilities. At Okahu Bay they operate from the Royal Akarana Yacht Club building. This facility boasts change rooms with hot showers and a tasty little breakfast café for that après ski socialising. The Takapuna Beach set up is similar, with the Takapuna Boating Club being the host venue. This however all comes at a price. An Akarana membership will set

you back around three hundred and thirty dollars a year, and Takapuna is a tad cheaper at two hundred and fifty dollars. Storage of course is extra. It's sometimes nice to know these little details, because it makes our Auckland Canoe Club thirty-five dollar family fee look rather attractive, even if we do have to forgo the café and shower options. A picnic and a summer swim are just fine most of the time.

Whilst on the subject of skis, they like to indulge in down-wind runs, and don't we all. The racing ski paddlers always like to keep a weather eye open for these opportunities. When one avails itself, they have an alert system that springs into action. Fergs Kayaks provide a big trailer and driver to transport the skis to a designated launch site. From here, it's an exhilarating downwind run back to base. Some of us sea kayakers can occasionally give them a good run for their money, particularly in choppy, clapotic or side wind conditions. Most of the high performance skis have microscopic width beams, with some as minimal as 430 centimetres. When the going gets rough, the talent gets tested and egos take a tumble. There's a great old saying in racing circles, "its horses for courses".

Down-wind runs were a rarity for me in my early years of paddling. Hard earned effort in slogging to windward would frequently go unrewarded with evil demonic winds changing at a whim. I felt as though I had offended somehow, and the wicked winds were conspiring to punish me. It was to have a profound influence on my subsequent paddling decisions that endures to this day. I'm not a big fan of paddling into the wind, never have been, and avoid it whenever possible. I have also resolved to have many remedies to minimise this inconvenience when it is unavoidable.

Choice of kayak has a big part to play here. I look for a craft that is long, lean and low in the water. Below the waterline we like our craft to be sleek because it reduces drag. The same can be applicable to the topside, particularly so in strong windy conditions. Anything above the waterline will create drag, or perhaps turbulence is a better term to use here. A low volume kayak sitting snug in the water will have many advantages here. Getting rid of unnecessary deck clutter will certainly help improve things too. Perhaps the greatest windage creating factor, when out on the water, is the paddler. This bulk or profile can be minimised with closer fitting paddling garments including that all-important PFD. A regular workout might also help. A kayak's shape has an important part to play too.

Continued on page 9 ➤

I often tell a story that happened some twenty years or so ago to better illustrate this. It involved one of our top female club paddlers and the difficulties that she experienced with her kayak which had too much rocker and volume. She was slim of build, had excellent paddle technique and could see off most of our male paddlers in a race. She was out on every club paddle, fair weather or foul. It was in the foul weather that she struggled. This was particularly so, when it came to turning her kayak up-wind in strong gusty conditions. Her kayak was one of those big beamy banana shaped composite craft that were very popular around then. The big flared bow, which bowed high above the waterline courtesy of the generous rocker design, was catching too much wind and it just wouldn't come around. It was acting like a weather vane. Long story short, she bought a new kayak. Problem solved. Her new kayak, an Albatross, incorporated many of the good design criteria that make paddling in the wind more tolerable. Matt Crozier also paddled an Albatross for many years. He too was impressed with the design, especially its low profile in the water. I nearly bought one too, but then I saw the Barracuda.

By this time next year, Auckland kayakers will be able to get their jollies of white-water adrenalin locally. The new Wero Whitewater Park will be up and running out at Manukau City. Construction of this long sought after facility is well underway and you can see the site from the Southern Motorway next to the Vodafone Events Centre. Our benevolent neighbour at Okahu Bay, Ian Ferguson, has been a key player in the promotion of this venture for over fourteen years.



Wero Whitewater Park by the motorway at Manukau City. Soon there will be no need to go out around Puponga Point on a windy day to indulge.

The early morning group caught up with Ian recently and he explained to us its many benefits. When completed, the complex will feature two separate artificial river rapid courses, as well as a five metre

waterfall to challenge both kayaking and rafting enthusiast. Wero White-water Park will be available for both recreational and competitive use, as well as emergency services training, school programmes and youth development. Our club was once at the very fore-front in competitive kayaking white-water slalom events. This was back in the mid to late 1950s when Jim Mason and Alex Carr virtually dominated all the national events. The future bodes well for any aspiring club paddlers. Four time Olympic gold medallist Ian Ferguson proudly predicts more gold from the prodigies of this new Auckland asset.

There was a time when I thought that the marvels of modern meteorology had delivered to me a special paddling opportunity. It was way back in the very early nineties, an era when the Quality Kayaks Puffin was the Rolls-Royce of plastic sea-kayaks. In fact they were so dammed good that they totally dominated the market of the day. My Puffin was a bright banana yellow, but there was nothing soft or squishy about its performance. This was to be tested on that long ago November weekend. It was a very inviting weather forecast that started the weekend's little adventure. I heard the forecast first mid Friday morning and it caught my attention immediately.

Strong westerly winds which had been blowing all week were predicted to veer right around to the east in the evening and then increase with intensity the next day. I had been toying with a plan to paddle around Waiheke Island for some time, and this was just the tonic required to activate it. If I could be out on the water promptly, there would be a nice tail wind to take me right down to the far end of the island.

Here I would enjoy a relaxing overnight camp, the wind direction would turn, and a strong tail wind would blow me home. My camping gear was at the ready in quick time. Just after midday, the loaded Puffin was ploughing a furrow around Achilles Point. The west wind was still blowing strong and it was a nice easy passage out past Motuihe Island. From here on it was all new territory for me. My intent was to paddle clockwise and wind assisted around Waiheke Island. A careful scrutiny of maps and aerial photographs in fore-planning this trip some weeks earlier, had revealed many potential campsites tucked away at the far eastern end of the island.

Out past Matiatia Bay the headlands were still being farmed and it was only on the western side of Oneroa Bay where a long narrow rocky finger juts out from the shore, that suburban Waiheke finally revealed itself.

Continued on page 10 ➤

The next fifteen or so kilometres of running at speed with the wind and waves, was pure paddling pleasure. The polyethylene plastic Puffin was a bit of a heavy beast off the water, but it could go toe to toe with many a lighter foe once underway. In fact as some may have discovered, a little bit of weight or ballast is a fine thing, especially when there is a big sea running.

So in no time at all, I was around Thumb Point at the far end of Waiheke Island. Landfall was made in the sheltered tranquillity of Hooks Bay. I was rather pleased with my sub four hour journey time for the forty kilometre voyage. It would have been closer to six hours without the wind assist factor. There were a couple of pleasure craft cruisers at anchor, but it was still too early for me to camp on these forbidden shores. So I took a hike up the track to Stony Batter. It's a strange sounding name for a locality, but the geology of the area soon made its origins abundantly clear.

My interests here however was to view the trio of old World War Two era gun emplacements. These were built to house big 9.2 inch guns, which were the largest type ever used in New Zealand. They were capable of lobbing a shell right out to the tip of the Coromandel Peninsula, almost thirty-two kilometres away.



One of the big 9.2 inch Stony Batter guns. They were only fired a couple of times for testing.

Operating in unison with other guns on Motutapu Island and the Whangaparaoa Peninsula, they were the guardians of the inner Gulf. It was all part of Auckland's coastal defensive plan to thwart any invasion from the Japanese hoards. The enemy did get close however and even over-flew Auckland on a reconnaissance mission. The crafty little blighters were bound to have seen some of our secret gun emplacements on that spy flight. Thankfully the

Americans and the Battle of the Coral Sea saw off any such invasion scenario.

If you are interested to explore here, a good torch is a handy weapon. This will enable you to explore the long dark tunnels that interlink the old secret gun emplacements. They burrow deep down and across the slope of the seaward facing hill, away from the hidden gully where the accommodation barracks were. The emplacements are all empty now after the scrap metal man made a visit here in the early sixties. DOC administers this historical area, and a preservation group is also active in restoration. They hope one day to re-install one of the big barrelled guns.



An aerial view of the present day Stony Batter with two of the circular gun emplacements visible. Hooks Bay and Thumb Point are beyond.



Some of the Stony Batter rock-scape with a few local improvements.

After my self-guided tour I briefly looked around for the local landowner, John Spencer to seek permission to camp. He was nowhere to be seen, so I ambled off back down to the bay.

It didn't take long to find a secluded site to set up camp further around the coast. It was a tiny little cove that only a sea kayak could enter. A small clump of grass above a gravel beach provided enough space for about two tents. It was tucked hard up against a steep hill. Trees and shrub on the slope above ensured privacy and I knew that none of Mr Spencer's sheep or shepherds would disturb me that night.

The evening forecast was not promising for the next day and my return to Auckland via the Tamaki Strait was in doubt. Dawn reconfirmed my concerns and the amended forecast now informed me that the westerly winds would continue to blow, and even strengthen. During the night I had mulled over provisional plans for this likely scenario.

The homeward voyage via the Tamaki Strait was off. I would now work my way south towards Kawakawa Bay. This would allow me to take full advantage of the lee-ward shelter provided by a string of islands along the way. After a delicious camp breakfast of beans on toast and a couple of nice hot cups of Dilmah tea, I was on my way. First port of call was Pakatoa Island where I came ashore to make an important telephone call.



Pakatoa Island was the place to be seen in the 1970s and 80s. Built by movie theatre entrepreneur Sir Robert Kerridge, the resort like his theatre empire languished when it fell into the control of other hands. The island is currently on the market for around 40 million dollars. That's Rotoroa Island to the top right of this view.

You must remember that this was all way back in the very early nineties and cell phones had not long progressed past the infamous Brick stage. I certainly didn't own one, but I desperately needed to phone a friend. I was beginning to feel quite anxious, because I was about to find out if I even had a friend. My "help I need a pick-up" call was finally answered by my two regular paddling partners. They gave me grief for all my efforts, but it was water off a duck's back.

A rendezvous was arranged at the Kawakawa Bay boat ramp. Pakatoa Island was still being used as a resort back then, and there was activity aplenty underway. A shotgun party was busy blasting clay pigeons from a range on the cliffs above as I snuck past in the lee below. The westerly was certainly strengthening, and I felt its fluctuating ferocity on the short sprint across to Rotoroa Island. This of course was still a very functional Salvation Army drug and alcoholic rehabilitation facility and landing was strictly prohibited. That extra cup of Dilmah at breakfast told me otherwise, but it was only a brief visit.

I was looking forward to Ponui Island because its greater bulk would possibly offer more sanctuary from the wind which was now whipping up a flurry of streaky whitecaps. The tide was also rushing into the Tamaki Strait and the classic wind against tide battle was on.

The eastern shores of Ponui Island are flanked by steep slopes with a series of small headlands. The island was offering little shelter though and the wild wind kept snatching at me, trying to impede my progress. Down by one of the windswept beaches, I spied some of the sturdy little Ponui Island donkeys sheltering in the shrubs. As I worked my way closer to the lower end of the island, a terrible sight began to manifest itself. It was a sea of seething whitecaps spewing out around the point.

The full fury of the westerly wind which was rushing the length of the Tamaki Strait unimpeded, appeared to have intensified here. It was being funnelled between Ponui and Pakihi Islands, and it clashed with the intruding tidal flow. This tidal stream is swift about here and has created a long arcing sand-spit over a kilometre long.

The sea conditions now looked ugly and I went ashore to survey the scene from the elevation of a small windswept bluff. The lofty view revealed a very unpleasant scenario. It was not too dissimilar to that of a long river rapid with a gale blowing up it. There

was a broad band of standing waves flecked with angry foaming tops that extended nearly the full width of the passage between the two islands.

I could see that shelter lay in the lee of Pakihi Island just beyond. Attempting to go left might see me being swept down the coast to Orere Point if I was lucky. Decision time loomed and I decided to give it a go. The best idea was to treat it like a nasty river rapid and ferry glide across it. The lee of Pakihi beckoned, but I was going to need some sharp skills and perhaps even some extra special help.

Back in my formative years I had been a good Catholic boy. I quickly remembered a few prayers from those innocent years of my youth; mainly the ones used as penance, dished out from the confessional box. Instead of saying three Hail Marys, I said four. The run of the gauntlet had begun.

At first it seemed fun with small surges of speed along the outer cordon of standing waves. But then they grew bigger steeper and deeper. The Puffin started to bury its bow as it plunged into the troughs. The white foaming waves whipped by the wind engulfed it as it struggled to surface. The wind tried to wrest the paddle from my grasp. The integrity of both the front hatch and my spray skirt was being tested time and time again. In the midst of this maelstrom, it felt as though I was conning a yellow midget submarine about to submerge. Thankfully it kept resurfacing and I edged in closer towards the lee of Pakihi. My born again Christian prayers were being answered, and soon the testing tempest was over. There was now just one last leg to run, and it turned out to be no trouble at all. I paddled part of the way down Pakihi Island, before lining up for a short but grateful downwind run to the boat ramp at Kawakawa Bay. The weather forecasters predictions have been viewed with due caution ever since.

As a postscript to this tale of twenty-five years ago, I must confess that I still haven't managed to paddle around Waiheke Island. I have paddled along just about its entire coastline on selective day trips, but that doesn't quite count as a circumnavigation for me. Our club has completed many successful group voyages out to and around the island over the years. One club member, the intrepid Brian Strid has even paddled right around it in a day. Not once, but twice and currently holds the speed record for a sea kayak circumnavigation. A few have tried to emulate Brian's efforts but have been thwarted by weather or gear failure. Just over nine hours is the time to beat and proof of the paddle is required if you want to brag the record.

Even with the cooler weather that has been around for a while now, some of our club kayakers have been active as ever. Members of the early morning team have been out paddling on every weekend of the year so far. Some of the keener ones are even paddling on both days. As we all know with the chill conditions, it's getting started that's the hardest part. Thankfully it doesn't take too long for the kayak cockpit to start feeling warm and snug.

The coffee cruisers probably have the best starting opportunity down at Okahu Bay. Here there is always shelter from the prevailing cold south-westerly wind, and the warm winter sun is usually beaming into the bay. If you would like to join the cruise, it might pay to contact either Lester Miller on 575 5942 or Chris Denith on 486 5599 to obtain the latest news on departure times.

The early morning group likes a bit of winter warmth as well. They can often be found sitting in that premium sun spot just outside the club locker enjoying a well-earned post paddle cuppa.

The mid-week group are also out and about, either peddling or paddling as the weather dictates.

Vine House quietens down over winter, but the resident hermits are usually at home, and a welcome brew awaits any visitors.

Commuters heading along Tamaki Drive will often spy a couple of other regular club paddlers. Club poet Mike is usually bobbing about composing, just offshore. If the wind is rising, Gavin's kayak sail will often be seen. Activities are happening every week and every month, right throughout the year. If you are not involved in any of them, well you are certainly missing out.

Opportunities abound within the club. One of the best ways to tap into these opportunities is to pop along to our monthly gathering at the Winter Lecture Series. Here you can meet our members, undoubtedly our club's greatest resource. This is the place to network with them, to garner information and ideas and perhaps plan upcoming outings and expeditions. If you are a solo paddler and would like some company, then this is the place to find it. As a bonus, you could end up making new friends, or just enjoy catching up with old mates. Our biggest problem after the show is getting that entire rowdy rabble to go home.

See you there,

Roger

The Auckland Canoe Club Winter Lecture Series 2015

Wednesday 15th July

Venue: Lecture Room 2, The Marine Rescue Centre
(next to the downtown heliport on Tamaki Drive)

Meet at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start

All welcome, so bring along family and friends. A light supper will be available and it's all free.

Further shows in the series will be held on successive months through until August. Look out for the upcoming promotions, and remember that they are all being held on the third Wednesday of each month.

If you would like more information, or would like to help, contact Roger on 846 6799.

Part I

Cycle-touring in the South Island

Kevin Woolcott

I have been a club member for about twenty years and consider myself a regular paddler, however it is the bike that has let me explore New Zealand and parts of the world.

With the advent of government funding, new bike tracks have sprung up all over the country.

Recently my wife Karen and I spent a couple of weeks in the South Island exploring various bike tracks.

Planning from day to day rather than having an itinerary, we managed a number of easy and enjoyable rides across the South Island.

This is off-road touring in contrast to Colin's touring in Iceland talk last month. A different perspective to biking – and lot of fun.

Kevin

Part II

Coastal kayaking in the Far North

Matt Crozier

Last February, Wally Gilmer and Matt Crozier embarked on a 280km coastal sea kayaking trip in the Far North. Starting at Matai Bay on the Karekare Peninsula, and finishing in Whangarei. The trip took 9 days, with a complete compliment of calm warm days to wind and rain.

Come along on Wednesday July 15th to see some more pictures taken on the trip.

Matt

