

# AUCKLAND CANOE CLUB NEWSLETTER

March 1998

A couple of weeks ago I went to New Plymouth to run the Marathon. It was an interesting experience and I am slowly recovering.

Billed as New Zealand's best marathon, I went along with high expectations. It gets such a billing for two main reasons: firstly there is a considerable net elevation loss over the 42.195 km so times are fast and secondly the race starts on Mount Egmont a major tourist attraction. Let me tell you how I saw it.

Well, first up, I didn't see it. Mount Egmont, that is. We started the race at a rather romantic spot in a cloud, and every time I turned to look back during the course of the run the mountain was still in a cloud.

Then again the elevation loss was easily compensated for by a strong headwind which dogged us for the entire distance. I have never run into a wind like that for hour after hour. It reminded me of a recent Tuesday evening when I started out paddling from Okahu Bay and the wind was so strong that I turned back when I reached the sea wall. I felt a real wimp but I hate headwinds.

Talking of headwinds there was plenty of that sort of thing at last weekend's Auckland Ironman event. I was one of many Club members to help with the swim escort.

It was a privilege to be able to see the action up close. For some perverse reason it actually interests me to see how the elite swimmers spread their fingers as they slide their hands into the water and to note how many strokes they manage between breaths or checking the marker buoys.

But as you'll remember the conditions were less than perfect for the competitors, making this one of the toughest Ironmans for years. The run and the bike were fraught by high winds and showers.

For the swim the water looked reasonably calm from shore but there was a considerable chop out past the first pontoon off St Heliers beach, where the swimmers turned to head for Achilles beacon. They then had a rough stretch across to a pontoon off Kohi beach and an equally rough but wind assisted stretch back to the first pontoon. Once they turned back for St Heliers they headed into the wind and it was a challenge to stay on course for the swim finish. Numerous swimmers headed, probably unintentionally, for the far eastern end of the beach, the easiest option, and had to be redirected.

There were few casualties on the swim and most made it in to shore before the 2 hours 15 minutes cutoff. This kayaker was however a casualty, tipping in on the rough stuff near the end of the swim. The first time I have accidentally had a swim, I must add. At least I was in good company.

The water is getting colder, you know.

Yours in paddling

Julia

#### Your Club Officers

## CALENDAR MARCH-APRIL

21 March Tongariro Mountain Classic multisport event. Start time 7.30 am at Turangi. The event is in 5 stages: 35.5 km road bike, 23 km run over the Tongariro Crossing track, 15 km cycle and 2.5 km run, 15 km kayak down river to Lake Taupo then 5 km paddle across the lake and up the tailrace, 4 km run to finish in Turangi.

Further details from Greg Carlyon, tel (07) 386 9245 day or (07) 386 6934 eves.

22 March Riverhead Pub Meet at Christmas Beach, Herald Island (boat ramp car park) for a paddle to the Riverhead Pub and back. There is a bistro/bar so you don't need to pack lunch, although they say the service there is very slow. Meeting time is 10 am, with high tide at 1.45 pm.

Contact Trevor for more details 817 7357.

- 22 March Dacre Challenge 12 km at Long Bay. Start 1 pm. Contact Yakity Yak Kayak Club, 479 1002
- 21 22 March Taupo whitewater George is running a training course based in Taupo, spending Saturday on the Waikato and Sunday on the Anawhenua, with a social bash on Saturday evening. He welcomes Club members to tag along. You must be a competent paddler on Grade 2 water.

Contact George Gerard 818 5066.

28 March Harbour circuit Enjoy a little traipse around the Harbour featuring morning tea at North Head, lunch on Rangitoto and afternoon tea on Browns Island. This will be a slowish paddle and it'll be up to you if you wish to walk and paddle or just paddle. Bring walking shoes if you plan to do the former. Meeting time is 8.30 am at Okahu Bay and you should be home around 5 pm.

Trevor will be the trip leader tel 817 7357.

28 March Oceans Classic Sea Kayak Race This is the rerun of the race which had to be postponed in October due to appalling weather. There is a choice of doing the race and continuing with a coastal cruise for the next couple of days. Good spot prizes are a feature of this event.

The star feature, the Cavallis Race, takes place on the Saturday with a choice of courses, short, long and non-competitive. On the Sunday and Monday you can join in a leisurely cruise up the Northland coast from Matauri Bay as far as Tauranga Bay and Whangaroa, with a hangi on the Sunday evening.

Entry forms will soon be available. Entrants from last October's race are automatically eligible for this event, but do need to confirm they will be attending. New entrants are also welcome. Since the cruise part did take place last year all participants for this year's cruise will have to register again.

Contact Auckland Canoe Centre for more info and entry forms, phone 815 2073.

Margaret Thwaites is keen to stay up in the area for a couple of days' more paddling after the cruise and would love some company. This is not an organised trip as such, but please let Margaret know if you would like to join her, phone 292 7883.

### Yes, it's another Manukau Heads trip!

Last month we advertised a trip to the Manukau Heads in the Calendar. The day turned out blustery, with wind warnings issued for both harbours, so instead of going to Whatipu we had a little paddle over to Rangitoto, with a walk to the top..... and very pleasant it was too.

Sunday 5 April is the next day with suitable tides for the Manukau Heads. If the weather permits we will meet at Cornwallis Wharf at 8.30 am for a 9.00 am departure.

The ebb tide will carry us down to Wongawonga Bay at Whatipu for a walk and morning tea. Low tide is at about 11 am, so at slack water we will cross the channel to the South Head and climb up the hill towards the lighthouse for lunch. There are fantastic views from here out over the bar and back across to Whatipu, plus long grass to have a snooze in. By early afternoon the flood tide will be running strongly enough to carry us back up to Cornwallis with minimal effort.

This trip needs fine weather and light winds. It is suitable for intermediate paddlers but probably not for novices. People intending to come should phone Colin Quilter 5280747 to register their interest; he will phone back to confirm the trip on Saturday night (4 April) when an up-to-date weather forecast is available.

- 4 April Round Auckland Double Harbour 60 km race starting at 10 am at St Heliers. Contact Adrian Davis 576 0996.
- 5 April Narrows to Hamilton Race 20 km Senior, 10 km Junior race starting at 11 am. Contact Paul Ewart (07) 855 8425.
- 10 13 April (Easter) Papa Aroha, Coromandel Join us for an exciting long weekend on the western Coromandel. The camping ground at Papa Aroha, just north of Coromandel township, is beside a tidal estuary and would be able to accommodate us in our own area, cost \$9 per person per night. Possible trips include exploring the offshore Mercury islands and the interesting coastline. If the weather makes paddling on the eastern side unattractive it's only a short hop over to the west coast for all it has to offer.

Contact Trevor to find out more, tel 817 7357.

By the way, the ASKNET trip to Orapiu Bay on Waiheke advertised in the previous Newsletter for Easter has had to be cancelled.

18 - 19 April Auckland Sea Kayak Race New date for this event. This is a race and a cruise of the inner Hauraki Gulf. Details appear on a flyer in this Newsletter.

On day one cruisers and racers leave Okahu Bay to head for Browns Island and on to Motuihe for a complete circumnavigation, before setting up camp there. Cruisers who wish not to go around Motuihe are allowed to omit that section.

Next day racers head out around the back of Mototapu and the back of Rangitoto before returning to Okahu Bay. Cruisers have the choice of following this same route or rounding Mototapu and then heading through Gardiners Gap on the high tide and back to Okahu Bay.

Further info from ASKR, PO Box 5087, phone/fax 410 0360, e mail nzcanoe@xtra.co.nz

18 April Picnic with Neal Join Neal Wilson for another of his enjoyable Saturday trips from Okahu Bay. Time of departure is 10 am with estimated return at 3 pm.

Contact Neal for more details tel 846 1429.

- 26 April Meadow Lea Marathon 16 km starting at Bottle Top Bay, Drury at 12.30 pm. Contact Manukau Canoe Club.
- 26 April Track and Gorge Triathlon Palmerston North Multisport event with long and short course options, also duathlon options. Both courses involve off road run, long cycle and whitewater kayak (not the duathlon option, of course).

Details from (06) 358 1908, e mail rics@xtra.co.nz

# LOOKING AHEAD

2 - 3 May Slipper Island Matt Crozier is planning to lead a trip here. The island is about an hour's paddle from Pauanui, and there may be a chance to call in at Shoe Island too. No this isn't a joke, these are real names, I'm assured. This trip is quite weather dependent, so if it's very windy it might be necessary to explore the coastline around Tairua instead.

Phone 276 7049.

3 May Tamaki Estuary Race 12 km starting at 12 noon. Contact Hauraki Kayak Group tel 483 6404

16 - 17 May ASKNET Kaipara Harbour Starting from Port Albert and paddling to Tinopai for overnight camp at the campground there. Return the following day. The distance is 23 km, and there will be about one knot of tidal drag on the Saturday and one knot of tidal assistance on the Sunday. The trip is suited to intermediate and experienced paddlers only.

Meet at Port Albert wharf at 10 am for an 11 am departure.

The leader is Brett Dyer tel 846 3198.

# REGULAR EVENTS

Evening paddles occur on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5.30pm from Okahu Bay. You can simply turn up for these trips, and if you want to hire a kayak you should phone Laurie Bugbee 813 1223.

Sunday morning paddles from Okahu Bay start at 9.15 to be on the water by 9.30, unless an alternative time is stated here. Destination is usually by consensus and depends on the weather. You should be finished by lunchtime. These trips are for novice and intermediate paddlers.

There is no need to let anyone know in advance if you are coming. However if you feel better speaking to someone beforehand you are welcome to phone Matt Crozier for more info; if he is not going along he will put you in touch with someone who is. Phone Matt on 276 7049.

Kayak hire arrangements are as for weekday paddles, and Trevor Arthur can also arrange assistance with this. Phone 817 7357.

### Swim Escort Series

A big WELL DONE AND THANK YOU to all Club members and friends who turned up for these races.

The Auckland Masters Swimming Association who rely on our help, and pay us for every boat we put on the water, were extremely pleased with our turn out. The Coastguard have commented on our great effort and, in general, this exposure to the public stands our Club in good stead with marine authorities.

For the last race (Rangitoto to St Heliers) we had 39 boats on the water. Saturday night saw 15 of us stay overnight with a barbecue and extra gourmet delights for dinner followed by a walk to the summit to watch the firework display for the Concert in the Park. A clear night with a nice breeze - what a truly blessed place our Harbour is!

Again, thanks for coming. These swims provide all the fundraising we need to do during the year. Paid for enjoying ourselves - whoever thought that one up was a genius.

#### Trevor Arthur

# LAURIE'S COLUMN

### Goings on

It really has been a great summer for Auckland kayakers. Contrary to predictions, not too much wind, lots of sunshine and the heat - what a February! Apart from the regular trips out on Tuesday evenings out of Okahu Bay I have done little paddling except for the Glyn and Colin week from Ruakaka to Whangamoa (*Ed. see Colin's write up further on in this issue*).

We paddled this part of the Northland coast about six years ago. Things have changed and will continue to change. Houses built in the middle of what were once isolated beaches and therefore prime camping sites. In the near future camping sites apart from DOC sites and commercial camping grounds will be hard to find. What can we do about it?

\***\*** 

Bruce and I in the Waitemata IRB helped set up the racing lanes on Lake Pupuke for the National Sprint Championships. An afternoon I shall long remember.

We were to attach buoys to eight lines of rope each 1400 metres long from the North Shore Canoe Club HQ side to Henderson Park. These buoys would mark the racing lanes, allowing the ropes to sink about one metre below the surface of the lake. Six lanes were completed in the pre lunch session and we started on the seventh.

By this time there was a fair breeze blowing on the far side of the lake and a number of board sailors were streaking across our sunken lines. A sailing club started a series of races at the Sylvan Park ramp. Half way across the lake on the seventh run the rope layers ran out of woven rope and we had to use spun rope to complete the lane. We went on blissfully attaching

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our buoys. When we chanced to look back we noted that board sailors were coming to a sudden stop as they crossed our line. It was so predictable that before long the four of us in the IRB were aching with laughter and tears streamed from our eyes. The sail boarder would come hooting across the lake then bang! his or her tail fin would encounter the barely submerged rope. The board would stop dead and nose dive and the unfortunate sailor be catapulted into the water.

What made it all the more hilarious was that these guys would set off again and do the same trick on the way back. A similar occurance was happening with the Laser racing fraternity. One old fellow shouted and cursed at us, but I impolitely told him he should stop racing while we fixed the problem. The problem of course was the spun rope. It was spinning round and winding itself up the string holding the buoys. We removed the offending rope and chaos no longer reigned.

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A reminder to all you sea kayakers that the Cavalli Islands Race is to be held the weekend 28/29 of this month. Obtain details and entry forms at Auckland Canoe Centre.

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THE WAIROA RIVER CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN. The interests of whitewater paddlers are being promoted by a small committee of paddlers during the hearings into the renewal of water rights for the dams in the Hunua Ranges. The Auckland Regional Council hope to formalise use for all water users during these hearings. With good planning and some compromise we should see some Grade 2 and whitewater weekends during winter on the Wairoa River below these dams. I will keep you posted.

Laurie B.

# St Heliers to The Noises By Trevor Arthur

8 am and Ray and I are waiting for the rest of the keen crew. Oh well we're going anyway.

We scooted out onto what could have been a sheet of glass with a light mist drifting across it. "Perfect" doesn't do it justice. It was almost a shame to put your paddle in the water and disturb the stillness.

We were passed by a friend off out for the day fishing so after a chat I got a new spinner for my line and we headed to Home Bay for a cuppa. Out around Mototapu, across to Rakino, up the coast on a tiki tour, then over to and around the Noises. What a beautiful run. The clarity of the water was really nice, the temperature was great and the new spinner was excellent. Caught four and kept two nice kawahai and all by lunchtime.

We walked to the top of the island, enjoyed the view and had a good look around. The island, so I'm told, has been in the same family for three generations and has just been taken over by the son who is OK about people staying overnight in the bach providing they take good care of it.

We had a neat run home until we reached Emu Point at Islington Bay. From here we had a

wind against tide battle with it taking an hour and a half to St Heliers which was a lot slower than planned, but it provided a good exhilarating end to the day.

Round trip was approx fifty kilometres, well worth repeating or stretching to an overnighter.

# DIPS N DUNKS

#### **Editor**

Please send items for inclusion to your charming Editor Julia Thorn, 14 Paunui St, St Heliers, tel 575 3099. My deadline is the second Friday of the month. Come on, let's hear from you.

#### Closing Day

at the Multihull Yacht Club is 4 April. This event is held in conjunction with our Club, as we share their clubrooms.

Things kick off at 10.30 am with water polo demos and canoe races. Some of our Club boats will be available. You can have a go sailing a multihull trailer yacht at 1 pm. There will be power boats on display and remote controlled yachts to try out, and various videos on show all day. BBQ food and music too.

#### Down Under

We are in possession of the latest DOWN UNDER catalogue (retail and mail order). If you would like to have a peruse contact Margaret tel 292 7883.

#### Okahu Bay sea wall

Submissions relating to the sea wall close on 20 March. Auckland Regional Council is applying to Auckland Regional Council to have the wall pulled down. The piles are seriously eroded and the wall is considered unsuitable in its current state, and the existing piles cannot be built on. There has been a quote of \$7 million to replace the sea wall.

#### Good news

- 1. The showers in the "R" Class building are now operational.
- 2. The padlocks on both the Club containers are unjammed and working well.

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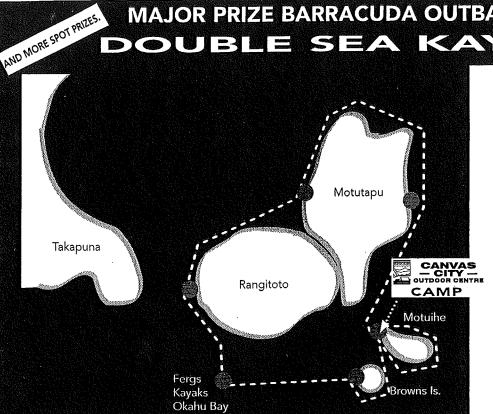
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### NZ OCEAN KAYAK CHAMPIONSHIP ALL COMPETITORS WHOSE ENTRIES ARE RECEIVED REFORE THE 20TH MARCH REPSI WILL GO INTO THE DRAW TO WIN A..... CYCLE 2 TENT

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#### THE GULF BUSTER IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY

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THE GULF BUSTER CHALLENGE SEA KAYAK RACE and NEW ZEALAND OCEAN KAYAK CHAMPIONSHIP.

A sea kayak race for single or double sea kayaks. THE GREAT GULF BUSTER SEA KAYAK TREK.

Cruise the same course in slower time in your sea kayak with comfort stops and support craft.







De Niros Pizza Restaurant

# Wandering to Whangaroa

Colin Quilter

In mid-February six of us began a kayak trip at Ruakaka, heading north. Our intention was to eat, talk and paddle our way along the coast as far as time and weather allowed. In the group were two double kayaks (Glyn & Birgit plus Laurie & Mike) and two singles (Trevor and I). We began our trip with a small argument in the office of the Ruakaka Reserve Campground. The proprietor wanted to charge us \$5 per car per week to store our two vehicles; we argued that this was a ridiculously low figure and that she should at least accept \$5 for the trailer as well. The bargaining was fierce, we haggled our best, but she won.

We launched inside the estuary, cleared the bar in calm seas, and crossed to Smugglers' Bay east of the Whangarei Heads for lunch. Approaching the beach we had a choice; the right-hand end with a pohutukawa tree for shade, or the left-hand end with two bikini-clad girls but no shade. Laurie and Mike (aged 70 and 52 years respectively) chose the left end, the rest of us chose the right. Trevor remarked, "It just goes to show that although there is snow on the roof there's still fire in the

furnace".

From Smugglers' Bay we rounded Bream Head; then traversed Ocean Beach where, late in the afternoon, we spotted a likely camp site on a low terrace above the sand. When I approached the farmer he shook his head. "No, if I let you camp there others will get the idea that it's OK."

"Can you suggest somewhere else we could go?"

"Depends how tired you are, doesn't it?"

There are times when it pays to speak up, and there are times when it pays to keep quiet. I said nothing. There was a long silence.

"Well, OK, just for one night."

Next day established a pattern which lasted for several days. In the morning there was no wind but an oily, uneven swell from the northeast, then from about 11am a northerly sea breeze which gave us head winds through the afternoon. Early starts and early finishes were the best tactic. At mid-day we arrived in the entrance of the Nunguru estuary with the intention of visiting Sue who was staying at the Nunguru Motor Camp. "Where's the campground?" I asked.

"Just around the corner" said Mike. Within the estuary it was hot, airless, and we battled a strong ebb tide. Thirty minutes and several bends of the river later Mike asked a bystander on the shore where the campground was. "Just around the corner" he said. This was to become one of the

sayings of the trip; often repeated, never believed.

At the campground a number of factors tempted us to call an early halt for the day; such as hot showers, a walk along the beach, and Sue's company (not necessarily in order of importance). However when Laurie offered to cook dessert (which required long slow heating on the campground stove) we were finally won over.



The dessert proved to be a kayaker's dream and weight-watcher's nightmare: chocolate dumplings with rich sauce. The dumplings rose like clouds and coalesced into a single megadumpling which almost covered the inch or two of steaming chocolate sauce beneath. The pudding was served onto plates each needing two hands to support; the more courageous of us then poured on condensed cream in order to complement the colour of the chocolate and complete the ruination of our coronary arteries. Eating this dessert was probably the greatest test of our voyage, far exceeding the rigours of surf, rocks and hostile natives. In place of the usual lively after-dinner conversation our party crept groaning to bed.

But not for long! An early start the next morning saw us heading down the river at 7.30am in order to enjoy the morning calm. This day marked the end of life for a large kahawai which took Mike's lure. We were well prepared for this; Mike had brought lemons and Trevor a sachet of lemon and herb sauce. A cool northerly blew across the DOC campground at Otamuri Bay that evening, but by laying a fly against the fence as a windbreak we gained a sheltered enclave for cooking and talking. After dinner the conversation turned to life and death, and Laurie was moved to tell us the Saga of Sid Snot. This turned out to be a contemporary epic ballad; the plot began with a truckload of dead goats, progressed to an animal crematorium hidden within industrial Avondale, and moved to a ghastly but hilarious conclusion in which Laurie's son Bruce lost a decaying sheep off the back of a lorry in the middle of Mays Road. To bed, weak with laughter.

On to Whangamumu Harbour, site of the old whaling station, the next day. If I give few details of the coastline it is because this part of northland is uniformly beautiful. Rocky headlands alternate with wide white-sand beaches and small shingle coves. There are countless landing spots, although only a few of them are suitable for camping. A worrying feature is that all along this coast grand new houses are appearing in bays which were previously uninhabited. No doubt the owners of these mansions see them as noble additions to the landscape, but for kayakers each new house means one more pristine bay removed as a possible campsite.

Beside the ruins of the whaling station a stream flows down to the beach. Small ponds had formed behind the shingle, and in these the water, warmed by the sun, reached

blood heat. Surely a kayaker's idea of Heaven is to lay down, salty clothes and all, in a bath of warm fresh water at the end of a long day on the coast.

In the morning we plugged slowly out to Cape Brett in overcast, squally weather. In the lee of the cape hard gusts swept down from the high land, once or twice strong enough to lift spray from the surface of the water. At the cape itself the sea was a confused mess. Waves rebounding off the cliffs met those still incoming; the boats were alternately thrown upwards on pyramid-shaped crests, then dropped into holes rather than troughs. We made a rough passage through the great hole in Piercy Island, then looked for a landing on the rocks in the narrow passage beneath the lighthouse. This would have been possible for the single kayaks, but lifting the doubles ashore undamaged would have been very difficult. Reluctantly we decided to press on to Deep Water Cove for lunch, then to Urupukapuka Island for the evening.

At Cable Bay on the sheltered southern side of Urupukapuka we set up camp in drizzle which became rain during the night. At this DOC campground there is water but no toilets; the sign says, "No camping unless you provide your own portable chemical toilet". This seemed to us a ridiculous requirement. How does one fit a portable toilet inside a kayak? There were other parties of kayakers on the island that night; presumably they, like us, headed for the nearest patch of bush with spade and toilet paper. But it is inevitable that not everyone will be careful about burying toilet waste, and the result is both unpleasant and unhygienic. In my view the basic necessities of a campsite are flat land, cold water and toilets; if these are absent then the area should not be designated for camping.

On the following day Glyn and Birgit left us to regain the comforts of home (and their baby daughter); the rest of us slogged slowly across to Cape Wiwiki which is the western headland of the Bay of Islands. After lunch and a walk we rounded the cape and worked our way quietly to the northwest in the confused, sloppy conditions which we had become used to. Our intended campsite in a beach just east of Takou Bay was ruled out by a newly-built holiday home, so we headed for the sandspit at Tapuaetahi. Dinner was barely under way when two delegations of local people came to warn us that the Maori owners of the land would not allow camping, so we took refuge in the scrub on the opposite bank of the creek; an unlikely spot, but pleasant enough. It occurred to me that the ancestors of the land-owners had presumably made canoe voyages along the coast in days gone by, camping on the beaches at night; but perhaps, like us, they were not welcome everywhere they stopped.

The morning was misty and cool. An intimidating surf rolled into Takou Bay but at the northern end an offshore reef took the main force of the swell and we gained a landing inside it. On leaving this spot Trevor put on a breathtaking display of precision canoeing. He timed his exit over three enormous waves so beautifully that we were treated to a view of him punching through the overbalancing crest of the largest wave and then free-falling down the

other side. The rest of us put on a comparatively dull show, judging our timing so badly that we met no waves at all. Phew!

The prospect of hot showers drew us on to Tauranga Bay, near the entrance to Whangaroa Harbour. Our time was nearly up, so we entered the harbour next morning after playing in the caves at the entrance, climbed Peach Island for the view, and finally pulled ashore at Whangaroa township deep inside the harbour at mid-day. Here Glyn met us with the trailer for the trip home; (a full day's driving for him, for which the rest of us were very grateful).

In all we had covered 191km in 6 full days and 2 half-days; an average of about 27km per day. This allowed for a steady paddling speed of about 5km/hr with stops for a swim or a walk at midmorning, lunchtime and mid-afternoon. If I had a suggestion for other parties it would be that they consider travelling southwards rather than northwards, since the sea breeze which is characteristic of

settled weather on this coast would usually favour paddlers heading south.

### **Auckland Canoe Club**

#### We Can Offer...

- Club Rooms at Okahu Bay on the water's edge Toilets, hot showers, kitchen with tea & coffee facilities.
- Monthly Club Newsletter crammed full of info. on upcoming activities and trip reports.
- Regular club paddles. Tuesday & Thursday evenings, Sunday morning.
- Club kayak storage facilities at Okahu bay.
- Auckland Canoe Centre 10% Club member discounts at retail outlets. Fergs kayats 10%. Canvas City 10%
- Club kayaks and equipment for hire.
- Club social activities.
- Club run events and races.
- Info. from experienced members with tuition and advice.
- The friendship and camaraderie of being with like-minded people.

AUCKLAN	D CANOE CLUB MI	EVIBERSHIP APP	LICATION FORM
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Surname:			
First Name (s) (IF F	AMILY, PLEASE LIST ALL NAMES	5):	
Address:			
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Phone (HOME):		(WORK):	•••••
Occupation:			
Do you own a cano	pe?	Yes	No
If yes — please list	type (s):		•••••
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