

AUCKLAND CANOE CLUB NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1998



And now it is Christmas. Time for mince pies, the fat man with the big sack, a prospect of hot sunny weather, and best of all a bumper fat Newsletter with lots for you to read over the holiday period.

I was reminded that Newsletter time was approaching when watching that TV comedy about the English vicar. She was trying to put together her parish newsletter and was having some difficulty getting articles for it. Ultimately she had a selection of two articles about growing radishes and something else so banale that I can't remember what it was. So I'm feeling very superior with my nice fat edition here.

Have you noticed how so many publications these days seem to include recipes? Is this an act of desperation on the part of the editors? Maybe there's a genuine interest in collecting new recipes. I couldn't understand why my quilting club newsletter had to start featuring recipes for things like steamed pudding. I'm waiting for the kids' swimming newsletter to start a column on how to feed starving kids after an hour's swim.

Anyway you won't be finding any recipes on these pages. I once struggled hard to write a review of a recipe book for a newly developed type of grain called triticale for a cycling magazine (get the connection - no, there isn't one) only to find there was no space in the magazine for the review. That was it; I don't write recipes or about them anymore.

I spend half my life in the kitchen so I don't want to think about food preparation when I'm not there.

Thinking about *eating* food is a different matter. This has been quite a gourmet month for we kayakers. A while ago on a Saturday evening fifteen of us partook of an excellent meal at the Settlers Cafe at Whitford. The food was good and the chef was memorable. What started out as an extremely windy late afternoon settled into a serene evening with delightful paddling to the restaurant and a peaceful moonlit paddle home. It will be a long time before I forget the amazing phosphorescence on the water on the return trip. As you can see in these pages, this trip was a great success with many of our members.

Next weekend we are looking forward to our Christmas party on Rangitoto with barbecue and picnic fare. The trip over is always fun; as you know, the island is a world away from Auckland despite being just over half an hour's paddle. Let's hope for a balmy evening.

Well, enjoy the festive season, have lots to eat and do lots of paddling! By the way, there's an interesting discrepancy between the two trip reports about the night out at Whitford. See if you're sober enough to spot it! As a mere editor I wasn't sure what to think.

Yours with Christmas cheer, and I'll be back in February.

Your Club Officers

President Trevor Arthur 817 7357
Secretary.....Margaret Thwaites 292 7883
Canoe hire/storage..... Bruce Bugbee 570 1134(day)
Editor..... Julia Thorn 575 3099
Sunday paddles..... Matt Crozier 276 7049
White water..... George Gerard 818 5066

CALENDAR DEC - JAN

19 December Sea Kayak Race 5 km and 10 km courses. Meet outside our downstairs Clubroom (behind Fergs Kayaks on the ramp) at 8 am for registration, briefing and handicapping. Everyone is welcome, regardless of ability or type of sea kayak. There'll be a barbecue afterwards. Cost is \$5.

Contact Grant Stone 473 6658, Matt Grant 524 2108 or Roger Lomas 625 8924.

19 December Join us for **Christmas dinner on Rangitoto**. The idea is to paddle across for a shared dinner, including barbecue (the Club will provide sausages, chops and maybe even steak) and walk to the summit if you feel like it. Please bring a torch for the return, although there will be an option to return in daylight, and bring salads and deserts. Yes, bring wine too - Rona has offered to bring the corkscrew. I hope she doesn't forget this!

Meet at Okahu Bay at 3pm for a 3.30pm departure, and phone Trevor for more details, 817 7357.

Christmas is coming.....Do you need company over Christmas? Well this isn't a lonely hearts ad, but if you would like to do some paddling with other like minded paddlers Trevor would be keen to hear from you on 817 7357.

15 January Mystery weekend We're planning a few of these over the summer months with the idea in mind of trips to exotic destinations like Mototapu, Motuihe and the Noises. Departing Okahu on the Friday evening to allow a sort of long weekend.

Trevor can tell you more about it, tel 817 7357.

23 January Goat Island Meet at Mathiesons Bay at 9am for a paddle across to

Goat Island. Bring your snorkelling gear and prepare to look around the caves too. Later on it may be possible to try some surf kayaking at Omaha Beach which isn't too far away. So bring your white water boat if you have one (the Club has several available for hire).

Bring lunch, and call the leader before you set out to ascertain exactly what we're doing. Leader is Matt Grant, tel 524 2108 or 021 610 604.

30/31 Jan/1 Feb Pah Farm, Kawau Island Come and join in for a long weekend based on this lovely island. The campsite belongs to Warkworth Game Fishing Club and has camping, cabins and a licensed restaurant at Bon Accord Harbour. We'll be crossing either from Sandspit or Martins Bay.

Contact Trevor Arthur for more info, tel 817 7357.

6/7 February Coromandel weekend Travel up to Hahei on the Coromandel Peninsula on Friday 5th for a weekend's camp. There's lots to do, including sea caves, Cathedral Cove and Hot Water Beach.

Please let the trip leader know well in advance if you wish to come, as the campsite is generally very busy.

Contact Matt Grant, tel 524 2108 or 021 610 604

12 February Mystery weekend See Jan 15.

21 February Sea swim Fergusons Wharf to Tamaki Yacht Club. This is the third swim in the series. Please come and help with the swim escort. Traditionally after this swim members stay on to practise re-entry procedures, so bear this in mind and pack a spare set of clothes. There'll be a barbecue after all this, courtesy of your lovely Club.

26 February Mystery weekend See Jan 15.

7 March Sea swim Rangitoto to St Heliers. This is the final swim in the Masters series. Club members and other kayakers will be able to camp on Rangitoto overnight to be at the start of the swim on time. More details to follow, but pencil in the date right now as we'll want to have a super duper turnout for this one.

.....**And soon it will be Easter** The Club is thinking of having a trip to Matauri Bay up in Northland, based at the motor camp. It's a great location with many fine spots easily accessible. We would like to hire a 10/12 seater van and a trailer as the easiest and cheapest way of getting everyone up there.

If this appeals to you please give Trevor a call on 817 7357. He will need to know numbers well in advance so he can make the necessary bookings.

Saturday mornings on the Manukau Who is interested in joining Trevor

for a paddle on the Manukau Harbour on a Saturday? He would love to hear from you, tel 817 7357.

Midweek paddling We've heard that there are a number of Club members who would be interested in a midweek daytime paddle, but it hasn't yet been possible to get you all together. So if this sounds like you, why don't you get in touch with your Editor and I will try to coordinate something or find you a suitable leader. I'm contactable on 575 3099.

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 Bruce Bugbee 570 1134. **We try** to have a Committee member there for these paddles, but excuse us if it isn't always possible.

Organised Club Sunday morning paddles from Okahu Bay don't seem to be drawing much of a crowd these days so we've decided to can them. But there's usually someone down there if you need company.

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

DIPS N DUNKS

Your Editor

My name is Julia Thorn and I can be reached at 447A Riddell Road, Glendowie, tel 575 3099. A lollipop to anyone who's noticed that I've moved. Give me a call or drop me a line when you have something to tell or ask. How about a trip report or suggestions for improving the Newsletter? Come on, you must have something that's burning to go into print.

Photos please

If you have any fun photos, incriminating or otherwise, but please only related to kayaking, that you'd like to share with Club members, how about pinning them on the notice board at our downstairs Clubrooms.

Club discounts

Just a reminder that Club members are entitled to a discount of 10% on purchases at Fergs Kayaks, Canvas City and Auckland Canoe Centre.

Sea Kayak Races Roger Lomas

We have held seven races now, and this Saturday 19th will be our last race for the year. Come on down to Okahu Bay for a serious Saturday morning workout. Take on the joggers as you race along Tamaki Drive waterfront. Yes, you can outpace some joggers in a sea kayak.

We all start together so you know exactly what the pecking order is, but our realistic handicapping system which takes into account age, gender and craft will put you right up there with the pace setters when the times are adjusted.

The course is set so that it doubles back on itself two or three times so you are always among the fleet and don't get a sense of being out there on your own. A variety of sea conditions will be encountered on our 5km and 10km courses that put sea kayakers in their real element.

The after race barbecue and prizegiving gives a chance to meet the contestants and catch up with the latest gossip. All the latest in sea kayaks will be on display. Five new sea kayaks have had their race debuts at these events.

We have a pool of over thirty contestants now and the ladies are starting to show up in force. Racing Rona cleaned up in the last race whilst Dave Poolman took on a couple of New Zealand's fastest sea kayakers in his super Sabre and cleaned up. It doesn't matter what sort of sea kayak you have, come along to Okahu Bay.

Swim escort paddles Trevor Arthur

Thanks to everyone who has been able to help with the first two swims. We've had a great turnout and this must be the easiest way for the Club to raise money.

We have the other two swims in the new year, so mark your calendar and shuffle that busy schedule to suit. We need 40 kayakers for the Rangitoto to St Heliers swim so rope in your friends if they're interested and let me know if they need a Club boat. Remember we can camp on Rangitoto on the Saturday night prior to the swim. Dates are in the Calendar. Please let me know numbers, tel 817 7357.

Tiri Tiri Matangi ... almost Version 1 Trevor Arthur

Friday morning saw a keen bunch of optimists (no, not the yachts) keen to ignore the elements and head off across Tiri channel.

Fortunately we are all well aware of the respect this stretch of fickle water deserves. The afternoon's 40km winds had already arrived and the water resembled a washing machine with too much soap powder added (more white than blue). So, some very disappointed people bade the ranger farewell and headed for a cafe in Orewa.

Caffeine fortified, we had an invigorating walk along Orewa beach leaning at quite an angle into the wind just to stay on our feet.

Rona very kindly offered the comfort of her home for our shared dinner that was to have been Saturday night's "mystery present revelry" so we all said *great idea* and headed off.

Some of us had a meander exploring Henderson Creek and its various arms. We found a lovely waterfall, a netball, an unbelievable amount of plastic and all other delights that lurk in estuaries.

A fantastic dinner was had, along with healthy debate over the procedure for the mystery gift session. Alison presided and all was well. A great night, and thanks again to Rona.

Well as you know the weather just kept on getting worse. 78 knots in Tiri channel being the top blow of the weekend, so all in all I'm really glad we weren't lodge-bound over there. Roll on next year and no La Nina.

Kawau Island in a day

Margaret Thwaites

Etienne, Ray and I took off one Friday to circumnavigate Kawau Island in a day. The trip took approximately 7 1/2 hours from launching to landing at Martins Bay, and included four stops and a dolphin encounter. We all agreed that this was the best dolphin encounter that any of us had ever had. These dolphins wanted to play. When I first spotted the dolphins, I was not sure what sort of reaction I was going to get. The dolphins were milling around in one of the bays at the southern end of Kawau Is and were splashing their tails and leaping out of the water. I was not sure if they were trying to round up fish or were simply having fun, so I tried to paddle around the group rather than head straight for them. The next thing I knew, there were three dolphins surfing the bow wave of my kayak and others were leaping out of the water behind me. Ray and Etienne were also being escorted by at least three dolphins each. I was almost afraid to put my paddle in the water in case I hit one of the dolphins, they were that close. We tried to play with the dolphins by surfing waves and suddenly changing direction, they simply swooped around and continued surfing the bow wave. They were so close we could hear them squeaking, and could see the scars on their backs and the nicks out of their fins. I think that if we could have stayed longer, the dolphins would have played with us all day. Unfortunately we had to continue on our circumnavigation and the dolphins did not want to leave their bay. As we reached the far end of the bay the dolphins turned back to return to their "party". We sat and watched them frolicking for a while before continuing on our way.

During our lunch stop, next to a sign announcing "Cyanide poison laid for Possums", we were entertained by some cheeky wekas. They were not afraid to come close to grab a piece of bread, but for some reason they had to rush back into the brush to eat the bread. They were either a bit shy about eating in public or else they were hiding the family back there somewhere.

Our stops, although frequent, were always short, and by the time we got to Mansion House Bay we were all starting to feel a bit tired and considered staying overnight at Pa Farm. Fortunately the wind was behind us for the last leg back to Martins Bay and we enjoyed some surfing on the way. This was definitely a trip to be remembered and hopefully done again.

PS Ray caught the only fish for the day.

DINNER IN THE SWAMP

Colin Quilter

On a windy afternoon in late November sixteen of us met at Cockle Bay on an expedition for dinner at the Settlers Coffee House at the head of the Whitford creek. There were Sea Bears, Albatrosses, Penguins, Barracudas, Sue and Peter in a double, and Julia in a long, skinny boat which looked more suitable for paddling fast down rivers than for paddling slowly up them. Rona had packed her kayak with a few bottles of water in order to ballast it in the fresh breeze, (although in view of the fact that the restaurant was BYO, she would have done better to use wine).

We were soon out of the easterly chop at the river mouth and being carried quietly up the estuary towards Whitford. Everyone remarked on the mansions which grandly overlook the river, but we all rejected them as future homes for kayakers because of the vast area of lawns to be mown, (it is well known that kayaking and large lawns don't mix); together with the fact that they cost fifteen million dollars each, (about three times the value of Mike Haye's ultra-lightweight kevlar-and-titanium Packhorse Express which was being paddled by Sue and Peter).

The tide was a little over half-full when we neared the top of the creek. Mud and mangroves closed in around us. "Where's the restaurant?" we asked.

"It's up there," said Ray, pointing to an evil little ditch winding itself into the swamp on the right. "We sent Margaret to see if the water is deep enough".

"Have you heard anything since?"

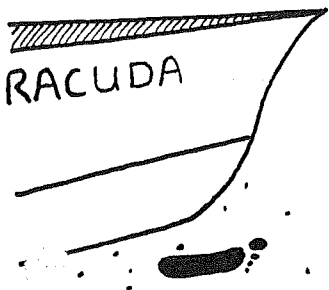
"No. Maybe she's stuck."

"Should one of us go and look for her?" Nobody moved.

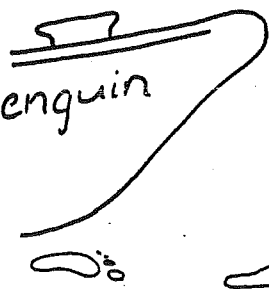
"Perhaps", I said, "there's enough water and she's already at the restaurant tucking into the hors d'oeuvres." There was a concerted rush for the ditch.

Eventually we were all pulled out on the grassy bank of the restaurant. Here an interesting sociological phenomenon occurred. Those paddling Sea Bears pulled clean clothes from their boats and entered the restaurant in casual but undeniably smart style, with only traces of mud between their toes. You could tell they belonged to a better class of paddler. The Barracuda people, on the other hand, squelched into the dining room in their damp polyprop and had to be seated near the door so they wouldn't drip on the carpet. Heaven knows what they're like in the privacy of their own homes!

But it was the two paddlers of Penguins who really took the prize. Both smartly dressed, not even a smidgin of mud, and - most amazing of all - they had actually combed their hair! Definitely haute boat couture!



The meal, I thought, was not quite up to the standard of my usual salami-and-pasta-and-Surprise-peas billy stew, but it was pretty good; and the wine, (which I chose because it had a picture of dolphins on the label), wasn't bad either. It was a well-satisfied party who set off down river at about 10.30pm.



The trip back was a special treat because of the phosphorescence in the estuary. From the bow of each kayak streamed a glowing green ribbon which marked the bow wave, and a splash of the paddle sent thousands of green sparks flashing across the water. This would be a good trip to do again in the future, and we all (except for the barracuda boys) vowed to bring a comb next time.

Labour Weekend on the Rotorua Lakes

Margaret Thwaites

Early on Saturday morning, Ryan, Mike Swift, Terry, Ray and I drove south to spend the long weekend exploring lakes Rotoma, Rotoehu and Rotoiti, near Lake Rotorua. After a somewhat eventful trip down (a bunch of girls in a car kept waving and laughing at us whenever we passed one-another! I said that they must be laughing at Ray because he always gets laughed at when he is in his Mini, except that we were in my car so I guess it must have been the Puffin they were laughing at!), we arrived at Lake Rotoma and were greeted by sunshine and bitie things. Terry came to the rescue with the bottle of Dimp.

On the arrival of a local paddler, Graeme, we left the bitie things behind and paddled out onto Lake Rotoma. With Graeme acting as tour guide, we explored the entire lake in the afternoon. The most striking things about this lake were the clarity of the water, clean sand beaches, and the flowering native trees surrounding the lake. After the heavy rainfall in the last few weeks, the lake level was higher than normal and with a bit of effort we were able to paddle/shuffle over a sand bar into a lagoon next to the lake. Graeme waved farewell to the party when we returned to the cars (and the bitie things!).

The camp ground right on the edge of the lake looked like it was filled to capacity so we decided to move on and check out some of the other nearby camp grounds that Graeme had recommended. We found the Rotoma Holiday Camp, situated between Rotoma and Rotoehu, fitted the bill perfectly. This camp ground has recently changed hands, and the new owner was very keen to make a deal - we could use the Soda Pools for half price! What a luxury to be able to soak in a spa pool filled with natural hot soda water.

After dark we discovered that October must be the breeding season for all the little bugs that live in the lakes - the air was thick with little flying insects, luckily not the biting sort. The next morning we nearly had to shovel the dead bugs off the kitchen bench!

Sunday morning we trundled off up the road to find a put-in point for Lake Rotoehu. After collecting a thick layer of road dust from the loose metal roads, and having to back-track a bit, we finally found the boat ramp and launched onto the lake. The first thing we all noticed about this lake was the colour of the water, murky compared to Lake Rotoma, and the abundance of reeds growing along the shore. This lake has a very convoluted shore-line and we spent all day exploring it. The lake level was up so high that we were able to paddle through the reed beds with little effort. In amongst the reeds you could almost expect to find crocodiles, but instead we found giant dragonflies, Canada geese, Paradise ducks, Mallards and Swans.

Sunday night we all had a well earned soak in the soda pools back at the camp ground and planned the next day's agenda. Monday morning dawned clear but windy - 15 knots predicted, so we decided to do a car shuttle and paddle with the wind from the Rotorua end of Lake Rotoiti down to the Rotoiti camp ground. We had a quick look at the Ohau Channel and decided against launching in Lake Rotorua and running the channel into Lake Rotoiti. The combination of wind, waves, current and high lake level meant that if somebody missed the channel entrance, they would be swept into the iron railing fence on either side - not nice. (The fishermen would probably get a bit pissed off with kayakers mucking around in their fishing spot too.)

We launched into Lake Rotoiti from the public boat ramp, but, Terry found that the choppy conditions were a bit much for her so we returned her to the ramp. After seeing Terry off, Mike put up his sail and we all rafted up and enjoyed an exhilarating sail down the lake. I suspect that the wind was a bit more than 15 knots because we were going at a good pace with just one sail between the four boats. At times it was quite tricky trying to keep the raft together in the choppy conditions. We must have created quite a spectacle because nearly every other boat on the lake had to come over for a look, and a laugh! About half-way down the lake, we finally broke up the raft and enjoyed some surfing on some lovely waves.

After a quick lunch in a sheltered bay, we continued down the lake, hugging the steep, rocky coastline. We practiced our "rock gardening" skills and paddling between the branches of fallen trees. We arrived at our get-out point nearly an hour ahead of schedule to be greeted by Terry bearing yummy chocolate pastries from the bakery on the corner of Tarawera Road. The perfect end to an excellent weekend.

Tiri Tiri Matangi ... almost Version 2 Rona Patterson

This would be one of the **big** disappointments in my life. After taking the day off work, staying up late the night before sorting out gear to take, getting up far too early in order to be at Shakespeare Bay on time, lining up the boats and packing the hatches - then, considering the weather! In hindsight, I am very glad we cancelled the trip because the weather just continued getting worse.

It took some time discussing alternative places to visit, but the weather was dreadful everywhere. In the end, a decision was made to return to my house and try to either get into the Whau or the Henderson Creek. This is where luck was on our side because we had an interesting paddle up the Henderson Creek. Margaret has the ~~soccer~~ball to prove it.
netball

Trevor phoned all the paddlers who had intended going to Tiri either on Friday evening or Saturday morning advising them that the Saturday night shared dinner would be held on Friday night at my home, and this we did. This turned out to be very successful.

Perhaps next year I will get to Tiri

Dinner at Whitford - a second view

Rona Patterson

On Saturday 21 November, fifteen hardy souls departed from Cockle Bay to paddle to Whitford for their dinner, in about two inches of water and very strong winds.

We were greeted with amazement by other patrons at the restaurant. The owner had primed the other diners by advising them that there was a group coming in who had found a way to avoid the 'drinking and driving' dilemma.

The chef/owner stood on a chair and instructed us to "listen carefully - because he would say this only once". He offered two choices of entree and main, which were both were delicious. Judging by the noise in the restaurant while we were there and the lack of noise once we had left, a good night was had by all. I can certainly recommend the company.

But that was not the end of the evening. Making our way back up the creek in pitch black was a beautiful experience, with the peace and tranquillity combined with the most amazing phosphorescence making this a night to remember.