



AUCKLAND CANOE CLUB

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1999

Happy New Year to you all and I hope the fat man was good to you. He was certainly good to us on the weather front, and at least for the weeks around Christmas/New Year the dreaded La Nina kept well away.

Over on Waiheke Island I took advantage of the beautiful weather to plan a pleasant circumnavigation of the island, in nice easy chunks. This was the scenario: have the family drop me off at a suitable location selected after hours of perusing the map (a bike route map being the only map I could find that showed the whole island). They would then spend an hour or two playing cricket or boogie boarding, or more likely licking ice blocks at a local dairy. And then they would pick me up at my destination. My timing estimate was not usually too far out.

Most of the time the plan worked fairly well. The biggest disaster was on my first leg. As I understood it we had agreed that I would paddle from Palm Beach to Little Oneroa and be met at the beach. But once I got started I realised that this leg was far too short for my allotted time and I felt I would have time to carry on to Matiatia and get back to Little O. The trip across there was fine - fabulous views of Rakino Island and then Motuihe, and a soon to be developed part of Waiheke with as yet undeveloped beaches.

Returning to Little Oneroa was a lot harder and I realised I wasn't going to make it back in time. When I finally got there, twenty minutes after my estimate of latest possible arrival time, my support team was nowhere to be seen. Oh well, I thought, they've gone off in a huff because I wasn't there in time and they've decided to teach me a lesson.

So I lay on the beach for an hour and had a jolly good time. Then I saw them drive into the car park, and putting on a shameface I went forward to face charges. *What are you doing here? You're at the wrong beach!* was how they greeted me. I was more than a bit surprised.

The nicest stretch of paddling was along the east coast of the island, starting from Man O' War Bay which is reached by means of a fairly horrific stretch of dirt road (hilly and extremely dusty due to the dry weather). You start off sheltered by Pakatoa Island to the east and then sheltered by the much larger Ponui Island. Along this coast of Waiheke are a string of beautiful golden sand beaches, some with an old homestead or a couple of shacks. The whole area is pretty much inaccessible by road, and in contrast to other parts of the island the bays weren't crowded out by anchored yachts and launches. So it was quiet.

Along the north coast there are delightful bays too, none nicer than Cactus Bay which on the landward side is reached after a six kilometre stretch of gravel road and then a ten minute walk. Looking at the map you'd expect a place like this to be deserted at any time, but to judge by the state of the car park most Waihekeans go there most days. The sand is white and there isn't a house in sight.

I paddled over there from Onetangi, past interesting rocky bits and quiet bays. Then the support team thought it would be hard work to carry the kayak up the hill from Cactus Bay to the car park so they made me paddle back to Onetangi. I had clearly misjudged the tidal conditions

that day because I had chosen to paddle this stretch in an easterly direction; when I ended up doing the return trip too I was surprised to find that it was much easier than the outward leg. Remember this if you ever go paddling at Onetangi: it takes an awful long time to paddle out of the bay! It is big.

The bay at Blackpool is pretty huge too. I paddled into it from two directions, first on my leg from Matiatia to Blackpool and then on my leg from Rocky Bay to Blackpool, converging twice on Blackpool because of the winds. Both times the trip to the bay entrance was fast and the trip up the bay was painstakingly slow. And unless you arrive at Blackpool at high tide you are greeted by mountains of smelly weed on the beach.

I did all these jaunts on my Frenzy, the most common sit on top around at the moment. It was ideally suited to the conditions - a mixture of calm waters in sheltered bays and rough stuff away from the island. Sea spilling onto my lap kept me cool and I could lie back and rest when I felt like it. All I took for luggage was a water bottle.

Yours in paddling



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

Please note that we have **changed** the Club's *official address*. So if you need to **write** to the Club - but this does not affect the address for Newsletter material - the new address is: c/o Margaret Thwaites, Auckland Canoe Club, William Potter Lane, Karaka, RD 1 Papakura.

CALENDAR FEB - MARCH

21 February Sea swim Fergusons Wharf to Tamaki Yacht Club, distance 3.2 km. 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.

We would like you to be at Okahu Bay at 10.30 to be on the water at 10.45 to give time to paddle around to Fergusons Wharf for the 11.15 swim start.

21 February Paddle round the Bays APCC race This race is a 16 km paddle around the Eastern suburbs bays, the paddlers' equivalent of "Round the Bays" and "Bike the Bays". Contact Rod Lewis tel 630 4495 or Auckland Canoe Centre tel 815 2073.

26 February Mystery weekend Phone Trevor for more details, tel 817 7357. The idea is to leave on Friday evening and return on Saturday afternoon, freeing up your Sunday for alternative pursuits. Just to give you some idea, a recent mystery trip went to Motuihe Island, and you can read all about it in this issue.

6 March 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, David Poolman 025 597 086 or Roger Lomas 625 8924.

7 March Sea swim Rangitoto to St Heliers. This is the final swim in the Masters series, a distance of 4.45 km. The swimmers arrive at Rangitoto at 8.40 am for a 9.30 swim start. High tide is at 11.51 am.

If you wish, Club members and other kayakers will be able to camp on Rangitoto overnight to be at the start of the swim on time. We need as many boats as possible on the water so pencil in the date right now. Phone Trevor 817 7357.

If you want to paddle over to Rangitoto on Saturday 6th, be at Okahu Bay in time for a 5 pm departure. You need to bring usual camping things, including a sleeping mat, but no tent required as the camping is under cover. Suggest you bring water with you as the only source is a little bubbler which is fiddly. There is also the chance of a later departure and if you choose this Trevor will give you details as a couple of kayakers will be available to escort you to the island.

For those paddling over on the Sunday morning, departure is from St Heliers at 8.30 am which gives ample time for the crossing to get you to the start for 9.30. Note different start point!

7 March Bridges Classic Contact Waitemata Multisport Club

13 March Dacre Cottage night paddle A night paddle leaving Torbay beach at 6 pm. High tide (2.3 metres) is at 7.23 pm.

Contact Grant Stone tel 473 6658.

20 March 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, David Poolman 025 597 086 or Roger Lomas 625 8924.

20 March Tongariro Mountain Classic five stage race around the volcanic plateau. Contact Greg Carlyon, Organiser Fairydown Tongariro Mountain Classic, RD 1, Turangi, tel 025 855 397 or 07 386 6934.

SURF'S UP! 26 & 28 March For those who enjoy surf, want to enjoy surf or just want to **survive**. Combined Surf Picnic / Surf Instruction day on March 28 at 9.30 am. Those with own boats (whitewater or sea kayak) can surf at their leisure. Those needing instruction can receive expert tuition as follows:

Who: Auckland Wilderness Kayaking

When : Friday 26 March 6 pm - Surf stroke technique - Okahu Bay

Sunday 28 March 9.30 am - venue to be advised on the day

Cost : \$20 hire whitewater boat, \$60 instruction

Instructor ratio will be limited to six participants per instructor so book early and no later than end of February, with Chris Gully on 09 813 3369.

This is a great investment in future fun, safety and paddling confidence.

For venue advice call on the Sunday after 7 am Matt Grant 524 2108 or Chris Gully 813 3369. The venue will be no more than 90 minutes' drive from Auckland.

27 March Waiwera Wet & Wild Contact Auckland Canoe Centre, tel 815 2073, for more details. Info will be included in the next Newsletter.

2 - 5 April (Easter) Matauri Bay in Northland, based at the motor camp. It's a great location with many fine spots easily accessible.

It's up to you when you travel up there, but organised paddles will commence on Good Friday. We would like you to organise your own camping arrangements - there is a lodge there also - so here is the motorcamp phone number: 09 405 0525. The address is Matauri Bay Holiday Park, Matauri Bay, Kerikeri. We are advising the motorcamp that a group of kayakers will be coming, so they can position us all together.

Please register your interest with Trevor, tel 817 7357 or Bruce Bugbee, tel 570 1134 (day) or

Matt Grant, tel 524 2108.

By the way if you were thinking of going up that way for the **Cavallis Race** in March, it has been replaced for this year by **Waiwera Wet & Wild**.

18 April Track & Gorge triathlon Long and short duathlon and multisport courses. Contact Track & Gorge Triathlon, 38 Langston Ave, Palmerston North tel 06 358 1908.

ASKNET trips As you know we usually list ASKNET trips in this Newsletter. Here is a summary of what they have planned: Feb 20 - 21 weekend on Ponui Island - contact Justin Sanson Beattie tel 278 8090; 21 Feb Mathiesons Bay to Goat Island via Cape Rodney, contact Kerry Howe tel 478 9952 ; 2 March Whangaparaoa by Moonlight - contact Vincent tel 424 2293; 7 March Round Rangitoto with the tide - contact Vincent tel 424 2293; 12 March Browns Island - contact Kevin Jose tel 846 6796; 19 March Riverhead Pub - contact Kevin Jose tel 846 6796; 21 March Tiri Tiri Matangi Island - contact the Dunsfords tel 410 3696.

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.

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** prefer novice kayakers to come on Tuesdays and tend to keep Thursdays for more experienced paddlers so the group can go further faster.

Please note that these are just **informal paddles** where you travel at your own risk and responsibility. We cannot guarantee that there will be someone there to hold your hand, although in practice there is almost always a **selection of well worn Club members** at these evening outings. We're not trying to put you off at all, but hey, things can **happen** out there on the water.....

Destination is by consensus and the group will usually appoint a trip leader and tail ender.

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. 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.

Wanted

Neal Wilson would like to buy a set of kayak wheels. Please contact him on 846 1429.

Have your say

about boating in New Zealand invites the Pleasure Boat Safety Advisory Group. They have a questionnaire which they want interested parties to fill out by 30 April. They are concerned to improve the level of boating safety and need feedback. Kayakers are right up there in the accident statistics.

Margaret has copies of the questionnaire, tel 292 7883 or you can write to PBSAG at PO Box 6046 Wellington.

For sale

Albatross for sale. 2 months old, Kevlar, as new condition with all the goodies. Price \$2900 ono. Contact Grant Stone tel 473 6658.

Maynard, Crozier & Arthur's 10 tips for surf sea kayak landings

Practice near lifeguards if possible
but away from swimmers

Follow the smallest wave in !

Lo-brace into the wave face with the
back of your paddle

Don't stand in the shallows when
unmanned boats are heading your
way if you don't want sore ankles

Matt Grant supplied this

The everything on,
especially glasses and hats

Observe the wave sets for a few
minutes before committing

Going out, look for rips to give you a
fast trip thru the surf !

'Rail' boat into wave

Use low brace-high braces can
dislocate shoulders. MC will vouch for this

Cut along the face of wave away from
the break - its a longer ride and you
will avoid burying the bow

Learn to *roll* and keep practicing so
its there when you really need it

South Island

By Matt Crozier

It had been bugging me for a number of years that I've spent almost all my life in Auckland, yet my most major adventures have been overseas. I know very little of the South Island, having visited only Queen Charlotte Sound and the Abel Tasman on a couple of paddling trips. So a tour of the South Island has been on the 'to do list' for a while, but has usually been put in the background by a more enticing (although comparatively local) expeditions. This year, I had a few weeks up my sleeve in early November and was in bad need of a break so with nothing major in the pipeline, I decided it was time to do it. Two and a bit weeks is hardly any time at all to explore the South Island properly, but at least I would find out where all these far away places I here about are located.

The idea was just to go for a long drive, solo, with the kayak on top - of course!, so the destinations would be places that looked interesting to paddle. I stayed mainly in backpackers although tented out if the scenery and weather was pleasant enough.

First stop from Picton was Kiakoura. The sea was a beautiful light blue colour although the day was overcast windy, and the tide too low to get in close. I only paddled for half the day (enough time to see the seals) before heading toward Akaroa on Banks Peninsula. It's a fairly long paddle (~15Km) to get outside the harbour, without anywhere to stop, but the sheer cliffs there are spectacular. The topo map for Banks Peninsula looked great paddling all round the perimeter. I spent another day paddling Pigeon Harbour on the north side, again a long paddle to get out but with some rather long sea caves. Lesson - never be silly enough to go paddling along expansive volcanic coastline without a good dolphin torch! I think the best way to explore Banks P. is to circumnavigate (2-3 days) and to explore the harbours separately.

It was then time to head for the inland lakes. First - Lake Tekapo. Brilliant crystal coloured water and brought back memories of the sea-level glaciers in Alaska (also memories of the cold, so I didn't paddle there). Looking at the map, Lake Benmore seemed like the best lake for an interesting paddle. There are a number of islands and channels joining parts of the lake together. This was one of the highlights of the trip. I had a brilliant windless sunny day and the whole lake to myself (you could see for miles, but not a sole!). Although a little barren, except for the islands, this was a paradise. Lake Wanaka - although a little more populated, I did enjoy a paddle up Stephenson's arm to have lunch on Stephenson's Island. I climbed Mt Iron to view the Guy Fawkes fireworks, but didn't appreciate how long I'd have to wait till sunset this far south.

By now, a week had gone by. I had to decide between going further south to Queenstown and Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri or whether to start heading up north to do a multi-day trip in the Marlborough Sounds. I was getting a bit tired of rushing around in the small time I had and just doing day-paddles. It would be good to finish off on a more relaxed note so, with the thought that Fiordland was well worth a separate trip in its own right (need an excuse to go back), I made a move up to Fox Glacier where I took a scenic flight over the glacier and western face of Mt Cook. Don't be put off by the price, if the weather's right it's well worth it. On to the picturesque Nelson Lakes. These would be

excellent weekend trips with huts at the other end, although don't forget your insect repellent. After that, a quick look at Golden Bay and Puppu springs (clearest water in the world except for Antarctica), as well as an afternoon paddle around Rabbit Is in Nelson before heading toward Marlborough Sounds.

Marlborough Sounds

I started the four day trip at Penzance Bay in Tennyson Inlet (OK, get your maps out). Following the fractal like coastline north, I made my way to a campsite at Waiona Bay, opposite Maud Island. The day started off fairly calm but the afternoon breeze picked up between 12 and 2. When the wind blows in the Sounds, it blows very hard indeed as it funnels down the valleys. There's no escape, it will even follow you right around headlands changing direction by even up to 90 degrees. I battled up Hallam Cove to have lunch at Cissy Bay with the hope of sailing back down again. It was warm and sunny and the water was clear but the numerous jellyfish put me off having a swim. Unfortunately, the wind started to die down by the time I left. At Waiona Bay, a weka managed to punch into my milk bottle and I managed to burst my lilo! After *some* sleep, I had to drag my Ladin boat along the rocky foreshore at low tide - a curse of solo paddling, ouch!

Today, I would explore Waitata Reach. The day was perfectly still and cloudless - I couldn't resist a dip at Canon Pt. Disappointed to find no blowhole at Blowhole Pt, I crossed into Forsyth Bay. The afternoon breeze was now getting stronger but it was a relatively short fight back into the Reach where I sailed all the way down and around into Tawhitinui Bay. The bays along this stretch of coast were filled with golden beaches. I was most impressed with the campsite at Kauauroa Bay - no pests, kayak friendly beach with a wonderful waterfall behind (mind the stinging nettle though!).

Well it had to happen. Day 3 came the gale. The winds blowing down Tawhitinui Reach were quite distinct on the water viewed from the sheltered bay. I explored Crail Bay, thinking this would be sheltered but the winds swung around straight into it. By mid morning, the winds were plainly visible as intense willy-waws brushed the surface in a fine spray to reveal their presence. I had to keep the paddle very low and eventually had to give up at Opani-aputa Pt as I was making zero progress no matter how hard I fought. With the sail up, my kayak walked itself up the beach all by itself. I found some shelter, made lunch, and finally made contact with Marlborough Radio on channel 1. Given the forecast, I was going to have to sit this one out for most of the day. By 4pm, I decided to head for Moturoa to try and get land transport back to the car, but found the wind had died down enough for me to attempt getting back to Tennyson Inlet myself. By the time I arrived at Tawa Bay 3 hours later, I was absolutely stuffed and the winds had died completely.

Keen to get off the water before more of the same arose, I was packed and ready at 6.30am for a quick jaunt back to Penzance Bay by 7:30 (only to find the car wouldn't start!). "Just as well", I thought as the Arahura rolled on the Cook Straight swell on the way back to Wellington.

15 Jan Mystery Weekend

By Rona Patterson

Unpredictable weather was the reason for the 'mystery' date changing to Saturday 16 January, with destination of Motuihe, and I was off on my first kayak overnight experience. I assumed when the 'mystery weekend' was advertised that it meant the destination was to be a surprise, but I really think the 'mystery' is how the devil does one get all the 'stuff' down the hatches. I have worked out that if I didn't have a sleeping bag, there would be plenty of room.

Matt Crozier, Ray, Margaret, Ryan, Alex and myself took off in fine weather, and it was a full five minutes before we experienced our first hiccup - Margaret had left her wallet in her car. It was nothing for Margaret and Ray to return for the wallet and still to catch the rest of the party just before we arrived at Browns Island, where we had a whistle stop before crossing to Motuihe. It was during this crossing that I experienced my first 'wonder'. Alex and I were taking up the rear and came across two families of blue penguins. My trip was worth it for that alone.

On landing we faced the second (and much larger hurdle). Fully laden kayaks are not light (not even a fully laden lightweight penguin), and six of them had to be taken from the low tide mark to the path and then ferried up a steep hill to the camping ground. Thanks to Margaret we had one set of wheels between us all.

Once tents were up and lunch eaten, five of us paddled over to Waiheke into a strong head wind. This was where Ryan got to practice with his rudder up. Unfortunately, this was not by choice. After investigating all the bays along the near coast line, we headed for home in a heavy cross-tail sea. This is where I caught my first fish - ever! Not very big - but a better effort than Alex managed. He had taken his rod and opted to fish while we paddled. I had no sooner put the line out again, and there was another tug on the line; followed by a much larger tug; then nothing. This is obviously the story of the fish that got away.

After setting out the dining table and settling into a comfortable story-telling mode, the rain began. This was accompanied by lightning. Dinner then became a series of scarpering for shelter and returning with half eaten dinners. You would not believe how far two of our members can spit cherry stones!

After some time, Matt could contain himself no longer, he had to look for a better view of the lightening. The rain bucketed down all night, and there was very little left dry by morning. With the rain came the mosquitoes. Monsters! I was eaten alive. Two days later, one eye is still partly shut from bites, and my tent is not the only one with bloody marks from unwanted guests.

By 9am on Sunday the sun had come out and dried the tents enough to make packing comfortable, and then began the loading and lifting once again. We took off from the other side of the island and headed for Browns Island where lunch was eaten. Once again, I was to see a couple of little penguins. One allowed me to get very close before (s)he disappeared.

Five minutes out from Browns Island the back of my seat gave way, and spoiled what was otherwise a very pleasant return trip. Of course, once home everything had to be dried out and repacked for the next mystery trip.

Hahei to Hot Water Beach - Rona reports

What were you doing on Waitangi Day? Twenty-four paddlers and three supporters arrived at Hahei ready to enjoy themselves. No-one could have foreseen just how much they would have to enjoy, for this was no ordinary trip; most certainly not for the faint-hearted!

At 9.30am on Saturday morning 21 kayaks were lined up at the water's edge for the planned trip to Hot Water beach. There was some wind and a small chop, and Terry Peddie had already decided to go for a walk and drive to Hot Water beach and have a dip in a hot pool. We were to be very grateful for Terry's support in many ways; the first was helping with the launching of the kayaks.

Once through the bay and around the head we hit strong head winds and huge swells. As we turned, conditions were much worse, but it wasn't all bad - **there was no rain** but we now faced cross-winds and waves. All the kayaks were being thrown around and often only the odd paddle was visible. Somewhere around here, two of our group turned back. There were another two who became separated from us by landing at another beach also.

On a trip of many highlights, the most awesome was the cave we visited. A few skills were necessary getting in and out of the cave, but the most amazing experience. Once through the tunnel there was a pool large enough to hold six kayaks at a time (just). The pool was surrounded by a tunnel about 20 metres high and then open to the sky. Absolutely magic!

After about 30 minutes of rough water, stomachs were beginning to object to the rough treatment. There were not many of the group who were either not sick, or feeling rather seedy.

Once Hot Water beach was in sight, we were about to realise another highlight was in store for us. While still a long way off land, it was obvious the surf was in an unforgiving mood. We had to go in. Too many people were sick, but it was a real challenge knowing that getting through surf as strong as that would take all the strength and skills available. Two of our strong paddlers took off to see if it was possible to land, and it was not long before a paddle was being waved from the beach.

Gradually, one by one, we all attempted a landing, and this is where about 75% of our people felt the temperature of the water. There were kayaks, paddles, paddlers and surfies everywhere, but a very brave attempt by all. I was one of the first to go in, and was very fortunate to manage with no problems. Once in the surf and at the point of no return, I became concerned by what I assumed were swimmers with boogie boards. It turned out to be life guards with buoyancy supports. I was afraid of hitting one of them and had to alter my direction in order to avoid them.

The surfies were to be commended for their commitment, especially as this was their first day as volunteers, but I am sure they were not aware that we were a group of able paddlers. One life-guard was hit by getting between the beach and a kayak which was hurtling in at a great rate of knots.

We could well have been in the Wahine or the Titanic by the amount of interest generated by our appearance. People came from all over to watch the spectacle.

Lunch was eaten and paddlers dried out before the trip had to be reversed, only this time with less paddlers. As I said earlier, Terry was a huge support to us. She returned to Hahei with some paddlers who knew they had reached their limit. One of our group walked the distance to get her car to return to collect her kayak.

The launching from Hot Water beach created fear for many of us. The surf club put members out into the surf and Matt sent two of our strongest members out beyond the breaking surf with bilge pumps in order to pump out anyone who had an accident. Trevor was seeing that hats, cameras and anything else which did not need to be above deck, was stowed away.

After the first two had made it out safely, the third person was sent out, and while he made it eventually, he initially had quite a struggle with the waves pushing him back sideways. The next person tipped out, and that freaked me completely. Then it was my turn! Yes, I made it. I believe I was in control all the way, but it took a tremendous amount of strength and I was puffing really hard as though I was running a 400 metre sprint race. I didn't count, but it seemed like about twelve waves had to be battled before I could rest.

While more people made it through the surf this time, there were still a few casualties. Once we were all together again the trip home commenced, but it was not too far before Margaret was sick again. It was still a long way in rough seas so she and Matt Grant headed back for Hot Water beach to wait for someone to collect them.

The return trip appeared harder than the morning one, and it was with some relief that Hahei came into sight. After paddling through such strong cross winds and high seas, it was a disappointment to finally get a tail wind into Hahei bay and not be able to surf in.

Landing at Hahei was easy, and there to welcome us and to help, was Terry, and once we were all back on land, she returned to Hot Water beach for Matt and Margaret. Thank you Terry for all your support.

I have never been with a sporting group where conversation has been hard to find, but this group must certainly have had the most exhilarating discussions ever.

The weather appeared worse the following day, so we packed and went in convoy to Cooks beach where we paddled up the creek to 'the worst vineyard in the world' (that is how it was described to me). There was a certain amount of ingenuity involved in mooring where there was nowhere to land.

The highlight of this trip was on returning to where our kayaks had been tied up, to find our leader in a row boat with one rollick missing and towing two kayaks. Jane was on a launch giving directions. It seems that two kayaks slipped their moorings - thank goodness for other craft moored nearby.

On returning to Cooks beach, it was apparent that there was a surf beach which just had to be sampled. This was fun - surf was much lighter but after so much forced pleasure the previous day, only a few ventured in.

For a trip which I had no intention of being part of, I am ever so pleased I went. This was the weekend that the X-Factor put me to the test. The pity of it was that I was so engrossed in surviving that I was not able to consider how the X-Factor was going. It looked after me very well... I never once felt afraid or that I was not in control Thank you Peter.

Rona Patterson