

AUCKLAND CANOE CLUB

NEWSLETTER

JULY 1999

I have just had a lovely weekend of paddling. It was quite unplanned, but with the weather so perfect there was really no excuse for not being out there on the water. I was able to make two trips close to home, which kept everyone happy, since I wasn't gone for too long, and I didn't have to do heaps of planning and preparation. That's what we spontaneous types like.

On Saturday I headed out from Glendowie and made a circuit of Browns Island. The island is the gem of the inner Hauraki Gulf, and even on a sparkling Saturday when the seas were full of small pleasure craft there was not a soul about near the island. For the first time I was there at high tide - usually I pick a low tide so I don't have so far to paddle! - so there wasn't much beach but the cliffs on the Motuihe side were as impressive as ever.

Auckland city looks quite attractive from this distance, and small too, and you feel as though you are right out in the Gulf.

On Sunday I joined an impromptu Club trip over to Rangitoto from St Heliers. The water was completely flat, and by that I mean completely flat, so we had a wonderful peaceful paddle over. We were probably the first people to arrive on the island for the day, which was a good thing because it got extremely busy later on, as others cottoned on to the beautiful winter sunshine.

We walked to the summit and had morning tea up on top. There was still little activity to be seen in the Harbour, but the northern beaches looked most inviting and the fog over the Firth of Thames hung as heavy as ever. By the time we made our descent the first Fullers ferry had been in so there were lots of walkers coming up the summit track and down at the wharf there were quite a few kayaks.

The return paddle was mostly quiet apart from a flurry of fishing speedboats. I had lots of time for thinking, and I came up with some questions:

1. Why is the water always cold when it's low tide and you have to wade out in it for miles?
2. Why are oyster shells mainly underfoot in places where you are not actively looking for them?
3. Why doesn't polypro clothing come in fluoro colours?
4. Who were those two kayakers who were lingering at the back of the bunch?
5. Have you spotted that the previous question was hidden after some dull ones?
6. Do you think this was deliberate?
7. Why can't kayak manufacturers think of better names for kayaks?

8. Why can you never get the salt off your car when you hose it down?
9. Why does the weather always pack up in the afternoon on days when you're too busy to get out on the water in the morning?
10. Why do you always step on your paddle if you leave it lying on the ground?
11. Why can't the wind run to a timetable in the way that the tides do?
12. Who were those two, anyway?

Answers, answers.....

Yours in paddling

Julia

The Club's *official address*, if you need to write to the Club - but this does not affect the address for Newsletter material - is c/o Margaret Thwaites, Auckland Canoe Club, William Potter Lane, Karaka, RD 1 Papakura. If you want to tell us about a change of address or phone number please inform Colin Quilter, tel 630 2219, as he maintains the data base for the Newsletter.

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
White water..... George Gerard 818 5066

CALENDAR JULY - AUG

25 July Manukau Heads a classic trip we've done before.

If you're onto a good thing, why change it? Meet at Cornwallis Wharf at 1000 for a 1015 departure. Bring lunch, drinks, snacks and walking shoes/sandals. We will carry the ebb tide down the harbour to South Head, land, and climb the hill to the lighthouse. Then across the fields to the south, over the cliff edge and a leaping-and-bounding, death-defying descent to the beach. After lunch (at about slack water) we'll paddle across to Whatipu on the north side of the channel. For those whose legs still function there's another hill to be climbed, with great views over sand and sea. By mid-afternoon the tide will be flooding and we'll have an easy paddle home.

This trip is suitable for intermediate paddlers. There may be some swell but the landings are sheltered. The trip will only run if the forecast is good (wind 15 knots or less). Those intending to come must first contact Colin Quilter, 630 2219. *(If the weather prevents this trip, Trevor Arthur will try again on August 8; see below).*

31 July 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.

1 Aug Parakai Special APCC race 12 km with hot swim afterwards.
Contact Hauraki Kayak Group.

Tuesday 3 August Social evening. Colin Quilter will show slides of recent trips to the Manukau Heads, Motutapu, Mayor Island and a sailing/kayaking tour of the offshore islands (Hen & Chicks, Mokohinau Is, Cuvier, Mercury Is and Aldermen). Everyone is welcome; you might even see yourself on screen! As usual, the venue is the clubrooms above Ferg's Kayak Shop at Okahu Bay, the session starts around 7pm, and the \$5 admission fee buys you something nice to eat & drink; and an evening in good company!

8 Aug Cornwallis to Whatipu Low tide is at 1.30 pm.

Meet at Cornwallis wharf at 9.30am for a 10.00am departure. The Plan is a coastal meander to explore, Kakamatua Inlet, Kaitarakihi Bay, Orpheus Bay, Te Huia, Destruction Gully, Fur Seal colony, Wonga Wonga Bay and finally the wonders of Whatipu.

All these interesting names and places. You'll have to come to see them and satisfy your curiosity. We'll lunch at Whatipu then use the incoming tide to get an assisted trip back to Cornwallis. Suitable for all levels as we are not venturing out through the heads. Bring a torch as we may explore the caves at Whatipu.

Please ring Trevor. Phone: 8177357.

8 Aug Waikato River Race Day 15 km junior, 32 km senior. hosted by Hamilton Canoe Club.

13 August, Friday. Overnight at Rangitoto. Spend a convivial evening by candlelight in the Sea Scout hut near the wharf. Meet at the Okahu Bay boat ramp at 7pm for a 7.15pm departure. Have an early dinner first. Bring a torch, a fixed light for your kayak if you have one, normal overnight gear, something small to contribute to a shared supper, and your own breakfast. In the morning I guess a walk to the top will be obligatory, then home before lunchtime. Contact Colin Quilter 630 2219.

14 Aug Sea kayak race Details as for 31 July.

15 Aug Hunua Tupperware Race Hunua Falls to top of McNicol Rd.
Contact Manukau Canoe Club.

28 Aug Sea kayak race Details as for July 31

22 Aug Weiti River with Matt Grant who will arrange for good weather this time.
Promise. Contact Matt on 524 2108.

ASKNET trips We usually list ASKNET trips in this Newsletter. Here is a summary of what they have planned: July 17 & 18 Motuihe Island camping contact Kerry Howe tel 478 9952; July 30 Riverhead pub in moonlight contact Kevin Jose tel 846 6796.

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.

Night paddles

Now that winter is almost upon us and the bulk of this paddling is in **darkness** please remember that you must bring **good lighting with you**. This means all around light and a large lens light. **Hat and warm clothes are also advised** and a whistle.

Our Fleet

At present the following boats are available for hire:

- 2 Puffins
- 2 Breezes
- 2 Sea Quests
- 1 Sea Bear double
- 1 Corsica
- 1 Pirouette

We are currently making changes to the hire fleet, so watch this space , and don't miss the ad in Dips N Dunks.

The Club is considering purchasing a better sea kayak as part of the revamped fleet, possibly a Slingshot or X-Factor. What are your views on this? Hireage would have to be higher for this higher quality boat, but would it be a good move to have one? Let Trevor know your views. The more 'ordinary' boats we are considering are a Squall and a Storm.

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?

And a second reminder...

I know that lots of you have been out there paddling, or even if you have some thoughts on the subject please write and tell me about it. This Newsletter relies on contributions from Club members. So if you want a good read it is also partly up to you to help with providing some reading matter for everyone else. Fair?. You can send stuff to me any time and the content does not have to be current. It can be something you did three years ago or last week.

Kayak storage

It has been brought to my attention that nobody has paid their kayak storage fees for the half year July to December 99. Please pay up so we can move the boats to their new home, when it is ready for them.

Subscriptions

Club subscriptions are now due for the year to March 2000. Please use the subscription form from your June Newsletter.

For sale

2 Sea Quest sea kayaks. Ex Club use, now being replaced.
Price \$750 to any financial Auckland Canoe Club member
Contact Bruce Bugbee 570 1134 or Trevor Arthur 817 7357.

For sale

KAYAK DUNDEE PRESS New and 2ndhand Sea Kayaking, Canoeing and Rafting books, also partial set (30) of Sea Kayaker magazines from 1985. For a catalogue of the books and mags contact Paul Caffyn. Phone/fax 03 731 1806. Email kaykpc@xtra.co.nz Mail RD 1, Runanga, West Coast.

Canoe Polo

If you're interested in playing in a social team, heres how it works.

Turn up at Northcote College pool in Kauri Glen Road – off Onewa Rd. at 7.00 pm on Wednesday or Thursday nights.

It Costs \$ 10.00 all up.

This covers hireage of boat, paddle and all gear. Bring your own if you prefer.

This is a really neat way to improve your boat skills whilst having a great time.

The Serious games start at 8.30 so watch how it's supposed to be done if you like.

If we have enough people interested, we could form our own team or two.

Give me a ring if you're interested or curious. Trevor. Phone 8177357.

Names and addresses

You will see that your phone number and membership status appear on the address label of this Newsletter. The member ship status side of things has hopefully received your prompt attention; if the phone number is incorrect please let Colin Quilter know, tel 630 2219.

Club Night

Roger Lomas writes

Something we have all been looking forward to — next Club Night. (Remember the first Tuesday of the month.)

Last summer, Colin Quilter loaded aboard a catamaran a crew of kayakers and their craft, and set off to explore the remote outer islands of the Gulf and beyond. For those of us who missed the boat, Colin has agreed to relive this expedition in another of his fascinating talk and slide shows. If you have been to one of Colin's talks before you know what to expect. If you haven't, get there early if you want a good seat.

Our last Club Night has no doubt prompted many of you to start planning a Coromandel Expedition inspired by Pelham Housego's fine archive display. Iain Anderson left us stunned with the visual beauty of his award winning photography. Thank you both.

Next year's Club Night Series is well under way in bookings with two fascinating speakers already confirmed. If you have any suggestions please contact me. It was never our intention to make a profit out of Club Nights but due to the hard work and generosity of all involved a small profit is showing. The money raised in last winter's Club Nights is being held in trust by the Club Treasurer and when this year's series is completed the money raised will be used to purchase a quality B.B.Q. and trolley to be stored in our new storage lockers downstairs and available for all club members to use at Okahu Bay.

Don't forget if you want to visit the Mokohinau, Cuvier or Alderman Islands, be at the Clubrooms 7pm on Tuesday 3rd August. \$5 gets you Hot Food, Show and Supper.

Sea Kayak racing

Roger Lomas tells all

Two days out from the shortest day of the year and our intrepid sea kayak racers were out in force for Event No. 13. Even the walking-wounded turned up to show support, and thank you Gordon for the time-keeping as well.

Another interesting course, this time up to Mission Bay, then back under the fishing lines off Bastion Point before a quick loop under the bridges under Tamaki Drive and a battle with the incoming tide. Out and along the seawall off Pokanoa Point for the challenge of the suck and surge of a ship's wake before rounding the breakwater and into Okahu Bay for the run around the last two marks and the desperate dash to the finish line.

A desperate dash of a different kind saw the De Niro's Sea Bear hit the water a mere 10 mins after the race start but a determined Wolfgang plied the waters of the Bay urging on the fleet paddlers and taking orders for the post race B.B.Q.

Back in the race and the sea kayaker friendly manager of the Canvas City^{Brendon Smith} was at the helm of one of the big Barracuda doubles with flatmate-policeman Brendon Greagon up front and under the whip. After a bad start these two were able to harness their power and with synchronised strokes moved up through the field to take 3rd outright. (The handicapper was watching.) Dave Poolman took line honours in the Sabre with Clee Parsons hot on his heels in the Bullet rewarded with the handicap top spot.

Multisport racer Brian Crump usually seen dashing about in an Opus has taken up our challenge and turned up for our last two races first in an X Factor and then in a Barracuda. Brian's no slouch when it comes to racing. He finished in the top 3rd of the fleet in our Club's recent Cambridge - Hamilton race.

It was a challenge for Brian to climb into the slower heavier sea kayaks and a revelation to experience the performance differential. He didn't disgrace himself coming home 4th both times. I mention this because this is what we are all about.

Most of us in the Club own one craft, a sea kayak. This craft serves us well for all our wants and needs. Most of our needs are touring, but without any expense this craft can become a racer and compete on an equal footing with any other sea kayak. All we need to do is apply the simple adjustment for age, gender and craft — no need to engage in the cost-spiralling exercise of updating to the latest, fastest, trendiest ego-boosting craft.

It's also "horses for courses" in our events, and the Division 1 craft don't always have conditions to suit. If Mother Nature doesn't level things out the handicapper will. Adjustments have been made and the Kaukapakapa Kid will have to work a little harder to step on the top of the podium now.

Back down at the ramp the famous Mt Eden chef was busy at the grill and in no time at all had prepared a huge amount of bacon, eggs and gourmet burgers. Hot tea and coffee and second and third helpings nourished the salty stalwarts. As we stood around chattering in the warm mid-winter sun we all felt like winners.

Come on down and join us. Race dates in the calendar.

Trials and tribulations at Mayor Island

Colin Quilter

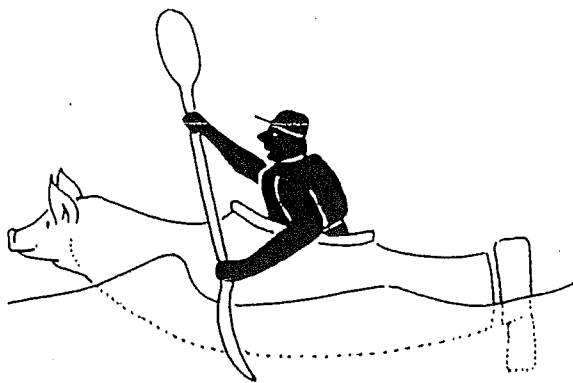
Mayor Island lies 30 km offshore in the Bay of Plenty. It is a volcanic cone now covered in pohutukawa forest, and famed for the deposits of black obsidian (volcanic glass) which drew Maori people there for centuries. Kayakers are attracted by the island's coast, an enticing mixture of cliffs, lava flows, sea caves and a few sandy beaches; which explains why eighteen of us gathered in Tauranga on a Friday evening in early June.

The night began well, as kayaks were loaded cheerfully and efficiently onto our chartered launch. But frequent lightning, the rumble of thunder in the west, and a blustering northeasterly wind gave warning of an advancing cold front and a rough trip to come.

Outside the harbour the "Ohore" laboured in a heavy swell. Beyond the heaving wheelhouse nothing was visible except for sheets of rain and spray lit momentarily by the glow of navigation lights. How quickly our party was transformed! Conversation and laughter died away, faces turned ashen. Plastic bowls and bags were soon in demand. When they ran short we resorted to cooking pots and pans. A heavy roll almost threw John down the companionway ladder. Stephanie, who had travelled without time for dinner, fainted, and wisely spent the rest of the trip lying where she fell. Close to where I was wedged on the saloon floor was a large plastic rubbish bin. It had two great advantages for the use to which I put it: firstly I could fit my whole head inside, and secondly it had a generous capacity, (unlike some of the cooking pots which needed frequent emptying, for which the timing was critical).

A kindly Maori lady (with a cast-iron stomach) reassured us at fifteen-minute intervals that the island was only fifteen minutes away. Hugh, the skipper, pouring his third cup of coffee, observed that "You might as well tell 'em the truth. It doesn't do to raise their hopes." So grey-faced, suffering and silent we lurched, rolled, heaved and chundered our way to the Mayor.

Seasickness is cured by time (about three days) or dry land, whichever comes first. In our case it was the land, and in the morning we were back to high spirits. In fact the entire weekend was to be marked by good humour; the only exception (which may as well be noted here) occurred when the expedition's archaeologist Amanda Young referred to my venerable plywood Sea Bear as a "Sea Pig". She would have done well to remember the proverb, "Never revile the crocodile's mother until after you have crossed the river." In the present context this could be re-stated as, "Never revile a companion's kayak until AFTER you find out who is going to write the trip report."



Grey skies and heavy seas prevented kayaking on Saturday. Amanda announced that she intended take the "Round the Island" track in order to study archaeological sites, and anyone who was a fast walker could accompany her. I wondered how archaeology could be done at a trot, but I was soon to find out. The track was said to require 6 hours. We set out in drizzle which soon became a deluge. Beyond the trig (320 metres) the rattle of thunder overhead became almost continuous. Rain bucketed down. Archaeological sites came and went beneath our hurrying feet. We begged Amanda to stop and take measurements and core samples, but to no avail. For a while the rain turned to hail, which made an interesting change, but then it settled back to rain again.

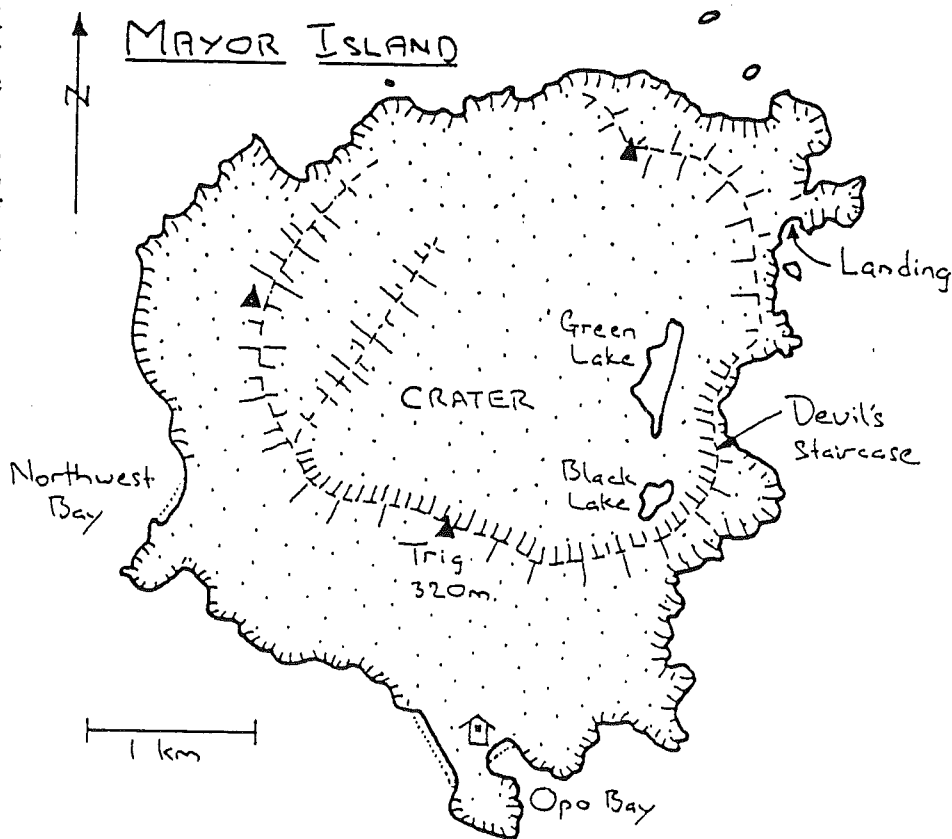
On the far side of the island we found the Opuhi Spring, ("water clear and safe to drink" according to the DOC guide book). The water - all 2mm of it - was quite clear, and John found that, after he had sieved the dead leaves through his moustache, it was safe to drink as well.

Eventually the crater lakes came into view through driving rain. We stopped for a few minutes to push sodden sandwiches into our mouths with cold-stiffened fingers, then climbed out of the crater by the well-named "Devil's Staircase." Here veins of obsidian gleamed wetly in the rain, and the path glittered with shards of black glass. The prospect of hot showers drew us on. Down the

southern slope of the island we leapt and slithered, arriving back at Opo Bay after four and a half hours of unrelenting downpour.

That evening we had a pot-luck dinner and exchanged mid-winter Christmas gifts. As usual, each person contributed enough food for about three others, so that finishing the meal was a severe test. Gifts included an inflatable pink plastic alien, a candle made of what looked and smelled like coffee beans, and a hot-water bottle.

Sunday morning was sunny after overnight wind and rain. A fresh south-easterly heaped up steep, short seas in the mouth of the bay. Six of us set off around the island by kayak, (not including Amanda who made two high-speed circuits of the bay in her gleaming Slingshot and then retired to the beach, while the Sea Pig carried me around in its usual, comfortable, piggish way). Once past the southern point of the island we had a sheltered run for a couple of hours, then perhaps another hour of rough water as we approached home in the afternoon. The highlights we expected were all there; a calm landing and a stroll along Northwest Bay, the dramatic offshore pillars and stacks off the northern coast, immense decaying cliffs threaded with metre-thick seams of obsidian, and a family of seals ashore in a jumble of boulders on the north side.



For me it was also interesting to see how well our group handled the rough conditions, particularly as two of our party were paddling Slingshots. It is a measure of how much the general standard of kayaking skills has improved that boats as narrow as these are now taken into difficult water as a matter of routine.

Monday morning was perfect. While others prepared to go kayaking Rob and I headed back up the hill, anxious to see the interior of the island in fine weather. We parted just below the crater rim and walked in opposite directions, me towards the Devil's Staircase to the east, and him towards the trig in the west. The view out over the two crater lakes was superb. The bush rang with the sound of tuis and bellbirds. From the crater rim I shouted a few "Halloooooooooooooos" and listened to the echoes returning from distant cliffs. Soon I heard an answering shout from Rob on the far side of the crater, and we later measured on the map the distance separating us at 1.8 kilometres; a long way for a human voice to carry.

Taumou Pa lay just to the north on a steep-sided promontory. This pa is the most famous on the island and was never conquered. It is a site of great archaeological interest, but it was clear that if any archaeology was to be done, someone other than Amanda was going to have to do it. On the way up the hill (DOC: "steep, narrow track..... difficult and should be used with caution") I subjected it to intense scrutiny, which was easy since the ground was never far from my face. The summit was terraced, but also covered in thick bush which hid most of its features.

Back on the coast the paddlers had decided to take advantage of the calm conditions. What began as a short excursion to sea caves near Opo Bay ended as an unplanned circuit of the island; thus Rob, who had gone out to meet the others for a 5-minute paddle without lifejacket, sprayskirt or lunch, found himself also circumnavigating the island with minimal equipment.

With conditions like this our return to Tauranga was a pleasure. Thanks to Justin for professional organisation of a great weekend, and to Hugh and Raewyn of the "Ohore". Let's do it again soon, Justin.

My Favourite Paddle

By Lindsay and Chris Sandes

Seizing the Moment

Julia has previously indicated that 'seizing the moment' is very relative to a busy parent, so I felt some contribution from a new member on some of my recent sea kayaking 'moments' was in order.

Last September saw the purchase of my first sea kayak, a plastic Storm. With some mirth, I read in the June Newsletter that this is an 'ordinary' boat, however it has performed well in severe conditions (eskimo rolling in my friends pool), survived falls from the roof racks and generally handles well in most sea conditions.

After joining the club, participating in a couple of harbor day trips, surviving George Gerard's 'learn to sea kayak weekend' and pool sessions I completed my first lengthy day trip through Gardners Gap at Rangī, returning via Browns Island. To a novice and new kayaker this was quite an extended paddle, however my fellow paddlers were great encouraging and supporting me to keep going.

Between university lectures and study, my sons sport, and running a business, I take each opportunity for a paddle and amongst my favorites are the Devenport, Bayswater, Americas Cup Base, play in the currents around the commercial wharf, plus the Okahu to Browns Island paddle. The Navy is not so keen on sea kayakers paddling close to their patch and as the rubber ducky patrol pointed out recently, this is a restricted area.

Browns Island is a great place to paddle for a brew and is never crowded. On a winters day the Island offers shelter and is a place to unwind in the sun with a winter red and blue cheese. Bad weather presents a challenging paddle to Browns Island in relative safety of the coastline, yet is distant enough to offer a shake out of the weeks stress.

This past Easter I ignored cramming for exams and after some deliberation joined the bunch on the Cavalli trip. I thought long and hard about this, as I wanted to take along my 11-year-old son (Chris), yet not hold back the smooth skinned glass boats. As it turned out, my fears were groundless as all paddlers supported us when we dropped back a bit, and both Chris and I enjoyed a weekend we will remember forever.

A 7-hour journey on Thursday evening with most of Auckland saw us arriving into Matauri Bay at around 10.00pm. Under a full moon, assistance pitching our tent was on hand from the team and before long we were enjoying hot coffees and biscuits at Maxims of The North (a.k.a. Trevor & Sue's palace).

A few enthusiastic paddlers enjoyed a great morning paddle in excellent conditions to nearby Islands while we waited for the remainder of the group to arrive. This gave us an opportunity to test the durability of glass boats in narrow shutes, hone up on group rescue and boat patch up techniques (as Trevor has previously recorded). A good lesson on depending on one paddler for throw lines was learnt - don't. When the paddler with the towline is busy performing self rescue, this doesn't allow much time to throw the line to rescuers. Cool heads, duck tape and furious pumping saw us all safely back at the beach to join the rest of the group. History will record that plastic 'ordinary' boats outperform glass in certain demolition conditions.

The afternoon was challenging in the club Sea bear. Chris attempted paddling at times, but after the Storm a double is a big boat to handle. The sea break was exciting (wet for Chris in the front) and the remainder of the day was glorious following the coast around the bays. Trevor and Matt exceeded the catch allowance, showing great skills at kayak fishing. Chris received fantastic encouragement from all paddlers and after an excellent day on the water, was welcomed back at Maxims with hot chocolate and Easter eggs.

The paddle around the Cavalli' was just a bit extended for Chris & I so we deviated off to the old Conservation hut for warm drinks and to explore the Island. The rest of the group joined us later in the day for a pleasant paddle back to Matauri Bay.

The day trip to Tauranga Bay to explore the caves was the highlight with good weather, successful fishing, darting in and out of caves with the swells and crystal clear water. Gourmet lunches were the order of the day and a pleasant paddle back home.

Another highlight was Matt's smoked fish each evening, plus the shared moments over a drink under make shift shelter at site 164. Aside from a few wet moments, providing the locals with 'demo gear' during the stormy night, this was a weekend to remember for many years. Chris really appreciated the support and encouragement from all paddlers, especially the girls at Maxims.

With only 1 semester to complete my degree, I'm looking forward to more active participation with the Club toward year-end and much more paddling with a great bunch of people. AND, despite owning an 'ordinary' boat, I think its 'heaven on a stick'.

Lindsay & Chris

YOUR reputation shot to pieces by people you don't even know.....

(Colin Quilter vents his spleen)

Early last month I caught the tail end of a program on National Radio about Fiordland. Former DOC Ranger Ron Peacock gave an interesting account about New Zealand's first conservationist, Richard Henry, who, beginning in the 1890s (I think) was employed by the Government to establish a bird sanctuary in Dusky Sound.

Henry's idea was to transfer to Resolution Island as many endangered flightless birds as he could catch. He hoped that birds such as the kakapo and kiwi could breed there safe from predation by stoats and rats which even then were common on the mainland. He toiled for years - fourteen years in fact - in conditions of great hardship and isolation, living and working mostly alone. The project came to a soul-destroying end when, one morning, Henry glimpsed a stoat ashore on his island sanctuary, and knew that all his work had been in vain. The origin of the stoat remains a mystery; perhaps it swam from the mainland, perhaps it was deliberately released on the island by local sealers with whom Henry had quarrelled.

I felt sad to think about poor Henry's misery, but I was even sadder about what came next. "The remains of Richard Henry's house still exist," said Ron Peacock. "The old brick chimney still stands, plus foundations of the building and shards of broken pottery. Unfortunately some visitors don't treat it with the respect it deserves.

"Recently, for example, a party of sea kayakers camped there, used the old bricks to make a fireplace, scorched surrounding trees, and left without cleaning up their mess. DOC staff had to remove rubbish scattered around the house site after they'd left."

So that's how it goes, folks. Next time you receive a cool reception from local people on the coast, or get turned away from a possible camp site, it may be because senseless, stupid people have been there ahead of you. It takes a lot of good behaviour by the majority of us to erase the memory created by one party of fools.

