



AUCKLAND CANOE CLUB NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1999

I'm ashamed to admit that I've barely been out on the water since my last Newsletter. I think I've only managed one trip on a lovely sunny but cold morning. I amassed so many odd stares and comments that day, something due to the temperature, it seemed, but as you've probably long since realised, when you keep active you don't feel the cold nearly as much. I was oblivious to the chilling wind and only noticed the coldness of the water while I was wading through the water prior to embarkation.

That's life. Winter comes. And winter goes. But it has prompted me to think that maybe we should be looking for alternative uses for our kayaks in the off season, if it becomes necessary to take an off season. Even I find it hard to muster up the energy to pack up car and kayak on a day when it is pouring with rain and visibility is way below nil.

I am just waiting for some designer to come up with the idea of a kayak bed. Remember you read it here first. Although sleeping in a kayak is still one of life's unsolved mysteries, there must be some scope for a kayak which you can stretch out in - for example a very long one. Sleigh beds have been trendy for some while, and the sleigh started out as a form of transport didn't it? Santa would be horrified if he took the time to look around our bedrooms while he was dropping off the gifts.

And what about a kayak cafe? It's easy to imagine: row upon row of glistening kayaks, each with a little side table. What could be more appropriate - kayakers love eating so the two would go well together. I imagine that's what it's going to be like down at Okahu Bay when the new waterside cafe is completed.

Then there's the obvious answer - use your kayaks as flower pots. The cockpit is the perfect shape and depth, although I suggest you seal off the fore and aft of your boat or you will need an incredible amount of potting mix to fill up the space. It would make the kayak fairly heavy too. But wouldn't that look great - yuccas and orange trees sprouting out of a kayak neatly positioned by your front door.

Then I thought of using my paddle as a paint stirrer, except that I would end up stirring my neighbour's paint instead of my own. As to my spray deck, well apart from the obvious use as fancy dress to wear when visiting the kids' classrooms to frighten their teachers into submission, that's a tricky one.

All ideas welcome.

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 AUG - SEPT

20 Aug 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.

22 Aug Weiti River

with Matt Grant who will arrange for good weather this time. Promise. Meet at Arkles Bay at 10.30am. If the weather looks dodgy call the leader to ensure the trip is going ahead.

Contact Matt on 524 2108 or 021 610 604..

28 Aug 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.

Saturday ✓

29 Aug St Heliers to ? Come and be surprised. Bring supper. Meet at 6pm for a 6.30pm departure from the main ramp. Estimated return 9.30pm to 10pm.

Contact Des Matthews 025 276 3456 or 815 2073.

Sunday **5 Sept Around Rangitoto** Meet at Okahu Bay at 9.30am for 10am departure. A leisurely trip to Mackenzie Bay for lunch then cruise on to Gardners Gap for the 3pm high tide and a quick paddle home.

Contact David Poolman on 025 597 086.

4-5 Sept Whanganui River to Ohinepa APCC race Train
Saturday race Sunday. Contact Adrian Davis tel 576 0996.

Sunday **12 Sept Awhitu Peninsula** Tide assisted trip. Meet at Cornwallis wharf at 9.30am for 10am departure. We will cross the harbour to Orua Bay and travel the coastline towards Waiuku, past Big Bay, Greames Bay, Matakawau etc. Possibly check out Awhitu Regional Park for a future overnighiter.

Contact Margaret Thwaites tel 292 7883.

Sunday **19 Sept Herald Island to Albany via Lucas Creek** Meet at the boat ramp before Christmas Beach at 9.30am for a 10am departure. If nature runs to schedule the kowhai will be in full bloom attracting an abundance of tuis. There always seem to be kingfishers, herons and shags on this stretch of tranquil water. See the charming waterfall past the Albany bridge, helping to make this a lovely paddle.

Contact Ray Clark tel 818 9609.

18-19 Sept North Island Marathon Champs at Waitemata Canoe & Multisports Club. Contact Blair Roskrug tel 815 4000

Sunday **26 September, (Sunday). Crusoe Island.** If small islands are good, tiny islands are even better! Crusoe Is lies in the channel between Motuhie and Waiheke. It's about the size of a tennis court and has two tiny beaches. We will carry the ebb tide out there (with a stop for morning tea on Motuhie Is), then after lunch on Crusoe Is get a lift from the flood tide on the way home, (probably by way of Browns Is). Meet at Bucklands Beach (near the northern end) at 9.45am for a 10.00am departure; bring lunch, drinks and snacks.

Novice or intermediate paddlers should phone **Colin Quilter (630 2219)** on Saturday night to discuss the trip; by then the weather will have declared itself. Experienced paddlers can just turn up on the day.

ASKNET trips We usually list ASKNET trips in this Newsletter. Here is a summary of

what they have planned: 29 Aug Puketutu Island, leader Vincent Maire tel 09 424 2293; 19 Sept Weiti River Silverdale, leader Clive Hookham tel 09 473 0493; 26 Sept Paddle to & climb Rangitoto from Takapuna, leader is Kerry Howe tel 09 478 9952

And before we launch into the usual stuff... some words from Trevor our President:

BAD NEWS TRAVELS FAST.

While talking to some of Fergs guides in the weekend, they commented, "Gee some of your members are bloody rough on your club boats. They drag them damn near all the way down the ramp." It took the rest of the day for my blood pressure to drop to normal. Please observe how glass and kevlar boat owners launch their craft and do likewise. They definitely do not graunch their boats down the ramp.

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

Winter is nearly over but as 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:

- 1 Storm
- 1 Squall

[cont. of]
ever

These are the only boats available for hireage. ALL other boats are privately owned. Please respect this.

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

These last 2 are whitewater boats.

We have now sold the 2 Sea Quests.

The rates for hireage are: for evening Club padles on Tuesdays and Thursdays the charge is \$3 per seat. For full day hire, or part thereof, the charge is \$15 per seat.

The majority of members are excellent at paying for hireage. Sadly a few need chasing up. Come on guys - the Committee are here to enjoy paddling not to play debt collectors. It's no fun for anyone when you don't pay up. Don't short change your Club.

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?

Thank you for the recent good response to my pleas for Newsletter material. It has been great to receive so much mail. If you don't see your piece in print straight away it is because I am saving it up for later. Keep the stuff coming!

For those who haven't yet ...

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.

Subscriptions

Club subscriptions are now due for the year to March 2000. Please use the subscription form from your June Newsletter. Again this month the label on your Newsletter shows your membership status.

For sale

1. Bandit, whitewater/surf playboat, excellent all rounder, spiffy colours, great condition with airbags. \$450. I have tripped over this boat in my crowded garage once too often. Phone Matt 524 2108home or 912 4311work.
2. Loksha sea kayak, stable tourer. Yellow, looking for good home, reluctant sale \$1200 with some accessories. Phone Jane 623 2060.

Sea Kayak Racing & BBQs

By Roger Lomas

I recently rang a paddling rival from a club up the harbour and invited him to join us in our Saturday Series. His club sits at the mouth of a muddy, polluted creek that doesn't get much early morning sun and is frequently wreathed in fog or swamp gas. He declined, mumbling some excuses about "getting a bit long in the paddle" and "sea worm rotting his rudder". Now, this fellow is in his fifties and feels it is time to ease up!

Not so down at Okahu Bay, the home of the Eveready Men. One of our Eveready Men, Roy Meeham, just a few days past his 68th birthday, was standing on the top of the victory podium after taking both line and handicap honours in our last race. Our Ray is still going strong and the legendary Lauri would have been nudging 70 the last time I saw him racing. It must be the sunshine and sparkling Waitemata that flood into our club base at Okahu Bay that keeps them going and going.

The post-race B.B.Q. saw Harley don the chef's hat after putting in a splendid performance in his new X Factor. The bill of fare included American Hot Dogs and Bacon & Egg Rolls. The owner of one of the best-kept sea kayaks in the club turned up on two wheels to show support and enjoy Harley's hot dogs. A curious observer noticed the trendy looking ankle bracelets the sea pig aficionado was wearing and enquired. "Bicycle clips," Colin politely replied.

To finish off a great morning in the sunshine, Rona (we can't possibly call her the Eveready Lady), our racing grandmum, presented us all with a bunch of golden daffodils from her garden and made us all look like winners.

Join us at the end of the month (28th) when we will debut the new B.B.Q. with a famous guest chef (Guess Who).

And some comments from Rona Patterson

During the winter of 1999 Roger Lomas has organised four Club Evenings, which have been a tremendous success. If you haven't managed to attend any of these, you have missed a treat. Roger needs to be congratulated on the work he has put into these evenings.

Each evening has followed the same format, commencing with soup and a hot sandwich, and the chance to catch up with fellow club mates. This is followed by a speaker with the most awe-inspiring tales and shows the most fascinating slides.

Roger has also been very busy organising sea kayak races which are held on a regular basis from our club rooms on designated Saturday mornings. He has done these on his own and has very rarely had the opportunity to take part in the race. At the end of the race there are the most delicious smells permeating from Roger's barbecue and it is not possible to go home until a huge breakfast is eaten.

With the final Club Night behind us, what on earth will Roger do with his spare time now? And will his family know the strange man who turns up at his house? Or is he working on new schemes to get us out of our homes so that he can feed us at some other venue?

Club Night

Roger Lomas writes

The winter series of club nights is over for the year (yes, it's spring next month) and it's time to thank:— the stars of the shows Peter and Su; from the Auckland Canoe Centre, Dave Inwood, Pelham Housego, Iain Anderson and Colin Quilter; the videos courtesy of our friends downstairs; James and the team at Fergs Kayaks; the kitchen crew of Rona, Jan, Rosie and Terry; Margaret and Ray who were at the door to greet you; and Colin and Trev who kept things running smoothly on the floor.

One of the real stars of the shows didn't actually attend — the well-known Mt Eden Pizzaman, Herr Wolfgang, who was busy at his De Niro's Restaurant after preparing most of the food for us. Also the show wouldn't have been complete without all the club members and their friends who gave tremendous support and filled our clubrooms with happy conversation and club spirit.

My Favourite Paddle

By Simon Bickersteth

(Actually a collection of fond memories of Auckland paddles from an Englishman who is shortly to depart these shores)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people in the ACC who have made me feel so welcome, in particular the Tuesday night kayakers. I arrived in Auckland last August to work for one year with the Mission to Seafarers here in the Ports of Auckland. As soon as I saw the aptly named Waitemata harbour, I knew that I had to get out on the water. Coming from Cumbria in England, famous for its Lake District, I had done a lot of sailing over the years, and for a brief period my family owned a 17 foot Canadian Canoe, which gave us more flexibility in exploring the lakes, rivers and coastline of Cumbria. However with two dogs, including a large Labrador who would prefer to be in the water rather than sitting in a canoe, and who constantly threatened to capsize the canoe every time he moved, we decided to sell the Canadian Canoe. Before coming to New Zealand I had done only a little bit of kayaking on lakes and rivers, and my technique left a lot to be desired (it probably still does)!

It was not long before I decided to try out Sea Kayaking, and traveled down to Okahu Bay one Tuesday afternoon in September. The thing that surprised me most about sea kayaking, being a novice at the sport, was how easy the kayaks are to control, even in quite rough conditions. I have mostly used the club Sea Breezes, and Sea Quests, which although not the most nimble of kayaks, have proved to be reliable and dependable in all weather conditions that I have encountered.

I have not been able to do as many trips as I would have liked over the last twelve months, however there are a number of outings that do stick in mind. One of which was a trip Laurie, Rona and myself did one afternoon to 'A' buoy off Rangitoto Island. For me this was quite an achievement, being one of the longest paddles I had done, having only been kayaking a very short period of time. This three hour, 18 kilometer round trip took place in summer, and although a nice sunny day, the wind was strong, and we battled some quite large waves. It was only on the return journey that I noticed how tiring the first leg of the trip had made me feel, having had to paddle into the wind. On the return leg not only did I have to contend with sore arms and legs (I have yet to find a kayak I am completely comfortable in- if that is indeed possible!), but I also had to learn how to control the kayak when the wind and waves are behind you, and pushing the kayak in all directions. Another more recent trip I did, that I highly recommend to people was an overnight trip to Rangitoto. We were fortunate in that the weather was beautiful

for our trip, and we had really calm conditions as we circumnavigated the island. Keen to clear the Gardeners Gap between Rangitoto and Motutapu before the tide turned against us, we pushed one around the island, only stopping for lunch once through the gap. One of the pleasures of overnighting on Rangitoto is the knowledge that you do not need to rush back to Auckland, and we could spend the extra time exploring the island, and enjoying the sunset from the crater summit, once the crowds have left the island. The Scout hut which the club now has use of, provides an excellent base to stay, only two minutes from the wharf (and toilets), it is basic, but comfortable, and quite well equipped with pots and pans. However I do recommend taking a pillow across- I found I woke up with a very stiff neck the following morning. One of the nice things of overnight trips to Rangitoto, is that although it is so close to Auckland, you really do feel you are escaping the rat race, and go home feeling greatly relaxed.

Here in Auckland you have one of the best harbours in the world which to explore by kayak. I have enjoyed the chance to get out on the water and experience Auckland at its best. However what has made the Tuesday night kayaking trips so enjoyable is the diversity of people that go sea kayaking, and the friendliness of the Tuesday night crowd.

On my return to the UK I will be getting back into sailing, however I have now caught the sea kayaking bug, and hope it won't be too long before I'm back in a sea kayak, albeit braving the cold and harsh conditions of the Irish Sea (during which time I'll remember fondly the warm waters of Auckland!) Best wishes to all in the ACC, and thank you for a fabulous year.

And while on the subject...

By Rona Patterson

We are lucky in Auckland where temperatures rarely get too cold, but Murphy's Law says 'When mercury drops, rain and wind will follow'. That being the case, you can bet the lousy weather clashes with plans to be out on the water. Such has been the case now for many months, the latest trips to be canned were overnights at Shakespear Bay and Rangitoto, and day trips exploring the West Coast and Moturekareka.

Tuesday night outings have not been very well patronised over the last few months. However, I must say that the keen Tuesday night paddlers are of quality stock. On a previous Tuesday evening it was decided that we would play in the waters rushing into Hobson and Judges Bays. Full tide was more than two hours away. After a couple of adrenalin rushes, we attempted going under the railway bridge at the back of Hobson Bay. It was a blessing that darkness was almost upon us, because our antics would have caused some amusement to passing traffic if they had been able to see us. The water was coming so fast, we could neither negotiate our way under the bridge, nor successfully back out without knocking the wall or the rocks.

This experience did not curtail our outing. The rush under Tamaki Drive near Judges Bay was almost as disturbed as the narrows on the recent Cambridge to Hamilton race. It was here that we heard (before we saw), two kayaks coming towards us and we waited for them to join us. Not so. They were in racing kayakers and had no desire to join us.

Paddling at Opito Bay

By Trevor Arthur

An early escape from work on Friday, saw me on top of the hill overlooking the "Jewel of Coromandel". Opito Bay must surely rate as one of the finest Bays on the coast, with the Mercury Island group scattered beyond it.

I arrived at Graeme Bruce's bach in time to go for a quick paddle before darkness descended. The water was like a sheet of glass and even in the failing light I could see the bottom several metres down. What a way to start the weekend.! This was just a taste of what we were to be spoiled with this weekend.

Sue and Wally had arrived on Thursday night, and on Friday along with Graeme, had toured the coast through tunnels and around Islands., having a superb day. By 9.00pm Justin, Ryan, and Des had arrived and we made plans for a civilised departure time in the morning. We had in mind a trip over to Peachgrove on Great Mercury, then around anti-clockwise to paddle under the sheer cliffs-200 metres or so, as they tower above you. Then it was to be off over to the inner islands then home.

By the time these plans were sorted, Arnie had arrived, and Peter S., Marcel and Joe had come along from Joe's bach just back along the beach. Two beach front houses in paradise, what a privileged club we are.

As steam rose from the water in the Bay into the crisp morning air, the sun sparkled on the water and we had to remind ourselves this was supposed to be winter.

Fishing lines were out, and by the time we got to Peachgrove Bay an obliging John Dory was on board, not a bad start. (I'm sure I heard a disparaging comment about my parentage muttered by a fellow Angler.!) Morning tea was enjoyed in a perfect setting on white silica sand (it squeaks when you walk on it.!) We explored up the estuary, some walking some paddling until we found a small waterfall. Tuis, Kingfishers, Fantails, Herons – wow.

Back at the beach it didn't take long to decide to go for plan "B", as the conditions were perfect. The smaller Islands could wait, we wanted to circumnavigate Great Mercury Island. Measured out it seemed like a 48km round trip and as we had got off to a leisurely 9.30am start, we decided to get cracking.

No sooner on the water, and we had 2 guests. A beautiful pair of dolphins were cruising around us in the bay. Ryan paddled off after them and had one on each side of his bow as though they were enjoying the boat's bow wave. Justin has a great photo of this, one of those very special moments.

The rock formations on the south eastern end are quite spectacular as they rise sheer out of the water to over 200 metres.

The geographic upheavals that have taken place over the ages to distort the landscape in such a way, then the erosion that has taken place, is incredible.

By lunch break – 1.30pm I had 2 Kawhai on the deck and it was shaping up for a memorable day. We ate well, soaked up the sun and slipped back onto the water at 2.00pm for the long push home, planning to be back to the mainland before dark. Rounding the northern tip and we caught the sea breeze, this put a bit of life into the water and we had a nice quatering sea helping us back around the Island. Those fish wouldn't leave me alone and 2 more Kawhai finished up on my deck. Well enough is enough, we had dinner, so I retired the lure.

As the sun set we had 2 more (or the same 2) dolphins gliding through the water as the sky turned the most amazing range of pink, purple, crimson and red and all the shades in between.

Well it was now dark and the beach lights were our beacons as we glided onto the beach at around 6.00pm and we knew we'd had one of the best days you could hope for.

Hot showers, fish on the smoker, all manner of foods being prepared, and a lot of happy, tired, bodies. Ray and Margaret had arrived in the afternoon so they were in time for Justin's slides of Major Island and Ponui Island. He has some amazing shots and we had a great evening. The need for some zzz's was pressing so we discussed Sunday and hit the sack.

Crack of Dawn and we didn't want to miss a moment of this day. A walk down the beach, back for breakfast and a cruise down the coast was the order of the day. Graeme showed us more special places and we lunched at an old Pa site. We meandered home discussing the merits of a hot swim at Miranda to finish the day off.

Well all good things end, so we packed up, thanked Graeme again for his hospitality and said our good-byes until we descend on this glorious spot again.

If you weren't able to come this time, do yourself a favour, find time next time, it's a wonderful place, there's so much to see and do, the water clarity is unbelievable, what a place..Wow.

Happy Paddling.

Trevor.

An Old Spanish verse

Susan Hill -the origins of this please ?

Que es mi barco mi tesoro
Que es mi fe la libertad
Mi ley-la fuerza del viento
Mi unica patria-el mar

My Ship is my treasure

My faith is liberty
My law-the force of the wind
My only home- the sea

Supplied by Matt Grant

Winter weekend at Kerikeri

By Etienne de Beer

Over the last weekend in June a group of 14 kayakers went up to Kerikeri to do some paddling in the northern BOI. The original plan had been to base ourselves at the Oronga Holiday Park, but subsequently we were offered the use of a homestay, Aratika, in Blacksmith's Bay and several of us decided to take up this option. Aratika is a fully equipped large 3 bedroomed house nestled in native bush with water access. The extensive parklike grounds have glow-worms and at night kiwis can be heard if not seen.

On the Saturday we awoke to the sound of steady rain and immediately were faced with the question of whether to go ahead with the intended paddle from Opito Bay to Cape Wiwiki and Ninepin. The consensus was that on a longish paddle like that (25 km) we would inevitably get very cold when getting out of the kayaks for a break along the way, and so we decided to go around Moturoa Island and the Black Rocks instead. Better weather was forecast for the next day - tackling the longer paddle then seemed a better idea. As we made our way through the Kent Passage the rain intensified and the wind picked up, and things seemed rather miserable, but soon afterwards the rain stopped and the skies started clearing. A gentle swell added interest to our exploration of the Black Rocks, and then we landed at a picturesque bay on Moturoa Island for a stretch and a snack. As we headed back to Opito Bay the weather deteriorated again, and we were quite keen to get back to Aratika for a hot shower, lunch, and a thaw in front of the open fire. On Saturday evening most of the group got together in the spacious living room at Aratika for a good feed and plenty of wine. We whiled away the evening in front of the fire and agreed to meet again at Opito Bay at 9 am on Sunday morning.

On Sunday morning we were faced with constant rain and in addition the temperature had dropped noticeably. No-one felt that paddling was a good idea, so we again headed back to the fireplace at Aratika for a thaw and some coffee. After waiting in vain for the rain to subside, Tony convinced a few brave souls to launch their kayaks from Blacksmith's Bay and paddle to the Stone Store and back. A couple of hours later they arrived back looking wet and cold, and wasted no time in heading for a hot shower and a place in front of the roaring fire.

Spending the weekend at the homestay rather than camping, had made the difference between being cold, wet and miserable on the one hand, and being quite comfortable, if somewhat disappointed by missing out on paddling on the other hand. For winter trips a place such as Aratika (Hosts Chris & Terry Quinlan, phone 09 407 7505, e mail aratika@clear.net.nz) is a valuable resource for kayakers, since it is ideally situated, very comfortable, and the rates are very reasonable - no dearer than a cabin at a motor camp.

Manukau Heads

By Phillip Noble

They say experience is the best teacher, and I can say that complacency caught me out, for when I saw the calendar with the above trip advertised I thought, “Yep I know that Cornwallis is just before Huia.” So with confidence left home a bit later than normal for the “short” drive.

On the way I noticed that the fuel gauge was on E but by now I thought if I don't hurry I'll be late. The road went on and on and soon I came to a sign that said Huia - “damn - I've come too far, how did I miss the turn-off?”

A quick U-turn and I was heading back when I saw another kayaker heading out and thought “OK, he's lost too.” But soon I came to Parau and realized that somehow I'd missed again!! So back again and this time came to the Huia sign that was half covered by a branch that hid the “5 Kms to Huia”.

That solved, it was now 10.15am and I was definitely late. Onward down to Cornwallis beach to be confronted with a dozen or so kayakers ready to go. A fast change and some help from Wally and I was on the beach to be greeted by (accustomed to tardy paddlers) Colin, who finished his briefing before we hit the water.

All smooth paddling out to the end of the Cornwallis peninsular before meeting up with the 15 to 20 knot Southerly which, combined with the outgoing tide caused some unpleasant bow spray.

On the way we passed, at a distance, Huia, which I recall was the site of the Turner (of Turners & Growers) family original homestead. Never having seen the land oldman Turner bought, at an auction, 200 acres for 5 shillings an acre. He then spent the next

few years(before buying a horse) walking the 23 miles into Auckland each Monday to return on Fridays. At that time he had a Fruit and Veg shop in Queen Street. From these humble beginnings grew the national network of Turners and Growers.

Shortly before arriving at South Head, Roger pointed out some seals making the most of the low tide and sunning themselves on the rocks. We beached and after confirming that the tide would be some time before turning, tied the boats together (precaution against being blown away if the wind got too strong) and headed off up the steep (2 : 1) south head slopes. Halfway up, we found a sheltered level area and settled down to admire the view and have lunch. Some of the more intrepid headed up to the summit which after a few strain-related near heart attacks gave a breathtaking view. After a brief stroll through some lush paddocks and some agile leaping over, under and through fences we came to the top of a steep sand bank down to the beach a few hundred feet below.

The view was spectacular and gave us a good appreciation of the difficulties of negotiating the Manukau mouth by boat especially at low tide with an onshore wind.

Halfway down we came to a vertical 2.5 to 3 meter drop onto softer sand below. Various techniques were employed by members to negotiate this, from whooping leaps, to more cautious slip and slides to Trevor's gentlemanly assistance to Rhona, who did extremely well to overcome her initial reticence to negotiate this obstacle.

A short walk back to the kayaks saw us head back with the wind and tide for an easy paddle with a bit of surfing added in for fun.

Overall a good easy paddle to an interesting destination. Thanks to Colin for leading the group.