



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2000

The other week it seemed as though winter were truly on the way. Stormy weather, cold winds and the return of the rain which had been absent for so long. I was especially annoyed at all this because for several weeks I had been planning to join Rona on her inaugural weekend Club trip as leader on the Saturday morning. It's not often I get the chance of a free Saturday so I was very put out to be thwarted, and not too keen on a kayak in heavy rain and winds.

So it was a great relief when Saturday dawned beautifully clear and calm, totally unexpected and unforecast as this was. I headed off to the Te Atatu Peninsula in joyful mood.

It was a delightful morning's paddle, with 11 boats - one double. Since my last paddle around this area had involved clambering through mile upon mile of mud just to reach the water I was pleased to see our departure was scheduled for close to high tide. There wasn't too much mud at all. Of course for the first part of the way the water was extremely shallow, but we all managed to stay afloat.

We headed along the peninsula coastline, searching for Rona's seal (featured in last month's Newsletter) but we could not spot it; it must have been out doing it's Saturday morning grocery shop in the Harbour somewhere. The seal has gained quite a bit of notoriety with many kayakers having achieved a glimpse. So I'm assured it does exist.

Next port of call was Pollen Island, and when members of our party spotted a picnic table on the foreshore there was no stopping the clamour for a morning tea break. As if we hardy types need a picnic table! Anyway we hastened for the beautiful white shelly beach and beached our kayaks as best we could, mindful of a rapidly approaching high tide and a steep foreshore from which carelessly left craft could easily slip away. In fact only one kayak came adrift as we sat scoffing - it was recaptured before reaching Greenhithe.

Rona had baked a chocolate cake, which we all enjoyed. Then we continued on to Waterview, passing under the motorway bridge into an area of lagoon and mangroves. The sort of spot you would never know existed. We headed upstream, at first parallel to the motorway then moving away from it, in quiet surrounds, finally navigating a narrow tunnel. After this point the stream was deemed too narrow to continue so we all had the fun of turning in a confined space. Some made it, some didn't without disembarking.

Our return from Waterview to Te Atatu was made considerably easier by the outgoing tide. I for one was in a hurry to get back since outgoing tide equates with increasing expanses of mudflats, and we made the return in good time. At Rona's house after the trip celebrations were in order as the kayakers in the double had just announced their engagement. I won't divulge their names in case a) I have got the story wrong or b) they wish to retain their privacy about this.

Yours in paddling

Julia

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? I like to keep a store of articles to use in the Newsletter so please send stuff in when you have it rather than worrying about when my deadlines are. However my final deadline is always the day of the Committee meeting which is on the second Tuesday of the month.

AGM 16 May

Apologies for the incorrect date which appeared in last month's Newsletter.

Don't forget this important occasion. This is your major opportunity to have a say on the direction your Club takes, who is on the Committee and generally what goes on. It's a fun evening not to be missed.

Time: 7pm
Venue: Clubrooms, Okahu Bay.

Please bring a plate for supper.

Subscriptions

If you've got this far into your Newsletter without realising that subs are due for the year ending March 2001, just check the front page as you might have missed something. Please try to pay your subs promptly as the income is important in keeping the Club on its feet to the standard that you've grown used to. Remember - you get two reminders and then the Newsletters will stop arriving.

For sale

Two Puffin sea kayaks, one blue, one white. \$700 each (without paddles or spray skirts). These boats have been in our club fleet for some years; they are well-used but in serviceable condition. The Puffin is an older design but an excellent one; we will be replacing both these boats with new Puffins. Contact Trevor Arthur 8177357.

CALENDAR MAR - APRIL

Just a reminder Please can you make sure to contact trip leaders before you pack up your stuff to go on a trip.

16 May Club AGM Don't miss the social occasion of the millenium. Well, maybe not, but please come along anyway to have your say in the running of the Club, and to stand for election onto the Committee. You don't have to be an experienced paddler to join the Committee, just interested and enthusiastic. Fresh blood is always welcome.

Safety policy for club trips

- 1 Any club member who has some doubt about whether or not their skills are sufficient for a particular trip **MUST** contact the trip leader ahead of time to discuss safety issues.
- 2 It is your responsibility to wear a buoyancy aid, to be suitably dressed for the conditions, and to carry any other personal safety equipment necessary for the trip.
- 3 You must make a realistic assessment that your strength and endurance are sufficient for whatever is planned.
- 4 You must be able to re-enter your kayak (with help from another paddler if necessary) after a capsize in deep water.

16 April Narrows to Hamilton Race Starts from jetty at Wellington St Beach Hamilton. There is a 10km event and a 20km event which includes 2 portages. Contact Scott Gemmill for details, tel 07 834 3957 or 025 285 1884.

Easter and Anzac Day at Mayor Island Friday 21 to Monday 24 or Tuesday 25 April. Depart Mount Maunganui Thursday night at 8pm. Space is limited and a deposit is required to secure a booking. Many spaces have already gone but there is still some room available, so get in quick if you'd like to come. There's a choice of return date: Monday or Tuesday.

There are fantastic bushwalks, fishing and snorkelling not to mention the awesome kayaking scenery to be enjoyed. Don't miss out on this one.

The cost of the return boat trip is \$65 and the accommodation is \$22 per night.

For full details and bookings contact Justin Sanson-Beattie or Jennifer tel 278 8090 or 025 868 177.

22/23 April
Or... Motuihe Island Come over to Motuihe for the Saturday and Sunday of Easter weekend, extending the stay if there is the demand. chance of a paddle across to Waiheke, or just lazing around the island.

Contact Rona Patterson if you are interested, tel 834 3399.

29 April Dinner at De Niro's Not strictly a kayaking trip. Come out for dinner at Wolfgang's restaurant in Mount Eden, which is Italian and BYO.

Contact Rona Patterson if you are able to come, tel 834 3399.

30 April Meandering on the Manukau What could be nicer than drifting down the Manukau with the tide? Then morning tea with a million dollar view, and a gentle stroll over the hill after lunch.

Meet at Cornwallis wharf at 9.15am for 9.30 departure. Bring lunch, snacks, shoes or sandals, warm clothes and a camera. We will land at South Head and at Whatipu.

The trip is suitable (in fine weather) for intermediate or experienced paddlers, not for novices. If the forecast is for more than 15 knots of wind phone Colin Quilter 630 2219 on Saturday evening or Sunday morning 6.30 to 8am for revised plans.

6 May Sea kayak race Here's a chance to test out your fitness on the Harbour or just have a pleasant paddle with friends going a bit harder than usual for about an hour. Courses of five and ten kilometres are on offer, with timekeeper Roger to keep things honest. Roger has a good handicapping system to ensure a fair set of results at the finish.

After the race there's a bbq and a chance to catch up with friends for a chat. Cost is \$5 and non kayakers are welcome at the bbq too, ie your clan of supporters.

Contact Roger Lomas for more info tel 625 8924. There's no need to book, just turn up on the day, at 8am for an 8.30 start.

7 May Matakana River Meet at 8am at Matakana township by the Rusty Pelican - to get there you turn right off SH1 at Warkworth then go left past the first lights. We will then proceed to Buckleton Beach and paddle back up to Matakana, an easy three hour return paddle for all skill levels. Great cafe on our return to Matakana, and a compulsory morning tea at Morris & James.

Trip leader is Matt Grant tel 524 2108.

13 May Across the Harbour Be at Okahu Bay at 8am for 8.30 departure, for a leisurely morning paddle across to Takapuna, with a morning tea stop on the way. You'll be home by lunch.

Contact Trevor Arthur tel 817 7357

20 May Sea kayak race As for May 6.

21 May Cornwallis towards Waiuku & return Meet at Cornwallis wharf at 8.30am for 9am departure. Carry the tide and see how far we get up towards Waiuku. We'll have lunch and return with the tide. high tide is at 12.19 (3.8metres) with lots of push to make use of. Back at Cornwallis around 4.30pm.

Contact Trevor tel 817 7357.

18 June Cambridge to Hamilton APCC race This is an important annual event for our Club, a major race on the APCC calendar which we organise and run. Matt Grant is in charge this year, tel 524 2108. The distance is 23km but don't be daunted - the current does a fair bit of the work, and this event is by no means just intended for elite racers. So come along and have a go. There's always an excellent feed and lots of spot prizes afterwards, and medals for all placegetters.

More details and an entry form will appear in the next Newsletter.

CLUB NIGHT PADDLES remain unchanged - Tuesdays and Thursdays at Okahu Bay at 5.30pm.

Night paddling

With the ending of daylight saving we need to make sure we are seen.

It is everybody's responsibility to provide their own large lens flashlight and/or a fixed all round white light on a pole, approx one metre high. The flashlight is to be carried under the bungies, not nicely stowed in the hatch or cockpit keeping it warm and dry. Check your batteries have enough grunt to do the job properly and not just give a feint dim glow.

Be out there and **BE SEEN**. Night paddling can be the some of the best you can have, like a recent trip with Wally over to Rangitoto for supper which was brilliant, to coin a phrase!

Kayak hire arrangements

On Club nights payment is on a first come first served basis, with money to be left in the Club shed. The rate is \$5 per seat.

At other times full payment must be made to Bruce Bugbee in advance to secure a booking. You can call Bruce first to ensure the kayak of your choice is available, tel 570 1134. This is a Monday to Friday daytime number only. Bruce's address for remittances is 1 Mason St, New Lynn. The charges are: anytime finishing before noon is \$10 for the duration of use; anytime starting after noon is \$10 for the duration. If your period of hire crosses noon the charge is \$20 for a full day.

**DO'NT
FORGET
THE**

AGM

**ON
MAY 16
MAY 16
AT 7PM**

The Ebb and Flow

By Roger Lofts

It pays to have good contacts and last weekends trip leader Rona Patterson must have been on the blower to the Weather Maker. After calmly reassuring the faint hearted during Friday night's tempest a near perfect sunny Saturday arrived. We were then treated to a pleasant paddle along the pristine white shellbanks of Pollen Island. Nestled between flax fronds a picnic table appeared and a happy pod of paddlers went ashore and parked themselves around it. Our thoughtful leader then served us all a large slice of freshly baked chocolate cake. Take a bow Rona.

Arnot Lafleur blew the paddles off the field to take out the Waiwera Sea Kayak race. Arnot had borrowed a new wing paddle from Ferg's shop for the race and I don't think they will be getting it back somehow.

Avert your eyes. A gasp was heard from some of the ladies in our 15 strong group of paddlers at the start of our Mokahinau Island exploration. Colin had just rolled over in the water to reveal a well travelled bottom. Almost immediately as if in sync, trip leader Matt Grant did the same. A rather shiny bottom was exposed this time and in the bright sunlight we had to squint or look away. Surely not, but yes another bottom flasher mooned at us when Kevin Jose made it a threesome. Rona was getting quite anxious at the sight of all these bottoms bobbing about and only relaxed when they rolled their kayaks back up for a fresh gulp of air. There were grins galore from our mask and snorkel equipped underwater pervers.

A small craft sank at its moorings in Okahu Bay last week and a smelly oil slick was reported to be lurking in the bay on Sunday.

One of our club male members is missing a couple of little round furry things. They have often caused shrieks of alarm when they have suddenly plopped out on the water next to some of our lady paddlers. Reports indicate that the items in question after frequent misuse and rough handling were showing signs of wear and now they have suffered a fateful form of vengeance. They've been nicked - Jonathon Jarvis would like his tennis balls back please, no questions asked.

Peter S. has a rare collection of second hand Sission Sea Kayaks for sale in his shop at the moment. A Selkie, and Astrolobe and a Puysegur.

Ken Snell and Philip Noble are at it again. How on earth do their wives tolerate it? These two have already built their own wooden Kayaks and are both well underway with new craft. Ken with more plans from the States is building something long and sleeker. Philip who is usually seen slicing the waves in his unique bulbous bowed Hornet is almost ready to launch a double.

Grant Stone who designed the famous Albatross Sea Kayak has also built two different models of double Sea Kayaks out of wood. At the recent Paddle Round the Bays race they scored a quinella with the winning team from the "Aquaterra" supplying the motive power. Grant paddling his single wooden V.F.K. came home second in the Sea Kayak event just behind Dave Poolman.

Watch out for the Rotorua Rocket when Graham Bruce builds his new boat.

Trip reports to look forward to - Mokohinau Island and the Alderman Island and well done to the Cruise Directors Justin Sanson-Beattie and Matt Grant.

Our serious Saturday morning workouts and BBQ start next month.

RONA'S SUMMER OF PADDLING

By Rona Patterson

Summer did not come to Auckland much before February this year, but the weather since has been fabulous. March was extra busy with a picnic at Puketutu (perfect weather), Rangitoto swim escort (a very hot and steamy day), Coastbusters (magnificent weather for the duration) and Wet 'N' Wild (more perfect weather). The best weather of all was saved for the Mokohinau islands which was on the first day of April.

Then as the evenings began to draw in and temperatures drop a little, Saturday 8 April was magnificent. This day 12 people gathered in Te Atatu for a trip up the upper harbour. We started off by looking for the Whau Creek seal, but he was not displaying himself for us. We continued around Pollen island where a discarded (and very heavy) picnic table was found high above a steep shell bank. We stopped here for morning tea and only a few kayaks decided to depart of their own free will.

Back in our kayaks again, we paddled to Waterview where Peter Sommerhalder led us literally up the creek. Oakley creek wound under Carrington Road via a narrow pipe and carried up for some way when we found it difficult to turn around.

Once we were back on the harbour side of the north-western motorway, it was a speedy paddle home with a following wind. Some had other duties and departed after the paddle, others had some celebrating to do. Two club members are to tie the knot and it was important for the remainder of us to share a glass of bubbly on the terrace of my home while sitting in the sun.

This paddling disease I have caught, has kept me from home for nine weekends in a row, and every event has been very much worth the effort of getting out of bed early for.

Escorting the swimmers is a privilege. While the paddle is slow, I am in awe of the strength of the swimmers and the ease with which they cover long distances – in many cases looking as fresh at the end as they did at the beginning.

The Coastbusters was a huge success. A considerable number of our club tee shirts were on display and the knowledge gained will be invaluable. On the Sunday, 81 kayaks were paddled to Motuora for a barbecue. This surely was some kind of a record.

The following week, cars were headed north again; this time to Waiwera for the Wet 'N' Wild races. Once again, perfect weather, and the event was very well organised, but entries appeared to be down this year.

Then we came to the trip to the Mokohinaus on the best day of summer. This trip had to be the highlight of the season, with the trip out and back on a catamaran, paddling around the islands, climbing to the light-house and snorkelling around the inlet. I must add here, that while kayaks were still to be lifted off the catamaran, I was astounded to see Colin Quilter's kayak tip upside down. I considered that it was early in the day for him to display his 'roll' and wonder why it took him so long to surface again. He was not rolling, but investigating what was under the surface. I swear he spent more time with his head in the water than out.

Whangamumu trip - more on this

Etienne de Beer's story from Anniversary Weekend

"A deepening low is situated over the west Tasman and moving slowly eastward" said the Metservice 'Weather Situation'. "Forecast for sea area Brett for Saturday morning 15 knot nor'easter, changing to 20 knot northerly in the afternoon." Not an ideal start to the long weekend, but not bad enough to keep 9 adventurous souls from meeting up at the motor camp at Bland Bay for a paddle up the coast. After shuttling a couple of cars up to the Rawhiti motor camp on the Saturday morning, we got onto the water shortly after 10 am for the start of what was to become quite an eventful trip.

As usual there was virtually no wave action on the beach in front of the motor camp, but as we made our way out of the well sheltered bay and paddled around the headland, we soon encountered 1-2 m swells and the promised nor'easter whipping up whitecaps. In the lumpy seas Bianca became quite seasick. With several miles of rocky shoreline exposed to a sizeable swell either side of us we did not have the option of heading straight to shore. Chuck, an outdoor guide from Fairbanks, Alaska who had come to NZ to escape the freezing Alaskan winter, soon started feeling rather chilly as the pod of his Puffin filled up through a leaky spraydeck. Ryan helped him pump the cockpit out, but it refilled rapidly, and further attempts at emptying were abandoned. Soon Ryan was also becoming seasick, stopping periodically to vomit. At this point the group divided into two, with Tony ultimately taking Bianca under tow, and leading off with Dave and Chuck (whose Puffin appeared to be slowly sinking), while Peter, Pete, Steve and I paddled with Ryan. Ryan elected to keep paddling rather than be towed, as he thought he'd feel even worse being towed. At one point, having stopped, Ryan capsized, but was helped back in without much difficulty. While lying over the deck of Ryan's Albatross to stabilise it for the rescue, a fish hook on his deck (unseen by me) stuck into my side, but fortunately didn't get through my clothing.

We decided to head for the nearest beach where we knew there was a sheltered landing - Taupiri Bay. This was also the last beach with road access before Rawhiti. Making very slow progress and stopping intermittently as Ryan was struck with waves of nausea, we ultimately took over 3 hours to get to Taupiri Bay. On landing at Taupiri Bay Chuck discovered that the pod of his Puffin was also leaking, so that the kayak (which lacks watertight bulkheads) was gradually filling with water. Clearly he was not going to be able to continue. Bianca likewise decided to opt out, as did Ryan after some thought - with conditions unlikely to improve the sea sickness seemed likely to recur as soon as he got back onto the water, and his energy had been drained by being sick on the first leg. Chuck, Bianca and Ryan took the road back to the Bland Bay motor camp, and then drove up to Rawhiti where they spent the rest of the weekend.

After a hot drink and some food, the group, now down to 6, continued on to Whangamumu. We again encountered some rough conditions going around the headland into Whangamumu harbour, but once inside the dogleg in the inner harbour we were well sheltered. We paddled past the remains of the old whaling station before landing on a beach at the head of the Bay. We pitched our tents on a level grassy area just above the beach and then went to explore the area, finding a small waterfall a couple of minutes' walk from the whaling station. A pipe installed by the whalers still produces a stream of clear water which we filtered and used to fill our water bottles. The pool beneath the waterfall turned out to be a good spot to take a bath.

At dinner time Pete demonstrated how his propane fuelled cooker could be used as a flame thrower, and then surprised us even more by producing a canister of whipped cream from the hatch of his X factor to put over the chocolate dessert. Clouds moving briskly overhead told us that the wind had turned to the north and was quite strong. A lone fisherman/hunter camping in the bush gave us a couple of snapper he'd caught.

Overnight gusts of wind funnelling over the ridge behind us twice flattened Tony's tent - according to Tony this means a wind strength of at least 30 knots. The next morning we awoke to persistent rain and ongoing northerlies. Tony got a weather forecast via cellphone - 30 knot northerly in the morning with rain, rough seas and poor visibility. The rain was predicted to stop at midday, with the wind changing to a 25 knot westerly. Clearly not suitable conditions to be paddling around Cape Brett. Pete fried up some snapper, and we spent the morning alternately in the tents, and huddling under a tarpaulin brewing up hot drinks.

At noon the rain stopped and the skies cleared, and it turned into a lovely afternoon. The northerly was still blowing hard, but we were quite well sheltered from it, and decided to go for a paddle after lunch. We paddled up to the northern headland of the harbour, where we shot through a couple of gaps in the rocks before paddling up to Outu Bay for a brief stop. We then explored Oregon Cove (which has a perfectly sheltered small boulder beach) and Te Toroa Bay (which has a small white sand beach exposed to easterly weather), doing some good rock gardening en route.

By evening it was clear that the wind had turned to the west. Dave paddled out to some boats that had arrived in the harbour to get a weather forecast. The news was not particularly good - 30 knot westerly predicted for the next day.

The following morning we watched the sun rise while eating breakfast. The skies were clear and the sea in the shelter of the harbour was calm. We felt that the worst of the weather had passed, and despite the forecast still being for a 30 knot westerly, decided to carry on to Cape Brett. We knew that we would have a fairly easy passage up to the Cape, but once we paddled out past the shelter of the cliffs the westerlies would hit us with some force.

Paddling north there was little more than a ripple on the water, though at times westerly gusts dropping over the ridge hit the water, kicking up small whitecaps. As we paddled past Net Rock we could see the wind stirring up the water ahead, and we decided to paddle closer to the coastline to gain more shelter, rather than cut across the bay to Waiwiri Island. As we paddled on I looked back for Tony (who had been bringing up the rear with Pete), but I could not see him emerging from behind Net Rock. We were being hit by westerly gusts and so continued on to reach the shelter of the cliffs ahead before stopping again to look back and wait for Tony. He still had not appeared from behind Net Rock, and just as I was thinking of paddling back to look for him, I spotted him further out to sea, cutting across the bay. Blowing my whistle and waving my paddle failed to attract his attention, and as he was already ahead of us and paddling fast, I had no hope of catching up with him. I hoped Tony would wait for us at Cape Brett, and couldn't really understand what he was up to. He subsequently told me that he had stopped at a beach just before Net Rock to answer

nature's call. On getting back into his kayak he decided to cut across the bay in an attempt to catch up with us, not realising that he was passing us in the process. The rest of us gathered at Waiwiri Island, and then set off on the final 2km approach to Cape Brett. The skies were clouding over and rain seemed to be on the way. As we left, Steve got a bite on his fishing line - a fair sized Kahawai. At least his wife now has proof that he can catch fish! Just beyond Waiwiri Island we found an archway to paddle through, with a moderate surge making it quite interesting. As we headed up to the Cape we encountered a leftover northerly swell of about 1.5 m. Drawing nearer we could see sizeable waves with whitecaps rolling past the point, being driven by a brisk westerly. "Holy S---!", exclaimed Dave. Moments later we plunged ahead into it. Swells reflecting off the cliffs made for some confused seas and gripping paddling. Gradually, as we pulled away from the point, things became a little easier. Fortunately we were not paddling straight into the wind, and the strength was nowhere near 30 knots - closer to 10-15 gusting to about 20.

Our aim was Deepwater Cove, well sheltered from the prevailing weather. I was hoping that Tony would be there waiting for us, but as we landed on a small boulder beach he was nowhere to be seen. I guessed that he had probably carried on to Rawhiti. We were all pretty happy at setting foot in Deepwater Cove - the worst was clearly behind us. Peter and Pete had a celebratory shot of cognac in their hot drinks - for special occasions only! After a brief rest and some food we were off to Rawhiti. The further we progressed into the Bay of Islands, the easier conditions became, and soon we were scanning the coastline trying to identify the motor camp. As we approached the beach Chuck was waiting, armed with a handful of beers, which he proceeded to hand out before we could even get out of the kayaks. It was with some relief that I spotted Tony - he had paddled past Deepwater Cove to Oke Bay where he had called Coastguard on his cellphone. He informed them that he had become separated from the group and was fine, but did not know whether we were. Coastguard put out a call to boats in the area to be on the lookout for a group of 5 kayakers, and someone soon called in to say that we had been spotted and were fine.

All up a very eventful trip with more than its fair share of trials and tribulations. We all learnt a few things from the experience - Tony is writing up a report for the 'Bugger file' in the 'Sea Canoeist Newsletter' covering some of the issues. Nevertheless everyone who finished the trip agreed that it had been a memorable weekend. The coastline around Whangamumu offers some very interesting kayaking - but be prepared for testing conditions, or be prepared to wait for favourable weather!