



## Newsletter

April 2001

Hello Folks,

A very big thank you to everyone that came to the Beach Bum Turns 40 Party – it was a rollicking success and I haven't had so much fun in a long time. We out-did the noise levels of all the other diners at De Niro's, with everyone enjoying themselves so much that they were all asking "Who's next for a birthday?". Wolfgang cooked up a magnificent banquet. The food just kept rolling out – garlic bread nibbles, followed by starters, followed by entrees, followed by pizzas, followed by deserts, followed by "I've eaten too much"!

When will we have the next party? Vincent Maire has suggested that we should have a "Polypro Ball" – any takers?

Another success this month was the re-scheduled trip to Little Barrier Island on Saturday 31 March. Unfortunately this meant that I missed the Taupo trip, but I wouldn't have missed Little Barrier for anything. The ride out was a bit lumpy and I only just managed to hang on to my breakfast, but once I was on the water I felt great! I don't think I'm cut out to be "petrol-head"! The kayak I had chosen to take on this trip raised a few eye-brows, but, despite the cobwebs, dust, dirt and no rudder (only a fixed skeg), the Dura didn't slow me down much, and I didn't have to worry about how it was stowed on the launch! The afternoon was spent bird spotting and walking on Little Barrier and then it was a fast trip back to Leigh, with the wind behind us. The things that struck me the most about Little Barrier Island were: the size and ruggedness of the island, the lushness of the forest, and the quantity of bird-life. I lost count of the number of Wood Pigeons that I saw feeding in the long grass.

Last weekend saw Ray, Ryan Whittle, Brian Strid, Gerard Boterman and myself braving the elements as we attempted the paddle from Albany to Long Bay. The strong south-westerly winds provided an exciting trip. Ryan's paddle got blown out of his hands just before going under the harbour bridge, but Ray managed to rescue it for him. Ryan then returned the favour by rescuing Ray's hat! After completing the hard part of the trip, my wrist started to ache and I had to pull out at Narrow Neck, but the guys continued on without me – they surfed most of the way to Long Bay. Sunday, of course, was dead calm, but that would have been boring!

There are a few things to look forward to next month. First up is the start of the Winter Series Slide Evenings on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May. Then, on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> May, there is a fund raising event in aid of Auckland Volunteer Coast Guard, see the attached flyer for more details. On Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May is the Club's A.G.M., where we will be voting in next year's committee. Our President, Trevor Arthur, has decided to stand down, so start thinking about who you would like to see in this role. The following Saturday night, 19<sup>th</sup> May, Ann Schofield will be facilitating a trip planning meeting, to which all Club members are invited. If you would like a trip to be run to a particular destination, please fill out the form that was in last month's newsletter and get it to Ann. Remember, if you don't want to lead the trip yourself, send Ann the details anyway because we can find a leader for you.

Last, but not least – annual subscriptions are now due. If you are not sure if you should be paying for a family membership, ask yourself "are there any other members in the family that might be interested in going out on any of the trips"? With a family membership, everyone can hire kayaks at member rates.

Cheers,

Margaret

### In this issue...

A circumnavigation of Great Barrier Island, by Ryan Whittle, page 8; A woman's perspective on solo paddling, by Susan Hill, page 12; A "Non Club" Trip to Muriwai surf, by Susan Hill, page 14.

## Useful phone numbers and addresses

Club address	PO Box 45020, Te Atatu Peninsula, Waitakere City				
President	Trevor Arthur	817 7357	Treasurer and Address List	Matt Crozier	817 1984
Secretary	Rona Patterson	834 3399	Storage and Club Kayaks	Jonathan Jarvis	366 6805
Trips Officer	Matt Grant	524 2108	Trip Planning	Ann Schofield	419 9223
Newsletter	Margaret Thwaites 2927 883, 025 626 4786 38A William Potter Lane, Karaka, RD1 Papakura <a href="mailto:m.thwaites@xtra.co.nz">m.thwaites@xtra.co.nz</a>				

The Club maintains two e-mail groups.

To subscribe to the discussion list, send a blank e-mail to: [auckland-kayakers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:auckland-kayakers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

For event reminders, send a blank e-mail to: [auckland-canoe-club-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:auckland-canoe-club-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

## Where can you go to get training?

### Auckland Canoe Centre, phone 815 2073.

Basic confidence course, Henderson Pool, Tuesday evenings - \$95 for four sessions.

One-on-One rolling, Henderson Pool, Tuesday evenings - \$149 for two sessions.

Sea Kayaking intro skills (one day) and Sea Kayaking skills weekend, at Waiwera

### Auckland Wilderness Experiences, Chris Gulley, phone 813 3369

Intro skills, overnight at Mahurangi - \$225

Details on web site [www.nzkayak.co.nz/awk/awskills.htm](http://www.nzkayak.co.nz/awk/awskills.htm)

Rolling sessions, Kelston Girls, Thursday evenings - \$95 for three sessions – run with George Gerard

Surfing courses, White water courses and Navigation courses run on request.

### Canoe and Kayak, phone 479 1002

Sea Kayaking intro course – Friday pool session, plus Sat/Sun 9 – 5, \$230

Rolling sessions, Northcote College Pool - \$150 for four sessions.

White water, Multisport, Advanced Sea Kayaking, First aid and First aid refresher courses available.

### Fergs Kayaks, phone 529 2230

Basic paddling skills – paddle strokes, rescues – Sunday morning, Okahu Bay - \$30 for Club members.

Learn to roll, one-on one, heated pool - \$60 per hour.

White water, and Multisport River Racing courses also available.

### George Gerard, phone 814 8989 (hm), 367 0959 (wk).

Pool Training, Kelston Girls, Thursday evenings - \$95 for first three sessions, \$10 thereafter.

Intro Sea Kayaking, White water, and Down River Racing courses on request – courses are designed to fit

what the participants want - \$100 per day (approx), plus boat hire (\$10 / day)

### Positively Outdoors, Liz Maire and Christine Mcloed, ph 473 0027, fax 473 0731.

Two-day OSH certified outdoors first aid course - \$130

10% discount if four or more club members enroll for a course.

Course dates for Albany – Sun/Mon 13/14 May, Sat/Sun June 30/July 1.

There are also a few club members that are experienced instructors and with a bit of encouragement (bribery and/or arm-twisting!) might be coaxed into giving a training session...

Ian Calhaem, Rebecca Heap, Ken Marsh, David Poolman

## Safety Policy for Club Trips.

- 1 Any Club member who has any 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.
- 5 With night paddling it is everybody's responsibility to provide their own large lens flashlight, or fixed all-round white light on a one metre high pole, in working order and mounted on the outside of the kayak where it can be seen at all times.
- 6 Use a craft appropriate for the trip. A kayak with water-tight bulkheads is essential for open sea kayaking. Sit-on kayaks are usually too slow to be able to keep up with sea kayakers, therefore, are not recommended on trips planned for sea kayakers.

# Trips and Events Calendar

Remember to contact the trip leader before you set out. This is important, and you must realise that the leader needs to know the capabilities of those who are coming and to be able to contact you if there are changes. **Please be aware that you paddle on a Club trip at your own risk. Read the safety policy below. If there is any chance that you may be a liability to the rest of the group or to the leader be sure to inform the leader of this before you set out.**

## TRIP CANCELLATIONS

The Club is now using "Newstalk ZB" cancellation service. This can be listened to on 1080AM or 89.4FM. The service runs on Saturday and Sunday from 7:00am.

This should eliminate the multitude of phone calls to trip leaders when the weather looks suspect.

## Regular Evening Paddles

It is now getting dark early in the evening and everyone intending to go out on an evening paddle must bring either an all-round white light, or else a large-lens (eg. Dolphin) torch, in good working condition, that can be mounted on the outside of the kayak. It is recommended that before anyone tries to go out on an evening paddle that they attend a basic skills course and that they are fit enough to be able to paddle for one hour.

**Tuesday, Okahu Bay.** All skill levels welcome. Meet at Okahu Bay by 5:30pm, ready to be on the water by 6:00pm. An experienced paddler will be rostered on to look after new/novice/slow paddlers. Fitter and more experienced paddlers can form their own group(s). Trips usually last 1 – 2 hours, destination dictated by tide, weather conditions and skill levels.

**Wednesday, Castor Bay.** No longer happening! Send a message on the eGroup if you want to start this paddle again.

**Thursday, Okahu Bay.** Not recommended for new/novice paddlers because we have not set up a roster of leaders for new people. These trips currently do not have a huge following, therefore, be prepared to paddle on your own. Be at Okahu Bay by 5:30pm, ready to be on the water by 6:00pm.

## April 2001

**Saturday 21 Tamaki River.** Start off your weekend with brunch up the Tamaki River with local paddler Phil. He is thinking of meeting at Glendowie Boat Club reasonably early, to spend some time exploring the Tamaki River and / or Bucklands Beach, with a stop off for either a cafe or BYO brunch. This will be a short, easy paddle and ideal for beginners. Further details from Phil. All members are most welcome. Leader **Phil Henderson 527 7938.**

**Sunday 22 Motuihe.** Meet at St Heliers at 9:30am for a 10am departure. We will paddle to Motuihe via Browns Island, having lunch at Motuihe. There will be time to explore the island by foot, visiting the surf beach and the headland overlooking the channel to Motutapu Island; and / or go for a swim. The return trip will be either pass Goose Rock, or back from the western side of the island depending on the conditions. Please note: this trip is 8kms, so you must be comfortable paddling this distance into a headwind on the return trip if it blows up from the south-west in the afternoon. To speak with **Harley Wilson**, leave a message, or contact him after 3pm on Saturday 21, on **575 6272**

**Tuesday 24-25 Anzac overnighter at Rangitoto** The idea is to make it feel like you have been away for the weekend, when in fact it will only have been one night plus the bonus weekday holiday day. There are various options, including leaving with the normal club paddle from Okahu bay, or paddling over from the North Shore. Where-ever you leave from, you will need full all-round night paddling lights. We will while away the evening with a pot luck meal and a "be merry" session on the island. We will stay in the bach, which has room for around 14, and costs a few dollars per head. Various options for Wednesday, including doing a circumnavigation if you want to get up for the 8:30am high tide (!), or do a portage through Gardiners Gap; or do some exploring of the island on foot. I would like to explore a little used track leading north to the northern bay with shipwrecks. Call **Ann Schofield** for a place on this trip: **419 9223**

**Sunday 29 Espresso Cruise to Whitford.** Meet at 9.15 at Sunkist bay beach in Beachlands, for an easy paddle around Flattop island, past Pineharbour Mariner and across the flats then up a lovely estuary with plenty of nice Tuscany like landscapes to look at. As the estuary narrows, steer up the mangrove lanes to a Maltese cafe sited on the edge of the creek. At the cafe you can sometimes see eels in the water. We will be able to go in just about any weather and the only constraint is that we must be at the cafe at about 11.15 for the tide. Please do phone **Steve Melrose** for this trip **5365386.**

**Tuesday 1 Evening Slide Show with Colin Quilter on Fiordland.** This is the start of the Winter Series of slide shows and talks by guest speakers. To start the series off, Colin Quilter will be presenting some slides and a talk about the trip that he had on Doubtful Sound last year. Colin is an excellent speaker, so this should be a very interesting and enjoyable evening. Everyone is welcome to come and listen in. Be at the clubrooms above Ferg's Kayaks, Okahu Bay, by 7:30pm, ready for a 8:00pm start. There will be a \$2.00 door charge (for biscuits and hot drinks). For more information, phone Roger Lomas on 625 8924.

**Wednesday 2 Adventure Philosophy's Post Expedition Evening.** Their stories and magic footage from the Polar Circle Expedition crew. Starts at 7pm, Davenport's Lounge, North Harbour stadium. Costs \$35 per person, proceeds towards the expedition costs. Call 0508 529 2569 to RSVP and book your tickets.

**Friday 4 Evening Paddle to Rangitoto.** A perennial favourite. Paddle over before the sun sets, walk to the summit to admire the city lights, then paddle back in the dark. If you have never been to Rangitoto at night before, then this is a "must do". The distance from Okahu Bay to Rangitoto Wharf is about 7kms, therefore, under good conditions this trip is suitable for all skill levels. It is absolutely essential that you bring some sort of night-light that can be attached to your kayak, i.e. either an all-round white light, or a large lens torch. You will also need a bright torch for the walk to the summit, a change of clothes, and some food. The whole trip normally takes about five hours. Phone Wally Gilmer on 8323 274 for more details.

**Weekend 5-6 Slipper Island.** This trip involves crossing from the east coast of the Coromandel to the offshore island, Slipper Island. We will camp on the island on Saturday night and return on Sunday. The crossing is less than 10 kms. There may also be the option of circumnavigating the island either Sat or Sun, or visiting the nearby Shoe Island. In the event of bad weather, there will be some sheltered local paddling, and bush / coastal walks to do. The club last visited Slipper Island around this time of year a couple of years back, and it was a huge success judging by the stories around! Phone Matthew Crozier 817 1984 for details on this trip.

**Thursday 10 Fund Raising for Auckland Volunteer Coastguard.** A film evening, with guest speakers, at the IMAX theatre in Auckland. The film is "Shackleton's Antarctic Journey", and the guest speakers are: Graeme Dingle, Bob McDavitt and Jim Lott. This should be a very good evening's entertainment and it is for a worthy cause, so please try to bring as many friends, relatives, and workmates as possible! The session will run from 7:00pm to 9:00pm, and tickets will cost \$20. The tickets will be pre-sold, please contact Sabine for more details and to book your place. Phone 813 3369 (hm) or 021 424 885.

**Saturday 12 Shoal Bay.** A wonderful way to start the weekend! High tide is around 10am, so Allister is leading a short (2 hours-ish) trip to potter around the mangroves between Takapuna and Devonport. Meet at 9:30am for a 10am departure. Meeting spot is Bays Water Marina Boat ramp, which is at the end of Bayswater Road. Ideal for beginners, and everyone is most welcome! Bring along morning tea. Leader is Allister MacClean Tel: 445 9646

**Sunday 13 Noises in a day.** Meet at Eastern Beach at 8am for a 8:30am departure around the Noises for some sight seeing. If anyone wants to leave from Okahu Bay, we could rendezvous at Motuihe, but the total distance would be slightly further for them. This trip is around 30 kms, so it is for intermediate and advanced paddlers only. You must be comfortable with long open water crossings and possibly bouncy conditions. Trip leader is Rob Gardner 533 4061

**Sunday 13 GR8concepts Ltd Barracuda Bash Sea Kayak Race – King of Kawau.** Yes, the Barracuda Boys are back with yet another great kayak challenge. After the success of the Gulf Buster race, Gordon Robinson, the manufacturer of Barracuda kayaks, has decided to give it another "crank!", and where better than the birthplace of the Barracuda – around Kawau Island. A 26km, 2-stage fun cruise or hard out blast for kayaks, skis, out riggers and ocean rowers, with a "bang up barbee" to top it all off. Entry forms are available from GR8concepts Ltd (=Barracuda Kayaks, 14-2 Tavern Rd, Silverdale), [www.gr8concepts.co.nz](http://www.gr8concepts.co.nz), Fergs Kayaks, Auckland Canoe Centre, and Canvas City. For more details phone Gordon on (09) 427 4478.

**Tuesday 15 Annual General Meeting.** All Club members are invited to attend. This will be a social evening as well as the official business of electing the next committee, setting fees for next year, and discussing issues on Club direction, etc. Your input will be most welcome. Our current President, Trevor Arthur, will be standing down this year, so we will be looking for a new President. The meeting will be held in the clubrooms above Ferg's Kayaks, Okahu Bay, starting at 7pm. Phone Trevor, 817 7357, for more details.

**Saturday 19 Trip Planning Meeting.** More details in the next newsletter or phone Ann on 419 9223.

**Sunday 20 Cambridge to Hamilton Race.** Phone Matt Grant on 524 2108 for more details.

## Advance notice of: WAIKATO RIVER TOUR WINTER 2001

Auckland Canoe Club is organising a Waikato River Tour in three stages of approx 25-30km, assisted by the current. This is not a race, but an opportunity for cruisers and seakayakers to develop river skills.

Stage 1	Sunday 17 June	Karapiro to Hamilton	approx 25km
Stage 2	Sunday 1 July	Hamilton to Ngaruawahia	approx 23km
Stage 3	Sunday 15 July	Tuakau to Port Waikato	approx 25km

Each stage will be led by Peter Sommerhalder and Ian Calhaem. They will assist with a trailer for shuttle services, but paddlers are encouraged to share transport. For further information and to register, please phone Peter at Auckland Canoe Centre 815-2073.

## Three Islands Paddle

By Rob Gardner

This is a modified version of an email I posted on the Club chat line a few weeks back. The responses have been very positive to date with a few cautionary comments. Taking those comments into account I've published a revised version here for the broader club to consider...

...What would the initial reaction be if I proposed we as a club do a segmented "Round New Zealand" paddle over the next, say, three to five years?

Without expounding on the detail here's some food for thought:

- The Aim would be to build up the skill, knowledge and experience levels within the Club whilst doing something enjoyable and challenging.
- It would be done in non-consecutive legs i.e. paddlers would cover sections of the coast (and lakes) when, where and in whichever direction they preferred. If you were planning a holiday to Bluff you could jump in your kayak, whip around to Doubtful Sound and we'd tick that section off the map (tongue in cheek).
- Paddlers would be encouraged to liaise with a club Planning Team who could assist by giving advice on safety issues, experience levels required and contacts or local knowledge that may be helpful.
- Short day trips would count but the real focus would be on building up the experience of club members on multi-day expeditions.
- Any sections of the coast done prior to an official launch date wouldn't be counted as part of this exercise.
- We'd progressively build up a valuable database of pictures, stories and experiences. These could be

maintained, along with 'The Map', on a club web site (another issue for consideration).

- We could look at different ways to fund the more expensive legs such as with corporate sponsorship.

I have left a folder in the shed at Okahu Bay titled 'Three Islands Paddle'. It has the responses received from the chat line so far as well as paper and pen for further comments. Alternatively send something to Ann Schofield as per the address in the Newsletter or myself at Rob.Gardner@sercon.co.nz. If the idea doesn't get totally shot down in flames we can discuss it further at the next Trip Planning Meeting and AGM in May.

## A Reply to Rob's Three Island Paddle.

By Lou Farrand

I'm in Invercargill for the next two years, Therefore this 'trip' is music to my ears. I have my kayak all ready to go, Just need a companion, some one who's slow.

If anyone's coming down south for a jaunt, You're welcome to stay at my cosy wee haunt. Lovely Stewart Island is just cross the ditch. I bet that bit of water can be a real rough bit.

I smile at the thought of you Tony G, Glad it's you at the Catlins not me. Each time I go there is blowing a storm. Give you a buzz that is more than the norm.

I really am hoping 'Bluff' will be mine. I love that place, it's truly devine. I think your idea is an excellent scheme. We can all go away and ponder and dream.

Cheers from the deepest south,  
Lou.

## Classified ads...

### For Sale: Squall sea kayak.

Multiple shades of blue. Asking \$1300. Contact Ann Schofield on 419 9223.

### For Sale: Storm sea kayak.

Our yellow. One year old. Good Condition. Price \$1400. Includes spray skirt. Phone Nicole on (09) 533 7244 or (09) 815 4623

## Found: Sea kayak Paddle.

Left on the grass at Manu Bay, Raglan. Probably belongs to one of the group that was with Ken Jackson on Sunday 25 March. Phone Margaret or Ray on 2927 883.

## Whitsunday Island Sea Kayak Adventure, Sunshine Coast, Australia.

The Aussie Sea Kayak Company is offering Auckland Canoe Club members a discount on their 5 night/6 day Whitsunday Islands trips run this season (May – November). For more details contact Natalie Stephens or Rod Withyman at [seakayak@powerup.com.au](mailto:seakayak@powerup.com.au) or have a look at their web site [www.aussiekayak.com.au](http://www.aussiekayak.com.au)

## CLUB STORAGE AND KAYAK HIRE

By Jonathan Jarvis

### Storage Shed

There are a number of spaces available for members who would like to store their kayaks at the club's shed at Okahu Bay. Payment is in advance for 6 months (\$130) or 12 months (\$260). Call Jonathan on 366 6805.

### Yellow Sea Bear

A yellow Sea Bear remains unclaimed in the storage shed. This is final notice and if not claimed by the end of April 2001, the kayak will become the property of the Auckland Canoe Club. It is the intention of the club to place the kayak in the club's hire fleet.

### Club Kayak Hire

#### Hire Register and payment

The process for hiring kayaks from the club is based on an honesty system. Some members continue to abuse the process in the following ways:

- not entering the kayak hired in the register
- not paying for the hire
- not paying the flat charge of \$20 per day for a single kayak

There was a situation on Sunday where a member had hired the double for the day and paid for it in advance. Another member then proceeded to take the double out – this is not on!!

**The members responsible know who they are!**  
**Please follow the process as you ruin it for everyone. Be warned.... big brother is watching**

The flat fee of \$20 per day per single kayak will continue to be charged. For those members who do not wish to pay this fee because they only take out a kayak for a few hours; there are 2 options:

1. hire from Fergs (as at the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2001, 2 hours = \$18 and 3 hours = \$22 .... and \$40 for the day)
2. purchase your own kayak

The Club in the past did provide tiered rates. However, it was too cumbersome to manage.

### New Kayak added to Club's fleet

You may recall in the last newsletter we were planning to purchase 2 new kayaks. This has now been done and the single kayak, called a Contour, has been delivered. This kayak is suitable for beginners and intermediate paddlers and ideal for the smaller framed person. Its' number will be 5 and this will be written on to the kayak at the rudder end.

We are still awaiting delivery of a double kayak.

Also, Ian Calhaem has very generously offered his Storm to be included in the club's fleet. It is marked appropriately at the rudder end of the kayak. Please use it as you would a club kayak and follow the hire process when taking it out.

## Book Update

By Vincent Maire.

A number of people have been asking what is happening to the book I am writing on sea kayak destinations in New Zealand. The situation is as follows.

1. It is now two books, a North Island edition and a South Island edition.
2. The North Island edition is almost complete. The target is 45,000 words and I have passed the 30,000 mark and am doing research on areas that I have not previously visited.
3. I have to get the completed manuscript to the publisher by May 31<sup>st</sup> in order for them to meet a pre-Christmas publication date.

Photographs are needed for the North Island book. If you have some great pics that you would like to see published in a book, please get in touch with me. They have to be action shots or panoramic shots. All must include kayakers and sea kayakers. They must be in colour. Naturally, we also need a really fabulous pic for the front cover. All pics must be of North Island destinations that are covered in the book. If you can help, please get in touch with me.

Vincent Maire

(09) 424-2293 home, 303-1989 work, [vincent@straticom.co.nz](mailto:vincent@straticom.co.nz)

# Introduction to River Kayaking: FAQ File

George Gerard

We often hear questions about whitewater kayaking – sometimes they are rhetoric: the “*why would anyone want to do that!*” kind. Every so often we are asked by genuinely interested members, how they should go about getting into river running. If you are in this group, you may find these notes helpful as a “beginners guide” to a safe and enjoyable first experience in whitewater.

## “How skilled do I have to be?”

Skills are relevant – knowing how to paddle is a great help.

The most common questions relate to skills level and of course the answer to that is dependent on a host of issues: including the location, the river, the group, your gear, skill, experience, water confidence, objectives and so forth. The simple answer, which I prefer, is “Not very” – provided you follow a preparation process which emphasises safety and self-reliance on and off the water.”

If your experience of Kayaking up until now has been confined to lakes and harbour trips, you may think that white water will require a different, and more demanding set of skills. This is only partly true. Different? In part – yes. More difficult? I don't think so.

From Spring to Autumn, most weekends there are people safely enjoying their first experience of river running in kayaks. They discover that while moving water may challenge their first (intuitive) response to feeling unstable, once they have learned how to deal with this, the river offers other things to balance their enjoyment ledger.

## River running is a gravity sport.

An obvious example is the fact that you can make progress without paddling. This is a novel concept for those of us weaned early onto a diet of phrases like “Dig it in”, “Push not Pull”.

Also: you don't have to do press work at the Gymn. Plastic kayaks are the norm. Little short dinky things that weigh about half of your finely sculptured Kevlar sports harbour cruiser.

It also means that you learn to grapple with the intellectual component of river kayaking – the Shuttle. And thereby acquire fresh (for some, already distressingly familiar) attributes related to accosting strangers, developing methods for keyless entry to vehicles, and the arts of persuasive communication and inter-personal relationships. But I'm anticipating: lets return to the main theme:

## “Can I Do It?”

Use this simple self-evaluation assessment tool to identify your readiness for whitewater.

Have you ever:

1. Paddled from Okahu Bay to Rangitoto in the company of a supportive group?
2. Fallen out and survived? ( Not necessarily on the trip above).

3. Been enchanted by the behaviour of a school of fish? ( Or flock of birds, collection of clouds, pattern of stars or what-have-you).
4. Been alarmed by... (large vessel, strong wind, big wave, surf landing, fizz boat, rocky coastline, etc, etc)
5. Felt a deep and nameless urge to be At One with Nature... (picked debris off the beach, saved a plastic bag, stowed the Moro wrapping, put out rubbish for recycling, Yep you're getting the hang of it).
6. Forgotten your... (Paddle, Drink, Towel, Car keys, Medication, Name)

When you are ready, take the test, and score yourself 20 points for each “Yes”

Points	Assessment
20	Doubtful, “though Whitewater Development Therapy could be beneficial.
40	Re-assess after another Rangitoto trip
60	Marginal: maybe work on being more forgetful?
80	You're a Natural: Hire a play boat from Peter at the Canoe Center
100	Freak! Why are you reading this? Y'should be paddling
120	Get Outta here!

So if *anyone* can do it....

## “How do I get started?”

Simple observation tells us that there are as many variations as there are beginner paddlers. In the “Good Old Days” everyone piled into a van and headed for the river. Camping and the social activities were as important as the paddling. Learning by doing was the norm with minimal formal instruction.

The social elements haven't changed, but these days there seems to be more willingness by beginners to start with some basic instruction and then learn from others who have both skills and the willingness/ability to impart them. Just where the mix of formal and informal instruction sits seems to be different for every individual. A lucky few are able to “see and do” and can pick up what they need by following others in the group.

These days more stringent river safety requirements by trip leaders, and clearer definition of what constitutes a minimum skill level have together made it harder for beginners to “just join in”. Most likely, if you are interested in joining a river trip, the leader's first question will be “What Grade do you Paddle?” and if you have no river experience the next will likely be “Have you thought about doing an basic course?” (River grades start at 1 - moving, but no white water, like the Waikato at Mercer - and move up to 6 - not runnable.)

## Aim to become Grade Two capable: Learn Railing and Rolling

Having fun on the river starts by feeling good about being *in* the water, as well as being *on* it. It is not possible for a paddler who is continuously capsizing to

enjoy the experience in any meaningful sense. So the initial skills to learn are those to prevent, and remedy, respectively, a capsize.

The first key skill called "*Edging*" or "*Railing*", maintains stability in moving water, and is the **single essential skill**, which distinguishes white water paddling from sea kayaking. Interestingly, this skill can be learned initially in Grade 1 water.

For the overwhelming majority, and certainly for those who have kayaked in the sea, feeling safe in flat water is not a challenge. Grade one rivers offer flat water - moving, but flat. To the kayak, moving at the same pace as the current, the river is indistinguishable from flat water. Grade Two rivers offer true white water conditions.

In either grade, the most common symptom of inadequate skill, is a capsize. Being comfortable, or at least in control, in a capsize situation is the **second key requirement** for paddlers in moving water conditions. The skill required to recover from a capsize involves Eskimo Rolling – in rivers, from Grade two upwards, *wet entry and roll* is not an appropriate solution. Again, rolling can be learned in flat water initially.

**Summing up:**

Before you paddle rivers, learn to Rail, and to Roll. Acquiring these skills is less important than the sense of personal confidence in the water that the learning process will engender. And this preparation is accessible, almost costless, and can be achieved without leaving town!

**Development Programme**

Development Module		Learning Objectives	Durati on	Cost
1	Pool Skills	Kayak adjustments, Wet exit, Confidence routines including swimming in kayak, swimming with gear, Rolling, Self-rescue, Railing, Sculling, Rafting-up, Buddy rescue,	3 x 1hr then as required per hour	\$95 \$10
2	Open water	Safety issues, equipment, group protocols, Launch and landing, Paddle strokes, signals, Railing and braces, Stern rudder, sweep strokes, draw strokes, rolling in open water, deep water rescues, Hypothermia, weather, navigation, water reading basics	1 x 3hr	\$50
3	Moving Water 1	Safety issues, equipment, entry and exit, group protocols, environmental issues. Railing, Ferry-gliding, Eddy entry and exit, low brace turns and supports, rolling in moving water, rescues in moving water, river reading at Grade 1 level, kayak portage and transport, Kayak design and purchase	1 x 3hr	\$50
4	Moving Water 2	Safety issues, buddy system, signals and communication, emergency protocols Flat water skills revision, grade two skills: railing, eddy entry and exit, ferry gliding, high cross, surfing, playing on waves, support and escape from holes, river reading and hazards, rolling and rescues in Grade 2 water, throw bag rescues, personal equipment purchase Deck carries, towing and buddy rescues, Multisport certificate criteria and certification	Two days	\$220
5	Surfing	Introduction to surfing and beach kayaking	1 x 3hrs	\$50
6	Grade 3 Developers course	Development of skills and confidence in Grade 3 water, including safety issues, group leadership, river running, slalom, rolling, rescues and extraction, navigation and river reading	4 Days	\$350

**Great Barrier Island Trip**

By Ryan Whittle

Wally Gilmer in a Storm, Steve Davy in a Sea Bear, Ryan Whittle in an Albatross and Graeme Bruce in a Barracuda Expedition met at Okahu Bay on a Saturday morning to start a paddle and circumnavigation of Great Barrier Island.

Two weeks had been allowed for the trip and provisions for this time had been packed away. Some supplies would be available from the few shops on Great Barrier and we each carried enough water to last about three days. Seen off by partners and a few stoic club members, we departed around 9 am and passed by the shores of Browns Island before making a brief stop at Motuihe before stopping for lunch at Ostend on

Waiheke Island. The forecast for the day had been for 35 knot winds but the weather man was true to form and it was calm and still. Steve picked up the first kahawai of what we hoped was a steady supply for the trip, but it was the last until the penultimate day and the smoker strapped to the back of Steves Sea Bear didn't see a lot of use.

We made camp at the Coromandel end of Ponui Island, with the kind permission of the Chamberlains, owners of that part of the island. Thanks to Justin Sanson-Beattie for arranging it for us.



On the water at 8 am, we had a brief wander around Tarahiki Island, a fascinating place honeycombed with passageways and tunnels best rockgardened at high tide. The tide was dropping and we had to settle for a couple of dozen mussels gathered from the rocks before heading out for the crossing to Happy Jacks, an island favoured by boaties because of the natural sheltered harbour created by its horseshoe shape. We had also been told that if you didn't mind the rats, you could camp there, but on arrival we found a rocky landing and you would not want to camp there if you didn't have to. Not a lot of space and it wasn't flat or sheltered.

The crossing had started without any breeze but it built gradually through the morning into a tail wind which Wally made good use of with his sail. Our only visitors on the crossing were a few penguins, gannets and shearwaters. The shearwaters seem to be the masters of the air in the Hauraki Gulf, with the control they show as they map the sea surface in flight.

After lunch on Happy Jacks the wind had built the seas to uncomfortable levels and the final 10 km to the Coromandel coast was less than ideal. We were concerned about making a surf landing onto the stony Waiaro Beach but the entrance to an estuary at the end of the beach meant we didn't have to. A very tidy flat piece of grassed land on the estuary edge provided a sheltered campsite for the night.

Looking back across the Firth of Thames, our starting point that morning is just a blur on the horizon. Its always surprising how far you can travel in a kayak.

On Monday morning we have about 15 km to cover to reach Port Jackson at the tip of the Coromandel, our intended departure point for the crossing of the Colville channel to Great Barrier Island. The wind is running at 15 knots when we start and is forecast to double. The weatherman has nailed it again, the winds drop and the whitecaps disappear. The sea around Cape Colville is still very confused, I think it would be a rare event to see it calm, and if anyone was dropping off to sleep they were awakened by a drenching from breaking waves every 10 minutes or so. Wally makes a stop at the Granite wharf for old times sake, as it acted as a campsite the previous year, and gets a boat full of water for his trouble.

We pull into Jacksons Bay and flat water around 11 am and the weatherman's warning of rising winds is realised. And they continue to rise through the afternoon. The sun is still shining and we use the afternoon to dry any wet gear and perform a little boat maintenance. The forecast for tomorrow is more wind and rain, so a day off may be called for.

The previous day's predictions were correct and although dry, the wind is strong. We walk the road across to Fletchers Bay and pause at the highest point on the way to view our destination. A stoat is active chasing a rabbit on the roadside. I think the rabbit escaped to flee another day.

Observing the sea conditions from above is a great help as we can see the best route to take from Jacksons Bay to avoid the turbulent water before Channel Island.

On the water at 7:15, Wednesday morning, at high tide and its calm and flat. Taking the route we saw from the hilltop the day before, the crossing is uneventful. The Barrier comes into greater relief as we approach and the headland at Tryphena Harbour is visible from early on. We cruise gently into Tryphena in a little over three hours.

Its the first time I've been here and I was expecting a small suburban town. Its nothing like that, with houses still spread apart and many of the beaches in the harbour having only one or two homes there.

Great Barrier Island is assumed to be an extension of the Coromandel Peninsula and is 10-18 million years old. It is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest island in New Zealand and the largest off the North Island. The population on the Barrier is about 1200 and they are spread out all over the island, with the 'big' centres not having large numbers. Whangaparapara has a sign proudly proclaiming its population as 45.

You don't go to Great Barrier for shopping, the one shop in Tryphena is like a small corner grocery (combined with takeaway and pub!). The shops in the other centres we saw were similar but the licensing laws must be stricter outside of Tryphena as we didn't see another pub.

We had arranged to meet with Wayne Anderson in Tryphena, the owner/operator of the local kayaking tour company, and asked for directions to Wayne's place at the shop. 100 meters back from the beach on an elevated site looking out over the harbour was not a bad place to work from. His visiting cousin directed us to the beach where Wayne was due to return from a harbour cruise and we had lunch on the beach as he approached.

After a thorough briefing on what to expect we decided to head up the East Coast that afternoon while the weather held. Exploring each beach as it came and went revealed only one kayak friendly sandy beach before Cape Barrier, a spot with a reputation. The sea there was similar to what we experienced around Cape Colville, except more confused. An easterly had sprung up in the last few hours and there was already a 1.5 m building swell with the tidal flows and clapotis combining to make a messy sea. Graeme found himself a whirlpool and then broke his rudder cable so it was stuck down and hard to port. He paddled round, and round, in circles for a while before attracting our attention for some help. I think that the paddling in circles probably created the whirlpool!

The first beach after Cape Barrier was Rosalie Bay, home to friends of El presidente Trevor, who had informed us that this was a site to camp. It was another non kayak friendly beach with a steep shoreline made up of small rocks and dumping surf. We sneaked in to shore at one end in relative calm and Wally wandered off to find our hosts while we scouted for a campsite. There was a lot of deep wet grass everywhere and moving one of the dinghy's lying around for a better spot was abandoned in a hurry when the rats under the dingy let us know it was already taken. We got a good view of the beach at the height of our leaps though.

At this stage smoke had started coming from the chimney of the only house in sight, and various theories regarding Wallys whereabouts and the length of his

absence were put forward. He later confirmed our suspicions with claims of hot drinks and fresh cheesecake. We didn't let Wally reconnoitre unattended again.

A short walk to a farm field with five or six elderly Pohutakawas next to a stream was our campsite for the night and our host Eric provided some fresh eggs delivered by the chickens we shared the field with.

Thursdays forecast was for rising north easterlies so we backtracked in the calm of the morning. Cape Barrier was not as tricky as the previous day but was still messy. Past Tryphena Harbour with a sense of déjà vu and a lunch stop at Schooner Bay. The water is still and quiet but the sky is grey and overcast. All along the coast the pohutakawas are the predominant species closest to the water, with only flax bushes able to foot it in the same environment. Above them is native bush, occasionally interrupted by homes.

There is no reticulated power on the Barrier so its BYO. There are plenty of solar panels around and the sound of generators is common, but surprisingly I've seen only one windmill so far. There is a plethora of TV aerials and many homes have sky with a couple of digital dishes spotted.

Into Blind Bay Graeme performs the obvious acting job to tell us where we are but we act even more stupid than usual and deliberately fail to guess his charade. There is a settlement here and the sandy beaches make it an attractive spot.

Around Beacon Point and into Whangaparapara Harbour the water continues to be deep and clear but becomes more tidal further in. Rain has started to fall and the DOC campground doesn't appeal so we book into the Great Barrier Lodge (sounds flash eh?), for a hot shower and drier surroundings. Our decision is endorsed as it rains harder.

Friday morning we head out of Whangaparapara in clear and calm conditions. There are some nice bays just past the harbour, especially Mangati Bay which has a small settlement. The coast runs straight for the next few kilometres with just deep clear water next to a shoreline of rock faces. We make a stop in Bowling Alley Bay, another of the many rocky beaches. On the way out of the Bay we find an excellent tunnel that passes through the end of the peninsula and the kayaks fit through with space to spare.

The tunnel is a doorway to another world, with the rather monotonous scenery left behind and islands in abundance appearing. The map is dotted with a number of islands but there are many too small to have been included. The patchwork of land and sea would provide several days entertainment for kayakers in less than 10 km of coastline. Into Port Fitzroy through the narrow Man of War Passage and we stop at Smokehouse Bay for lunch. This Bay is public land that has had a smokehouse, a bathhouse, and a toilet added. It is available for use on a casual basis and all you need to find is the firewood. The sand on the beach has been manually added and it would be a welcome stop for boaties after a stint at sea.

Port Fitzroy is a large Harbour and we see boats moored all over. Even in the high season it doesn't get close to full. The tide is low when we get to the DOC

campsite so to avoid a long carry across the mud we make a visit to Port Fitzroy shops. There is more of a laid back country feel here than at Tryphena or Whangaparapara.

Back to the campground there are a few other tents already there but we have no trouble finding good spots. A cold shower before a dinner of the cockles gathered at low tide ends a picturesque day nicely.

Yahoo, its the weekend! The tide is high, as we leave so no mud between the toes. A stop at Port Fitzroy wharf to drop off our rubbish, before heading out of Port Fitzroy Harbour into Port Abercrombie. Both are in the same stretch of water, separated only by imaginary lines between Kaikoura Island and Great Barrier. Entering Port Abercrombie from Port Fitzroy lends a spectacular view. The North Island is too far away to see, so the outlook is of ocean framed on the left by islands and on the right by more small islands and the Great Barrier mainland.

Cruising along the coastline into Karaka Bay we come across the Orama Christian Community. It was labelled on the map and I had been expecting some sort of alternate lifestyle, Centerpoint type community setup. Got that wrong. This was by far the most manicured place we saw. An open, mown, grassy area with a children's playground surrounded by a variety of buildings connected by laid pathways. In adjoining bays, other areas including a tennis court were in a similar tidy state. A sign on the foreshore advertised accommodation and a local shop.

Around into Katherine Bay we are into a head wind and we have been warned that the locals aren't keen on visitors so we cut across the bay before reaching the township. Except for Katherine Bay, the northern Barrier was sold by the Maoris in 1838, and subsequently (1984) gifted to the Department of Lands and Survey as a reserve.

The head wind becomes a tail wind, and my Albatross must really like the gentle following sea the way it left Katherine Bay. Just out of Katherine Bay is Ahuriri Point and this marks the start of a wealth of caves, tunnels and rock gardens. From the point to Miners Head is a huge playground and the flat sea lets us get in close. Miners Head has a pebbled beach with a good size stream. Views with Little Barrier on the left, in much greater relief than we see from Auckland, and the Mokohinau Islands a haze on the right, along with blue skies, warm sunshine and a gentle breeze to dry the washing made this a great place to stop. Its times and locations like this that make you glad to be a kayaker. We hope for a wind shift back to south west to flatten out the swells on the east coast.

The following morning really feels like a weekend. The wind is howling and it's raining torrents. We stayed put and shared some custard creme biscuits in honour of what the weather had turned to. Steve suggested chocolate biscuits for a similar reason. The good size clear stream has transformed into a raging muddy torrent, and a large waterfall has materialised at the other end of the beach. Wally's tent is doing a Venice impression, mine is being blown flat, and we erect a fly on the beach for some shelter. It also acts to collect rainwater and using saucepans on one corner we fill 11

litres into water bottles in about an hour. We can state that watching the tide falling is far more exciting than watching grass grow or paint dry. Graeme provided a few lessons on pitching tents in stormy conditions, which saw mine transformed into a pillar of strength, and Steve's larger abode provided a dry spot for Wally to spend the night.

Monday morning brought grey skies and drizzle. We kept our heads down until late morning when the sun put in an appearance and allowed us to dry some gear. The northeasterly is blowing and doesn't bode well for travel down the east coast. Steve and Wally set off on foot to find the nearby copper mine and I try a spot of kayak fishing away from the muddy outflow, and return with a small snapper to get Steve's smoker into action. We are all keen to move on and resolve to move the next morning if we can.

Tuesday brings grey skies, drizzle and a 10 knot easterly forecast to drop further so we set off out of Māori Head. Just around the corner are cliffs stained green from the copper oxide leaching from them and mineshafts emerge from many places on the face. More than 2000 tons of copper ore were extracted from here between 1857 and 1867.

At the top of Great Barrier are a number of islands, the closest separated from the mainland by only a few meters and the sea surging through the gap provides a thrilling passage. This island is not labelled on our maps, but I've seen it referred to as "Unknown Island". Past the islands we are onto the east coast and the swells mean we need to keep offshore. The rocky coast doesn't provide the opportunity to land and it's a few hours before we find some protection at the head of Whangapoua Beach, the first of the long sandy beaches on the east coast.

After lunch Rakitu (Arid) Island passes by on our left. It is reputed to be a great place to paddle to but you would need better conditions that day.

We see the first group of birds working since we arrived and I make a slight detour to investigate. On the second pass my boat slows dramatically as something takes the lure. It feels bigger than your average kahawai and takes line back as fast as I bring it in. It tires eventually and I have my first kingfish. Steve meanwhile has also hooked up and needs some help, as the kahawai he has won't fit in his net. We stow them in an onion sack on my back deck and the fish trail in the water on both sides of the boat. While catching up to Wally and Graeme a four-foot shark cruises on the surface between us in the opposite direction. Seeing a shark at sea is another first for me. All this area of coast we were told was fantastic, but the swells keep us well offshore and we don't get to look at it.

The DOC campground at Harataonga was our intended destination, but low tide meant that we couldn't get in the estuary and it would have meant a long walk with all our gear. The campground was a nice one, with many flat grassy spots, toilets and water on tap. The next likely campground was another DOC site up another estuary at Awana Beach a few kilometres south. The tide provided the same problem with the estuary being gone and the heavy dumping surf stopped us attempting a landing.

The map showed a possible sheltered spot at the head of Kaitoke Beach behind Palmers Island and so it proved, with the dumping surf absent from the 20 meters at the top of the beach. From the signs onshore, this was a defence area and the presence of submarine cables meant fishing was prohibited. There were the standard Great Barrier Dinghies strewn about - we didn't check them for rats - but the beach was otherwise deserted. My only worry was that we would be used as target practice overnight. We found a suitable area for our tents above the sand dunes and Steve prepared the fish for the smoker at the waters edge.

After Steve's return, I went down to the sea intending a swim and a rinse but stopped short at the site of four or five Brown Whaler sharks up to five feet in length splashing in 6" of water after the fish remains. Standing on rocks on the waters edge only feet from a good feed, the black backed gulls and seagulls kept out of the water and I followed their example. Graeme came down threateningly brandishing a fork but his yellow poncho kept him from chasing after them. As the clouds dropped to beach level reducing visibility to 100 meters and the fish cooked, we watched the sharks, resolving to be careful not to capsize when launching in the morning.

Wednesday morning saw the fog and the sharks gone and we hit the water at 8 am to enable us to pass Cape Barrier on the ebb tide and to get back to Tryphena in time for the ferry back to Auckland. The easterly had dropped to a zephyr as predicted but the swells continued to restrict us to an offshore route. Kaitoke Beach passes by with Claris visible on the hills behind it and a plane using the airfield.

Medlands Beach was the last of the long sandy beaches on this coast before the rugged coastline returned. This sort of seascape always impresses me, a calm day with swells rolling onto shore and exploding on the rocks with the water levels rising and falling by meters with each swell. These conditions produce masses of foam that congregates and is streamed for miles in the currents. The gods were doing the dishes. Rosalie Bay marks the completion of our circumnavigation due to the false start but we are not home yet. Cape Barrier still waits. The combination of the ebb tide and soft breeze mean that the conditions are considerably gentler than our previous passages, but full concentration is still required along with the odd brace stroke. Once around the corner and out of the swell the water flattens out. We make a short stop at Sandy Beach before the dash back to Tryphena by midday.

The ferry is due to arrive at 1 pm and leave at 2 pm so we have plenty of time to dry off and change before organising the tickets.

The Fullers ferry is not designed for carrying kayaks and the boats just rest on some unused seats. Trying the same method with fully loaded boats may have caused some damage and would have been difficult to load aboard. The Subritskys car ferry, while slower, would provide better for a heavy kayak.

Racing back in clear, calm conditions, we see the landmarks from significant points of our journey to Great Barrier. Tryphena recedes in the distance as Port Jackson comes into view, and is clear as we pass

Channel Island. Waiheke is a distant mass. The Coromandel quickly fades and the islands of the inner gulf welcome us home. We pull into downtown

Auckland 2 hrs after leaving Great Barrier, a journey that took us 5 days to complete.

## Alone Again, Naturally

By Susan Hill, March 2001.

Every time I do it, I'm amazed I don't do it more often, but I guess the habits of some twenty years of enforced compromising, bending to meet the scheduling needs of others, are hard to break. I really am working on it, though, trying to learn to be more selfish, to take care of myself in ways other than physical. Once again, a week off from work, and a surprisingly splendid forecast: a window of opportunity between Monday appointments and a Thursday afternoon school meeting. Time for a short trip north, another attempt to use Motuora as a home base and get around Kawau. Any takers? Most have to work; those with flexible schedules have already made commitments: Rosie is booked, Ken is sick, Margaret doesn't believe in answer machines, Robyn is away, Jocelyn has childish responsibilities, Clive is in preparations for an expedition . . . . Simplicity is alone.

And it is so much more simple, though there's no one to ask if you've forgotten the can opener or a pair of pliers or whatever (but more on that later), and as Chris Gullely says, you have your best resource right between your ears. Food is easy -- no one else's tastes to account for or size of appetite to estimate (though a different pleasure is gained in sharing), and timing is perfect.

I arrived at Sullivan's Bay mid-afternoon (after buying a new tire), shortly before high tide, and found three other kayaks near cars. One didn't count -- an open job with obvious short range, but the other two were familiar (and much-discussed) models. I approached the paddlers to ask if they were arriving or departing, and was not surprised to recognise them, but I was surprised from where. Last September or so, on a solo trip to Ruapehu, I found myself wrapped in cotton wool at the top of Whakapapa and in fear of skiing off the mountain into oblivion. I approached a couple of women who appeared to be of appropriate age and ability (and who were giddy with laughter at the whole situation) and asked to take a few runs with them, as they seemed to know the mountain well. We ended up spending the rest of the day together, chasing each other blindly down their favourite trails amidst gales of giggles at the optical illusions caused by rocks and cliffs appearing as if from nowhere as we roared by. We agreed to try for a repeat performance, but never managed to do it. But here they were, wet and covered with sand from an ultimately successful surf landing, Lindsey and Christine, still laughing. And they helped me carry my boat to the water. Then it was my turn to chuckle as I changed from driving to paddling clothes. The last batch of clean clothes must have been put in the wrong piles, because I found myself not with my polypro paddling pants (girls know why to wear baggy shorts while kayaking) but with an extra black turtleneck instead (that's a skivvy to you Kiwis). Thank goodness for long shirts and black knickers!

A bit over an hour later, paddling into light wind, I landed at Motuora, choosing the campsite farthest from the ranger's house and his gas-powered generator. The tide had been high enough to cross through the gap in the reef at the north end of Te Haupa (Saddle Island), and landing was easy with the easterly breeze. Then there was a certain joy in being the only one there, unobserved as to how many (or few) trips up the beach were necessary, no discussion over the best tent site, no justification as to why I half set up the tent and then paused to read a few chapters of my book, no audience for a few yoga stretches, no disagreement on when to eat or comments on how long the water takes to boil or how delicious the aromas coming from the pot (onion, garlic, and ginger flavourings again). Those of you who live alone may take all this for granted; those with active families and / or social jobs may understand exactly what I mean.

But there's also the line about multiplying the joys and dividing the sorrows through partnership. The sunset was not as spectacular as some, but as I approached the mercurial water to wash my spoon and pot, I saw splashing in the shallows. A small school of fish escaping a predator? Spacing and rhythm were wrong. It was a sting ray, apparently almost caught in the shallow. No, there were two. Frolicking. I'd never seen such a thing -- wouldn't have minded if someone else could share my sense of wonder. As darkness descended, the half moon half-way up the sky wisped through the cirrus clouds, and it was easy to walk the length of the beach, well past the wharf and the plover nesting area, to where rocks made passage unrecommended for this tenderfoot. The quiet led me to light my tiny candle lantern, unused since that solitary July in Abel Tasman when the sun set at 5:00 pm and didn't reappear again until 8:00 am. It's almost enough light to read by if the pages don't have too much texture.

I expected to hear kiwis in the night; some fifteen birds are currently residing on Motuora as part of a re-colonisation plan. But aside from a few moreporks, there was only the whoosh of the wind in the big pines at the top of the hill behind me and the rush of the waves in front.

Dawn was grey; I hardly knew when to wake up. This wasn't predicted -- we were to be in the centre of an anti-cyclone by today! But the roar in the pines was louder and clouds scudded overhead. The water still looked fairly calm, so I took a hike up over the hill to look at where it was all coming from: not an encouraging sight. The surf on the outside was not too scary yet, but there were whitecaps in the distance and the sky to the east was not encouraging. Silly cows just stared at me with no answers. Back down the hill,

Adrian, the new ranger, was out on his deck doing wind estimates for his radio call to Pam at the DoC headquarters in Warkworth. "Twenty-five knots, moderate seas," he reported. And then, "Doesn't look too good for you," to me. "Rising to thirty-five by this afternoon. Wind warnings." And tomorrow? "More of the same." He postponed his trip to Moturekareka to collect cabbage tree seeds and to Kawau to fill out his census form -- errands I had thought I might be able to run for him.

Again the simplicity of solitude, quick packing, cold breakfast, onto the beach, and an easy launch. "Call me when you get there," Adrian had requested, as no one was expecting me back for another day. The route back was to be determined by how the waves felt -- across north of the reef by Saddle and then run down to Sullivan's, or down between Motuora and Saddle then across. The seas were white at the level of the reef, so I chose the relative protection behind Motuora then crossing south of Saddle, figuring that if I couldn't get to Sullivan's, I could make it to Wenderholm, land in the shelter of the river, and try to hitch back to where my car was. Sometimes decisions are easier alone, but challenging conditions are often more easily shared; these were the biggest seas I'd been in alone, and while I wasn't feeling physically challenged or frightened, I knew there was potential for accident. The swell from behind and starboard allowed for surfing, but very attentively, and the seas grew very confused as I reached the shallows at the south end of Saddle. One great roller sent me flying, threatened to broach me, but paddle-as-rudder carried me across, heart in my mouth, to the calmer waters on the inside. Then it was clear that I'd have no trouble reaching Sullivan's, and I

actually considered extending the trip a ways up the Mahurangi Harbour, yet another replay of two previously aborted trips, last March and the November before, when gale force winds kept me from venturing out into exposed areas. But both those times I had enjoyed sunny skies; today rain was threatening, and I had nothing to prove.

The last challenge was simply in getting up the beach carrying the boat on my shoulder, as the wind attempted to spin me around like a maple-seed helicopter. A kind soul appeared to hold the 'yak on the roof of the car until I could tie it down, and another made the call to Adrian to report my safe return.

P.S. As much as I enjoyed doing this alone, I was really looking forward to the companionship of the Little Barrier adventure scheduled for the next Saturday, and I was crushed to get the call -- as I was literally in the doorway with gear in hand -- cancelling due to wind warnings from Bream Head to Cape Colville. Couldn't quite get up the motivation to meet the folks for coffee in Titirangi, almost as far a drive for me as Leigh, so I just went back to bed with a book. Coming up with an alternative plan for the day just felt like too much effort, so I resigned myself to the Saturday chores I had been avoiding. Then, on the way home from getting a bike tire repaired (this was not my week for tires), a block from my home, I saw someone wheeling an X-Factor down the sidewalk. A quick u-turn, and I met an almost-neighbour, and fifteen minutes later I was on the water, just the Inner Harbour, but three hours of with-the-wind-against-the-tide and then with-the-tide-against-the-wind with a new friend.

## Lake Taupo Trip Report.

By Vincent Maire.

The weather couldn't have been better. The lake was blue and calm and the Mts Ruapehu, Ngarahoe and Tongariro stood out with a light dusting of snow to add to the colour.

Seven of us joined Bill Hayes and Nancy Reiser to explore the north-western coast of the lake. Like myself, Lindsay and Ryan traveled down to Kinloch on Friday. I arrived at Nancy's place around 5pm and along with Bill, we decided to have dinner at a local restaurant. On the menu was Schnapper Cajun with fried banana. A great meal however I was perplexed to find at the end of the meal, both Nancy and Bill had a banana skin on their plates. Horror of horrors, I had eaten mine. "Don't worry," said Nancy, "it is good roughage!" She wasn't kidding. I felt the effects of the fried banana skin being internally processed all weekend.

On Saturday morning we were joined by Wayne, Pam, Bernie and Ken. By 10am the party was on the water and heading west. Our goal was Boat Harbour for lunch but rather than take a direct route, we dawdled beside forest-covered cliffs and mooched around rocky headlands.

Bill and Nancy know the area well so we had a 'Cooks Tour' of points of interest. There are unlimited camping spots along this coast of Lake Taupo. A few are bona fide sites and managed by DoC or the regional council. Most however, are small, bush-fringed beaches that would provide idyllic stop-over points for any expeditioners.

We made Boat Harbour in time for lunch. This is a delightful horseshoe shaped bay with trees right down to the beach. Bell birds called to each other from across the narrow entrance to the harbour. Behind the trees are a number of well-used camp-sites and there are two longdrops at each end of the bay. Fizz-boats were also making use of Boat Harbour for a lunch break. The final leg of the day took us passed shear cliffs and two waterfalls tumbling out of the bush into the lake. The occasional trout broke the calm waters with a splash and apart from the occasional fishing boat we had the lake to ourselves.

We arrived at Waihaha at 3pm. A river of the same name enters Lake Taupo at a point that (like much of the part of the lake) is under Māori ownership. The owners operate a private campsite which is adjacent to their marae. The camping area is fringed with recently

planted kowhai and flax and we discovered an old apple tree abundantly laded with small, slightly tart fruit.

The marae was under the care of an elderly caretaker who showed us around and told of ambitious plans to develop the site. It is already possible to book a stay at the marae facilities however, by next summer groups of more than 30 will be able to stay and need only bring sleeping bags and food – everything else is supplied.

Apart from midges and the odd mozzie our stay there was a delight. During the evening we looked skywards and wondered at the red hue that brushed the heavens. It was the Southern Lights. If only we had known we were seeing such a rare phenomenon it would have made the experience that much sweeter.

Next morning Nancy and Bill advised that we paddle up the Waihaha River to a waterfall. The river is relatively

uncluttered with debris and the lead kayaks saw quite a few trout. It took us an hour to paddle upstream and about five minutes from our destination we heard the falls.

The Waihaha Falls tumble down some 20 or so metres into a wide and shallow lagoon that is ringed by a lovely pumice beach. We stopped there for a while for a snack-attack and took some photographs before heading back to camp.

After packing up we made a direct crossing to Boat Harbour for lunch then back to Kinloch, again by a direct route.

Many thanks to Nancy and Bill for sharing their favourite sea kayaking destination and this trip can be considered a recci for future adventures.

## Lunch With Rob

By Rona Patterson.

Saturday 31 March was a very busy day for ACC members, with one group heading for Taupo, another paddling around Little Barrier, and yet another group off to have lunch with Rob Gardner. It was my privilege to be with the latter group of ten men and four women.

A few of the group had said they were interested in this trip if the weather was good, and it was, right up until we rounded Orakei wharf, ten minutes into our journey. Then it rained! Thankfully, the shower was brief, and the rest of the day was beautiful.

Our first stop was Crater Bay on Browns Island, where we were met by Rob Gardner in his new Mirage. This was an interesting stop, with one of our ladies going for a swim, another climbed to the top of the island, one of the men boiled up his billy, some enjoyed a cup of coffee, but by far the greatest interest was in the 'Mirage'. So much so, that from a little way along the beach, the mirage could not be seen because it was surrounded by Homo Sapiens of the masculine variety checking out the new kayak.

It was a pleasant paddle around the Southern end of the island, down past Music Point, and alongside The Parade to the Half Moon Bay end of Bucklands Beach where we landed outside Rob's home. We ate lunch on his balcony overlooking the Tamaki River. *I wonder*

*where the Taupo and Little Barrier tourists were eating their lunch.* It was so hot that some had to have a swim, and I got to have a little paddle in the Mirage! What a treat, even if my feet were six inches away from the foot controls. I wonder if Rob will think to bring me one back from his next trip to Aus.

How much pleasure can one endure? I ask because after leaving such an idyllic setting, we now had a strong wind, and it was behind us!! All the way home!! After a brief stop at Karaka Bay, where one of our group found himself a potted orchid, we were back in our kayaks for the final push home.

It was noted, that just around the corner at Gentlemen's Bay, half a dozen of our group kept close to the shore. Perhaps they were trying to hole their boats on the rocks, or may-be they were sight-seeing!

The only difficulty on the final stretch was the number of wind surfers crossing our path, only to do a loop and cross in front of us again. One instance was a little too close for comfort with the wind surfer shouting at one of our group to "go, go, go, go" as he appeared to lose control.

This was a wonderful trip with good company, lots of sun, easy landings and a good wind to blow us home.

## Non Club Non Trip

Susan Hill, March 2001

Over the last swell and into the calm -- my heart was pounding not so much from the exertion as from the excitement, that I'd made it out through the surf at Muriwai! I had been really worried about being the weakest paddler in the group and had checked with Dan, who had convened this group (officially a non-club sponsored trip), as to whether my experience was adequate, giving him references to trips I'd taken and people I'd paddled with. He was reassuring and I really wanted the chance to stretch my abilities and increase

my skills, as did a few others. Brian, though he's done lots of board surfing, had never really been in surf in a kayak; Ryan, somewhat overly modest, I suspect, claimed never to have been through anything of any real size; Dan comes west whenever he can. We were also joined by Boyd, a local who saw us arrive and dashed home to get his own boat.

A "blocking high" over New Zealand for the last several days meant relative calm on the West Coast, conditions

that Dan had been waiting for. His idea was just to go out and around the slab of rock that sticks up near the Bennett colony and perhaps poke down the coast a bit, but he suspected we wouldn't be able to get into the caves, though we had brought torches just in case. And he'd brought along a sit-upon for playing in the surf either afterwards or if conditions forced a change in plans. Gathering to discuss strategy, we each checked that all gear was securely stowed or tied, and then started studying the waves.

There seemed to be rather long quiet periods followed by sets of larger waves, so the idea was to get prepared during the large set and then launch and punch through the quiet period. Brian and I were to be launched first, with the three more experienced paddlers watching us safely through and then joining us.

Paddling through waves is strange in that there's no sense of progress, as there's no visible shoreline and the water is movement unto itself. The frothy white stuff is full of air and seems to offer no resistance to the paddle -- pushing hard was the best I could do -- but the froth had surprising force when a freshly-broken wave would slap me in the chest, threatening to knock the wind out of me. West Coast waves have more force for their size than those on the East Coast. Just punch through -- there were only about three of these, and I was beyond the breakers into the swell. I kept going, thrilled to be meeting the challenge, not yet thinking of what might come at the other end of the day. . . . Brian must be close behind me, and the others would catch up soon. The sky was clear, the winds were light, all's right with the world. I paused to empty the puddle on my spray deck, to lower my rudder, to look back at the beach, amazed at how far out I was, and turned back to the sea.

Now what? I'm facing a wall of water! This is bigger than anything I've seen so far, and it's looking unsettlingly pointed at the top. "What you want to avoid," Brian had said, "is being at the crest of the wave just as it is breaking." OK, what should I do? Paddle like hell! Get up and over, past it before it crests. This is why I do occasional sprints on calm days, to hope that I'll always have something in reserve, but man, this is steep! Up and up, the bow is in the air, and splat, I'm down the back side, into the trough, but no chance to rest -- here's another one! Back paddle and hope it will have already broken? No way! Another sprint, I feel vertical, the whole length of the kayak, and . . . oblivion! I'm over, no, not the back of the wave, but backwards upside down and tumbling. So much jumbled force that there's no way to hold on to anything or even pretend to think I'm doing something deliberate; I'm just riding it out. Curiously, there's no fear -- my fear in playing waves has always been that of being pounded onto the bottom, and there's little chance of that here. Just tumble, hit a couple of times by passing debris, but luckily nothing significant. I wasn't even out of breath when I came up, so I couldn't have been under for too long, but boat and paddle were gone, hat ripped off my head but only a few strokes away, and it was obvious what to do: follow the waves and swim for shore.

Yes, it was a long way. The lifejacket up around my ears and water sandals on my feet didn't make it any easier, nor did the rescued hat which refused to stay stuffed in my shirt. Strong, steady sidestroke, watching backwards to best catch the waves that would boost me along. Still no fear, only relief that the water was so warm and concern that those on the beach see me and know that I'm OK. What's freaky was that there were no more breaking waves, nothing else that I even considered ducking under, nothing that tumbled me again, I just rode the sea in, catching up with my paddle and taking it along with me. And no sense of the passing time, though I think it was nearly an hour from when I launched that I was finally standing again on the beach. Not until I touched the bottom was I again aware of the incredible force of the water, and Boyd came to me through the shallows. "You're at the edge of a rip," he said. "Stand up and dig your toes in. Then ride the next wave in with me." And we were on the beach, but a few hundred yards from the starting point. Brian was alone out there beyond the surf.

I coughed a little, heaved up a little, and thought wryly of a quack I'd heard about who bottles Muriwai's pure salt water and sells it as some sort of life elixir. Ha! No obvious injuries: a scraped thumb (deck coaming?) and an upper lip that needs no collagen treatment (a passing paddle?), and all my gear was neatly piled on the beach, though covered with fine black sand. Nothing was missing except my emergency water bottle, a recycled three liter juice jug that I accidentally contribute to beach litter. I thought a small dry-bag had become detached, and walked up the beach to look for it, finding instead Brian's dried apricots which had been liberated from his chest pocket and Dan's escaped ginger beer bottle. But the dry bag was there all the time, still tied on but under the boat.

Now there was time for tears -- rage and frustration, to have been so close and to have messed up; should I have timed things differently, could I have ridden that wave differently, why did I stop and relax too soon, did this ruin everyone's day. And what to do about Brian, still out there alone -- though surely very proud of himself.

Dan considered, watched, counted, and headed out. The three of us climbed the dunes to observe: no problems getting out, and then there they sat, without our ideal vantage point, contemplating the timing of a return trip. "Now! Now!" we would say, seeing the calm spell stretching before and behind them. "Not now! There's a huge set coming!" Mostly, I felt relief -- that I was already in and didn't have to decide when to make a run for it. But they made it, unscathed and glowing.

Lunch and then play time. My boat was unnavigable -- a bent rudder and a couple of almost symmetrical dings in the hull at about knee level. They don't look like rock gouges (or teeth marks), so maybe it was the sea's attempt to "can" my kayak, a new meaning of the word for me, which I can only assume means to squash it the way I've seen sailors squash beer cans before sinking them. But Dan had brought a sit-upon and I had my boogie board. A bit of the hair of the dog that bit you . . .

Boyd went home to bring his kids back and the rest of us took turns with the sit-upon, the other three also playing about a bit in their kayaks – I may have seen some successful foamy re-entries, but I also helped empty some boats, including Ryan's imploded back hatch. And I had a few good rides myself.

No expectations, Dan had said, except to have a good time. We did. But not having had quite enough of the sea, I went to see \*Cast Away\* that night. And then slept deeply.

**Dan Hawthorn's view on trip leadership issues:** Susan and Brian were remarkably non-blaming but I am not happy with my role. Yes we got two inexperienced people out through the surf and it was only a minor slip up that led to Susan going in, if she had only gone 50 yards further, etc. On the other hand Brian was upset by what he went through, he simply did not expect that level of power and was horrified by the problem of getting back in. He could easily have come out. Susan came in really exhausted and just missed a rip and another 20 - 30 minutes in the surf, so the potential for a death was there.

Being the non-leader of an unofficial trip is I suspect a cop-out on my part. And other people taking part in such trips need to think about having an inexperienced person leading as part of their decision about committing themselves. I organised the trip and had the others trusting my judgement. I then got it wrong. I wanted us to get out there, I could see that the larger waves were too large but I think my belief that the lulls between the sets were long enough was influenced by a number of things I should have suppressed.

1. I wanted to go.
2. Beyond the surf it was lovely, nearly mirror calm.
3. I felt that it was a bit tame to have got us all to come out and not give it a go.
4. I should have said, "I do not think that at your level of experience you should go out in these conditions," but I was unwilling to say it to people who were dead keen, politeness over frankness, being nice over risking being seen as opinionated. In obviously bad conditions I would have said "we don't go" and merely been stating the obvious, in marginal conditions I gave the okay for going and put two people with insufficient experience into more risk than they needed.

Both Susan and Brian ended up with a different view of the risks than when they started and would probably not have gone out if they knew how powerful the waves could be, a trip leader de-facto or otherwise has some responsibility for shaping other people's estimates of the risk.

Second point is that although I talked about what to do I was aware that we covered too many points for people to remember, especially if things went wrong. I also missed out the need for a sustained sprint. And although I said 250 ? 300 metres out, as Susan points out she felt she was a really long way out when she stopped and it was unrealistic of me to think she was going to be able to estimate "far enough" without more experience.

The third point is that after things went wrong I would have given a lot for a simple set of arm signals for communication between the shore and sea parties.

The fourth point is that during a surf exit or if you come out while coming in there is a long stretch where a kayaker is on their own. A rescue attempt with another kayak is likely to mean two people in the drink.

We all are saying that we want to go out again, given much calmer conditions. But part of the experience we are building up is going to be how to deal with the lack of an experienced leader.

Somewhere there are books with chapters describing all you need to know about surf exits and landings. However here is my current take.

Contributions from others are welcome.

1. You need to have a reliable sprint for 300 metres or more
2. You need to know how long it takes you to cover this distance and you can then estimate if the lulls are long enough
3. Wait for the lulls between the sets
4. You need some way of estimating whether you have gone beyond the range of the rare rogue waves. Should one of the experienced members go out first and act as a marker?
5. Avoid the waves as they are about to break or for the first 10 seconds after they have broken
6. Hit the rising swells or broken water straight on when going out, you need to have developed momentum before you hit the broken water as once in the break you have less power.
7. You have to be prepared to come out so can you manage a long swim in a life jacket or are there lifeguards on hand who have been told what you are doing
8. Anything not tied firmly to the kayak will be lost. This includes items under bungy cords and items in net pockets without zips on lifejackets. It also includes anything loose stowed in your cockpit if / when you come out.
9. If conditions are marginal cancel; it is easier getting out than getting in and it is when coming in that you are likely to be dumped or have your kayak rammed into the bottom.
10. When coming in the general technique is to avoid breaking waves. Come in behind the break, cross the zone of breaking waves following one that has just broken, and then as the next one breaks and the broken water catches up with you come in sideways leaning into the wave with a brace stroke.
11. You really need to practice this. Takapuna in an easterly storm is great. There are minus points for taking out swimmers; given the width of a kayak going sideways this is simply unsporting. Safe entry through swimmers comes under the next point.
12. If you come out you can swim the kayak in, with you at the nose on the seaward side and the waves pushing you into the beach. Hold the kayak so that your hands are not going to get jammed under a carry handle, I prefer holding the deck ropes and being willing to let



them go if it gets too much. Again practising this on the East Coast makes sense.

13. Once in the surf, kayaks tend to come in safely by themselves, much faster than swimmers. Note however that Susan's kayak did get a couple of 2cm breaks in the fibreglass and a bent rudder,

**Ryan Whittle responds:**

On the point of a sustained sprint all the way out: As we watched the surf prior to launching we could see that the waves were breaking twice, with a calmer area between the two. When I set off I did attempt to sprint the whole way and in retrospect think that this was an error. After breaking through the first set of breaking waves I could see the next set forming and proceeded to attack them anyway. It would have been better to have treated them as two individual sets, and to watch the second set and pick a time for paddling through rather than blindly charging them.

**Brian Strid responds:**

Dan I think you are beating yourself up way too much.

I would rather classify myself as having limited experience rather than being inexperienced and as such I can take responsibility for trying to extend myself in what were marginal conditions -- for me. I got away with it. I now have so much more experience. I wasn't horrified, I was terrified.

The paddle I used was a cruising paddle. It did not have the required power for the necessary sprints. I proved that when I swapped paddles to play and had so much more control. That play in the white water means I am now more confident about waiting in the gap between

the two breaks to both break the sprint in two and also to gauge the sets in the outside break.

The deck I was using could not handle being dumped on. I will investigate a Rhino deck for surf play.

I need to develop a roll so I can hide from an oncoming dumper and then resume my merry way.

I had a good paddle on Sunday from Kawakawa Bay to Matingarahi (sic) and back.

I am looking forward to the next lot of (slightly smaller) surf.

**And Susan again:**

What would I do differently? I think I agree with Dan that someone with more experience should go out first, partly to test the reality (as compared with the perceived reality) and partly, as he suggests, to show how far out you really have to go. I'd wear booties instead of the Tevas that I had on because of the thicker soles I thought I should have to protect my recovering torn plantar fascia. Hand signals probably wouldn't have helped me; I probably couldn't see them from as far as I would have needed to. I wonder if there's a way to clip a life jacket down, a detachable strap between the legs or something, to make swimming easier. I was aware and accepting of the possibility of swimming in if I flipped -- Dan did make this clear -- I wasn't actually tired from "swimming" (have done a fair bit of distance swimming and body surfing in my time); it was the final effort of walking up the last twenty feet of undertow that was hard, but there was support then. I have no regrets -- would do it again -- feel respect but not fear, had no trouble getting in the water again that afternoon.

**Deadline for next month's newsletter: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May (= committee meeting)**

**Articles to look forward to:** another solo paddle by Susan Hill; and Lindsay Sandes' report on the Taupo trip.

The end of this page has been left blank, so that you can cut off the "Adventure Night Out" reply form -- see over page. Cheers!

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