



Newsletter

March 2003

Hello Folks,

What a great selection of articles this month. I have held a couple of articles for the next issue. You will see that in April and particularly over Easter there are a number of opportunities for paddling no matter what your experience level.

More trips are required for May so how about it? A number of club members have attended leadership courses that were subsidised by the Club, but few have put their new found skills to good use. If you need support from another member just ask.

Cheers,

Jan

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Deadline for next month's newsletter: 7 April 2003

Useful phone numbers and addresses

Club address	PO Box 147-282, Ponsonby, Auckland		Publicity Officer	Roger Lomas	579 8799
President	Matt Crozier	817 1984	Safety & Training Officer	Peter Sommerhalder	815 2073
Patron	Colin Quilter	630 2219	Storage & Club Kayaks	Lindsay Sandes	522 3344
Secretary	Rosie Thom	376 8636	Merchandising	Jonathan Jarvis	578 1545
Treasurer	Alissa Good	846 2622	Newsletter Editor	Ian Calhaem	579 0512
Membership	Matt Crozier	817 1984		lanCalhaem@xtra.co.nz	
Trips Officer	Morgan Lewis	620 4005			
	Morganl@xtra.co.nz				

The Club maintains two e-mail groups:

To subscribe to the discussion list, send a blank e-mail to: auckland-kayakers-subscribe@yahoo.com
For event reminders, send a blank e-mail to: auckland-canoe-club-subscribe@yahoo.com

Where can you go to get training?

Auckland Canoe Centre, phone 815 2073

Basic confidence course, Henderson Pool, Tuesday evenings - \$120 for four sessions.

One-on-One rolling, Henderson Pool, Tuesday evenings - \$149 for three sessions. \$55 for single 90 minute lesson. Multisport Grade 2 Certificate, white water, sea kayaking one and two-day courses run frequently.

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)

Outdoor Discoveries Ltd, Chris Gulley, phone 813 3399

Intro skills, overnight at Mahurangi - \$225. Details on web site www.nzkayak.co.nz

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

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

Two-day OSH certified outdoors first aid course - \$140

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

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, John Maynard, Mike Randall.

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 kayaks, therefore, are not recommended on trips planned for sea kayaks.

Trips and Events Calendar

Remember to contact the trip leader before you set out. This is important because the leader needs to know the capabilities of those who are coming and to be able to contact you if the plan changes. **Please be aware that you paddle on a Club trip at your own risk. Read the safety policy (page 2). 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

Because daylight saving ends soon, evening paddles will be returning after dark and you MUST have either an all-round white light on a pole, or else a large-lens (eg. Dolphin) torch, in good working condition, mounted on the outside of your kayak. This is actually a legal requirement, so, no light, no paddle. It is also 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 paddlers MUST provide their own night-lights. All skill levels welcome. Meet at Okahu Bay by 5:30pm, ready to be on the water by 5:45pm. 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. Club boats can be hired at the subsidised rates of: \$5 to club members, and \$10 to non-members/guests. (At all other times, club boat hire is \$20/day or part day, for members and guests.)

March

March 23 Swim Escort - This is the big one! The Club is organising accommodation on Rangitoto for Saturday night. Otherwise leave from Okau Bay (or St Heliers) at 7.00am. 60 kayakers are required by the Coastguard to escort the swimmers. Meet at the western end of St Heliers at 7:30am, ready for an 8am departure. Club boats are available hire free for the swim escorts. Biscuits and soft drink available afterwards. **Please do phone Matt Crozier, on (09) 817 1984 or matt@vsl.co.nz**, to let him know that you will be able to assist with this, or would like to hire a club boat.

22-23 March Around Auckland Paddle & Portage - An overnight circumnavigation of Auckland and a fund raising event for Auckland Coastguard and Surf Life Saving. Last year's event attracted over 80 paddlers. This year should see even more participants plus a 20-person Waka! This event is organised by **Outdoor Discoveries (09) 813 3399 email discoveries@nzkayak.co.nz**

March 28/29/30 Tiritiri Matangi weekend The time has come to visit this enchanting island again. Enjoy the dawn and dusk chorus of the amazing array of bird life, walk the many tracks, swim, fish or paddle the interesting coastline with some neat caves to explore. The accommodation is very comfortable with everything provided, all you need to bring is sleeping bag, food and drinks of your choice. All this for \$15 per night. We leave our kayaks on the wharf where we are met by the ranger who kindly puts all our clutter on his truck and delivers it to our doorstep. Does it get any better than that? Shared dinner on sat night.

Departures have in the past been: Friday 9a.m.

Friday 6p.m. Own discretion

Saturday 8.30 am

Return to the real world approx 4 or 5 p.m Sunday.

Our cars are left in secure overnight parking at the Thearuru Bay[next to Shakespears Bay]. The paddle takes approx 1 hr in average conditions.[approx 4.5 km] Tiri channel has the capacity to be a very nasty and testing stretch of water if winds get up or winds oppose tide. The trip leaders decision will govern if the crossing is safe. For those not wanting to paddle there is the option of the ferry from Gulf Harbour or Downtown. Ring the trip leader early as space is very limited. Sorry, the answer is NO. camping is not allowed anywhere on the island. Trip leader is Trevor **Contact ph no 8177357 and leave a message on the answer phone.**

April

Sunday April 6 Pt Chev / Inner Harbour / Meola Reef - Explore the estuary under the

motorway bridge and then back to the Meola Reef. H.W. 1023 Meet at the Pt Chev yacht club ramp, Raymond Rd @ 0900hrs. **Contact Brian Strid (09) 2388084**

Saturday April 12. Explore Sandspit waterways/Kawau Bay/Matakana - River, choice depending on weather. Good trip for beginners and others who don't know or have forgotten the charms of Sandspit. Meet at Sandspit, (6 km out from Warkworth) by play area opposite Sandspit Motor Camp at 11 am. High tide 1500. Finish about then.

Contact Mike Home phone: 09 528 1377 Postal address: P.O. Box 25 131, St Heliers, Auckland Mobile phone: 025 736 806 email: mike-randall@xtra.co.nz

Fri 18th April Easter Weekend - Motuora Is - Meet at Sullivans Bay on Friday 18th April - 8.30 am, where vehicles will be left at a charge of \$5 per night. Leave at 9.00 for Motuora Is where we will set up camp. The weekend will include a trip to Moturekareka and Kawau Islands, and a pot luck dinner on Friday night. This is a great chillout spot and of course, some fishing too. We will be camping, as the bach is already booked. Charge is \$5 per night. **Ph: Justin 025-868 177 or 09-278 8090 to book.**

Fri 18th April Easter Weekend - Far North - This Easter we are heading to the Far North to explore some very interesting and rarely visited coastline. Our base will be Pinetree Lodge, the main camping ground in Ahipara, just west of Kaitaia and at the southern end of Ninety-nine Mile Beach. But don't worry, we will not be going off the beach. Just south of here are two very interesting and apparently very beautiful harbours that drain onto the west coast. They are Herekino and Whangape harbours. Our initial goal will be to explore these two bodies of water and I believe Whangape has an amazing entrance which runs between high cliffs. To the east we also have Houhoura Harbour and the Karikari Peninsula. So, the plan is drive and kayak. In the main the paddling will be in sheltered waters but for the more adventurous sea kayaker, there will be opportunities to paddle in the deep blue stuff. The cost of a tent site is \$10, however the camping ground has a range of cabins and these can be viewed and booked on <http://www.ahipara.co.nz/ahiparamotorcamp/index.html> I have been told there is no need to book tent sites. The leader is Vincent Maire on (09) 424-2293, 0252766032 or vincent.maire@xtra.co.nz and please let me know if you are coming along. I may well be going up Thursday afternoon and I look forward to having plenty of company. **SEE YOU ALL THERE**

Sat 19th April Easter Weekend - For those of us who must stay close to home over Easter, come out to Vine House for a night. Leave Saturday morning and return Sunday. Bring wine and good food to share. This may be an opportunity to commence work on the property - such as the access track. **Contact Stephanie Seager for more details. Ph 8345769**

25th - 27th of April Anzac weekend in the Coromandel - Spend the Anzac weekend in the Coromandel at Kauotunu. There are lots of things to do in the area including kayaking, tramping, Diving and Fishing. Depending on numbers we will stay at Alissa's Batch, if there are too many people then we can take over the backpackers as well. **Contact Alissa on agood@peace.com or 021 608 448 or 846 2622hm.**

May

May 4th Cambridge - Hamilton Race, start 11am **ph Peter Sommerhalder 815-2073 for details**

Found - Gloves

One pair of red and black new paddling gloves. Left at Vine House. If these sound like yours, contact Stephanie email:stephseager@hotmail.com

Classified

Nissan Terrano 1990 2.7 turbo diesel 4wd manual five speed air conditioned sun roof nudge bars Pioneer stereo and cd player, 157,000 k current owner for the last 100,000k meticulously maintained by fastidious owner careful lady driver never raced, rallied, rolled, driven on the beach or dropped in the tide Goodrich All Terrains, near new on alloy wheels c/w tow bar \$10,000 ono optional extras - Thule roof rack, Nissan maintenance manuals for engine/body Ideal multi-sport vehicle. Current owner reluctantly selling.

Phone Mike Marra, 818 8203

Pres Sez

There were a couple of weeks last month where numbers on club trips were strangely down. It seems this can be put down to everyone being 'loyal', as it were! Nevertheless, I enjoyed exploring some new territory on Steve's trip around the shoulder of the Firth of Thames with three others, on a windless sunny day. The images of the heavy rain cloud activity about the Coromandel peninsula and the low dense fog in the Firth will not escape my mind in a hurry.

KASK forum in Rotorua

It's always good to catch up with paddlers from other clubs and other parts of the country. The symposium had a noticeably different style from the ones we have here in Auckland. There was more of a focus on paddling and learning about the local area and less of the workshops. Quite a stress-free weekend! The event opened and closed with an Irish ditty (full chorus participation!) – is this a feature that will move up north, I wonder?

Swim Escort

The next swim is on March 23, from Rangitoto Wharf to St Heliers. This is the big one! We've booked the scout bach on Rangitoto for Saturday night. There is a charge for the bach, so contact me (matt@vsl.co.nz) for further information if you would like stay overnight.

I have heard that, due to one aborting swimmer not being 'caught' before making the beach on the last swim, the organisers are a little worried that there won't be enough kayakers to properly oversee the swimmers - so please come out of the closet and join us. If you only come out for a paddle once this year, please make it for this swim escort – we need your help.

Membership

Just a reminder that new members who have joined from January 1st 2003 have membership right through to March 31st 2004. For the rest of us, subs are due to be renewed March 31st this year. If you wish to actively participate in the AGM in May, you will need to have renewed your subscription by then.

Mahurangi Bach

The ARC are currently working a plan of work required and an estimated cost of bringing Vine House up to scratch. From that we will have a better idea of what contribution, in terms of both funding and labour, would be needed from us for the project to go ahead. As a club we need to work out just how much we are prepared to spend on this, taking account of our other objectives. Ideally we'd like an initial short-term agreement where we can assess our use, income and expenditure over that period, and accordingly restrict our budget for that term. A final decision would need to be made on this at the AGM. When more information comes to hand, it would be good to discuss the pros and cons in a general meeting prior to the AGM.

Annual General Meeting

It would be good to start thinking now about what you would like to get out of the club, any direction you think we should be taking, or any niggles you have that you think should be raised. Promote discussion about any issues with committee members or among yourselves. Any motions can be discussed closer to the time, so that we can make final decisions more quickly on the night of the AGM.

Remember any specific motion should be sent to the Secretary before the next Committee Meeting (8th April) so that it can be published in the next Newsletter and included in the Agenda of the AGM.

Happy paddling,
M@

Change of Lock Combination

Members using the Kayak shed are trusted with the combination of the lock. It must NOT be given to anyone else. The Club periodically changes the combination in order to have some control over who is using the facility. A new combination has been operational since the 1st march 2003.

The brief history of Vine Cottage

Vincent Maire

I discovered this in the winter 2002 issue of Pohutukawa Post, a newsletter produced by the ARC Regional Parks committee.

The Vine House cottage at Lagoon Bay in Mahurangi East Regional Park might look like an old bach to many, but it is a building with an interesting history

The house and woolshed on the foreshore were built by Ronald Vine in 1952. Ron Vine was a sort of latter-day pioneer, who did everything himself. He cleared the Mahurangi farm of gorse by hand, and designed and built the buildings. He felled the trees for the construction timber and towed them with his self-built boat to a sawmill, treated the timber himself (with creosote), made his own concrete blocks and concrete water tank, and even built his own fridge!

The house was built in a modern architectural style, and incorporated a number of design features that we now take for granted, but were considered avant-garde at the time.

It had an open plan north-facing living area with a sliding glazed door providing access to the deck, and an island kitchen. Acrylic paints, still considered experimental, provided the finishes. The low-pitched roof incorporated diagonal sarking and was originally covered in a bitumen membrane, overlain with beach shell to reflect the heat.

Ron Vine was a journalist and later editor of the NZ Farmer magazine, and the construction of the house was documented and used as a basis for a series of articles on the design and construction of the ideal farmhouse.

The design of the house is very similar to and was originally thought to be the work of Vernon Brown, New Zealand's leading domestic architect of the day. Although Vernon Brown was part of Ron Vine's circle of friends and did visit the house, it appears that Ron Vine was in fact responsible for designing the building.

Other friends who stayed at the Lagoon Bay house included writers ARD Fairburn and Anthony Alpers, and artists Eric Lee-Johnson, Helen Brown and Alison Pickmere.

Vine House - "This place inspires nothing"

Stephanie Seager

Trevor Arthur said it, we did it, happily succumbing to a weekend of sweet nothings.

The weekend of 25th-26th January was designated for idle time. It was a chance to check out the new club bach and a time for making checklists of what should be done. Talk was big and action precious little. More than 20 people seized the opportunity to admire, discuss and dream. All were enthused. How could they not be? The place is magnificent.

Envisage a sheltered bay, ancient pohutukawa, sandy beaches close by, and easy access to a number of islands.

It was perhaps these attributes that first tempted original Vine House inhabitant Ron Vine to lease the property in 1949. Lured by the beauty of the place, Vine was not to experience idle times in Lagoon Bay. Clearing gorse was a constant battle in his efforts to establish a small sheep farm. As was creating boundary fencing and building a residence for his family. A genuine 'do-it-yourselfer', Vine designed and built the farmhouse in 1952. It is a building of note. Vine was interested in modern architectural practises of the period. The house incorporates many features that are in keeping with post-war modern architectural design. When you visit take note of the open plan design, expansive windows, sliding doors and mono-pitch roof. Also look at the main living areas which are considerate of sun and views. This house is now the focus of our club's attention.

Over the next few years the canoe club aims to sympathetically renovate this dwelling. Ron Vine rarely had an idle moment on the property. But after a few small working bees we will be able to enjoy many lazy years. Whilst weekends of sweet nothings cannot be promised initially, you will surely find many rewards in the doing (and of course our fabulous company!) We offer you a chance to recapture the Ron Vine do-it-yourself spirit of days gone by.

The dwelling is in reasonably sound condition. It boasts electricity and running water. You can experience the joys of a hot shower and the luxury of a flush toilet!! It is also within easy paddling distance for even the most novice sea kayaker.

Look out for advertised working bees in the future. We'd love to see you there.

Lake Tarawera

Stephanie Seager

I'm sure that Garry Mabey has some influence with the weather gods. Being a veteran of two of his expeditions, I have come to associate blue skies and calm seas with his very name. Met Service may predict 30 knot winds and driving rain but for our happy little party this was not the case. Lake Tarawera provided us with idyllic conditions.

For a brief weekend we camped out on the water's edge. All paddlers of all levels were well occupied. Some of the multi sport boys checked out the course for the Moa Challenge but many of us idle souls spent our time lolling in natural hot pools. Hard physical yakka was not a priority for this Manukau/Auckland Canoe Club trip. Kay and Steve even provided a support boat should we have needed it. We didn't.

As we lay out on the shore on Saturday night drinking wine and stargazing, we counted our blessings that Jim Hickey got it wrong.

It was a supreme weekend. Thanks Garry for organising everyone and everything so well, including the weather.



Mahurangi Harbour & Warkworth Trip Sat 22nd Feb

Sue Bunce

Sat 22nd February dawned both calm and relatively cool for summer, only about 20 deg as the high. Ideal kayaking weather. As well as myself, 9 other keen souls drove up to Snells Beach to join me on this trip. Many thanks to Ian & Alison Calhaem for attending as experienced trip leaders. Others who ventured north of Auckland were Jodi, Reuben, Aaron, Andrea, Margaret, Anne, and Judith.

We shuttled a couple of cars and a trailer down to Scott's Landing, which took about half an hour, then set off from Dawson's Creek, at the end of Dawson's Road, Snells Beach at 10.45 am. It was a lovely leisurely paddle up the beautiful upper reaches of the Mahurangi Harbour, up the river to Warkworth town. The river is lined by both mangroves and beautiful steep hills covered in native bush and kauri trees. We passed the historic cement works as well as various marinas and boat yards. Ancient steam tugs are also moored up river. We spent another 10 minutes on a rising tide, exploring Duck Creek, a beautiful little creek, almost hidden by mangroves at the entrance, but opening out into a lovely tree lined miniature harbour with a small waterfall. We then continued up river to the Warkworth boat ramp where we stopped for a short lunch break.

We set off exactly on the high tide to paddle down river with the tide and explore the Mahurangi Harbour. Upon reaching the harbour the group of 10 seemed to split into a group of 4 and 3 and some individuals, it seemed everyone wanted to explore a different area of the harbour. The harbour has many bays and fish farms as well as Grants Island in the middle reaches. Unfortunately this meant we totally missed the main stop for late lunch which was meant to be at Grants Island or ashore close by it. Hence by the time I caught up with the others they had already arrived at Scott's Landing and finished the trip earlier than intended. My fault for not making the trip intentions clearer. The harbour was lovely and serene, with a nice high tide as full moon was only 3 or 4 days ago. Grants Island was heavily guarded by 2 shags and a pair of oystercatchers. There is so much to see in the Mahurangi Harbour that quite a few trips on high tides would be required to see the area properly. We finished at Scott's Landing, a beautiful setting by the old Scott Homestead with access at all tides. A lovely trip for those of us who don't like surf or waves !!

Waiheke Adventure.

David Ward

I'd always wanted to circumnavigate Waiheke Island, but "where to sleep" had always placed it in the too hard basket. That is until I met a couple of women kayakers on the Island who were doing just that. I decided that I could take a three day break from painting the outside of my house (not too hard to do) and after taking off distances on the chart

and making allowances for tide, had my route planned. I was to start from Narrow Neck beach and make my way round the southern side and up the east side of the Island to end up somewhere around Man o' War Bay, a distance of some 40km. I could have driven to St Heliers and launched there so saving 5km but felt comfortable with the distance, given the likely wind and tidal conditions and to start and finish at home had a certain appeal.

A large high was heading our way across the Tasman and with it's flank over Auckland the weather office was predicting 10 to 15 knots SW decreasing. I set off at midday and struck out for Rangitoto wharf, the next way point was

Motuihe Island and at 2pm called in at Calypso Bay for a late lunch. Paddling along Waiheke's south coast and not doing too much exploring because of the time factor I had some assistance from the tide and the wind over my right shoulder until Otakawhe Bay was reached. From here on up the west coast it was good to be out of the wind, which hadn't abated, and to receive more assistance from the tide. I was now on the home straight with about 8km to go so took advantage of the improved conditions to explore the numerous bays until my destination was reached at 7.30pm. The Bay had bush around it and a small stream coming down with a small flat grassy spot beside it, there didn't seem to be any sandflies around which was a big plus - ideal thought I. I intended to sleep under the stars which I figured was not camping and therefore ok. Food first though and then just watching night come with the lovely reflected pink sunset colours and the first stars before shuteye time.

My destination for the next day was Palm Beach where I was to stay with a friend who lives there. The morning started off with some great rock gardening, a real weakness of mine, as I made my way to Thumb Point at the NW tip of Waiheke. On rounding f Point it was soon apparent that the wind had not lessened but as I felt comfortable with it continued exploring the delightful rock gardens along the coast, made a little more interesting by the presence of a half metre swell. Two km along the coast I espied a tempting passage some 3 metres wide between sheer rock faces, I paddled along behind a surging swell and reached the other end ok but in my deliberations as to which direction to head off in, I was caught by the following surge which took away my steerage and lifted the kayak up so that the bow was on a rocky shelf. As the surge subsided I frantically back paddled but could not dislodge the bow before the next surge hit me side on and I was over. My kayak is a ply Sea Bear and being fearful of it ending up as a pile of match sticks my concern was to get both of us to a safe place. The said rocky shelf at the bottom of the rock face was the best available and it was awash when the surges came through. I hung on to the kayak and with a struggle and numerous abrasions to my hands and legs managed to get both of us onto it. My paddle was thankfully attached to the kayak. As I surveyed my situation I saw my pump floating away (it had been stowed under bungy cord on the foredeck which I had been holding onto) so had to jump in and swim out to retrieve it. Inspection of the kayak revealed some holes in the bow section which tape would fix. Luckily, it was close to high tide so my situation on the rock shelf was not going to worsen, but clearly there was no land route off it. I had to get a towel out of my dry bag to get the areas thoroughly dry before taping over the holes, which was quite a mission with buckets of spray continuously coming over the kayak and myself.

Launching from the jagged rock shelf was not going to be easy with the swell surging well over it and then retreating. I observed for some time trying to pick a pattern and then went for it and got away with it, the episode had taken some 40 mins.

My rock gardening from this point on was somewhat restrained in fact non existant with the increasing SW wind (this length of coast lies roughly SW) coming over the island and worsening sea conditions. I felt more comfortable going into it than with it behind so continued my way along the coast past Owhiti and Cactus Bays to Carey Bay for a welcome lunch stop. As I approached Te Whau Pt at the eastern side of Onetangi Bay I could see lots of whitecaps and bigger seas whipped up by the wind funneling up that side of the Bay. Rounding the point with the wind gusting 25 kn plus was a real struggle but I just had to keep at it and keep the bow pointing directly into the wind, the alternative was to get blown out to sea. Paddling down that east side of Onetangi Bay was tough going, constant spray as the bow hit yet another wave I was barely making progress, a distance of 3.5 km from the Point to the store which would normally take 30mins took me all of 90, I was exhausted. There was no way that I was going to continue on to Palm Beach and on approaching the occupants of a beach front house was able to leave the kayak in their garden for a few days until the wind abated.

A couple of days later I had an uneventfull paddle back to Narrow Neck. I'd like to do the trip again but :-

- 1) have more time
- 2) take greater heed of the weather and orientation of the coastline
- 3) take a more cautious approach to rock gardening when paddling alone
- 4) see if there is anyone out there who would like to do the trip with me

and make a few changes to the kayak:-

- 1) I have a tow/grab rope around the foredeck secured with two plastic clips which sprang off when I grabbed the rope. They will be replaced with metal ones.
- 2) make sure that all essentials, such as pump, paddle float are attached to the boat in a secure way and not under bungy cord which can be grabbed in an emergency situation
- 3) buy some more duct tape

Tugboat Tom on Tiritiri Matangi

Mark Kraayenhof

"What a day !" I said to my wife as we unpacked the heavily loaded car of two kayaks, snorkelling gear, clothes, life jackets, spray skirts, pumps etc, not forgetting the food to feed us for a week on a deserted Island, should it come to that.

Rolanda looked around, dressed in her bright green rash shirt.

Blue sky all around, the coast rimmed horizon looking like the edge of a giant bowl. Only one break, the green blue turquoise of the open sea beckoning, with the low emerald green forested Island of Tiritiri Matangi glowing in the early rising sun.

The sparkling jewel in the crown of Hauraki's magnificent harbour.

"It sure is" she agreed bending down to pack more dry bags filled with food into my already well-stocked banana yellow kayak.

Looking at the turn out I counted seven additional kayaks, not one of them with a female owner. Maybe the description of the trip sounded to arduous to some, not to Rolanda though, I thought with pride.

My thoughts were broken by an authoritative yell by Vincent. "Come over here you lot"

Clad in a white sun bleached cap, well worn vest and spray skirt he looked like a high seas kayaker should. Bronzed tanned skin stretched over a lean muscled frame. Concentrated brown eyes looked at us each in turn. "Have you all logged your names and phone numbers in the book ?" he said in a voice designed to carry to us all.

Heads nodded all round.

"Right lets go," he said flashing a grin, "Some of you may need a hand with your glass boats" Vincent picked his up easily and waded into the slight surf.

Deep blasts of sound echoed around us. A crisp white luxury cruise liner signalled its departure from the West side of the harbour. Made tiny by distance, it looked too small to make such a big sound.

By this time we had all lined up like ducklings to cross the shipping channel, with Vincent keeping us bunched up and herding us safely across.

Tiritiri Matangi rose to meet us, green forested hills, finally showing a strip of sand, which turned out to be a beautiful snug cove, with a small protective rocky headland at each end.

Water turned from dark, to tropical green. Visibility was amazing. Looking down honey coloured sand came to sight. I felt I needed only to reach out to tweak the seaweed which waved cheekily at me. However it was firmly anchored three metres beyond my touch, as I glided overhead, into the cove.

Small schools of whitebait escorted us out of the cove, after our snack ashore, as we followed Vincent's promise of some "awesome" rock gardening.

Indeed, a vista of sculptured rock, crevices, white capped ledges opened before me.

Someone designed this for fun loving kayakers like us, dolphins of the boating species.

A game was immediately started of follow the leader; each person daring to go into yet narrower, shallower passages. Hilarity often resulted.

I for one went into a promising detour close by the shoreline, only to find on an outgoing wave the tail of my kayak suddenly scraping rock.

"I heard that !" a jovial fellow kayaker cried, as he squirted through on a wave, a passage that moments ago was only rock.

Paddling around the next rocky headland, I saw ahead of me a brightly coloured glass kayaker, lining up a patch of boiling water. A wave surged in calming the water momentarily; he stroked over the calm surface, only to be undone by the same wave, as it retreated; delicately leaving the kayaker pillowed on a cushion of seaweed covered rock.

Rocking your kayak won't free you I thought, as I waited with the others in deeper waters, who were hooting and hollering encouragement, and instructions.

A large obliging wave lifted him off his perch, he quickly paddled into safer water. Once there he excitedly called, "Did you see that ? Did you see me up on the rock?"

Rocky gardens, narrow chutes, passages were explored and experienced in a daze of colour and adrenalin.

Something odd caught my eye. Why were three kayakers so close together being washed by the surging waves towards the rocks?!

Paddling closer I realised Rodger was in the sea, his kayak upside down. The thought flashed through my mind. Too much rock gardening can cause you to collect rocks!

Quickly Vincent and another kayaker formed a raft, sandwiching Rodgers kayak between them. A ballet of moves saw the kayak righted, emptied of water and a tow rope lashed to it. Kayaker Tugboat Tom carefully paddled out until the

rope snapped tight, then with his characteristic powerful stroke, slowly pulled Rodger's kayak away from the danger of the rocks. Churning white water spraying from paddle tips, showing the strength of his arms. Once safely away from the danger Rodger scrambled back into his kayak with all the grace of a seal on dry land, kayak stabilised by the sandwich escort.

Snugly fitted back into his kayak Rodger was again back in his element, though not before having to endure a few good natured, "How many rocks did you collect Rodger?"

Not long thereafter we came again upon the tropical cove where we had previously snacked. It was agreed to stop, for a swim, a short tramp and take the last opportunity to lighten our kayaks of more food and drink.

On grounding our kayaks a local Takahe wandered up, inspecting the kayaks, carefully walking from one to the other, turning his head from side to side to get a good view.

Rolanda's kayak interested him the most, probably because the colour closely resembled his own.

With grape blue/black head, peacock blue shoulders, olive green flightless wings, he gently touched the kayak with his thick scarlet red beak. Satisfied his colours were superior to that of the kayak he side stepped through the shallow water. At only half a metre tall he was shy of the big noisy humans who took a sudden interest in him, a protected bird, endangered.

Birdsong which we had heard muffled in the distance on our way around the Island now filled our ears. It was as though we had opened the door to a concert chamber.

Loud clear liquid ringing notes of the bellbird, penetrating "cheet cheet" of the fantail, explosive whistles of the stitchbird all cascading around us. These were a few that I recognised from the canopy of sound around us.

We had walked into a musical collection of all the most rare and endangered species of bird, for these are our priceless New Zealand heritage, free without a care in the world.

With startling suddenness the walk came to an end, and we were again by our kayaks, bird inspector Takahe long gone.

We to had to go, leaving this magical Island sanctuary of forest and bird.

Kayakers, dolphins of the boating species, we slowly paddled back, each mind filled with the wonder, beauty and appreciation of a day we would never forget for the rest of our lives.

Authors note:

Some of these names, recollections of events may have changed due to an over active imagination and too much sun, fun and sea.

Thanks to Vincent (team leader) and others for a magical day.



Putting your Leadership skills to use

Ian Calhaem

During the year the Committee approved subsidies for two Leadership courses. The reason was to encourage more members to organise trips and take others to their favourite places. In the process attendees had the opportunity to develop their own skills and thus the knowledge base of the Club was increased.

The problem is how to get these members to use their new found skills. I am sure that a number of them would like to lead a trip, but currently lack the confidence to do so.

Recently I had the opportunity to assist one of our members to run a trip. Sue Bunce had been encouraged to "volunteer" to organise a trip on the Maharangi harbour. However, she lacked both knowledge of the area and the confidence to lead. She asked for help.

I offered to be her mentor. I was available on the phone to answer questions and to make suggestions. However I made sure that Sue remained the leader. I was not willing to take over that role.

On the day, I went on the trip up the Mahurangi Harbour as an attendee watching but being carefully to support but not dominate. The result - an enjoyable trip for all. A learning experience and a member (hopefully) willing to organise more trips.

If you are in a similar position - willing to organise but lacking confidence, then you too can follow Sue's lead - ask.

The Auckland Canoe Club is fortunate to have members with a wealth of knowledge, and a willingness to share.

All that is required to let a committee member know that you would like assistance and I am sure that you will find a willing mentor.

New Members

The Committee extends a warm welcome to our new members...

John & David Blight,
Ralph Stuetgen,
Stephanie Watson,

Karen Hirst,
Bruce Suter,
Allan Whitney

Martin Malin,
Alison Thomas,

Wendy Muir Croft,
Marianne Van der Haas,

Lana Stanbury,
Kate Wallis,

Deadline for next month's newsletter: 7 April 2003

Start writing your articles now. Easter is fast approaching and the 2nd Tuesday in the month is early. (Committee meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday, and the deadline is just prior).

Send articles to: IanCalhaem@xtra.co.nz