

Newsletter



February 2005

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Editorial: a new look Newsletter

Many thanks to outgoing Newsletter editor Ian Calhaem - Ian has tirelessly maintained the Club publication for several years, and brought its production into the electronic age.

With a new editor, it is a timely opportunity to develop the Newsletter further. I hope not only to reflect the Club's activities and character, but to contribute to a wider dissemination of information for Club members about sea kayaking generally, now one of New Zealand's fastest growing sports/leisure activities.

Not too many years ago I could paddle about the Harbour and Gulf and invariably not see another sea kayaker. Now sea kayaks are everywhere!

In addition to the normal Club and related news, the Newsletter will try to offer a range of new features to Club members.

There will be an editorial in each issue, and I would also very much welcome guest editorial columns. So if you've got something to say about some aspect of sea kayaking, please send me your contribution.

I would also like to have a number of regular items on topics such as gear and gadgets, techniques and tips, safety, DIY projects, tall stories, sea kayak related news, recipes, what if? incidents, book reviews. So, all you budding writers, here's your chance for a regular column, or for just a single cameo appearance.

I would like to feature more trip reports, as well as photographs. Each issue will also have a 'pic of the month'. So send them in! Editors get what they inspect, and not always what they expect - so I am dependent on your material.

I would also like to invite organisations such as Coastguard, the Meteorological Service, the ARC and DoC to write occasional articles to enhance our Newsletter. Have you got further ideas and/or contacts?

I really do look forward to being editor. So paddle well, and then write to me.

Please send material to me at:
krmhowe@xtra.co.nz

Please put 'Newsletter' in the subject line. I'd prefer Word or Word Perfect formats. Photographs should be JPG, and with sufficient pixels for reproduction.

It's been an interesting 'summer', and the rotten weather is a main player in the two featured trip reports. There's a TR for a Gisborne to East Cape

expedition in some pretty dodgy conditions late in November. It makes for fascinating and instructive reading, if you read between the lines. The Likely Lads (Ryan Whittle, Colin Quilter, Matt Crozier, and Graeme Bruce) or the Red Arrows as they call themselves, reveal all, well, almost all. And Vincent Maire led a (truncated) Great Migration along the northland coast.

Kerry Howe

Changes to VHF marine channels



A VHF marine radio has become a basic piece of sea kayaking safety equipment. Regular sea kayakers are encouraged to get one, along with the Marine VHF Operators Qualification, and join Coastguard. Coastguard has recently changed frequencies on a number of key marine channels in the Auckland and northern regions.

Coastguard Ship-to-Shore Channel 88 (located high on Moehau at the end of the Coromandel Peninsula) has become channel 82.

Thus calling Coastguard in the Auckland region can now be done on channels 82, and 86 (in the Sky Tower), as well as on channel 16.

Channel 85, a Ship-to-Ship 'chat' channel based on Waiheke, has now become channel 62.

Thus the current 'chat' channels are 62, and 83 (on Kawau).

For the Manukau Harbour, Coastguard channel 63 has now become channel 81. Channel 63 is now a Ship-to-Ship channel for the Manukau.

Further up the coast, the Coastguard channel for Whangaruru changes from 87 to 85;
Tutukaka changes from 87 to 85;
Hokianga changes from 88 to 82.

More changes are apparently in store.

KH

How to find out about VHF channels

Keeping track of what VHF channels to use can be a bit confusing when they change, and when sea kayakers go beyond the Auckland harbour and inner Gulf.

Some main sources of information are the Coastguard website:

<http://www.nzcoastguard.org.nz>

See also:

John Allen, *New Zealand Marine Radio Handbook* (second edition, Mollymawk: Devonport, 2004).

New Zealand Maritime Safety Authority, *Radio Handbook for Coastal Vessels*. It can be viewed or downloaded at:

http://www.msa.govt.nz/Publications/publications/MSA052_Radio_Handbook.pdf

It's a good idea to have a list of likely channels for the various regions where you sea kayak. You can make up a small laminated card for your PFD pocket.

For the Waitemata Harbour and inner Gulf it might look something like this:

Coastguard 16/82/86
Ship/ship 62/83
Weather 21

For the Manukau Harbour add:

Coastguard 16/81
Ship/ship 63

KH



Auckland Coastguard HQ
(photo - Broad)

Trip reports

The Red Arrows fly east!

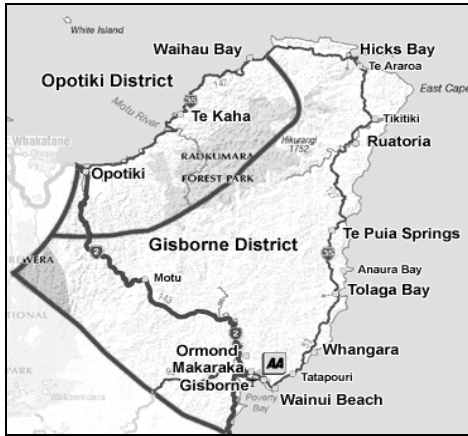
Ryan Whittle

A heavy gust of wind picked up the Barracuda and the Sea Bear and turned them into Stukas in attack mode. Graeme's boat scored a direct hit on his very up-market MacPac tent.

The Red Arrows - Colin in a Sea Bear with Matt and Ryan in Albatrosses - drove from Auckland to pick up Graeme in a Barracuda from Rotorua before continuing on to Gisborne. The plan was to paddle north from there, around East Cape to Te Araroa, where one of Colin's southbound trips had ended previously.

The weather forecast for the week was for gale force winds, so we crossed our fingers. I had been expecting a smaller place than Gisborne proved to be. It had the Auckland sprawl feel to it, with the traffic being nearly as heavy. A reco of the harbour was short. Large swells prompted us to travel up the coast past Wainui to the campground at Tatapouri-by-the-sea. It was sheltered from the pounding at Gisborne and looked a much friendlier place to launch. The power and gas in the camp kitchen hadn't been connected yet, so we got to test our cooking gear.

Sunday morning arrived along with the forecast gale. It was an opportune time to listen to the All Blacks v France rugby test on the radio from the shelter of Colin's car. At 9-6 up, there was a sudden and unprovoked attack from the backline. A heavy gust of wind picked up the Barracuda and the Sea Bear and turned them into Stukas in attack mode. Graeme's boat scored a direct hit on his very up-market MacPac tent, snapping all three poles which in turn provide air conditioning vents in the fabric. Unsurprisingly, neither of the Albatrosses were phased by the incident. Phone calls to local camping stores were unsuccessful, but Graeme's support crew in Rotorua was able to obtain another tent, the brochure for which was beside the phone, with the desired tent marked. And guess who was having a sale that weekend? Spooky. The new tent was kindly delivered on the Rotorua-Gisborne bus that evening, and Graeme had a new toy to play with. Graeme's wife also informed him that the weather maps in the paper were covered in red arrows, signifying high winds everywhere.



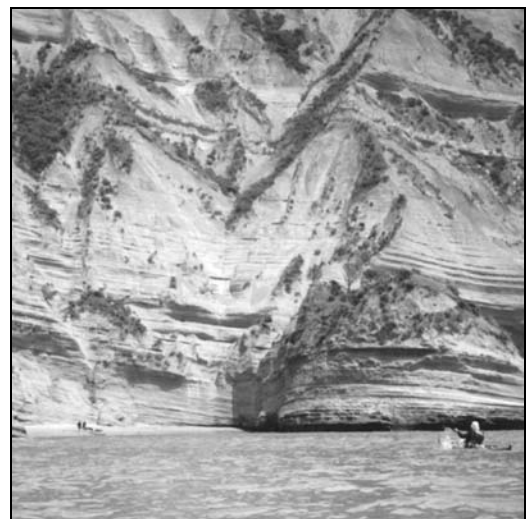
Because paddling was obviously off the program for the day, Colin decided to drive his car and trailer to Te Araroa campground, and return by shuttle the next morning. This provided Colin with the most dangerous part of the trip, the driver of the shuttle paying less attention to the road than he would have liked. A sigh of relief accompanied his arrival back. We were now committed to reach Te Araroa.

The wind had dropped on Monday morning. But we paddled only a couple of hours to the point before Whangara (Whale Rider country) when we had to make a relatively sheltered landing and stopped for the day. The afternoon was spent wandering along the substantial beach, reading, and generally recovering from the exhausting start to the trip. The Pohutukawa were beginning to bloom - hopefully a good sign. The skies were blue and clear, and the wind was forecast to drop.

Tuesday. The weather man told us that it was blowing 40K, so we went looking for it but could only find sea breezes all day. Around the point at Whangara would have been a good day to film the Whale Rider sequel in postcard conditions. The settlement consists of a dozen buildings, the marae and church being the most prominent. A couple of totem poles on the hill keep a watch on us as we pass by. There are no signs of any residents on shore, and no signs of any whales at sea. High in the hills past the town, a lone farmer on horseback is watching his dogs mustering sheep seemingly on autopilot. The hills beside the sea appear to have been modified with a cheese slice, leaving vertical white cliffs. At the entrance to Tolaga Bay is Cook's Cove, where Cook sheltered the *Endeavour* in 1769. There's also a collection of rocky outcrops, many with archways that call out to be paddled through. Fishermen crowded at the end of the Tolaga Bay wharf, the longest fishing platform in the southern hemisphere. The campground provided top ups for our water bottles. At Marau Point we saw a fence running vertically down a slip and wondered at

the point of it. Goats being farmed in the next few miles provide the answer. After 11 hours on the water we called it a day Anaura Bay. The campground here is an old school that was closed down in the 1970's

It's blowing on Wednesday morning, but drops by 9:30 allowing us to start. A saddle at Mawhai Point allowed us to view the coast to the north over Tokomaru Bay. East Cape waved to us from the horizon over the calm sea. Paddling around the point and towards the beach it stayed that way until about 200m from shore. We could see a squall approaching across the water, and instead of passing by, it intensified. Spray whipped from the surface as williwaws travelled past us at pace, and it's all we could do to stay upright. Unable to paddle anywhere, we got blown ashore and had to wait it out. Our intended landing beach was only a stone's throw away. After using the time for lunch and watching the display pass us by, the wind dropped enough to make our way to the beach. Deciding that we had enough excitement for the day, a search for the campground found it about 500m up the road, beyond our carrying distance for the laden boats.



Figures dwarfed on the beach
(photo - Bruce)

The lady at the campground directs us to pitch our tents on the beachfront as there is free camping allowed on the East Coast where it's not fenced, and outside Xmas/New Year. It's another curtailed day, but our campsite provides panoramic views from Tokomaru Bay out to sea.

Thursday's weatherman tells us that there is still a gale blowing, but we can't see it on the smooth water under a blue sky. The pod of dolphins in the bay does not seem concerned either. Colin has a grin as wide as the Grand Canyon as they take a liking to the Sea Bear and escort him en masse. The wharf at the end of the bay appears unused, the final few sections not having any decking. Buildings onshore also seem to have

seen better days. The scenery here changes from farmland to bush. The water is no longer cloudy and the vertical cliffs are absent. I wonder about the effect of clearing the bush on erosion of the land. There does not appear to be possum damage here. Compared with further north, there are no dead trees, and the bush is lush and thick. Pohutukawa are getting redder by the day. Approaching Waipiro Bay, a myriad of tunnels and archways present themselves. I try to get through at least one archway on each trip. This will provide enough for the next ten. We bump into two other ACC members heading out on a day trip, having come all this way to see them! Shags roosting in pohutukawa resemble decorations and transform them into Xmas trees with a white snowy coating. The first building in the Bay has a small boulder just offshore, with around twenty shags amusing themselves. This is the Waipiro Bay Fishing Club, and the shags must be members. The main buildings here are the church and the Trading Company, only one of which appears to be in use. The last house has around 10 cars scattered alongside it, a couple are rusting hulks in the sand. We look, but can see no access route for the vehicles on the property. The place is a Venus Car Trap - once in, they never leave.

The cloud pattern is an unusual one, with everything in the sky appearing to be making for one point on the horizon, just below the sun. It's as if the plug has been pulled out of the sky, and everything is draining toward it.

[what /s Ryan on? -ed.]

Around the corner at Whareponga we stop for lunch and the forecast front announces itself with a lift in the wind. Colin makes use of the time to climb the nearby point for a better view, while the rest of us perform our Mexican impressions with an early afternoon siesta. The passing front takes the wonderful morning conditions with it. The beaches since Tokomaru bay have changed from sand to stones and rocks. Farmland is making a re-appearance, along with the associated eroded cliffs and murky water. A secluded flat area just before Port Awanui provides a driftwood scattered campsite for the night, and appears to have been used by others before us.

Friday is quiet at sunrise, and the clouds keep the light at sunrise strength all morning. The cloud pattern is an unusual one, with everything in the sky appearing to be making for one point on the horizon, just below the sun. It's as if the plug has been pulled out of the sky, and everything is draining toward it. Around Whakariki Point there is a wide flat shelf on shore looking like a

boat ramp, but on closer viewing turns out to be a large mud slid coming from well back in the hills. Piles of driftwood, 100m above the high tide mark, give an indication of the conditions that can be found here. A container ship slips along the horizon, presumably bound for Gisborne. Gannets, shearwaters and petrels are chasing breakfast in the calm just before the Cape. Taking a break on the beach, we are joined by a group mounted on local horses.



Dramatic East Cape. Arrow marks kayak campsite (photo - Quilter)

About 2km off East Cape is East Island, the original site for the lighthouse in the early 1900's before earthquakes and slips threatened it, and it was moved to its current location on the mainland. The island is now goat and rat free. Plans to reintroduce tuatara, unseen since 1920, are under way. It calls Matt and I for a closer look. The calm conditions deteriorate quickly, and a tour of the island is traded in for a quick return through building seas. A passing fishing boat gives us a concerned look as it passes by. The other side of the Cape is open fields with ideal camp spots, and the still rising wind encourages us to call it a day. A walk up to the lighthouse provides a view of the whitecap strewn sea, and we can see the route we have taken over the week. It seems tiny in the context of the views in front of us now.

Saturday morning we are joined by a couple to watch the sunrise. The north westerly drops with its arrival and allows us on the water. The low tide has exposed the reefs common on the Eastland coast, and allows plenty of scope for rock gardening. The grassland is pitted with pools of sand making the coastline look like a giant golf course.

Late morning sees our arrival at Te Araroa, which used to be called Kerikeri. The name was changed to avoid confusion with the northern town of the same name. The new name was taken from the path leading to the pohutukawa here, thought to be the oldest in the country at around 350 years.



Seas not for the faint-hearted
(photo - Bruce)

Te Araroa is also the name given to the length of NZ walkway currently in the news. Waipiro Bay just to the south, also shares its name with a location in the Bay of Islands but I guess that it's not as well known and didn't warrant a change of name. We are met on the beach by a local, who informs us that he was also here to meet Paul Caffyn on his North Island circumnavigation in the seventies. That's a long wait between drinks. He kindly gives Colin a lift to the campground where the car is waiting. Showers and lunch watched by the resident ducks at the campground marks the end of our journey along the Eastland coast. We had concerns before the trip about how we would be received on the coast, but they came to nothing. For the most part, there was no-one around, and when there was, people were helpful and friendly. The scenery here is different than any I have seen elsewhere. If you get the chance to paddle in the region, take it. And keep a wary eye on the conditions as they can change so quickly.



Driftwood Motel, near Whangara
(photo - Quilter)

The Great Migration in Northland Vincent Maire

Not all leaders are perfect.
Napoleon forgot about the
winter. I forgot about
estuarine tides.

Unlike previous years this trip didn't get underway until the first week of January. Having spent previous club trips sitting in a campsite waiting for the Sydney to Hobart to end, and the weather gods to have had their fun, I decided to move the event out a week. The move paid off, well almost.

Twenty-seven keen sea kayakers gathered at Helena Bay on 3 January, for a 12.30 launch. We left our cars at the local school, which sadly is about to close after many years serving the local community and holiday campers. We made good progress passed Mimiwhangata and had our first stop on Rimariki Island, the largest of the Wide Berth islands. Best of all, the group had melded quickly into a number of smaller pods. At the pre-launch briefing I explained that due to the number of kayakers in the group I was unable to be group leader and everyone had to take responsibility for her or his own safety. I was delighted to see the experienced paddlers taking it upon themselves to paddle with the slower, newer people in the party.

The trip south took us past Okupe Beach, Pareparea Bay, Rockells Bay and Moureeses Bay to Motutohe Island, where we had another break. This part of the Northland coast is especially beautiful and not overly populated. I believe Mimiwhangata/Okupe Beach and the associated peninsula was once going to be sold to Club Mediterranee but the government of the day stepped in and purchased the property. Great decision. As well as the wonderful beaches there is also a wetland in the now DoC administered property.

Not all leaders are perfect. Napoleon forgot about the winter. I forgot about estuarine tides. We arrived at the entrance of the Whananaki River an hour or two off low water and had a long, hard slog of almost 2km to the school. But the showers were hot and the campsite (the local primary school) not overly crowded. Not too many people stayed up after 10pm.

The next morning we were again faced with the dilemma of the tide. Should we go or should we stay? In the end it was the idea of another long hard slog against the tide at the end of the day that made us opt for an early start. Some launched directly from the school while others walked the 300m or so to the boat ramp and deeper water. Everyone met at the entrance to the river and from there we again turned our bows south and aimed for a hill that is topped by the monument to the vessel

Capitaine Bougainville that was wrecked with loss of life in 1975.

From here it was an easy 3.6km hop to Whale Bay. I have visited this beautiful beach many times before but this is the first time I have found it deserted. We stayed about half an hour before a few drops of rain sent us around the Tutukaka Coast. By now the leading bunch was lost to sight but its job was to scout good resting places and it located a deserted beach on the northern side of Tutukaka Harbour. Lunch was meant to be a leisurely affair but once someone announces his or her intention to move on, everyone else decides to quickly follow.

Being wider and having more water meant the 2km trip up the Ngunguru River was less of a challenge than the previous day. But somehow the campsite just seemed to take ages to come into view. We were assigned a front lawn which meant we were all huddled in close and this increased the sense of camaraderie. We were here for two days and the local café was so overwhelmed with our presence they actually ran out of food!



Eating out the settlement of Ngunguru
(photo - Noble)

The itinerary called for three more days on the water; 15km to Patau, 35km to Marsden Bay then 15km to Onetangi. It wasn't long before some of the group let it be known they would not be able to handle the 35km around Bream Head but in the end it was the weatherman who called the shots. With 25 knot winds forecast the trip was canned at Ngunguru. Our last day included pikelets at 1030 hours and a wonderful barbeque and shared meal in the evening. The next day the Whangarei Bus Company sent their 21 seater to transport us back to the cars. From there some headed home, others went north and others came south a bit. (Evan, Giselle and Ryan continued on to Marsden Bay making the almost 50km trip in about ten hours.)

While we did not achieve our sea kayaking goal, we nevertheless achieved our social goal of having a really

great time while covering a good few kilometres in the kayaks. Even better, quite a few in the party had their first taste of expedition kayaking and this is what the club New Year trip is really all about.

I wish to thank everyone for making it a really successful trip and especially the gun paddlers for taking turns in staying with the group and escorting the slower people in the party.

Evan Pugh recorded the following distances for the two days on the water: Helena Bay to Whananaki School via the Wide Berth Islands 25km; Whananaki to Ngunguru school 30km.

The Migrants were: Alison Wagstaff, Taisho Kaneko, Andrew Lamont, Ann Schofield, Brian Strid, Bruce Sommerville, Christine Fryer, Cynthia Borne, David Ward, Des Matthews, Vincent Maire, Evan Pugh, Mike Hindmarsh, Mike Hindmarsh's mum & dad, Graeme Bruce, Jill Benge, John Fryer, John Hadfield, Judith Wesley, Liz Maire, Matthew Crozier, Giselle Clements, Mike Randall, Morgan Lewis, Peter Sommerhalder, Philip Noble, Rosie Thom, Ryan Whittle, Sue Noble, and Tony Greaves.

Gadget of the month

A signalling mirror is a low-tech but highly effective way of drawing attention to yourself if you are in difficulties in the daytime. But commercially available signalling mirrors, generally made of polished alloy with an aiming hole in the centre, are expensive. Simply keep an old CD in your lifejacket pocket. It is highly reflective, has an aiming hole, and is the perfect fate for a now unwanted Christmas Collection CD.

KH

What if? file

Close shave with a new blade

I have just been on a rather pleasant trip to the South Island taking my friends and kayaks with me. We were paddling on the Akaroa Harbour when all of a sudden I noticed my expensive carbon fibre paddle almost losing its blade. Well I was ok and it wasn't an emergency and, and, and.... But it just goes to show what can happen. Generally I am a bit reluctant to put my spare paddle on deck because I do use a paddle leash, however, this would have been an unpleasant experience if it had been in nasty weather, so it just goes to show what if?!

Ralph Stuetgen

Poet's Corner

A poets' corner once a month
Our new editor said
He didn't mention Chaucer
The first to fill a space
In that hallowed ground
The final possie
For heaps of dead poets
No longer around
So when the Invitation came
To scribble some verse
I thought, "If it's good enough for Chaucer
What better name
What could be worse?"
He spoke of columns, A3, A4, 10 point font,
stitch and fold
Things a poet should bear in mind
When exposing their soul
And a tale's to be told
He didn't mention content or style
So was this a chance to flee the rhyming
couplet
Designed to bring a smile
To the paddling set?
No, the weighty stuff of life
I'll leave to others
And stick to songs of sea
Wind and waves
Of cups of tea on a lonely coast
Adventures small
Where we can boast
On our return
Of wondrous sights
And deeds heroic
One thing's for sure
There'll be no room for me
In that other Corner for Poets.

Mike Randall

Book reviews

The Frozen Coast. Sea Kayaking the Antarctic Peninsula by Graham Charles, Mark Jones, Marcus Waters with Sarah Moodie, Craig Pottin Publishing, 2004, \$39.95.

Club members may remember the marvellous illustrated winter lecture given by Mark Jones, not long after he returned from the first sea kayak trip along the Antarctic Peninsula to below the Arctic Circle, a journey of some 600 kilometres, with Graham Charles and Marcus Waters.

Now the book has appeared. It's short, just 118 pages, but beautifully produced (as you expect) by Pottin Publishers in hardback with numerous absolutely stunning photographs. Each of the three paddlers has contributed a chapter covering different sections of the route. All write very well, have an acute eye for detail, a sophisticated knowledge and appreciation of the Antarctic world, and a droll, understated Kiwi humour. Find out what testicles do when you take them for a naked swim in polar seas!

The book is packed with information and events to enthral sea kayakers, from the specialised kayak gear, clothing and food, to finding landing places along hostile frozen cliffs, to avoiding dreaded katabatic winds, to living intimately with whales, orca, sea leopards and penguins.

While the weather was *relatively* benign for much of the trip, and the season was fairly pack- ice free, there were plenty of moments of drama and the potential for disaster, especially with mini tidal waves from falling ice faces that could have obliterated a camp site or two. Their arrangements for getting picked up south of the Antarctic Circle seemed pretty fraught too, and the journey back to southern Chile aboard a charter sailing boat was yet another adventure in itself - and possibly the most dangerous.

This is far more than a coffee table book about a fascinating adventure. It is imbued with the writers' well known 'philosophy' of adventuring. The trip's mission statement was: 'We believe in the spirit of adventure - being self-propelled, self-responsible, the need for an unstoppable attitude, the need for challenge. We believe that the world is a better place for those who are prepared to confront the improbable and defy the odds.' Next time you are cursing the summer sou'westerly wind and chop as you butt your way back from a day trip to Rangitoto, it might be instructive to think of where these guys paddled...

New Zealand's Islands by Pamela McGeorge, photographs by Russell McGeorge, Bateman, 2004, \$39.95.

There is not a single mention of sea kayaking, nor a photograph of a sea kayak, yet this book will be of much interest to coastal sea kayakers. It consists of a series of beautiful photographs and brief descriptions of the islands off the New Zealand coastline. Starting with the far north, it works its way down the north east coast looking at such groups as the Cavallis, the Islands in the Bay of Islands, the inner and outer Hauraki Gulf islands, the Mercury Islands and so on right around the entire coastline of New Zealand. Fortunately for us, a good proportion of the country's off-shore islands are within the wider Auckland provincial region. Much coastal information can be gleaned from the book's wonderful aerial photographs. Who would not want to sea kayak the Cavallis after seeing their glorious looking possibilities!

KH

Roger's ebb and flow

- Our club hire fleet has been enhanced with the addition of some new sea kayaks. Two Barracuda Beachcombers replace the old club Puffins. The new craft incorporate many innovative refinements, a very effective rudder system, a handy glove box and a unique paddle park. Perhaps more importantly, the new sea kayaks weigh in at less than 20 kgs, (The old Puffins were about 30kgs.) So now there is no excuse for dragging them up or down the ramp. The club received a very generous discount from Fergs Kayaks in the purchase of the new craft. It is also worth remembering that Fergs Kayaks give club members a discount as well. You only have to ask. Their big summer kayak sale is on now.

- At the other end of the weight scale in the hire fleet are the two club plastic doubles. Big Red is our double Econiizh, which has just had its rudder system overhauled and weighs in at 46 kgs with 200 litres of storage. Little Red is the Crosswind double at a slightly trimmer 39 kgs and 140 litres. They both require a bit more muscle to move on the ramp but cruise well on the water. Big Red has been fitted with extra carry handles; so don't be afraid to ask for additional assistance. The club kayak trolley is also available to use with these craft.

- After an early morning kayak recently, a club member helped co-ordinate a sea rescue. He was back on the beach having a well-earned cuppa when he witnessed some multi-sport kayakers in trouble in the choppy sea off St. Heliers. One of the four strong group had capsized and the others were unable to effect a rescue. In fact they looked at risk of a similar fate as the tide swept them into more exposed waters. A quick call to the Coastguard on his VHF radio enabled our club member to co-ordinate a rescue by a passing vessel. Well-done **Tony Hannifin**.

- If you are out on Okahu Bay when the tide is high, paddle over to Kelly Taltons and have a look at the new Stingray Bay facility. You can get a peek in through the big view window in the sea wall below the footpath. You break the glass you pay.

- The following is a list of current active club paddlers who have an extensive knowledge in their particular field of expertise. It is not a complete list but illustrates the broad kayak skill and knowledge base that is available to be tapped into. If you were to paddle up to any one of the listed paddlers and ask for some advice or even a bit of tuition they would be more than happy to oblige. This is the way good clubs operate and we have been doing it for over 50 years now.

Ken Marsh - White water kayaker with extensive N.Z. and overseas experience. Our current club-rolling instructor who runs sessions down at Okahu Bay and at the Glen Innes Pool.

Gordon Robinson - A wing paddle technique expert, a former sprint champion and a successful kayak builder.

Ryan Whittle - A regular active paddler with good expedition planning experience.

Brian Strid - Our rock gardening guru who boldly goes where no kayak should and is often seen perched atop an outcrop. Also has extensive experience at wet re-entry.

Justin Sanson-Beattie - A kayak fishing expert who has photos to prove it. An outdoor cooking chef extraordinaire and owner of the famous "Kawhia Lodge".

Roger Lomas - Sea kayak race organiser, racer and sea kayak wave surfing aficionado.

Matt Crozier - GPS navigation authority and VHF radio buff.

Evan Pugh - Modern day river cruiser and explorer with extensive knowledge of many North Island Rivers.

Gavin Baker - Sea kayak sailor with good knowledge of technique.

Colin Quilter - Our most experienced expedition leader. Has organised and led trips from the top end of Ninety Mile Beach to Gisborne. Good knowledge of the Manukau Harbour and Auckland's rugged West Coast. Renowned for his common sense approach to safety.

This is a list of the active paddlers so if you want to meet them you will have to get out on the water.

- And then of course there is one other. A quiet achiever who started off paddling on the murky rivers of the Manawatu. In more recent times he has been an active sea kayaker who has paddled the coast from way down on the East Cape to the top of the North Island, most of the time solo. He has also been in sea kayak races, knows all about GPS and VHF, has a sail on his kayak and can navigate through rock gardens. Perhaps his greatest claim to fame in the kayaking world has been his fishing exploits. Some allege that he has been single handedly responsible for the absence of all the large snapper around the North Shore reefs. We are talking of course about our new editor. Welcome **Kerry Howe**. And watch out for Kerry's great new book available in April – *Coastal Sea kayaking in New Zealand. A Practical Touring Manual*, published by New Holland.

Roger Lomas

URGU speaks

URGU presents a mix of views, news, gossip, scandal and both sound and questionable advice. Contributions welcome, especially if they are salacious. Readers who correctly identify **URGU** will likely be shot.

What is it with men and Vaseline?

Philip Noble always takes his little pot away with him. 'Vaseline,' claims Philip, 'is an ideal antidote for blisters. Smear a little on the tender spots on the hand at the start of the day and it does wonders for keeping the hands as soft as a baby's proverbial.' **URGU** has also found Vaseline helpful in preventing chaffing caused by wet and salty clothes, especially sleeves. Ryan Whittle, however, prefers a different approach to this problem. He wears his polyprop shirts inside out and that way avoids chaffing from the seams.

Where oh where is the club website?

Websites are fantastic things, especially for clubs. The KASK website has more than 1000 distinct visits a month and **URGU** believes many of the sea kayak retailers do much more than that. With club membership having dropped below the 300 mark **URGU** calls on the committee to once again re-visit this very important marketing tool. KASK membership more than doubled with the launch of the website. There are some great club websites out there. The Victorian Sea Kayak Club (www.vskc.org.au) and also the venerable New South Wales Sea Kayak Club (<http://www.nswseakayaker.asn.au>) have very fine examples.

What is it with men and slippers?

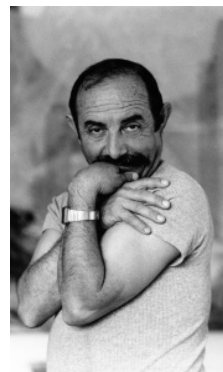
After many years of buying slippers from the Big Red Shed **URGU** decided it was time to take better care of his tootsies and go up market. Waikato-based member Evan Pugh and his wife Linda own a sheepskin shop in Litchfield, which is between Putaruru and Tokoroa. Evan sent **URGU** a wonderful pair of slippers that are oh so comfortable to wear and even keep his size tens cool on hot days. They look good and don't even show the occasional pee spot!

What is the Book Group Reading?

Last Orders is a novel by Graham Swift and won the 1996 Booker Prize. Generally such an accolade means the book is unreadable, but not so with *Last Orders*. **URGU** saw the film and thinks the novel a better portrayal of the characters, especially as the film devoted more time to Jack, played by Michael Cain, who in fact is the dead guy. Highly recommended. Thanks to our previous newsletter editor Ian Calhaem for promoting the book group. There are now 12 members in the group, which is the maximum number.

URGU?

Recently, a leading outdoor magazine described your columnist as a sea kayaking guru! Yuk! Bert Potter was a guru as was Jim Johnson, Hopeful Christian, David Koresh, Marshall Applewhite and the Maharishi. However, a quick Google search shows that **URGU** appears more than 7000 times in 0.26 seconds. Team Urgu is too fast for comfort but Benito Urgu is much more in the style of the Auckland Canoe Club's aging population. Described as a *comico sardo* with a *gruppo musicisti*, he looks like our editor after a hard day on the water.



...so says **URGU**

Scheduled Club trips

You paddle on Club trips at your own risk. Please be aware of the Club Safety Policy inside back cover.

26 February, Saturday - Rangitoto overnight

Paddle over to Rangitoto the night before the swim escort (see below) and stay at the scout bach. Bring some food for sharing, and the club will contribute something as well. Also bring your roll mat in case we run out of bunks (most seem to like to sleep out on the deck), a torch (there's no electricity), and mossie repellent. FREE bach hire - the club will cover this cost as part of the swim escort. Meet at the city end of St Heliers at 4.30pm for 5pm departure.

Contact **Matt Crozier**, 817-1984

5 March, Saturday - Rangitoto circumnavigation

Start with a buddy from your favourite launching spot to rendezvous at Mackenzie's Bay by the lighthouse for a 1.45 pm departure for Gardiner Gap. We will be aiming to get to the causeway for a high tide at 3.10 pm. I will be leaving from Narrow Neck beach at 11.45 am, having lunch at Mackenzie's or maybe going for a walk to the summit. I will be taking a portable gas barbie with me to Mackenzies for anyone who would like to cook some meat. You can peel off from the main group at a suitable point to return to your original departure point.

Contact **David Ward**, 445-3639

March 5-6 Vine House working bee

We usually take off from Sullivan's Bay. For a map see <http://www.geocities.com/tofska/VineRoute.gif> Vine House is in Lagoon Bay. Just paddle to the green shed at the right hand side of the bay coming in, and walk up the track. It's a twenty minute paddle from Sullivans to Lagoon Bay. Bring a pillow case (probably a roll mat, just in case) and carry bags. Come prepared to get dusty and splashed with paint. Bring along an electric sander if you have one. Also bring \$5 for dinner on Saturday plus your own supplies for the weekend. The high tide is in the afternoon so it is a good idea to have wheels as the estuary is very tidal.

Please phone **Stephanie** to register your interest 09 8345 769

Easter is early this year! 25-28 March

There are two trips planned so far:

1. Rawhiti

Plans are afoot for an Easter camp at Rawhiti in the Bay of Islands. A brilliant location! You can bring the whole family. The Bay's islands are just offshore.

Contact **Rona Patterson**, 834-3399

2. Kawhia

THIS IS NOT YOUR NORMAL KAYAKING WEEKEND

Thursday 24th, after negotiating Auckland's traffic, be prepared to escape and relax.

The plan is to head down to my pad at Te Waitere (Kawhia South) and enjoy the area. If people arrive Thursday evening there are six spare beds, room for tents and some spare kayaks.

Friday is planned to head inland to a Natural Limestone Tunnel. This is on Private Property and is an easy 2 & ½ hour walk each way. Great photography and a good day out.

Saturday I'm in the process of trying to get access to the Taharoa Lakes. This is an area where there are two lakes which are joined together by a narrow passage and the third lake is a 30m portage.

Sunday is paddling on the harbour to some great rock formations and relaxing on white sandy beaches.

As always bring good food and wine. Monday we may do a paddle out to the heads and try to explore some of the coast.

There are limited places so first in, first served. Contact **Justin**, 09-278 8090 or 025-868 177

Regular Tuesday evening paddles

Meet at Okahu Bay every Tuesday at 5.30pm, for departure at 5.45. Trips usually last 1-2 hours. All skill levels are catered for. Novice paddlers will have an experienced paddler look after them.

It is a legal requirement for every night paddler to have an all-round white light fixed to a pole at least a metre high, or a large lens (e.g. Dolphin) lamp at hand on deck. No legal light, no paddle. Club boats can be hired at a reduced price.

Regular Saturday morning paddles

Meet at Okahu Bay by 9.00am. The usual trip to Café at Kohi lasts about 2 hours. All skill levels are catered for. It's a great chance for novice or slow paddlers to mix and mingle with older and/or experienced club members. Club boats can be hired.

Swim escorts

See swim escort policies inside back cover

Sunday 13 February St Heliers Bay to Tamaki Yacht Club.

Meet at St Heliers at 9:15am. If you are paddling to the start from Okahu Bay, please be on the water by 9am. Kayakers' briefing at 9:45am. Race starts at 10:15am. Tide 11:49am.

At least 30 kayaks required. A BBQ is planned at the Okahu Bay ramp afterwards!

Please make sure you ring **Matt Crozier**, 817 1984 (just leaving a message is sufficient) if you intend to come, especially if you require a club kayak. This will help to avoid a panic!

Sunday 27 February Rangitoto Swim

Rangitoto Wharf to St Heliers, 4.45km. Unless you are staying overnight at Rangitoto, meet at St Heliers at 6:45am, departing for Rangitoto 7:15am. Race starts at 8:30am. Tide 10:38am.

At least 55 kayaks required!

Contact **Matt Crozier**, 817 1984. There will be no email cancellation for this paddle since Matt will be on Rangitoto. See above for details of trip to Rangitoto the night before

Winter lectures are coming back!

The Club proposes to reinstate its winter lecture series. These evenings have been a great deal of instructive fun in the past. If you have some suggestions for speakers/topics contact **Roger Lomas**, 579-8799

Guest speaker night

Tuesday 22 March. Come along to hear our guest speakers, **Andrew Francis and Morgan Lewis recount the voyage of the sailing ship *R. Tucker Thompson***. With a crew of club kayakers and their craft on board they headed off for an expedition to the Three Kings Islands.

Meet at our new venue -The Hauraki Kayak Group's clubrooms, which are at the city end of Coxs Bay. It's one of the two converted boatsheds built over the water just off West End Road. This is also a good opportunity to catch up with club gossip and purchase club merchandise, including the new order of club caps, which have just arrived.

Meet at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.
All welcome, refreshments available.
Need more info: **Roger Lomas** 579-8799

New Zealand Kayak Builders Get Together 18 - 20 February 2005

Based at the Blue Lake in Rotorua. This is a chance for people interested in kayak building to meet other builders, to try out different designs and to paddle one of Rotorua's fantastic lakes. Even those unfortunate enough to paddle only plastic or glass will still be most welcome to join in for the weekend. This will be an informal gathering with plenty of time to 'talk shop' and socialize. A group trip on either Lake Rotoma or Lake Tarawera is planned on Saturday with Sunday being the chance to test paddle those designs that have caught your eye.

Accommodation is available at the Blue Lake Holiday Park www.bluelaketop10.co.nz Ph 07 362 8120. Bookings are on a first come basis and the management recommends booking early to avoid disappointment as they expect to be full for this weekend. An area for tents has been set aside for the kayak builders but advance booking will still be required. Please mention that you are part of the Kayak Builders Get Together. Food will be the individual's responsibility but bring a plate for the pot luck BBQ on Saturday Night.

Building your own kayak is a fascinating hobby as well as a way of obtaining a craft suited to your particular needs. So if you have already created a masterpiece or if you just want to see what it is all about, we hope to see you there.

For more information please contact Graeme Bruce ph 07 332 3112 or Grant Glazer ph 09 372 3267 email grantglazer@clear.net.nz

Mangahao release

The next Mangahao Dam No 2 release is 19 February 2005. Normally it is on the last Saturday in March but this is Easter and under the agreement no release is allowed at Easter.

Confirmation of dates is complicated by the need for a resource consent. This has taken more time than desired. Apologies for the late notification.

Alan Bell
for Graeme McIntyre
Access Officer, NZRCA

For sale

1 North West Passage glass shaft SK paddle, hardly used \$100 ono.
1 Nyloprene Seakayak Spraydeck, hardly used \$80 ono.
1 Humble Kayak Trolley, new, by GB Tool Design \$130 (new \$195).

Contact **Ute Engel** 09 4260669 or 021 0521481.

Pres Sez

It's been great to see that club members have actively offered trips over the summer holiday period, and that these have been well attended. It's during this time that it's harder for people to commit to certain time frames, so the impromptu trip is usually the norm. It shows that the club email notice board (auckland-canoe-club@yahoogleroups.com) is working well.

Swim Escort

It's that time again - Swim Escorts, part 2. Starting this Sunday 13 February (if you've got this newsletter in time), there's the swim from St Heliers to Tamaki Yacht Club. See the events calendar for further information. As usual, these are the events where we

really need your help. Keep 27 February free in your diary for the Rangitoto swim.

Vine House

Steph has done a wonderful job over the holidays to make Vine House available for us, and has progressed much further on the inside. If you haven't yet made the trip over, it's well worth it. Try to make the upcoming working bee.

Web Site

Our web site is well underway. We've got a domain name (www.aucklandcanoecub.org.nz), which you can visit now. For the moment, you'll be able to view photos of the club trip to Three Kings last year (and prepare yourself for the talk next month). Many thanks to Andrew Francis for getting this going. The site is still in development, and the content is yet to be fleshed out. Have a talk to Andrew if you have anything you think worthwhile for the website.

New club address

Andrew has also set up a permanent PO Box in Newmarket (see inside back cover) for the official club address. This saves us having to change it every time we elect a new secretary. The main problem has been to inform other organisations and people of the change - a process can never be 100% complete. It will save previous secretaries from still getting our mail! It works be setting up a redirection at the Post Office, so that any mail sent to the official address is forwarded on to the current secretary.

New Members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members. Members who have joined since January have their membership extended to March 31 2006.

Ben Costa
Trevor & Lisa Craig
Yukimi Nobu
Ulrich & Sigrid Speidel
Marcus Wilson

Cheers
M@.

Watch out for this weed!

The islands of the inner Hauraki Gulf are being colonised by an invasive weed which has the potential to compete with, and displace, our native pohutukawa trees.

Kayakers can play a part in resisting this invasion by watching for its presence and reporting it to the Auckland Regional Council; or by uprooting it on the spot.

The weed is the evergreen buckthorn or rhamnus (*Rhamnus alaternus*) which has been introduced as an ornamental plant from the Mediterranean.

It first appears as a fast-growing evergreen shrub but can eventually reach 5 -10 metres in height (and will outgrow pohutukawa on coastal cliffs).

Rhamnus spreads rapidly because its berries are eaten by birds. The seeds germinate from bird droppings which may fall many kilometres from the feeding site.

The easiest way to recognise rhamnus is from the



shape of its leaves. They are a little fleshy, a mid-green colour, and have a slightly serrated or toothed edge as shown in the diagram. At the base of the leaf blade there are two raised bumps, one on each side of the central vein of the leaf (actually related to holes (domatia) on the underside). In summer female plants have clusters of bright red berries.

Small rhamnus can be tricky to identify. They could be confused with juvenile pohutukawa, or with another native shrub present on the Noisies and other islands. For that reason it's best NOT to uproot suspected plants on the spot.

The Auckland Regional Council is compiling a database of locations where rhamnus occurs, and has already started eradication measures. Infestations are known on the inner Gulf islands (Browns, Rangitoto, Motutapu, Motuihe, Rakino) and on the western end of Waiheke Island.

However it has not yet been reported from the eastern end of Waiheke and offlying islands (Ponui, Rotoroa, Pakatoa, etc.), or from the Coromandel Peninsula and offlying islands, or from Great Barrier Island, or from the mainland north of the Okura River.

If you find plants growing outside the known range it would be helpful to phone the Auckland Regional Council, ph 366 2000 to add to their database. Bring back a branch and press it between newspaper so the ARC or DOC can confirm your identification. Useful contacts are:

Richard Gribble, Biosecurity Unit, Auckland Regional Council, ph 366-2000.

George Wilson, DOC Auckland Conservancy Office, Private Bag 68-908 Newton, ph 307-9279. Email gwilson@doc.govt.nz

Ewen Cameron, Curator of Botany, Auckland War Memorial Museum, Private Bag 92018 Auckland. Ph 309-0443. Email ecameron@aucklandmuseum.com

Colin Quilter

[And no, Ryan, you can't smoke it, or you will start thinking the sky is going down the drain again! -ed.]

Auckland Canoe Club - information

Postal Address:
P.O. Box 9271 Newmarket, Auckland

Clubrooms:
Hauraki Kayak Group boatshed clubrooms, Coxs Bay,
just off West End Road.

Website:
<http://aucklandcanooclub.org.nz>

Email discussion group, send blank email to:
Auckland-kayakers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Email event reminders, send blank email to:
Auckland-canoe-club-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Officers:

Patron:	John Watts	03 541 9296
President:	Matt Crozier	817 1984
		matt@vsl.co.nz
Vice-President:	Lindsay Sandes	522 3344
Secretary:	Rona Patterson	834 3399
Treasurer:	Des Matthews	575 5804
Trips:	Gavin Baker	528 5188
Publicity:	Roger Lomas	579 8799
Safety/ Training:	Ken Marsh	828 0701
Storage/ Club Kayaks:	Lindsay Sandes	522 3344
Vine House:	Andrew Frances	021 142 4857
Committee:	Margaret Thwaites	818 9609
	Wayne Fitzsimons	298 5087
	Ian Calhaem	579 0512
	Peter Sommerhalder	631 5344
Newsletter:	Kerry Howe	krmhowe@xtra.co.nz

Club trip/event policies

Visit the Club website for more details of policies:

Contacting trip/event leader.

- You must notify the trip leader in advance of your intention to go on a trip. Leaders need to know numbers and to be able to contact you if the plan changes.
- You must also discuss with the leader in advance any medical or other conditions (such as your experience and ability) that might affect the progress of the group.

Cancellation

- If the weather looks uncertain don't call the trip leader but listen to Newstalk ZB Cancellations on 1080AM or 89.4FM, Saturday and Sunday from 7.00am.

Safety Policy

- You must make a realistic assessment that your skills and endurance are sufficient for a planned trip.
- Any Club members who have doubts about their skills for a particular trip MUST contact the trip leader in advance to talk about safety issues.
- It is your responsibility to wear a buoyancy aid, to be suitably dressed and prepared for likely conditions, and to carry necessary safety equipment.
- In the event of you capsizing in deep water, you must be able to re-enter your kayak, with help from another paddler if necessary.

- On a night paddle it is your responsibility, and a legal requirement, to provide a fixed all-round white light on a pole, or a large lens lamp at hand on deck.

- Kayaks must be appropriate for a trip. A sea kayak with water-tight bulkheads is essential for open water sea kayaking. Sit-on kayaks are usually too slow and not seaworthy enough in rough conditions and are therefore not recommended for sea kayak trips.

Gear hire

- The club hires out a range of sea kayaks and accessories. See the website for details.

Swim escorting

- Auckland Coastguard controls operations for kayak swim escorts, and has stipulated that there be a minimum number of kayaks before events can proceed. The Club receives some financial support depending on the number of kayak escorts it provides.

- With small distances and a slow pace, there are no Club paddles more suitable for novices. Club kayaks are available for use at no charge.

- The on-water job is to guide swimmers if they veer too far off course and to flag down a roaming rubber boat if a swimmer needs to get out.

- If you have a VHF radio, please bring it. Initial comms are on channel 86, then move to channels 6 and 8 for each side of the course. Please STAY in the area until the last swimmer arrives, in case a search is needed.

To:

From: Auckland Canoe Club, PO Box 9271, New Market, Auckland

Pic of the month



Bedraggled President M@ after capsizing by giant williwaw on East Cape trip
(photo - Quilter)