



April 2012

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*Learning and having fun – Stefan Hadfield, Jodi Yeats, John Hadfield and Murray Sheard.
(See **Kayaking proves a ‘learning experience’** on page 9.)*

PHOTO JODI YEATS

Auckland Canoe Club Information

Postal Address

P.O. Box 9271, Newmarket, Auckland

Clubrooms

Marine Rescue Centre, Mechanics Bay

Website

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

Email event reminders

send blank email to

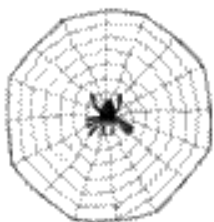
subscribe@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz

Officers

<i>Patron</i>	Jim Mason	
<i>President</i>	Ian Calhaem	579 0512
<i>Secretary</i>	Matt Crozier	817 1984
<i>Treasurer</i>	Gerard Fagan	832 9720
<i>Trips</i>	Jackie Hillman	634 5042
<i>Publicity</i>	Roger Lomas	846 6799
<i>Storage/kayaks</i>	Gavin Baker	528 5188
<i>Assistant</i>	Roger Lomas	846 6799
<i>Vine House</i>	Trevor Arthur	817 7357
<i>Newsletter</i>	Claire O'Connor	521 1769
<i>Webmaster</i>	Matt Crozier	817 1984

Email addresses

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vinehouse@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz
newsletter@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz
webmaster@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz



Club Website Access

Password Rotopiro

Club Trip/Event Policies

Visit the Club website for details of safety and other important policies.

Contacting trip/event organiser

You must notify the trip organiser in advance of your intention to go on a trip. Organisers need to know numbers and to be able to contact you if the plan changes.

You must also discuss with the organiser 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 call the trip co-ordinator.

Club Banking Details

Bank BNZ
Branch Newmarket
Account 02-0100-0023453-000
Name Auckland Canoe Club

IMPORTANT

If you are depositing money to the Club Account please ensure that you include YOUR name so that the Treasurer knows who deposited the money.

Internet Banking

All major banks have set up Auckland Canoe Club as a registered payee for internet banking.

This means that you can pay to

Auckland Canoe Club

without having to enter the account number.

Check with your bank.



Deadline for Next Newsletter

20 April 2012

Kayak Hire

To book a kayak, enter details in the diary.
Check diary before taking a kayak.

Kayak Hire Rates

Single kayaks

Daily hire – out am, back pm \$20.00

Half day – out am, back am
out pm, back pm \$10.00

Double kayaks

Daily hire – out am, back pm \$30.00

Half day – out am back am
out pm back pm \$15.00

- Please enter details of hire in register and on an envelope.
- Put money in envelope and place envelope in honesty box.
- **No I.O.U.s!**
- Carry or wheel kayaks to water.
- No seal launching.
- Please wash kayaks before returning to rack.
- Report faults or problems on the faults/problems sheet.

JANDALS FOUND

A pair of jandals was found on St Heliers Beach
after the Rangī–St Heliers swim escort
Sunday 26 February

Phone Philip on 575 3493

NEW MEMBER



Welcome

The Committee extends
a warm welcome to the
following new member ...

Eanna Doyle

Regular Events

Vine House – Last Weekend of Every Month

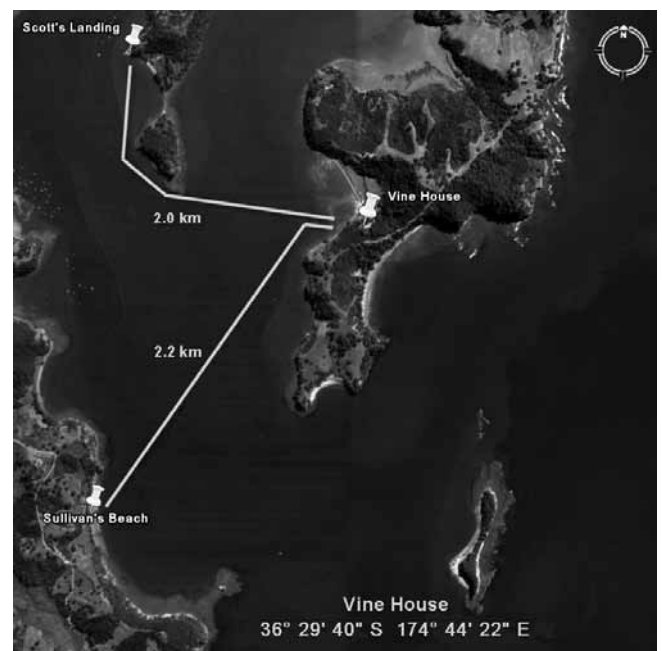
On the last weekend of each month we have the use of Vine House.

This gem in Mahurangi Harbour is a 2 km paddle from Sullivans Bay, which is the ARC park at the end of the Mahurangi West Road, first on the right past Puhoi.

The house sleeps 10 and has all creature comforts. Bring sleeping bag, pillow case and food. A shared meal and nibbles is the norm for Saturday night, so bring your goodies.

Lagoon Bay is very tidal, so bringing a kayak trolley is a good idea. The range of paddling is endless, eg Waiwera, Warkworth, Kawau Island, Motuora Island – your choice. Or just rest and read and enjoy this tranquil and special place. We recommend you take a carry bag to get all your gear up the track to the house. Secure parking is at Sullivans Bay. Leave a note on your dashboard reading “Vine House Volunteer” when you park in front of the ranger’s house.

Please ring to book a bed, and for detailed directions.
Trevor 817-7357, Matt 817-1984.



Saturday Morning Paddles

If you are into good coffee, good company and usually a leisurely paddle then these are the trips for you.

A small but growing group meet about 9:00am on Saturday mornings to paddle to one of the beaches – St Heliers, Kohimarama or Mission Bay for coffee.

Note: Paddlers under 18 to be accompanied by a guardian!

For more information, go to:

<http://www.mapmyrun.com/routes/view/127561>

Wandering north

Colin Quilter

Two weeks available for a coastal trip in February; but where to go? The thought came to me that in 26 years of kayaking I've never started a long trip by wheeling my kayak out of my own driveway and down to the sea. That's a good enough reason to do it. So on a sunny Wednesday morning I set off down the road to Herne Bay Beach with my kayak on its trolley. It contained the usual camping stuff, food for 18 days, and an AA roadmap of Northland. What more do you need?

There was a brisk southwesterly; I hoisted my sail and set off down-harbour. Familiar landmarks slid past, and at North Head I turned left and headed north. In fact, that was the sum of my planning for this trip: *turn left at North Head and keep going for a fortnight*. I had no particular destination in mind, didn't need one. The pleasure of this trip would be in travelling, not in arriving.

Once around North Head I headed out into mid-channel to gain a steady wind, without the gusts which occur closer inshore, (that's one of the disadvantages of a sail; it tempts you to go offshore in search of a constant wind, but if you then get more wind than you expect, the shore may be a worrying distance away). However on this occasion it held steady at 15 knots, occasionally 20, and a little over 4 hours after leaving Herne Bay I landed at Te Haruhi Bay in Shakespear Regional Park on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula. This is a pleasant campsite, sheltered from the wind by dunes, flax and trees, with several good walks across the hills behind the bay.



On the beach at Te Haruhi Bay. First the photograph, then a cup of tea, then a snooze in the grass.

The forecast next morning gave me something to think about: calms today, but prolonged fresh north-easterlies to follow. Perhaps 4 or 5 days of them. Therefore today I needed to reach a place where I could happily spend that amount of time ashore. The Tawharanui Peninsula, about 35km to the north, would be ideal. So I spent an easy day

paddling gently northwards. I crossed directly from the Whangaparaoa Passage to the eastern side of Kawau Island, stopping for lunch at one of the two attractive white-sand beaches on the southeastern corner of the island, (just north of Kawau Pt) and then up the eastern side, around Tokatu Pt, and into the campground at Anchor Bay on the northern side of the Tawharanui Peninsula.

Those who have camped at Tawharanui will know that it's an expansive campsite behind the dunes. I tucked my tent into a sheltered spot in the lee of some flax bushes and settled down for a long stay. As it turned out, I was there for 5 nights. The north-easterlies blew steadily at 25-30 knots, with grey skies but little rain. I passed the time with long walks on the many tracks which criss-cross the peninsula, and spent a morning helping volunteers uproot weeds in the dunes. It was all good, and I would have been content for several more days if necessary, but on the fifth morning the wind eased to 20 knots and swung to the east, which was my chance to head north under sail again.



My kayak on the beach at Tawharanui. The constant strong winds eddied around her, scouring out the sand, and after four days she had sunk into a trench of her own making.

Getting off the beach required careful timing because there was now some surf, but once clear of that I hoisted my sail and immediately we were off, slicing towards Cape Rodney with almost no need to paddle. I had the wind at right-angles to the canoe, the best point of sailing with a rig of my design. Cape Rodney was soon abeam, then Pakiri and Te Ari Beaches slipped steadily past. By early afternoon I had rounded Bream Tail and I stopped for lunch at Anderson's Cove, (near Langs Beach). I had covered 44km so far in just 4 hours, which, with a heavy load in the

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Wandering north

Continued from page 4

kayak, is more than twice the speed I can manage without the sail. From here Bream Head looked a long way off, and the wind was easing, but I took a chance and headed directly for it. This was a slower crossing, and I was relieved to get ashore near Peach Cove, on the southern side of Bream Head, late in the afternoon. I was tired but pleased with the day's progress, 65km in about 7.5hr paddling time.



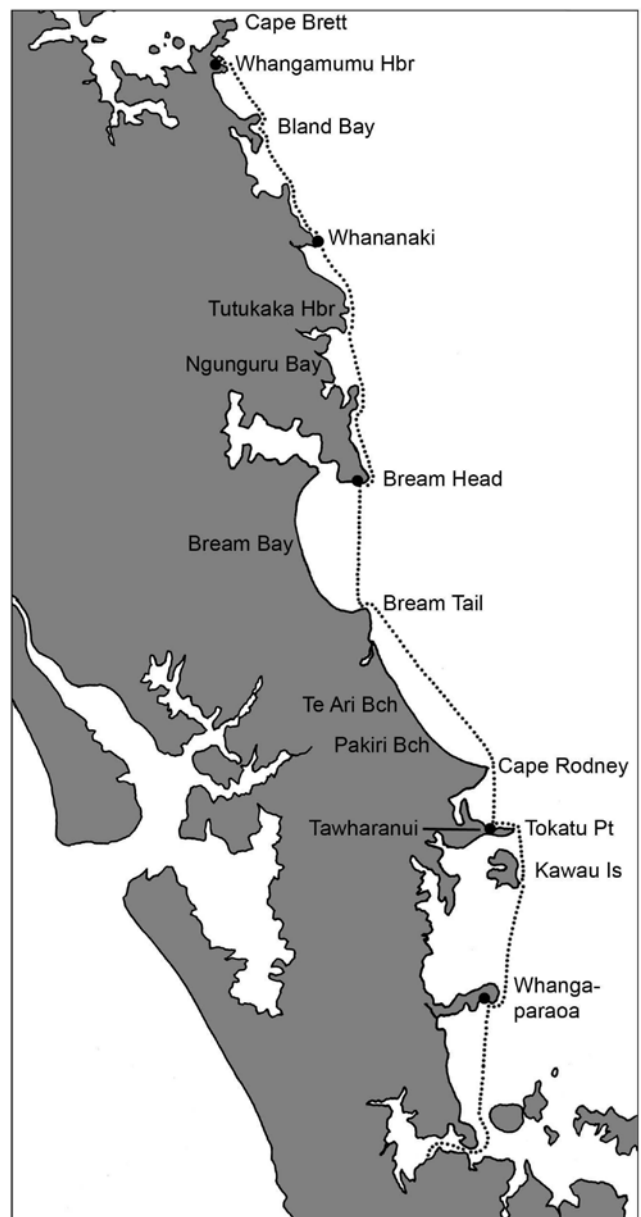
Ashore near Bream Head. This might be the only place left in mainland Northland where mature pohutukawa forest sweeps down to the sea. The "beach" here is only a beach at high tide; it is rocks and boulders at other times. I arrived out of time: alas more bumps and scrapes on the old kayak!

Bream Head is a majestic cape, with its volcanic plugs rearing up into the sky like the battlements of a castle. The steep southern face of the cape is clothed in dense forest, and lying in the grass beneath a pohutukawa I could hear tui, bellbirds and kaka overhead. At the end of a long day on the water it was hard to imagine a better place to be.



A remote campsite with flat grass, shade and a stream nearby; no wonder he's happy!

As expected the wind had eased further next morning. I paddled quietly along Ocean Beach with its constant rumble of surf, past Ngunguru Bay, stopped for lunch at a tranquil cove inside Tutukaka Harbour, and finally settled for the night, after 44km, at the DOC campground at Otamure Bay, Whananaki. My tent was pitched on a flat shelf just above the sand, one of many which had been carved out of the hillside with a bulldozer. These are spectacular campsites but sadly many of them are threatened by landslides because the deep cuttings made by the bulldozer have destabilised the hillside above. It will take a lot of work and expense to remedy this problem.



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Up-Coming Club Trips and Events

I want to say thank you to everyone for their support, enthusiasm and guidance since taking on the role of trip officer. To those who have volunteered ideas and offered to coordinate a trip, a special thank you. Please keep these ideas flowing and my phone buzzing.

If anyone has trips they have always wanted to do but don't know how to go about it – we can find someone to co-ordinate for you or help you if you just need a bit of extra support

Just Get Involved – it's what makes it fun.

I would be interested to hear if people are keen on doing some moving water (river trips).

Happy Paddling – *Jackie*

Saturday Morning Coffee Cruise

If you are into good coffee, good company and usually a leisurely paddle then this is the trip for you.

A small but growing group meet about 9:00am on Saturday mornings to paddle to one of the beaches – St Heliers, Kohimarama or Mission Bay for coffee.

Note: Paddlers under 18 to be accompanied by a guardian!

For more information, go to:

<http://www.mapmyrun.com/routes/view/127561>

Tuesday Group

A group of retired kayakers (Colin, Rona, Mike & Peter) are meeting every Tuesday morning; you are welcome to join us. We decide what to do at breakfast time on Tuesday morning. If it's fine with light winds, we paddle, usually meeting at Kohimarama Beach at 9.30am. Destination Rangitoto, Browns Is or Motuihe. If it's too windy for kayaking, we cycle. Distance 30–40km, destination anywhere there's good coffee. We don't approve of rain, head winds, heavy traffic, battery chickens or the Republican Party.

Sometimes our trips last most of the day, sometimes just the morning. None of us want to get encumbered with organising these outings in advance, so they won't be advertised by email.

However if you would like to join us on a particular Tuesday then **phone Colin Quilter 360 6271 between 7.00 and 8.00am on Tuesday morning.**

Easter Weekend April 6–9 Te Waitere (Kawhia South Harbour)

Come and enjoy kayaking the Kawhia Harbour, including Te Maika, Kawhia cafes and rock gardening through limestone rock formations. We'll spend the rest of the weekend exploring other areas as well.

There are limited places at the bach so be in quick to enjoy soaking in outdoor baths and cooking on open fires.

\$10 per night.

Phone Justin Sanson Beattie 0274 868177.

Easter Weekend April 6–8 2-Night stay at Home Bay, Motutapu Is

Leaving am Friday 6th, paddle to Motutapu with maybe some fishing along the way. Stay 2 nights camping under the stars at Home Bay. Returning Sunday 8th morning for an enjoyable paddle home.

Contact Philip Noble on 575 3493 for details.

Sunday April 15 Puhoi River paddle

Leaving Wenderholm Regional Park by boat ramp in the morning to cruise with the incoming tide. Lunch at the pub, tea shop or BYO. Return with the outgoing tide. Option to paddle one way if we arrange a car shuttle.

Contact Jackie Hillman on 634 5042 for details.

Sunday April 22 Browns Island and Motuihe

Meet at St Heliers and paddle to Browns Island for morning tea, Motuihe for lunch and a walk. Paddle back in the afternoon. Plan to be firmed up nearer the time.

To book phone Jodi Yeats on 021 942 896 or 445 3639.

Saturday April 28 Motuora Island & surrounding area

Leave from Sullivan's Bay may be dropping in to see the others at Vine House if time allows.

Leave Saturday morning or Sunday option if weather unsuitable on the Saturday.

Contact Gerald Fagan on 832 9720 on Wed/Thurs prior if interested and for further details.

April 28 and 29 Vine House Weekend

Take the chance to get away from the crowds for a relaxing weekend with good company and good food.

Call Trevor 817 7357 to book a bed and for detailed information.

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Up-coming Club Trips and Events

Continued from page 6

Saturday May 5 Riverhead Pub by Moonlight

Leave Herald Island using the incoming tide and full moon for an evening, paddle up the harbour to the Riverhead Pub. Enjoy some pub food and a pint before returning to the cars with the outgoing tide.

Lights essential, a bow line to secure your kayak and some clothes suitable for the pub.

Suitable for keen beginners.

Contact Trevor on 817 7357 for details.

Saturday May 12 3 Peaks Waitemata Trip

A trip for confident fit paddlers who want a full day on the water. Leave Okahu Bay early to paddle to Browns Island with a walk to the summit, morning tea before heading to Rangitoto for lunch on the summit. Cross to North Head for afternoon tea and a final summit bagged before returning to Ohaku Bay. Carrying lights essential

Contact Ryan Whittle on 419 2672 for details.

Tuesday May 15 Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held on Tuesday May 15 at the Marine Rescue Centre, Tamaki Drive.

Meet at 7.00pm for a 7.30 start.

May 26 and 27 Vine House Weekend

Take the chance to get away from the crowds for a relaxing weekend with good company and good food.

Call Trevor 817 7357 to book a bed and for detailed information.

Saturday May 26 Cockle Bay to Whitford

Come and enjoy a leisurely paddle with Dorothy along the coast and up the river to the Whitford Café. Return with the outgoing tide.

Contact Dorothy on 376 1986 or email fitzcox@yahoo.com for details.

Saturday June 9 GeoCaching on the Waitemata with Matt

Contact Matt on 817 1984 for details.

Last-Minute Paddling Opportunities email notifications

You can be notified by signing up for the Club emails.

Contact Matt on 817 1984 to get onto the emailing list.

Mike Randal has kindly offered to look out for last-minute paddling opportunities for beginners, so look out for any email posts on Thursday/Friday advertising a Saturday or Sunday paddle.

Or If you are planning a trip and want company, send details to Matt who will send an email.

Wandering north

Continued from page 5

As always the sound of the surf was magnified during the night and I expected to get wet leaving the beach next morning; but with a mixture of patience and good luck I got away dry. This would be another day of light winds and clear skies. At the northern end of Okupe Beach at Mimiwhangata there was a tiny corner protected from the swell which gave an easy landing, and I walked up onto the headland for the view. From there I could see Rimariki Island nearby, and on its northern side a little cove so tranquil that I went there just for the pleasure of landing in it. Then directly across to Cape Home and into Bland Bay where there was a sheltered landing for lunch immediately inside the south head.

In the afternoon came the long crossing to Whangamumu Pt, made more enjoyable when several dolphins kept me company for a while.

One in particular rolled onto her right side and swam that way for a minute or two directly beneath the kayak, holding position and looking up at me with her left eye. What was she thinking? If our thoughts had anything in common, perhaps it was just that we were both there for the fun of it, and no other reason was necessary.

By late afternoon I was encamped among the ruins of the old whaling station in Whangamumu Harbour. I pitched my tent on soft kikuyu grass under a spreading pohutukawa in exactly the same spot as last time; I bathed in the same fresh-water pool as last time, I probably cooked the same meal as last time, and I was just as happy as I expected to be. Cape Brett could wait for tomorrow; and it can also wait for the next issue of the newsletter.

Happy paddling, *Colin*

Swim Escorts – Our Fundraising

Peter Sommerhalder

We were carrying our kayaks back to the cars at St Heliers after the swim from St Heliers to the Tamaki Yacht Club. This was after a rather demanding – and tiring – event for swimmers and escort boats alike. A station wagon was parked to one side of the boat ramp. The driver opened the window and asked me if we were paddlers who had assisted the swimmers. I said yes, and was delighted that this chap showed his appreciation. Obviously, he was one of the swimmers who had just finished a rather hard event, as the wind and waves were growing in size during the time of the swim. When passing his car with the second kayak, we had another short yarn. It was then I noticed a folded wheelchair of some sort in the back of his car. It dawned on me that he was the guy I saw getting ready before the swim, launching from a trolley on the boat ramp into the water. I had heard about him and remember seeing him on earlier occasions. Actually, he is a member of our club, Martin Girling. Not only has he participated in the Auckland Central Masters Harbour Swims for a number of years, he has a sit-on kayak stored in the club locker. That is where I had seen Martin on occasions, when he goes kayaking. Despite his limited mobility, he manages to participate in kayaking and swimming. Martin, you are a great role model for all us paddlers. I am looking forward to meeting you again at Okahu Bay, or on other swims.

This encounter made me reflect on the “partnership” between the Master Swimmers and the Auckland Canoe Club. Rona Paterson remembers going down to the beach in St Heliers when she was a little girl, to see the swimmers coming in from Rangitoto Island. I learned that Bert and Mamie Raper coached the swimmers, mainly in breast stroke and butterfly. The harbour swims started with the Ponsonby Swim Club a long time ago. In fact the Herne Bay to Westhaven (Curran Street) swim has been going for 101 years, and the Chelsea to Westhaven Swim for 99 Years. Trevor and Coralline Eagles were so impressed with Raper’s coaching, they began sponsoring the swims in 1986 and continued until today. People who have a love for swimming join up. You pay an entry fee and get on with swimming. No “pressure” to purchase sporting goods, or getting bombarded with sponsor’s advertising. You participate because you love swimming, and want to improve your skills and fitness. The club also runs a Mid Winter Chiller. The rules say using wetsuits is discouraged. The swims are followed by hot drinks, food and rum. That’s it. About 350 swimmers entered the Rangitoto swim this year. In the Millennium year 2000 the numbers swelled to 600–700!

No wonder the Coastguard and Auckland Canoe Club were approached to assist with safety escorts for the swimmers. It started a very long time ago. The Rapers knew the Augustins, who were involved in paddling and guiding seakayaking trips. Ron and Nancy Augustin soon realised, that the number of paddlers they could call on for escort duty was not big enough. So they approached Liz Godfrey for help.

That is how the Auckland Canoe Club got involved. I do not know which year that was. Over time we developed a simple system. A line of kayakers paddles on either side of the swimmers to shepherd them, and point them in the right direction. Swimmers needing assistance can hang on to a kayak. The paddler then signals a rubber ducky to pick up the swimmer, then a larger launch or Coastguard vessel will take over. We make use of radios to communicate. For this service the Master Swimmers remunerate the Canoe Club, and donate barbecue food and cold drinks. The swim series are a welcome opportunity to socialise on the beach, and are also our yearly fundraising event. This is much more attractive than running raffles.

Many of us will remember vividly the Rangitoto Swim of about 4 years ago. The Coastguard vessels and kayakers were ready to set off from Rangitoto wharf, and the first wave of swimmers was ready in the water, when the announcement came from the organisers that the swim had to be cancelled due to rapidly worsening conditions. All swimmers were shepherded back on to the ferries, and we kayakers suddenly found we had no Plan B! After some initial confusion we formed into pods and made our way back to St Heliers in somewhat challenging conditions, escorted by Coastguard vessels. To swell numbers of kayakers it is custom to encourage paddlers with limited experience to participate. On this occasion paddlers from the Girl Guides got an introduction to some serious sea kayaking on the return paddle, practising “real” capsizes and assisted rescues by other paddlers, with transfers to Coastguard launches. We all got safely back to the mainland for a much appreciated barbecue.

Over the last few years the numbers of swimmers in the harbour swims have dropped slightly. However to run these events safely, the organisers and Coastguard do rely on a minimum number of kayakers. The kayakers are the first link in a chain of safety procedures. We would like to keep up this tradition and encourage all club members to give next year’s swim series priority by making themselves available.

As a footnote it is interesting to learn how the Rapers and Augustins got to know each other. Ron Augustin was very much involved in speed boat racing before he immersed himself in kayaking. Bert Raper was an expert in tuning car engines. The 14-year-old Ron kept blowing the motor on his speed boat and desperately needed help. So Bert took him under his wing and taught Ron how to tune and de-carbon motors. By the time Ron was 19, he became New Zealand champion in speed boat racing against strong competitors. Some pilots used imported American 8-cylinder motors in their speed boats. Ron made due with an expertly tuned Austin 7 motor in his boat. At that time a race-tuned Austin 7 motor fitted to a car reached 123 miles/hour driving on Muriwai Beach. And there is me thinking boy racers were a phenomenon of the 21st century!

Kayaking proves a 'learning experience'

Jodi Yeats

As the sky coloured to red behind heavy clouds above Waiheke Island, our small party of four townies camping at Home Bay tried to guess what could be causing the mysterious light. We were fairly confident we could rule out an aurora borealis.

The others, Murray Sheard, and John and Stefan Hadfield were keen on the idea of a reflection of the hidden sunset. Then I hit on it – a giant full moon was rising behind the clouds. The moon soon appeared – magnificently huge and confirming my theory.

That was just the first of a number of learning experiences on that kayaking trip. In fact, the whole improvised trip to Home Bay on Motutapu was something of a learning curve for me. A few days earlier I had decided the weather looked OK for an end of summer camping trip, so I sent an email around the club soliciting paddlers to join me.

I planned the 2pm departure on Saturday, 10 March, with the timing based around the fact my aunt was visiting from Whanganui and I wanted to have a coffee with her before heading off.

From Narrow Neck Beach, it took us three heavy-duty hours to reach Home Bay around slack tide.

When we arrived, a high point of the trip was John and Stefan pitching their amazing fly contraption between their kayaks, complete with happy faced flag.

In the evening, we shared whatever we had brought and had a delicious communal meal and some fun dice games, followed by a very early night and peaceful sleep, with the sea lapping near our tents.

The next day was rainy and a bit rough. Murray headed off early to a meeting with some trepidation, but found he flew home easily with the tide and wind behind. Similarly, the rest of us, not far behind, had a far easier trip. The rain cleared and held off until we got home. Phew.

Note to self – plan the trip for the tide, rather than coffee engagements, and next time leave from St Heliers, which is much closer, rather than Narrow Neck, even though the latter is conveniently close to my home. Maybe that's why only three people came?!



John and Stefan Hadfield pitching their sleeping contraption, assisted by Murray.

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Kayaking proves a 'learning experience'

Continued from page 9

The previous weekend (3 and 4 March) at Vine House had been thoroughly enjoyable. Only Matt Crozier, Judith Wesley and I were able to kayak over on Friday before the "weather bomb" hit on Saturday. It didn't amount to much and Sunday was lovely and sunny.

Ralph Stuetgen was over at Big Bay. He was keen to test his waterproof camera, taking some great photos of Matt and Jodi, before discovering it wasn't really suited to underwater shots.

We had a very relaxing time of reading and naps, complete with Judith making date scones. I learnt not to put too much cream on, when a slurry slid onto my trousers. Yum.

For such a relaxing weekend, we got a lot of work done on the house on Sunday morning, before repairing to beautiful Big Bay to sunbathe. Another tough weekend's "kayaking" at Vine House!

Jodi



Munching date scones at Vine House (painting by ARD Fairburn).



Jodi learns about greed as her thick layer of cream slides onto her trousers.



Jodi (and Matt) shortly before Ralph's camera drowned.

Auckland Canoe Club Annual General Meeting

7:00 for 7:30 start on Tuesday 15th May 2012
Marine Rescue Centre, Tamaki Drive

If you have any ideas for General Business items and/or Motions, please phone Matt Crozier on 817 1984 or email secretary@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz

We particularly need a Secretary, now that Matt is taking on the Treasury! This is an admin role and doesn't require kayaking skills. Duties are mainly keeping the agenda and taking minutes at committee meetings, receiving correspondence from the PO Box and email and replying to correspondence where appropriate

Agenda

- Welcome
- Apologies
- Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 19th May 2009
- Reports
- Remits (*Please submit remits*)
- Election of Officers
 - Patron
 - President nomination: Ian Calhaem
 - Treasurer nomination: Matthew Crozier
 - Secretary nomination: **Vacant**
 - Committee nominations: Jackie Hillman, Roger Lomas, Claire O'Connor, Trevor Arthur, Gavin Baker
- General Business

Poet's Corner

*At last a pen to paper
Or fingers to the keys
I've been resting from the writing
So this doesn't come with ease.*

*But it's good to be in Auckland
Now that Autumn's there
With calm and sunny weather
And sweet Autumnal airs.*

*We paddlers – and big ones too
Delight in these conditions
Exciting us to get out there
On our little expeditions.*

*A leisurely trip to the
Little Blue Penguins play
Warm Autumnal zephyrs
Help us on our way.*

*Be sure our boats are pest free
When we go to Motuihe
Sixty Tuatara join
The Little Spotted Kiwi
That keep company with Saddlebacks
And skinks there by the hundred
The wily Kakariki
About which I've sometime wondered.*

*Or a gentle paddle to Rangī
An amble up the cone
Down again for cups of tea
Is it possible to moan?*

*All those trips we read about
Of paddlers doing stuff
In these beautiful months of Autumn
Can we ever get enough?*

*So welcome to the Autumn
But in spite of what I say
Just beware those squally winds
There's always another day.*

*And welcome back Rebecca
You've been away a while
People not acquainted
Will know you by your smile.*

Mike Randall