

## February 2013



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*Kayakers cum walkers make it to Cape Reinga  
– Judith Wesley, Jodi Yeats, Matt Crozier and Rosie Thom. See article on page 10.*

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

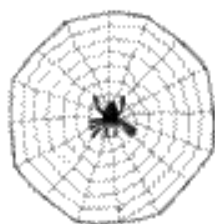
[subscribe@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto:subscribe@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz)

### Officers

<i>Patron</i>	Jim Mason	
<i>President</i>	Ian Calhaem	579 0512
<i>Secretary</i>		
<i>Treasurer</i>	Matthew Crozier	817 1984
<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>	Ian Calhaem	579 0512

### Email addresses

[patron@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto:patron@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz)  
[president@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto:president@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz)  
[secretary@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto:secretary@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz)  
[treasurer@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz)  
[trips@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto:trips@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz)  
[publicity@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto:publicity@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz)  
[merchandise@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto:merchandise@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz)  
[vinehouse@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto:vinehouse@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz)  
[newsletter@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz)  
[webmaster@aucklandcanoecub.org.nz](mailto: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

<i>Bank</i>	BNZ
<i>Branch</i>	Newmarket
<i>Account</i>	02-0100-0023453-000
<i>Name</i>	Auckland Canoe Club
<i>Particulars</i>	Your FULL name (Initials are not enough to identify some members with common names)
<i>Code</i>	Either <b>SUBS, STORAGE, HIRE, OTHER</b> (depending on what you are paying for)

If your payment is for several items, then please make **separate** payments for **each** item.

### 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.

## 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.

## FOR SALE

**Ron Augustin, Designer**  
and previous owner of Paddling Perfection Ltd  
has a number of used and kitset kayaks  
(similar to Colin Quilter's original Sea Bear) for sale.

**Enquiries phone 818 7241**

## NEW MEMBERS



### Welcome

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

**Christopher Davis,  
Airini, Michael Minns  
and Murray Wilson**



## Deadline for Next Newsletter

**20 February 2013**

## Regular Events

### Vine House Weekends

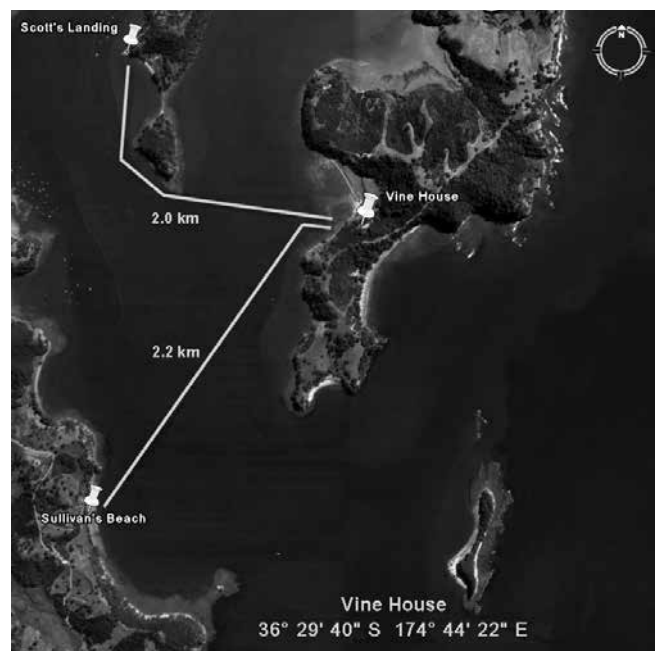
On one weekend each month we have the use of  
Vine House.

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>

## Up-Coming Club Trips and Events

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 – phone 634 5042.

### **Sunday 3rd February Eagle Technology Bays 3.7km St Heliers to Tamaki Swim escort**

It's the first for the year and here's hoping there is good weather for the final two swims this year after the challenges of the previous two swims.

Briefing at St Heliers 11.00 am

The swim start time is 11.30 am

For those wanting to paddle from Okahu Bay meet at 9.45am, leaving at 10am.

Listen to the Newstalk ZB radio for cancellation notifications or we are trying out another option, for club members. Neil Scott plans to update his home answer phone message that morning so phone 09 846 4004 and listen to the update.

Sadly if the organisers cancel very late Neil will be on the water so please turn up anyway and meet at St Heliers as there are great café options making it still a good reason to catch up with kayak friends.

### **Saturday 9th February Kayak near Kawau Island**

Paddle the Kawau Bay area, east towards Tawharanui, and perhaps over to Kawau for lunch.

**Call Will before Thursday 7th for more details on 550 3699.**

### **Sunday 17th February Tiritiri Matangi**

We will paddle over to the island and stop at Hobbs Beach and decide on our options, which include a paddle around the island or bird watching in the beautiful bush on this wondrous island – or both. Bring lunch and walking shoes, togs and mask and snorkel.

**Please contact Matt Crozier by Friday 15th for details. 817 1984, 021 126 9582, matt@pl.net**

### **22nd to 24th February 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 3rd March Last swim escort – the Big one!! Eagle Technology Rangitoto 4.45km Rangitoto to St Heliers**

Race briefing at 10am. Race start at 10.20am

Kayakers meet at St Heliers at 8.30am to leave at 9.00am

Please watch out for email announcements for any changes or for details of any club members planning to camp over on Rangitoto Island the night before.

### **8, 9 and 10th March Kask Sea Kayak Forum**

At Raglan, so its local this year – for details [www.kask.org.nz](http://www.kask.org.nz) there are still a few places left.

See page 3 for details

### **9th or 10th March Other Paddling Options**

To be advised – watch out for email notices.

### **Sunday 17th March Fishing trip to Waiheke with Dorothy**

Catch to ferry 8am from Half moon Bay to Kennedy Point. Pack a picnic and your fishing gear. If weather permits aim to explore from Kennedy Point to Park Point.

Return ferry options, check out sea link website for times and pricing <http://www.sealink.co.nz/timetables-and-fares/timetables.html>

**Contact Dorothy for details by Friday. Hm 376 1986 mob. 02102783343 or email. fitzcox@yahoo.com**

### **22nd to 24th March Vine House weekend**

Note this is a change and not the last weekend of the month.

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.**

Continued on page 5 ➤

## Up-Coming Club Trips and Events

Continued from page 4

### **Easter Weekend 29th March to 1st April Coromandel**

Wally and Sue have offered to host ACC members at their home/garden in Coromandel Township.

There is room to camp in the garden and a few mattress opportunities on the floor of their home.

First come, first served!

There are a variety of paddling opportunities from Coromandel and these will be determined on the day depending on the weather and sea conditions.

Coromandel offers many activities if anyone wants a break from their kayak one day.

Depending on numbers there are several local campsites that you can check out.  
<http://www.coromandeltown.co.nz/tent-sites--powered-sites.html>

The top 10 resort is a few minutes from Wally and Sue's house.

**Please contact Wally to book and get location details on 07 866 8833 or email [mapagilmer@hotmail.com](mailto:mapagilmer@hotmail.com)**

### **6th or 7th April Other Paddling Options**

To be advised – watch out for email notices.

### **12th to 14th April Tawharanui**

Maybe the last camping trip of the year.

With summer nearly over, time to give the tent a final check and pack up the kayaks again.

Plan to book for Friday and Saturday nights.

Some might like to leave early Saturday morning and stop off at Matakana markets, so book just the Saturday night.

A close to Auckland gem, with access to some wonderful paddling.

**Plan:** You will need to book your own site and aim for a shared BBQ meal Saturday night. Walk or Kayak Sunday.

**Email or phone Jodi Yeats, ph 445 3639 (h) or 021 942 896 or [editor@pharmacytoday.co.nz](mailto:editor@pharmacytoday.co.nz)**

Campsite bookings are per person; phone ARC on 366 2000 to book. \$12 per night for adults, \$6 for children and there's another rate for infants under three.

## St Heliers to Tamaki Yacht Club Swim Escort This Sunday!

### **The St Heliers to Tamaki Yacht Club swim escort is this Sunday – February 3rd**

Briefing at St Heliers is 11.00 am.

The swim start time is 11.30am.

The Swim Escort time is approximately 90 minutes. Please assume that the swim is on unless it is cancelled.

You can find out if it is cancelled by calling my home phone number 09 846 4004 (add it to your cell phone) and listening to the Greeting. I will change the greeting as soon as I am informed of cancellation by the swim organisers.

A BBQ will be provided after the swim for hungry paddlers. This is a great way to meet people, or catch up with old friends, and the club receives a small payment for each kayak attending the escort.

If there are not enough kayaks, the event will have to be called off so they rely on us.

A group of us will be paddling from the Club's kayak storage at Okahu Bay to St Heliers for the escort. This turns the event into a reasonable day trip and there is usually plenty of parking at Okahu Bay.

Meet at 9.45am – Leave at 10.00am (leaving one hour for a leisurely paddle to St Heliers).

Please note that the Club's kayaks are reserved for people who are doing the swim escort and are free of charge for people doing the escort. If you intend to participate in the swim escort, I would appreciate it if you could let me know [onnngscott@orcon.net.nz](mailto:onnngscott@orcon.net.nz) so that I have an idea of numbers.

Regards, **Neil Scott**

# Using a Sea Kayak on Rivers

## My comments in reply to: *Think Before You Leap*

Peter Sommerhalder

Reading Philip's comments using sea kayaks on rivers, I go along with his observations and warnings about getting trapped inside a crushed cockpit, or washed into tree branches, or worse, willow roots in fast flowing rivers.

However I think sea kayaks can be used on rivers. To do this safely, some rules and skill factors have to be observed.

### River Grading

White Water rivers are graded the world over using a scale from 1 to 6.

**1** – Slow flowing gentle water, no obstacles.

**2 plus** – Fast flowing current, safe passage visible, no obstacles in main flow.

**6** – Not paddleable, risk of life. Yet in today's white water paddling circles dangerous Grade 6 rivers and waterfalls are being paddled!

In my view Grade 2 plus is the limit using a sea kayak on flowing water. This relates to places like Waikato River, Wanganui River, and Waimakariri River.

### Paddling skills for rivers

The skills needed to negotiate a river are really basic paddling strokes, and the ability to read the water. River paddling is no harder than sea kayaking or surfing a kayak at the beach.

**Sweep strokes** – forward and backwards, are essential. Repeated sweep strokes will turn a 5m long sea kayak briskly, especially with the rudder up. A kayak with rocker turns swifter than one with minimal rocker.

**Ferry glide** – forward and backwards. Forward ferry glide means paddling facing upstream. By angling the kayak away from the bank into the current and keep paddling, the kayak will cross the river to the other side, like a ferry attached by a pulley to a wire rope rigged across the river. The aim is to set the angle so that you are not getting washed downstream by the river current. The rudder on the sea kayak is of great help for this manoeuvre, but you should practice the forward ferry glide using your paddle strokes only, with the rudder up.

Now try the backwards ferry glide. You are facing downstream, paddling with the river flow. Paddle backwards to stop getting washed downstream. Set the kayak in an angle to the current and glide across to the far riverbank without getting spun around by the current. This is done with the rudder up. In fact on a river all steering is best done with the rudder up, using the paddle.

The backwards ferry glide is the most needed skill on rivers like the Wanganui. Again and again you are aiming down the V of a rapid keeping in the main river flow. Unexpectedly a boulder or small island divides the main flow ahead of you into two channels.

You are heading bang on for the obstacle in a heavy loaded single or double kayak. Back paddling will slow you down, and in most cases you will be able to hold your own, which means you are no longer pushed towards the boulder. Still facing the obstacle you now angle your stern to the left or right, still paddling backwards. This will move you sideways and away from the boulder. When you are clear of the obstacle you glide forward again and past the obstacle. This also works in situations where the main river current is aiming into tree branches overhanging the water.

### Reading the water

This is an important factor on all river trips. Watch the main flow. Does it aim into a sieve of willow trees or boulders? Back eddies, whirlpools, sandbanks in river bends can be spotted while paddling. On white water, rapids are scouted from shore before attempting to paddle them. This has to be done on every trip, as changing water levels and floods can change or even block rapids with driftwood and debris between river runs.

### Cockpit designs on sea kayaks

Most modern sea kayaks, plastic and composite, have a large cockpit. Spray deck materials like stretchy neoprene with strong bungy cords are securely fitted, yet can be released without difficulty. This makes exits and re-entries easier for those paddlers without rolling skills. However it does not stop decks from imploding and filling cockpits with water quickly. Built-in bulkheads front and aft of cockpits do give strength to the cockpit hull.

Above factors combined, show that sea kayaks are suitable for use in rivers. Indeed I prefer to use my plastic sea kayak for the Wanganui River to the fibreglass white water or cruising kayaks from the old days. Competitors in the Coast to Coast are increasingly using the Beachcomber sea kayak for the 60km leg on the Waimakariri River. The rapids are classed as Grade 2 plus, which means a suitable channel through the rapids can be seen. The extra stability of the Beachcomber (or any sea kayak) compared to Multisport kayaks, might just prevent a possible capsizing, which means not "wasting" valuable time doing a self rescue.

I have encouraged trips on the Waikato River with sea kayakers in the past. In fortnightly sessions over four of five Sundays we paddled from Cambridge to Tuakau. Most participants have never paddled on running water before that. We practiced sweep strokes and ferry glides on the way. There were a few enlightened faces from people mastering new "tricks" at the end of these scenic trips. The annual club Wanganui river cruise, and Wanganui trips with Boys Brigade always began with three days practice in empty kayaks at Cherry Grove in Taumarunui, before heading down streams into the "unknown".

## Christmas Picnic, Browns Island, 22 December



PHOTOS MEREDITH BLESING

## Poet's Corner

*Fletcher Bay at the end of the road  
High tech tents and four wheel drives  
Boats bikes and kids galore  
Big swells breaking on a stony shore  
That batters your feet in the undertow  
Outgoing incoming in your narrow boat  
Waiting a bit till you see a calm spot  
If you want to escape a drubbing or not  
It's good to see the families camping  
Old style with some luxurious gear  
Kids up till all hours on the go all the time  
I hope they remember these years of their prime  
The mountain bike tracks a bit rugged for me*

*Just as well that I left mine at home  
But that coast is a dream for pedestrian travel  
Mixed in with a spot of kayaking paddle  
Tents right by the creek an assortment of kayaks  
The skills kids were learning could never be taught  
Hats off to our DOC for camps such as these  
To the Rangers who run them with professional ease  
And good on the families making the effort  
To get out and camp in these faraway spots  
The sense of adventure deep down in our culture  
Is alive and well looking good for our future.*

*Mike Randall*

## Summer Holiday Paddling in Auckland

*Roger Lomas*

The club early morning kayakers have been very active over the Christmas – New Year break.

For those that choose to stay in town, a busy paddling itinerary was on hand. Even though many were away, a regular 6-7 turned up each morning. Our plan was to stay local to avoid holiday traffic hassles and this worked. We did however encounter congestion at a few of the boat ramps that we use. All the fishermen were out in force for the snapper season. There were also great squads of neoprene clad swimmers out training for the long distance harbour races, (One this Sunday St Heliers – Tamaki). We also couldn't help but notice the proliferation of SUPs (Stand up paddleboard).

Some of these paddlers are extremely fit and a very attractive bikini clad lass gave the lads a run for their money back up the harbour recently. That certainly got the blood pressure going. Some of the best summer paddling is still to come and in early February we are off to explore some of the vast waterways of the Kaipara. Away from the busy holiday season camping is a lot more relaxed and enjoyable.

Occasionally there are opportunities for new paddlers to join the group. If you are an energetic paddler who is prepared to commit to a regular early morning paddling routine then give me a call on 846 6799

**Roger**



*Time for a cuppa, Lucas Creek.*

PHOTO K. WOOLCOTT



*Te Waka at Salthouse Slipway.*

PHOTO J. AMSDEN



*Portage into the Tahuna Torea Wetlands.*

PHOTO R. LOMAS



*Ashore for breakfast at Rangitoto Lighthouse.*

PHOTO J. AMSDEN



## Mohaka Trip – November/December 2012

### – a first-timer's view

*Dorothy Fitzgerald*

Prior to this trip my only river experience was one visit to the Waiau Pa. However Jackie assured me that I had enough kayaking ability to cope with the grade 2 sections of the Mohaka.

There was an impressive level of organisation by indefatigable camp mother (Carol Exon) from Waitemata Canoe & Multisport Club.

As with ACC trips the experienced people took good care of us inexperienced ones. About twenty people came on the trip. There were two sit on doubles and one short little shoe thing that was designed for playing in white water. Most people had sea kayaks. My Beachcomber seemed to handle all the bumps pretty well and came away with just one serious scratch. A couple of craft split and required duct tape repairs. Handy hint... toilet paper is good for drying a surface before applying duct tape.

The stones and rocks of the Mohaka are smooth unlike the oystered and barnacled reefs of the Hauraki Gulf. I was happy to hear that due to lack of rain the river was 'boney' i.e. of slow volume and relatively slow flowing. It was fast flowing enough for me!

A group of the keen and experienced drove for a further two hours to Mangatutu and came down an upper section of the Mohaka to join the rest of us at Mountain Valley Lodge. That upper section is classified as grade 2 but was not suitable for white water novices due to the high number of rapids and shorter stretches of calm water. Down river from Mountain Valley Lodge there were two sections of river. We had the option to get out after the first section.

The drivers for the upper section took the opportunity to have a soak in the hot pools at Mangatutu. The pools are nestled in bush overlooking the river – a 'must do' for anyone visiting this area

Even before I'd put kayak to water I had expended rather a lot of adrenalin as I didn't know what to expect. Rather should I say that 'I was expecting something wild and beyond my ability'.

We put in at a calm stretch just below the campground at Mountain Valley Lodge. The sky was overcast and the water looked darkly uninviting. I watched the experienced ones and with trepidation tried out paddling upstream and turning, 'Oh dear!' the water felt unfamiliar and difficult. However I was prepared for a dip or two with my brand new wet suit, woolly beanie under borrowed hard hat and firmly secured spectacles.

So off we went... me keeping in mind basics such as a four kayak gap between kayaks when in rapids, to steer clear of trees and rocks and keep paddling in rapids. Whoomph... down the first one like a frantic cork and low and behold into the relative calm beyond... very exciting and oh the relief to have come through. Then I noticed something wrong with my vision... the calm stretch in front appeared to slope downhill. It took me a wee while to realize that my glasses weren't malfunctioning. Of course the river was going downhill and tipping over the edge... more adrenalin. Oh for the normalcy of the Hauraki Gulf.

The sun came out and over the course of the next four hours I gradually calmed down and enjoyed the river environment; kowhai on the cliffs, lupin scent wafting on the breeze and the water temperature was pleasant, tastings sweet rather than salty (I took a few dips).

We had the option of pulling out at Glenfalls (a basic DOC campsite) 14 km from Mountain Valley Lodge. Most of us continued on a further 13 kms to Dave's landing the next DOC camp and the last grade 2 section before the rapids increase to > than grade 3.

The next day the keen experienced ones did the upper section again then met up with us novices and we all did the middle section. I found it good doing a repeat and was surprised by how much I'd learned the previous day. Again I enjoyed the river environment and in the company of two experienced ones stopped for a satisfying little forage of lush watercress.

I would recommend this trip to 'intermediate level' sea kayakers. Mind you I don't think that I'd take along a boat that was in pristine condition. My far from pristine Beachcomber with its flexible mid section handled the inevitable bumps well.

## KASK Sea Kayak Forum

### Raglan – 8, 9 and 10 March 2013

Speakers, paddles, flare demo and even some training available at this great spot on Auckland's back door.

Your registration covers everything from meals to accommodation and the sessions.

Go to [www.kask.org.nz](http://www.kask.org.nz) and on the events page is all the information and the registration form or contact Evan Pugh  
[sheepskinsstuff@extra.co.nz](mailto:sheepskinsstuff@extra.co.nz)

## Northland kayaking offers good picnic options

Jodi Yeats



*Matt and Judith walking into Sandy Bay en route from Toputupotu Bay.*

*Matt Crozier and the erection at Parua Bay aka Phallus Bay.*

I have previously been quoted in this newsletter as saying I view kayaks as large picnic hampers. So, it shouldn't come as a surprise the trip I organised to the far north in early January was pretty much a holiday at the beach with a bit of kayaking thrown in.

When I went to book, there was only one campsite available at Matauri Bay. So initially I invited a few people, then later sent an email out to club members following some cancellations. In the end, it was myself, Judith Wesley, Matt Crozier and Rosie Thom who met up at Matauri Bay on Friday, 4 January.

January can be a windy time of year and the first few days were quite blowy. However, thanks to the southerly wind direction we were able to do two fairly sheltered paddles along the coast towards Mahinepua. On the first day, Matt, Rosie and I paddled to Te Ngaere on clear green and turquoise water. We found a beautifully planted piece of land, with no buildings and a lovely stony bay. This was a great spot for a swim in clear green water and a stovetop espresso. The coast offered fun rock gardens and gaps with a reasonably strong swell coming through, which lent some excitement to the day.

The next morning, we drove to a long, pristine surf beach, Takau Bay, south of Matauri Bay. We went for a short walk to assist Matt in finding a cache, then had a fun time body surfing and boogy boarding before heading back to Matauri Bay.



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## Northland kayaking offers good picnic options

*Continued from page 10*

A short paddle that afternoon took us to a lovely sheltered bay, called Parua Bay. We nicknamed this beach "Phallus Bay" as it had a huge kauri obelisk in the centre. We found a sign explaining it was a large piece of swamp kauri, dug up and then quite literally "erected" by beer baron Doug Myers who also had built a lovely wooden villa on the property, called Opounui.

Matt capped it off by posing for a photo lying on his back with the "sculpture" between his legs!

We all progressed further north by car to Topotupotu Bay, which is a remote campsite at the end of an unsealed road near Cape Reinga. Again, it was blowing a gale, but that wasn't a problem as we used the first day to walk along a coastal track with stunning cliff-top views to Cape Reinga. Walking to the cape is a far more exhilarating experience than arriving by bus and I felt more connected to the spiritual significance for Maori, arriving by land.

Fortuitously, the wind dropped and the next day offered an equally rewarding paddling along the base of dramatic cliffs, with many caves and blowholes, from Topotupotu Bay to the top of Spirits Bay and back. I landed twice in my perpetual quest for somewhere to brew up a coffee, but was unable to convince the others to join me and land. The fact I disappeared under two enormous waves on the

first landing didn't help. Somehow I did a passable rudder and didn't capsize, but the spectacle apparently didn't inspire confidence. Similarly, the second landing involved jumping out into the water in a very rocky bay that wasn't very inviting on closer inspection – especially if you were paddling a Kevlar craft.

The wind and swell had been dropping and we all had a straightforward surf landing at Topotupotu Bay, much to everyone's relief, and I finally got to make a coffee back at the campsite.

Later that day we moved on to Maitai Bay, where the protected turquoise waters worked their magic and we all had a supremely relaxing chill-out time before heading home. Matt and Rosie paddled out to the headland where Matt reported outstanding snorkelling. He met the local blue maumau, who apparently, thanks to his blue fins, thought he was a long-lost relative and started following him around.

I managed only a small paddle across the bay to a nice spot under a pohutukawa for a read and a swim, while Judith abandoned all pretence of sportyness and relaxed on the beach.

I reckon car camping and keeping options open for kayaking, walking or chilling, is quite a good option for January when it is so often windy.



*Judith hard at work at Parua Bay near Matauri Bay.*