

New Zealand Canoeing

98.3

NZRCA Canoeist of the Year

At the 1998 AGM in Wellington the NZRCA elected Colin Leitch the 1998 Canoeist of the Year. The following is based on the nomination letter from the Marlborough Canoe Club.

Kayaking in Marlborough had been in decline for some years, with Colin being one of the few people with the commitment to continue paddling. Colin worked on not one but two club committees in Blenheim, as the Secretary/treasurer of the Marlborough Canoe Club, and on the executive committee of the Woodbourne Canoe Club.

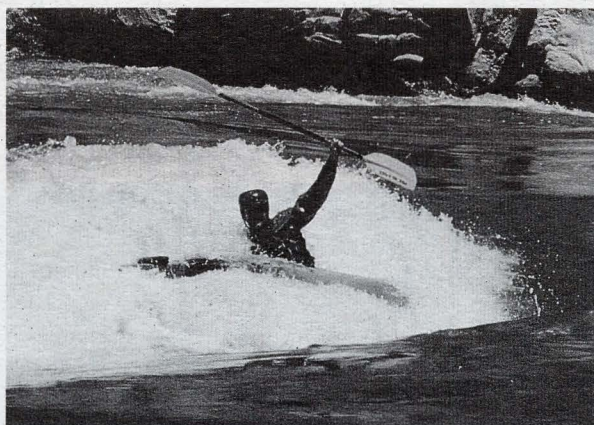
As well as running club nights every Wednesday for both Woodbourne CC and Marlborough CC Colin also organises the winter Canoe Polo league, and in summer takes 'learner' trips on a regular basis, almost every weekend. It helps that he is a great paddler as well. It's great to have somebody there that can do all the 'tricks' effortlessly - it gives people something to aspire to - or try to be better than!

Safety is a big issue on these trips and Colin always takes the time with each person to make sure that they fully understand what to do and the safest way to do it. Colin's patience with is amazing. Its not a problem for him to explain the same thing in ten different ways until the person understands.

Colin also stores the canoe club equipment, including all of the boats at his house, and sees to the maintenance and upkeep and the equipment. He ensured that it is available and in the best possible condition for club members to use.

The Buller river is Colin's playground, and the conservation of the area is high on his list of priorities. Colin was heavily involved in the application for a Conservation Order on the Buller river, and continues to monitor the area. Colin has run trips with the primary aim of monitoring the effects of works being done on the Lyall Earthquake section.

Unfortunately Colin has to leave Blenheim and move to Auckland. While he will be missed in Blenheim, we are sure he will continue his dedication to kayaking in Auckland.



Colin Leitch, surfing on the Colorado river, 1997

Spring 1998

Contents

About NZ Canoeing	2
Executive & Officers	2
The President reports	3
News in brief	3
Letters	4
Classifieds	4
Quarrying the Clarence	5
Fifteen minutes	7
Testing out the Tekapo	9
Taking on the Takapotahi	11
River safety courses	13
Calendar dates	14
Membership form	15

About NZ Canoeing

New Zealand Canoeing is the official newsletter of the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association (NZRCA) Inc. NZ Canoeing is published quarterly and distributed free to over 1,000 members of the NZRCA throughout New Zealand/Aotearoa.

The views expressed in New Zealand Canoeing are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Executive of the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association.

NZ Canoeing welcomes advertising from organisations associated with recreational canoeing. Please contact us for our advertising rates, and find out how to show your products and services to kayakers around NZ.

Thanks to Sarah McRae, Hugh Cannard, Paul Macey, Mick Hopkinson, Craig Peerless, Rob Worledge, Ngaire and Andrew Lawson, and the myriad of email correspondents for their contributions to this issue of NZ Canoeing. May the rivers flow for you!

Contributions of articles, trip reports, classified advertisements, and letters for publication are gratefully received.

Please send items to:

The Editor
New Zealand Canoeing
2 Kruse Place
Christchurch 5
Ph/Fax: 03 352 5786
kayaks@xtra.co.nz

The deadline for material for the Summer newsletter is Friday, 27 November 1998.

All map references are to NZMS Infomap 260 Topographical series.

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as elected at the 1998 NZRCA AGM

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Muzz is due back shortly from the USA, and will be team working with Andy Hollings and Adrienne Jones in the North Island and South Island respectively.

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162 Hospital Road
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132 Parkvale Road Karori
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ceri@actrix.gen.nz

Errata

In the previous edition of NZ Canoeing the picture on page 11 was incorrectly identified as Wade Bishop on the Mangahao. The person was actually Mark Smith from Rotorua.

The table identifying the 20 most important rivers and their conservation page 10 stated incorrectly that the Landsborough river was within the Kahurangi National Park. The top half of the Landsborough is in the Huka-Landsborough Wilderness Area.

THE PRESIDENT REPORTS

Time for the Big Ripple

Sarah McRae, NZRCA President

Life since the AGM and my election as the Association's President has been busy. Limited paddling, but it is winter. Administrative time must never outweigh time on the water.

Over the past 10 weeks I have marvelled at the intensity of involvement by past and present Executive members in running this Association. They have done an impressive job. Beyond the Executive, there are the unnamed strong supporters who also deserve thanks for their voluntary efforts over the last year.

Past President Paul Macey deserves an award for most committed duty over the last three years, and parenting the NZRCA since its birth in 1997. A full on time for Paul in getting the organisation through its potty training, early walking classes, and dismissing calls from Executive members for individual Teletubbies per portfolio. Frivolity aside, Paul's major achievements include defining the Association's mission statement and direction, and restructuring the executive to reflect the strong customer focus required for the organisation. Thank you for your efforts Paul.

Thanks also to past Communications Officer, Jon Hunt, who has spent much of his precious spare time slaving over the keyboard in producing earlier editions of "NZ Canoeing". Farewell also to Mike Savory, long time past NZCA President and more recently NZRCA Access Officer. Mike's involvement with the Association has spanned generations of paddlers and survived at least 12 evolutionary leaps forward in playboat design.

Thank you also to member canoe clubs who have continued their affiliation through the restructuring of New Zealand canoeing administration. Your ongoing support is appreciated. You continue to be a major force in getting people onto rivers and representing paddlers in river conservation and access issues.

Now for the welcomes. Greetings to Ceri Williams as Communications Officer and Donald Calder as Membership Officer, who were appointed at the AGM in July and have significant roles to play in the Association. Communication and membership issues were debated at the AGM, and both will be an important focus for the coming year.

The last Executive worked hard to get this baby onto two feet; the time is right for the Association to take some major steps into the outside world, to create "The Big Ripple".

My aim will be to establish a new belief in New Zealand kayaking, which is, that any paddler worth their salt should belong to their national association, whether through an affiliated club, or via individual membership. Membership of the Association guarantees information about what's happening in New Zealand kayaking, and allows paddlers to contribute to the growing debate surrounding river conservation, access and safety issues.

So, if you know someone who isn't a member of the Association, then sign them up now. The membership form is on page 15.

See you on the river.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Waikaremoana resource consent

Rob Worlledge

On July 15 I met with Peter Canvin from ECNZ regarding the joint HBCC / NZRCA submission to the HB Regional Council on the Waikaremoana resource consent. We are working on securing legal access across ECNZ land at Piripaua and Whakamarino Dam. We definitely have an easement lined up at Piripaua and are looking at a covenant off the dam road for the get in at the bottom of the spillway. He's checking to see where exactly the ECNZ land ends. We are also trying to tighten up the wording on providing predictive flow information on the proposed 0800 phone number. Things are progressing.

Clarence river resource consent hearing

The Clarence River Resource Consent Hearing regarding Transrail's proposal to quarry 1.93 million cubic meters of rock from the Clarence riverbed was held in Kaikoura from August 31 to September 3. For more information on this see the article on the Clarence on page 5.

More news on page 6



Classifieds

FOR SALE

Prijon 'Fly'. With nosecone and airbags. Minimal use, good condition. \$1000.

Schlegal Carbon paddle - Shaft+blades. Good condition. \$175.

paul.pujol@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

Super Sport, \$800 ono

Ph Nelson 035445667 or alh@extra.co.nz

1 Puffin Sea Kayak, excellent condition including spray deck and paddle. \$1,200 ono.

Sue Watson

Phone: (07) 378 5203

email: sue.watson@vuw.ac.nz

Pirouette Super Sport \$700

Suzanne Hills


Ph 03 548 6303

SDH@kingsalmon.co.nz

More classifieds on page 6

Gear for Paddlers

Palm has been designing and developing technically advanced equipment for the whitewater paddler for many years. The Palm Dry Tops can be used for all season paddling, working together with a layering system to keep you warm and dry even on the coldest and most severe river expedition.



Double Seal Dry Top

NEW: Whitewater jacket with neck and wrist seal protectors

Palm Equipment is available at selected retail stores, for example:

Auckland	Auckland Canoe Centre Canoe & Kayak Ltd. Ian Ferguson Marine	502 Sandringham Rd. 2/20 Constellation Dr. 12 Tamaki Dr.
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Rotorua	Ski Wet	81 Amohau St.
Wellington	Bivouac Outdoor	16 The Terrace
Nelson	Aquatic Sports	227 Hardy St.
Christchurch	Bivouac Outdoor Canoe & Outdoor World	79 Brisbane St. 7 Pilgrim Pl.
Dunedin	R&R Sport	70 Stuart St.

For more information and a complete list of retail outlets write to:
Topline Agencies NZ Ltd - PO Box 1160 - Rotorua
Ph 025-80 99 77 Fax 07- 362 4264 Email Paddle.Power@extra.co.nz

LETTERS

In 1996 a group of keen river lovers heard that the land adjoining Granity Creek rapid on the Buller River was scheduled for disposal by Landcorp. To their delight and amazement, their tender was successful, quickly forming a company called Kawatiri Play Group Limited.

The block of land owned by KPG Ltd is historically known as Grassy Flat and was the last work camp for the Nelson to Westport railway which was terminated at this spot by the government of the day back in the 1930's. Some things have not changed.

On the northern side of Grassy Flat the land rises steeply in forest covered Kahurangi National Park. The southern boundary is **two kilometres!** of the Buller River. This section of the Buller River, known as Granity section, is one of the most important sections for recreational white water use. Protecting and enhancing access to this recreational asset is the main aim of KPG Ltd. The aims of the company, as set out in its constitution, are:

- 1 To enhance and restore the natural values of the land.
- 2 To provide a place to foster adventures on land and water.
- 3 To protect access to this part of the river for future users.
- 4 To encourage use and enjoyment of the area by providing environmentally sustainable camping and chalet facilities on a normal business basis.

The shareholders of KPG Ltd are in no particular order; Hugh Canard, Hazel Nash, Fred Kahl, John Dobbie, Don Allardice, Peter Garlick, Mike Savory, Ritz Woods, Todd Jago and Bruce Gilkinson.

By subdividing the block into two areas on both sides of the state highway, an Esplanade Reserve or "Queen's Chain" is automatically created, thereby preserving public access along the whole section for posterity. Our proposal is to do more than just provide an additional camping facility, but to create a place for all people who want to access the river for kayaking, rafting, fishing or just to be there.

So, if you see a few signs on gates, and the odd character wandering about with a chainsaw, don't be alarmed, we're your friends, and we're busy.

Hugh Canard

A new rodeo move -

the Unintendo.

QUARRYING THE CLARENCE

Paul Macey, 27 August 1998

Take one scenic river and several big bulldozers and what do you get? Tranzrail's resource consent to remove 1.9 million cubic metres of rock from the lower Clarence and tributaries.

Tranzrail needs a large volume of rock to construct a breakwater for their new ferry terminal at Clifford Bay. They already have consent to use rock from another site, Stirling Creek, but for some reason, they are also applying to use rock from the Clarence. The proposed quarrying site is the 5km above the main road bridge across the Clarence. The proposal describes taking rock from an island, and up stream of the island from the true left bank of the river, and from two side streams, the Miller and the Wharekiri.

In the 1991 River survey kayakers rated the Clarence river the 9th most important river, and the most important river to kayakers that is not protected by a conservation order. This section of river is a bouncy grade 2-3 with lots of continuous, bouldery rapids. The section from the end of the gorge is often done as a day trip, but also features as a highlight at the end of a unique multi-day trip, suitable for beginner to intermediate paddlers. After 180km through wilderness, with lots of grade 1 and 2 water, this final section is an exhilarating finish.

The exact effects of the proposed quarrying are basically unknown. What is certain is that there would be disruption for 4 to 6 years, the period for which the consent is being requested. The extraction would involve large trucks crossing the river, diggers in the riverbed, and flows being diverted away from the activity. Tranzrail have proposed ideas for a safety plan, such as warning signs upstream, and a free-phone number for people to advise of their

While Tranzrail have said they will rehabilitate excavated areas to re-create rapids, there has been no investigation or research into whether this is feasible.

intentions. Truck drivers would also be warned to look give way to other river users when crossing.

While Tranzrail have also said they will rehabilitate excavated areas to re-create rapids, there has been no investigation or research into whether this is feasible. It is possible that a flood could wipe out any new channels. Another concern is that the larger boulders may be removed, leaving only smaller rocks. This would obviously affect the rapids.

Ripping up a riverbed goes against the purpose of the NZRCA: "...to preserve New Zealand's whitewater resources..." The NZRCA, Hawkes Bay Canoe Club, Whitewater Canoe Club, University of Canterbury Canoe Club, Marlborough Canoe Club, and the Otago Canoe and Kayak Club, have opposed the application.

Submissions from canoeists have had an impact on the Canterbury Regional Council, who has asked Tranzrail to consult with the NZRCA. An informal meeting was held between the planners, engineering consultants, Geoff Price from the Whitewater Club, and Paul Macey. This was informative in terms of their application, but little came of it otherwise.

Sarah McRae will be presenting the NZRCA submission in person at Kaikoura, backed up by expert evidence from Hugh Canard and Doug Rankin, and Geoff Price will present the Whitewater Canoe Club's submission. And being in Kaikoura they may even pop in a trip down the river (Golden Rule #1: Always turn up to a hearing with your boat - who needs briefcases?)

Watch New Zealand Canoeing and your newspapers for the results of the hearing.



Setting out on the Clarence - a great multi-day trip that offers something for beginners and experienced paddlers alike.

Photo: Paul Macey



News in brief

continued from page 3

World Rodeo Champs

New Zealand will host of the 1998 World Rodeo Championships. The competition will be held at Ngaawaparua December 3-6.

For more details contact the Freestyle Committee on NZFKC@clear.net.nz

PILGRAMAGE TO THE RIVER GODS!

We are planning a party.
It is going to be a big party.

WHEN: 26-27th Sept

WHERE: Jollybrook, Hurunui River, Canterbury.

WHY: why not when we will have

a slalom course, an amateur competitions, a big bonfire, BBQ, Beer, demo boats including all the summers new designs and a fine river with many many play holes to play in and a big party on Saturday night.

Contacts: T.C

tch24@student.canterbury.ac.nz

DAVE.C

dac66@student.canterbury.ac.nz

See the ad on page 14.

Dagger and Perception Merge

Atlanta, 6/26/98

Perception Inc. and Dagger Canoe Co., long-term competitors and category leaders in the paddlesport industry, have been acquired by WaterMark, a newly formed company based in Atlanta.

Dagger and Perception will operate as separate divisions of the new company. Joe Pulliam, president of Dagger, said

"This bold move in acquiring two rivals and letting them remain competitors with significant new resources is good news for dealers and consumers. It will mean better new products and focus on increased participation.

Forestry get-ins

This may be old news to some but officially you are 'supposed to' have a permit to access the Jeffs Joy/Mid section run on the Rangitaiki. Seems the forestry owners Carter Holt are cracking down on this. It's more like OSH cracking down on the forestry owners than the forestry owners cracking down on on paddlers. It seems OSH may target the forestry owners if anything happens to us on the river.

For permits call 07 3462082

More news on page 14

BOOKS ON CANOEING

We specialise in outdoor books and we have a comprehensive coverage of books on kayaking and canoeing. We work by mail order. We'd love to send you our catalogue, and to list you for newsletters on new books.

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131 - 135 Abel Smith St, Wellington
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Email: wdamier@ibm.net

☐ Please send me your catalogue

☐ List me for updates

My name _____

Address _____

Classifieds

continued from page 4

WANTED

The NZRCA needs a copy of Microsoft Word 6.0 and Excel 5.0 for Windows 3.1.

Please contact the NZRCA or Paul Macey (phone 03-3792276, email childhealth@xtra.co.nz, or address 1/328 Bealey Ave, Christchurch.

I'm after 2 K2's at a reasonable price to take my kids canoeing. Any types considered - the more versatile the better.

If anyone knows of any for sale, just about anywhere in NZ., I'm interested. Alan Meredith
04 234 8732 evenings
04 498 9168 days
alan.meredith@xtra.co.nz

Fifteen Minutes at Clarks Fork, Yellowstone

Mick Hopkinson

15 minutes, give or take. Not long! Long enough to shower and shave, or bath the kid, or check the oil and water in the car, sit down with a coffee and the newspaper or drink a slow contemplative beer.

But given the wrong circumstances 15 minutes can be a lifetime. Its long enough to feel nearly the whole gamut of human emotion:- excitement, fear, anticipation, shock, numbness, guilt, stress, hope, resignation, despair, grief, sadness, amazement, elation, joy, relief..

Day 3 on the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone, a gripping class five kayak expedition in the Beartooth wilderness of Wyoming. Deliberation Corner, the penultimate named rapid in a sea of hard rapids. I opt to take the photos and watch the other three make the lines first. I ran the middle drop here a little over enthusiastically two years ago and landed on a rock, finishing off one of my already degenerating spinal discs.

Peter comes first, all concentration and technique and hits the perfect line over the fifteen foot fall on river right. He pulls a few hard strokes and then relief..he's in the eddy. He joins me to take photos. We are at the opposite end of the spectrum. He's done the hard move and I still haven't decided whether I'm even going to try.

Mike comes next. He's the veteran of a half dozen runs down here. He has it wired. I hold my camera and point it at river right. Wrong, wrong, wrong! There's Mike up against the buffer wave on the rock above the big drop. He's moving backwards right to left. He's missed the crucial eddy and is about to run the narrow boilly waterfall on the left side of the giant mid stream boulder. I watch with morbid fascination. He looks over his shoulder. Its too far away to see his eyes. He plunges over the drop and I press the camera button. Then he's gone. He never makes it to the bottom of the fall. Vanished, no Mike...no boat, no paddle.

We're stunned.

I reach for my watch, attached to the shoulder of my lifejacket. Its old, only four functions but strangely its already set to STOP WATCH. I press the start button and go back to staring. Jamie is with us now. After a minute I caution him and Peter that its probably a resuscitation job. Fragmented first aid lectures come to mind:- A..B..C.. 2 quick breaths... how many compressions?? The stop watch is now the only thing still working....

We stare, immobile.

Two minutes and twenty seconds on the watch and a purple flash. Mike's kayak appears and heads off through the boiling foam into the maw of the next drop. We leave it. Not important now. I tell Peter to get back in his boat. If Mike comes out now he will be unconscious or dead. I walk slowly back upstream surmounting the granite boulders with their interspersed leg braking crevasses, carefully and methodically. Jamie and I stand on a flat rock and look across the top of the drop. The huge boulder that splits the river appears as a long humpback. There is a small crack at this end but no still water next to it. All thoughts of paddling or swimming to the rock evaporate as I realise my chances of joining Mike are about 99%.

Time to think/feel. Downstream Peter is holding his head in his hands. He too has had friends die before his eyes. Jamie is crying. I, paradoxically, am feeling relieved. I was vaguely contemplating trying the left line to avoid the back breaking run down the right side. It could have been me in there. I've got a child! My son's face floats in front of me. He's all happiness because he just managed to stand up and take a few steps. Guilt follows close by. That's Mike in there. What am I going to say to Brittany, his girlfriend. My God we're going to have to paddle out and leave his body in there. The Sheriff....The local Search and Rescue Team....Ha!! with all my rigging mates from "Survival of the Fittest" it would take half a day to rig a Tyrolean over the fall..Then what... poking around in the falls with a grappling hook.... Shit, Olaf and Goose and the team from Idaho Falls are behind us. Mike will have been in there for two days when they arrive. I come out of the thought world and take a few photos of the drop... easier to explain what happened with a few pictures.

Jamie and I start building a cairn. We're going to leave a message for other teams:- **DO NOT RUN THE LEFT SIDE.** Should we mention the body in the drop???

Suddenly fifteen feet down from the drop Mike is there. White helmet, yellow lifejacket, head UP.....arms waving. I stop the watch 13:57. I start

*Two minutes and
twenty seconds.
If Mike comes out
now he will be
unconscious or
dead.*

Continued on the next page

Fifteen Minutes *continued*

screaming at Peter "He's alive, he's alive" Peter can't hear me but from where he's sitting he can look straight in to the ghosts face.

Mike flushes down towards the next drop and for a micro second hangs up on a submerged rock. Oh God don't let him get pinned now!! Its another fifteen footer but with two thirds of the river going down it. He disappears and then pops up swimming. He neatly makes the tiny eddy on river right I had been vaguely worried about making in my kayak! Peter runs the drop and eddies out. He hugs Mike.

Jamie and I head upstream. He opts to portage "Mike's Drop" but I'm wired and decide to run it. It was a lot of hard work to get this far and besides portaging is gruelling and I want to get down to Mike quickly. I run the first drop cleanly and make the eddy Mike missed. Deep breath, thread through the rocks and over the drop. Its big enough to close my eyes. I land upright and make the eddy river right. One more drop... backender..screwup..roll. Join Mike. Still in control. Give him a big hug. Check him out. Shoe size 12! He's lost his bootees. Peter is eight and a half, I'm a nine, Jamie is a 6!! Mike is still at the bottom of this 1000 ft. deep canyon with no boat and no shoes. I think about cutting the toes off my boots so he can walk out.

Meanwhile Mike tells his story, amazingly calmly for a man back from the dead. He'd been sieved through the fall into a narrow slot between the cliff and the boulder, just room to stand chest deep on his boat

when he wriggled out of it, surrounded by rock and water but in an air space. Behind him the slot tapered to nothing and in front of him the wall consisted of the underside of the waterfall and a series of jammed chockstones over which the water ran. His boat sank out from under him and he had two attempts at squeezing out over the chockstone in front of him. Both times he ended up being recycled back into the slot, battered and scared. At one point he had to take his helmet off because it jammed against a chockstone and held him under. He eventually bridged higher but his hands were shaking so badly that he struggled to fasten the chin strap again. What went through his mind? Life, love, the pursuit of happiness?? His story. But I was amazed that he said that at one moment he was thinking of us poor guys, thinking he was dead!!

He finally psyched up for another attempt and shoved himself down into the blackness at the bottom of his little room. He made it into the full force of the jet of water and bounced down through the boulder sieve and flushed up into the green/white water and life.

Peter heads downstream looking for Mike's boat. I run the last drop of Deliberation Corner and Mike walks to the bottom of it where he once again jumps in. I pick him up and we stern deck carry through a couple of easier rapids until we find Peter, grinning, on the left bank in a granite alcove. He's just pulled Mike's battered but unpunctured boat out of a recirculating eddy and he's busy reassembling the breakdown paddle from the back of Mike's boat.

Only the "Leap of Faith" to go, a blind and intimidating 15 footer that's much easier after you have run it. Surprisingly Mike goes first. He's calm that man!

One long last portage around Charlie Thomas's Falls (another stirring tale of survival against all odds). Then we are home and free and all ALIVE.

The river flushes out into the desert and we change in the sun. We drive off to the local bar and gas station. A woman in a truck shouts to us "You been down the Clarks Fork?"

"Yeah"

"I live up there.....You come from the other side?"

We perk up! The other sidehmmmmm!

"You should have been here in April. It was really WILD then".







We all burst out laughing and crack the beers. Yeah we're only August men.

Real men come in April!

New Zealand Kayak School

Based in Murchison, on the Buller river

Courses include:

-  **Skills** - Introductory, Intermediate, Advanced
-  **NZRCA / NZOIA Instructor Training**
-  **River Safety**  **River Rescue**
-  **Gear rentals**
-  **Paddle USA - guided tours**

Or design your own course!

For course dates, or just for fun check out our web site:
www.sharplink.com/kayak/index.htm

For more information contact:

Janette Kear, 2 Kruse Place, Christchurch

Phone / fax: 03 352 5786

Email: kayaks@xtra.co.nz or nzkayakschool@compuserve.com

TESTING OUT THE TEKAPO

Paul Macey

July 1st was a gorgeous sunny day, with the typical Mackenzie Country wind. A perfect day to commission the Tekapo Slalom, and a number of kayakers were there for the occasion. The aim was to test the course, to make sure that the features were as desired, and that the course was stable at 60 cumecs.

The course is about 1km downstream from Lake Tekapo. A graded track from the back of the village leads down some river terraces to the site, where there are a few pine trees and places to park. A green toilet is well hidden amongst some bushes. There were a couple of very big yellow trucks (grown-ups' Tonka toys) and a winding channel in the ground lined with rocks. Bigger boulders sat in the channel at a few strategic locations, although they looked pretty small.

After a safety briefing, we walked up and waited for the water to arrive. The plan was to have flows of 20, 30, 40, 60 and 80 cumecs for an hour each, evaluating the course at each level. So, down came 20 cumecs; ever seen a river flowing bank to bank, with dry river bed 5 metres ahead? Once the level had stabilised, we jumped into our boats and went down to the first rapid, a wave with recirculating eddies either side. The wave was nice, but a tad shallow. The rest of the course was good for slalom, but not much to play on. At this stage I was concerned that it "hadn't worked."

30 cumecs sorted that out! The wave at the top turned into a superb play hole, the sort that you can stay in sideways all day, surf out the front, or pop of whenever you want. Ah, bliss! 40 cumecs improved matters by making the hole a tad deeper, and the ride a bit rougher, although less sticky. Lots of fun, and potential for multiple retendo-y moves. Unfortunately 40 cumecs was chewing the course up a bit, cutting up some of the corners. At 40 cumecs the last third of the course was essentially a raging torrent, with only small eddies. Concerned that the course might be damaged further, the project manager opted against putting 60 cumecs down, much to the disappointment of the paddlers. However, the two key features were there: the guts of a good slalom course, and a good rodeo spot.

Once a river is lost, it is better to have something than nothing

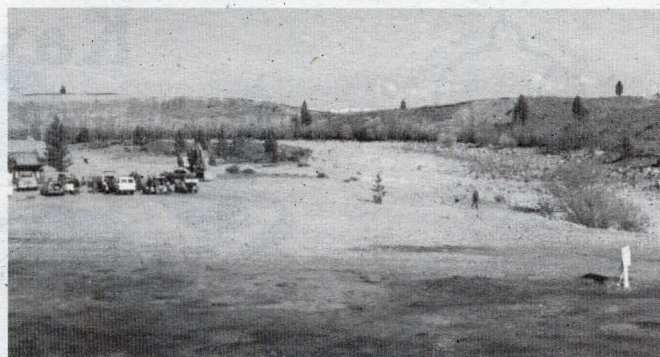


... and just add water. Brad Williamson tries out the hole.
Photos: Tony Ward-Holmes

60 cumecs; 30 cumecs or less is standard. The main issue now is stabilising the course so that 60 cumecs can go through with damaging it. All in all, it will be great asset for kayakers. Congratulations must go to the canoeing association representatives who negotiated the original funding from ECNZ, and to the members of the Tekapo Whitewater Trust who have stuck at it over the years.

An artificial course cannot compensate for the loss of a river, but once a river is lost, it is better to have something than nothing. More than ever, a strong national canoeing association is essential to represent the interests of kayakers.

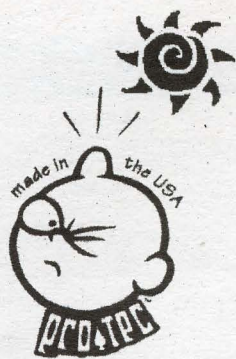
The course will be officially opened on Labour weekend.



For a great time kayaking take one dry riverbed...

At the debriefing, the paddlers came up with several suggestions to improve the course by shifting rocks to add bigger and more defined eddies, and also to allow the river to spill up banks and cut corners, as opposed to trying to constrain the water. 60 cumecs down a 10 metre wide channel really cranks! The top wave / hole was not as planned, so they were going to move some rocks. The wave will shift back and be easier to get on, and it will also be easier for spectators to see paddlers on the wave. It was certainly valuable to have the paddlers there to give feedback.

I believe the final course will be a world standard slalom and rodeo site. Very few other slalom sites have



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TAKING ON THE TAKAPOTAHU - 12/13 October 1996

Craig Peerless and Rob Worlledge

The Takaputahi River is the biggest tributary of the Motu River. This kayak trip had been some time in the planning and had an aura about it as I had not heard of anyone kayaking it within at least fourteen years.

Apart from information received by an Opotiki local who had "Lilo'd it", the only person who was able to shed some real light on it was Noel Rusden, a rafter, who said that we should expect a Grade 4 river with a Grade 6 rapid at the bottom of Boulder Mile.

Bryce & I received this information just as we were leaving lunchtime Friday. I decided to invest \$24.00 in a club Overflow and take the Acrobat off the roof!

A strong team of four Gisborne paddlers, four paddlers from Hawkes Bay and one from Opotiki assembled at Tirohanga on Friday night ready to take on the "Taka" the next day.

Three paddlers from Auckland were due to fly in by private plane first thing in the morning. One of them was a mate of Tomo's from Gisborne and the other two were mates of his. Mark from Opotiki joined the team late on the Friday night. He was a mate of our host for the night who was a mate of Craig's! About this time I started getting an itchy neck.

This happens when I paddle with paddlers of unknown abilities on unknown rivers, especially as remote as the Takaputahi.

A 5.30 a.m. start in the dark from our overnight sleep in the garage and its on with breakfast and packing while Craig disappears to the grass airstrip to pick up the Auckland contingent.

The cloud is down and it's still drizzling so they'd better be good. We were packed and waiting, an hour lost at the beginning is an hour you haven't got at the end. Craig's back, no sign, they either never made it off the ground or fell out of the sky, either way we can't wait.

Saturday morning we drove to the put in at Rawea, nine paddlers crammed into Scott's double cab builders truck. It was raining and had been for a couple of days and the river appeared to be up a bit but still reasonably clear and not flooding.

We left out overnight gear on Scott's truck to be helicoptered into the Managakiri camp site. From the put in we paddled for an

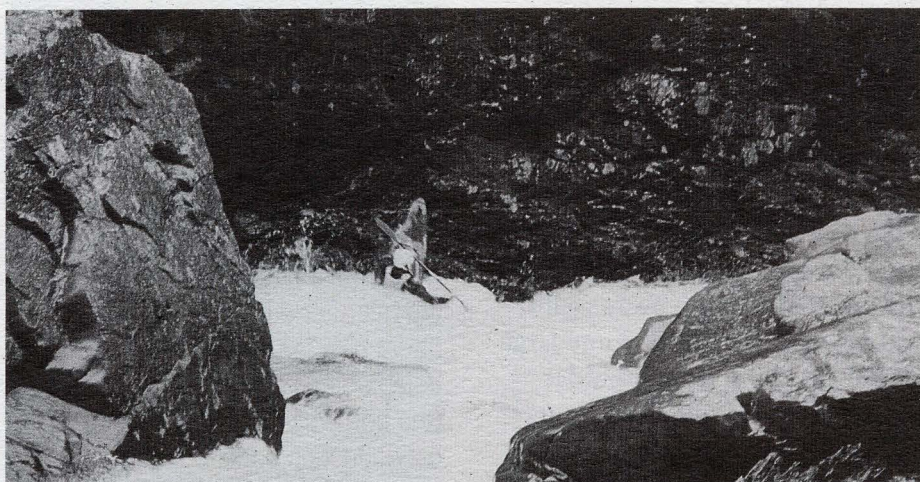
hour down a really pretty gorge before we heard the sounds of thundering water, and rounding a corner we saw the river dropping steeply away into a Grade 4 rapid.

I'd been chaffing at the bit watching Stu whooping away in Pat's Acrobat 270 while I'd left mine at home and was paddling this

slug, mumble, mumble. After gopiong from nice Grade 2 to gnarly, Grade 4 in one breath I was glad of my conservative nature on "new stuff". We hopped out to survey the scene. Vertical canyon walls of hard black rock wet, mossy and foreboding. Overhanging native bush, dim light, and a jumble of sharp edged rock stretching 150 metres then disappearing round the corner. A 4m high rock obscures what is obviously the 2m drop mentioned in the guide book, but what about the rest of it? It's a mess!

Scott reckons he can see a line and gets ready to see if he is right, good on ya, Scott! He's virtually soloing as it's almost impossible to get to that side if he bites the biscuit. Winding it up he disappears from view over the drop, reappearing in a more vertical position moments later, gets that under control, hits the small gap next to the wall and hangs a hard right above a jumble of tombstones to hit a spit sized eddy behind a rock mid-stream. Quick breather and turn round to hit the next metre high drop

*A large boil was
foaming where
the water was
hitting the tree.
It was
impassable.*



Taking time to play on the Takaputahi. Photo: Rob Worlledge

Takapotahi

continued from previous page

on the angle, bounce up in the air (must be a rock there, thanks for that Scott) and turns back to hit a thin two boat eddy at the top of the next bit, whatever that is.

There is no ready portage and standing with my throwbag at the ready only works for the first few paddlers. Stu comes out of the big drop vertical and rock splats the wall. Warren does an involuntary 360 between the drops but gets it round

in time. Tomo's paddling old technology, a dancer, going well until the last crucial move, gets washed backwards onto three rocks and vertically pins backwards, looks bad. Shout to Craig that I need help and swim across to the next rock to get closer with a line. Get my face out of the water and look up and he's off and swimming for any place out of the flow, his Dancer wants to go it alone! That does it, it's too risky a line, there's no real portage but I'm portaging anyway. Returning to Craig, he says its our turn now, right! Yeah, right, anything you say, Craig. Damn peer pressure. Tomo's been yanked across the river on the end of a line by Bryce and Warren and his runaway boat picked up by Stu while he was exploring the next bit out front.

The line goes well, the Overflow stable under pressure and I arrive at the top of the next bit. Craig missed the breakout at the top and decides to take the fast survey option, no idea what happened to him but no ones screaming! Can't see a thing over my shoulder but Bryce is

pointing to an imaginary point on the lip and Warren is making wave motions with his hand, aha! Wouldn't like to be first down here but trust the team and go for it, reasonably straight forward, three or four holes to break through and a sloping Rimu log to miss. Mark tried a limbo move under the log, glad he came out, I

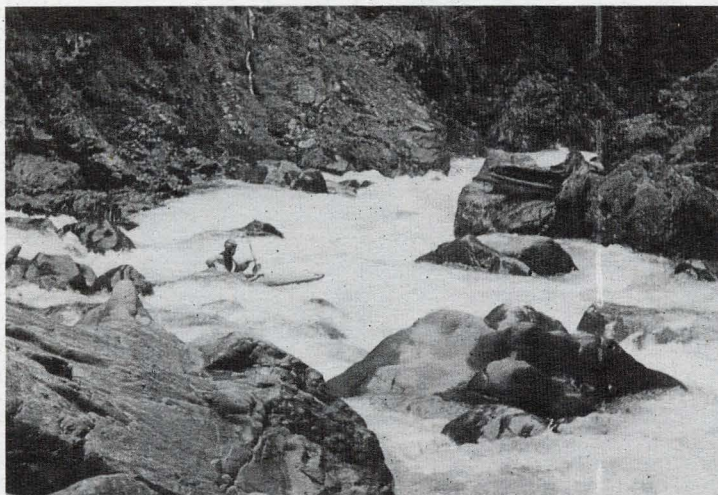


Photo: Rob Worlledge

wasn't looking forward to going in after him.

Having negotiated this rapid we paddled on toward Boulder mile with the river dropping steeply away before us, the cloud cover starting to lift and the Urewera bush displayed in all its glory.

We stopped for lunch and our chopper dropped in after dropping our gear at the hut to say that three paddlers from Auckland were on the water behind us and their gear had been taken in as well. The pilot thought at least one of them didn't look that flash and had some concerns. They'd been delayed by the weather but had decided to carry on anyway getting on the water about midday. We weighed the new information and decided to carry on.

After another hours paddling the river started to drop away again and we saw the first of some large boulders - the start of Boulder Mile. It took us about an hour and a half to paddle through Boulder Mile which consisted mainly of Grade 3+ to 4 rapids of continuous drop/pool variety and

very exciting.

The real surprise lay at the bottom of Boulder Mile where we saw the sight all paddlers fear the most. A Grade 6 unrunnable rapid consisting of the river funneled into a two metre drop and immediately after 2 large trees wedged between two rocks and totally obstructing the river. A large boil was foaming where the water was hitting the tree. It was impassable. To attempt to paddle this was likely to be fatal. The choice was walk it or die. We all chose to walk.

While surveying the unrunnable rapid my thoughts went back to the three paddlers behind us and the severe time pressure they would be under. They would have got on the water about noon and at least one paddler was thought to be in over his head. You could only see the log jam from a bank scout and if they were bombing rapids unseen then we could easily end up with a fatality here. I called a Time Out to go over options and we decided we had to keep ourselves safe first, and we could not imperil ourselves by waiting when we did not know what obstacles still lay ahead or what their present status was. Spring got into his first aid kit for paper to leave the others a note.

From here we it took about 50 minutes to the Motu confluence and a further hour downstream to the Mangakiri Hut for the night, arriving about 6 p.m..

We rigged up a throw bag and boat arrangement to attract the attention of the others, in case they didn't know where they were. As far as we knew they didn't have maps, and it would have been a shame to miss the hut after a hard days paddle. We had a nice tea, with the luxury of being able to fly all the goodies in (the port was for medicinal purposes only). Just on dark Tomo and Scott went down the stream to see if anyone had turned up and a short while later we heard a very relieved

yodel drifting up from the main river. They'd had all sort of epics and the note left at the unrunnable rapid, as it turned out, was a lifesaver. The lead paddler was lining up the rapid when one of the group noticed the note on a stick in the riverbank. One paddler especially was in way over his head and as he put it "nearly drowned several times." He was mentally and physically stuffed.

After a restful night we paddled out through the lower Gorge and onto a jet boat pick up in the vicinity of the White Rapid.

In short the Takaputahi is a great paddle and one that doesn't get paddled often. To avoid major drama I suggest it is left to itself whilst flooding.

We were :

Poverty Bay Kayak Club - Craig Peerless, Scott Bothwell, Spring Thompson, Tomo Nicholson

Hawkes Bay Canoe Club and Associates - Rob Worlledge, Bryce Harkness, Warren Hales, Stu Cameron.

Opotiki - Mark Thompson

Auckland - Stubsie, Strings and Bruiser

Have you been on a great trip recently?

Got any great photos?

If so, write it up, and send them in!

River Safety Courses

Mark Planner, NZRCA Safety Officer



Even victims need training !

You don't have to be an expert paddler to benefit from a NZRCA approved River Safety course. A trained victim will get themselves rescued more quickly, and more safely, if they know how to assist their rescuer. The rescuer will be safer as well.

A River Safety course is also good training for people who are starting to lead their own trips, or be responsible for less skilled paddlers on the river. Become a better buddy.

If you are interested in doing a River Safety course the good news is that the NZRCA can provide a subsidy for approved courses, using funds provided through the Water Safety Council. The first step is to contact your club and find out if they are planning to run a course. Alternatively contact the Safety Officer or Education Officer of the NZRCA.

A brief outline of the course content is set out below. Also here are dates for two commercially provided courses that we know about. We'll advertise any other courses that we get told about in the next issue.

Summary of Course Content

Day 1: Introduction & theory

Personal equipment and rescue gear currently available in NZ.
Boat and equipment design.
Rescue organisation. Videos.

Day 1: Practical on flat water

Basic knots and pulley systems, throwbagging, use of various towline systems. Practice of these and boat to boat rescues on flat water.

Day 2: Practical on grade 2 water

Throwbagging and rope work, boat based rescues, swimming, river crossing, all in moving water.

Commercial courses we know about:

South Island

New Zealand Kayak School, Murchison.
Instructor: Mick Hopkinson
Enquiries to Janette Kear, Phone/fax 03 352 5786
November 7/8
February 6/7

North Island

Wilderness Adventures
Instructor: Ian Ruthven
Enquiries to Ian Ruthven, Phone/fax 07 378 4514
December 19/20
February 6/7 April 2/4

"I know why I like kayaking but I have no idea why you like it".

- Corruption of ancient Japanese saying.

Pilgrimage to the River Gods



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When: *26-27 September*

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Contacts: *www.uccc.canterbury.ac.nz/totheriver.html*

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For prices and details contact Geoff Havill

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Stafford Loop Road

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Hokitika

Phone: 03 755 8151

Cell: 025 224 3652



Calendar Dates

24/25/26 Oct
Tekapo Opening

21st 22nd Nov
Surf Rodeo Auckland
Contact Fergs Kayaks 09 529 2230

3-6 Dec
Fuljames 98 International rodeo

12 Dec 98
Kaituna Challenge Rodeo/Race
Contact Donald 07 3624222 or prijon@iconz.co.nz

13/27 Dec
Wairoa flow days

31st Dec 98
Buller Rodeo 98

3,10,17,24,31 January
Wairoa flow days

5-6 Feb
Fuljames rodeo Summer 99 Demo day and free rodeo coaching
Donald 07 3624222 or prijon@iconz.co.nz

7,14,21,28 Feb Wairoa flow days

13 March
Kaituna rodeo Demo day and Free rodeo coaching
Donald 07 3624222 or prijon@iconz.co.nz

7,14,21,28 Mar
Wairoa flow days

News in brief

continued from page 6

Forestry speed signs

If you see a speed sign in a Carter Holt forest (Rangitaiki, Tarawera) OBEY it. Seems they are employing security guards with radar guns and note pads and taking the license plates of offenders and sending them a 1 off warning. It is a very terse warning and basically says you will be trespassing if caught a second time. They have snapped 2 HCC vehicles.

New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association

2 Kruse Place, Redwood, Christchurch 5

Phone/Fax: (03) 352 5786

Email: kayaks@xtra.co.nz

Individual Membership Form

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Please make cheques out to "New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association," and post with this form to the address at the top of the page.

Thank you for your support!

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Our purpose is to preserve New Zealand's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

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