



New Zealand Canoeing 00.2

Canoeist of the Year

Hugh Canard, Patron

Ron Wastney was nominated Canoeist of the Year at this year's Annual General Meeting.

Hugh Canard writes of how Ron's contribution to kayaking deserves wider recognition...

"Ron is one of those people whose passion for canoeing manifests itself in many ways. Ron instructs, organises races, lobbies DOC, the local council, attends long boring hearings and leads river trips. His interest in the sport is expressed through the enjoyment of others.

I first met Ron when he turned up at a Conservation Board meeting I was chairing. He argued eloquently the case for allowing canoe races on Lake Rotorua in Nelson Lakes National Park. Later when I joined the Nelson Canoe Club, there was Ron again, instructing and coaching

multi sporters. His name appeared in the club's harbour race and river race results. Ron's name came up in council circles as a frequent spokesperson for recreation on our local rivers. Who drove from Nelson to Christchurch in the middle of winter to attend the NZRCA Annual General Meeting? There was Ron again.

Many of us take it for granted that the rivers will always flow free, that someone will push our case to councils and government departments, get up in the dark and hitch up a trailer load of boats and drive to the pool, and write submissions when they would rather be out there paddling.

I think Ron sets an example to all of us who share a love for the outdoors with the simple joy of paddling a boat."



Ron Wastney, in the Coast to Coast. Photo: Paul's Image Centre

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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 around 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 Hugh Canard, Ron Wastney, Robin Rutter-Baumann, Wade Bishop, Robin McNeil, Earth Touch Adventures, Aoraki Polytechnic and the myriad of e-mail 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:

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The deadline for material for the Summer newsletter is 1st November 2000.

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as elected at the 2000 NZRCA AGM

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For more news, images, boat info
and the buy/sell/swap forum, check
out the NZRCA website at:
www.rivers.org.nz

President's Comment

Robin Rutter-Baumann, President

It was a great honour to be voted into Sarah's shoes as President at the AGM. I can but hope I will be as effective as she has been (though I'm sure she'll do better as a Mum than I ever will). Thank you Sarah for agreeing to be Vice President and keeping me in line. Other changes at the AGM include the departure of Ian Logie, Janette Kear and Colin Leitch all of whom worked exceptionally hard this year. Colin and Janette have been Exec members for well over a decade and for their contribution the AGM voted that they become life members of the Association. Janet Nicol of Christchurch is the newest member of the Exec and her role is to oversee both the Safety and Education portfolios (what a woman). Mike Savory has returned to take on the Access portfolio and it's great to have him back. Aside from these changes, the Exec remains the same which means we can continue to function without the down time that occurs with too much upheaval.

The work that gets put in by Exec is amazing and this year we hope to become even more effective by involving more members in working parties on specific tasks. After all, it is your Association and so it's best if you have a good say in what happens. If you want to become involved in any NZRCA matters just drop a line to the person concerned and make an offer.

On the conservation front lots is happening with the Tongariro Power Scheme in the Central Plateau, the Rangitata and Hurunui Rivers in Canterbury and the Arnold River on the West Coast - if you have a special interest in any of these rivers contact Muzz our conservation guru. The Safety and Education area received a fair amount of publicity last year with the spate of drownings and soon we hope to have a report on these for you. Also on the go is the subsidising of River Safety and River Rescue courses - if you would like to get back more than your membership subs in a discount on these courses contact Janet for details. Polly is always on the hunt for newsletter shorts so don't be afraid to put pen to paper and send something to her. Meanwhile, Fi has prepared all our accounts for audit and come up with our first financial projections.

Our biggest project this year will be to improve visibility of the service we provide and to increase member numbers. There's a two fold reason for this; we believe you deserve to know what's happening, especially if you are expected to participate, and secondly fighting resource consents costs big bucks and membership subscriptions are our income.

I had a dream last night about the Mangahao River - it's been the highlight of my early season paddling since I "discovered" it a few years ago. This is simply the best grade 3 / 4 run in the North Island and has a great atmosphere with usually well over a hundred paddlers making it for this twice a year event. The NZRCA have negotiated the spring release for the 28th October this year and a bonus release in Autumn to make up for missing one last year. You just gotta love a sport that still turns you on even after two decades and it's this passion that makes paddling and paddlers so unique.

I believe the best and easiest way to ensure the aims of the NZRCA are met is to tell our kayaking friends about the work that's being done on behalf of all paddlers and invite them to join us in conserving our whitewater future. Later in the season we'll be organising a membership drive with a prize for enrolling the most new members so start softening up your mates now.

Events

Mangahao Release

This Spring's Mangahao Release is on Saturday 28th October, see you there...

Post-Release Party

Saturday 28th October plan to attend a party of all parties at River Valley lodge. Bliss-stick kayaks & River Valley invite paddlers & like minded people to enjoy an evening of dance & merriment until the early hours (2 Bands/DJ.)

The party will be followed by a mass paddle down the Rangitikei gorge the next day. Backup and safety will be provided.

There will be free camping and river access, food, refreshments & lodge accomodation available at the River Valley Lodge. Industry folk welcome to bring along their new toys. Any questions contact Richard 06 3881445 or team@bliss-stick.com

Memorial Rodeo

A fun rodeo in memory of Niamh is planned on the 2nd and 3rd Dec at Full James. More information will be available once sponsors are established, contact Helen Brosnan 07 377 3203 or hbrosnan@taupodc.govt.nz

NZFKC Team Selection Events for Spain 2001

These two events will be held at Full James and the Kaituna. We have still to confirm which event will be on which weekend (waiting to hear back from Mighty River Power) Dates: Sat 20 / Sun 21 Jan 2001 and Sat 3 / Sun 4 Feb 200. Contact Helen Brosnan 07 377 3203 or hbrosnan@taupodc.govt.nz

North Island Resource Consents Project

Wade Bishop

It may come as a surprise to many kayakers that the resource consents projects that gave us the flow releases on rivers such as the Tekapo and Mangahao rivers are still going on. These resource consent related flows resulted from the requirement of the ECNZ State Owned Enterprise to re-apply for all the resource consents, which were previously held by the Electricity Department of the Government. The Resource Management Act (RMA) and Regional Council plans set the process framework for ECNZ to apply for the required resource consents. Oops - I can detect a little bit of boredom setting in, so I'll skip the technical rubbish and give an update on two ongoing projects which may hopefully result in some form of better 'deal' for kayakers.

TONGARIRO POWER DEVELOPMENT (TPD).

The TPD scheme affects a number of key rivers in the central North Island by diverting water from these rivers via the Rangipo and Tokaanu Power Stations. The rivers mostly affected by the TPD are the Tongariro River (upper & lower), the Whakapapa River the Moawhango River, the Whangaehu River and to a lesser extent the Whanganui and the Waihohehu Rivers.

The TPD resource consents project was started way back in 1992, when a publicly elected management group was set up, comprising of representatives from the various interest sectors (e.g. fishers, conservation & recreational). I put my hand up then (to represent amateur recreation) and have been involved ever since.

Initially, the main accomplishment was to overcome the very high degree of mistrust between some of the parties and ECNZ and to build up to an effective working relationship between all those involved. I was amazed to see the degree of bad feeling that there was towards the Tongariro Power Development.

Since 1992 some very interesting scientific results have been produced relating to complex issues such as blue duck habitat and the dynamics of natural silt movements down the rivers. For example, the best river flow for fish is about the level of the current flow on the lower Tongariro River. I think however, that those doing the actual fishing prefer a little more water in the river. These types of studies are an essential mechanism for finding the correct solutions to the negative environmental effects the scheme causes.

To date during the project, several unexpected 'spanners' have impeded the progress of the project. The volcanic eruptions of Mt Ruapehu caused major delays to research studying the blue duck, trout and silt movement on the Tongariro River. The split of ECNZ and the emergence of Genesis Power Ltd as the party who now owns the TPD caused another 12 month delay while positions within the new company were filled.

As far as kayaking is concerned, several professionally produced environmental effect reports have researched canoeing and rafting concerns. These reports have effectively supported everything that kayakers already knew - namely that the TPD scheme has had a negative affect on kayakers' usage of the Upper Tongariro River, the Moawhango River and the Whakapapa River and has had a partial effect on the Whangaehu River and Lower Tongariro River. It should however be acknowledged that the TPD scheme has had some positive effects, such as improving access to the rivers (it used to be quite a 'bush-bash' into the Tongariro River sections).

So where are things at? Genesis Power Ltd have stated that the data gathering phase (i.e. the formal studies) is nearly completed. The next step is that Genesis intend to contact the numerous interest sectors individually to discuss and negotiate towards solutions. A specific set of the desired outcomes that kayakers are seeking was forwarded to the project back in 1996 - these desired outcomes will fundamentally form the basis for the forthcoming

discussions with Genesis. It should however be recognized that the TPD scheme does not really hold a lot of scope for greatly improving the kayaking opportunities on the rivers affected by the scheme. This is because:

1. The rivers in their natural form generally had quite low levels during the summer months.
2. There is very little water storage capability within the scheme that can be used to provide controlled releases (effectively only the Moawhango Dam).
3. The TPD scheme structures and other flow regime restrictions don't favour short duration releases for recreational usage.
4. Blue duck have a higher environmental priority than kayakers, so kayaking is not that desirable on some of the rivers between August and April (and its very cold outside these months - how tough are you?).
5. Diverse recreational groups (e.g. kayakers and anglers) can want different water flows. It must be acknowledged that the lower Tongariro River is a world class trout fishing river.

Anyway, I'm still committed to having:

- Some form of pre-programmed recreational releases down the upper Tongariro River and maybe the Moawhango River.
- An improved flow regime on the lower Tongariro River.
- A better 'deal' on the Whakapapa River, or some form of compensation for the effective loss of this river.

The intention is for this project to be completed within the next 12 months.

Been on an awesome trip lately?

Got some great photos?

Write it up and send it in!

Deadline for Summer Issue

1 November 2000

WAIKATO RIVER RESOURCE CONSENTS PROJECT

Unlike the TPD, the consents renewal program for the Waikato river has only just started (well it's a couple of years old). The problem with this project is that ECNZ was just starting up the 'show', when the government decided to split ECNZ. The new company called Mighty River Power (great name) now owns all the Waikato River hydro power stations. MRP have however recognized the importance of getting the Waikato River resource consents application in by 2001, so a specific project team has been set up within MRP to get the project underway.

Like the TPD, the Waikato River resource consents project is currently in the data gathering stage. This initially involves MRP contacting the various interest sectors to identify all the issues relating to the effects of the scheme. The intention is for this phase to be completed by the end of 2000. The Waikato power scheme control gates at Taupo effectively govern the river flows over the upper portions of the Waikato River. The main upper river sections utilised by kayakers are:

- Cherry Island to Reids Farm (easy river section).
- Reids Farm (slalom course and beginners practice/training area).
- Huka Falls (extreme whitewater rapid).
- Aratiatia to Ngaawapurua Rapid (easy/medium difficulty river section).
- Ngaawapurua Rapids (medium difficulty rapid used extensively for 'play' boating, training & competitions).

The key issues relating to the control of river flows over these sections are the ability to have set pre-programmed, stable and guaranteed river flows for specific events, the ability to easily obtain river flow information, and the provision of river flows for casual and commercial usage.

I would like to see some 'controls' formulated to offset any negative effects the control gates could have on the current recreational popularity of the upper Waikato River. The main issues in the resource consents project as they affect kayakers are:

1. The release of water down the Aratiatia Rapids
Water is released down the Aratiatia Rapids daily as a public attraction. The rapids are considered extreme whitewater, but have now been kayaked numerous times. The main issue relating to the Aratiatia Rapids would be having releases continue from the dam to enable kayaking to occur (& for people like me to look at & wonder who could be so crazy). The Aratiatia Rapids would probably currently be amongst the hardest section of rapids which have been kayaked within NZ. Even though probably less than 20 people have successfully kayaked the Aratiatia Rapids, I feel that extreme whitewater sections are an essential component of the sport of kayaking. The lower quarter of the rapids (i.e. below the power station access bridge) are however kayaked on a more regular basis and are now part of the Taupo kayaking package.

2. The river flows below the Karapiro Dam.
The river from the Karapiro Power Station is an easy river section which is used by kayakers for casual usage, training and specific events. The main issue on this river section would be the ability to have set and stable river flows for competition events (e.g. the Karapiro to Hamilton race).

3. The Arapuni Power Station 'man made' feature.
The structure below the Arapuni power station which is designed to control back pressure on the power station turbines creates a significant whitewater feature. The whitewater hydraulic formed by the structure varies considerably and can in some conditions be quite mean looking (i.e. a very big hole). However, I think that this feature does potentially have similar usage characteristics as the very popular Ngaawapurua Rapids (i.e. could be an excellent 'play spot').

The issues relating to this feature are:

- Aspects which affect the whitewater characteristics created by the feature (e.g. water flows from the power station, changes to the structure, level of Lake Karapiro). These need to be investigated to 'map' any potential usage.

- Access to the feature if it becomes used by kayakers.
- Safety (most man-made features can be lethal and this one is no exception).

If anybody has any experience or opinions on this feature I would like to hear from you.

4. The destruction of the original river gorges, rapids and environs.

The 8 dams on the Waikato River system were progressively commissioned between 1929 and 1970. These dams now effectively form a continuous 150 kilometre lake from Aratiatia to Karapiro. The river drops nearly 300 metres over this section. The only significant whitewater sections left on the Waikato River are the Huka Falls and the Ngaawapurua Rapids (as well as the bypassed Aratiatia rapids).

The original Waikato River traversed through some spectacular gorges and falls that were once called the North Island's Grand Canyon. Remaining photos suggest that the original river gorge contained an interesting range of whitewater including some very significant rapids.

To approach this tricky issue in a constructive manner, I think the resource consents project needs to first quantify what affect the dams did have on the original environment. The project also needs advice from bodies such as the Regional Council to determine to what degree this issue falls within scope for the resource consents project to consider. I'm sure that because the dams are already considered a 'given' within the Regional Council Plan, I cannot see the dams being pulled down. However, I feel that some form of acknowledgment needs to happen to compensate for the negative effect that the dams have had. I don't think having eight world class rowing lakes quite compensates for the loss of what was a very wild and scenic river.

There are other issues like safety and erosion, but that is where we're at - nowhere really apart from defining the basic issues and getting our 'finger in the pie'. With these things there is no gain without a little pain (and I must admit that attending TPD management group meetings for eight years is no picnic).

If anybody has any suggestions, advice or queries please feel free to call me:

Wade Bishop
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or e-mail: wade.bishop@telecom.co.nz

The original
Waikato River
traversed
through some
spectacular
gorges and falls
that were once
called the North
Island's Grand
Canyon.

Paddling in California

Polly Miller

Paddling in the States... the legends of rivers filled with snowmelt, air temperatures of around 30 degrees, amazing desert and wilderness and lots and lots of grade IV. Inspired by a group of friends whose stories were very vivid five years after their mission, a small group us in Christchurch began to plan. Fiona was finishing her job as a site engineer, Kate routinely got masses of holidays from working at Outward Bound, Steffan decided it was time for the big OE, and I persuaded my new boss of three weeks that I should be allowed to take May and June off to go paddling. Awesome...

Fi and Steffan bravely opted to go to Los Angeles a week prior to Kate and myself, with the aim of buying a vehicle. E-mails flew back and forth, van vs car vs American vs Japanese. Even with the help of Paul and Katherine Macey in LA, buying the Dodge Caravan was an epic. Kate and I arrived to help with the next problem – in California every vehicle needs a SMOG. A bit like a warrant in concept, but based on the car's emissions instead of the condition of the body and tires, our Dodge had failed its SMOG. A week and \$1000US later, we were the proud owners of a legal van.

The Kern is the closest river to LA and was the logical first place to go – for us to get into being in our boats and paddle with friends. A desert valley with lots of excellent free



Polly Miller on the Kern River. Photo: Kate Downer

camping, it was a great introduction to some of the differences that Californian paddling has to offer. Flows are reported in cubic feet per second (cfs) (cumecs=cfs/30). We discovered that although the water was freezing snowmelt, the air was so warm and dry you got out of your boat to warm up on the bank – what a concept! I found the continuous nature of the river really challenging, others found the volume their biggest problem.



The van fits under a Sequoia tree. Photo: Kate Downer

After another impressive car epic, we purchased a new van and drove up to Sequoia National Park. The feeling of being on holiday (rather than in a bad documentary of good and bad car garages in Southern California) finally crept up on us. We stood under sequoia trees and got our problems into perspective under these 2000+ year old red giants. And finally, with no expectations and taking it one day at a time, we went paddling...

On the Merced. This was the fastest, hardest water I had ever done, and it was with some apprehension that I got

on with Steffan (Kate and Fi wisely decided to sit out this one). I had a feeling of being sucked into the rapid, there were no eddies to catch and it was very much a "read it and run it" river. Some of the holes were just huge and it was only a matter of time before I ended up in one. After my first ever big water swim (very educational I'm sure) I elected to scout more and walk a few of the more daunting rapids, an approach that paid off.

From the Merced we cruised up to the Kings, where we found our first person-made wave. Slow, smooth and totally fun, we spent all afternoon on a 40 degree day, staying wet and trying those flat spins. Bliss. Working our way up the Sierra Nevadas, the next major highlight was Yosemite National Park. I guess we were pretty blasé about the scenery we'd see so far, and I was beginning to appreciate how special the scenery in New Zealand really is. But Yosemite is a bit like Milford, the sheer walls of granite make it quite unlike anything else I've ever seen.

From Yosemite we went to meet some friends at the American River. The team jumped on the Chamberlain Falls run of the North Fork of the American, for me one of the most fun sections of the trip. A new friend took us home to his hot tub, his family, and his mother's American cooking, which was pretty fabulous. We spent another memorable day on the South fork of the Yuba – the local hangout for those who like to spend their weekends in the nude.



Waking up on top of Half Dome in Yosemite National Park. Photo: Polly Miller

The Lower Tuolumne was a wilderness run that had been highly recommended by so many paddlers we backtracked to paddle it. It was also memorable in that it was running at 6000cfs – we got to it at high flow. At 18 miles it was our longest run, and we covered it in six hours, including breaks and playing. Steffan finally found that his Innazone 220 had limits, and Kate totally took over the role of Most Confident Paddler.

Asking round before we left, we heard from reputable sources that we should spend as much time as possible in northern California. Paddling the Trinity on the way, we finally made it to the Cal Salmon, and that most prestigious of kayak schools, Otter Bar. Peter Kettering showed us round the amenities and we did our best to hold our mouths closed.

The Cal Salmon is a very special and gorgeous place to paddle. There is lots of variety in the runs you can do – we got there as it was all dropping but there was an easy two weeks of fun to be had in the area. A highlight for me was the Main Canyon run, a trip where not only are the rapids called things like “Cascade Falls” and “Freight Train” but unlike names on other runs, these names seemed wholly appropriate. The river had left huge logs fifteen metres above the current water level, so we could imagine what it was like in a high water year. The Salmon also boasts the very best destination play spot I’ve ever seen, a powerful wave-hole which we played in till we were too tired to roll up.

Unfortunately Kate had to leave us, so it was just the three of us who went adventuring further north to Idaho. More miles (it’s a long way through Nevada) more mountains and much more water. You need more than a week to explore Idaho! However, that’s all we had before heading back to experience the delights of San Francisco.

Some suggestions resulting from accumulated team experience...

1. Don’t buy a vehicle without a SMOG
2. Don’t buy an old US vehicle
3. Shop around for insurance
4. Buy duct tape at Costco
5. Do buy a new skirt – the kevlar ones are amazing
6. Do take a shorty top – although the water is cold the air is toasty
7. Do visit national parks. Walk to the top of Half Dome in Yosemite for the total experience.
8. Do take some time to sightsee in San Francisco



Steffan plays on the Lower Tuolumne. Photo: Kate Downer



Soaking in an Idaho Hot Tub. Photo: Polly Miller

President's Confessions

Robin Rutter-Baumann, President

I must confess I've been a bit of a sloth the last few months and although I have had a couple of visits to the surf and swimming pool I've not been on a river for ages. It's been a rather mild winter and while many paddlers have made the most of it by paddling right through an even greater number have been like me - hibernating and waiting expectantly on the warmer weather.

There's a wee trap for paddlers of the hibernating variety and that's that our memories are still filled with the performance we put on at the end of last season while our ability to actually do it has diminished. So I thought I'd take the chance to discuss some of what we might need to do to get back up to speed and in to the flow again.

First there's physical fitness - there is a direct correlation between this our safety and our enjoyment. One of the most common paddling injuries is tendonitis and the sure fire way to get it is to grip your paddle really tight and paddle hard - a bit of anxiety will facilitate the vice-like grip. Trying to keep up with the lads and lassies who didn't sit out the winter will have you aching in no time. If it happens tendonitis will bugger up the next few trips so you'll fall even further behind so need to do more to catch up - see it's a vicious cycle. If it starts to hurt stop, relax, and try to open your top hand on each stroke, see your doctor if pain persists and consider a paddle with less blade offset. I'm lucky in never having had tendonitis but this next paragraph is based on experience.

The most likely source injury may also be fitness related - at the end of the day are you expecting to be tired or full of beans ("Dumb question!" you might say "Of course I'll be tired that way I know I've had a good day."). If you plan to be tired, ask yourself if anybody will be reliant on you to provide safety at the end of the trip both on and off the river. Are your mates trusting you to drive them home safely? We all can make mistakes when we're tired and not seeing tiredness as a problem is the biggest mistake of all, especially at cruising speed with four sleeping passengers in the car on Sunday night as you head home. Remember cars hurt kayakers more than rivers. After the first few trips my ability to be alert at the end of the day improves but I plan to ask others to share the driving in the meantime (and maybe have a coffee enroute).

Aside from us being fit it pays to take the time to have a check of how well our gear has survived winter. The other day while surfing I had to do my first rescue since May and found the carabina on my cow-tail had seized (fixed now thanks to CRC). This prompted me to check the rest of my gear when I got home - when did you last look in your rescue bag? Check your throw rope for wear? Look at the rivets holding the strap on your helmet? Check and condition the seals on your drytop, etc?? Most of my gear checked out fine except for my folding saw (I bought a new blade to replace the rusty one) and my knife (taken to Mr. Minit and made razor sharp for \$10). By the way another good reason to check gear now is that there is still enough time to make those "oh so subtle" hints to Santa and thus avoid more undies and socks on the 25th.

On the subject of rescues, I've been taking my throw rope out for a walk with the dog and doing some target practice on driftwood at the beach. And yesterday when I got home I set up a Z-drag to pull the van up the

driveway. Often these skills only get used in earnest, a bit like swimming in rapids. My last swim (18 months ago on the Shotover) almost stuffed me and I haven't practised since - odd isn't it that something that needs to be done well under pressure is often left 'til it's too late. We practice rolling 'til it's automatic, why not prepare for when things going wrong?

One final preparatory step for having a great season is to make sure I've got my relationships sorted. To fully enjoy myself on the water I've learnt that I need to have peace of mind and this is helped along by my partner and my friends knowing the extent of my love for them. Nothing stuffs up a days boating more than an unfinished dispute at home that leaps up and bites me as I come in the door.

What if someone I care about dies when I'm boating and I still have things to tell him or her? What if they die and I never told them their buoyancy aid was dangerous or what they mean to me? I have missed my chances before, I won't let it happen again. Last summer 4 paddlers died in New Zealand and that's way too many. Let's all do our bit to make sure that there are no regrets this summer. Keep safe and paddle hard.

Riverview Holiday Park, Murchison

Discount Rates for paddlers (excluding non-paddling partners)

Tent Sites - \$4.50 per person per
nite

Cabins - \$11 per bed per nite

Tourist Flat - \$20 pp per night
(\$15 pp for groups 4+)

Communal kitchens, shower blocks,
showers take a \$2 coin.

10 am check out time, prior ar-
rangement for later leaving possible,
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Write: P O Box 140 Murchison

Phone/Fax: 03 5239 591

E-mail: Riverview.Hp@xtra.co.nz

That mighty river...

Matthew Bennett

The day had dawned overcast and damp. Apart from this conditions were perfect... if you could ignore the fact that the water level was a bit low. I looked over to Biggles as he donned his legendary helmet and checked in. "Are you ready for this then Biggles me lad?" With a nod of his head and a flash of his smile he silently slipped into the water below.

Ahead of us lay 5kms of treacherous water. Flowing at the steady gradient of 1% with well over 20 cumecs it would take at least an hour to descend. To the best of our knowledge none of the rapids have been portaged, (although plenty swum!) This was due either to the dense West Coast farm bramble, or where this was absent, the marauding cattle beast, which a dairy farmer would describe as having healthy bowel movements. We were only making it harder by putting on at 4pm on an autumn day!

Biggles quickly cut through an eddy behind the bridge piling, allowing me to take the lead. On this constantly flowing water we were at the first obstacle within a minute. A large flat rock, (about the size of a hearthrug), sitting just above the water. I hit it on the up stream side hard and attempted a rock 360. Unfortunately my timing was out and I found myself beached and broadsided on it. In the confusion that followed Biggles managed to grab my tail and with the assistance of luck freed me from my precarious position. I made a mental note to thank him at the next opportunity that I got. I didn't know when this was to be!

Round the next corner we found a surprise. Biggles was intently studying the confluence, a place where if we weren't careful we might be able to get great whoopies and pivot turns. In his nervous scouting however he had failed to notice the water that he was traveling on and didn't punch through a wave. Instead it surfed him and he was forced to paddle hard so that he could cut under some tree branches.

It was a close call and served as a good reminder to both of us to be attentive, least we relax and start 'playboating' on the this serious river.


Beyond the confluence the river increases in volume by about 5% and the gradient remains constant. Regular holes, eddies and pourovers exist that provided both friendly rests and hair-raising experiences. Our biggest skill was to identify which was which!

At the end of this difficult piece of water was the grand finale. A rapid so large and so complicated it makes drain water salute it. We even had to make a choice of going left or right!

I now sit in my room and remember the name of this formidable river. It was (and probably still is) the that intrepid West Coast run, the Arnold.

The Arnold is a classic beginners run close to Lake Brunner on the West Coast, and is currently under threat from hydro power. *NZ Canoeing* will provide more information as it becomes available.

gnarly primo wicked
it's going off
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Membership Update

Polly Miller

In the past year, the NZRCA has made big leaps toward promoting itself amongst the whitewater community both nationally and internationally. The NZRCA has had a presence at major kayaking events in 1999 such as the Mangahao release, the World Championships in Taupo and at Buller Fest. The NZRCA executive has recognised the need for a strategy to increase awareness of the very active and important role we play in river conservation and access, and has developed a banner, posters and t-shirts with this in mind.

Individual membership is increasing slowly, but there has been an overall drop in membership numbers compared to last year. This is largely due to the fact that clubs are registering fewer members. The NZRCA executive has discussed in recent meetings the need for the promotion of more tangible benefits for members. This is in addition to the essential but less quantifiable work the association does on conservation, safety, education and access issues.

Benefits for members include a 20% discount on the purchase of Graham Charles book *New Zealand Whitewater*, subsidised River Safety and River Rescue courses for NZRCA members up to \$45 per person, and river information, conservation and access updates, great images and a buy/sell/swap forum available on the website: www.rivers.org.nz

In the coming year, the NZRCA is looking to develop new initiatives to increase the input of the paddling community into our work on promoting enjoyable and safe kayaking on New Zealand rivers. If you have any suggestions regarding membership, please contact Chris Sinclair: membership@rivers.org.nz

Letters

Attention Kayakers Using Homer Hut

Dear Polly

Over recent years we have observed increasing canoeing activity in the Upper Hollyford River. Given the nature of the river, this can hardly be surprising. Arising from the increased activity, more canoeists are using our Club's Homer Hut, which lies off the road near the head of the Hollyford Valley. While we welcome canoeists to use our hut, we do ask that everyone contributes to its upkeep by paying their hut fees (\$14.00 per person per night, \$7.00 for day use only).

Those camping near the hut are expected to pay for day use of the hut- as there are other areas better suited to camping, by implication the only reason someone would camp by the hut is to use the facilities there. When one realises that our total revenue from the hut is only a few thousand dollars a year, it is clear that fees barely cover fuel supply and maintenance costs. Those canoeists who have still to get around to paying their fees from last summer can send their cheques to the Southland Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club, POBox 965, Invercargill.

Wishing your readers good paddling in the coming months

Robin McNeill,
Secretary, SouthlandSection of the New Zealand Alpine Club

Earth Touch Adventures Ltd.

Demand for high quality instruction in white water and sea kayaking has arisen out of an unprecedented explosion in the NZ kayaking scene in recent years, according to Brett Whiteley, director of a new kayaking school based in Christchurch.

Earth Touch Adventures Ltd offers a wide range of courses from complete beginner to advanced level, as well as guided river trips, rolling clinics and training for the competitors among us. "What makes Earth Touch Adventures unique is the wide variety of courses that cater for all levels of paddler whether the chosen discipline is white-water, sea kayaking or multisport" says Brett, a past NZCA Instruction and Safety officer.

NZRCA-NZOIA qualified instructors run the courses, using the latest high quality equipment. A specific course for women adds a new dimension to the usual instruction courses that also include river, sea rescue and instructor training workshops. Brett says, "If your needs aren't met in the listed courses or trips, let us know and we'll do everything we can to provide what you're looking for."

For those of us who would like to venture further afield and test our skills on more remote and technical rivers, Earth Touch Adventures provides guided trips all over the South Island, particularly on the West Coast. The grade of the trip obviously depends on the ability of each paddler, ranging from one day to a week in duration. We aim to provide a well-rounded trip with excellent food and plenty of fun!

With "Minimum Impact, Maximum Appreciation, Maximum Learning" as the company's motto, it would seem Earth Touch Adventures is taking kayaking to the max. Feel free to call us at any time for further information on our courses or to discuss your specific requirements. Brett Whitely, Director, Earth Touch Adventures Ltd, Ph: 03 377 1177, Mob: 025 572 285 E-mail: earthtouchadventures@clear.net.nz

New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association

PO Box 284 Wellington

Phone: 03 348 9301

E-mail: nzrca@rivers.org.nz

Individual Membership Form

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If you wish to provide additional support for our work in Conservation, Access, Safety and Education, we will gratefully accept any donation:

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Membership is \$30.00 for one year from the date we receive your form, and includes three issues of *NZ Canoeing* in Spring, Summer and Autumn.

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Thank you for your support!

New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association Inc.

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

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