

155 Waka Report March 2009

Since 2006 - Gail Ambler has been coaching people how to paddle using the two OC6 (six man) waka, and the two OC2 (double) waka owned by 155 based at Kissing Point, Terenga Paraoa (Whangarei Harbour). Over that time, huge numbers (estimated to be over 200) people have experienced the sport of wakaama. Gail Ambler has had assistance from other experienced paddlers during this time but she has consistently turned up from Monday – Thursday at 5pm to take people paddling. Most nights all through the year, both waka are used and sometimes, particularly in summer, people wait to take turns in the two waka available for use.

Wakaama is generally known as a highly competitive sport, for this reason it can be difficult for new, inexperienced people to start paddling. Many paddlers tell stories of literally having to ‘sit on the bank/beach and watch’ whilst waiting for a seat in a waka to be vacant. What happens at Kissing Point is the opposite approach to this, with the philosophy of openly encouraging new people to take up the sport of paddling.

Milestones

- Over the years several people have learned the basics of paddling at Kissing Point, some have become so keen on wakaama they have wanted to further develop in the sport and have gone on to join other clubs. One of these paddlers became a world champion in 2008 and is now a renowned international paddler from Whangarei. All owe their beginnings in paddling to waka based at Kissing Point utilising the 155 waka.
- We have been contacted from the Brain Injury Society to help teach clients wakaama – we were open to be able to introduce people with disabilities an alternative.
- We have been contacted by Womens' Refuge and Whangarei Youth Workers but unfortunately they didn't get back to us as they were both running national hui in Whangarei. Time did not permit for it to happen.
- Business house regattas were organised due to the social paddlers. We have run Business House regattas have been running for three years on the Hatea River opposite the swimming pools. The businesses that have participated are : ACC, Housing NZ, Ngati Hine Health, Manaia PHO, Steel Tube & Plumbing, Inland Revenue and Whangarei Aquatic Centre.
- ACC Whangarei participates in their national regatta held in Auckland each year. They have been winners for two consecutive years and this year were second placed. They train for three months in the year as the event gets closer. They had two teams competing and all were new to paddling. One waka was set aside for them and they paddled in two separate timeslots, or early mornings before work. To be noted they had no one that was interested in training them.
- Towards the end of 2007 a group of men and women, all beginner paddlers from Kissing Point, decided they wanted to compete in a race but didn't want to join another club, they wanted to stay with the people they started paddling with at Kissing Point. There is one club in Whangarei that people could join – they were situated at Ngunguru. Due to the high costs of travel and petrol, time away from whanau and the competitiveness of experienced paddlers, it suited our makeup to start a club at Kissing Point. The National Kaihoe o Aotearoa requires all people who paddle at regional or national regattas to be registered with a wakaama club. Several paddlers were also hockey players that belonged to the Parihaka Sports Club. The whakapapa of this club suited wakaama and could support and nurture all people.
- In April 2008 two teams competed in the Tauranga waka fest, a 25km marathon paddle and again in 2009.
- 2008 – one mixed team competed at the Omaha Regatta, did not complete the race due to rough conditions and inadequate waka (not 155).
- In January 2009 Parihaka took four teams (24 paddlers) to the National Sprint Club Championships held at Lake Karapiro. Of the paddlers that attended 18 are social paddlers from Kissing Point.

- April 2009 – a group of mixed social paddlers entered a 25km race at Raglan for the first time. One of the women paddler's in this crew is 60 years old – this is the only sport she has every competed in. To be noted these paddlers were all social paddlers that wanted to give it a go.
- The Golden Master Womens team (age 55+) won two silver medals. All six paddlers were social paddlers from Kissing Point. These women are now in training to attend and compete for the Worlds next year. Two have no purchased their own single waka since January this year. All training was done at Kissing Point using 155 waka. As much as we always say we use waka supplied by 155 Community Trust the media as e know do not write what we want them to.
- Five members competed in the National singles races, two made finals, and one semi-finals. All the training was done at Kissing Point using the two 155 waka. One paddler did not have access to a single so would train in the double waka with a tyre on the front.
- During the time the club formed and teams trained for nationals there was a commitment to make sure the waka were still available for social paddlers. During the peak summer up to 30 people were using the waka in an evening. Having the two 2-man waka available for use gave a extra dimension to the training's.
- The club has organised and run whanau days where people have been encouraged to bring their families to enjoy wakaama. Our next event will be in partnership with SKIP and CYF Everyday Communities.
- The club has attended regatta's over December and transported waka to Tutukaka and Opononi over the last year. First time social paddlers have attended their first races. Whether they were to paddle at Nationals or not we were able to introduce paddlers to racing and mix the experienced with the new paddlers.
- We are hosting **Hoe Matariki** at Onerahi and our theme is about whanau participating. We have races that can accommodate for paddlers at all levels and most importantly our novice or whanau teams. (Race details are being finalised).
- Eight members from Kissing Point have just completed a Hoe Making class. We are currently working with Northtec to extend the learning's into maintenance of how & waka which is looking promising. Our intention is to take all waka off the water during either July or August – which are usually the months of bad weather.

Parihaka Sports Club have become an Incorporated Society (a requirement of the National Kaihoe o Aotearoa). The Chairperson is Richard Pehi, Secretary Ngaire Rae, Treasurer Tania Moriarty. There are wakaama delegates and hockey delegates on the committee. The constitution of Parihaka states a clear commitment to support all people to enjoy and participate in the sport of wakaama.

Schools

Parihaka have been assisting several school's i.e.

- Whangarei Boys High School – had two teams and were training over the warmer months. We provided lifejackets, paddlers and coaches.
- Whangarei Girls High School now have three teams – they are all social paddlers and they come down on a Thursday afternoon at 4pm to learn ad have fun.
- Tikipunga High School – we are part of the TikiPrde community hub – it has been identified from the community that they need more activities for their youth. Parihaka is already looking at helping with wakaama as a means of helping with youth in that area.
- Kamo Christian College – physical education teacher approached us and wanted to know if we he was able to bring his older students to learn. As it was coming into winter we have suggested warmer months as we teach everyone how to capsize safely.
- Kamo High School & Te Kura Kaupapa Maori o Te Rawhiti Roa are being looked after by Te Puu Ao which are situated at Tutukaka. We assist when they require help in Whangarei to take students out for practise.
- Otangarei School – have had a whanau day – both Parihaka & Te Puu Ao have assisted to run a successful wananga for them. This was done in Ngunguru.

There is a group of wakaama paddlers across Whangarei that are looking at ways of incorporating wakaama into schools – as we can appreciate that our students have fairly busy lives at school, with sports, kapa haka and studies we try to make it fun before – and at the same time making sure they understand about safety and most importantly the strong kaupapa and etiquette that surrounds its culture.

Social Paddling

Currently Monday and Wednesday are the dedicated ‘social’ paddler nights – this is where a few experienced paddlers in the club go down and take new, beginning paddlers. At these sessions we focus on teaching technique, safety, etiquette and mostly enjoyment. As people progress, and get more serious, they can paddle on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On these days the paddles are longer and more intense (e.g Onerahi wharf 10kms, LollyPop 13kms, Pools 7kms, Frigate ships 6kms). There are two teams training at present for Tauranga waka fest 2009. They use the waka out of the peak times so as not to interfere with other paddlers.

All the people that come have arrived via word of mouth, friends of friends, work mates etc. We would like to promote what we do more but do not have enough resources to cope with more people. The club however does have plans and would like to continue what we do but expand with more waka, paddles, lifejackets, trailer, etc.

155 allowing us to use the waka at Kissing Point is a powerful story of enabling community development. From this generosity and sharing of resources a whole club has formed, which has a kaupapa and values.

The objectives of our club, as stated in the constitution, are:

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the covenant establishing the basis of power sharing partnership and will be the guide of how the Club carries out its work. In seeking to do so, the Club will work according to these aims:

- 1.1 To foster a community where people feel they are valued, supported and able to realize their full potential.
- 1.2 To establish a Club for the enjoyment and pleasure of Whanau, Hapu, Iwi and all users that are in need or marginalized in society.
- 1.3 Promoting and developing strong leadership, smokefree, drugfree and healthy lifestyles;
- 1.4 To provide a forum for the rehabilitation of youth at risk and others wishing to participate and be involved in that forum.
- 1.5 To participate in local, regional, national and international sporting competitions at the discretion of the Club.
- 1.6 To teach and respect all life and etiquette from a Tikanga Maori perspective appropriate to cultural and social development and growth of rangatahi. All organised programmes will be carried out with openness, honesty, humour and above all recognizing that each individual brings skills which can be shared with others or developed.
- 1.7 To teach each sporting culture together with safety requirements of the sport.
- 1.8 To where appropriate, enter into joint ventures or working arrangements with other agencies whose work could assist the purposes of the Club.
- 1.9 To seek, accept and receive donations, subsidies, grants, endowments, gifts and legacies, loans and bequests either in money or in kind or partly in kind for all or any of the purposes and objects of the Committee.
- 1.10 To promote, sponsor, arrange or participate in community activities intended to raise public awareness of the existence and purpose of the Club.

The Future

Part of our obligation of being a club is to organise and hold regular events on the Ngai Kaihoe Events calendar, hence the club has plans to:

- Hold a Hoe Matariki in June 2009, to celebrate Matariki with a mid-winter marathon and short distance paddle.
- Series of 5km and 10km races (which can suit competitive paddlers and non-competitive)
- Increase our resources on waka, paddles
- Train the Trainer – so we are able to give assistance at anytime
- Increase Community Focus and link with Water Safety Awareness

At all times 155 Community House has been acknowledged. A website has been established for the club which has a link for 155 Community House and all business groups that have participated in utilising 155 waka.



Figure 1: "Silver Haired Grannies" medallists



Figure 2: Social paddlers first time nationals



Figure 3: Settingup for 12-man



Figure 4: Capsize drill



Figure 5: Taonga won by ACC 2006 & 2007



Figure 6: Whanau Day 2008



Figure 7: making paddles



Figure 8: Manaia PHO business house



Figure 9: WBHS training