

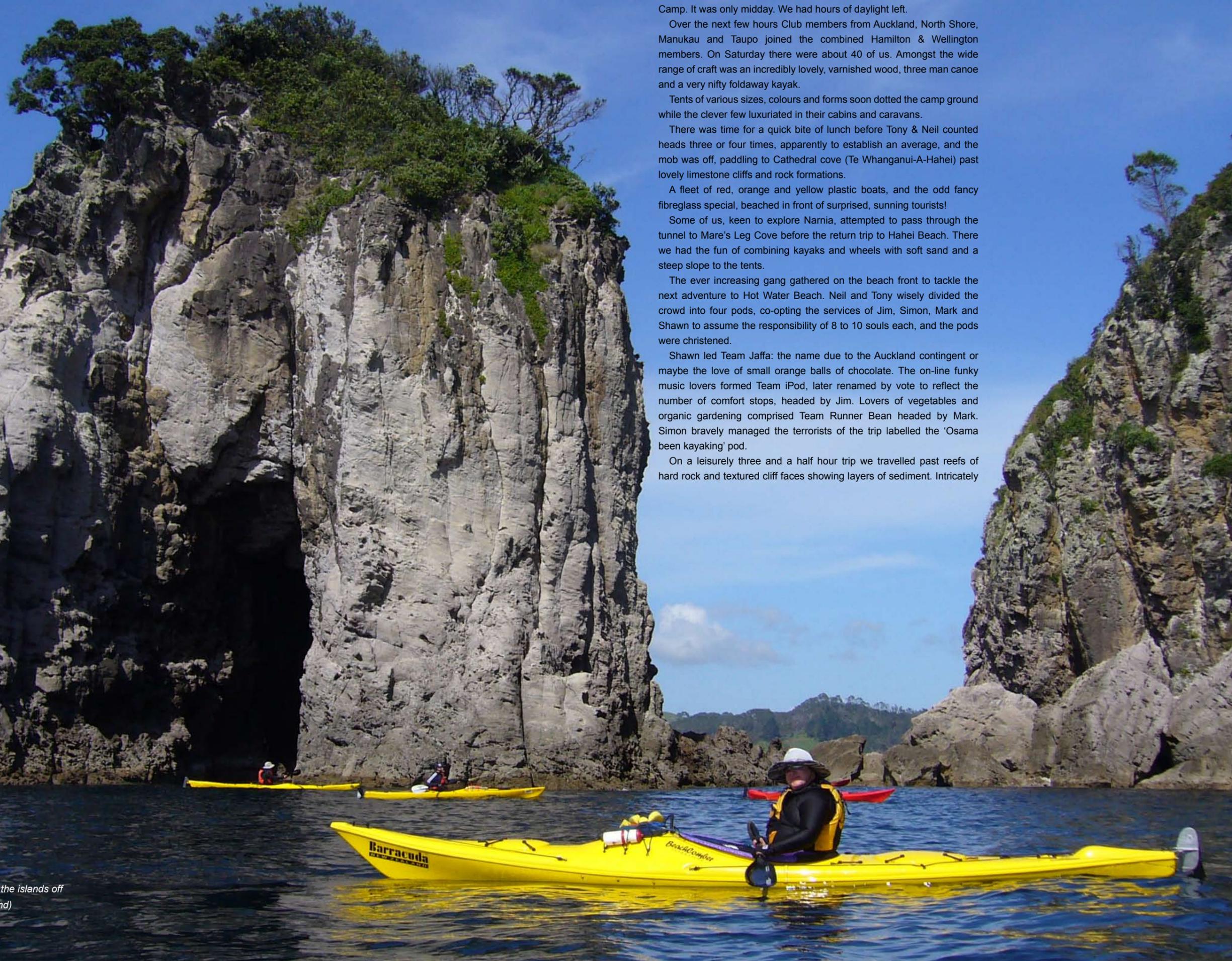
AN ADVENTURE IN COROMANDEL

By Helen Maddox

In response to an earlier invitation to join a Wellington Yakity Yak club trip, the Hamilton club invited the Wellington team to join a trip to the Coromandel.

The word soon spread and many Yakity Yak clubs in the North Island got wind of a great adventure. The promise of sun, white sandy beaches and no wind was too much to ignore.

Bright and early on Thursday morning 18 Wellie clubbers packed up the vans and soon were on the road, reaching Hamilton just on dusk after Navman diversions. A further seven hardy Wellie souls joined the convoy during the evening which brought the total to 25.



Hours were spent exploring, especially around the islands off the coast of Hahei. (Helen Maddox in foreground)

Hamilton Tony had said that the next leg of the trip to Hahei would take 2.5 hours, but little did he know our secret ability to find the longest way to anywhere. We admired lovely countryside, patted or posed with the Paeroa bottle, picked up supplies, and arrived at the Hahei Holiday Camp. It was only midday. We had hours of daylight left.

Over the next few hours Club members from Auckland, North Shore, Manukau and Taupo joined the combined Hamilton & Wellington members. On Saturday there were about 40 of us. Amongst the wide range of craft was an incredibly lovely, varnished wood, three man canoe and a very nifty foldaway kayak.

Tents of various sizes, colours and forms soon dotted the camp ground while the clever few luxuriated in their cabins and caravans.

There was time for a quick bite of lunch before Tony & Neil counted heads three or four times, apparently to establish an average, and the mob was off, paddling to Cathedral cove (Te Whanganui-A-Hahei) past lovely limestone cliffs and rock formations.

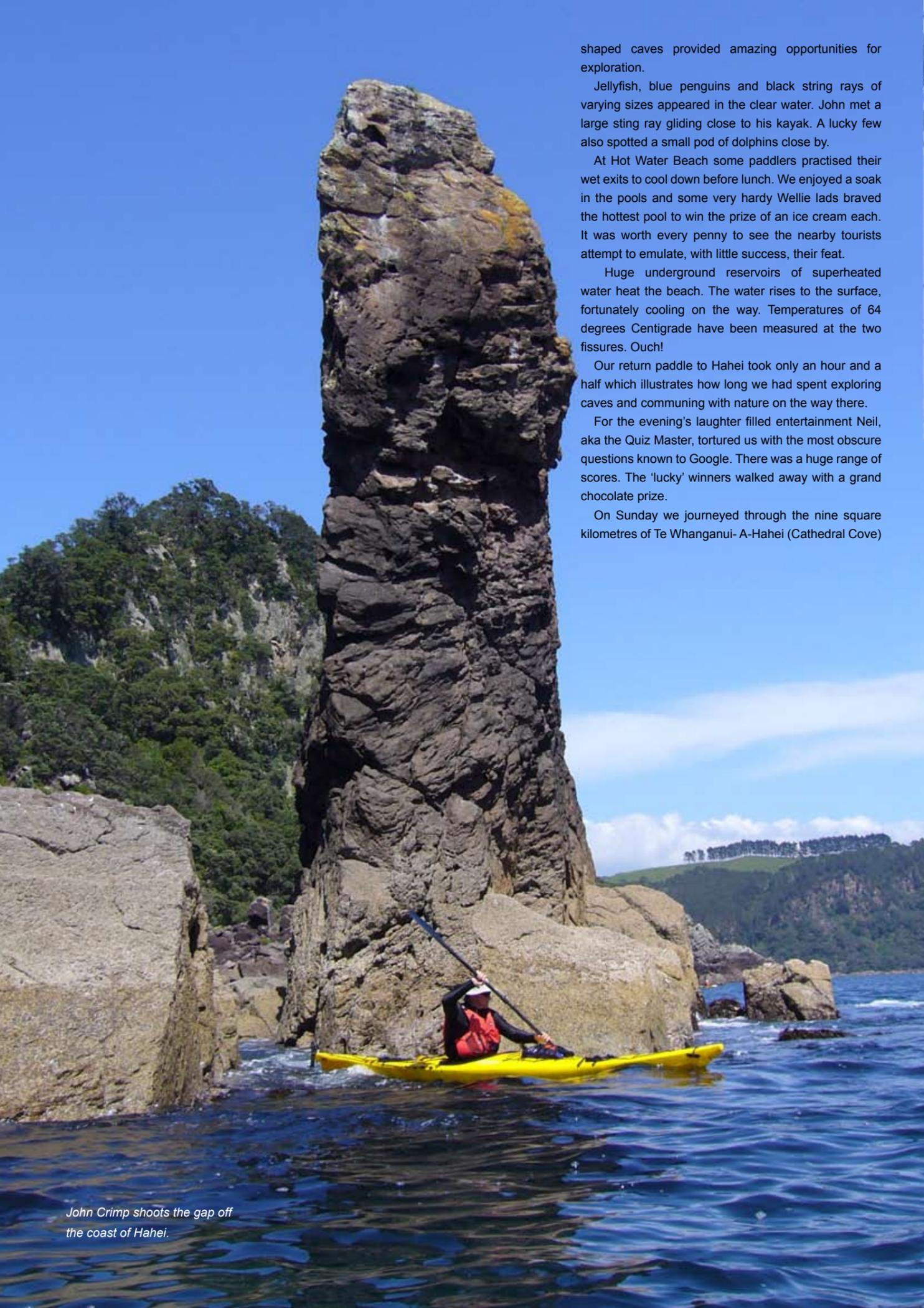
A fleet of red, orange and yellow plastic boats, and the odd fancy fibreglass special, beached in front of surprised, sunning tourists!

Some of us, keen to explore Narnia, attempted to pass through the tunnel to Mare's Leg Cove before the return trip to Hahei Beach. There we had the fun of combining kayaks and wheels with soft sand and a steep slope to the tents.

The ever increasing gang gathered on the beach front to tackle the next adventure to Hot Water Beach. Neil and Tony wisely divided the crowd into four pods, co-opting the services of Jim, Simon, Mark and Shawn to assume the responsibility of 8 to 10 souls each, and the pods were christened.

Shawn led Team Jaffa: the name due to the Auckland contingent or maybe the love of small orange balls of chocolate. The on-line funky music lovers formed Team iPod, later renamed by vote to reflect the number of comfort stops, headed by Jim. Lovers of vegetables and organic gardening comprised Team Runner Bean headed by Mark. Simon bravely managed the terrorists of the trip labelled the 'Osama been kayaking' pod.

On a leisurely three and a half hour trip we travelled past reefs of hard rock and textured cliff faces showing layers of sediment. Intricately



shaped caves provided amazing opportunities for exploration.

Jellyfish, blue penguins and black string rays of varying sizes appeared in the clear water. John met a large sting ray gliding close to his kayak. A lucky few also spotted a small pod of dolphins close by.

At Hot Water Beach some paddlers practised their wet exits to cool down before lunch. We enjoyed a soak in the pools and some very hardy Wellie lads braved the hottest pool to win the prize of an ice cream each. It was worth every penny to see the nearby tourists attempt to emulate, with little success, their feat.

Huge underground reservoirs of superheated water heat the beach. The water rises to the surface, fortunately cooling on the way. Temperatures of 64 degrees Centigrade have been measured at the two fissures. Ouch!

Our return paddle to Hahei took only an hour and a half which illustrates how long we had spent exploring caves and communing with nature on the way there.

For the evening's laughter filled entertainment Neil, aka the Quiz Master, tortured us with the most obscure questions known to Google. There was a huge range of scores. The 'lucky' winners walked away with a grand chocolate prize.

On Sunday we journeyed through the nine square kilometres of Te Whanganui- A-Hahei (Cathedral Cove)

John Crimp shoots the gap off the coast of Hahei.



It was a mottly crew from all parts of the North Island.

Marine Reserve, to Cooks Bay. Keen eyes spotted crayfish in underwater grottos, leaping schools of small silvery fish, dive bombing gannets and shags swimming expertly plus one or two bikinis.

On a low tide we navigated the Purangi River at Cooks Beach and had an opportunity to witness how not to navigate a river in a power boat. Apparently brown water and grit exiting a motor is bad. It was good timing. Tony had just finished warning the pods that motor boats had difficulties in low tides with boat control. I wonder if the ten dollars Tony slipped the boatie was worth the damage, and I'm not sure why the chap on the far side of the river was yelling and waving his arms. Perhaps he was the owner of the boat.

Lunch at Cooks Beach included time for a spot in sun or shade, depending on personal preference, and an opportunity to excel at orienteering to the local dairy for an ice block. The local radio station was running a sun smart promotion.

We were delighted to score a free bottle of sun screen – definitely needed with a daily average temperature of 24 degrees.

Six caffeine devoted lads, who journeyed to sample a fresh brew, then formed Pod Whitianga. Powered by the humble bean, these lads powered back to Hahei in 90 minutes while the rest of us enjoyed a slower, leisurely potter.

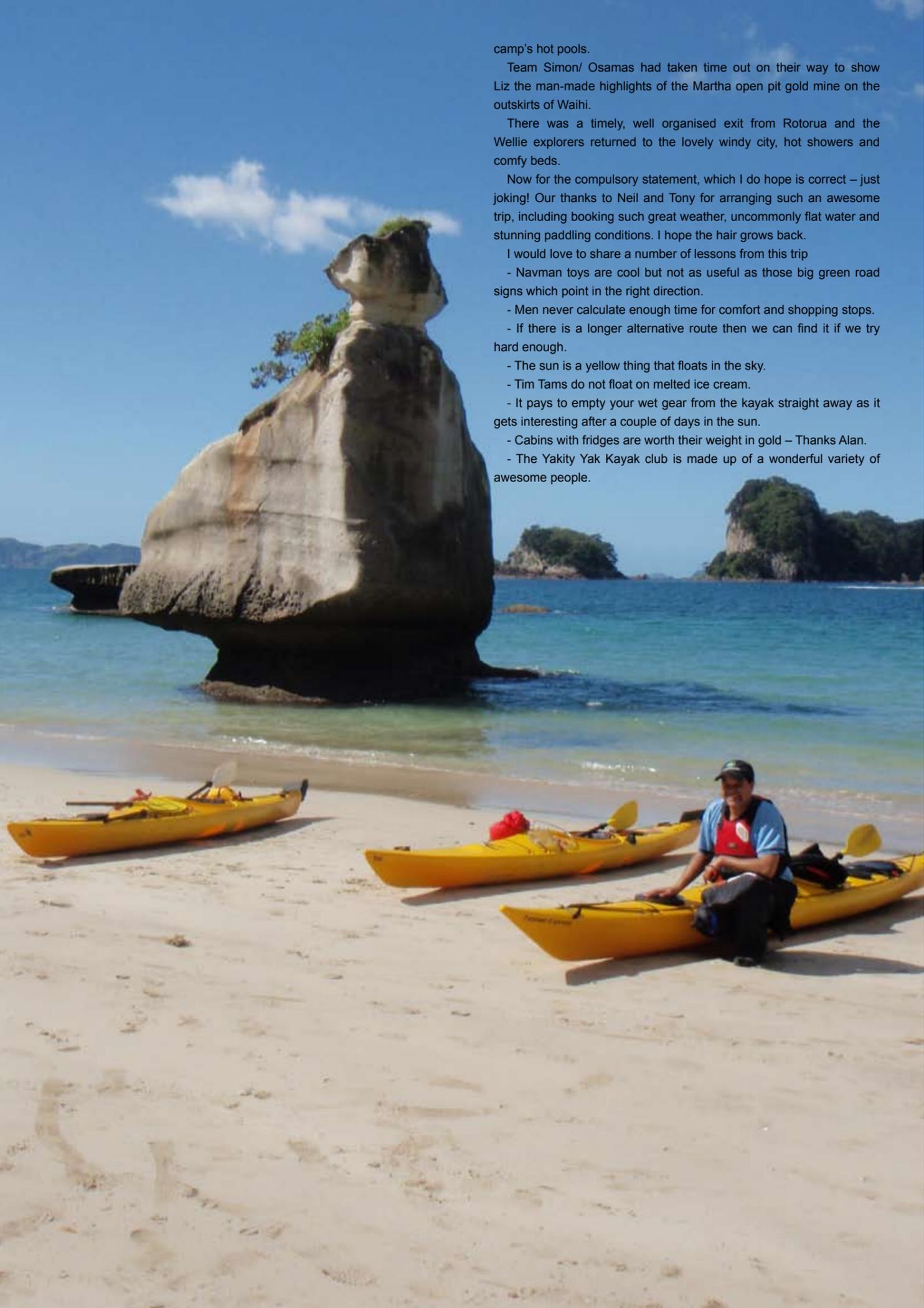


Hahei on a fine and calm Labour weekend.

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camp's hot pools.

Team Simon/ Osamas had taken time out on their way to show Liz the man-made highlights of the Martha open pit gold mine on the outskirts of Waihi.

There was a timely, well organised exit from Rotorua and the Wellie explorers returned to the lovely windy city, hot showers and comfy beds.

Now for the compulsory statement, which I do hope is correct – just joking! Our thanks to Neil and Tony for arranging such an awesome trip, including booking such great weather, uncommonly flat water and stunning paddling conditions. I hope the hair grows back.

I would love to share a number of lessons from this trip

- Navman toys are cool but not as useful as those big green road signs which point in the right direction.
- Men never calculate enough time for comfort and shopping stops.
- If there is a longer alternative route then we can find it if we try hard enough.
- The sun is a yellow thing that floats in the sky.
- Tim Tams do not float on melted ice cream.
- It pays to empty your wet gear from the kayak straight away as it gets interesting after a couple of days in the sun.
- Cabins with fridges are worth their weight in gold – Thanks Alan.
- The Yakity Yak Kayak club is made up of a wonderful variety of awesome people.



Jude Sherning exploring the coast line.



Hahei to Hot Water Beach



Does it get any better than this? Full Moon from Hereheretaura Pa.

A final note to everyone, please check out the trips each of the clubs post on their section of the web site and feel free to join up and join in. It is lovely to meet new people and share experiences. I hope to see you at either the Xmas trip to the Marlborough Sounds (which includes a competition for the best dressed kayak or Christmas costume), and/or the upcoming Abel Tasman trip in January.



Piyush Mistra shoots the gap.

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