

Dacre Cottage Transformation

By Ruth E. Henderson



Captain Ranulph Dacre, sea-captain, adventurer, pioneer of the timber export trade who in 1855 built what we call Dacre Cottage as a farm house, could not have, even in his wildest dreams imagined the use it gets today, especially when Peter Townend, Chairman of the Dacre Cottage Management Committee and founder of Canoe & Kayak puts on his annual Christmas party. It was fun to participate and witness the overnight transformation from historic cottage to party central and back again.

1. On Saturday afternoon, once Pete, family and friends arrived it was all ACTION! Number one priority is a knotty issue, sorting out ropes and tarps.
2. After the afternoon's labour, the boss-man takes the time to put some flowers on the table, and to stop for a chat and wee rest.
3. Locals exercising their horses, selves or dogs check out the changing scene.
4. That day's chores and dinner dishes done, it's "S'mores" time!



5. Next morning ham sliced, spuds and salads underway, it's time to sizzle the snarlers. Kids and Dads – it is all hands on deck. The clock is ticking.



6. At 1100 hrs the first arrivals trickle in – one boat (Carl Brown), then two, three...



7. It turns into an invasion, and there's more on the horizon.



8. Some boats were dressed for the occasion



Yakity Yak Club Trip

9. The momentum and masses build, blankets are spread under the ballooning shade. The food is brought out, queues form, there's plenty for everybody, including cake and pudding.



10. By 1420 hours it's time for a group photo (centre fold) then time to set sail, to beat the outgoing tide. (Miriam and Eric Strickett in their 50th wedding anniversary present). Leaving me and Dacre Cottage once again to the starlight, solitude, and early morning shadows. (Main picture)

To get there launch at any of Auckland's East Coast beaches: Mairangi Bay, Browns Bay with Long Bay being the most obvious choice if wanting only a short paddle of less than 5 km. Note the beach is very tidal.

Alternatively, walk! Park at the end of Haigh Access Road, off East Coast Road, 18 km north of Auckland and follow the track along the Okura River estuary through groves of nikau, pohutukawa and regenerating kauri to Karepiro Bay. It takes about 90 minutes.

See www.dacre.org.nz for the history and more information.

A huge thank you to all of those who helped with the set-up, cooking and clean up. And thank you too, to all that attended. I hope you had a great day.

Cheers

Pete