

Footprints Waipoua & Crossings Hokianga Newsletter #14
October – December 2008

Now there are no more excuses not to experience the Hokianga. Try the famous night walk with Footprints Waipoua, take a guided cruise through history with Crossings Hokianga or do the double whammy from the Bay of Islands with Kings Crossings Hokianga. Whatever the choice, we can GUARANTEE you an experience of a lifetime.

New office hours

Our new office hours are from 10am to 6pm. Please note that we are currently based in the Opononi Resort Hotel.

A visit to Hokianga by Steve Williams

Bill, Tawhiri and Shane, Alex Nathan from Te Roroa and Stephen King from the Waipoua Forest Trust recently hosted Steve Williams (Tiger Woods' caddy) and camera crew at Tane Mahuta. This amazing opportunity was courtesy of Kauri Cliffs 2 million dollar golf tournament The Kiwi challenge featuring Adam Scott, Anthony Kim, Hunter Mahan and Brandt Snedeke, four of the world's top young golfers. The tournament was aired in the US on NBC in November accompanied by footage promoting New Zealand. I would like to commend Kauri Cliffs and The Farm Cape Kidnappers for what I understand was an amazing tournament. What a huge effort it must have been. Many thanks on behalf of Northland and New Zealand tourism operators for a fantastic job and a marketing opportunity of a lifetime.

Launch of Aratapu 'A Sacred Journey'

We recently in conjunction with ICG, Culture North and Waka Taiamai Heritage Journeys launched the new cultural product Aratapu 'A Sacred Journey' on Urupukapuka Island.

We would like to thank all those involved in making sure it was a successful launch. Special mentions to the whanau of Ngati Rahiri, Bishop Ben Te Haara, Labour MP's Shane Jones and Kelvin Davis, Wiremu Wiremu and the waka paddlers (students from the Bay of Islands College), the café, Maori TV, industry colleagues, family and friends for your support.

Behind every new product is a bunch of hard working individuals, so we would like to thank our fabulous guides Hemi and Isaiah, two Culture North regulars and Sharon and ... who are manning our desk in the Maritime Building.

Like every new product we are still finding our way but already we are receiving fantastic feedback like the below.

"Thank you to the staff on Dolphin Seeker. On Saturday the 6th of December our family travelled with your helpful and friendly staff. Also a special thank you to Isaiah (the Maori man) who sang to us and took us on the waka at Urupukapuka Island. He is just AWESOME, his energy and passion is a real asset to your team. He was friendly, funny and very dedicated to sharing his culture. A very big thank you to him. Our kids and ourselves will be sharing this story and recommending your trip to all our friends. Thanks again"

I personally hope that the tourism industry will support what is another opportunity to promote Northland as a destination where alternative cultural experiences can be experienced.

For Bookings

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Aratapu Contact Person

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International Museum conference presentation

Diane Bradshaw and Hone Mihaka (Waka Taiamai Heritage Journeys (www.taiamaitours.co.nz) Tawhiri and I recently presented at the 2008 Intercom Museums Conference in Rotorua, a conference that discussed cultural tourism and the visitor experience. For more information visit www.intercom2008.co.nz. Thanks to TNZ and others for the opportunity.

Meeting News & Radio NZ FAMIL

Thank you to Stu and David for highlighting the Hokianga in print and on radio respectively.

Footprints & Crossings staff FAMIL of Paihia Paintball and Culture North

Recently our staff enjoyed a rare day out together. The day kicked off with a visit to Paihia Paintball. What an awesome time we had with Ken, Jane and Debbie rounded off with a mean barbecue and a chat. Everyone has to give this a go. We were still raving about it for days afterwards and to this day I still have fond memories of our foray into paintball. Ken, Jane and Debbie you were fantastic hosts. I hope the development of your new course goes well and here's wishing you all much success. I have to say I love the tagline "*It takes balls to play*". For more information contact Ken & Jane Dromgool www.paihiapaintball.co.nz or Debbie Ryder Mad Ideas www.madideas.co.nz

A Japanese Tourism Research Group visits Hokianga

It was a privilege to host this group of tourism researchers to Hokianga. The primary role for this group was to understand how tourism affects Maori and the role Maori play in tourism. They hope to apply some of their findings from their visit to New Zealand and various meetings with national Maori tourism operators to indigenous tourism in Japan. We can all learn from one another. It was a very interesting visit indeed.

Client Inspiration

It's pretty cool when clients send you letters, cards, poems, short stories and the likes. I'd class this as a short story. Thank you to Kathy from NZ Timber Products for sending this in. See www.nztimberproducts.co.nz for more information.

I was not born when the earth shuddered and my home was wrenched from its parent, but my ancestors survived this monumental upheaval and we have become one of the oldest existing conifer families.

I was already mature when the first Polynesians settlers came and named this land “Aotearoa” the land of the long white cloud. They came regularly into my home and took my neighbours foliage and occasionally cut down one of my relatives. Before their night visits there were only the sounds of the *night bird calling to its mate down the valley, and the occasional hoot of the **night hunter. Now the forest is alive, with their fire sticks darting and dancing constantly like the fantail bird. They were too far below in the lower canopy for me to hear their voices, so my friend the wind carried the haunting sound of their ***singing sticks up to me high above the canopy. From this time forward my friends called me Tane Mahuta the name these settlers had given me.

As Time passed the equilibrium shifted and I increasingly heard the lament of my young relatives as their parents were taken. The forest birds saw the great water ways harnessed and large structures built to help float thousands of my family far away. Many escaped but were found languishing along the route. One by one my families’ voices became silent, so eventually only the occasional whisper reached me on the wind. I had time to ponder why our friends had forgotten us.

Slowly as time passed the visitors returned, but what started as a trickle ended in a constant flow. I became ill because my sensitive life giving roots were damaged by the constant movement in the lower canopy. Some of my visitors stayed and tried to nurse me back to health, and they constructed a mighty wooden path through the forest so that my roots would not be damaged by movement.

The visitors have returned at night, but their fire sticks have been replaced by light sticks whose beams are as bright as the moon. As before their voices and strange sticks echoed through the forest. Today I seem to attract lots of attention, and have visitors regularly by day and night. Recently my friend the wind whispered he’d seen young kauri seeds being planted throughout the area. One day when they are strong enough I will hear their voices.

*The night bird refers to the Kiwi whose call can be heard at night

**The night hunter is an owl.

*** I’ve called it singing sticks but the Maoris name for the small wood or bone flute is a Koauau. It could be four to eight inches long and were open at both ends. It may have three to six finger holes along the pipe and was played by breathing across the sharp edge of the upper aperture.

Auckland Info Centre & Hotel Concierge FAMIL of Northland

Thanks to Cecil, Jo, Ryan and the team at great Sights for organizing the above FAMIL. I understand that Northland was a massive HIT. We thank all the participants in advance for their support of Northland.

Jim Hickey in the Hokianga

TV1 Weather guru Jim Hickey was in Northland recently. One day he was being given tips on camping from Harry the local Opononi Holiday Park proprietor and sitting on the deck of the Copthorne Hokianga having a feed of crayfish and the next day he was out on the Coast Guard boat enjoying the picturesque Tutukaka. The News crew, in the studio was still raving about the crayfish the next night. All in all you looked great Northland.

Hokianga Experience Group Appointment

The Hokianga Experience is a group of tourism operators based around the Hokianga Harbour region, who pay a voluntary levy to promote the Hokianga as a distinctive tourism destination and a must see and do experience. The Executive Committee has very recently appointed Kate Claydon as the groups Promotion Officer. Kate has a Hotel, Conference and Media background. Good luck Kate and welcome aboard.

The Hokianga Experience Group has four goals:

1. Develop a cluster of quality tourism experiences which are complimentary; accessed via the harbour; bicultural; and add to the Hokianga destination experience.
2. Design and implement a targeted promotion, marketing and events campaign to promote the Hokianga as a tourist destination.
3. Establish water based public transport service, linking Hokianga settlements, for tourists and the community alike.
4. Developments that reflect the Hokianga, working towards sustainable community economies & positive environmental impact.

I would like to on behalf of the group thank Wayne Hutchinson and Jo Douglas from Enterprise Northland for their support. For more information please contact the Chairperson of the group Dallas Williams on dallas.williams01@hotmail.com.

2009 Community Seminars on Tourism in Hokianga

In late March/April I will be conducting community workshops that introduce the ins and out, challenges and rewards of tourism. There will be up to 5 workshops held in various communities around Hokianga with special guest speakers. Locations, workshops and speakers are yet to be confirmed. For more information contact Koro Carman on koro@footprintswaipoua.co.nz.

Waipoua Forest Fun Run & Walk 2009

What are you doing on Sunday May the 24th? Why not participate in the second running of the 12km Waipoua run and walk event. Make sure to book your space though as there are only 300 spaces available. Last years inaugural event attracted 145 participants, 33 of which came especially from Japan. For more information contact info@footprintswaipoua.co.nz.

Staff Departures

Three of our staff have left to pursue other paths. We wish Joe, Tawhiri and Dan all the very best and every success in their new journey and thank them for the valuable contribution they have made to Footprints, Crossings and tourism in Hokianga.

Conclusion

What more can I say but we have managed to survive another year. Another year of developing relationships and opportunities, and it's these very relationships and opportunities that I hope will create long term benefits for tourism and communities in Hokianga. It's been a tough year and I again want to thank my Board of Directors for the support they have given me and more importantly a group of dedicated staff who continue to forge ahead. We have had several members of our team leave but these losses create new opportunities for others. I am under no illusions about how tough the 09/10 season is going to be. It will definitely be a time of uncertainty yet with an element of excitement, given that we are in the process of developing an international sister community partnership, a new iSITE building in Opononi, the second running of the Waipoua Forest Fun Run & Walk event and much, much more. There are so many people to thank so for fear of missing someone on behalf of the Footprints and Crossings teams I would like to sincerely thank you ALL. It really has been a tough road but definitely one not without its rewards.

I hope you all had a Merry Xmas and more importantly have a prosperous New Year.

Koro