

Ruakaka

Surf Life Saving Patrol

50th JuBilee

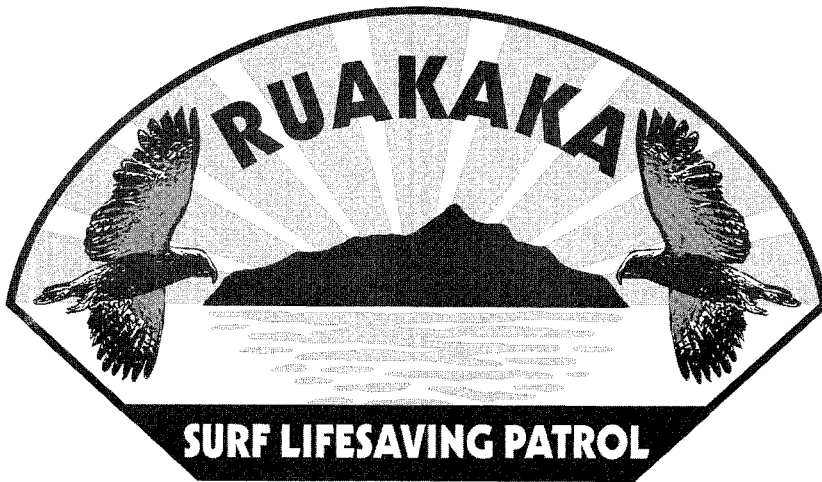


Welcome to the 50th Jubilee of the Ruakaka Surf Life Saving Patrol

We, the Jubilee Organisers and members of the Patrol are delighted that you have come to join in the celebrations of 50 years of being guardians of our beautiful Ruakaka Beach. The Jubilee Committee:

- Headed by Paula Kearney, who has been involved with the Patrol on and off since the mid seventies. Paula is a current Committee Member and Patrol Captain.
- Jill Crawford was part of the first wave of girls back in the early seventies and has added her event management and catering coordination expertise to the event.
- Kerry Pearce (a member in the eighties) has added his event coordination ability and knowledge of where to access what.
- Terry Hutton, who was first a member in the early sixties, has kept us all honest and on track with budgetary matters.
- Megan Whyte – our “all rounder” from the nineties took on the role of Secretary – most impressive to get minutes the next day.
- Bronwyn Winter – originally on the committee back in the late sixties and then again in the seventies/eighties, has been responsible for separating fact from fiction in researching material that has resulted in the history recorded in the Jubilee Book.
- And last, but by no means least, there is Brian Hutton – there at the beginning of the sixties and still there in the noughties – Brian’s main role has been registrations (and proofreading each decade as he seems to be the only one who has been part of the Patrol at some stage in each decade).

The Jubilee Committee would like to thank Patrons, Eric and Gladys Gulbransen for the cups of tea and coffee and use of their home for most of the meetings. Their common sense comments have helped to keep us motivated.





Ruakaka



Surf Life Saving Patrol (Inc.)

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND, N.Z.

Beginning in the Sixties

Can you remember what were you doing on 7th January 1960? Late in 1958 road access to Ruakaka Beach was opened increasing the number of people who used the beach during the summer months bringing with it the inevitable near fatalities associated with surfing. The Ruakaka Surf Club and Life Saving Promotion Committee was formed in 1959 and it was on this day that they convened a meeting of approximately 50 people – this meeting unanimously deciding upon the formation of THE RUAKAKA SURF and LIFESAVING CLUB.

First Office bearers were:

Chairman – J Ashcroft

Secretary – Laurie Wilkinson

Committee – Mate Slako, Bill Foreshaw, Mrs S Batger, Mrs Georgina Slako and Mr D Jury

Patron – Don McKay

Honorary Members – Reg Nichols and Bill Beeston (members of the Waipu Club who had provided support to the local committee on the formation of a club for Ruakaka).

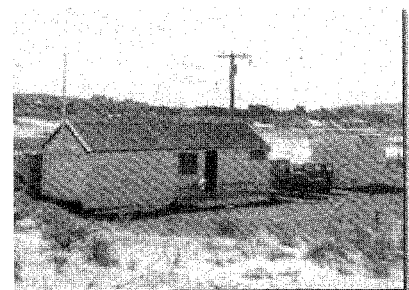
Annual Subscriptions were set at 5/- (five shillings – 50cents in our world today) for senior members and 2/6 (two and sixpence – 25cents) for junior members under 16 years.

The meeting also agreed to make members of all other Surf Clubs Associate Members who, “when visiting the district would be welcome to use the amenities of the club while at the same time assisting in duties and club activities generally”. A further resolution was passed “that steps be taken without delay to affiliate with the Surf Life Saving Association”.

Ten days later Barry Greer was appointed Club Captain and the first team – G Flavell, Darrell (Brick) Taylor, John Hutchings, Kerry Tocher, Dennis Sterling, Johnny Slako, Paddy Slako, Miss A Whalen, B Wells, Miss B Wilkinson and Phil Cooney were enrolled as active members. The new Surf Lifesaving Team took over responsibility of a surf reel transferred from Waipu Surf Club.

In those very early days, the tradition of voluntary help began – offers of assistance came from Reg Nicholls (training sessions); Mr & Mrs Beeston (electric siren); Mrs C Wright (carpentry services); Ruakaka Domain Board (use of hall for meetings); Prescotts Band (fundraising dance); Mr LJ Bradley, Mains Avenue (concrete blocks) with a lot of individual offers of assistance in a myriad of ways to help the fledgling club on its way.

The first rescue action happened sooner than expected, but not





Ruakaka

Surf Life Saving Patrol (Inc.)

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND, N.Z.



on the beach. A siren on loan to the newly-formed club was being assembled by members in the Ruakaka Domain Hall prior to being tested on the beach; when smoke was noticed coming from a house five chains from the old Ruakaka Post Office. The siren was activated and the Waipu Fire Brigade contacted. The 'surf boys' were the first on the scene and began salvaging personal effects from the house, along with local residents. One of them, Tom Carr, a farmer from One Tree Point was overcome by smoke, collapsing inside the house. He was dragged to safety by "Brick" Taylor, although suffering himself from smoke and heat. Later in the day surf club members tried out their new siren again – this time on the beach.

At the end of February an Emergency Committee had been set up to work towards the acquisition of land over the winter months and Mrs Slako was "asked to enlist the assistance of women members to act with her as a social committee". By 26th September 1960 a sizeable hut had been purchased for \$5 (\$10); surveying of Lot 210 had been completed and the club had been granted a permit to occupy the area. Approval was given for £40 (\$80) to be spent on renovating, transporting and erecting the hut at Ruakaka Beach.

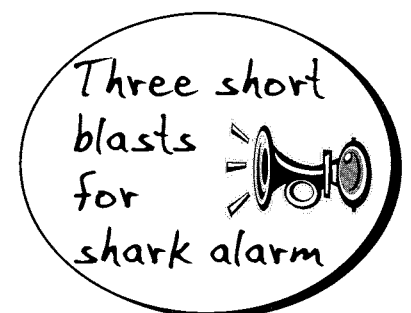
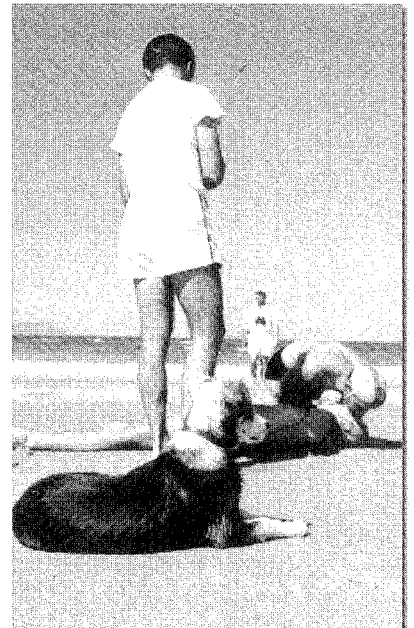
A siren was supplied; Whangarei businesses donated materials for the siren stand built with voluntary labour and Miss Prescott's Band did their part raising £16.2.0 (\$32.20) at a benefit dance held the previous 30th April.

At a meeting on the last day of 1960; the land had been vested in the club for a peppercorn rental of 1/- (10cents) per year; the clubhouse was in place; the club's finances were in a healthy state and the club colours of Royal Blue and Tangerine had been approved, as noted in the minutes – "these colours were decided upon by the Emergency Committee owing to the unavailability of some other colours in material for blazers"!!!!

On a suggestion from the Club Captain, Barry Greer, it was unanimously decided to elect Mr and Mrs J Ingram as Life Members in appreciation of their general interest and efforts in the welfare of the club and also their kindness and generosity displayed toward the team members.

During 1961 and the early part of 1962 fundraising continued for operating expenses and the building fund; and the upgrade of the clubhouse and lifesaving facilities. Interclub competitions had begun but attendance at events and manning of patrols was becoming a problem, due to a lack of trained and experienced personnel. Five members had passed their Royal Lifesaving Bronze Medallions making 8 members eligible to sit their Surf Bronze Exams.

| | |
|---|--|
| The Insurance Office of Australia Ltd <small>Incorporated in Australia</small> | |
| AGENCY COVER NOTE | THE I.O.A. AGENT C. Wayland <small>Authorized Branch 19 HIGH STREET P.O. BOX 1523 R. T. ANDERSON, Union Manager</small> |
| No 402 | Issued to Ruakaka Surf Life Saving Club 21-10-1960 |
| Ruakaka Surf Life Saving Club c/o Mr. Wilkinson (Bagman) | |
| You are hereby held covered against loss or damage by "fire" insofar as subject to the Company's policy conditions, until 4 p.m. of the 1st day of Nov 1960 | |
| provision completion of proposal. (When notice of termination is to the member given prior to the extent of £ 350) | |
| On | 21-10-1960 |
| At | Ruakaka |
| Occupied by | Insured as Surf Club |
| In line of policy/cover No. | nr |
| Extended to | Agent B-6 |





Ruakaka



Surf Life Saving Patrol (Inc.)

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND, N.Z.

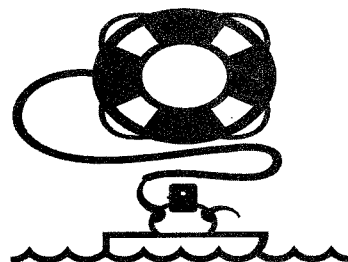
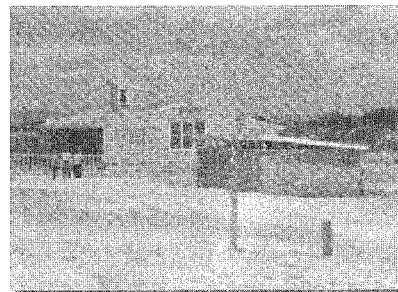
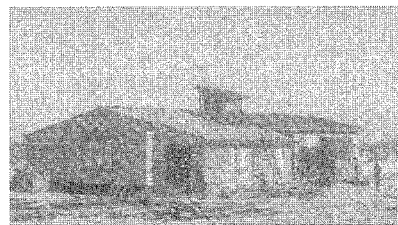
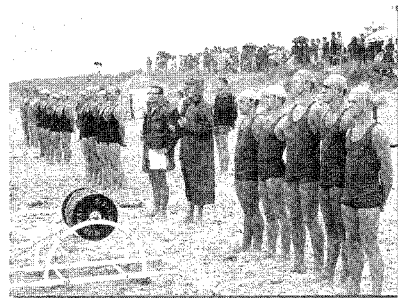
On 11th March 1962 three Birkenhead children were dragged 200 yards out to sea and rescued in a team effort by Phil Cooney, Terry Hutton, Peter Mellsop and Brick Taylor. Two adults who had been caught in the same rip and dragged beyond their depth the previous day had also been rescued. By the end of that season, 14 rescues had been performed without the loss of a single life and beach patrols had been established on Saturdays as well as Sundays.

Meanwhile, towards the end of March, the Ruakaka Surf Life-Saving Club staged its first carnival attended by an estimated crowd of between 4000 and 5000 people. The Blair Shield trophy for annual competition was introduced with Ruakaka taking out third place behind Eastern United and Red Beach. The Rabbage Cup, for annual competition between Waipu and Ruakaka was won by Waipu.

In August 1962 a previous decision to construct a new building was rescinded and the purchase of an old house went ahead – the cost - £50 (\$100) down and £50 (\$100) in 12 months time. This decision would of course mean a lot of work on refurbishment. The building was to be sited with the main clubhouse in line with the council toilet block with the northern back corner on the boundary of the property. The club was adopted by the Whangarei Lions Club in response to an appeal for public assistance.

In what can only be described as an amazing effort, the new Ruakaka Surf Life Saving pavilion opened in April 1963 – six months after work started – an asset and facility worth a conservative £5,000 (\$10,000) at the time. Only £1,200 (\$2,400) cash went into the project, the rest made up of gifts of materials and labour from the members and the public. The core of materials for the clubhouse was an old house at Kauri. Members dismantled the house board by board with the help of the Lions Club, and it was transported free of charge by local cartage contractors, to the site in nine loads. Three carpenter members, assisted by local residents, started on 1st October 1962. Manhours were donated by local building contractors, electricians, plumbers and sub-contractors. Almost all the furniture was donated; the bunks were built with other items being bought at cost or for token sums. At the time of the clubhouse completion, the club was well-equipped with life saving gear, including five new surf lifesaving reels. It had 24 active members who trained every week at the Whau Valley School and Kamo High School baths. Supporting this active membership was a small, hard-working committee of just seven people.

Throughout the balance of the early sixties, rental/use of the clubrooms during the off-season was a recurring theme throughout the Minutes, along with the introduction and amendment of rules





Ruakaka



Surf Life Saving Patrol (Inc.)

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND, N.Z.

and codes of conduct in the clubhouse. Fundraising appeared to be mainly by way of dances; participation at surf carnivals was spasmodic and moves were afoot to purchase a surf boat, with a Boat Committee being appointed to meet this new challenge. Once purchased, the next step was suitable housing for the boat which saw the original old clubhouse being put to yet another use.

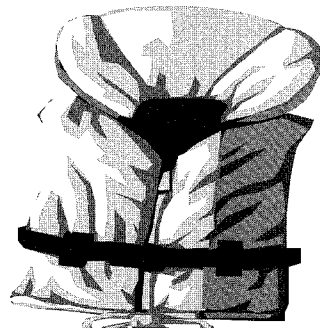
The naming of the boat was decided through a radio competition on the then local radio station, 1X.N. An 8 year-old boy, Graham Ross Wagner of Whangarei was the lucky winner of the prize of £2.2.0 (\$4.20) – the chosen name “Tohu Ora” (To Save Life). The christening and official launch of Tohu Ora took place on Saturday 19th November 1966. The boat and members were to become regular attendees as Water Safety Shows and various tourism promotional activities in ensuing years.

The activities of the club continued through the late sixties, however there appears to be a gap in the records from 1967 to 1970. We do know that two well known local identities served as President – Colin Meale from 1966/67 and the late Rick Batten from 1969 to 1970. Secretaries during this period were Les Fowler and Mrs Mossman.

From later Minutes of Meetings, the club had accumulated a great deal more surf life saving equipment (boat trailer, Minuteman Resuscitator, a racing paddle board,) and the Committee required to run the club had grown substantially – House Steward, Gear Steward, Chief Instructor being added. On the downside; the behaviour and lack of responsibility in maintaining the clubhouse by the predominantly mid-teen members of the club was a challenge and a concern because of the negative image it created. These boys, however, gave up a large amount of their leisure time in training and patrolling the beach – what was lacking was a core of older, more experienced lifeguards to provide adequate supervision.

The decade, however, finished on a brighter note with Doug Ferguson doing extremely well in the National Championships, becoming a finalist in the Junior Belt Race.

In acknowledging the work done throughout the first decade, special mention is made of Bill Gudsell (made an Honorary Life Member in 1966); Jim Keir who filled a multitude of positions over the early years, including Secretary and Club Captain; Mate and Georgie Slako (Mate was made an honorary member of the Auckland Surf Life Saving Association); not to mention Brick Taylor and Phil Cooney (there from the start); Brian and Terry Hutton (clubbies who always seemed to be there) and the late, Miri McKay patron from 1962 until 1974. wonderful,



*Cushla Slako
became
Patron at 1974
AGM*



Ruakaka



Surf Life Saving Patrol (Inc.)

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND, N.Z.

And on to the Seventies: At the start of the 1970 surf season, retired local vet, Warren Daniel took over the reins, his considerably larger first committee comprised:

Chairman – Warren Daniel
Vice President and Building Maintenance Officer – L Abela
Secretary – Mel Arndt
Treasurer – Roger Phillips
Publicity Officer – Bronwyn Slako
Club Captain – Lance Richards
Gear Steward – Peter Slako
House Steward – Brian Arndt
Vice Captain – Doug Fergusson
Boat Captain – Brick Taylor
Chief Instructor – Terry Hutton
Junior Club Captain – John Benton
Ladies Chairwoman – Cushla Slako
Auckland Delegate – Beryl Small

Committee – D Anderson, Ken Gayford, Gus Lindstrom, with a Junior Club Captain still to be appointed. Four subcommittees were set up in September – Active, House, Finance and Social. A resolution to raise the Annual Subscriptions was lost and these remained the same (though the figure is unclear).

Fundraising had stepped up to very successful gala days, Community Chest collections, invitations to business houses to take out Associate Membership, supporter stickers, raffles, a craft carnival, a white elephant auction which raised \$260.00, participation in the Miss Aquarama contest and the running of a beach stall in conjunction with the then owners of the Ruakaka Beach Store, Neil and Gwen Melville. The first Housie night raised \$9.30 with 24 people attending.

Social dances still continued to play a role in raising funds for the club – a “Down on the Farm” social at the clubhouse in 1970 cost \$4.00 per couple. “Refreshments to be supplied – 1x9gal keg, 3 crates of flagons, 10doz bottles, punch, blackberry nip, sweet and medium sherry. Supper will be curry and rice, club sandwiches and maybe shellfish.”

Working bees were a regular feature of club activities, as were donations of building materials, paint and furniture for the clubhouse. Ben Wortelboer donated a winch; with concrete for its installation being supplied by Somners of Waipu.

Protection of funds for a new building was also activated at a





Ruakaka

Surf Life Saving Patrol (Inc.)

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND, N.Z.



Special General Meeting held on 13th December 1970: "That the Committee shall appoint three Trustees who shall open an Investment Account with the Auckland Savings Bank in the name of the Club to which the sum of \$836.22 shall be deposited, and to which any further monies which the Committee may from time to time set aside or which shall be donated for building purposes, shall be deposited and that no withdrawal shall be made from such Account except by direction by the Club in General Meeting, and for the purpose of erecting a new Clubhouse for the Club".

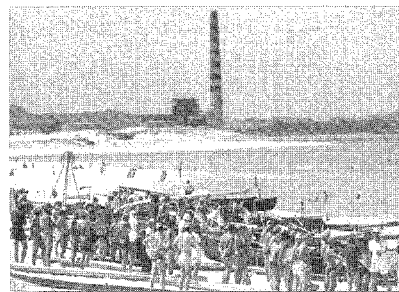
Early in January the following year, the club was in a sound financial position with a further \$989.10 in the No 1 Account and \$92.94 in the Travel Account. A donation of \$100 from the Tai te Marae Housie Subcommittee and the transfer of a small amount from the No. 1 Account saw the Trustee Building Fund reach \$1000.00.

The neoprene tube was introduced along with the teaching of cardiac massage as regular training of new members continued with the ASLSA Board of Judges visiting Ruakaka to conduct examinations. A Big Dig, held in conjunction with Marsden Jaycees on 30th January 1972 drew an estimated crowd of 1800 people and helped the club move from a weak financial position in January 1972. Approaches were made to the A.S.L.S.A to have the Northland Surf Life Saving Championships officially recognised by the Association; to be held at Ruakaka Beach in 1973. Small teams continued to compete at Auckland and National S.L.S. Championships with minor successes.

On 28th February a momentous decision was made at a Special General Meeting of the club, when Terry Hutton formally moved – "that the changes to the Ruakaka Surf Life Saving Club (Inc) Constitution and Rules for the Control of the Clubhouse to allow for the admittance of female active members; for the minimum age limit of Junior active members to be 14 years as in the Auckland S.L.S.A; and for the Patrol Season to be brought into line with the Auckland S.L.S.A." be adopted.

Disaster threatened following the AGM on 23rd July 1972 when insufficient people attended to form a quorum – the club was critically short of active members and associate members prepared to take on committee roles. According to a newspaper report "Many qualified members had left to continue their education and a certain uninterested and irresponsible element had also dropped out, which was probably to the advantage of the Club. Discussing what could be done to save the Club, Warren Daniel said the emphasis on recruiting should be on quality not quantity" – enter the new wave of members – "OUR GIRLS".

Negotiations started in 1972 to replace the surf boat "Tohu Ora"





Ruakaka

Surf Life Saving Patrol (Inc.)

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND, N.Z.



with a more manoevrable surf canoe and in January 1974, "Miss Ruakaka" was officially launched courtesy of a \$930 donation from the Whangarei Round Table Club. In its first competition try out, Ruakaka gained second place in the ladies surf canoe race.

During the 1972/73 Christmas holiday period, crowd attendance at the beach had increased substantially. With financial assistance from the Northland Harbour Board and Whangarei County Council paid lifeguards operated at both Ruakaka and Waipu. Sue Smith, a member of North Piha Surf Club and one of Auckland's two professional lifeguards taking on the role at Ruakaka. Meanwhile Ruakaka club member, Grant Efford was working from the Baylys Beach headquarters. The rate of pay for paid lifeguards at the time was \$60 per week. During the 73/74 season, Ruakaka (with only 10 or 11 active members) had two more paid lifeguards operating – 17 year old Robyn Weaver manning Ruakaka and 19 year old Alan Miller patrolling at Mangawhai – taking part in at least three reported rescues.

Unfortunately, there was a drowning at the Ruakaka river mouth when a teenage girl from Maungakaramaea drowned even though several members of the Ruakaka Club tried for almost an hour to revive her with mouth to mouth resuscitation.

For the first time in many years, the Ruakaka club had the support of Ruakaka people with the Ruakaka Beach Improvement Group expressing an interest in helping to keep the clubhouse free of vandalism. This, combined with the efforts of club members, saw the clubhouse repainted prior to the July 1974 AGM. However, paint alone was not going to keep the clubhouse standing. A new roof was installed in 1975 and the old gear shed removed.

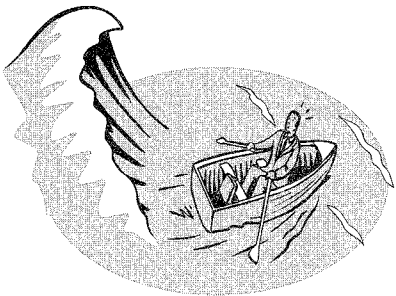
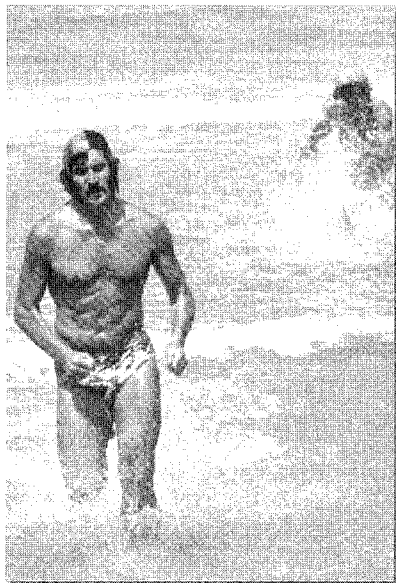
26/1/74 – At Ruakaka, lone surfer Kevin Courtney lost his board in a rip 200 yards off shore at 2.35pm and was rescued by a six-member team in difficult conditions.

2/12/74 – Women's Club Captain, Sue Shand and Club Secretary, Gillian Beehre rescued six year old Scott McPherson from Birkenhead when he drifted into a hole at the turn of the tide.

9/12/74 – Gillian Beehre made her second rescue in a week when she revived a two year old girl who had been knocked down by waves while trying to follow her mother into the water.

On Wednesday 18th June 1975 the name of the organisation changed – the club proudly became the RUAKAKA SURF LIFE SAVING PATROL.

It is interesting to note that the club lost two key members of the committee; the Chairman Warren Daniel and Treasurer L Greenall during the early part of 1975. However by the AGM all looked to





Ruakaka

Surf Life Saving Patrol (Inc.)

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND, N.Z.



be going along well with 31 people present at the meeting and visitors being given speaking rights. Secret ballots were held for positions of President, Vice President, Junior Male Club Captain, Chief Instructor, House Steward and four committee positions drew six nominations. Was there more to this than meets the eye? The matter of "Rules" became a regular agenda item over the following months and the President's Report the following year went into a great deal of detail regarding the attitude of members and concluding with the statement "that the Club would benefit greatly by being shut down indefinitely, and a paid Lifeguard put in for the holiday season and weekends to Easter". Not surprising then that a caretaking committee was elected and the following resolution was passed at the 1976 AGM:

"That the Club go into recess until such time that the nine Committee Members feel that the Club is in a position to make a comeback".

The financial position of the club was also serious – General Account \$137.71 and Travel Fund \$25.36 although the Building Fund still held \$900.00.

The Caretaker Committee, led by Brick Taylor as chairman and Gill Beehre as secretary, continued to meet on a regular basis, actively seeking new members and putting their minds to the task of sourcing funds to re-establish a healthy bank balance before any move could be made to bring the club out of recess.

Then a golden opportunity presented itself. The Whangarei Racing Club was to be relocated to its current Ruakaka site and the Surf Club won the contract to remove the running rail from Kensington and reinstall it at Ruakaka with proceeds of \$700 going to the club after meeting all expenses. However, the members and helpers did receive something for their efforts – a resolution on 6th July 1977 states that:

"All individuals, club members and others, who assisted with the project, be compensated for their time at an hourly rate of \$1.50 – times recorded by Mr B Taylor (Contract organiser)." That same meeting agreed to hold a public meeting on 4th September to decide whether the club should be closed completely; continue to run in recess or to call for nominations for a committee and if enough nominees were available, the club could commence activities again.

A small band of willing workers put up their hands and the club came out of recess - Graeme Finlayson (Chairman), Bronwyn Slako (Secretary), Brenton Erceg (Treasurer) and a committee of four – Colin Baker, Ian Gibson, Bruce MacFarland and Keith Whalley. Brick Taylor mentioned in his report that the club's only Life Member, Mate Slako had passed away and that "his efforts for both the club





Ruakaka

Surf Life Saving Patrol (Inc.)

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND, N.Z.



and the Ruakaka domain will not be fully appreciated until the next summer season, when I am sure he will be missed". Brick did not want to continue to take an active part in the club due to family commitments, but left his sincere hope "that the club pulls out of its difficulties and becomes a great place to be at again".

And so began the slow, arduous task of organising working bees; increasing membership while still continuing the usual fund raising activities – housie, raffles, gala day, etc. By 1st November 1977 the club had 9 senior members, 8 junior members and 5 associate members, however as there were only 2 senior and 2 junior members qualified – a lot more emphasis was placed on finding qualified instructors to conduct training.

Nth Advocate 11th Jan 1978 "At Ruakaka it was reported that there was more of a problem with people swimming with clothes on than without. "I would prefer it if they did swim nude" said the Ruakaka Surf Club President, Mr Graeme Finlayson. It's safer".

Attendance at a working bee on 9th July 1978 was almost non-existent. The President and Secretary were joined by only one member - the late Ian Alison – who helped clean up the front verandah and walls of the clubhouse, returned empty soft drink bottles and repaired the gear shed door in preparation for the AGM. Reading the President's Report, it is amazing the number of local business people, farmers and other voluntary organisations (Fire Brigade, Marsden Jaycees, Bream Bay Club) who contributed their services free of charge to bring the clubhouse back to its former glory, helped along by a \$3,000 Lottery Board Grant for replacement of windows and doors and a brand new Skyline Garage gear shed.

20/1/78 – About 9.30am Ruakaka beach was closed for the second time this week when what was thought to be a shark was sighted but the beach was opened about half-an-hour later when the "shark" was found to be a floating tin can – Better to be safe than sorry – like the following summer when swimmers were called from the water on more than one occasion when sharks were sighted.

Membership continued to steadily increase with many local names appearing in the memberships approved – Price, Nelson, Attwood, Whimp, Baker, Gulbransen, Hodgson, Batten, Paki. At the last AGM in the Seventies, Royal Life and Surf Bronze medallions and certificates were presented to Peter McGlone, Ian Alison, Lesley Alison, Ralph Wallace, Nigel Attwood and Julie Dawson. Colin Baker was presented with his Instructor's Certificate - it is sad to note that Nigel Attwood is yet another of our rising stars taken before his time.

A different type of rescue – Jan 1979 – a local Takahiwai youth was





Ruakaka



Surf Life Saving Patrol (Inc.)

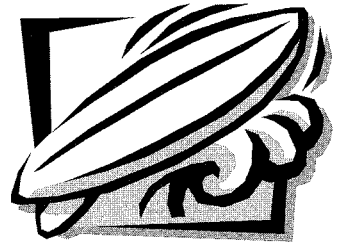
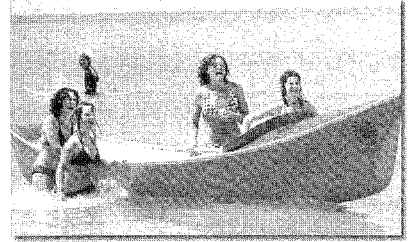
RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND, N.Z.

run over in the car park- Surf club members Jack Paki and Warren Morgan helped lift the side of the car to free the youth who was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Jan 1979 – Then the real thing - Les Bruen was tragically drowned at Uretiti – Ruakaka Surf Club members tried in vain to resuscitate him - the family asking that donations in lieu of flowers be made to the Club.

On a lighter note, let's bring the close down on this line with a quote from the minutes of the committee held on 17th December 1979:

“Bream Bay College – Graeme had been asked for a loan of one of our rescue tubes by a college teacher for a weekend trip. When the tube was returned it was left with Graeme but unfortunately Graeme's dog had a chewing session and Graeme advised that he will replace it.”





RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

Then the drama of the Eighties:

All was going well with the Club at the start of the 80's. There was a healthy bank account balance of \$1960.64; new members were being recruited and becoming qualified; liaison with the ASLSA was flourishing; and patrols were operating well with successful inspections taking place. Extensive refurbishing of the clubhouse was under way – new paint work, curtain tracks and curtains. Moves were afoot to renovate the old gear shed into a kitchen.

The election of officers in July 1980 resulted in the following people taking up the reins:

President – Graeme Finlayson

Secretary – Paula Gulbrandsen

Club Captain – Jack Price

Treasurer – Neil Hodgson

Chief Instructor – Brian Whimp

Gear Steward – Ian Alison

House Steward – Lloyd Batten

Committee – Nigel Attwood, Kristine Whimp, Ken Merritt

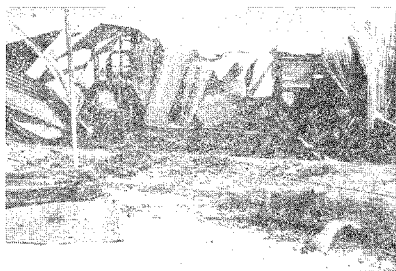
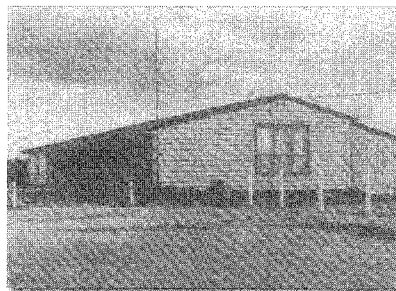
Delegate to Auckland – Bronwyn Finlayson

Publicity Officer – Christine Whimp

With the introduction of IRB's into Auckland clubs – Ruakaka did not want to miss out and had the loan of one for three weeks over the 1980/81 summer. Brian Whimp and Ken Merritt became qualified over the summer with others logging hours toward their qualification. There was a frenzy of activity in raising public awareness of the club; seeking sponsorship for the \$5,200 needed for the Club to get its own IRB – the club was literally abuzz with excitement and making plans for a new boat ramp for easy launching.

And then.....the unthinkable happened.....some of you might remember the old lounges that used to grace the front verandah. Seems they were being used by non-club members and whether deliberate or not – there started the fire that was to destroy the clubhouse on 6th April 1981. Also lost in the fire was the PA system, binoculars, thermometer, shorts, caps and manuals. Fortunately the majority of the water gear and crafts was stored in the gear shed which was saved thanks to the Ruakaka Volunteer Fire Brigade.

The club would collect \$17,000 from their insurance policy and had other funds to bring their contribution to \$19,200, but where was the balance to come from. An emergency meeting of the



IF YOU DON'T
KNOW
WHERE
TO SWIM, WHAT
SHOULD YOU DO?





RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

committee decided to call a public meeting on Easter Sunday, 19th April to decide the future of the Ruakaka Surf Patrol – continuation would not be possible without public support.

An amazing 54 people attended the Public Meeting which resulted in decisions being made to a) rebuild the clubhouse, b) sited further back on the same site; c) the newly formed Marsden Lions Club be approached to organise the fundraising and d) the formation of a two-man Building Committee – Bill Whimp and Charlie Pettit.

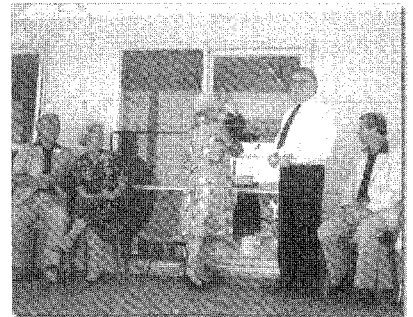
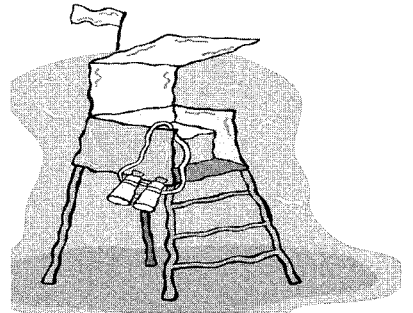
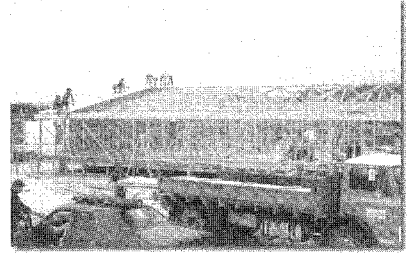
Even without clubrooms, members of the Club started to make real inroads in the competition arena. A third place in the National IRB Champs and a second placing in the final of the single rescue event at Piha, both using borrowed equipment being the highlights.

Over the next six months, all avenues for funding were investigated and eventually three plans were considered – the first, a purpose-designed building by Phillipa Johnson; a Keith Hay home and a pre-cut plan from Waipu Timber Company via Tony Oetgen. The quote from Waipu Timber Company was approved in General Meeting on 22nd November 1981.

Perhaps the fire had been a blessing in disguise – the Club now had enormous support from service clubs (eg Lions, Jaycees, and Whangarei Happiness Club), local and Whangarei businesses not to mention the tireless efforts of many local volunteers. And so began a new era in the history of the club. With the greater public support and willing workers for the building of new clubrooms for the Ruakaka Surf Patrol, and because of work commitments, Graeme Finlayson tendered his resignation. Bill Whimp spoke for all present when he said “years ago the club’s name was bad and it was Graeme and Bronwyn’s work that brought it back to what it is now.” Eric Gulbransen agreed to take over the role of President.

The summer of 1981/82 saw the Patrol still guarding Ruakaka Beach – their headquarters the Skyline Garage gear shed. When not on patrol club members took up hammer and nails to help in whatever way they could to build a new “home”. Additional funding to replace the clubrooms came from the New Zealand Lotteries Board (\$25,000); plus backing from the NZ Surf Life Saving Association, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, the Whangarei County Council and the Northland Harbour Board.

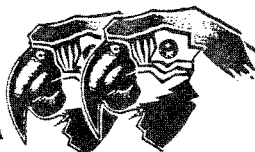
That season started with Ruakaka Patrol being the only club in the Auckland Association to enjoy increasing membership of both men and women. Add to that the distinction that Ruakaka was one of only two Life Saving Clubs in the country over the last ten years to have a woman Club Captain – Paula Gulbransen. By the close of the season there were 27 active members and a healthy bank balance.



Ask Paula - how do you stop the paddling pool from flying away while you fill it with water!



RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

17/1/82 – A nine year old Auckland boy was rescued by Ken Merritt after suffering cramp – the weekend before swimmers had to be cleared from the water when a 3 metre hammerhead shark and a 3 metre sand shark were sighted close to shore.

STOP PRESS – At the 1982 AGM – Senior Subs were finally raised to \$10.00 per annum.

The last six months of 1982 were to be most memorable. Thanks to Europa Oil New Zealand Ltd, the Ruakaka Patrol took possession of its first inflatable rescue boat. A great weekend was had by all as members travelled to Tauranga to take possession of the 'new baby'.

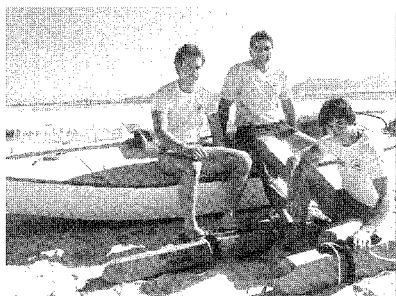
From April 1981 an amazing number of people, organisations and businesses worked collectively and tirelessly until.....6th NOVEMBER 1982 – the official opening of the new clubhouse by the then MP for Kaipara, the late Mr Peter Wilkinson and the club's life member, Mrs Georgina Slako. A plethora of dignitaries and representatives from ASLSA and other clubs, joined with members and the local community to start the next chapter in the history of the Ruakaka Surf Life Saving Patrol.

By now the club had introduced Nipper and Cadet membership; training of new members was proceeding well (eight new members became qualified in March 1983); advertising and promotion was at a level never seen before in the capable hands of John Kearney; work was proceeding on extensions to the gear shed thanks to the efforts of Bill Whimp and there were rumblings about the Patrol raising funds for the purchase of a surf boat.

Jan 83 – a large shark heading toward swimmers at Ruakaka Beach was rammed by a rescue boat to chase it out to sea on Friday afternoon. Chief Instructor, Ken Merritt, said it was the only way to head off the 3m grey nurse from the swimming area.

In January 1983, after a break of 10 years, the Ruakaka Patrol made a strong comeback by competing successfully in the ASLSA 50th Jubilee carnival. The junior canoe crew was placed third overall in rough sea conditions with some waves nearly 2.5 metres high. Kristine Whimp made it through to the final of the beach sprint. Then in April, Ruakaka made the finals at the IRB Championships held at Waipu.

Why do they do it? In December 1983, thieves broke into a shed adjoining the patrol's clubrooms on Ruakaka Beach and took the rescue boat which was in a 'ready' state for any emergencies. The boat was found undamaged on the bank of Ruakaka River, by two Williams boys, however the motor was ruined. It therefore couldn't be used when a few weeks later:



Georgie Slako passed away in January 1991 - but she was there for 30th Birthday



RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

Two Auckland sailors owe their lives to the alert members of the Ruakaka Surf Life Saving Patrol, when they were rescued off their submerged yacht after being in the water for almost an hour. Darren Pierce, Gary Marsom and Mark Flavell drove to Uretititi and swam out with rescue tubes.

December was a busy month that year, as the Patrol received notification that it was going to be able to take to the 'airwaves' thanks to a grant from the United Council of \$14,600 for the purchase of radio-telephone gear. Carter Holt added their support with an offer to sponsor sign-writing in their colours on the surf boat and that they would sponsor oars and life-jackets.

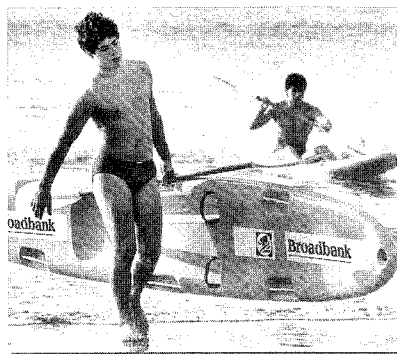
18 Jan – a busy day for Ruakaka Lifeguards – at 11.45am 12 year old Helen Maugham got into trouble when she was swimming with a group (including lifeguards). She was supported by Gary Marsom until Stephen Davies reached them and secured a rescue tube around her – then an 18 year old Maungatapere woman had to be rescued when she got into trouble swimming outside the patrolled area. The third incident occurred later in the day when 11 year old Ruakaka boy, Bryce Swainson, was knocked off his board by heavy seas and was swept out by the rip.

In March 1984, Marsden Lions again supported the Ruakaka Patrol with a Steptoe Auction which raised \$2,500. Items sold ranged from sewing machines and records to radiograms, toys and a television set which was sold for \$1.00.

31 March – a 19 year old Whangarei man suffering from severe cramps 250 metres off-shore was rescued by Mark Flavell and Brendon Barry-Walsh using the IRB.

Success at competitions was building – in May 1984 – teaming together for the first time, Ken Merritt and Paul Silk won the B division single rescue event at the NZ inshore rescue boat championship at Piha. Meantime, improvements were still continuing at the clubhouse. A memorial honours board was presented to the surf club by Norm and Joan Attwood, whose son Nigel, was a member before he died in a car accident two years previously. Eric Gulbransen continued to lead the team of willing workers, including Ian Alison who had returned to the fold as power craft controller.

Until now, family togetherness was usually in the form of parents taking on committee responsibilities while their offspring were involved as active Surf Life Savers. In February 1985 another milestone in the club's history – eight beginner surf life savers gained their bronze medallions – included in the group was the father and son team of Colin and Garth Macleod.





RUAKAKA

SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.



RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

In May 1985, the committee decided to have a shake-up of membership and sort out the "users" from the "workers". Only members who were meeting their responsibilities by patrolling, attending working bees and training, and being involved in general club activities will be invited to renew their membership of the Patrol. An Active Membership Subcommittee to be recommended as essential at the AGM to be held in June.

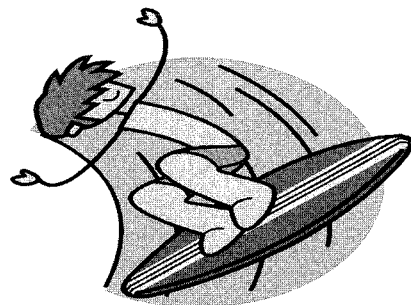
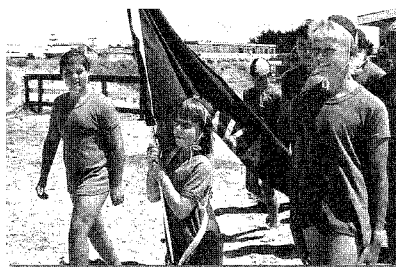
In January 1986 another first – five members of the Patrol, Matt Denton, Morris Maugham, Cynthia Voss, Rodney Boswell and Ian Alison completed an 11 kilometre swim from inside Whangarei Harbour to Ruakaka beach in an attempt to attract more membership. Currents and a strong headwind made the going tough, but in less than 3 hours it was mission accomplished. There were 22 active members at the time – twice that number were considered necessary for the club to do its job properly – how times change!

The 1986 AGM was also to be Eric's last meeting as President – from 1986 to 1989, the position of President of the Ruakaka Surf Life Saving Patrol changed hands a number of times – Brian Whimp, Brendan Barry-Walsh, John Kearney and Peter Stevenson, all having a turn. Life Membership was not often awarded to the huge number of people who devoted time and energy to the running of the club, however, this meeting rightly acknowledged the work done over many years by Bill Whimp, Charlie Pettit, Eric Gulbransen, Tony Oetgen and Wilma Whimp when they were all made Life Members.

Throughout the second half of the eighties development of the 'Nippers' (7 to 14 year olds) continued to grow strongly, which in turn led to new support from the general community. Younger members learn about water safety and to get more self-confidence, while the older members learn how to use nipper skis and Malibu boards, and how to watch the surf and know the signals.

Macsway Scaffolders assisted with the purchase of two new competition surf skis in 1988 and these were used extensively by Nippers in competitions. More rescue equipment was also acquired – a Malibu board was donated to the Patrol by the J R McKenzie Trust. The major benefit of the Malibu is its ability to hold up to four people in the water at once during an emergency situation.

Jan 1989 – Two teenagers (a male about 13 and a girl about 11) and a woman were rescued by Ruakaka lifeguards after being sucked into a rip on an outgoing tide.





RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

By the end of the eighties, the Ruakaka Patrol had become very much a family affair. Parents of young ones took on committee responsibilities which helped to leave active members free to do what they did best: Patrol the Beach. A good example of family ties can be seen with the Webb family. Jack Webb was a championship winning member of Eastern United in 1937 – his grandson Daniel Webb, a Ruakaka Nipper. Daniel's great-grand-uncle, William, started the North Shore Lifesaving group in the 1930's.





RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

Carnival success in the Nineties:

This could be the decade that's called the return of the "Huttons" as Brian returns to the fold while daughter Megan began her involvement with the Patrol. The first election of officers for the decade included the following:

President – Peter Stevenson

Vice Presidents – Terry O'Meara and Brian Hutton

Secretary – Judy Stevenson

Treasurer – Jeannie Burke

Public Relations – Lance Lincoln

Club Captain – Brian Hutton

Gear Steward – Aaron Lincoln

House Steward – Barry Lincoln

Vice Captain – Aaron Lincoln

Power Craft Controller – John Kearney

Chief Instructor – Megan Hutton

Nipper Coordinator – Geoff Ander

Team Manager – Bryce Swainson

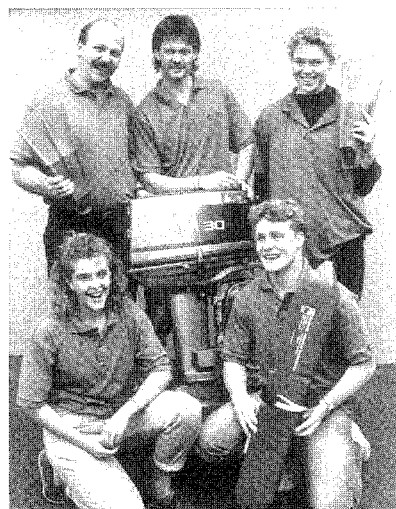
Delegate to Auckland – Brendon Barry-Walsh

Committee – Laura Hunter, Vivien Burke, Glenys Heffernan, Jeff Ander

The Nineties started with a bang – a surf carnival on 2nd January which included an exhibition of a helicopter rescue by Ray Boswell and Ken Merritt, members of the newly formed Northland helicopter surf-rescue team. Then the Patrol was presented with a new motor courtesy of the Bream Bay Club. Last but not least, senior lifeguards had to haul more than 40 exhausted children from the water during the Nipper Carnival at Waipu Cove where a two metre swell was running. Flash rips were popping up everywhere and the racing marker was changed from 200m to 50m because "some of the kids were being hammered by big swells and rips".

Celebrations plus – on 15th April 1990 the Patrol marked its 30th Anniversary – with five past Presidents, Graeme Finlayson, Eric Gulbransen, Brian Whimp, Brendon Barry-Walsh and Peter Stevenson all attending the celebrations. That summer over 3000 hours were worked by the Lifeguards; 15 rescues and 15 first aid cases were attended to; 17 members gained their Surf Bronze Medallions, 3 gained their Instructor's Certificates and a further 2 their IRB Driver's Certificates.

In September the club won a \$4000 outboard motor for being the most financially efficient surf rescue group in the country. The sea coast at Ruakaka is often so calm that the Maori called it "Tai-hoe-





RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

nga-tamahine" (girl's paddling sea) but the river mouth always presented problems.

By the end of 1990, the club had 29 active lifeguards, 63 families involved and a Nipper and Cadet population numbering 65. There were two IRB's and extensive equipment and the radio network link was working well. A new tent donated in January 1991 by the Marsden Tavern proved one of the clubs most valuable assets for use and carnivals and events. Fundraising included a Fashion Frolic which raised \$1200.

The early nineties saw the Patrol develop a strong team of competitors who had their fair share of successes at ASLSA and regional level with many making the finals at National Level. Notable wins included Colin Macleod's title in the 45-49yr Mens Ski at the Auckland Champs in 1990 and Viv Burke's Junior Ski title at the Lion Red Regionals, at Mt Maunganui in 1991. All rounders Megan Hutton and Kylie Hobern were both named in the Auckland Development Team 1991 to compete against the NZ Squad along with other districts. Kris McKay, Vaughan Skiffington, James and Tina Lumsden also placed prominently throughout ASLSA carnivals.

One of the most popular and dedicated members, Julia Williams, won Patrol Person on the Year; Outstanding Woman Member and Patrol Captain of the Year at the Annual Prize giving early in April 1991. Sadly Julia died of injuries received in a car accident a few weeks later.

Not only that, the club won two major Auckland Awards – best patrolled beach and best Junior Lifeguard (Viv Burke). Two other members, Brendon Barry-Walsh and Mark Flavell, received Distinction Awards for their input into Surf Life Saving over a number of years.

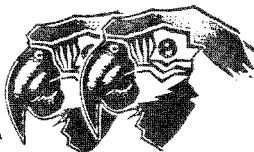
Patrolling lifeguards during the 1992/93 season won the "Beach Patrol Efficiency Trophy again and Curtis King, Martin Burke and Byron Taylor were named in the Auckland Emerging Competitors Squad. Jeannie Burke was singled out for a special mention in Bryce Swainson's (Club Captain) report to the AGM. "As Building Coordinator, if it were not for her initiative and impatience with the slow progress, the extension programme would not be at its present position".

Additional qualifications were gained by a number of members during the season – 2 Surf Bronze Medallions, 3 First Aid Certificates, 3 Emcare I and 8 Emcare II qualifications, 4 gained their IRB crewman certificates, 5 achieved CNZ Course Level 1 and 2 parents Kiwisurf Level 1. Garry Parker took over organisation of the Junior Lifeguards from Graeme and Christine Ander.





RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

Thanks to a grant from the Lottery Grants Board, the club acquired a 1989 Suzuki 4WD Quad Bike to help lifeguards to patrol from the Ruakaka River estuary down to Uretiti on a regular basis. It is awesome to realise that a total of 2,207 voluntary hours were worked by the Ruakaka Patrol, with a total of 16 rescues being carried out during the 1992-93 season.

A short time after achieving his Surf Bronze Medallion, Shane Batten performed his first rescue by helping a 15 year old girl from heavy surf after she was in difficulty when a hole developed just south of the patrol flags.

At the AGM on 25th July 1993, the Ruakaka Patrol had \$5,021 in its General Account and a further \$24,686 in Term Deposits and fixed assets with a book value of \$101,516.

During the middle of 1993, Bryce Swainson participated in a seven week lifeguard exchange to California. Bryce presented a very comprehensive report of the comparisons between surf lifesaving equipment in California and New Zealand and introduced some aspects of their Junior Guard Programme into the Ruakaka Nipper Programme on his return.

In October 1994, the carpark received a \$25,090 facelift. Apparently the cost of keeping the gravel tidy was pretty costly – the sealing would be tidier and last many years.

Near the end of summer 1994, the problem of attitude, abuse of gear, unauthorised usage of the quad and IRB, saw the Management Committee spending quite a bit of time in open and frank discussion. Part of the minutes read "Parents are not prepared to carry on with fundraising when money made is just paid out for repairs and maintenance due mostly to stupid actions by those concerned". As always, there is a minority who spoil it for the majority.

Do you recall that the club changed its name back in July 1975 to the Ruakaka Surf Lifesaving Patrol. It appears that the change was never registered and the process had to be repeated before 30th April 1994. Current membership stood at 17 Active Senior, 14 Active Junior, 65 Nippers, 48 Family Associate and 25 Business Associate. Without a doubt the club had huge support from parents and the community as the 1994 AGM approached.

In December 1994, Scott Stevenson, won a scholarship to Woodridge College near Port Elizabeth which is the only secondary school in the world that competes as a team in surf lifesaving carnivals.

Speaking of competitors, Eva Harris, a junior competitor and regular patrol member at Ruakaka was preparing for competition





RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

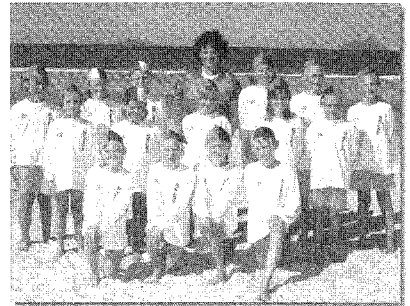
RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

at Muriwai Beach when she noticed a swimmer in trouble. Eva leapt to his rescue and was in the midst of hauling him clear when the boy's mother arrived in a state of panic and needed assistance as well. The trio were eventually pulled to safety by two senior Muriwai lifeguards.

Curtis King and Diane Sherwin dominate the surf lifesaving competition news during 1994/95. Curtis won the Bream Bay Junior sports person of the year award after winning silver medals for the under 16 beach sprint at both the New Zealand and northern regional surf lifesaving championships. The IRB Team of Bryce Swainson, Bryce Pearce, David Sherwin, Maree Smith and Sam Taylor, continued to make their mark taking out a Silver and Bronze Medal at the ASLSA Champs at Raglan.



By the middle of 1995 it was time to embark on another major building project – construction of a \$137,000 gear shed to house the patrol's two IRB's; 4 Wheel Drive and other equipment. John Kearney took over the reins from Brian Hutton who had spent four years as President. Family involvement was still high – three Batten's, Donna, Shane and Peter all being named on the committee, not to mention the Irwins – Paul and Karen taking on Junior Guard Coordinator and Secretary respectively. Subscription rose to \$40.00 for active members.

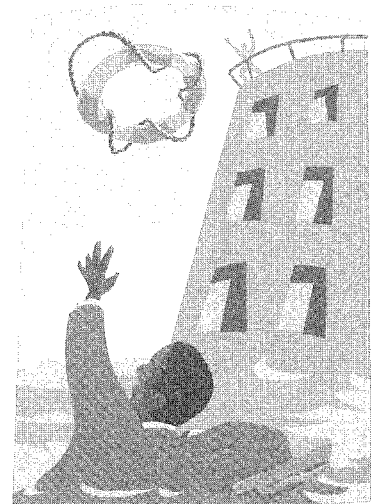


An update on progress at the time with the building extension would indicate that a few problems had been encountered – Council would not give planning authority because of its size (double storied). Having changed to one level, the Council then wanted all sorts of things clarified, even the colour the building was to be painted! 44 days after making application, planning consent was received – all that was needed was building consent.

December 1995 and January 1996 saw swimmers being called from the water on a number of occasions because of sharks, then trainee lifeguard, Brendon Sullivan, rescued a 9 year old girl who lost her boogie board.

A beach education programme attracted hundreds of children from 15 schools during the late summer of 1996 – the children were taught how to identify rips, look after themselves in the surf and to use the right beach gear. But all was not well.

A financial crisis had developed over the funding of paid professional lifeguards at Whangarei Heads, Ruakaka and Waipu. The Northern Lifeguard Service had been pleading with local councils for at least the past five years for fair and equitable funding. With no increase in funding forthcoming from the Whangarei District Council – the only option – shorten the number of weeks when the service would be provided.





RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

Lost Property – have you lost something – in July 1996 there were 4 kleensaks full of clothing and towels looking for owners. Some kind soul, washed them all and the items were put on display prior to and during the AGM. Then, at the beginning of the 1996/97 season, club membership had dropped to 14 junior and 8 senior members.

By June 1997, the go ahead of the new gear shed was likely and along with it a tougher stance by the IRD where GST was concerned. During the 1997 year, the number of people on the committee had dwindled; resulting in a lot less fundraising and higher costs as clubs had to take over responsibility for payment of the radio license and contribute towards the cost of insurance on the IRBs. There was also the cost of hiring a container for storing gear until the new gearshed was finished.

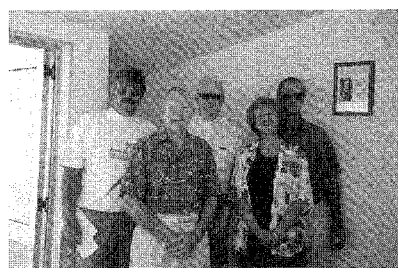
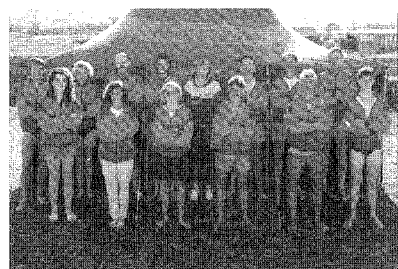
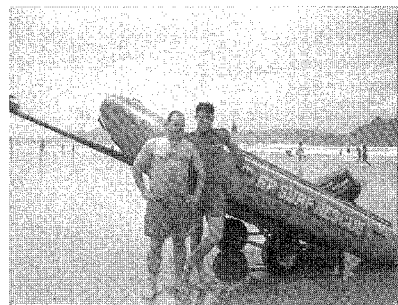
The AGM in June 1997 saw a substantial changing of the guard. Terry Grant continued as President but there did not appear to be a lot of support with positions of Secretary and Treasurer being accepted more or less in a caretaking capacity. However, this appears to have been a minor 'blip'. 11th August saw the first turning of the earth for the building extension with the ground being levelled.

By October, thanks were being given to Megan Hutton, Paul and Karen Irwin, Noelle Liddy, Michelle Kurth, Gavin, Rebecca, Anthony and Jamie Piggins along with Doug and Sandra Ball for their work in sealing the block work on the new building. Not only that, membership was around 40 for the start of the 1997/98 season.

Then a plea from Paul Irwin – “We need painters and lots of them. We have to paint 2 x coats to exterior, 2 x coats to eaves, 3 x coats to 10 doors and frames, walls and ceiling of 2 store rooms, walls and ceiling of 2 showers and disabled toilet and walls/ceilings of beach observation tower. We have set down the weekend of December 13-14 as our first major attack on this job. Any help is appreciated so we can have an opening ceremony THIS summer with the building looking good.”

Ruakaka turned out in force with 16 members participating at Raglan in January 1998. It was an excellent experience visiting this wild West Coast beach where the nippers showed good form and the right attitude. Parents and families provided great support on the beach and at the campsite – what was the story with the Spice Girls Karaoke?

Moving along to the end of April 1998, the Patrol's Balance Sheet showed a healthy Accumulated Funds (Assets) figure of \$335,105. The bulk of the funding for the new gear shed and tower had come from an ASB Trust Grant of \$108,400 and the Lotteries Commission





RUAKAKA



SURF LIFESAVING PATROL INC.

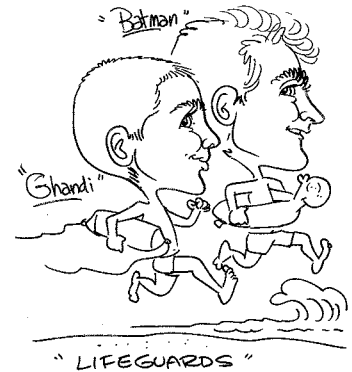
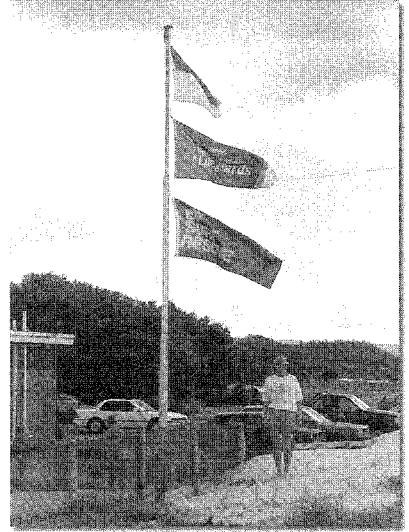
RUAKAKA BEACH, NORTHLAND. Ph:089 432-7002

with a grant of \$15,000. The Patrol had contributed \$30,000 from the investment account. Then on 20th December 1998, with around 80 people present, the new tower facility was opened by the Mayor, Craig Brown and a commemorative plaque was placed in the Tower in memory of Julia William's dedication to the Ruakaka Surf Life Saving Patrol.

Just one year later, Brian Hutton, in his Administrator/Instructor's Report made the following observation – "It is important, I think, to look back and remind ourselves of the reasons for the Patrol's existence. To me it is to provide a safe beach area for the general public to swim, supervised by qualified personnel. What I am getting at is: Let's be of real service to the public, be seen to be doing a volunteer job that is required, and I believe that this will result in partly returning this Patrol to public and business support, that in previous years has been the main income of the Patrol."

Gladys Gulbransen and Paul Irwin were recognised for all the work they had done for the Patrol by being awarded Life Membership at the AGM on 25th July 1999.

The close was brought down on 1999 with an invitation from Mangawhai Heads Surf Club to attend their first training for Junior Surf. They hadn't had Junior Surf for a couple of years – Ruakaka members attended to show their support for another club in Northland.



**The New Zealand
REFINING COMPANY LTD**

Major Club Sponsor



The last decade – the Naughties (oops Noughties)

The noughties started on a high – In Brian Hutton's words "It is really a good feeling for those of us that have grown with the movement over the years, to see a new, vibrant effort to achieve the recognition our service deserves and, I believe, is entitled to." The decade started with the return of a number of 'old hands' (with all sorts of different titles from the previous decade):

President – Brian Hutton

Vice President – Bryce Pearce

Club Administrator (formerly Secretary) – J McQueen & J Gilmore
– incoming committee to decide

Treasurer – Jeannie Burke

Chief Instructor – Jane Lomas

Junior Surf – Mike James

Property Manager – Paul Irwin

Auckland Delegate – Bryce Pearce

Club Captain – Ken Merritt

Vice Captain – Crystal -- McConchie

Power Craft Controller – Bryce Swainson

Funding Coordinator – Kerry Pearce

Public Relations Officer – John Kearney

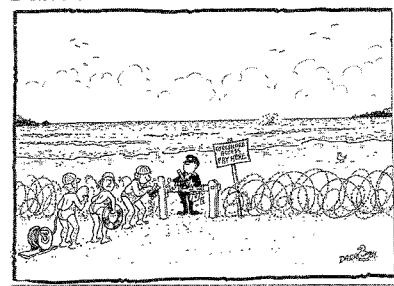
Committee – Tracy Schultz, Peter Boyce, Sean Cahalane, Byron Taylor

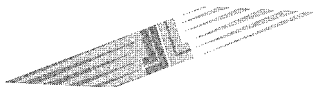
Subscriptions had been dropped in 1999 to encourage members back to the club; however the incoming committee reinstated payment of subs to help cover the cost of uniforms. A summary of work that needed to be done on the clubhouse included replacement of the west side roof, remodelling of the kitchen and provision of accommodation facilities for married couples/guards. The other important issue to be dealt with being the rewrite of the Patrol's Constitution.

During the 1999/2000 season, generous donations were received from Dave Burgess – Rynoz Bar (New IRB Motor) - Tikipunga Tavern –(New IRB Hull) and Zonta Hatea gave \$1,000 specifically for Junior Surf – it was decided that these funds should go towards the purchase of four cadet boards at a cost of over \$4000. Orr's Pharmacy gave \$1,000 towards uniforms. Fundraising from the Gala Day in January 2001 netted the club over \$900.



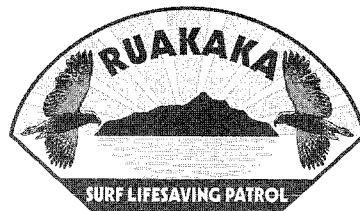
Darroch's View





The New Zealand REFINING COMPANY LTD

Major Club Sponsor



Another Birthday Celebration – the Patrol's 40th – a long night by all accounts. Surf Life Saving Northern Region presented Ruakaka with a wall plaque in commemoration of the event.

A Special General Meeting was held on 22nd October 2000 to ratify the revised constitution. Members had been given the opportunity to read the new constitution before the meeting. Brian Hutton provided a summary of the main changes and in record time the new constitution was unanimously accepted – Meeting started at 1.10pm – Closed 1.20pm – wow!

At the AGM held on 21st July 2001, Brian Hutton was elected a Life Member of the Patrol – he was a foundation member and had been an active member at various times over a forty year period – not to forget the positions he had held on the Management Committee for more than a decade.

19/10/2001 – Swimmers at Ruakaka Beach are being warned to remain between the flags as holes have developed over the shoreline during the winter months. Children were also warned to keep away from the sand dunes which after storms had steep banks that were undermined and collapsed very easily.

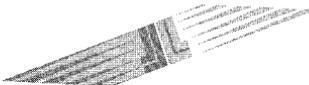
20/10/01 - a beach clean-up netted 7 tonne of rubbish – yuk!

Depending on which newspaper you read at the time - 400 to 500 people (or was it 700?) flocked to Ruakaka Beach for the annual gala day on 5th January 2002. Northland Health was also involved promoting the "Sunsmart" message. To add to the excitement of the day, Ken Merritt and Marty Burke made a 15 minute high-speed dash to an area off the old Marsden Point Power Station to rescue a man in his late 30's found some 600 metres offshore. Although sem-conscious when found, the man was taken to Whangarei Hospital in the Northland Electricity Rescue Helicopter.

This was followed on 20th January with the Junior Surf Sunsmart Carnival. The organiser (Gina D'Arth) approached the club to run it as an annual event – Mike James was congratulated for his part in organising a very successful weekend.

Then later in January 2002 – the ASB Grant was approved for the kitchen/toilet area – not as much as applied for and no funding for ramps. Other interesting titbits of news from 2002 - the distance from the river mouth to the clubhouse is now 1km – a submission should be made to the Ruakaka Open Areas Plan to ensure that a space is left for helicopters to land near the clubhouse – an application will be made to the Inland Revenue Department for tax exempt status – lifeguards in Australia have been sued for injury





**The New Zealand
REFINING COMPANY LTD**

Major Club Sponsor



to a member of the public when swimming in a flagged area - what next?

Reroof day was set down for March 30th, 2002 with a plea for "all the battery drills we can muster to screw roofing sheets". Not only that but work on refurbishing the kitchen and toilets was expected to be completed by the end of May (STOP PRESS: Work was still progressing by November).

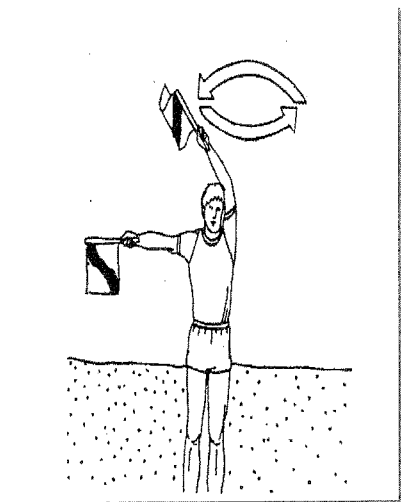
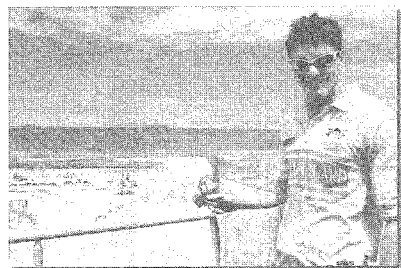
The Competition Team now had 14 members, largely due to the donation of a surf canoe by Paradise Shores and the enthusiasm of Norm Blunden the Gear/Sports Manager. However, new paddles were needed and another battery and charger. This led to an application being made to the Lion Foundation through the Marsden Tavern for funding.

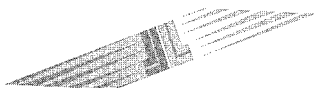
W. Stevenson & Sons held a charity auction on 19th and 20th October 2002 – members attended on the day in a variety of roles – eg runner, parking, refreshment sales. The sale of sausages and drinks was great PR for the club thanks to the efforts of Sean and Delice Cahalane. Proceeds were to be shared between the three local surf patrols – the club anticipated receiving somewhere between \$6,000 - \$8,000 – what a great surprise when the cheque for \$12,000 was presented in December.

At the start of 2003, there was a bit of a dilemma – Ruakaka Patrol had a real shortage of trained IRB Drives and crew – to make matters worse, it was now up to clubs to train their own lifeguards where in the past patrol members had attended courses and exams when they were held at other clubs.

To add to these woes, the ongoing problem of vandalism reared its ugly head again with bottles being thrown through five windows in January. Following a meeting with the Police, Neighbourhood Watch was reinstated and the District Council was considering the installation of surveillance cameras and improved lighting in the car park area.

On the plus side of the ledger, a further eight members passed their Bronze Award; three their Beachguard Award with a further eight more due to sit their awards early in March. The JuniorSurf group was growing rapidly with overall membership rising from 45 to 80 during the season. To add to a donation from Culham Engineering of \$2000, the Ruakaka Tavern were asked to help fund the purchase of two 8'10" Sonic Paddle Boards for the JuniorSurf members.





The New Zealand REFINING COMPANY LTD

Major Club Sponsor



Great news for the Ackermann family in July 2003 – Simone gained acceptance for the Under 14 Development Squad along with Rory Taylor and Odette Ackermann's nomination for the Under 16 Squad was also accepted. All these successes; the purchase of competition equipment; the building of a sound sponsor base and the completion of the refurbished kitchen placed the patrol in an enviable position going into the 2003-2004 Season.

Attention during the next season was to focus on getting more members qualified as IRB crew and operators with Mick Kearney as instructor.

12 January 04 – Not members of the Ruakaka Patrol, but lifesavers all the same. Reginald Olliver (aged 15), with his friend Naphtali Pumipi, rescued two girls and a man from a rip between the racecourse and the power station.

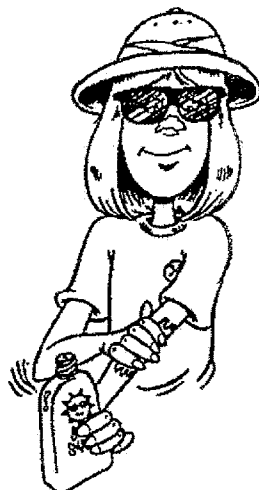
Tai Khan, Tasmin Barry and Greg Lomas hosted a group of Hukerenui Primary School children as part of the Patrol's schools beach fun day programme. Activities included water safety – how to spot rips; the different types of waves and how to be sun smart; not to mention a whole lot of fun and pretend rescues.

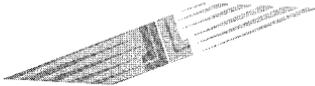
More accolades for Ruakaka at the Northern Region Awards in 2004 – Chad Cahalane was named Rookie Lifeguard of the Year in recognition of the 102.5 hours he spent on patrol in the 2003/4 season (part of the time with a broken foot in plaster). Club President, Brian Hutton received the award for Examiner of the Year and Sean Cahalane, Outstanding Contributor to Junior Surf through his involvement at Ruakaka which helped to produce a 30% growth in junior membership.

What a start to 2005 – Sean Cahalane's "little red truck" arrived on the scene - a specially designed Mitsubishi four-wheel drive vehicle with lifeguard tower at a cost of \$14,500. The purchase was made using some club funds and a grant from the ASB Trust. Then a fun day early in January followed by the weekend of 14th and 15th January – on Saturday the Northern Regional Rookie Challenge was held, then on Sunday the Northern Regional District Champs and Northern Regional Junior Surf Carnival took place. However the visitors from "across the ditch" proved too strong for the 17 Auckland District Clubs who came out in force.

Early 2005 – lucky the committee was holding its monthly meeting about 4.00pm when a boogie boarder was swept out to sea – to the rescue Leon Batten and Mike James.

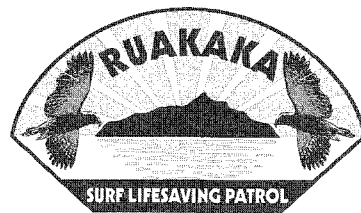
And what about all those members who entered in the Kids Triathlon in March 2005 – 28 young boys and girls from the club took on the challenge!





**The New Zealand
REFINING COMPANY LTD**

Major Club Sponsor



Later in the year, in preparation for the 2005-06 season, club members made the trek down to Takapuna Beach for a pre-season refresher day. Apart from brushing up on CPR techniques and rescue skills, 2061 red and yellow balloons were released representing the number of lives saved by New Zealand life guards the previous summer.

Once again, the 2006-07 season showed that the club had excellent team spirit and a growing membership (170). It would seem that young Dylan French was the Ruakaka Patrol's "star" at the Under 14 Ocean Athletes Championships held at Mount Maunganui.

During the latter part of the 'noughties', a great deal of media attention was focussed on the problem of vehicles on beaches throughout Northland. Ruakaka Beach was no exception with the Patrol helping to monitor and control vehicles travelling close to densely populated swimming areas. As a result, the District Council imposed a 30km/hour speed limit from Marsden Point to Waipu Cove later in the decade.

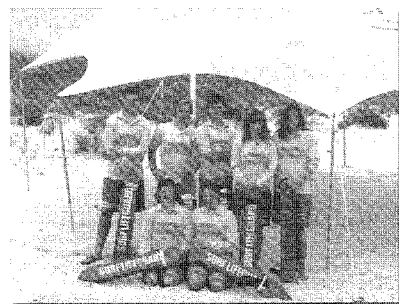
November 2006 – a Ruakaka Patrol led by Club Captain, Leon Batten performed a superb rescue of two missing divers which resulted in the patrol being awarded both the Northern Regional and NZ Rescue of the Month.

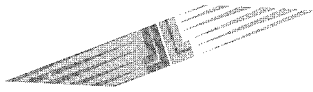
Also in November, the Under 21 IRB crew competed for the first time and came home with 9 medals from 13 races, including firsts in mass rescue, tube rescue and assembly. The team comprised Chad Cahalane, Ryan Hulse with Amanda Gentil and Kyle Taylor being the 'patients'.

Perhaps the greatest highlight of the season was the news that The New Zealand Refining Company became principal sponsor of the Patrol for the next three years – starting with the supply of a new event tent.

In January 2007, Ruakaka came third overall out of the nine clubs competing in the IRB champs held at Waipu Cove. Collecting medals were driver Melissa Batten and crew member Maaike McKernon. Driver Chad Cahalane and crew member Ryan Hulse collected silver in the Under 21 Single rescue, and then combined with Nick Crayton-Brown and Leon Batten for the team's event. From this success two teams would go to the Under 21 National champs at Ohope.

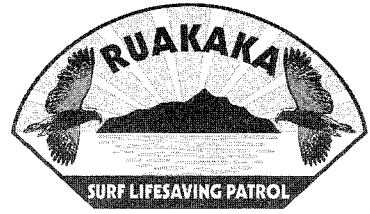
Past President in the 60's, Rick Batten passed away on 30th July 2007. Rick's younger son Lloyd was an active member, his other son Peter and wife Donna, were also involved along with Shane, Chris, Melissa and Leon right through into the 'noughties' – typical of the way in which the club becomes such a family affair.





**The New Zealand
REFINING COMPANY LTD**

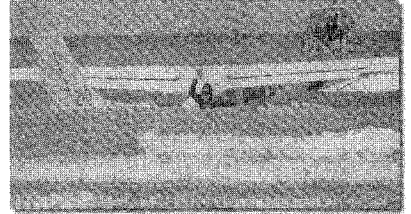
Major Club Sponsor



Then came a spreading of the wings – three teams from Ruakaka competed in the 90 Mile Classic IRB Challenge in October 2008 where 16 North Island teams participated. Ruakaka achieved a credible fifth placing.

Christmas Day 2008 – a rescue with a difference – Rory Taylor and Joel Larimer (a visiting life guard from San Diego) rescued an uninjured pilot from his Cessna when it came down in the sea about 500m south of the clubhouse.

And so ended the fifth decade of the Ruakaka Surf Life Saving Patrol. However, like all things, the end is really just the beginning - of the next 50 years. Once again, in the words of Brian Hutton – “it is important that we retain and continue to extend our membership and be mindful of the image we project to the public – WE ARE WHAT WE DO – LIFEGUARDS.”



Acknowledgements:

When attending the original Jubilee Committee meeting, I was asked to take on the role of Secretary, but declined due to a lack of time outside my full time employment. Later in the meeting, however, I put up my hand and offered to write the book. It has been a journey I have enjoyed immensely but to say I have been a one-man (woman) band is a fallacy. Apart from the encouragement I have received from friends, my thanks go to the following for their help:

- Firstly, to all the club Secretaries and others starting with Georgie Slako for keeping safe, minute books and scrap books for over fifty years – this book has been written entirely from information gleaned from those books and newspaper articles.
- To Paula Kearney – who has run around and found all the records, kindly filling my house with boxes and boxes of material.
- To John Kearney, Total Idea Co, for his patience in making the changes we wanted to his designs for the Jubilee Logo and Registration Form.
- To Brian Hutton, Graeme Finlayson and Megan Whyte for their proofreading for accuracy of information – their intimate knowledge of their own time with the club and the spelling of names have helped tremendously.
- To John Stone, Northern Advocate photographer for his patience and willingness to allow me access to photo negatives and finally for saving to disc, film from the last decade at the very last minute.
- To the anonymous photographer who took the shot we have used for the cover – found in one of the many albums.
- Finally, to Nancy from Bream Bay Design and Print – she has exceeded all expectations in ensuring the safe delivery of the “the baby”.

My apologies for any errors or omissions. In a book of this nature, it is impossible to include the name of every person who has been an active member, a committee member, an associate member or a supporter in any way over the past 50 years. Neither is it possible to mention every business and community organisation which has provided support over the years – your contribution is acknowledged and appreciated, even if there is no mention in the book.

Similarly, there are a huge number of photographs which could not be included. The decision on which ones to use was mine but I was always acutely aware of the ones I did not include because of the memories they would have for someone.

I hope you enjoy the final result.

Thanks to our sponsors:

As every person who has ever been involved with the Ruakaka Surf Patrol knows – our sponsors are our lifeblood. A huge thankyou therefore, to the following six businesses which have helped make this book a reality – you are urged, as past and present members, to support them whenever you can.

Macsway Scaffolding Ltd
(Ian Macartney)
Phone 09 432 7643



Orrs Bream Bay Pharmacy
(Ken Orr)
Phone 09 432 7756



Glenaldan Lodge
Quality B&B (Gill Crawford)
Phone 09 435 3917



