

Waterway slowly returning to former glory

Fun and flotillas on the Whau

Flowing between New Lynn and the Te Atatu peninsular, the Whau River with a short overland connection, provides a portage across the Auckland isthmus. For iwi, this route traditionally provided a natural infrastructure of food, connection and economic production.

In the colonial economy the river and portage played a crucial role in the urbanisation of Auckland, as both a transport route for food grown in the fertile land to the south, and as a source of clay. Along the riverbanks numerous brick and pipeworks produced an astonishing array of goods, all shipped along the waterway to the building sites of the inner city.

Unfortunately, in the latter decades it was also used to drain away by-product materials from factories situated on the riverbanks resulting in heavy pollution. But thanks to the efforts of various groups like the Scouts, the Watercare Harbour Clean Up and Whau Catchment Trusts, the river



New Lynn Scouts helping to unload the Phil Warren 2 of rubbish picked up from the river.

Photo: Andrew Stevens

is now regaining its health and becoming a more enjoyable place to play.

For the New Lynn Scouts, this river, due to its sheltered nature, has been an important training ground since the early sixties: an ideal resource to take the younger members for their first experiences out on the water, right through to the older members, who will often go for a longer row then drop anchor to go for a swim.

Thus, the Scouts have a vested interest in helping restore this important waterway back to its former glory. Every year for the past couple of decades, the New Lynn Sea Scouts have teamed up with the WHCUT and WRCT to help keep the Whau River clean. Over more recent years a Flotilla on the Whau event has also been run to encourage the community to celebrate this

waterway. This year both activities were brought together on what ended up being a fine winters day following a week of wild weather up and down the country.

The afternoon on the water started with the arrival of the Phil Warren 2 laden with rubbish picked up from the water earlier. This boat is named in honour of a former chairman of the past Auckland Regional Council, and is tasked with keeping the waters of the Waitemata Harbour free from floating rubbish.

After unloading the vessel, a procession of boats, some rowing, others canoeing, paddle boarding or under sail, headed from Archibald Park up to the pontoon at the Westend Rowing Club where members from the Club hosted a BBQ lunch for all.

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As the tide turned, it was then time to head back down the river collecting more rubbish along the way. This was against the tide to get back to Archibald Park making it hard work for the rowers for the last few hundred metres as the tidal stream picked up, while the fickle wind made it a challenge for those under sail.

At the end of the day, it was satisfying to fill another rubbish skip so full that it was overflowing, a great result for the health of the waterways.

The New Lynn Sea Scout Group caters for boys and girls aged 5 - 19 years. So if you want a slice of action on the water, or to go camping and explore the awesome adventure playground that we are

blest with out West, then give Andrew a ring on 027 6939 756 or check out www.newlynn.seascouts.org.nz for more details
By Andrew Stevens



A successful haul of rubbish removed from the harbour