

Beach birthday

It's a beautiful spring morning at Waipu Cove, the waves are being brushed clean by a light offshore breeze, and my interview subject is sitting at a picnic table outside the Waipu Surf Life Saving Club, taking in his glorious surrounds.

Club Registrar and Life Member, Ian Godfrey, explains that the club was started in 1928 in a wooden building that is still partly visible in the cafe opposite the car park at Waipu Cove. 'It was started by Edwin McMillan with some friends and family. The club is the oldest in the Northern Region.'

Ian has done an amazing job of collating the club's history into a 200-page book that will be on sale at the club's 90th anniversary celebration, to be held on the weekend of October 26-28. 'We've got a mix and mingle on the Friday night, then a big day on the beach for families on Saturday with lots of events for the kids. There's a club dinner on Saturday night and a choice of golf, croquet, bowls or a coastal walk on Sunday,' Ian tells me. My eye lights upon Saturday's giant treasure hunt and I wonder if there is an age restriction.

'We've had a great response and we're building the data base,' says Ian. 'We're also using it as a practice run for the centenary which will be on us before we know it.'

The campground alongside the club is crowded over the summer period, with up to 2000 people at the height of the season, and it provides a good pool of talent for the ongoing life of the club. This is supplemented by new generations of stalwart families, and growth of the local community has resulted in more young people joining the club. 'We're back to about 90% members from Waipu and Whangarei, and 10% from Auckland,' explains Ian. 'At one stage, during the late 70s and early 80s, it was around 99% Aucklanders.'

There is no finer location for a party, overlooking the surf and beautiful view across Bream Bay. For anyone interested in the celebrations, visit the club website for full details.

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