**Waikato River Adventure - Using British Seagulls**

“Originally using British Seagull Outboards and nowadays modern 5-6 hp single cylinder engines”

A series of articles to prepare for the Waikato river adventure, particularly if using a classic British Seagull Outboard.

**History:**

This river adventure started back in the 1980’s with two gentleman challenging each other to see who could get from the Karapiro Dam to Hoods landing (Waiuku) first, Using British Seagull Outboards.

They took a week after stopping at all the watering holes along the way….

We have moved on from those days and do a two day adventure at Easter.

**Schedule:**

Friday night stay in Cambridge for the Karapiro camp ground and Saturday at the Rangiriri Hotel to enjoy meals and overnight accommodation.

Telephone the Rangiriri Hotel on 07 826 3467 for bookings.

Meet Easter Friday at Karapiro camp grounds 1200hrs to 1600hrs for scrutineering and a briefing

Easter Saturday: 0800 hrs start for slower vessels followed by 0830, 0900 and 0930 for the other classes.

Easter Sunday: 0800hrs start with a briefing covering navigation and the delta area

Sunday 1700hrs: Prize giving, a meal and social function hosted at the Waiuku Golf Club

**Prep for Waikato River Adventure**

**“The Boat”**

The type of hull and its weight will dictate whether you are going to be plane-ing or a displacement vessel! Even classic British Seagulls will get on the plane in their standard form, if well prepared and with the right hull.

The flat bottom hull is the easiest to get on to the plane. Parallel chine stops it from squatting at the stern.

* Length for one-person (recommended) 12ft or 3.6m (flat bottom)
* For two persons 14ft to 20ft (4.8 to 6m)

Note: Pelin Boat Plans (Buddy 15ft, 4.5m) is a good base design, keeping the chines parallel, build in light ply and reducing the height of the sides.

I recommend for the first time, you start with a 12ft tinnie and a good 102 or silver century outboard.

**“The Motor”**

The two best classics are the silver century and 102 model with a standard gearbox. Not the barge models! Ensure you have a well serviced engine which will be reliable.

**“Pre-Run”**

Clean out the fuel tank. Clean the carburettor and clean out the gearbox. Clean the points and set. A new set of rings will help performance. Use a 10:1 mix – either 30 grade engine oil or a good two stroke oil.

**“The Prop”**

Most important –three things are in the water. The Prop, gearbox and hull.

Spend some time on removing dags from the leading edges of the prop and gearbox will help. The prop can be improved if you know how, by thinning pitching and reducing the blade area followed by TESTING.

The bottom of the hull should be smooth and clean with nothing to create drag.

The Cavitation plate on the outboard should be parallel with the bottom of the hull and just 5-10mm below. A larger cavitation plate helps keep the water around the prop and stops cavitation when running the motor at this height.

The benefits of running the outboard high:

* Less likely to run aground
* Less likely to hit submerged objects
* FASTER!!

**“Testing, Testing, Testing”**

A word that seems alien to many!!

A minimum testing program before the event is doing a least two one-hour test sessions on the water. I can guarantee your testing will not go smoothly but you can sort these issues out in a controlled environment. Launching into a fast flowing river without things running well is not a good start – either for your or for the support boats.

**“Tips”**

Run a tell-tale hose from the outboard up to the front of the boat so you can see the water being pumped – you will notice if the flow slows, or turn to steam. You can then clear leaves etc from the water intake before you end up seizing the motor. Use a standard outboard remote tank and use the squeeze pump to transfer fuel to the outboard tank.

Spare Engine: If you are not 100% confident, take a spare engine or at least a good supply of parts.

**“Navigation”**

Reading the water is probably the most important thing and will make the difference between an enjoyable or challenging day, not to mention the number of springs broken!

**Saturday DAY ONE:**

Fast flowing water down to Cambridge. But besides the odd log or rock it is “relatively” deep and clear. Ngaruawahia to Rangiriri is where you need to start navigating by following the river flow. To the long way around corners and when on a long straight, 90% of the time it will be deepest on one side – or the other. Often you will have to change sides and this is when you should try to read the signs of shallows, sandbars, logs etc.

**Sunday DAY TWO:**

Challenges will continue on Sunday down to Mercer but even more intense. Definitely the navigator’s section!

Mercer down to the Marae is open and subject to wind and tide and can be a sharp chop, uncomfortable and wet! Long boats have an advantage here.

Marae to Hoods Landing (Delta Area)

Turn right opposite the Marae, then turn left near the end of a long westbound straight. Turn right (very easy with a modern GPS or navigation app) into Hoods landing boat ramp. Do your due diligence!

**“Part of the challenge”**

Precautions: Make sure you have a full tank of fuel before entering the delta area. Running out of fuel and ending up in the reeds makes it hard to get to deep water again with wind and fighting the reeds.

**“Comfort and Warmth”**

Enduring approximately 5-7 hours each day when not warm or comfortable makes for a less than enjoyable trip. Good clothing/wet weather gear and a comfortable seat is a must. This could be a cheap swivel seat or a bean bag!

A plank of timber from the back seat to the middle seat works well so you can straddle while facing forward with an extension tiller just behind your back, resting on the seat or located in cutouts.

**“What to Take” and how much?**

Depending on your speed you should use between 12-20 litres per day (approx.) Work on 3 litres per hour and approximately 8 knots of speed. If you only get to 6-7 knots that’s ok as the river flow will give you the rest – at least on Day 1.

Travel time x Fuelburn rate = Fuel volume

Use your test days to work out fuel usage

Safety equipment: Life jacket, tow pope, bailer, spare engine (or parts), tools. You should know what you need after a couple of “test days”.

**“Sandbars”**

These can be seen by a band of water with ripples on the surface. The band can be 6m across or more. There will be a channel around the bar at the end but may be only a metre or two wide and very close to the bank. The sandbar can go bank to bank.

Logs will leave a disturbance on the surface if they are below and are obvious if above!

**“Tips”**

Don’t go down the middle of the river. In most cases this is the shallowest. Either side is usually deeper.

When entering say a right-hand bend don’t cut corners, go the long way around (e.g. left bank) and when you enter a long straight with a left-hand bend at the end, the main flow will cross from the left bank to the right bank, approximately mid-way along the straight. Not always so use your eyes!

**“Tell Tale”**

When you stop, or after you have stopped your engine to clear leaves or fix a broken prop spring if you have a clutch you need to give it a good rev to start the water flow or if not give it some good power, you have river flow going the same way as you are and need the boat to move through the water to assist the water pump.

**“Go Prepared”**

The weather might be fine and sunny on the morning at start time but can change. Bring good wet weather gear and warm clothing (including a woolly hat). Tide against the wind can create a good chop and a wet spray soaking you onboard.

Have access to the bung from the inside of the boat – you can control it if water is coming onboard if the bung is open.