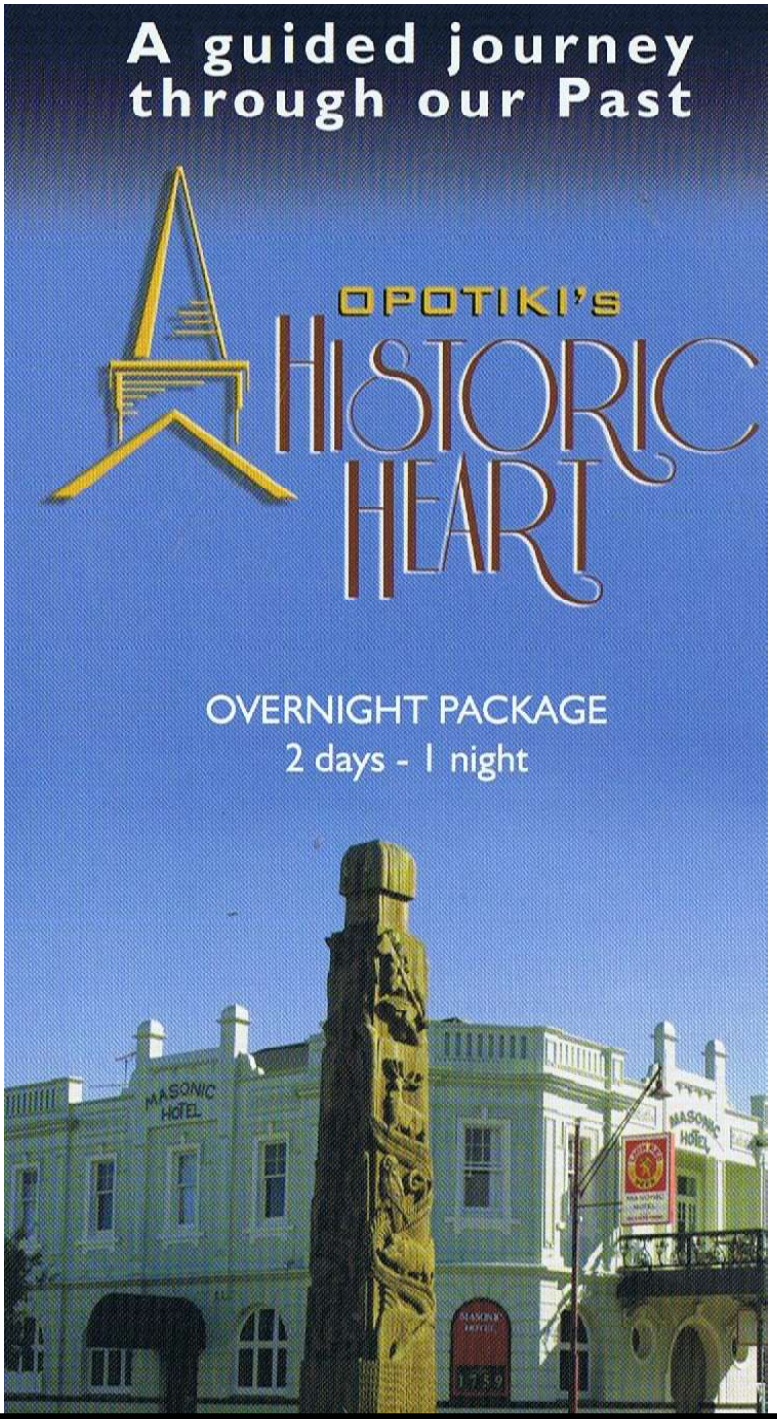


TOURISM - A LIFELONG CALLING

16 May 2018

I had the pleasure of visiting the Whirinaki Wilderness camp with a business colleague and we were both very impressed with the ‘product’ Chris had developed and promoted. We also had some superb trout fishing in virtually untouched streams.

...

Chris has long experience in the Central North Island-Bay of Plenty region. He has strong knowledge of the coastal areas and hinterland, its Maori culture and what to see and do. This considerable knowledge and experience will be an asset to anyone wanting to market this region.

...

I have absolutely no hesitation in recommending Chris for any tourism promotions role because he has certainly delivered beyond expectations in my time.

- Jim Little, Chief Executive Tourism West Coast
(former CE of Tourism Lake Taupo and CE of Tourism Bay of Plenty)
04 August 2012

Key statemements elevant to role

Key statements relevant to role

Communications, public relations, promotions and marketing - in all their forms - have been my life and my love since my childhood. From the publication of my first-ever newspaper article, at the aged of 11, this was to be my chosen career path. My epitaph may well record that 'this was his destiny'.

Dovetailed with that has been 30 years of tourism development, operations, marketing and promotions, which began in 1983. In that time I have assisted a wide range of tourism and events operators with all manner of communications, marketing and promotions, publicity across the various platforms and development planning. That work is on-going. As much as communications is my base discipline, tourism has become my life's calling.

My three years on the national executive of the New Zealand Adventure Tourism Council (1993-1996) established my credentials on a bigger stage, representing Central North Island operators in that forum. During this time I played a role in the development of the first-ever codes of practice for the commercial horse trekking, sea kayaking and guided walks sectors.

Highlights of my tourism career have included the six offshore tourism marketing missions I have undertaken. These took me right to the coalface of the international market:-

- To Australia with Sir Edmund Hillary as part of the Walk New Zealand promotion organised by Tourism New Zealand in 1997, attracting 6000 consumers in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane
- To the United States in 2003 with Tourism New Zealand on its first-ever indigenous Maori marketing mission (face-to-face presentations to 18 tour wholesalers in four cities, including Hawaii)
- To the United States and Germany in 2004, for Whirinaki Rainforest Experiences
- To Germany and Holland in 2006, 2007 and 2008, for Whirinaki Rainforest Experiences

I have also acquired significant experience of, and appreciation for, Maori cultural tourism and tikanga, having been a founding director of the international marketing consortium Maori ExperieNZ and a founding and current director of Central North Island Maori Tourism (the MRTO for our region).

Mr Birt was able to quickly bring together elements, both within our Council and externally, to provide momentum in marketing and promoting a region of the North Island that is well off the established tourism trail.

...

During my long association with Mr Birt over a period of some 30 years, I have always appreciated his professionalism in all spheres, his personal loyalty, his reliability and his innovation in the way he approaches communications and marketing. He is an ideas man but also provides the follow-through necessary to achieve results.

...

He is a people person who relates well to all those he comes into contact with and he has both a sound knowledge of the workings of Local Government and the ability to be able to respond to the internal politics that we often experience in that arena.

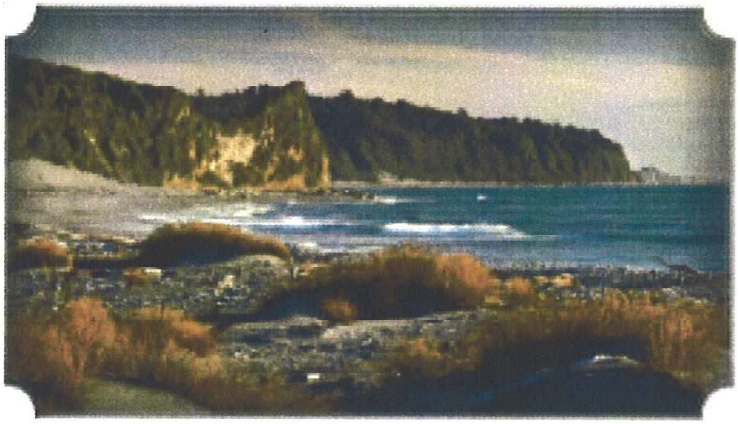
- Doug Leeder, Opotiki District Councillor
Former Chairman Tourism and Promotions Committee
23 January 2012

West Coast

Whitebait Patties & OTHER TREATS

by Chris Birt

There's always been something disconcerting about the little eyes that look so forlornly out of the patties, or fritters as some prefer to call them. But that all changes the minute one sinks one's teeth into the transparent, delectable little creatures, surrounded by a patty mixture which would put Colonel Sanders to shame. Absolutely scrumptious - and the taste lingers. The first reaction is to ask for more...



That's something Tony and Moana Kerr of the Curly Tree Whitebait Company at Haast, near the southern end of the West Coast of the Southern Alps of New Zealand, not only welcome, but expect

The whole of the West Coast is, from early September till mid November, whitebait country and the small

I'm at Curly Tree Whitebait on this trip, and listening to Moana tell the story of the whitebait – its annual migration up the rivers which dot almost the length of the region, and especially the legends that have been created since humans first reached the Coast – is fascinating. Many involve tall tales, as is the tradition with fishermen in the world over.

Key career highlights

Key career highlights

- 12 years of daily newspaper journalism (three papers in New Zealand and two in Australia)

- 2 years as a photo-journalist/feature writer for two Australian magazines covering the length and breadth of New Zealand

- 32 years as Editor and Publisher of etourismnz.com (formerly The New Zealand Tourism Report). Now New Zealand's longest-established specialist tourism newsletter. Continuing role as Editor.

- 30 years as contract public relations, promotions and marketing advisor to commercial entities across a diverse range of sectors, specialising in tourism and events

- Contract magazine writer and photographer within New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region

- Production of marketing and communications strategies/plans and international market development plans for the tourism and events sectors

As a teacher at Taupo Nui A Tia [College] I was the co-ordinator of Duke of Edinburgh award expeditions. As such I contracted Mr Birt to set up multi-day tramps in the Whirinaki Forest Park and numerous other locations over a 10 year period. His knowledge and management of that environment and the logistics involved were exceptional. There are many ex students who have benefitted from his expertise.

...

Sadly he has moved on from the events scene and concentrated on his one enduring passion - promotion of the Whirinaki Forest Park. In this endeavour he has exposed this precious area to a wide group of visitors either on day or overnight excursions.

...

I have noted over the years he is painstaking in his organisational skills and has a great respect for the environment and cultural care of this wonderful landscape and the Tangata Whenua.

- Keith Crate, former Taupo District Councillor
Former Event Director Lake Taupo Cycle Challenge
16 November 2012

aori-experienz
pure culture

Te Panui

Official Newsletter of the tourism export marketing consortium Maori Experienz

Aotearoa - New Zealand Issue Seven August 2007

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meetings of Maori Experienz Ltd and the Maori Experience De
Charitable Trust are to be held in Rotorua on
WEDNESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2007
commencing at 1pm. The formal agenda and advice of the venue will be circulated to m

CONSORTIUM PROVES ITS VALUE

Maori Experienz has carved a niche as the biggest and most influential Maori tourism marketing consortium in Aotearoa New Zealand.
But the true extent of the business interests of the collective MENZ membership has only now been accurately assessed, by way of an independent survey.
The survey was conducted for the Maori Experienz Development Charitable Trust by Snowden and Associates of Auckland.
Since being completed in March, two new members have joined the export marketing focused collective - Tohu Wines and the Indigenous Arts Trust.

This has further boosted the group's status.
However at the time the survey was conducted, MENZ consisted of 21 member companies, with a collective annual turnover of $15.1 million.
The consortium's members have $35.6 million in assets and employ 211 people.
Trust chairman Graham Hall says these figures speak for themselves.
"This group of export-ready organisations - who are focused on tourism, creative and performing arts, wine and indigenous food - is now a significant player in all the sectors in which it is involved," Graham says.

"Over the last
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The MENZ g
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within Aotear

The Maori Experienz marketing message and the unique differences that the Maori cultural tourism available only in Aotearoa New Zealand can offer is reaching into the far-flung corners of the world.
In recent weeks, MENZ member Moana Maniapoto has been back in Russia, presenting both traditional and contemporary music and song to audiences across that vast continent.
MENZ in-bound operator John Panoho (pictured with Moana Maniapoto outside St Basil's Cathedral in Red Square) seized the opportunity the promote the activities and services provided by members of this country's

Events experience

Events Experience

- 3 years as publicist for Lake Taupo Winterfest (3 years) created and operated by the tourism and events marketing division of the Taupo District Council (1992-1995)

- 13 years as publicist/media advisor for the Crater to Lake multi-sport challenge, the original winter event for New Zealand - Ruapehu crater to Taupo town (1993-2006)

- 6 years as publicist/media officer for the Lake Taupo Cycle Challenge, New Zealand's biggest annual cycling event (1995-2001)

- 2 years as international marketing advisor to the Lake Taupo Cycle Challenge, including production of a market development report (2010) and a dedicated marketing and promotions campaign for Australia (2011)

Chris' lengthy experience as a journalist and media advisor was ably demonstrated by the material he produced, whether it be the articles or photographs for the newsletters we produce, or media releases for dissemination to news organisations in our region.

...

The aspect I valued most for Chris is that all I needed to do was advise him of the deadline for a newsletter or media release and he would do the rest. Chris arranged interviews with the victims of accidents or other misadventures and travelled (often long distances to very remote areas) to get the inside story. The editorial content he produced was extremelly well written and captured the human aspects we look for in publicising our work.

...

I personally miss Chris Birt's professionalism and writing flair and the excellent time management skills he possesses. I can recommend him for any senior or executive role involving media advisor, public relations, promotions and sponsorship support.

- Kylie Harcourt, Marketing and Sponsorship Manager
Philips Search and Rescue Trust
17 December 2007

West Coast

GO WEST

Exploring the Coast

by Chris Birt

The region is known to Kiwis as the Coast and the people as Coasters. Now increasingly, Australians are also discovering this narrow strip of green alongside the rampaging surf of the Tasman Sea...

In a country that's so well endowed with natural features, amazing experiences and stunning landscapes, it's difficult to find a particular region of distinction. But on driving into the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island, I knew immediately that I'd found such a place.

The region is known to Kiwis as the Coast and the people as Coasters. Now increasingly, Australians are also discovering this narrow strip of green alongside the rampaging

would want to. The West Coast of the Southern Alps is spectacular and provides such a variety of experiences and sights that it ought not to be rushed, under any circumstances.

There are several ways of getting into the Coast, but for my visit, I flew to Nelson, at the tip of the South Island, and drove along the eastern fringes of the Kahurangi National Park, one of the country's newest conservation areas and, at 452,000 hectares, the second largest

Chronology of career

Chronology of career

- 1970-1982: Daily newspaper journalist - Bay of Plenty Times; New Zealand Herald; Taranaki Herald; Daily News-Gold Coaster; Courier Mail

- 1983-1984: Photo-journalist/New Zealand correspondent People Magazine and Australasian Post

- 1983-1984: Publicist for White Water Adventure Tours, pioneer operator in North Island rafting industry

- 1984-1996: Founder and operator of Rafting Unlimited - grew to be the largest specialist operator on lower Mohaka River, Central North Island

1991-1994: Contract media advisor and publicist for Taupo Distrrict Council's inaugural tourism and events marketing division

1996>: Founding member of the Walk New Zealand international marketing group representing multi-day walk operators (established by Tourism New Zealand) and the only North Island member to this day

1993-2018: Developer and operator of first tourism business in Whirinaki Forest Park, operating initially as Trek Whirinaki, then rebranded to Whirinaki Guided Walks and subsequently to Whirinaki Rainforest Experiences

2009-2011: Contract tourism and marketing advisor to Opotiki District Council

2011-2013: Research/business development contractor for Toi-EDA (the Eastern Bay of Plenty economic development agency) and Lake Taupo Cycle Challenge, and contract media services/communications practitioner for commercial clients

2013-14: Special projects manager for Lake Taupo Cycling Trust, with responsibility for development of a new recreational cycling tour of the central North Island (launched March 2015)

Referees

Jim Little, Chief Executive Tourism West Coast

[redacted]

Doug Leeder, former Opotiki District Councillor (now Chairman BOP Regional Council)

[redacted]

Kylie Harcourt, Marketing and Sponsorship Manager

[redacted]

- a 22-page testimonials document is available on request