

RUATARA

The quarterly magazine of Vaughan Park Retreat Centre || Number 1 || Winter 2018



Welcome to this first edition of *Ruatara*, the Vaughan Park Anglican Retreat Centre's quarterly magazine. We hope that it will enable you to keep up to date with our ministry to both 'stranger and friend'.

I hope that you will enjoy reading our new magazine named after Ngāpuhi Chief, Ruatara. As a mark of good friendship, Chief Ruatara invited the Rev. Samuel Marsden to Rangihoua, in the Bay of Islands, Aotearoa, New Zealand. That enabled Samuel Marsden to share the gospel with his people. Theirs was a relationship of reciprocity filled with warmth and hospitality. Consent to use the name of Ruatara as the title of our magazine was sought from Pihopa Te Kitohi Pikaahu of Te Tai Tokerau who offered us his blessing.

After a very good 2017, both financially and in terms of numbers of people who came, 2018 started fast and furiously with our Anglican Diocese Summer Adventure Camp. It went extremely well in so many ways, and so it's with excitement we are able to advertise the next one: Jan 18th-20th, 2019. We hope you will come!

Last November, the Governance Board met, and discussed a new Five-Year Plan. It adopted it as a blueprint for the future development of Vaughan Park. Adding to the very good work that has been done over the years, we wish to

add new ministries so that Vaughan Park continues to be known as a place of "Generous Hospitality" and grace where "Spacious Conversations" may be known, all leading, we hope, to people who come here discovering "Life in Greater Fullness".

One of this year's aims is to develop our gardens. At the heartbeat, will be a labyrinth which can be used reflectively by retreatants and the local community. There is further information in this magazine about The Garden Project, and hopefully you might feel called to support it.

Another project we have all been working on has been the *Hikoi Rangihoua*, the pilgrimage that starts at the Cathedral, our mother church for Anglicans, and weaves itself around 300 kilometres via Vaughan Park, to Rangihoua and the Marsden Cross. We are indebted to Bishop Ross and Bishop Kito for their past profound support. We value your prayers as the Board considers its vision and strategy.

Vaughan Park celebrates, its twenty-first anniversary this year! We are thankful to all of you who have



Iain Gow, director of Vaughan Park Anglican Retreat Centre

supported us in some way – you are our family.

Finally, and something to make you laugh! Be part of a quiz – 'Guess how many 'sleeps' we provide here each year to guests?' A tip: it's in the thousands! If you email us your answer by the end of July, we will announce the winner in our next issue of *Ruatara*. And what will you win? A weekend at Vaughan Park!

Blessings,





Ruatara

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architectural note, worthy of its purpose and name became a defining reality for the Centre and the three Tikanga Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia.

John is an integral part of Vaughan Park's history. His enterprise and hard work will live on in the ministry and continuing hospitality, conversation and theological encounter that identify the purpose and Christian ministry of the Centre.

May John and Dianne long continue to enjoy the views of beautiful Long Bay.

A creative prophet disturbing the security of the status quo: John Alexander

John has recently retired as Diocesan Representative on the Governance Board of Vaughan Park. The Rev. John Fairbrother, former Director (2003 – 2013) offers an appreciation of John's significant contribution to secure Vaughan Park's meaning and continuity for church and society.

The deck at Vaughan Park on a brilliantly fine spring afternoon can be an idyllic spot. None better for the initial meeting, between John Alexander and the about-to-become new Director of the Centre in 2002. It became an immediate meeting of minds, ministry and unquenchable humour.

Along with the many who have contributed to the Centre's story so far, John stands out as one who has, for many years, striven to secure its meaning and continuity for both church and society.

John has given freely of his time, energy and commercial knowledge serving as Diocesan Representative on the Governance Board. From day to day he has made himself easily accessible to the Director and members of staff. His advice, encouragement, entrepreneurial flair and enquiring mind have long served to support governance and management with all the hallmarks of a creative prophet disturbing the security of the status quo.

John and Dianne are people of Faith.

The Anglican Church stands at the centre of their lives as their means to find and share meaning about the sacred depths of relationships and worth of building community. Their discipleship of the Way is clear to see in their contributions to St Mary's Anglican Parish, Vaughan Park, various roles in the Auckland Diocese and the Selwyn Village. John and Dianne are a remarkable team.

While stories abound about John, there is one, for the writer at least, that holds almost symbolic significance. In 2003 it became apparent the role of Director required a stand-alone office as part of the day-to-day management. Additional space was not readily apparent. The current solution was far from adequate. The problem remained.

On another of those lovely Long Beach days John and the Director were standing midway along the shell path. John, almost casually, observed the Chapel had never been built. The present Chapel had been intended as a library. John quietly asked/observed: "Why don't we build a Chapel and convert the current space to the Director's office?" John and Director looked at the hillside above the path, looked at one another and concluded the idea, funds notwithstanding, seemed perfect. There and then, the decision was made to approach the Governance Board.

The rest, as the saying goes, has become history. A building of

Major fund-raising appeal launched to create an International Garden of Significance

An appeal has been launched to create an International Garden of Significance at Vaughan Park which will bring meaning, beauty, community engagement and accessibility to all.

At the centre of the Garden will be a Labyrinth, an ancient symbol of circle and spiral, a metaphor for what is sacred in our lives, holding all our life experiences in its ancient form and spacious pathways. It represents a journey to our centre and our return to the communities and the world in which we live.

“Vaughan Park is a special place where people find solace and flourishing in equal measure,” says Linda Gow, Project Manager. “The enhancement of the Garden and the addition of a Labyrinth will offer an inspirational and creative place where meaning and healing can be experienced. We are aiming to raise \$100,000 to grow our Garden and create the Labyrinth, and we need generous support to make that happen. Any contribution, however small, will be very much appreciated.”

You may like to donate towards some specific items that are needed: Pavers @ \$55 each; Hedge Plants @ \$10 each; 15 Evergreen Clipped Plants @ \$100 each; 23 Trees @ \$150 each; 2 Steel seats @ \$3,000 each; or make a general donation.

The Garden is to be designed by Linda's sister, Chris Prebble of Mosaic Design in Wellington. With degrees in Botany and Art History, Chris worked in illustration, photography and graphic design for many years before her life-long passion for plants and a desire to create gardens led her to re-train in landscaping, gaining a Certificate in Landscaping Construction.

“I aim to create beautiful classic gardens with a contemporary edge,” says Chris. “I specialize in tree pleaching, espaliers and training plants on wires. I design climbing frames for



Chris Prebble, Mosaic Design, Wellington

plants and other structures in steel including pergolas, planter boxes, tree grates and more.”

She has exhibited her designs at the

Ellerslie International Flower Show, 2013 receiving Gold and Supreme Awards for a garden jointly designed with fellow garden designer, Rachael Matthews.

In 2014, Chris worked at the prestigious RHS Chelsea Flower Show in the plant-arranging team for Hillier's Nursery, helping to create two gardens: the “White garden” and the “Bee garden.” Both were awarded a Gold medal.

To find out more about the Garden Appeal and to donate online, visit our website, www.vaughanpark.org.nz. You can also give via internet banking to 02 0192 0130001 03 with the reference, VP Labyrinth, and your name. All gifts are tax deductible.

International Scholars come to Vaughan Park

Our annual Residential Scholarship Programme offers people the unique opportunity to take some time out to study and work on a particular research or writing project for a period of one month or two months.

Scholars are nurtured throughout their stay with a supportive environment in which to study and write. Comfortable cottage accommodation is provided as well as all meals. Long Bay with its golden stretch of sand and views of the Hauraki Gulf, is only a few steps from the Centre and nearby public transport links offer easy access to Auckland city and beyond.

We are inviting applications for two month residencies in March-April, June-July and September- October 2019 and four one month residencies in February, May, August and November 2019.

Applications (which close on 7th September 2018), should be made in writing to the Scholarship Grants Committee of the Vaughan Park Governance Board and should include:

- a short biography,
- an abstract and/or portfolio and the overall context of the project
- your date preference
- references from two referees

Take a look at the Scholarships page on our website to find out more.

We'd love to hear updates from our Scholars. Contact the Editor, hilaryoxfordsmith@vaughanpark.org.nz



Grace Bower reads a story to Emerson Rockell.

Fun in the sun at Summer Adventure Weekend

Grace Bower went along to the Summer Adventure Weekend at Vaughan Park. It changed her life.

As a friend of the Vaughan Park Retreat Centre from the first year of its operation, I take every opportunity to enjoy the great hospitality offered, the world-class views and the corporate standard of food.

When the first advertisement appeared for a Summer Adventure Weekend, I immediately felt that this was a weekend where an older non-grandmother on her own, could enjoy a family-based event, organized by Vaughan Park and the Diocese of Auckland, at a reasonable price.

There was a whole range of ages from 18 months to 87 years there - from parents with teenagers to parents with younger children, to a grandmother and granddaughter, to women with and without their children and people like me, on my own and not knowing other participants. I had registered early, but due to personal family circumstances,

I was hesitant about moving out of my comfort zone. My confidence, though, in the magic of Vaughan Park was abundantly filled.

One of the leaders told me that she had done many camps, but ours didn't feel like work at all. It ran so smoothly and offered many choices and activities for every participant.

On Friday the early arrivals enjoyed an afternoon at the beach before the first meal gave everyone a taste of what was to come and how special it is to forget shopping and cooking and dishes for the weekend.

That first evening was a real old-fashioned family night with activities such as board games and jigsaws and the first delightful connections between new friends. People were free to wander and chat and interact with each other. A contingent from up North connected with cousins from the South - what a great idea.

The evening culminated in a gathering in the beautiful Ruatara Chapel for family evening prayers that included a maritime adventure story from the Bible - not Jonah - but Paul's shipwreck. Josh Jones, the musician on the team, gave us spiritual food through morning and evening prayer times and at Sunday morning Eucharist.

Saturday was maritime education day at the Sir Peter Blake Marine Education and Recreation Centre (MERC) next door, with a world-class group of professionals offering fun education to our new family. There were two sessions - morning tea - two sessions - a packed picnic lunch and two-afternoon sessions.

Some of the planned decisions changed as there was exciting news that it was perfect weather for sailing - much to the delight of the participants. I loved seeing how some families

Retreats and Workshops programme 2018

Our exciting and diverse programme of Retreats and Workshops for 2018 is inspiring people from all over Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond to come to Vaughan Park and share in a journey of discovery, transformation, faith, creativity and wellness.

Come and see how this space and place will endear itself to you. Relax, share, learn, enjoy and find purpose in all the ways you are seeking to enrich your life.



29th June-1st July

Letters to a Missing Woman: Facilitator, Maree Aldridge

6th-8th July

Living Room: A walk through the house of my life: Facilitators, Fran Francis and Kris Telfer

14th July

St Thomas the Apostle: From Doubt to Faith, to Kerala, India and beyond: An Ecumenical Morning in collaboration with Mercy Spirituality Centre, Auckland.

1st September

Introduction to Meditation in the Christian Tradition: Facilitator, Vincent Maire

7th-8th September

Gently Tending Grief: Facilitator, Dr. Hilary Oxford Smith and harpist, Julie Saraswati

13th October

The Spirituality of Music - I heard there was a secret chord: Facilitator the Rev. Josh Jones

To find out more about our Retreats and to register, go to www.vaughanpark.org.nz and click Programme on the Home Page.

did everything together, and others took the opportunities to mix and match their children. There was great camaraderie as everyone cheered each other on during the activities, whether at the beach, building rafts and kayaks or abseiling and learning about marine biology at MERC and exploring marine life at the beach.

After another delicious dinner, we all gathered for a concert. Two of the younger girls MC'd the evening brilliantly. I loved hearing a mother answer her two daughters who asked her, "Why didn't you tell us about the concert?". She replied, "that was information that I chose to withhold."

I remember church camps when my girls were little and I loved that this mother made sure that the weekend break was for her as well. The variety of concert items was concluded with

beautiful waiata and a haka by the group from Northland, who reluctantly had to return home to fulfill commitments in their congregation.

After supper, a group of us sat around as Josh sang and played a wide range of our favourite songs.

Sunday was a later start and we had a leisurely breakfast. Bishop Ross Bay celebrated the Eucharist outside at the amphitheatre in the gardens of Vaughan Park. Some of the children had gathered decorations for the altar and families went up the shell-lined path together to receive communion. The Bishop gave us an inspiring challenge to take what we had learned back to our places of living, working and worshipping.

Everyone left with a desire to return the following year. It will be interesting to see how friendships have developed

over this year and what reconnections may happen at Summer Adventure Camp 2019.

I am often reminded of the families I met and their family circumstances, especially as some of the children were beginning a new term in their educational journeys. Even if I don't see them again, meeting and sharing with them on that summer weekend continues to be a very happy memory for me. I will be encouraging others to take the opportunity to be there next year.

A huge thank you to Jacolize Becker, Children and Family Ministry Facilitator for the Anglican Diocese of Auckland and Marion Nickerson, Operations Manager at Vaughan Park, who carried the vision through and provided us with a holiday to remember - in body, mind, and spirit.

Between the Tides

Dr. Julie Thorpe

I barely got on the plane. My stomach reflux flared up again after a workshop in Manchester. My doctor in Sydney had given me enough tablets to tide me over until I started my sabbatical in New Zealand, a three-month fellowship at a retreat centre on a sheltered strip of beach at Long Bay. But not even strong medication could quell my familiar companion as I took leave of absence from work and any semblance of home.

My body must have known it was headed in the right direction as soon as we lifted above the clouds. We crossed over Erbil where refugees sought safety in the Kurdish capital thousands of metres below my window seat and continents away from the safe haven awaiting me. I had never felt more grateful to be on a plane.

"The project you came with may not be the project you leave with," warned John Fairbrother, the Director, over our first cup of tea in the dining room.

I'd applied to write stories of displacement, the lost threads of girls who'd fled war. Bright roses, cats and birds, someone's initials, the intricate patterns and colours of homes and families embroidered onto cloth that a museum in Vienna had boxed in darkness for a century. To mark the war's centenary the museum exhibited the refugees' handiwork. I gave my first public lecture in Vienna two days before the workshop in Manchester.

Two years later it all seems like another lifetime. John was right. I left my project and profession and discovered my own silent threads in the dark.

Before I arrived at Vaughan Park, I'd struggled to articulate the displacement in my chosen academic life. As though my language of the past had been buried by a wave crashing from a Pacific storm and spreading its white foam carpet over my ground of understanding. As the storm receded and left a beach full of broken shells,



I started to learn to live between the tides, carried by the ocean's breath.

"It's like being inside Mary's womb," a visiting Episcopalian priest described the retreat centre chapel that overlooked the water.

We were speaking after mass on the feast of Mary's assumption six weeks into my sabbatical, but her words had nothing to do with a liturgical event. Suddenly I saw what had been happening to me in the rhythmic swelling and falling, crouching on slippery rocks and climbing steep cliffs, sitting on the heated tiles of the chapel floor with the day disappearing behind green hills. Hearing the older woman's voice outside the chapel I knew it was time. I wrote my first words of resignation as inexplicable as the assumption.

Six weeks of pacing cliffs and rocks came to a standstill. Once the inward process of leaving was set in motion I kept close to the centre, only venturing out for an errand or to sit in a café in the rain. At night I took my thermos of tea to the top of the retreat centre to watch the moon from a miniature shell garden in the shape of a koru unfurling.

"Sometimes it takes darkness," poet David Whyte says, "to learn / anything or anyone / that does not bring you alive / is too small for you."

In the presence of the moon I asked what might make me alive, doubted about ever outgrowing the confines of these broken shells, wondered if I'd be able to learn not just when to leave but also when to stay. I'd been moving so

long, I didn't know how to stop. The moon had travelled even longer than me, but she seemed to understand my need for stability. I'd stopped believing in an itinerant God who travelled to earth and died homeless. If she was a mother, she'd know how to make a home.

The stories that touched me most at Vaughan Park were the mothers of high needs children who came to unburden and find strength to give again. I could see the difference in their faces from Friday evening to Saturday as they opened up at dinner after a day of massages. The quilters were some of my favourite retreat companions with stories as vibrant as their recycled fabric: Japanese kimonos worn by monks stitched into a wedding present for a bed, scraps sewn into a keepsake for a friend or grandchild. The loudest group turned up on their motorbikes for a white ribbon ride around the country. Some had spent time in jail, some had lost children to family violence, but each taught what forgiveness sounds like when they held me in a circle with their voices soaring in a Māori hymn of peace.

Leaving Vaughan Park was harder than leaving my career. Yet in some ways I never really left. I'm still learning to live between the tides, still listening to the song of broken shells unfolding in a prayer for peace. The conversations I've become part of are like so many I joined at Vaughan Park. One of those conversations was the history of an adult faith centre in Sydney, Aquinas Academy.

"It doesn't feel finished," I told Michael Whelan, the Marist priest who invited me to write the Aquinas Academy story.

The stories are never finished. They are only given back to the ocean like the shells at high tide. Sometimes the stories have been hidden, covered up by an institution in the false name of security. Those stories, too, are carried by the tides. Sometimes the stories, like the monks' kimonos made into a wedding quilt, are stitched out of silence into blessing. I will keep listening to those prayers.

©Julie Thorpe

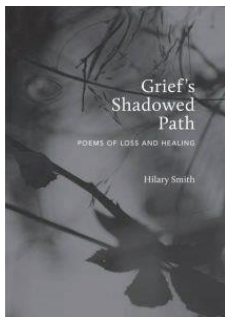
The Bookshelf

GRIEF'S SHADOWED PATH: POEMS OF LOSS AND HEALING, Hilary Smith

When someone we love dies, our lives are changed forever. Many of us grieve alone. Sometimes we find it hard to express how we really feel with family and friends, to find the space and freedom to grieve in our own way and in our own time and transition to new possibilities of living with loss.

With searing honesty and tender reflections, Hilary leads the reader through the shadows of death and loss to the possibility of renewed hope and life. Her words will resonate deeply with those who are grieving and be a treasured resource for those who care for the dying and bereaved.

EV Books, New Zealand / ISBN 978-0-473-40758-2

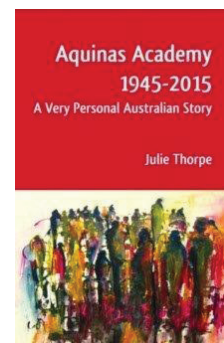


AQUINAS ACADEMY 1945 - 2015, A Very Personal Australian Story, Julie Thorpe

Dr. Julie Thorpe, Australia, (Scholar in Residence 2014) has written a deeply touching book about the people of the Aquinas Academy, Sydney, a centre of adult education founded in 1945 by Marist priest, Austin Woodbury.

She interweaves archival research and conversations with former students and staff, about childhood, war, family and the struggles to make sense of losses and loves. Readers are drawn into a very particular story and yet they will hear resonances of the stories of their own lives.

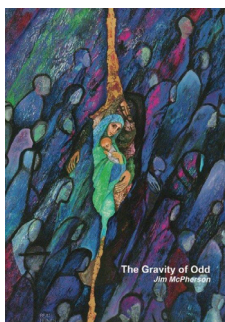
ATF Theology, Australia / ISBN 978-1-9254-8614-8



THE GRAVITY OF ODD, Jim McPherson

This latest book of poetry from the Rev. Dr. Canon Jim McPherson (Distinguished Academic Visitor, 2008), explores life, suffering, death, hope and faith. From hatchlings to humpbacks, from Nicodemus to Crooked Mick, from clowns to Tolkien, from mathematics to why 3D movie glasses work, Jim encourages us to glimpse the Odd that lies at the mysterious core of life. With prophetic passion and unsentimental faith, this book fearlessly explores what Jim's own dying might be like.

Lakeside Publishing, Australia / ISBN 978-0-244-61-930-5



A CHILD LAUGHS, Prayers of Justice and Hope, Maren C. Tirabassi and Maria Mankin

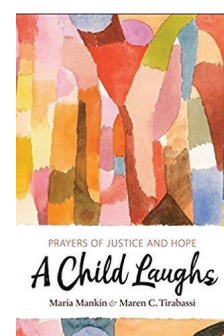
The Rev. Maren Tirabassi, a pastor in the United Church of Christ, USA has been awarded a Vaughan Park Scholarship for October.

In *A Child Laughs, Prayers of Justice and Hope*, Maren and Maria Mankin, have brought together reflections from writers across the world who have prayed their way into justice and hope from personal perspectives.

"A child's laugh should be the butterfly wing, the ripple-maker, for all the world. There are many children crying – we hear them echoing from news media. It is time to pray the change of the world in children's laughter."

This book is a passionate, challenging, thoughtful and enriching creative resource for personal contemplation and prayer, for use with church groups and for inclusion in liturgies of hope, justice and peace.

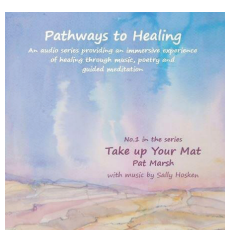
The Pilgrim Press, USA / ISBN 978-0-8298-2032-4



PATHWAYS TO HEALING, Pat Marsh

Pat was a Vaughan Park Scholar in 2010. Her meditative recording based on St. Mark 2: 1-12, combines narrative poetry and guided meditation with prayerful questioning and relaxing ambient music. It will be a valuable resource for individuals and groups.

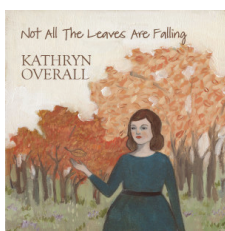
<http://patmarsh.blogspot.com>.



NOT ALL THE LEAVES ARE FALLING, Kathryn Overall

This album offers a folk-pop collection of melodic, story-telling songs infused with depth, beauty and contemplative spirituality.

<http://kathrynoverall.com>



MOMENTS is the online gateway to the contemplative life of Vaughan Park. This blogpage on our website, offers an emerging collection of articles, poetry, meditations, prayers and liturgies from international writers. It reflects the richness and diversity of Christian and multi-faith spirituality, ecumenical inclusivity and a deepening encounter with the world and its people.

The Curator and Editor, Dr. Hilary Oxford Smith is happy to speak with new and established writers, poets and liturgists who would like to explore the possibility of sharing their work with our international readership.

hilaryoxfordsmith@vaughanpark.org.nz.

All books and audio/visual products reviewed are also available to buy direct from Vaughan Park and we are happy to send overseas. If you have had a book recently published or about to be published, it could be included on The Bookshelf. Please email the Editor, hilaryoxfordsmith@gmail.com.



From left to right: Alison Squires, Mark Pierson, Linda Sines, Josh Jones, Elizabeth Whitton, Nyasha Gomba Gumbeze



New sculpture brings a story of hope

It all started a year ago, when Linda Sines from America, who was Worship Curator at a retreat at Vaughan Park, asked participants to take some pieces of coloured glass and chip away at them, as a way of contemplating their own brokenness. The glass was being damaged and its value decreased – or so it seemed.

The glass though, was being shaped for a better purpose of being able to refract and amplify light – a purpose that at the time, participants were not aware of. The colours and shapes combined to create a unique pattern reflecting the diversity of the communities and the world in which we live. As The Message Bible puts it in St. Matthew 5:14, “You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world.”

Linda and her husband John, created a Dalle de verre sculpture called Green Hope for the garden at Vaughan Park. Dalle de verre, is an art form using pieces of coloured glass set in a matrix of concrete and epoxy resin or other supporting material. The technique was developed by Jean Gaudin in Paris in the 1930’s.

The glass was set into an amazing piece of West Coast driftwood. The wood would have once been a strong tree with purpose, wisdom and dignity. A member of the community of the forest, it was probably brought down in a storm and drifted in the ocean before finding itself on a windswept shore.

And an artist came across it, discerned its story and gave it new purpose, dignity and life.

Linda’s sister, Cheryl-Del Des Jarlais, wrote a poem, *Green Hope*, the words etched in stone and placed next to the sculpture. They tell a story of the interconnectedness of all life and the pilgrimages of light and darkness that we encounter along the way.

On December 23, 2017, Green Hope was blessed by the Rev. Mark Pierson and the Rev. Iain Gow. Linda and John Sines travelled from the USA to be there and were joined by some of the participants who had been on retreat with Linda earlier in the year, and also some friends of Vaughan Park.

For all who can visit Green Hope, may you be blessed with love, hope, peace and light.

Green Hope

*Raise the darling sweet leaves shining
Shifting shafts between the green,
Glinting beams across the ripples,
Tall the beech along the shore.*

*Wild and warring, wailing storm winds
Charge the dark flanks writhing sore,
Toss the small leaves to the darkness,
Lost beyond the winter’s darkness.*

*Rip one wounded, wet and heavy
From the whakapapa shoulder,
From its deep and ancient mooring
On the rocky river shoreline.*

*Pitching, heaving through the frothing,
Braving wrecks, splintered and shattered,
Shredded breadth, the limbs all scattered,
Skewered shank spit out to sea.*

*Bare and numb, the bark rides aimless
Rest for bird and sheltering fish,
Torn on reefs and shivered gales,
Beached, cast off, and beached again.*

*Arawhata braided river
Jackson Bay and Hokitika
Lampedusa, Ellis Island
Zuwarah, Bodrum and Lesbos
Flotsam, foam, small bits and broken,
Sodden, black, undone, alone.*

*Called for--
Sought for--
Found!
Chosen!
Light! Love! Oh!
And green again.*

© Cheryl-Del Des Jarlais.



Hikoi from Vaughan Park to The Bay of Islands 4th–6th December 2018

We are hoping to offer another walking adventure in December. If you would like to know more and want to register your interest, please contact Iain Gow, director@vaughanpark.org.nz