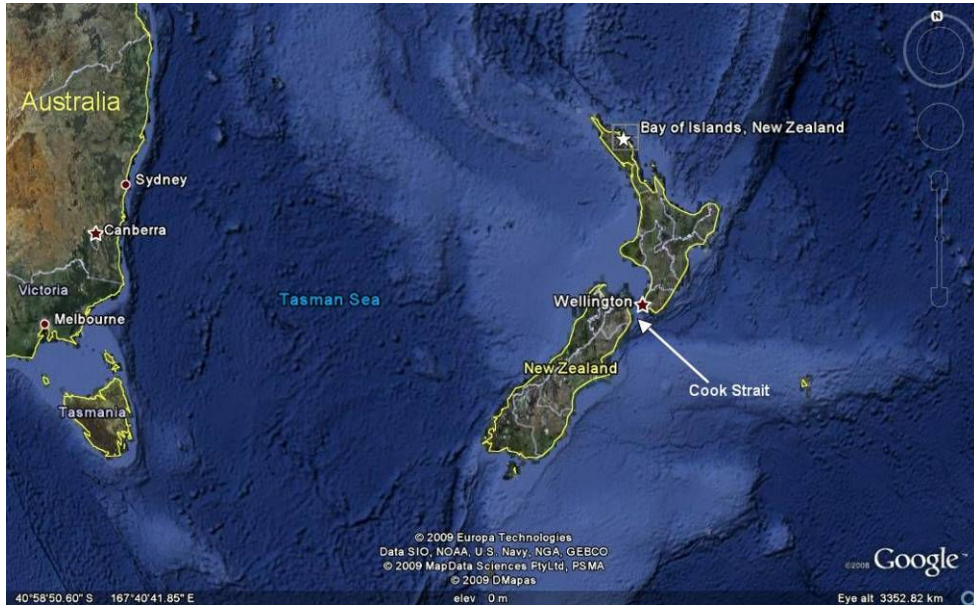
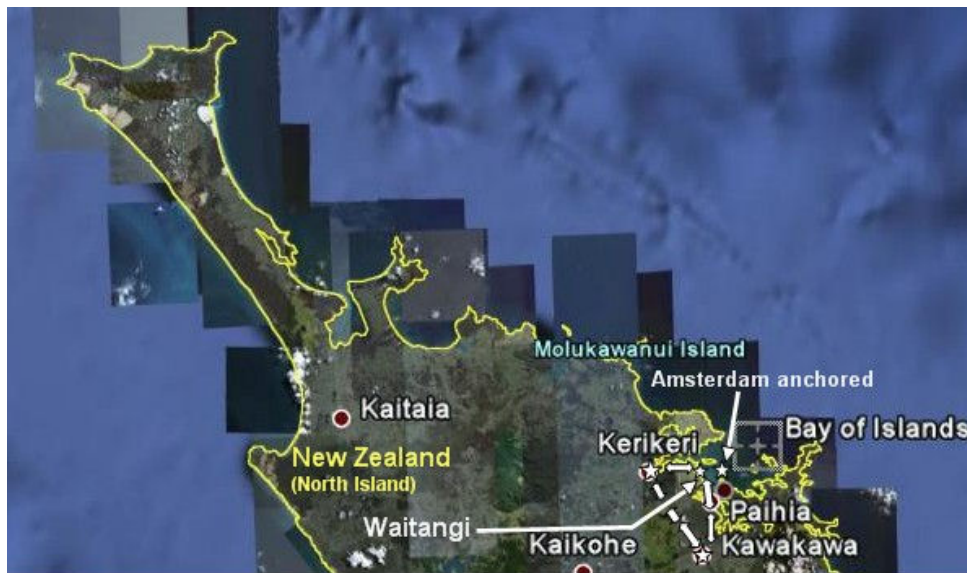


Day 51 –Bay of Islands–Hundertwasser Toilets–Waitangi–Canoe-16 Nov. 09: The day started as the Amsterdam was entering the harbor at Bay of Islands, New Zealand. The sea was calm and the temperature was in the low 60s. The Bay of Islands is on the extreme northern tip of New Zealand as shown in the map below.



Bay of Islands is a region with a large natural harbor containing a myriad of small islands. A map showing how Bay of Islands is positioned in the North Island of New Zealand is shown below.



Also shown on the map are the cities of Waitangi, Kawakawa and Kerikeri that we visited later in the day.

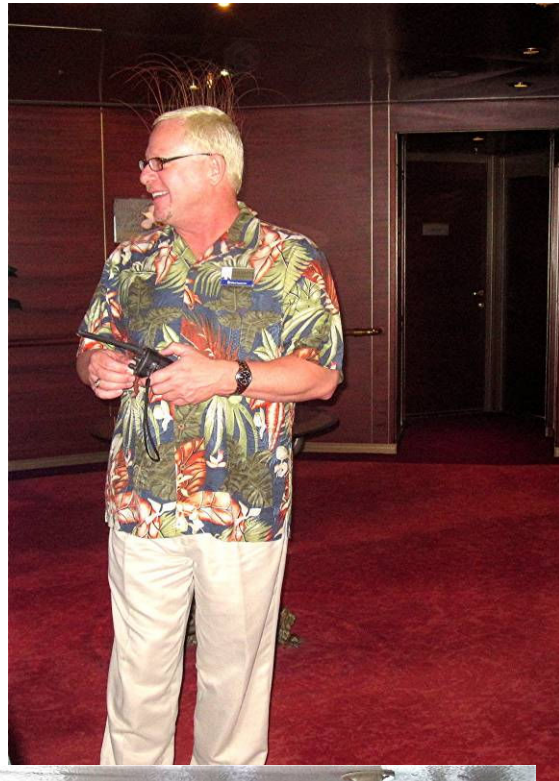
One of the beautiful islands near the entrance is shown in the picture below.



A more detailed map of the Bay of Islands and the villages of Waitangi and Paihia are shown below.



The Amsterdam anchored about 8am in the Bay of Islands a couple miles away from the towns of Waitangi and Russell. Since we were anchored it was necessary to take tender boats in to shore. We were signed up for a tour that was arranged by Karen (kweenkaren) with the Indigenous Tours Company. This was the same company that gave us a tour in Tauranga, New Zealand, a couple days ago. About 8:15 we went down to the Explorer's Lounge where we met the rest of our tour group of about 20 people. Most of people on the tour were Cruise Critic fans that had joined the tour through the Cruise Critic message board last summer. Soon, Bruce, our Cruise Director, as shown on the right, came and told us that the tender boat for our tour group was available and we could go on in to Waitangi. The bay water was calm so there was no problem boarding our tender and taking the short ride in to the tender boat passenger pier at Waitangi. We filed off of the tender boat, as shown below, looking forward to meeting Des and the people from Indigenous Tours.



On shore we met Des and his assistants, Eve and Peter. Eve and Des are shown with Karen on the right. Eve and Peter are part of Des's extended Maori family.

Des gave us a brief description of the day's tour. The route of the tour from Waitangi to Kawakawa and then to Kerikeri is shown in the map of the Bay of Islands above. Then we boarded the bus and headed out south to the city of Kawakawa.



We took pictures of houses along the way as the bus went through the town of Waitangi and out into the countryside. Some typical views are shown below.



Eve provided commentary as we went along. She said many of the residents of the urban area were retired or worked in the tourist industries. In the country there is a sizeable agricultural economy based on beef production, wool, and kiwi fruit.



We soon came to the little town of Kawakawa. The main claim to fame of this city was the fact that it contained a toilet facility designed by the famous artist and architect by the name of Hundertwasser. This seemed like an odd tourist destination so we were looking forward to see what this fine toilet would look like.

At the entrance to Kawakawa the sign for the city gave the first clue about the appearance of a Hundertwasser toilet in the support posts for the sign as shown on the right.



promised additional toilets were available in a nearby park and they were open for business, as shown on the right.

Eve had mentioned the toilets in her introduction to the city and we were left with the impression that there was something exceptional about the actual plumbing fixtures that made the toilets so famous.

The bus wound its way into town and we parked across the street from the Hundertwasser toilet. A prominently posted sign indicated the location of the toilets where we were stopped, as shown on the left. There was another sign that



We concentrated on the toilets on the main street of Kawakawa which were very ornate with a lot of porcelain tile work and a tree growing through the roof as shown in the pictures below.



In the picture on the right our guide in the red shirt, Peter, is watching the left hand traffic and helping us North American tourists take pictures from the street without being run over by passing cars.



We were still under the impression that the notoriety of these toilets was based on some innovation regarding the plumbing fixtures that carry out the function of a toilet. Barbara took her trusty camera into the lady's room and shot pictures of the plumbing and decorations of the place as shown in the following photos.





Clearly, the acclaim for the Hundertwasser toilet was based on the imaginative architecture and tile decoration and not some radical new plumbing innovation. Orlin's check of the men's room confirmed that conclusion on his side also. We had to give credit to Mr. Hundertwasser, his toilet decorations and architecture were fun and a break from the ordinary and he did the tourist business in this little town a big favor with these installations.

We found a nice sign at the local library. We used it to record the visit of Barbara's library card to the Far North District of New Zealand and Kawakawa, as shown on the right.



Back on the Kawakawa streets a passing logging truck, as shown below, reminded us that the timber business is a major contributor to the economy of New Zealand.



Having satisfied our curiosity about the Hundertwasser Toilets, we all climbed back on to the bus and we turned north across the countryside to the town of Kerikeri. As we went along there were more of the beautiful, pastoral scenes of New Zealand to record as shown below.



Our destination for this part of the tour was the Mission Station at



Kerikeri. The houses of the Mission Station were part of the first European settlement in New Zealand in the early 1800s, as indicated by the sign on the left.

The Stone Store built in 1835 is one of the remains of the mission and it has been maintained in tip top shape, as shown on the right. Inside it still operates as a store with souvenirs for the tourists.



Next door to the Stone Store is the Mission House, shown below. The Mission House was built in 1822 and is the oldest wooden building in New Zealand.



Both of these buildings served as an essential part of the European presence here in New Zealand. The governing English agents associated with the mission did their best to maintain order and security for the residents who had to cope with dangerous pirates, whalers, and seal hunters. In addition there were Maori terrorists who attacked the Europeans in an attempt to protect their lands from the invaders.

We left the Mission Station and stopped briefly in downtown Kerikeri. Here we were able to get another photo showing Barbara's library card had passed through these parts. We found the local library and the picture we got shows the Maori name for the library along with Barbara's yellow library card, as shown (rather skewed) on the right.



The library sign was written in Maori and reads as follows: "Te Kete Maturanga'o Kerikeri". Our guide, Eve, said the meaning was "The Basket of Knowledge at Kerikeri".

While passing through Kerikeri we noticed this gas station on the right selling regular gas for \$1.699 per liter. At today's exchange rate of \$1.28 NZD for \$1 USD that works out to \$1.33USD per liter. Further, assuming 4 liters per gallon the gasoline costs the equivalent of \$5.31 per gallon. That was a little more expensive than gasoline we had seen for sale in less remote New Zealand cities south of here.



Our bus then took us the short distance back to Waitangi and the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. The Waitangi Treaty Grounds are where the Treaty of Waitangi was first signed on 6 February 1840. Prior to 1840 there had been frequent battles between the Maori and the English settlers and all sides were ready to make some accord. The treaty spelled out how the English government and the Maori Chiefs would share the power of government in the New Zealand islands. However, over the years there has been a lot of controversy about the treaty because the Maori translation of the original English treaty gives more power to the Maori than England would permit. There has been accommodations made and there is less controversy now. In 1940 there was a big 100 year anniversary celebration of the Treaty at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. In the relative calm of current politics the Treaty Ground are referred to as “Waitangi Treaty Grounds, Our birthplace”.

The Treaty Grounds are owned by a private organization known as The Waitangi National Trust estate. The Trust is administered by the National Waitangi Trust Board, whose members represent various sections of the New Zealand people.

We arrived at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds and got off the bus. Des went into the office and returned with a man who was our guide for the Waitangi Treaty Grounds tour. He gave a very professional and informative tour. He apparently had a talent for this kind of work and was very well educated about the Treaty Grounds. He is the man in the blue jacket talking to Des in the picture below.



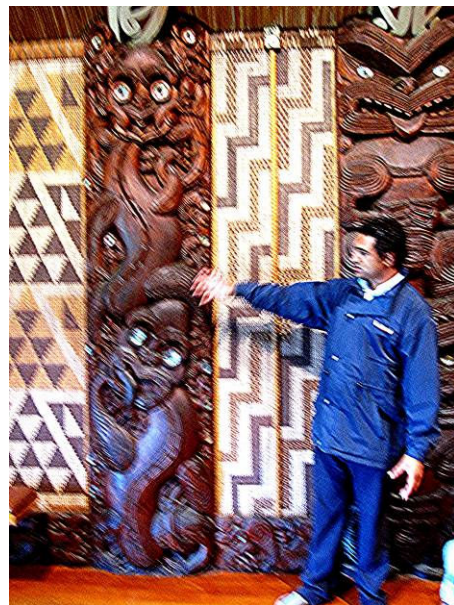
The first stop on our tour of the Treaty Grounds was the Maori Meeting House, as shown on the right. This house was constructed in the late 1930s and was opened during the Treaty Centenary Celebrations in 1940. It was more magnificent than the meeting house we had seen at the Thermal Village of Rotorua back on November 14.

Massive Maori wood carvings adorned the roof supports and pillars on each side of the porch.

We all took off our shoes, as requested by a posted sign, and went in to the Meeting House with our guide.



Inside the enormity of the wood carvings on the walls was overwhelming. Our guide explained that the carved images were done to honor past chieftains and other ancestors. The carvings on either side of the room represented people who were related in some way during life and they were connected in the Meeting House by the decorated roof beams. The pictures below attempt to show some of what we saw.





After the tour of the Maori Meeting House we went next door to “The Treaty House” shown on the right.

The Treaty House was built in 1833-34 as the residency of the British governor of the colony. The house served as a meeting place prior to signing the Treaty of Waitangi. In 1840 the treaty was signed in the front yard of the house so it was then named “The Treaty House”. The



house has gone through periods of use, neglect and renovation over more than 170 years since construction and today it stands as a good example of the residence for a high level colonial government official in the 1800s.

Next we gathered in the broad field in front of the Treaty House. Our guide then explained some of the events surrounding the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.



In February 1840 British Captain William Hobson arrived in the Bay of Islands to make a treaty with the Maori chiefs on behalf of the British Government. A sign now marks the place where he came ashore in Waitangi, as shown on the left.

On 5 February 1840 hundreds of Maori and Europeans gathered in front of the governor's Residency at Waitangi. The Treaty was read and explained in English and Maori.



On 6 February 43 chiefs signed the Treaty in front of the Residency at Waitangi. A flagstaff now marks the site of the signing of the Treaty, as shown on the left (We had seen the huge flagstaff from the deck of the Amsterdam anchored in the harbor).

After the 43 chiefs signed the Treaty, translated copies were carried around New Zealand for discussion with the Maori chiefs. By September 1840 over 500 Maori chiefs had signed the Treaty. Captain Hobson proclaimed British sovereignty over the whole country on 21 May 1840. Debate still continues over specific interpretation of its parts but there is apparent agreement that the Treaty of Waitangi guarantees the rights of both Maori and non-Maori citizens in New Zealand.

After hearing about the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi our guide took us through a wonderful flower garden and we couldn't stop ourselves from taking pictures of some flowers as shown on the right and below.





After a most pleasing walk through the flower garden we arrived at the beach where a long building with open sides stood over the biggest canoe we had ever seen. This canoe was launched in 1940 as part of the Treaty of Waitangi Centenary Celebrations in 1940. It symbolizes the smaller canoes that were used by the first Maori people to explore the oceans and discover the New Zealand Islands. A picture of this large canoe is shown below.



The canoe is currently undergoing a careful renovation to preserve it. A fearsome carved face of a warrior, shown on the right, was on the prow that was otherwise covered in protective plastic.



The canoe was too long to be made from one tree. It was made by hollowing out and then connecting the trunks of three Kauri trees. The joints where the tree trunks were connected were very interesting and pictures of joints are shown on the right and below.



It takes 76 paddlers to handles this canoe safely. We got the impression that such a massive canoe could possibly be used for a war party with plenty of warriors but was probably not actually used by the ancient Maori in long ocean voyages where the joints in the hull might give way. The Maori

most likely used smaller canoes made from single trees for exploring the oceans. Nevertheless, this canoe was a grand illustration of how fairly primitive technology can be used to make a large boat.

The viewing of the large canoe brought our tour of the Waitangi Treaty Grounds to a close. We walked out of the grounds where we said goodbye to our guide and got onto our bus. We took a short ride to a park on the bank of the bay at a small boat harbor. A feast of fish and chips was laid out on a table cloth on the lawn and we enjoyed an informal but very tasty lunch, as shown on the right.



The event on our agenda was a ride on the bay in a long canoe where all of us passengers did the paddling. During lunch Des introduced Hone, the leader of our canoe ride, as shown on the right. Hone, dressed in Maori garb, was a convincing Maori and turned out to be a real character. He made the afternoon canoe ride on the bay the highlight of our visit in Bay of Islands. Like Des, Hone is of Maori descent and would try to expose us to some canoeing and other survival skills of the Maori this afternoon.



Before we started with preparation for the canoe paddling exercise we went down to where the canoe was beached and checked it out. Barbara picked up a stick with feathers on one end and held it for the picture on the right. We immediately heard a yell from behind us as Hone had seen what we were doing. He instructed us that we were not to touch this sacred



staff that he kept in his boat. We sensed that he was serious about his request and apologized for violating this taboo. He passed it off saying he should have warned us about the significance of the staff when he arrived.



It was now time to put on our life vests and get ready for training as canoe paddlers. The life vests were fairly easy to put on so that operation went smoothly and we all were soon safe in our vests as shown on the left. In view of her fear of canoeing, Barbara was putting on a brave face.

Then Hone arranged us with partners of about the same size and formed us into two lines with the partners side by side. There were 16 of us going on the canoe ride so we made two lines of 8 people each. Barbara being one of the smallest was put in the second row of lines paired with a non-Cruise Critic lady (an Aussie, we didn't get her name). Some bigger people were put in the middle. Orlin was paired up with John (NPBCruisers) and

put at the end of the line. Hone then put us through some lengthy drills where he and his wife, Judy, showed us how to handle our paddles and efficiently paddle the canoe along. As part of the session he gave a vivid portrayal of how ancient Maori warriors would beach their canoes, jump out and attack the enemy. They would use their paddle which served both as a tool for moving the boat and weapon for killing the enemy. Pete, one of our guides played the part of the defeated enemy warrior. At the end of the killing scene Hone turned toward the dead warrior and performed some kind of a religious blessing which Hone claimed was thanking the deceased person for his life earth and wishing him the best as he returned to the earth. The window on the differences in our cultures was cracked open a bit and we filed it away for further thought.

Now fully trained as paddlers we tramped down to the canoe and climbed in. John and I went in first then the succeeding pairs. Barbara was last in. The view of oncoming paddlers from the back seat is shown on the right.



Des, Peter and Hone joined us at the back of the canoe while Hone's wife, Judy hopped in the front. Thankfully Hone used the motor at the back of the canoe to get us out into the bay where we were clear of moored boats and other obstructions. Then it was time for us to exercise our new found skill of paddling a canoe with a herd of other people. The view of the paddlers from Orlin's position in the back is shown on the right. Judy is showing us how to hold the paddle at the ready before starting to paddle.



The view from the front is shown on the left in a picture taken by Judy with our camera. Barbara and some of our Cruise Critic crowd can be recognized in the picture.

Hone shut the motor off and we paddled heartily. He had one technique where we would each tap the oar on the hull of the canoe after each stroke. A well trained crew would all tap at once. We approached that level of perfection a couple times while we paddled

about 1.5 miles out to a small island. It was definitely an effort and after seven weeks of luxury on a cruise ship this was a noticeable change in our daily activity. At one point my partner, John, leaned over and made the wry comment, "And we're paying for this!". Thankfully the temperature was not too hot. With the life jacket and shirts we were wearing it was warm but still comfortable. When we approached the island Hone threw an anchor overboard and he then proceeded to tell us how the ancient Maori lived on the bay.

Hone cut an impressive figure standing at the front of the canoe, as shown on the right. He would talk with his booming voice, punctuated by a fiendish laugh whenever he made a point that implied the superiority of old Maori ways over modern practice. In the picture Judy is in front of Hone and the small island is seen in the background.



We were told of how the Maori envisioned the shape of the nearby shoreline as a huge bird with wings outstretched. He had names for all the features along the shore. He then made us aware of the fact that the bay was very shallow under our canoe. It was part of a ridge that extended toward the mainland. He called it his storehouse because it contained mussels that he and his ancient Maori ancestors could harvest for



food. With that description Hone then jumped overboard and stood on the bottom in water about chest high. He dived down and in about 10 seconds came up with two mussels in his hands which he showed triumphantly to us modern restaurant feeders.

We then got a lesson in how to cut the muscle of the mussel so that it could be easily opened to remove the meat inside. The following pictures provide the graphic detail.



This mussel opening technique is known to a lot of people but it was fun to watch an expert practice his art while perched in the front of canoe in the Bay of Islands. The product of his labor is shown on the right. He repeated the process a few times and passed the raw mussels down the line of people and there were a few takers. Our guide, Peter, relished the mussels that made it back to him.



Hone got an empty bucket out of the back of the canoe and proceeded to fill it with mussels for a few friends.

Having given us a lesson in how to get food out of the bay he had us row over to the beach of the small island. He got out and ran across the sand to a clump of plants. He



came back with a long bladed leaf as shown on the left. This was a leaf from a hemp plant. He proceeded to show us how to delicately cut the outer coating of the leaf and pull out the long strong hemp fibers. Maori women were expert at this technique and durable fabric for clothes was made this way. Perhaps more



important, the hemp made sailing of the Maori voyaging canoes possible because it was used to make sail cloth and rope.

Several of the ladies had commented on the prominent ear decoration that Hone had inserted in his left earlobe, as shown on the right. Toward the end of the canoe ride he decided the time was ripe to explain what this decoration was all about. He took it out of his ear and proceeded to play it like a flute. The picture below shows him playing a little tune for us. He said that in ancient Maori times when a person died the surviving family members might take one of the deceased person's bones and make a flute like the one Hone had. Then whenever the flute was played they could hear the ancestor speaking to them in the music that came out of the bone. Then with his little laugh he assured us that this bone came from a lamb and not a human.



With this explanation and demonstration completed Hone must have had a little sympathy for his tenderfoot passengers. He said it was time to start the engine and motor back to the landing. This announcement brought a rousing cheer from the wilting paddlers.

We cruised back in to the landing and the canoe was nudged gently up on the beach. Hone hopped out and grabbed a long horn which he proceeded to blow, as shown on the right. It made a sound something like the conch shell sound we had heard at Polynesian events before. It was part of Hone's ceremony to mark the end of a good journey. Then at popular request he agreed to make a Haka face for us. Judy joined in as they did their most fearsome Haka face, as shown below.



With these ceremonies completed it was time to figure out how we would negotiate our exit from the canoe. Hone held the boat steady while we worked our way to the front of the teetering craft, as shown below. Each got off in turn

and fortunately there was no "Man Overboard" event.

It was 4 pm now and we had a 4:30 pm "All Aboard" requirement to meet. We said our goodbyes to Des and his Indigenous Tours people as well as Hone and Judy. When Karen arranged this tour the selling point was that it emphasized exposure to the Maori culture. We were pleased with what Des arranged for our tour today and the way it was conducted. We went back to the ship as happy cruisers.



Des had arranged for the canoe to come in within a few hundred feet of the tender boat passenger pier so we hot footed it over to a waiting tender boat and made it safely back to the Amsterdam. The ship got underway about 5pm and we sailed out of the Bay of Islands. The Amsterdam took a northerly course headed towards our next port of call Nuka Alofa, in the island kingdom of Tonga.