

# SELF GUIDED ADVENTURES

## KAIPARA HILLS

With John Nick

Here's a half day gravel road adventure that starts and finishes only 30 minutes from the Auckland CBD. This ride is entirely on good gravel roads and suitable for any adventure bike on road tyres, and even adventurous riders on road bikes.

The Kaipara Hills are typical North Auckland clay hill country, steep and once you get off the main highway remarkably quiet and remote. Mt Auckland, or Atanui is the highest point in the Kaipara Hills, but don't confuse this modest elevation with easy country.

Bounded by Highway 1 to the east and Highway 16 on the west most of the roads in the Kaipara Hills are still in gravel, almost as narrow and winding as they were first made, which in historic terms wasn't all that long ago. Long before it was called the 'Winterless North' Northland was known as "The Roadless North" and this situation continued up to the 1940s. Even today heavy rain often floods bridges and slips are common.

Our ride starts and finishes at Waitoki on Kahikatea Rd, the Dairy Flat to Kaukapakapa link. Your first mission is to find Waitoki, if you can't you don't qualify to go any further. We begin with a mix of sealed back roads around Wainui where lush lifestyle blocks are taking over from real farms, however as we wind up into the hills the houses thin out. Some nice ridge top riding leads us to the descent to the historic Bohemian settlement of Puhoi where you must stop to see the historic pub wharf and store.

Winding further north the country becomes ever more remote. Passing Mt Auckland the ride follows a high ridge with views south and north and to both coasts. Bustling and ever growing Warkworth is the only town on the ride and here all kinds of refreshments will keep the body fuelled.

The ride back from Warkworth keeps the remote theme alive as we cross the Kaipara Hills again, closing the figure eight, crossing ridges and winding through valleys heading generally south via Kaukapakapa and back to the start at Waitoki.

Bike fuel can only now be had at Waitoki and Warkworth, so make sure your bike is also full to the brim. This ride returns to the start point, but you may use this as a way north, breaking the route at Warkworth.

## FOLLOWING THE ROUTE INSTRUCTIONS

- Distances are in kilometers
- TL Turn left
- TR Turn right
- SO Straight on

Please note that road signs often change or are vandalized, so please remember this is an adventure, remote in places, be prepared. Odometer accuracy, tyre size and riding styles cause distance readings to vary.

## ROUTE GRADING

- 1 Tar sealed, all weather road
- 2 Formed surfaced gravel road, all streams bridged
- 3 Formed surfaced gravel road, surface uneven in parts, surfaced fords and or bridges
- 4 Formed unsurfaced road, rough fords and or bridges
- 5 Moderate unsurfaced track, moderately rough fords and or bridges, no major climbs
- 6 Rough unsurfaced track, rough fords and or bridges, moderate climbs
- 7 Rough unsurfaced track, rough fords and or bridges, steep climbs

- 8 Very rough unsurfaced track, difficult fords and difficult climbs  
 9 Nightmare unsurfaced track, very rough fords and very steep climbs  
 10 Don't go there!

## KAIPARA HILLS ADVENTURE ROUTE SHEET

Start/finish: Waitoki Garage, Kahikatea Flat Rd.

Total distance: 143 km

Route grade: 1-2 with one culverted concrete ford

| Odometer                     | Instruction                            | Notes   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| reset odometer here          | From garage take Waitoki Rd.           |   |
| 6.5                          | TR into Weranui Rd                     |   |
| 10.8                         | SO Weranui Rd                          |   |
| 14.8 and reset odometer here | TL across bridge take Upper Waiwera Rd |   |
| 1.9                          | TL into Upper Waiwera Rd               |   |
| 8.9                          | SO on Upper Waiwera Rd                 | New houses creeping in but check out the pioneer cottages                               |
| 10.3 and reset odometer here | TR across bridge on Krippner Rd        | Tiger country   |
| 7.2                          | TL stay on Krippner Rd                 | Narrow and steep  |
| 9.9                          | TL now at historic Puhoi               | Coffee at store and check out the pub. Best grub at Cheese factory 2.7 km               |
| 10.0 reset odometer at store | SO from store on Ahuroa Rd             |   |
| 2.7                          | SO                                     | Puhoi Cheese Factory best meals and coffee on left                                      |
| 3.5                          | SO Ahuroa Rd                           |   |
| 3.9                          | SO Ahuroa Rd                           |   |
| 15.0 and reset odometer here | TL into West Coast Rd                  |   |
| 0.2                          | TR into Komokoriki Hill Rd             | Windy bugger  |
| 6.4                          | TR back onto seal                      |   |
| 10.4 and reset odometer here | TR onto Kaipara Coast Highway (16)     |   |
| 5.2                          | TR into Kaipara Hills Rd               | Steep, narrow and winding from here, great views coming up both to west and east coasts |
| 19.6                         | TR to continue on Kaipara Hills Rd     | Watch for logging activity  |
| 22.6 and reset odometer here | TR onto Kaipara Flats Rd and seal      |   |
| 0.3                          | SO under railway                       | Kaipara Flats township, old PO and railway stn  |
| 6.1                          | TR into Streamlands Swamp Rd           | <b>Caution 3x slippery wooden bridges</b>   |
| 7.9                          | TL to Warkworth 6km                    |   |
| 10.0                         | TL into Falls Rd                       | <b>Caution concrete ford. If water over culvert by-pass to</b>                          |

|                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
|                                |   | <b>Warkworth</b>  |
| 13.3                           | SO through lights   | <b>Caution: the most confusing intersection in NZ</b>                                       |
| 13.3 and a bit                 | TR into Bridge St, Warkworth  |   |
| 13.6 and reset odometer here   | Warkworth, note Bridge House on right. Return to Bridge House to continue | Take a break, cafes etc all around, historic wharf etc. Fuel to come on the way out of town |
| reset odometer at Bridge House | return to Bridge House to continue in original direction                  |   |
| 0.01                           | Across bridge TR into Mill Lane   |   |
| 0.3                            | TR into Whittaker Rd, fuel on right                                       | Shell and Mobil fuel here on right – fuel now!  |
| 0.8                            | TL onto SH 1 Auckland   |   |
| 1.2                            | TR onto Woodcocks Rd  | High School on right  |
| 6.0                            | Stay on Woodcocks Rd  |   |
| 12.0                           | SO Cross Railway now West Coast Rd  | <b>Caution railway X ing</b>  |
| 20.1 and reset odometer here   | TL into Wech Access Rd  |   |
| 0.4                            | SO farm buildings   | <b>Slow past buildings</b>  |
| 8.2 and reset odometer here    | TL Makarau Rd, seal   |   |
| 3.0                            | TR into Kanohi Rd – onto gravel   |   |
| 8.9                            | Cross Railway   | <b>Caution railway X ing</b>  |
| 10.3                           | Cross Railway   | <b>Caution railway X ing</b>  |
| 10.8                           | TL onto SH 16 to Kaukapakapa  |   |
| 12.4                           | Kaukapakapa 50kph, beware Mr Plod, Cross Railway                          | <b>Caution railway X ing</b><br>Excellent ice creams at store                               |
| 13.8                           | TL onto Kahikatea Flat Rd   |   |
| 18.5                           | Waitoki back where you began  |   |