

Research leads to Mauke adventure

Visitors Kirsty Griffin and Therese Mangos enjoy their time on Mauke.



It is not every day that you get to meet a keen environmentalist or a professional photographer who worked on 'The Whale Rider' movie.

And so visitors Therese Mangos and Kirsty Griffin made for an interesting few days on Mauke as we spent time chatting about our sustainable living endeavours, their special project.

Together we enjoyed a first visit to the giant Banyan trees with vines aplenty for swinging on and Motuanga, an under-

ground adventure that is part of the cave with one hundred rooms.

We saw three of those rooms and enjoyed swimming in crystal clear cold waters that played with torch and candle light on the cave walls.

No one knows now if there really were 100 rooms and I'm guessing that most have long since overgrown with new lime deposits.

But while the 100 rooms exist only in legends now, Therese is on a quest to record another part

of Cook Islands history before it falls into extinction.

Therese works for an Environmental Trust in Auckland and has blood connections to the Cook Islands through her mum Tuaine Utanga who is of Mauke descent through her mother's side, a connection not lost on the locals in Mauke.

She has a passion for Cook Islands tattoos, in particular in finding out their origins. This personal pursuit over a period of about 16 years, is now leading to the creation of a book. Therese

says that this won't be the definitive work on Cook Islands tattoos, rather a catalyst to spark interest and hopefully further discoveries.

It hasn't been easy to find information, as so much has been lost with past generations.

In fact, she quips, if she had realised what the cost would amount to in time and money, she may never have begun this journey.

Therese is thankful to have the talented help of her friend Kirsty, a professional photog-

rapher of Ngati Porou descent.

Kirsty calls this her 'labour of love' as she gives her time to photographing the links between patterns in nature, local crafts and the art of tattooing.

Once the women complete their final Cook Islands visit, to

Mangaia, they will have covered all of the southern group. Compilation of current Cook Islands research along with that done through the museums in New Zealand should make for very interesting reading in the future. ■ **June Hosking of Mauke**

Radio DJ 'Cookie' graduates

AITUTAKIAN Johnson 'Cookie' Raela recently graduated from Auckland University of Technology with a Bachelor of Communication Studies majoring in television and journalism.

The AUT graduation was held at the Aotea Centre in Auckland city on February 20.

Raela, who received a rousing applause and cheers while being presented his qualification, was

the only Cook Islander to graduate in his degree course.

Many family and friends gathered at the Aotea Centre to witness Raela's achievement and were later treated to dinner at the

Fortuna Restaurant at Sky City.

In 2005, while attending Aorere College, Raela was awarded a full scholarship by Auckland University of Technology.

Raela is a radio announcer on one of Auckland's popular radio station FLAVA 96.1FM which plays Hip Hop and RnB. His nickname is Cookie and he's on air 7-12pm Monday to Friday on his Niteshift slot.

At 21, Raela has an already extensive CV. He also has a few television offers lined up in the next few months.

Raela's key to success is having full support from his family, making it to classes every day and pure hard work.

"If you want something, you have to go out and get it yourself, no one is going to spoon feed you, that's reality", he says.

He also hopes to see an increase in the number of Cook Islanders undertaking tertiary study. ■ **HG**



Proud parents Maria and Koi Orika with their son Johnson Raela, who DJs a night show on Auckland's FLAVA 96.1FM. 09022729



In the cool shade of the Motuanga caves in Mauke – from left, Knut Kaumer, Therese Mangos, Andrew Hosking and Tangata Ateriano. 09022620



Mauke resident June Hosking cools down in the clear pools of the Motuanga caves. 09022616