

Taylor's Mistake Surf Lifesaving Club celebrates centenary

JACK FLETCHER

Last updated 09:44, February 11 2016



TAYLORS MISTAKE SLSC

The Press canoe, piloted by a team from Taylor's Mistake, crashes over surf at New Brighton beach in 1999.

Taylor's Mistake Surf Lifesaving Club has patrolled its remote part of the Canterbury coast for more than 100 years.

The club, founded in 1916 by a group of bach owners in the isolated bay, celebrated its centenary celebrations over Waitangi weekend with generations of lifesavers.

Club president Ken Jones said having so many members of the club together at one time was "really great".



TAYLORS MISTAKE SLSC

Former lifesavers Brian Rattray, 76, Noel Saxon, 78, and Jim Turpin, 74, kit up to celebrate the club's centenary.

"We had a Friday night drinks for 180 in Sumner, with past and present members ranging from 18 to 80 years old. On some tables, four generations of the same family were sitting together."

Jones, a long-time surf lifesaver, said the weekend celebrations included a gala dinner on Saturday night in Sumner for 200 people, with surf events and competitions on both Saturday and Sunday at Taylors Mistake beach.

"There was a series of different events, including a black and white swim race – some of our competitors were in their 80s.



TAYLORS MISTAKE SLSC

Taylors Mistake's original pavilion, photographed on January 21, 1917. It was destroyed by fire in 1958.

"A bunch of us did a demonstration of an event called six-man rescue and resuscitation."

Up until the mid-1980s, a reel and line were used to pull people in from the surf.

A team of five would march into place on the beach while a belt swimmer, attached to a waxed line, swam out to the person in need, scooping them up before being reeled in by the beach team.



TAYLORS MISTAKE SLSC

Current club president Ken Jones and Simon Davies, NZ Junior double ski champions, photographed in 1977.

"Taylors Mistake won that event [at surf competitions] more times than any other club in New Zealand, so we were a bit of a specialist."

The introduction of inflatable rescue boats, or IRBs, in the early 80s changed the face of surf lifesaving across the country.

Club patron Jim Turpin said the "hazy days of summer youth" spent patrolling the beach were still fresh in his mind.

"It seemed like every day was perfect, out there with all your mates in the sun."

Turpin's first year as a surf lifesaver was in 1958 and he continuing to serve the beach until the mid-90s.

"A lot has changed since then though. We had big bunkhouses and we stayed out there for weekends and holidays."

Turpin said they used to rely heavily on tertiary students to volunteer, with non-funded study having a major influence. "With students having to pay back their loans, they had to work on the weekends, so some of the comradery was lost."

The club went through various transformations, including having to rebuild the entire clubhouse following a fire in 1952 and sustaining further damage from a storm in 1978.



TAYLORS MISTAKE SLSC

Young surf lifesavers carry line and reel in a rescue and resuscitation event in 1949.

- Stuff