



## Beauty, brains and mussels

What do the birth of nuclear physics and the space race have in common? The unlikely answer is Havelock in the Marlborough Sounds.

The early years of Sir Ernest Rutherford, the pioneering nuclear physicist, and William Hayward Pickering, senior NASA luminary, were spent in short trousers in the former Havelock schoolhouse.

The work of these heavyweight scholars has had global ramifications. Rutherford's work has been instrumental in the research and development of nuclear energy, nuclear weapons and, less controversially, smoke detectors and cardiac pacemakers. Pickering headed Pasadena, California's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, for 22 years and his group launched Explorer 1 less than four months after the Russians launched Sputnik.

With such boast-worthy credentials, where are the brass plaques and statues? Well, as far as I saw, there weren't any. There was just a faded notice-board in the old schoolhouse, with a cobbling together of old school photos, newspaper clippings and typed notes. I loved the low key South Island approach.

Havelock, much more famous for its green shelled mussels than the splitting of the atom, is found at the confluence of the Pelorus and Kaiuma rivers 35km west of Picton and is a fantastic base for all sorts of outdoors activities. The more remote parts of the Marlborough Sounds, particularly Pelorus and Kenepuru Sounds and d'Urville Island are easily accessible from here.

As a gateway to almost a fifth of New Zealand's coastline, in the labyrinth of bays, coves and inlets there are many things to do including fishing, diving, boating, kayaking, swimming and water-skiing. Nearby walking tracks include the world famous Queen Charlotte Track, and

lesser known Nydia and Pelorus tracks.

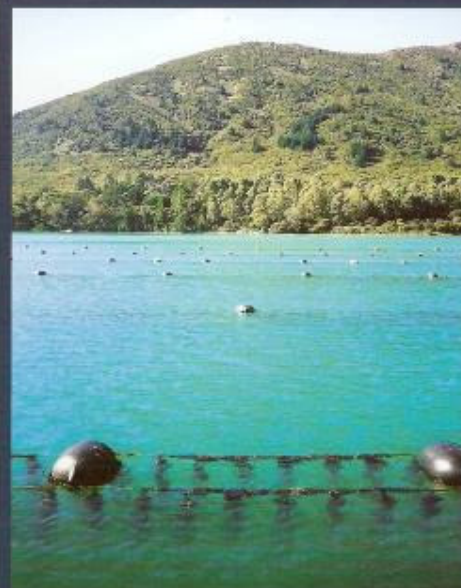
If your kayak is your companion, the sounds are perfect paddling grounds - with good shelter in most weather conditions and plenty of hideaway places to snorkel, camp or simply watch the wildlife. Gannets, shags, little blue penguins, tuis, wood pigeons, wekas, sting rays and dolphins can often be seen.

Maud Island/Te Hoiere Scientific Reserve, in Pelorus Sound, is a predator-free scientific reserve and a sanctuary for rare and endemic native species. It has some enigmatic residents including the colourfully-plumed flightless takahe, giant Cook Strait weta, intricately-patterned geckos, pakeka (Te Hoiere's own species of frog) and skinks. Apparently the dawn chorus is phenomenal. Visits are allowed, but by permit only.

Havelock also borders the Mt Richmond Forest Park. The park has an area of almost 166,000ha and has more than 430km of walking tracks. It seems to be a little-known tramping haven as many visitors to the area are distracted by the lure of the nearby sounds.

The Richmond Range is the backbone of the park with some peaks reaching 1700m, and the Pelorus, Waimea and Motueka Rivers run through the western section (west of the Kaiuma Valley and SH6). There is an excellent network of tramping huts, and the Pelorus Track offers three to four days of hard tramping through the forest and along the river. The old gold miners' two day Wakamarina Trail is more of a beginner or family track and is best walked south to north. This trail is also good for mountain biking (it can be done in a day).

The Department of Conservation-managed Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve is only 18km from Havelock and offers lush forest and river scenery. There is a variety of walks including the Tawa Path, a 30-minute stroll past broadleaf tawa and massive podocarps like rimu and kahikatea,



Main pic: A jetty in Nydia Bay, Pelorus Sound  
Above: One of the 570 mussel farms in the Sounds. Each farm is 3-3.5ha but, in total, they make up less than 1% of the total water space.

and the Trig K Track (four hour return) which, from the top, has wonderful views of the surrounding countryside. The Kahikatea campground is located beside the river and close to a number of swimming holes.

The most interesting place to stay in Havelock is Rutherford and Pickering's old schoolhouse now known as the Rutherford Eco-Lodge YHA. There are many other accommodation options in Havelock and throughout the sounds, and the tourist booking office in Havelock will be able to help organise charter boats, accommodation and trips.

As the green shelled mussel capital of the world, a visit to Havelock wouldn't be complete without indulging in a few of the freshest mussels in the country. Havelock's mussel restaurant cannot be missed - as much for its décor as its food!

So, with its gorgeous scenery, delicious eats and scholarly history, Havelock really seems to have it all: beauty, mussels and brains.

**Rutherford Eco-lodge YHA:**  
(03) 574 2104

For more information on Maud Island/Te Hoiere Scientific Reserve, the Mt Richmond Forest Park and Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)