

River fun for everyone

by Heather Campbell Hapeta

WITH the school holidays nearing the end, you may have almost exhausted the activity options around the city, but have you included boating on the Avon – one of the time-honoured ways of enjoying the warmer weather in the Garden City?

The centre of this boating fun is, of course, the Antigua Boat Sheds. Established in 1882, they have drawn many generations of Christchurch people who have enjoyed spending time messing around in the hired boats.

The boat shed was built by a couple of boat-builders and is one of Christchurch's oldest buildings. It is open all year round, and with a café full of home-cooked food attached, it makes a great setting for all sorts of events – from weddings and cocktail parties to children's parties – as well as being an ideal starting point for a family fun day out.

A pleasant way to pass the time

Canoes and paddle-boats are available for hire and you can also be punted upstream, through the beauty of the Botanical Gardens – sipping champagne or tucking into a hamper of food is optional.

You can also punt further downstream, leaving from the Kate Sheppard suffrage statue beside the Worcester Boulevard bridge down to the Manchester Street area.

Both these routes offer a restful and different way to see the city.

The present owners of the Antigua Boats Sheds are a family who have run the business since 1987. "It's a lifestyle thing," they say, "we love not being confined to office space."

The fame of the Antigua Boat Sheds has spread wide and far and some tourists have even come directly to the boat sheds from the airport.

So, next time you're looking for a pleasant way to pass the time, and one that's distinctively Christchurch, head for the boat sheds, right by the Public Hospital.

