

◆NSW Sea Kayaker◆

Newsletter of the NSW Sea Kayak Club Inc. P.O. Box A1045, Sydney South, NSW 2000: Phone (02)5520028

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ARCTIC DREAMS

By Sheila Newman

When Max returned from his trip in the high Arctic, crossing between

'frozen North'. That trip had taken 3 weeks, over glaciers and frozen sea ice in temperatures reaching 40 degrees below Celcius. We decided that both of us should go in the Summer, and what better way to do it than by kayak, together with

Greenland is a Danish colony. In spite of so called "home rule", the Danes act as "benevolent dictators". Most Eskimos in Greenland and elsewhere are supported by Government. The Thule Eskimos with whom we travelled number about 700 and live in the more Northerly settlements - mostly in Qaanaaq (pop. 500), Siropoluk (pop 80) and a few smaller settlements. Unlike most other Eskimos, they have retained their traditional skills in hunting, fishing, building kayaks and dogsleds - surviving the Arctic winter.

We stayed in the only hotel, a small centrally heated building run by one of the local Eskimos, for the first night. We were wakened by the howling of dogs. There are about 12,000 dogs in Qaanaaq, tied up for the summer outside their masters' homes, waiting to be

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Above: Local Inuit in his Greenland skin kayak (Note the harpoon and bladder)

Ellesmere Island in Northern Canada to Northern Greenland by dogsled with Eskimos in March 1992, he talked with excitement about the magic of the

the people who had invented the kayak. The same tour group from Canada, Eco Summer were organising their second kayaking trip in Inglefield Fjord in August 1994, to coincide with the few brief weeks of summer. It would start and finish in Qaanaaq, Greenland, the most Northerly 'town' in the World, half way between the Arctic circle and the North Pole.

We met up with the group of 8 others in Edmonton, and flew together via Yellow Knife, Cambridge Bay, Resolute Bay, and lastly by Twin Otter to Qaanaaq, arriving at 2 a.m. in brilliant sunlight.

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President's Report

Hello Everyone. Firstly an apology. My extreme lateness in getting this report to Editor Leigh Hemmings has meant that you've all probably been wondering where the magazine is! I sincerely apologise for the delay.

The Club's AGM was held on 27 August. Attendance numbers at 27 were lower than expected especially considering the calibre of our guest speaker. More on that in a moment.

Highest on my list of priorities in this report is to thank the outgoing committee for their efforts in the club's past year. It was another good year for the club with membership continuing to climb. Special thanks for this success must go to retiring President Patrick Dibben who for the past 2 years has acted as Editor of the magazine, fulfilled the role of Secretary and also held his elected position of President. Patrick and I have had many long late night phone chats over the last year or so, and I know the vast amount of work he has done for the club. We owe him a great deal. Thanks Patrick.

Voting results at the AGM are as follows: I was elected President with Gary Edmond taking on the Secretary's role. Peter Adams accepted Treasurer and Leigh Hemmings is our Editor. Dirk Stuber again took on the job of Trips Convenor but tendered his resignation from the job some weeks later due to family commitments. Thank you for your help Dirk. At the Committee meeting on 19.9.94 we welcomed Arunas Pilka to the position of Trips Convenor. You can hear Arunas on our Infoline anytime ... updated midweekly.

Our guest speaker at the AGM was Paul Caffyn. Paul, a New Zealander, was in Australia not only to talk at our meeting, but also to promote his latest book "The Dreamtime Voyage" which is an account of his Australia circumnavigation by sea kayak. I think his book is fantastic and deserves to be on all sea kayaker's bookshelf...OK, this is, I believe, Paul's second talk to sea kayakers in Sydney, the first being at Canoe

Sports at Narrabeen about 18 months ago. Since then, Paul has released his book and at the AGM he was questioned on many stories in it. If Paul comes to Australia again to talk to sea kayakers, don't miss it!

In General Business at the AGM, discussion took place on training, the Club's Constitution, aims and objectives, funding from Government sources for training, provision of grading and more information on the Calendar. You should find that in the latest Club Calendar.

On behalf of all club members, I extend a warm welcome to all new members. I hope that we can organise training and paddling outings to your liking. Please feel free to call any Committee member if you strike a problem on our waterways. Our Infoline is a great way to keep in touch. Make use of it. Leave a message! As summer approaches, remember ...there is no substitute for time in your boat.
David Winkworth.



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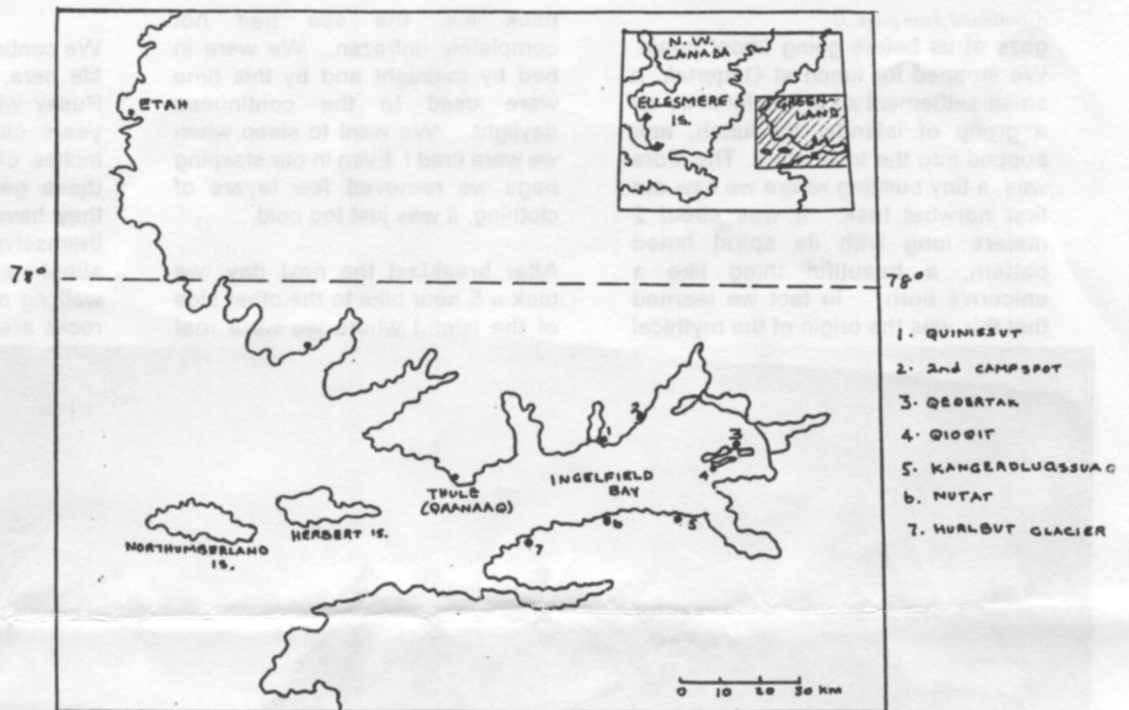
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worked in the winter months.

Next morning, we piled into 2 small run-abouts with all our gear, and were taken by their Eskimo owners up the fjord to our first camping spot, past magnificent cliffs of ochre-coloured sandstone. We put our 5 boats together and set up camp. We used 2 person German Kleppers. The boats were sluggish in the water but had adequate storage capacity. We considered that they were inferior to the Australian made Amphibian 11. The trip again demonstrated the need for a rigid shell collapsible kayak in which the elements fit into each other. We wore multi-layered clothing, thermal underwear, then pile shirts and trousers, pile jackets, woollen beanies and a one-piece padded floater suit. On our feet were two pairs of socks and gumboots. They were essential for launching the boats in icy water. It took some time to develop techniques for getting us and our gear in and out of the cockpit. The whole group would launch each fully laden boat one after the other, doing a kind of Chinese shuffle down the beach using slings.

The landscape looked extremely barren from the water, but closer exploration of the tundra amazed us with the variety of plant life, it was beautiful and full of colour. There were yellow poppies, blue saxifrage, vetches and chickweed, brilliant purple fire weed and a large number of lichens amongst the grasses and mosses. Our first campsite, called Quinissut, was an old established Eskimo camp, with the remains of 'houses' - rough stone circles each with a tunnel entrance. The Eskimos would erect covers over the structures with whalebone arches and skins, or tents. Close by was the Hubbard glacier, which we walked to and climbed onto the next day at the end of a wonderful hike up the hills behind the campsite. At the edge of the glacier, where it met the water, the ice cliffs were the size of a 4 or 5 storey building. We were overwhelmed by the magnificence of the scenery.

After a good night's sleep - again in broad daylight - we packed the boats,



and set off. Paddling amongst ice floes and past ice bergs was an unforgettable experience, one we would repeat over the next 10 days on the water. Each berg was sculptured in a different shape, we could see the turquoise blue of the part under the water, and above the white crystals sparkled in the sunshine against the deep blue of the water. It was as calm as a millpond, reflections were everywhere we looked, mirroring the land and seascapes. Silently we glided, listening to the constant drip of water off the icebergs and hearing the occasional crashes as parts fell off with huge splashes and ripples or when a berg toppled over. Curious birds circled us, fulmars (a kind of albatross), kittiwakes, guillemots and the occasional eider.

Our two Eskimo companions followed in their boat with an outboard motor, on which they carried their kayak. Each hunter makes his own kayak, a slender light craft of wood and canvas to fit his own weight and size. On each is carried his harpoon and a bladder made of a whole seal skin attached to the point of the harpoon by rope so that they can locate the narwhal when they have harpooned it. Occasionally one of the Eskimos, Jens, would get into his kayak and paddle not far from us. His wooden paddles were so thin they made no sound in the water, no drips at all - a necessity when

hunting narwhals which have very acute hearing. These Eskimos prefer to be called Inuit which means 'people' or 'human beings', and they speak Inuktitut. They wore kamiks, boots made of skin.

We spent 2 nights at our next campspot, mainly because we were enveloped in thick, very cold fog. But, even so, we did explore our surroundings, and washed in the freezing stream in water straight off the icecap. Our clothes were donned again with great haste, but we felt tremendous. Our guides provided us with filling and magnificent meals cooked on 2 small burners. The air was wonderful, we had never been in such an unpolluted atmosphere, any activity was sheer delight and we were filled with energy.

The next day we were up early and paddled across the fjord taking about 4 hours to do so in water as calm as glass, and brilliant sunshine. It was exhilarating. Mountains covered with ice surrounded us in the distance as we paddled past ice bergs looking like huge dollops of meringue. Each kayak was reflected against the scenery which made the taking of photographs imperative - we couldn't stop! Each one of us seemed to be paddling in a magical dream world. Sounds of our companions exclaiming in wonder carried across the water, and everywhere the birds continued to swoop over us and fly just above the surface of the water. Seals would pop their heads out of the water and

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gaze at us before going under again. We stopped for lunch at Qeqertak, a small settlement of a few families on a group of islands, for lunch, and popped into the local store. The store was a tiny building where we saw our first narwhal tusk. It was about 2 meters long with its spiral fluted pattern, a beautiful thing like a unicorn's horn. In fact we learned that this was the origin of the mythical

pack ice, the sea had not completely unfrozen. We were in bed by midnight and by this time were used to the continuous daylight. We went to sleep when we were tired! Even in our sleeping bags we removed few layers of clothing, it was just too cold.

After breakfast the next day, we took a 5 hour hike to the other side of the island where we were met

We continue to marvel at the extent of life here, plants, birds and sea life. Pussy willows here are hundreds of years old, but spread out about 8 inches off the ground. Walking on these gardens seemed sacrilegious, they have taken so long to establish themselves in the few brief weeks of sunshine and warmth, but it is like walking on cushions underfoot. The rocks are salmon pink and black with lichen.

Paddling to our next campsite the following day we passed hundreds of arctic terns, diving for fish and getting ready for their migration to the Antarctic, a distance of about 12,000 miles. How can they do it, such tiny birds, to find their way and make that journey each year, the longest migration anywhere. We also passed a rookery of gulls, ivory gulls and kittiwakes. We landed at Qioqit, where a group of 6 Inuit were camping and looking out for narwhals. On the rocks were 3 Inuit kayaks. The ice floes and bergs had thinned out, and this is the kind of water preferred by the narwhal,

we were told. They come up the fjord in summer to hunt the arctic cod, part of the food chain in this area.

After getting our tents up, we joined the Inuit who were constantly searching the water through their binoculars. Suddenly they jumped up with the call "Narwhal", and Jens and his companion were into their kayaks and off. Through our binoculars, we could see their successful hunt, which had taken them about 2 hours. Meantime we could see pods of narwhals making their way through the water, blowing and puffing. The larger boat then set off, with 2 men rowing it to the 2 hunters, where they helped to bring back the narwhal they had caught. The boats came back with the flukes of the whale tied across the bow of the boat, which is a ritual observed to demonstrate the Inuit affinity with the beast they have killed, and to show respect for it. We were amazed by and full of admiration for the skill and courage of the hunters.

Dragging it up the beach, they cut a section (mukluk) from the back of the

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Above: Sheila & Max approaching an iceberg in Ingelfield Bay

unicorn.

The opportunity to see how the Inuit live, and to meet with them was certainly one of the highlights of this trip. They are a remarkable people, living very much as they have done for centuries. It was very humbling for us as quallunaats (white people) to learn that they have a self-imposed rule that narwhals cannot be hunted from motorized boats, or with guns, but must be hunted in the traditional way with kayak and harpoons. How different from the massacre of whales in the Southern oceans. The polar Inuits will only hunt to provide themselves and their dogs with sufficient food, and no more. A by-product is the ivory narwhal tusk, which they carve into the most exquisite art products and pendants.

The day finished for us, with another hour's paddling to our campsite on another small island within the group. This time we paddled through broken

with more spectacular views of almost continuous bergs and ice coming off the Tracy and Heilprin glaciers, both enormous stretching several miles across. Back at the camp, the Inuit had killed a ring seal, which they proceeded to cut up in about 5 minutes, saving the skin for boots. Striking camp we were back in the kayaks and off for another couple of hours paddling. The Inuit had reached the next island ahead of us, and were sitting on top of a hill looking out through binoculars. They had spotted the narwhals on the other side of the fjord. Suddenly Jens was off in his kayak again, a small human being in that enormous seascape, paddling quietly. But the narwhals were elusive, and after a couple of hours he returned. We paddled on to our next campsite for the night. By midnight we were off to take more photographs. The best light we found to be between 12 midnight and 1 a.m.

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animal, giving us each a small piece to chew. It tasted like rubber! It is high in vitamin content, and we learned that the early explorers of a century ago need not have died of scurvy, if they had only learned this fact from the Inuit. To-day was my 63rd birthday, and what a birthday, complete with 'cake', together with candles brought by Max from Sydney, for dinner! Snuggling up in our tent that night, I couldn't help thinking what a privilege it was to be here.

Pancakes with maple syrup for breakfast. We had a fairly leisurely morning with a walk up the hills behind us, giving us yet more wonderful views. Time for another freezing wash in the stream, and then we wandered back to narwhal watching. Suddenly Jens and Nuka were off again in their kayaks, and after a few hours were back again. It was Nuka's 37th birthday and they joined us for another birthday cake and candles. We had a fun time with them playing string games, for which they are famous, much more elaborate than cats cradle! To-day the temperature was about 7 degrees.

At breakfast time the next morning, a pod of whales came past the little bay in front of us. We could hear them before we saw them, blowing and spouting as they came up for air. They were such a beautiful sight. Then we set off again for a long paddle to the other side of the fjord. It was a bit misty, so the scenery had changed again. On the way we stopped at another deserted Inuit camp, Nunatarssuaq, complete with stone houses, and a stone gravesite, and had our lunch. Then we paddled another three and half hours round the head of Academy fjord and along the coast line to Kangerdlugssuaq, a very small settlement where just one family has lived for several generations. On the way we paddled close to 3 pods of whales and sat quietly in the water watching them, rolling and blowing their way through the icy water. By this time we were almost blase about the seals which were constantly around us. Some groups looked as if they had just been let out of school, coming up and

looking at us with their heads right out of the water.

We had another hike in the hills after breakfast the next morning and caught sight of Arctic hares with their white fur, seen on some of our previous walks. The beaches are littered with the bones of narwhals, bleached white. Back into the boats, we passed the island of Qingmiunegarfik (how does one pronounce that word?), and on up the coast until we reached Nutat about 6 p.m. On this side of the fjord there are sandy beaches, quite different to the craggy rocky terrain on the other side. This was our last campsite, and we all had mixed feelings. It had all gone so quickly, and we had been exposed to a completely different culture and environment, had learned so much, but the lure of hot showers and clean clothes was also there!

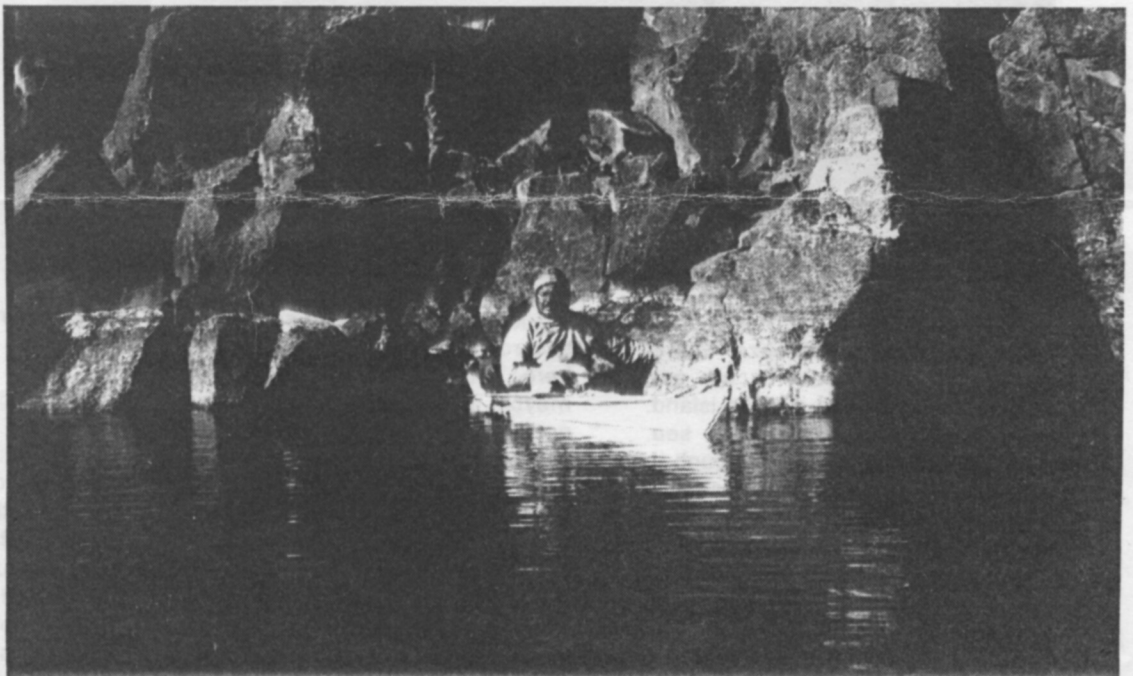
We packed for the last time, got the boats into the water for the last time, and picked up our paddles to go up the coast for the next few hours with the wind behind us, reaching the Hurlbut glacier around 1.30 p.m. We seemed to speed along in the wind, the first day in which the water was not like glass.

After lunch we took the boats apart, and were ready to put them in the motor boats which arrived to collect us at 4 p.m., to take us back to Qaanaaq, and to the hotel where

the warmth of the central heating drove us outside again very quickly. We were not used to that kind of heat! After dinner, Kaj, a Dane who had lived there with his Inuit wife for the past 20 years or so, and is the local teacher, judge and authority on Inuit life, spent another evening with us talking about the culture and aspirations of the town. It was fascinating.

At 2p.m. the following day, we were off to the runway to await the arrival of the Twin Otter, chartered to take us back to Resolute Bay and onwards.

It seems impossible for us to be able to describe those wonderful 2 weeks to people who haven't been there. It is a vast and magical pristine wilderness. It was a learning experience to see how the Inuit survive with such extraordinary daring and skill. Learning about their history and way of life was fascinating in itself. How do we pass on the feelings of wonder at the life which teems in that area for the brief summer, the smells and sounds, the energy in the air, the sights on land and water, the joy of paddling in those waters? We were left wondering whether the benevolence of the Danes will finally destroy the Eskimo incentive to hunt and fish in their own way. Will this proud and unique people turn into entertainers for foreign tourists, or worse still, become dependent on welfare?



Above: An Inuit at one with his boat

Voyage Into the Mystic

By Peter Blunt

7.30 pm; Out onto the main road from the campsite floating through the forest with Van Morrison "...this must be what paradise is like". Unload at the boat ramp. Overcast. Disappointment as hopes for a paddle in the sunset and stars fade. Gear up and push off. The old familiar feeling as I become one with the ancient Inuit and the kayak. Easy, fluid movement gliding graceful through the green. "G'day yachtie. Yarn. Sailed down from Sydney eh? Where next? South to Eden then over to NZ then Tahiti" Dream. And cruise again.

Hug the inner shore of the island and begin the quest for penguins. Hopes high. It's been a long wait for this. Lots of likely landing sites. Fish galore. Clear and easy to see in the fading light. Round the northern end of the island. Still early so just cruise about.

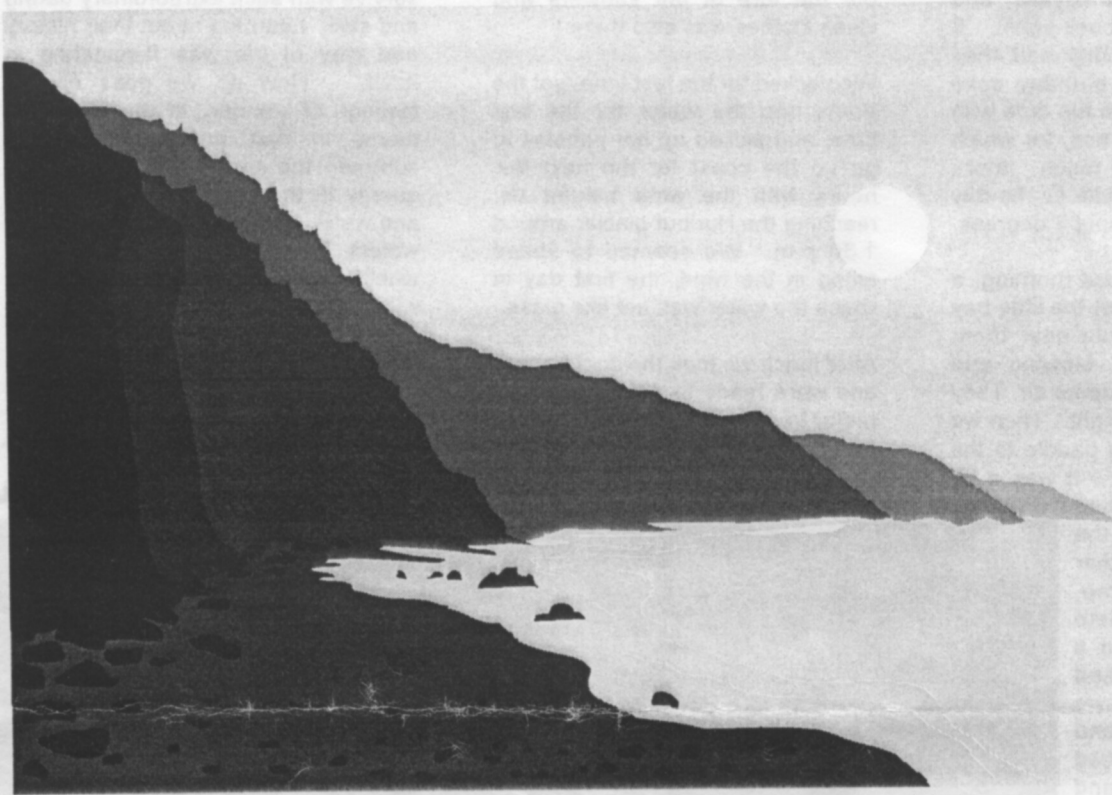
Fins. Small but several. Fear lurking in the depths. Senses heightened. Water closing up to vision. Secrets hidden. Spooky time of the nearly dark. Silently back along the shoreline. Looking, peering, straining, listening for the fairies. Droplets silverlike from the paddle in the dullness. Stirring faint memory, old stories. Let it go. Not sure like something on the edge of vision.

Listen. Be. Part of this world of the natural. Belonging and alive. All moments lead to this. Clouds moving slowly west. Open sky in patches of stars. Move along slowly. Over towards the mainland shore. Stars reflecting on the glass at elbows side and all around. Stars moving in slight low ripples at the bow and in droplet arcs from paddle tips.

Phosphorescent memory surfaces. Senses on fire. Paddling through the Milky Way. Moving, playing with the brilliant tiny jewels. Flowing lines of stars from the tip of the ancient's craft. Circles, spirals paddlecarved gently in the black velvet of the sea.

Splashed diamonds on the deck. Hands wet with twinkling sparkles. Galaxies of stars in all dimensions, the heavens now clear above and glittering from the rocks and weed in the shallows of the deeps below. And me at the interface, like a Pueblo Indian at the creation of the desert world, throwing up the stars. Magic. Neon sparkling silver. Time stands still. Fish jump followed by rippling circles of tiny lights. Joy and reverence.

Ease through and back along the rocks past the breakwater to the ramp. Bursting, almost exploding with the beauty of it all.



Warm air, cool soft breeze. Water mirror still. Head out to the gap between the mainland and the island. Through the gap and out to sea. Lumps not too bad. Brave enough to sneak a view past the island's southern end. Towering cliffs on the Point. Alone with the ocean. Feeling close to mariners past. Present inner turmoil over whether to forge on round the island. It's getting dark so skulk back to the safety of the Bay. Surf a breaking wave through the shallows of the gap. White rocks and sand below, too close.

"Squeak" and two heads surface in towards the shore. I'm still. They're here. But only two. Paddle on maybe at the other end. Faster now. Few more squeaks and swimmers. And so more to starboard. There. Just ahead. Some about. Searching, stroking forward. No large groups waddling up the beach. Dismiss expectations. Focus on the now. Closer in now almost touching the rocks and sand. Still again. Squeaking grass tussocks from top of the beach. Fairy families busy in their evening settlings.

10 pm. On the shore looking over the Bay.

Postscript: This is an account of a short solo paddle from Murray's Beach to the vicinity of Bowen Island in Jervis Bay on a quest to encounter fairy penguins. The phosphorescence is caused by a species of algae. Please note that landing on Bowen Island is strictly forbidden by ANPWS/ANCA.



South Coast News



□ I am writing having just returned from a weekend in which Norm Sanders' new, hand-built, cedar strip kayak was christened. Norm, who has been working on this boat for some months, couldn't bring himself to smash a bottle over the glistening varnish, contenting himself with pouring champagne over the bow. (Inuit ceremonies used the owner's urine! L.H.)

Paddle reports of the kayak are positive so far, with rapid acceleration and good tracking. It is indeed a joy to behold, and I'm sure Norm will attract the attention on beaches this summer. Look out for Norm and 'Tigara' (an Eskimo village on the Bering Sea) at Patonga in November.

□ Introduction of a rating system for club paddles so that people can get some idea of what they are in for, has been the topic of some discussion. In South Australia Investigator Canoe Club uses the sea kayaking certification levels to indicate the level of skill needed to participate in a given paddle. Thus, a beginner's paddle would be labelled 'I' for Introductory, and a more difficult paddle labelled 'P' for Proficiency. These letters would be part of each advertised paddle in the club's calendar.

□ Peter McCabe and David Winkworth report that channel seven's 'Getaway' holiday program has taken an interest in sea kayaking. In October the program crew were expected to film a segment featuring Peter and kayaks. Keep your ears open for the showing of the segment.

□ Recent paddles down south have highlighted some safety issues that should be considered, even short day paddles in apparently benign conditions. In October, at Broulee Norm Sanders and myself were pottering around the bay in calm, pleasant conditions. However, by mid afternoon we found ourselves wet and cold on a SE facing beach with a strong (and cold) SW wind blowing. Launching from the beach proved problematic, the entire bay a mass of whitecaps, and we were forced to retreat to the shelter of the forest.

Fortunately, we had both a stove and warm clothes, and were able to brew up a cup of tea and remain warm. The incident brought home to us the need to always be prepared for adverse conditions, even in apparently innocuous circumstances. 'You never know what you're doing until you've done it, you never know where you're going until you're there'.

On a separate weekend, the need to be aware of what is happening to other members of your group was reinforced. Having spent some time around a headland and gauntlets, we returned to a sheltered beach for lunch. However, one member of the group was missing and no-one knew where he was. It turned out that he had become separated from his boat in a nasty surf, with a strong rip flowing, and was in trouble. It was only by immediately returning to search for him that further potential trouble was avoided.

Despite the above incidents paddling is alive and well down south, and on a recent paddle there were three new Canberra paddlers, including one completely new to sea kayaking. The 'Canberra Pod' remains active and paddles frequently. Give the Canberra crew a ring if you want to come down.

□ Easy Weekend: Beautiful Place

Never been on a club paddle? Don't know what you'd be getting yourself into? A bit worried about having to paddle 40 km and do a surf landing? Haven't done much paddling? Then we have the weekend for you. On February 11 & 12 there will be a weekend of gentle paddling at Honeymoon Bay (in Jervis Bay).

Honeymoon Bay is small, cute, very sheltered, easy to launch from, easy to land in, and gives access to beautiful Jervis Bay. If you would like to be involved call Nicholas Gill on (06) 2491123 (h) or (06) 268 8472 (w).
N.G.



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Whitsunday Dreaming

by Rob Jung

We all have dreams of things we intend to do some day. One of mine was to kayak a sea, cruising along and exploring remote shorelines.

Julie, my co-paddler, organised our lift to Mascot early on a Sunday morning. The boat, a second hand Klepper Aerius II, was split into two bags and we had a ruck sack with our personal gear such as tents, sleeping bags etc. In my case I also had a little bit of photographic gear. The big boat bag weighed 38kg, only 8kg over the limit, but they still let us on board without penalty. A few hours later we were cruising low over the southern part of the Whitsunday Island chain, spying scenes of jagged sea peaks pushing through low cloud (sea fog).

We landed at Hamilton Island on a balmy tropical morning at 11am. We loaded all the gear on the trolley and trucked it one kilometre or so to a quiet beach where we assembled the boat. We had plenty of time since ebb tide began at 3pm. In the Whitsundays we were to learn that tides are very important: tidal ranges are up to five metres. In the narrow passages these create five knot currents (which are tough to out paddle). Flood tides here travel north to south and ebb tides south to north.

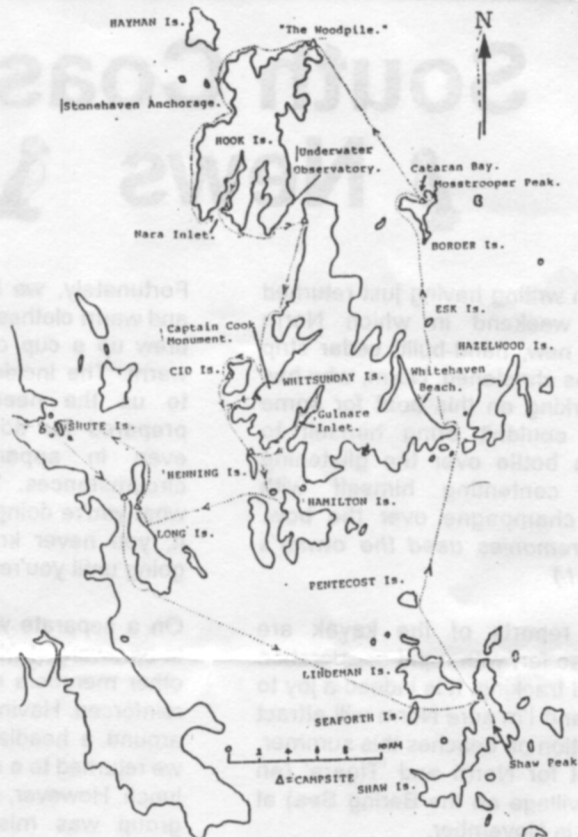
Assembling the boat was easy, but packing required much experimentation and repacking of our dry bags. By four pm we were ready and headed off for Long Island. Pleasant conditions and a slight tailwind meant paddling was sail assisted. Even so it was after sunset before we landed on a rocky beach on Long Island. Here we discovered that our heavily laden

boat would not wheel across large stones so had to pull out to sea gain. In another half hour, in waxing moonlight, we were fortunate enough to find a tiny bit of sand to land and wheel the boat to shore.

Every night most of the gear had to come out of the boat, and every morning it has to go back in, somehow! It was nearly 10am before we departed, packing proving quite a task as the tide fell and left lumps of coral protruding. In two hours we were on Shute Island where we set up camp for lunching and paddling over to meet the four other paddlers of our group who had made the long drive from Sydney. They had spent over four hours packing their kayaks and were eager to make distance before

night! That meant us repacking in double quick time, which was made even more difficult by the two weeks of our food that the others had carried up from Sydney and 40 litres of water in 10 wine casks. Somehow we managed to be packed and away within an hour. So much for a relaxing non-stressful holiday in the tropics.

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Above: Mangroves & Hoop Pine — Whitsunday Island

(Continued from page 8)

A promising sandy beach (White Rock) appeared as night approached, but the group leader felt enough distance hadn't been made, so on we went. After dark (again) we landed at Humpy Point on a rough staghorn coral littered slope, which is not recommended for soft skin boats.

Monday we had to wait until 10am before catching the flood tide through the narrow passage between Long Island and the mainland. A headwind opposed the tide making conditions lumpy. Lunch at Paradise Bay was out of the wind, but then came 18 kilometres of open water in the crossing of Whitsunday Passage towards Lindeman Island. Against a breeze and one metre swell it was sunset when we landed on a pleasant beach on Seaforth Island. At the eastern end were grooves in the granite where freshwater had collected, which is notable since freshwater is hard to find on the Whitsunday Islands. We also found water in pools on the western side of Seaforth, on Shaw Island, Border Island and at the Woodpile on Hook Island, as well as in the creek north of the cave paintings in Nara Inlet.

Wednesday, getting to the neck on Shaw Island meant paddling into a blustery 20-30 knot headwind. That

afternoon we climbed Shaw Peak (413m), collecting the usual bushwalking collection of cuts and scratches. Things that would not normally be of concern, but I was to learn, in sea kayaking where cuts stay wet for hours, they can fester and take much longer to heal.

Thursday an 8am start with a strong ebbing current, and a tailwind, had us quickly cruising to and past Pentecost Island admiring its towering ramparts. So good was our progress that we were easily through Solway Pass before midday, passing Whitehaven Beach (with its cluster of tour boats) before lunching on Esk Island, a delightful little Hoop Pine and rock clad jewel where the snorkelling is superb. After lunch we faced the tide to Border Island landing at sunset -- a day of 40 kilometres. The group leader was ecstatic.

After two nights at Catamaran Bay on Border Island a fresh southerly had us sailing north: two hours, 13km to Pinnacles Pt on Hook Island and we kept up with the fibreglass boats. We camped just around the point at the "Woodpile", an area which offers excellent snorkelling over coral gardens.

On Monday, as we left the beach a

dark black shape of a three metre Manta Ray glided by. Paddling anti-clockwise around Hook Island we made Stonehaven Anchorage easily for lunch (with favourable flood tide), but we faced a tougher south east headwind and ebbing tide on the way to Nara Inlet.

Tuesday morning we paddled and sailed up Nara Inlet to the marked Aboriginal art site, had a late lunch on the S.E. point of Hook Island, then paddled across to the beach opposite on Whitsunday Island for an early camp and a walk along a virgin beach. Next day, a walk to the cairns and an afternoon departure still gave us plenty of time to set up camp on Cid Island. There were no other boat and it had a much less trampled appearance.

Thursday morning our four companions departed leaving us to a leisurely departure. After quick progress to Reef Point we toughed it out for 2 hours paddling hard towards Henning Island, but succeeded in drifting west towards Shute Harbour. Giving up against the ebb tide and wind we surfed back to Cid Harbour, camping at beautiful Joe's Beach.

Next morning, with a flood tide we reached Henning Island easily, set up camp at the pleasant airy end and dried out our gear. Saturday was calm, tranquil and later sunny day, perfect for a cruise up Gulnare Inlet with its mangroves and pine covered shoreline. Sunday, in sunny mild weather, we paddled back to Hamilton Island to await our flight home.



Above: Grass Tree Forest — Border Island

FACT BOX

- Location: Whitsunday Islands
- Transport: Air to Hamilton Island
- Group: General kayak experience but not a lot of sea kayaking
- Boats: Puffin, , Greenlander, Estuary & Estuary Plus
- Days: 14
- Accommodation: Tent with mossie/sandfly mesh
- Side Trips: Shaw's Peak, Mosstrooper Peak (Border Island)
- Charts/Maps: AUS 370, 254
- Reference: 100 Magic Miles: David Colefelt
- Special Tips: Popular campsites be careful with food - feral animals.





Technique



Surfing for Beginners

By David Malcolm

This article comes as a result of my experiences and observations while surfing kayaks. It is by no means a be all and end all for surfing paddlers and I make no claims to be an outspoken authority on the topic nor a master of the discipline. Others may disagree or elaborate on what I have written here and I welcome any criticisms.

Surfing can be challenging and fun but I think more importantly is an essential skill for the touring paddler. It is also a very effective way of improving technique and confidence which is probably often overlooked as a skill building exercise. It most definitely improves boat control.

Breaking out through the surf seems easy enough; just point to sea and paddle. Try to time paddle strokes so that when you go through waves, the paddle goes into the water as you emerge on the other side. This is important not only as an aid for stability but also to prevent being sucked backwards by larger waves. When breaking out through large broken waves, I find the best approach is to lean forward onto the deck (offering less area for waves to hit) and "come up fighting". In larger waves, the only real option is to roll underneath, let the wave pass and come up the other side.

To come in, look for a suitable wave. I find that gentle breaks are easiest, safest and often most fun. Point the nose to the beach and accelerate in front of your chosen wave. A few powerful strokes will generally get you onto most waves. I like to lean forward as the stern rises since this helps me accelerate down the wave.

Once on the wave, you are faced with options of turning or running straight. Straight is not so good for the beginner due to the risk of an ender. The easiest option is to angle to a side and let the kayak go into a broach. In a broach, lean into the wave face (or broken whitewater) and apply a low or high brace depending on the size of

the wave and/or preference.

It's usually a case of enjoy the ride once you are broaching. Continue to hold the brace and possibly pull off the back of the wave as it loses power. Aim to balance the lean and brace so that little pressure is applied to the paddle ie. the boat takes your weight, not the paddle. Remember that when broaching, the boat will still travel across the wave as well as in toward the beach - a correction stroke here may well be worth considering with other people around.

If you find yourself high and dry on the beach, let the water recede, tip the boat right over onto its side while supporting with a hand and spin the bow around to point to sea. This is almost impossible when



laden, but becomes easier with practice. Then slide the boat into the water for more!

Changing direction while going down a wave is usually slow and sometimes difficult in a sea-kayak. Lean on the outside of the turn (textbook lean turns) and use the paddle for a stern rudder / reverse sweep on the opposite side. Thus for a kayak angling down to the right, to straighten, lean on the right and reach up to the rear on the left to put in the stern rudder / reverse sweep. Note that by doing this you will be leaning on the "wrong side" and will need to be ready for a quick change of lean for when the wave catches up to you and accelerates your sideways motion.

Here are some tips that may make surfing just that little easier.

Avoid other surfers - This is quite obvious as kayaks are

relatively "logs" in the surf and have caused considerable damage. A respectable distance is advisable.

Avoid steep waves - they are harder to control and are potentially destructive.

Avoid surf too large for your ability - being out of control is dangerous. If you enjoy the adrenalin rush, good luck.

Weigh lean into wave proportionally to wave strength -

Leaning too far in small waves will cause you to fall "over the back" of the wave - though rolling back from this position is relatively easy. Larger waves obviously require a stronger lean. Aim for a balanced lean with little pressure on the paddle blade.

Have elbows high in high brace and elbows close to the body in high brace - In a low brace, having the elbows high gives more control and allows maximum leverage to be applied if necessary. When using a high brace, the elbows should be close to the ribs and the shaft under the chin (similar to a chin-up position). This might feel uncomfortable at first, but is safe. Throwing the bottom arm out and the top arm up leaves the paddler vulnerable to shoulder and muscle damage. Having the elbows in close also becomes a more relaxed position.

If capsized, hang on and keep head low for protection - A paddler that is in his/her kayak cannot be hit by their boat; a swimming paddler can be hit by the kayak, paddle, rocks or even strangulation by a paddle leash. The best course if you capsize is to try and stay in the cockpit until the major turbulence subsides and then wet exit (if you can't roll).

While hanging in a submerged kayak, the major concern is the submerged torso striking the bottom or rocks. The safest option here is to have the head down low (high when upside down) towards the foredeck. This hides the face, chest and stomach which are the most sensitive areas. The head could then be covered by a helmet and the back with a buoyancy vest providing the best available protection. Leaning forward has the added advantage of placing the torso in a favourable position to commence a roll.

Good surfing !!





From the Net



Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club

The Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club is organising a trip from Little Musselroe Bay on the north-eastern corner of Tasmania to the northern end of Flinders Island, via Swan, Clarke, Cape Barren and numerous smaller islands, and invites members of mainland groups to join us.

There are limited berths and car spaces available on the TT line ferry "Spirit of Tasmania" leaving Melbourne for Devonport on Monday 9th January, and returning from Devonport on Saturday evening 4th February. They have indicated that they will accept kayaks unaccompanied by cars, and we will provide ransport to and from Devonport for paddlers and kayaks who require it. We will also provide billets for anyone who wishes to arrive earlier or leave later.

The plan is to paddle to Swan Island, Clarke Island, Preservation Island, western end of Cape Barren Island, Long Island then up to Killiecrankie at the northern end of flinders via the islands Mt Chappell, East Kangaroo and Prime Seal if the weather permits. We can go on to the Sisters Islands if we feel like it. Then return along the west coast of Flinders, explore the Franklin and Armstrong Channels and the wreck of the Vansittart before returning to the southern tip of Clarke and crossing back to little Musselroe Bay.

Much of the trip will be coastal paddling under conditions which should not be difficult. Some of the hops between islands off the west coast of Flinders are open sea crossings of the order of 10km, and they can be abandoned if the weather is unsuitable. However the crossing from Swan Island to Clarke Islands is a serious crossing of about 18km. Tide changes produce strong currents in the shallow water, and can form large overfalls and very rough conditions. The crossing takes 2/12 to 3 hours and needs to be synchronised both with the slack tide and with times when the tidal changes are small. Provided that is done, (and the weather is appropriate)

the crossing should be straight forward, but it is essential that paddlers are competent and their equipment sea-worthy.

Anybody interested in coming should contact me at
**150 Summerleas Road
Fern Tree
Tas 7054
Phone (002) 391 518
Mike Emery (Commodore)**

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Contents in the
November/December edition
includes:

Fishing from a kayak.
Through the surf zone.
File a trip plan.
To fish or not to fish.
Doing our part for preservation.
Kayak Regatta
Submarine Dead Ahead
Seaward's new kayak cart.
And:

Haida Song for Smoother Waters

Ocean Spirit
calm the waves for me
get close to me, my power...

my heart is tired

make the sea like milk for me

yeho
yeho'lo.

(Info thanks to Nick Gill)

Kayak Builders and Tinkerers

Is anyone interested in a weekend get to gether to talk over the joys and despair of constructing your own sea kayak and or making serious modifications to a commercially constructed one? This is Norm

Sanders idea and could be along the lines of a casual or structured weekend of show and tell, slide shows, practical hands on building or brainstorming on how to get over various problems. Norm has his stripper kayak, Leigh Hemmings has a epoxy/ply boat and Peter Witt has a couple of stitch and glue boats. Though these are all timber based, the idea is for all forms of construction to be dealt with. If you are interested please register with Norm Sanders or Leigh Hemmings before the end of December.

Build your Own Sea Kayak

If you'd like to build a sea kayak but still are not quite sure what do do, why not join class on "Build Your Own Sea Kayak" in January 1995 or try their owner/workshop arrangement. Details from Ian Smith, Woodcraft Boats Mortlake Phone (02) 743 5349

Life and Sex of the Kayak

"It is interesting...that in the Aleut oral tradition, the kayak is not an object; it is a living being, male, a hunting partner which attempts to identify itself with its master and would like to share his married life. Their fates, indeed, are bound up together, and their lives end at the same time: they disappear at sea together, or, on land, share the same grave."
"The Aleut Kayak" Joelle Robert-Lamblin



Secretary's Rap

I wanted to label this column the Gary Spot, or G-Spot for short. Maybe I missed the mark. Maybe it would deter retailers, no-one being able to find their advertisements. Who knows? Anyway the transition to the new board had been both smooth and optimistic. Those people in the club who I speak to regularly prophesy good things. I must confess that I alleviated my personal guilt now that Patrick Dibben, that tireless servant, has been relieved of the many and varied tasks of President, secretary and editor. I should also acknowledge that our new treasurer, Peter Adams, has been receptive to accepting additional components of club administration for bureaucratic ease.

With regard to club business, there is little to discuss. I would like to welcome the following new members to Club: Peter Putter, Andrew Dickson, Mark Kitteridge, Bruce Wingrove, Mick Keyts, Jan Bartel, Greg Wilkins, Steve Howlett, Adam

Wildman and Andrew Eddy. I encourage them to come along to the various trips and functions planned over coming 12 months.

I should also remind members who are not financial, and therefore not technically members, that their fees are now overdue. Actually that's not quite right. For fees can't be due for people who are not members. To that end I shall create a new category, the "quasi-member". To all you quasi-members, **your fees are now due!**

One bonus which I have just discovered is that the secretariat has access to a modest, though maturing, collection of home-grown sea kayaking journals. Groups from around Australia have reciprocal arrangements with our club to swap newsletters. In the future I will endeavour to produce a carefully annotated index, updated in subsequent issues, to provide

information for members.

A more felicitous discovery is that our mail-box and past correspondence boasts a trickle of international inquiries concerning sea-kayaking in Australia. Thus far two USA women have written asking for information about our paddling calendar over Summer. I presume this stems from our listing in Sea-Kayaker magazine. I hope we see them.

To all concerned please note that there is a brief meeting of the executive scheduled for Patonga early Saturday evening prior to the festivities and entertainment.

Finally I would encourage members interested in experimenting with waves and surf to attend the inaugural Surfing at Coledale weekend in December (see trip calendar). I'm sure we will all get wet together. Not such a bad thing.
G.E.

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Member Profile

Max & Sheila Newman

In their 60s, Max and Sheila's energy and enthusiasm for the outdoors come across strongly. There's an innate love for preservation of wild places, of local conservation, and a sense of fun and good fortune at being alive to it all. The exquisitely hand crafted model of a Greenland skin kayak which has pride of place in their home gives you a clue about Max and Sheila's most recent kayaking experience. (See next issue of NSW Sea Kayaker) but they began with local trips.

I asked about life before sea kayaking. Max it turns out was the catalyst for their shared paddling adventures since he has a background of adventure travel trips. Ten years of Himalayan trekking and white water rafting gave him a good grounding in outdoor experiences. And while Max started off Sheila's paddling (they went courting in a kayak on Myall Lakes) a son of a friend started Max off by inveigling him into the Hawkesbury Classic. That Max's partner was 25 years his junior didn't seem any bother. Max and Sheila now regularly compete in the classic. (This year was Max's 5th and Sheila's 4th.)

Asking them why they go sea kayaking you get an inkling of their personal philosophy as well as their enjoyment of being together. Akin with many paddlers, the feeling of being in love with life and at the same time being able to share silence, total isolation and freedom were motivating factors which they both feel just as strongly today. And there's that sense of space tinged with excitement which grips them each time they launch the boat and

head off -- be it in south west Tasmania or on the Spit to paddle across the Harbour for breakfast. It is in the latter supposedly "civilised" sort of paddle where you sense their enjoyment of the known mixed with the unknown. It might be a harbour surrounded by nearly 4 million people, but there is still a sense of being alone and slightly vulnerable.

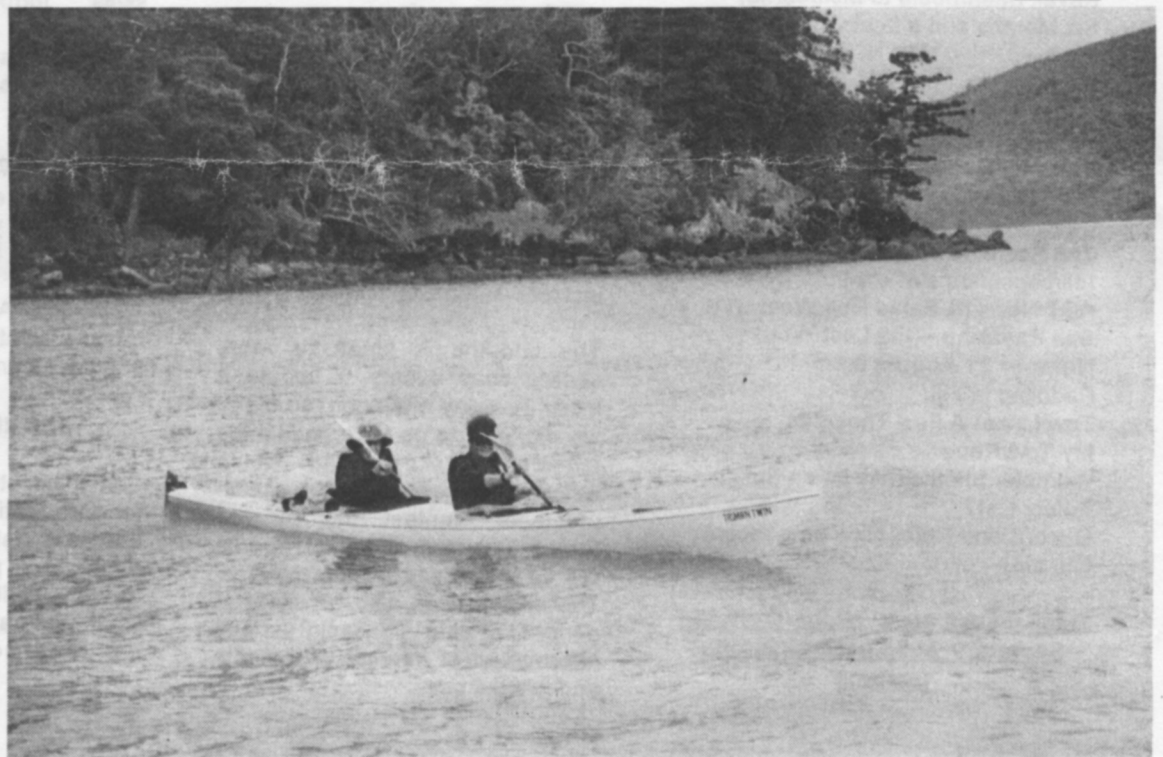
Max and Sheila still have their first boat (an Estuary Twin), but it has been joined in the garage rack by a Tasman Twin. The Tasman they rate as an excellent dry boat, fast paddling with good storage. Also tucked away is a folding boat, the Amphibian 11 (designed by Peter Poole), a purpose purchase for a very special trip-- Bathurst Harbour in south west Tasmania.

The Bathurst Harbour trip was mentioned by both as providing two memorable sea kayaking experiences. Firstly when they were kayaking on what seemed like molten glass, then were later dismissively pushed back over the same water when the famous west coast weather let loose. Max and Sheila also nominated paddling in the ice fields of Greenland (see next issue) and sunsets on the Great

Barrier Reef as some of their most wonderful sea kayaking times. Not so wonderful was a rugged experience off Hook Island.

Max and Sheila always paddle as a team, they regard this as essential to utilise each other's strengths. Sheila has a much greater sense of direction (she steers from the front), while Max is stronger. Naturally both would encourage others of their age and younger to take up sea kayaking. They rate the activity as inexpensive and practical, using boats which are easy to handle and have low upkeep. Paddling, they say, gives them a feeling of strength as well as helping to maintain their fitness and health. This is not to give the idea of a pair of fitness fanatics who live at the gym prior to major paddling trips. I asked about the preparation for their Greenland trip and was told they had done a lot of gardening!

As for likes and dislikes on trips --they would both like to know why no-one has yet designed a spray deck that doesn't leak! If they could have found it, such a skirt would have made it onto their personal essentials trip list. This is now a padded seat, Pelican box (for cameras), mars bars and a Goretex hat made by Outdoor Research. L.H.





Flotsam & Jetsam



NSW SEA KAYAKER INDEX OF RECENT BACK ISSUES

Number 15 January 93

Rock & Rolling at Merimbula
Patagonia

Number 16 June 93

Montague Island/Mystery Bay
One Person Boat (The Nimbin Puffin)
Murramarang Coast
Going Paddling Going Fishing
Sea Kayaking Course
Book Reviews (Happy Isles, Whale
watching)

Number 17 August 93

Journal Notes of a Myall Lakes
Sojourn
Broughton Island 8/9 May 93
Safety: Sea Kayaking (Night
paddling, rescue equip, flotation)

Number 18 October 93

Two Very Different Kayaking Trips
(Bathurst Harbour & Whitsundays)
East Coast Spectacular (Wreck Bay
to Currarong)
Health (Tenosynovitis Carpal Tunnel
syndrome)
Health (Tick Tock Pox - tick fever)

Number 19 Feb - March 1994

Dodging Southern Gales in a Sea
Kayak (Merimbula to Melbourne)
Six Months and a Leaky Boat (Jervis
Bay)

Number 20 May 94

Kayaking Kauai's Na Pali Coast
Advanced Proficiency Training
Weekend
Sea Kayaks -- The Cutting Edge
Cake, Caves and Kayaks
The Secret is not Minding (learning to
roll/beginners surf exp)
ACT News (A Salad Roll Weekend)
Sea Kayaking -- the Last Word

Number 21 August 9

Paddling in Fiji
Tow Lines- A Few Thoughts
My Tow Rope
Helmets- Should they be on the
Safety List?
Queensland Notes (tips on a recent
Qld trip)

**Back issues are available from the
Secretary at \$5 each including
postage**

FOR ACTION PHOTOGRAPHERS

Catch the thrills and excitement of many kayakers in moving water performing diverse unnatural acts. This will be a shutterbug's dream (*And good material for the Newsletter*). Check out the December listing on the trips calendar.G.E.

OUTSIDE SEAM TAPING

Buying a new fibreglass kayak? Then consider getting taping of the hull seams on both the inside and outside of the kayak. It may cost you more but you will end up with a much stronger kayak. There are two reported recent instances of kayaks without outside seam taping splitting. Not what you want at sea! N.G.

IT'S YOUR INFO-LINE & CLUB CALENDAR

As the Club's new trips convenor I am responsible for updating the Info-Line and Club Calendar. Both these are services to members to enable you to participate in club events and to become involved with the club generally. For these services to achieve the desired result they require input from members.

The club calendar comes out quarterly with the newsletter and because of the necessarily long lead times lends itself to annual events and those for which more planning is required. If you are planning an event contact me with the details and I will see that it is included in the club calendar.

The info-line is ideal for more spontaneous events. I update it every Tuesday afternoon, so if you are planning to go for a paddle the following weekend and would welcome the company of other club members, contact me by the Tuesday before and your paddle will be advertised on the info-line. The info-line can also be used for general club gossip, any information of interest or for sale and wanted ads.

The information that I will generally need to advertise an event will include, what the event is, when it is to be held, where it is to take place, any restrictions on paddling ability or numbers, any special features of the events, who to contact and contact numbers.

Contact me on (06) 248 7828 (h) 2835746 (w), fax (06)283 5515 or by post to 29 Westgarth St, O'Connor ACT 2601. Alternatively, leave a message for me after the recording on the info line number (02) 552 0028. Aruna Piika

NEW BOOKS

At your local book store, or kayak shop keep an eye open for:
Complete Folding Kayaker: Ralph Diaz
Eskimo Rolling: Hutchinson
Guide to Sea Kayaking: Hutchinson B.E.

N.S.W.B.C.E.

Even if you are proficient in paddling safely, the occasional use of an instructor is a safe way to raise your paddling standard and learn more advanced techniques. The Australian Board of Canoe Education is the only training scheme for Australia and is recognised Internationally. In sea kayaking there are three levels of skills, introductory sea award, proficiency sea and advanced proficiency sea. The Advanced sea award covers skills and knowledge to take parties on sea journeys with safety. The Sea Instructor Award requires a weekend training course, followed by a weekends assessment one to two years later. The Senior Instructor Sea Award is for candidate's who have held their Advanced Award for at least six months. Details Peter McCabe (064) 935035. John Wilde.

INFORMATION WANTED

Cathy Didcott (02 3989773 is looking for information on Paddling in the Solomon Islands. She and three others are planning a trip around Santa Isobell Island in Jan 95, using local boats and are keen to get some gen on the region, people and paddling.





Contributors' Notes



WE WANT YOU!

Paddled somewhere lately? Launched a new boat? Tried out a new bit of high tech gear? Designed a bit of low tech gear? Had a funny kayaking experience? Lived through a less than funny incident? Took a memorable sea kayaking photograph? Did a competent sketch after your latest paddle? Love something in the last edition? Hated something in the last edition? Hey, do we want to hear from you.

It's a buzz to see your thoughts in print or to see your photographs published. Contributing to NSW Sea Kayaker is easy and fun, but sadly is not profitable in a dollar sense since we are unable to pay.

NUTS AND BOLTS

Not everyone feels confident (or has the spare time) to sit down and type out a feature length article, but the newsletter is made up of many other contributions other than major journey pieces. Let's start from the easiest to the most demanding (and perhaps most personally rewarding).

PHOTOGRAPHS & SKETCHES

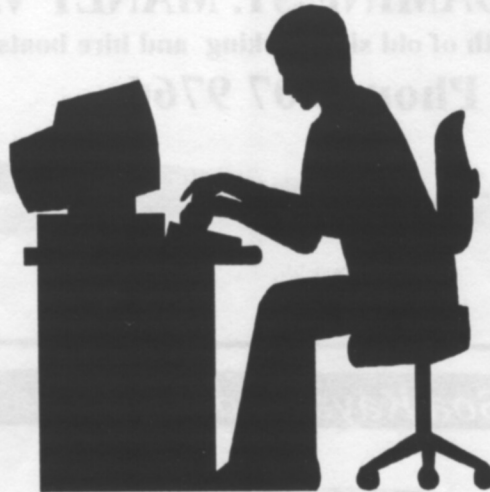
They can be black and white prints, colour prints (both postcard size), colour slides (35mm larger) or b/w line drawings, just so long as they concern an aspect of sea kayaking and are sharp enough to see what is going on. **In The Wake** needs fun images which can stand alone with a short caption or even a paragraph of text. But, it would be great if we could build up a library of photographs to be slotted into the newsletter at appropriate spots.

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

This is the section of the newsletter where we are looking for only paragraph length contributions (up to 60 words) This section really covers anything remotely concerned with sea kayaking. See opposite for examples, but if you quote from a published source less than 50 years old, it must be less than 30 words and clearly credited.

EQUIPMENT

This could be about some new bit of gear you have tried, tested and loved (or hated) or something that you nussed out after bitching about wanting a gismo to cover the widget and not being able to find or afford a commercial one. This section is a one pager of about 400 - 600 words — that might be two pieces of equipment with a couple of hundred words each. Essential however are clear photographs or line sketches to show exactly what it is that you are describing. If it is a do it yourself on making the



gismo, then readers will appreciate a materials list and a logical sequence of construction.

TECHNIQUE, SAFETY, HEALTH, COOKING, FOOD, PACKING

Again this is a one pager of about 400 to 600 words where the titles are pretty self explanatory. Unfortunately they are often overlooked as possible sources of information for club members. **Technique** and **Safety** are usually thought about and hotly debated, but things like **Health** — good and bad experiences on a trip, medical check lists, common complaints (I don't mean "How much longer do we paddle!" kind of wings) are all of great interest to paddlers planning trips. **Cooking** and **Food** are of immense importance on trips. On your last trip what did you eat? How was it prepared? Did

you managed to catch any fish? What's your favourite campfire recipe? **Packing** a sea kayak is one of those great mysteries. You know the scene; four sea kayaks pull up on a deserted cove for the night. Within minutes out has come a staggering array of essentials, luxuries and downright decadent touches (coffee pots and real coffee!). So how the hell do you fit a banana chair in the rear cockpit?

TRIP REPORT FEATURE JOURNEY

They are pretty similar except the trip runs over two pages (500 to 1,000 words plus 2-4 pics) and the journey runs to five pages (1,500 to 2,000 words plus 4-6 pics). They are the only two parts of the newsletter where we ask you to contact us before you start to write.

Essentially a **Trip Report** is briefer in both content and style than a **Feature Journey**, in which you can use more emotive language and possibly draw in other features; cultural, ethnic, environmental, historical aspects. For both sections of the newsletter there are three essential ingredients: photographs or sketches, a clear map and a fact box (see below). The photographs or sketches are detailed above. Maps can be accurately scaled or schematic, just so long as they contain the start point, the places named in the story and an end point.

FACT BOX

This should contain: Location, Means transport to launch site, Number in group, Experience Levels of Paddlers, Boats (number & type), Days Paddled, Rest Days, Land Accommodation, Side Trips, Best Time of Year, Constraints, Reference material, Charts/Maps used, Special Tips:

Type manuscript or put it on a 3/12" IBM formatted disk (Word 2.0 and beyond). So that's the essential information on contributing to NSW Sea Kayaker. How about contributing something for the next edition?

Please send material to:
Leigh Hemmings 91 Somerville Rd,
Hornsby Heights. NSW 2077



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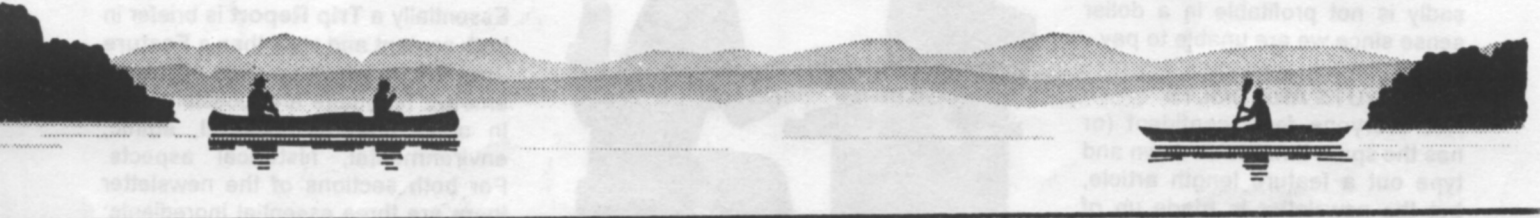
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RED BOX? MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE NOW!

