

# ❖NSW Sea Kayaker❖

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

Issue 23

March 1995

## PADDLING RANGIROA By Jacqueline Windh

"Why Rangiroa?" people kept asking me. "I've never heard of the place"



Above: Jacqueline's sea kayak was a novelty for Rangiroa, and all of the locals had to try it.

they would say. That's exactly why - neither had I! I selected Rangiroa because of its inaccessibility (200 km NE of Tahiti), and its small population (approx. 2000). Also, an important feature in selecting Rangiroa over other contenders (Manihi, Maupiti and Huahine) was the fact that at Rangiroa, the fringing reef makes an almost complete ring around the

sheltered lagoon - something that as a solo paddler I considered an important safety factor.

Rangiroa is the world's second largest atoll. (An atoll is a ring of

coral which was once a fringing reef around a volcanic island.) Rangiroa's lagoon is 80 km east-to-west, and 50 km north-to-south. Rangiroa's volcano sank below the ocean floor somewhere between 5 and 10 million years ago. What remains now is a ring of sandy coral islands. In the northern part of the atoll, these palm-fringed islands are up to several hundred metres wide, stand up to 5 metres above sea level, and are separated by scattered watery passes through which the tidal currents flow. In the southern part of the atoll, these "islands" are really just wave-washed patches of reef. Rangiroa's two villages, Avatoru and Tiputa, are located on adjacent islands at the northwest end of the atoll. The airstrip is on a narrow strip of land just east of Avatoru, and is serviced by flights from Papeete (Tahiti). Accommodation on Rangiroa is quite limited. There is one luxury

resort with 30 bungalows, and a few smaller lodges with bungalows. Aside from that, there are several family-run pensions, where you can either set up your tent or occupy a little bungalow, and take meals with the family. I had opted to stay Chez Nanua, run by Nanua and Marie Tamaehu, on the lagoon-side of the island near Avatoru. Setting up my tent, and three meals a day (1001 variations on fish and rice) cost about \$25 per day. Nanua's daughter Marguerite collected me at the airport, and drove me to their home, where I set up my tent on the coralline sand. I had left Australia in a mad work induced rush. By the time I boarded the flight from Canberra, I had barely slept for days. With stopovers, each of several hours, in Sydney, Auckland and Papeete, by the time I arrived on Rangiroa I was a wreck. On top of

(Continued on page 3)

### NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB INC

**PRESIDENT:** David Winkworth  
(064) 94-1366  
**VICE PRESIDENT:** Patrick Dibben  
(02) 810-7242  
**SECRETARY:** Garry Edmonds  
(042) 84-0836  
**TREASURER:** Dick Stuber  
(042) 86-1001  
**NEWSLETTER ED:** Leigh Hemmings  
(02) 482-2876  
**TRIPS CONVENER:** Arunas Pilka  
(06) 248-7828

### In This Issue

Paddling Rangiroa	1
President's Report	2
Equipment: Trees Triumph	6
South Coast News	7
Jervis Bay to Batemans Bay	8
From the Net	10
Surf Weekend Report	11
Sec's Rap/Planning with Godot	12
Sunshine, Gauntlets & Flashers	13
Myall Lakes Paddle	14
Glacier Bay	16
Flotsam & Jetsam	18



# President's Report



Hello everyone. If you were one of the many club members who came to our annual Rock 'n Roll weekend at Patonga, you would have been less than impressed by the behaviour of a group of campers adjacent to our area. Although I managed to sleep through the worst noise on both nights, it was nevertheless a 48 hour display of bad manners and lack of consideration for fellow campers. Complaints to the ONE caretaker on duty in daylight hours achieved nothing. However, on return home we sent a letter to Gosford City Council—the owners of the caravan park—and the Patonga Progress Association.

We are still waiting for a reply from the Council but the Progress Association has informed us that 2 security guards are now stationed there from 9pm to 2m each Fri & Sat night.

This is perhaps a start towards 24hr on site supervision but many members were quite justified, in my view, talking of relocating the weekend training event this year. Tuross Lakes on the South Coast has been

mentioned as a possible venue.

In spite of the disturbance, it was again a great training weekend with many paddlers achieving a quality roll and others getting very close ... Keep practising!

Sea kayaking businesses continue to grow in South East Australia. Patrick Dibben operating "Natural Wanders" on Sydney Harbour has quit his "daytime job", as has Andrew Lewis, director of "Sea Kayak Australia" which is based in Victoria. Both these businesses are now full time. They are responsible ambassadors for sea kayaking and deserve our support. Good luck guys!

If you have bought a leaky kayak recently, you have good reason to complain! The quality of boats on the market now, with one or two exceptions, is higher than it was 5 years ago. It is time for buyer resistance to put an end to poor quality workmanship! Kayak manufacturers ARE responding to paddlers needs. Outside taped seams on kayaks ARE available ...

Super—strong decline fittings ARE available to customer wishes... "podded" or minimum volume cockpits ARE available. To my mind, industry is responding to paddler's wishes. We should support the businesses that give us what we want in boats. It can only improve the breed!

Last issue, I mentioned that Dirk Stuber stood down as Trips Convenor early in the Club year. I neglected to mention that Dirk has served on the Executive for 3 straight years prior to this one, two as treasurer and one as trips convenor. Thanks Dirk.

I took my family along to Nick Gill's Honeymoon Bay Weekend at Jervis Bay last weekend. The Gods smiled on us and it was perfect weather for a family camp, which made a nice chance from the weather experienced on our last foray!

If you get the chance to attend a laid back "single base" weekend...do so. It's good fun. Isn't that what sea kayaking's about?

GO FOR A PADDLE!

David Winkworth.



## SPECIAL OFFER

If you didn't get "IT" at the Rock & Roll Weekend then take advantage of Canoe Sports special deals this Summer

Learn to roll for \$100 with Samantha our expert.

Guaranteed or your money back if we can't get you rolling this Summer

We'll give you unlimited lessons until you are successfully doing a roll of your choice

We can teach all styles:

- Pawlata
- Hand
- Reverse Sweep
- Right or Left Handed
- Screw
- Scull
- C2C

STOP PRESS

The new SKERRAY sea kayak has just arrived!

Now available \$1800

Learn correct paddling technique from our NSW Canoe Education Board Sea Kayak Instructor and Ex-Olympian Helen Jacobsohn - \$25/hr



# CANOE SPORTS

ON THE WATER

The Boatshed, 11 Narrabeen St, NARRABEEN, NSW, 2101

Phone: 970-7099 Fax: 913-2636



(Continued from page 1)

this, I had decided to use my "relaxing Polynesian escape" as a time to give up caffeine, so I had a pounding withdrawal headache.

For the first few days, I did not do much more than rest under the palms by the lagoon - acclimatizing to the heat and humidity, getting over my exhaustion and jet-lag, and, worst of all, suffering from intense caffeine withdrawal. I set up my Feathercraft and went for a few short paddles, and enjoyed the pleasant snorkelling from my doorstep. Two little girls from the seemingly endless Tamaehu household, Faaitini and Annanine, latched onto me, and I gradually regained my confidence in speaking French by conversing with them.

I rented a bicycle a couple of times, pedalling west and east to examine the passes at Avatoru and Tiputa. At Avatoru the current swirled through blue water, at a faster pace than I could paddle against, and met the ocean swell well out to sea. At Tiputa, however, the current was very strong, forming standing waves as big as a car, out of which dolphins leapt and played. I tried to make sense of the timing of the tide changes, but found it difficult. The locals had told me that the tide changes approximately every six hours, but "no one ever knows exactly when". To the best that I can figure out, this is because of the very few passes between the ocean and the lagoon, and the prevailing easterly winds moving water across the lagoon towards the west - the time that the current in the passes changes depends on both the tides and on the winds. This is the best explanation I can come up with - in any case, the current at Tiputa seemed to always be flowing out, no matter what time of day I went to look.

Finally I was feeling fit and ready to paddle. I made the decision to leave the next morning, only to realize today was Saturday - shops would be closed all afternoon and all day tomorrow, so I could get no groceries or fuel for my stove. My flight out of Rangiroa was booked for the next Saturday - in order to allow time for delays due to weather, as well as time to dry out and take apart my boat, I should plan to return from my paddling trip by the Wednesday. This only left three days for my paddling trip - much shorter than I had intended, but I had not thought that the caffeine withdrawal would be so bad! In any case, if I

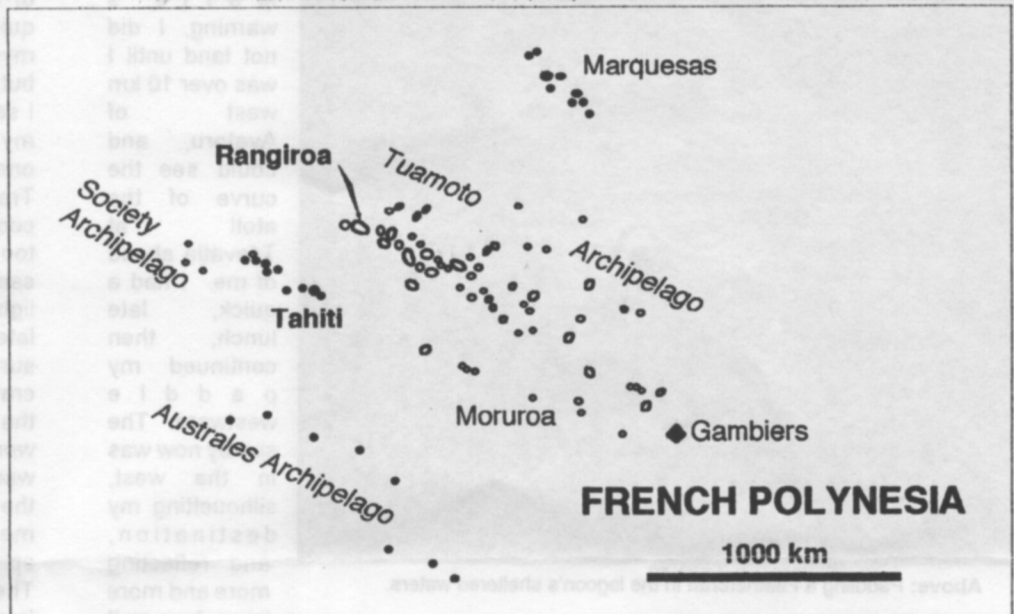
returned back here on the Wednesday, it would allow me plenty of time for more day trips.

I spent two days quizzing the locals about ocean conditions. With my Canadian-accented French and their Polynesian-accented French, communications were sometimes laborious and often humorous. Nanua was a wealth of information in disguise - he looked like a Buddha, and was so large that he could barely walk. He passed his days ordering the female children of the household to bring him food and drink. However, in a past life he had been a fisherman, and he still owned a black pearl farm in the lagoon. He could give me the Polynesian and French names of every aquatic creature I described to him from my snorkelling activities.

It turned out that Nanua owned some land at Teavatia, 15 km to the west of Avatoru, at the northwest corner of the atoll. He said I could camp anywhere that I wanted to

often difficult for a solo paddler far from home to organize a "check-in", in case for some reason you don't return. I told them I expected to be back on Wednesday afternoon - however, if a strong easterly was blowing, I might not be back until Thursday. If I hadn't returned by first thing Friday morning, they would come out looking for me. Another local told me about the mara'amu, a strong southeasterly that blows from time to time, day and night. "It usually lasts for three or four days, but once it blew for two weeks. You cannot paddle against it - you must just sit tight. So you must carry lots of water." He told me how, several years ago, some Americans had shown up planning to circumnavigate the interior of the lagoon (approximately 200 km) in a double folding kayak. Halfway around they were hit by the mara'amu. They camped for several days, resorting to opening coconuts for their water supply, and eventually were rescued by locals.

But the one main concern I had was

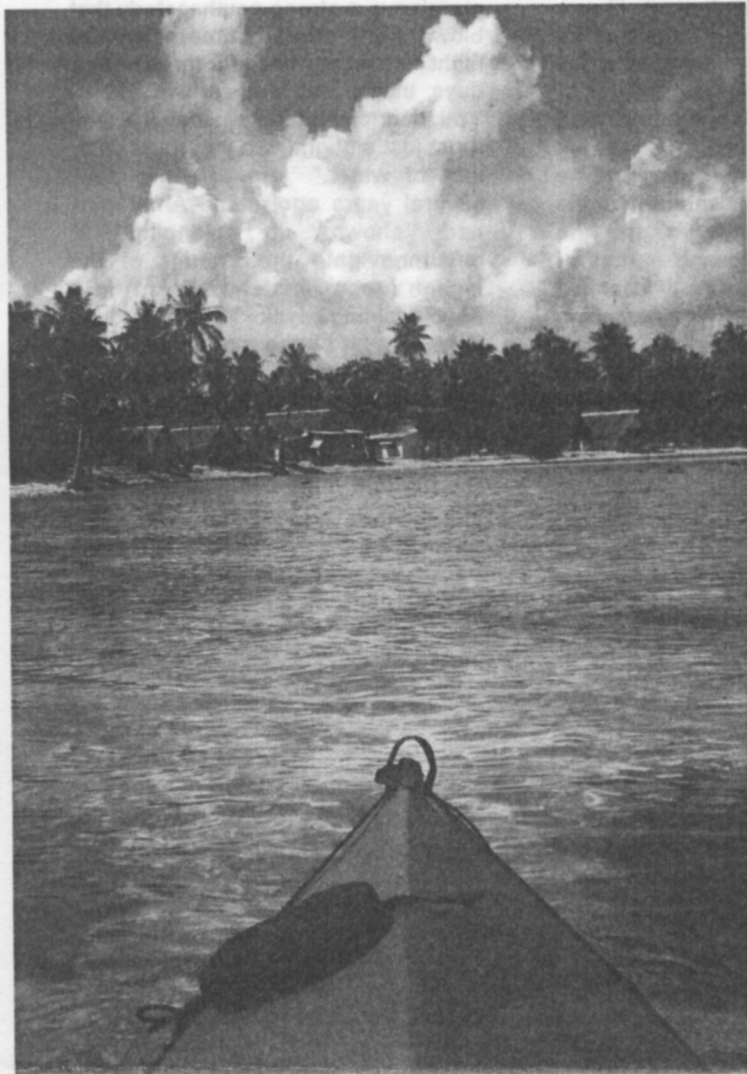


while paddling, but suggested that I camp on his land at Teavatia. I thanked him for the offer. He, Marie and Marguerite all took an interest in my paddling. Marie warned me not to stop on any island where I saw people - in particular, the islands immediately west of Avatoru. "They are copra plantations. The men there work hard and drink a lot. When they see a woman, who knows what might happen". Nanua talked to me about the winds and the tides. Marguerite asked for details of where I would be camped, and when I expected to be back. I was grateful for their kind concern - it is

sharks. Rangiroa's lagoon and passes are known, especially to the diving community, for their abundant sharks. In the pass by Tiputa is an underwater cave which regularly has about 100 sharks in it (together with dolphins, debunking that myth!). When I asked, Nanua said not to worry about sharks; they are mostly black-tipped reef sharks, and they do not attack people. Marie told me the only attack on record was provoked: a fisherman had speared a shark, then fallen overboard, and had his arm eaten. Nanua said that, if you are going to worry about something, forget sharks, worry about the barracuda!

(Continued from page 3)

Finally, on the Monday morning I set out. My groceries were purchased and stowed (the lack of choice made shopping quite quick and easy). I had purchased a Trangia stove before leaving Australia, thinking that metho would be the easiest fuel to find here - but I didn't know how to say metho in French! So I asked in French, literally,



Above: Paddling a Feathercraft in the lagoon's sheltered waters.

for "alcohol, not to drink, but alcohol to burn", (in French, "alcool à brûler") and thought myself quite clever when I was shown a bottle that had "Alcool à Brûler" written on the side of it.

I paddled westward from Nanua's place, with the prevailing easterly pushing gently against my back. As usual, it was hot and humid, with a blue sky and patches of grey rainy cumulus cloud. I had a map that Nanua had given me - an A4 photocopy of a fax of the whole atoll. At that scale, the narrow island strips show up only as black lines, and it is difficult to tell which gaps between islands are true passes, and which are

simply lower-lying sandy areas that are only washed by waves during a storm swell. As I paddled, I soon realized that none of the passes west of Avatoru connected the lagoon to the ocean during calm conditions. And that explained why the tidal currents in the passes at Avatoru and Tiputa raged so strongly - these two narrow passes

were the only drains for a huge area of this giant lagoon.

The scenery remained the same as I paddled - no topography, just palm-fringed sand to my right, and open turquoise lagoon to my left. I did not see any people, but heeding Marie's warning, I did not land until I was over 10 km west of Avatoru, and could see the curve of the atoll at Teavatia ahead of me. I had a quick, late lunch, then continued my paddle westward. The sun by now was in the west, silhouetting my destination, and reflecting more and more in my face as it sank lower in

the sky. I reached the corner of the atoll, and turned to the south, looking periodically to the right for the bungalows Nanua had described.

As the sun got lower, it became harder to make out details on the land, and a large shallow reef was forcing me to paddle several hundred metres out from shore. Beyond the reef I could see what looked like a pass to the ocean, and from the map it appeared that this should be Teavatia, but I could see no bungalows. I paddled up and down the reef, trying to look for a gap I could paddle through towards

shore, but my investigation was hampered by the sun reflecting from the water into my eyes. I finally made it through a tiny gap in the reef, with minimal scratching and bumping, only to find that there were more reefs ahead. I squeezed back out through my gap (a bit easier this time since I could at least see into the water), and headed back north along the reef to a pretty little beach I had seen just to the north. I found a gap of dead and broken coral in the reef very close to shore, and dragged the boat over it, then paddled up to the little beach. I asked myself why I had been aiming for the bungalows at Teavatia when heaven awaited me here!

I was parked at a beach on a lagoon within a lagoon within a lagoon. The innermost lagoon was a still, shallow pond of coralline mud, with sea cucumbers, mud crabs and a few darting fish. Baby palms sprouting from coconuts lined the beach. Behind the beach was a mesh of intergrown coconut palms and a stagnant pond. I could hear the roar of the ocean through the palms. A quiet, Polynesian paradise all to myself! Exactly what I had hoped for, but had not dared to think I might find. I set up my tent, then started cooking my meal as the sun set - a standard one-pot affair to be eaten out of the Trangia pot. By the time it was cooked, it was dark. The meal was too hot to eat, so I placed it on the sand to cool while I read a book by the light of my headlamp. Five minutes later I turned to my pot of food - it was surrounded by a ring of giant hermit crabs, waving their antennae against the sides of the pot, obviously trying to work out where the delicious smell was coming from. As I ate my meal, the crabs scoured the ground around me for flecks of onion peel, and bits of spice that had blown out of the pot. These crabs became my companions in my days of solitude here, and I got to know them both by appearance (their shell "house") and by personality - which ones would march up and eat out of my hand, and which ones would duck into their shell, not to re-emerge until late in the night, after I had gone to bed.

By the next morning, I had decided to stay in this idyllic spot for my second night. I went for a day-paddle south, past Teavatia. I saw the bungalows this time, lit brightly by the morning sun. I continued south about 5 km, until I could see the next big pass. South of here the islands are much smaller and lower, more wave-washed and less vegetated. Then I turned around and paddled back to



(Continued from page 4)

my camp for lunch. After lunch I went for a snorkel over the reef. The water was so warm that I stayed in for a long time, floating in 1 to 2 metres of water, looking at brightly coloured fish and clams. After a while I ventured further out, to where the reef dropped off and the sandy bottom was only dimly visible through the blue water. A flash of movement caught the corner of my eye, and I turned to see a shark cruising directly toward me. The photographer in me took over, and I clutched my Minolta Weathermatic. However,

as the camera clicked against my mask, the shark turned and with a powerful flick of its tail it was gone. It had been close to 1.5 m in length, and had been only 3 or 4 metres away from me when it turned. My heart was pounding with excitement. However, that encounter allayed my fears of sharks, and from that time on all of my snorkelling outings included moving out beyond the reef, looking for sharks (I saw four in all).

I spent another evening in the peaceful company of my hermit crab companions, this time feeding them veggie scraps as I cooked. Above the water, there was little wildlife to see - a few frigate birds and the occasional sea turtle by day, and the crabs by night (they spent their days roosting in trees!).

The next day was Wednesday, the day I had planned to return. The weather was so fine that I really did not feel like paddling back to Avatoru so soon - my flight out was not until Saturday. But I knew I should not take any risks with that - I wanted to pack my boat dry, and at Avatoru it dumps rain several times a day. After a leisurely lounge on the beach and some snorkelling, I broke camp and paddled back to the east. The gentle headwind was a welcome change, and did not hinder my progress.

As I approached Avatoru, I skirted wide around the pass. The tide was going out, and I knew from my previous day paddles that it could pull you into the pass quite quickly. Soon the green bungalows Chez Nanua came into view, and I landed at the beach. The children came to greet me, and to carry and examine all of my gear. I had not known what to expect in



Above: Camping is total privacy on a sparsely populated Polynesian atoll

going to Rangiroa. What I found was a small island community that has only been slightly "Frenchified". Although French is spoken by everyone, the natives still speak Tahitian at home - in contrast to most Polynesian cultures where the language has been lost to all except the universities, e.g. Hawaii, Tahiti. The men walk around town playing their ukeleles and singing; men and women both would smile and say hello to me on the road; and the children grow up in and near the ocean.

As a sea kayaking destination, it ranks in the class of "use your kayak to get to where other people can't", rather than "paddling for paddling's sake". Paddling in the passes would be very exciting in the right kind of boat - either a whitewater boat, or a technically skilled and experienced paddler in a good, manoeuvrable sea kayak. However, it would be difficult to get anything other than a folding kayak there. A large boat which will take passengers sails regularly from Papeete to Rangiroa, so presumably a rigid boat could be brought on that, but getting the boat to Papeete in the first place would be expensive. From what the locals told me, mine was the third sea kayak ever to have been there. If I was going back there, I would plan on allowing plenty of time to circumnavigate rather than do the short paddle I did, and I would bring a really big knife to open coconuts with.

For diving, Rangiroa is considered to be one of the best spots in the

world. Since it is an atoll, with no land mass and therefore no rivers, the water is crystal clear and the sea life (sharks, dolphins, spotted manta rays, and the usual pretty coloured things) is amazing.

For those whose vacations must always have high adventure and danger, Rangiroa might not be for you. For those who like something a bit more slow-paced and relaxing, and who value the opportunity to see and get to know a very different place - the people, the geography, the animal life - I highly recommend it. And if you don't want to go somewhere you have heard of before (by reading this article), the Tuamaotu Archipelago has 77 other atolls in it (including the infamous Moruroa), most of which are even harder to get to than Rangiroa.

#### FACT BOX

- Boat:** Feathercraft K1 Expedition
- Paddles:** Werner Little Dipper 4-piece breakdown and Werner San Juan 2-piece breakdown
- Tent:** Eureka Autumn Wind
- Stove:** Trangia
- Water:** five 4-litre wine-cask bags was more than enough for the three days
- Travel:** Qantas to Papeete, then Air Tahiti to Rangiroa



# Equipment



## TREES TRIUMPH OVER TUPPERWARE

By Norm Sanders

There I was, next to the boat ramp at Womboy Lake, alone in "Greens Cost Jobs" country. I had unloaded my strip-planked East Greenland inspired kayak *Tigara* from the car and was awaiting my paddling companions.

A group of fish killers approached. As a bearded hippie, I braced myself for the verbal and/or physical abuse which has so often been my lot. Their leader spotted *Tigara* and steered his beer belly in her direction. He smiled tentatively at me. I guess it was meant to be friendly, but his missing front teeth detracted from the warmth of the greeting.

The F.K. opened conversation with "Not a bad looking boat." I said thanks. He said, "Build it yourself?" I said yes and then added the information that it had taken 360 hours. "Geez," said the now assembled school of FK's. They seemed genuinely interested, so I showed them how the strips were

glued together edge to edge and then fiberglassed inside and out. I let them lift the hull to see how light and stiff it was.

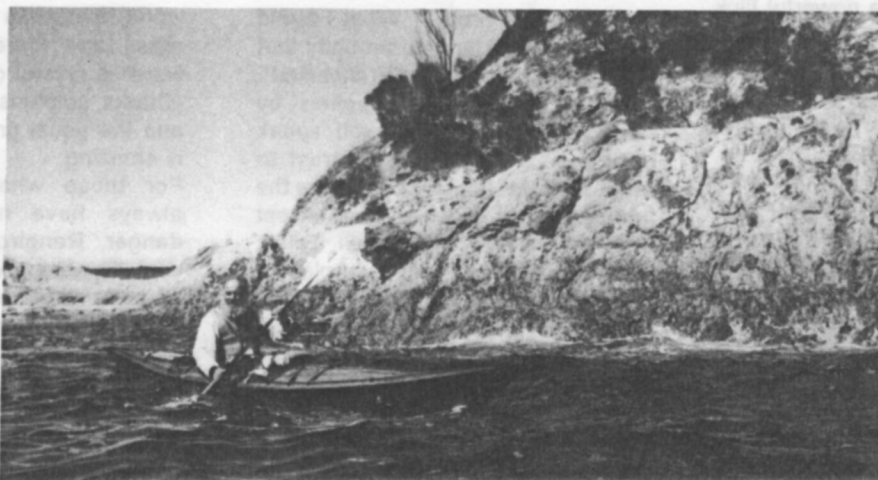
After some more small talk they muttered a chorus of "Good on ya's," picked up their weapons and wandered off. I marvelled that a wooden boat could so easily offer a passage over such a wide cultural gulf. I guess it's not so surprising, really.

The human race has been paddling around in wooden boats for a very long time. So long, in fact, that everyone has an ingrained appreciation of wooden craft. Humans also have an innate fondness for sheer - the beautiful sweeping curve of a deckline which starts from a high stern, swoops to a lower midship section, and then soars to an even higher bow.

What better combination of timber and sheer than in an East Greenland kayak? (Hold on, I hear the purists braying, Inuit kayaks were built of hide

stretched over dritwood frames. True, but as George Dyson says about his aluminium and hypalon *Baidarkas*, they would have used these materials if they had them.)

The first boat I ever built (1958) was a Malibu Outrigger, a mulihull sailboat. She was 1/4" plywood, with pronounced sheer. In those days, the Malibu Outriggers, which we actually sailed off the beach at Malibu, were the fastest boats around. One day a surfer we knew came by and took measurements of the boats. We asked him why. He said he was thinking of going into production of a surfing mulihull. He was planning to use fiberglass rather than ply and wanted to build cats instead of



outriggers. He wondered if any of us would be interested in buying into the project. We, with our massive hubris, said "Nah, your idea will never sell, Hobie..."

A little while later, a guy came to the beach with a contraption he had built. We lords of the beach tried it in the surf and pronounced it a dismal failure. He was undeterred. He refined the design and called it a "Windsurfer." And so slowly, we learned humility.

Over the years I built a timber, carvel planked yacht and three Grand Banks dories, with lots of nice sheer, again out of plywood. I still have one. And then I discovered kayaking. My first sea kayak was an Estuary, an unfortunate name for a craft which I regularly paddle on the Tuross Bar. People seemed to react adversely to the name. I consistently got "Pittaraked" until I took off the Estuary lettering on the hull and replaced it with large

letters spelling **ORCA**.

I decided that I wanted to build a wooden kayak. I wrote to Pygmy Kayaks and Chesapeake Light Craft in the US for information. They had plans and kits for plywood construction, which was a comfortable option for me. I liked the Pygmy design best. Until I got some information on Rob Mack's Panache stripper design. I knew it would be a lot of work, but it was worth it.

There is only one trouble with paddling a work of art. *Tigara* is plenty strong enough, but I hate the thought of scratching her. So... back to plywood for a quick little zinger for bouncing off rocks. I took the basic hull shape of Christopher Cunningham's Greenland inspired design which was published

in the US magazine "Sea Kayaker". I squeezed it down to 15'6" so it would fit in the shed where I keep my kayaks (except for *Tigara*, who is allowed in the house). I am also redesigning the deck and hatch system. I like my aft hatch to be in the bulkhead behind the seat to leave the aft deck clear and to make long items easier to

load.

I found some inexpensive 3.6mm exterior plywood and started work. The hull is now all glassed and I'm ready for the deck. So far I have spent about 30 hours on the new boat. With *Tigara*, I was still building the construction jigs after this much time. 50 or 60 hours should see the new kayak, *Taku* (another Inuit name) in the water. I am designing it to be simple to build and CHEAP - about \$400. I am making paper templates for all the panels so that others can quickly lay out the shapes if they have a yen to build their own kayaks.

After a lifetime around boats, I have settled on sea kayaks as the most satisfying and intimate way to experience the moods of the ocean. The simplicity of equipment - a kayak and paddle - is very appealing after having owned ocean racing yachts. Tupperware kayaks are fine, but for the most pleasure you can't beat a wooden boat you've built yourself.





# South Coast News



## IN THE DEEP SOUTH

There has been a bit of paddling on the far south coast of NSW and into Victoria. Myself, Jacque Windh and Norm Sanders spent a week in Nadgee Nature Reserve. We spent most of our time at Nadgee Bech and Merrica River, undertaking day paddles, slothing and a number of walks. Meanwhile Ron Mudie has been off on a solo adventure, paddling from Mallacoota to Wingan Inlet. Ron had a number of wildlife encounters. Camping just north of the inlet, he was visited one morning by a dingo. Ron also came across a seal, asleep while adrift on the water. Ron ran his hand gently along the seal, waking it up.

## BOAT BUILDING

Boat building and modification is also on the agenda. Ron Mudie is building a Greenland style boat. Ron reports that he will have a mould off in a few weeks. The boat will be along the lines of a Nordkapp, with VCP hatches and a length of 17'10". Ron will be trialling an integrated rudder system on the boat, and plans to tape it together, avoiding lumps of resin at each end. Norm Sanders is busy building (see Page 6). David

Winkworth has modified his Puffin to do away with the large (and leaky) rear hatch. Dave has cut away the existing plastic coaming and has attached a moulded fibreglass plate that takes a VCP hatch. Being a Puffin owner myself, I agree with the need for improvement in the rear hatch Puffin setup. However, I am not sure that I am brave as Dave. Dave, keep us posted.

## SEDIMENTARY SEA KAYAKS

Sea kayaks were recently spotted by Norm Sanders on the Tuross estuary. The kayakers were geomorphologists from James Cook University. They were conducting research on sedimentation in the estuary and use Seafarers as a platform from which to sample estuary sediments. As part of their visit they talked to the local community Tuross estuary management group, about their work and the effects of upstream logging.

## JERVIS BAY WEEKEND

The weekend at Honeymoon Bay on the 11th and 12th of February was well attended by paddlers from

Sydney, Canberra and elsewhere. Many of those who came were new or relatively new to the sea kayaking. The weekend was relaxed and the weather near perfect. Highlights included caves, surfing and instruction in Honeymoon Bay itself. Feedback so far indicates that the newcomers appreciated the weekend and were able to gain skills and new experiences, such as going into sea caves little wider than one's kayak.


## CANBERRA PADDLING

The Canberra Pod is meeting on Wednesday evenings at 6pm for paddling on Lake Burley Griffin. Meet at Yarralumla Bay. Call Nicholas Gill or any other Canberra Paddlers for information. Meanwhile, the number of active Canberra Members continues to grow, with David Whyte the latest to join. A recent visitor was John Cordwell from Bowral, who is looking to purchase a kayak. Jacque Windh is currently in New Zealand with her Feathercraft. On a competitive note, Arunas Piika and John Wilde recently took part in the annual Lake Burley Griffin Bash. Arunas, in his Arctic Raider, managed to break the course sea kayak record by some ten minutes. N.G.

# Trangia the complete all-weather outdoor kitchen



The trangia cooking system operates instantly without priming, pumping or pre-heating and cooks with additional protection in almost any weather conditions. Burner efficiency even improves in strong winds. Methylated spirits is a safe, clean and sterile fuel, available anywhere. Made in Sweden, the stove and its aluminium utensils are robust, compact, maintenance-free and quickly assembled.

 **trangia: the art of successful outdoor cooking**

## JERVIS BAY TO BATEMANS BAY- A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

By Dirk Stuber

Rob Thompson and I left Green Patch, Jervis Bay at about 11 am. I was in a relaxed mood: 5 days to cover approx. 120 kms of coastline. My only concern was that I'd be on my own for the last 3 days as Rob had to pull out on Tuesday because of work commitments. I was psyched up to complete the journey no matter what. The trip was important, once I'd completed this section of the coast I'd have achieved my long term goal: to paddle the southern coast of NSW-Cronulla to Mallacoota.

We left in fine weather making good time and rounded Governor Head about midday. Paddling on the inside

leaping about in the water.

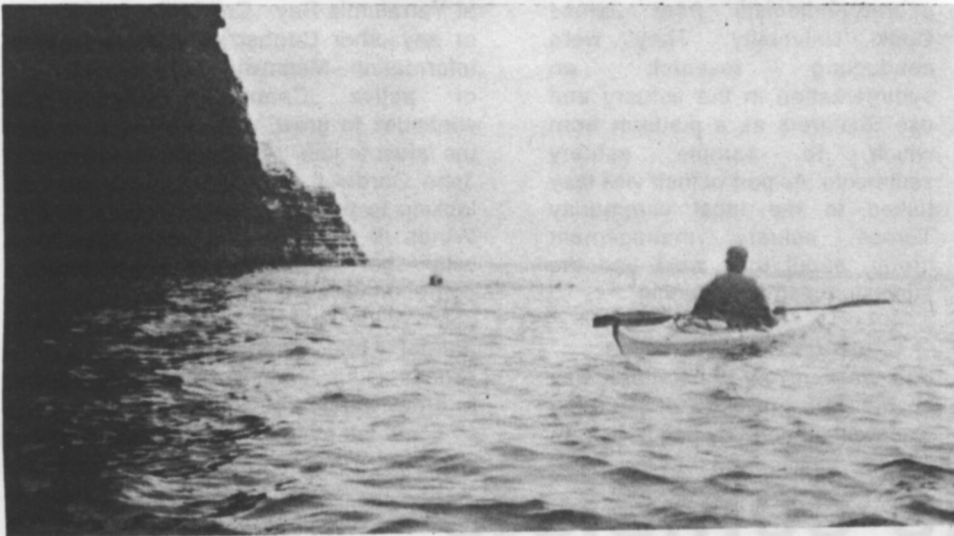
We paddled closer, they hurriedly slid from their ledges, and as the cave was narrow, we became concerned that some might land on our kayaks. We stayed for a while as they swam around and under our boats but it was obvious that our presence distressed them. We paddled from the cave and Rob was surrounded by a large group, leaping about energetically escorting him out to sea. He was thrilled with this close encounter. I took a number of pictures which unfortunately did not turn out as the cave was too dark.

Steamers Beach was a beautiful place to stop for lunch. While we were there three Aborigines from Wreck Bay stopped to talk. They

was keen to continue though I noticed that the new lure he gave me was not such an expensive one! Heading towards St Georges Head I had a huge strike which ripped the handline from the deck. Simultaneously the fish leapt into the air, Rob claims it was the mother of all fish, but as in all good fish stories, it got away. We were agog with excitement, Ernest Hemingway's old man of the sea stand aside. Hurriedly we changed the broken lure and continue trolling. Alas not another strike. The gods had decided we'd had enough excitement. We rounded St Georges Head with only 5 km to our camp at the northern end of Bhewerre Beach. We were now paddling towards the west and our helpful NE had become a nasty off shore wind. The sea was littered with 1 metre wind waves, the wind was gusting to 20- 25 knots and we were buffeted by the waves and drenched by the spray. It was turning out to be a hard "character building" slog. We eventually made it to our camping spot and I was full of admiration for Rob. He'd slogged it out across wreck Bay forced to paddle 75% of the time with left sweep strokes. Not one complaint. We'd covered about 22 km on day one.

We set off early in the morning after another delicious meal provided for mainly by Rob. He was turning out to be the perfect partner, carrying an excellent variety of food in his dry bag! Day two we covered about 33 km in ideal conditions. We reached Ulladulla at 2.30 pm. Sadly Rob had to bail out. He caught a cab back to his car at Green Patch and then returned to pick up his kayak. Now that's what I call self-sufficiency.

So a big chunk of the trip was left and I was on my own. I'd done a couple of short paddles on my own but never an overnighter. I'd been inspired by the feats of Ron Mudie (solo from Wallagoot to Melbourne) and Paul Caffyn (*everywhere*) so it was time to have ago. I headed for a camping ground behind Race Course Beach, 4 km away. I thought I'd stay close to Ulladulla as I fancied an evening at the Marlin Hotel, an old stomping ground from my teenage years. Memories of beautiful, blond, bouncy, beach babes reduced me to a somnolent stupor as I paddled towards Warden Head. Suddenly the wash of lively water snapped me to attention. Not far away was the first serious gauntlet since Stoney Creek, it dissected the tip of the headland. Should I be so bold on my own? Hell why not, anyway it was too far to paddle around the point. So I lined it



Above: Sea lions come out to play.

of Bowen Island we sighted some fairy penguins. A strong NE pushed us down the coast and we enjoyed the scenery of low sand stone cliffs. I thought to myself that although this was exciting paddling it was certainly not as intimidating as the northern headland of Point Perpendicular. Rob was working hard maintaining a good line with the Nautilus as his rudder was broken, (this proved to be a real challenge as the afternoon wore on). We decided to have a lunch of freshly cooked fish at Steamers Beach. To his joy, Rob (The Fisherman) had caught three fish while trolling. We rounded the head and found ourselves in a sheltered bay. As we paddled towards the beach we became aware of a strong odour and the sound of barking. Our curiosity aroused we headed for a large sea cave and to our great delight we found it full of seals! There were at least forty of different sizes, camped on rock ledges or

told us that the seals had been living in Devils Hole for some time but they'd eventually move on to look for mates or food. They said a few days before a large shark was seen feeding on the seals. We talked for a while and they told us that they were looking for a feed of abalones and crays. They were a bit nervous as rangers had been "harassing" local Aborigines for taking bush tucker illegally. They were annoyed by this and said the rights of Aborigines to collect traditional food was to be tested in court. This was further complicated by the fact that the Wreck Bay community was making a claim for the land.

As we left the beach I responded to Rob's encouragement and started to troll a lure. I was hugging the coast as I'd been told this is the best place to troll. Unfortunately it's also the best place to become snagged -lost one \$20 lure. Rob



up, in I went, slap, push, shove, brace, hold and then accelerate. I was through and I felt confident. Cruising down the beach I was certain that a gaggle of gals was casting admiring glances. As I drew closer my gaggle turned out to be a group of surfers. It is well known that an adrenaline rush can cause one to hallucinate.

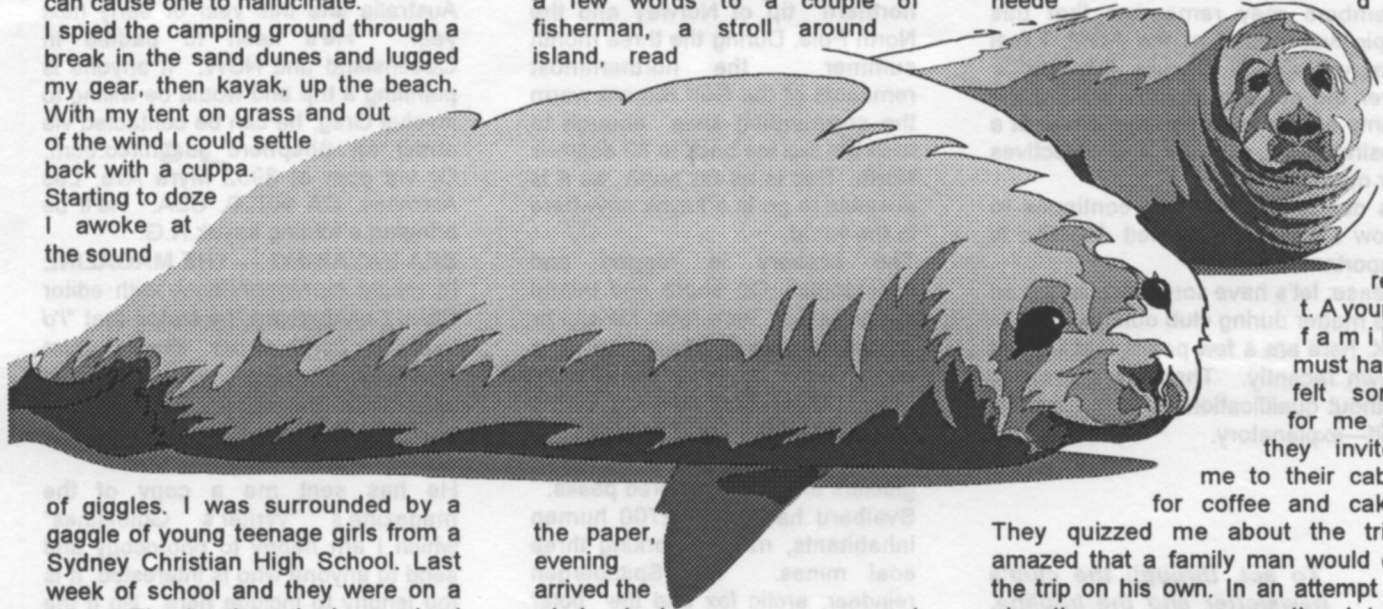
I spied the camping ground through a break in the sand dunes and lugged my gear, then kayak, up the beach. With my tent on grass and out of the wind I could settle back with a cuppa.

Starting to doze

I awoke at the sound

wasn't going anywhere for awhile. I was stuck for 22 hours, a long time on a rocky, sandy island. At low tide I walked over the spit to the mostly empty camping ground, the shop served no hot food until the next week, bought a can of drink and the paper, went back to the Raider, had a few words to a couple of fisherman, a stroll around island, read

wave onto a rock shelf. As I approached, one shouted out that I wasn't welcome. All I could do was smile. He must be joking to think I'd risk my \$2000 kayak and \$1000 worth of camping gear on his suicidal wave. I was glad to reach South Durras early afternoon, my back was aching and I needed a



of giggles. I was surrounded by a gaggle of young teenage girls from a Sydney Christian High School. Last week of school and they were on a camp. The teachers had organised them into 3 groups for personal development exercises and, fair dinkum, I was stuck in the middle.

I set off on the half hour walk to the Marlin. What did I find? Just a bunch of balled, blubbery, boozy blokes. Oh well so much for old memories. I enjoyed myself having a couple of beers, some chips and watching the cricket. At least when I got back to tent the teenagers were asleep.

Wednesday I awoke at dawn to find the southerly had arrived. I looked at the beach- a 2 metre swell, then I looked around and I saw the bus and the tents. I decided the ocean was the preferred option. I timed it well and got past the shore dump without too much trouble. Then I waited for the set to pass, and as the walls of white water hit I could feel the shaft of my paddle bend as I held my ground. Concentrating hard, I knew this was not the time to practice my roll. A lull arrived, sluggish acceleration as the loaded Raider responded to the demands of the paddle. I headed south through the dark rolling sea aware that the wind was getting stronger. I worked hard to cover the 9.5 km to Crampton Island and landed on the sheltered side at 9 am.

After breakfast I walked to weather side and found a howling wind and a big swell strewn with white caps. I used my mobile to call coastal patrol for the latest weather report: Southerly to ease by evening. It was obvious I

the paper, evening arrived the wind had not eased. erected the tent, had dinner and went to bed. I had a restless sleep. Will the wind have died by morning? I couldn't bear another day on the rock.

Day 4, I woke at 6 am to find the wind had died and the swell had dropped. I was ecstatic, quickly loaded the boat and was pleased the high tide allowed me to surf across the spit. The conditions were excellent and I covered the 13 km to O'Hara Head in just under 2 hours.

The scenery did not encourage me to dawdle as many of the headlands were cleared and dotted with bits of suburbia. Not even the presence of Brush Island lifted me. I felt despondent, this was not the wild coast I'd come to see. After a hearty breakfast I continued towards my goal — Murramarang National Park. I rounded Snapper Point, northern border of the park, weather and sea were perfect and the forecast was good, so I slowed Time to relax and play. The scenery improved significantly: beach, forest, headlands, islands and mountains was all I could see. I hugged the shoreline, skirted behind O'Hara and Dawsons Island, took all the safe gauntlets and even managed to catch a few waves. As I got close to Pebbly Beach I found a group of boogy boarders surfing a short, steep

res t. A young family must have felt sorry for me as they invited me to their cabin for coffee and cake.

They quizzed me about the trip, amazed that a family man would do the trip on his own. In an attempt to give them some perspective I told them about the adventures of the great Paul Caffyn. They also asked me about sharks, but they must have been disappointed as I couldn't titillate them with even one experience. I said farewell and hurried to my camp site at Myrtle Beach. It was the best camp site of the journey, grassy area, beautiful view and not a soul in sight. I must have covered 35 km that day. I was tired and happy.

On day 5 I woke before dawn. I had plenty of time as it was only 15 km to the bridge at Batemans Bay where I was to meet Gary Edmond at Middy. I had a leisurely breakfast and watched a most beautiful sunrise. I was on the water by 8 am and slowly headed for Batemans Bay, again enjoying the beautiful undeveloped coast, hugging the shore line and playing in gauntlets. I even had the company of a dolphin for a short time. I spent some time exploring a long narrow sea cave near Oakly Beach. Rounding North Head I had the assistance of a friendly NE for the last few kilometres.

Gary and I arrived at the boat ramp almost at the same time. On the drive home we agreed that Jervis Bay and Murramarang were the highlights, certainly worth another visit. I was glad I'd spent the time paddling and camping on my own. I feel more confident as a result of the experience.





# From the Net



## SEA KAYAK CLUB AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Members may remember that this topic was raised at the AGM. I feel that we should discuss this matter over the coming months around the camp fire etc. and perhaps arrive at a desirable set of aims and objectives for our next AGM.

As our sea kayak club continues to grow I feel some defined direction is important.

Please, let's have some discussion on the matter during club outings.

OK, here are a few points that I jotted down recently. They are presented without qualification as they are fairly self-explanatory.

- 1 **To act, through the club's newsletter and the Infoline, as a contact point for members paddling related activities.**
- 2 **To promote sea kayaking in the general community as an enjoyable social and environmentally responsible wilderness pursuit.**
- 3 **To promote, organise and conduct sea kayaking training programs for all skill levels.**
- 4 **To liaise with sea kayaking retailers and manufacturers in the design and adoption of quality craft and practical safety ideas.**
- 5 **To encourage respect for our environment and wild places and the practise of minimum impact camping.**
- 6 **To support environmental study and lobby groups, both morally and, where appropriate, by supplying skills and finance.**
- 7 **To represent sea kayakers generally in consultations with government departments at all levels.**

.....got a problem with any of the above? ...Want to add a point or two? ...let's hear your views.  
David Winkworth.

## EXPEDITION NOTICE!!!! SEA KAYAKING SVALBARD

Svalbard is a Norwegian island group about half way between the northern tip of Norway and the North Pole. During the three month summer, the northernmost remnants of the Gulf Stream warm the surrounding seas enough to melt the sea ice back to 82 degrees North. This is as far north as it is possible to go in a kayak anywhere in the world.

The scenery is rugged and spectacular. On shore and inland the ground is bare rock, ice-cap or tundra. Tundra in flower can be a riot of colour, as all the plants try to grow, flower and set seed before the summer is over. From the sea there are many fjords, tidewater glaciers and snow-covered peaks.

Svalbard has about 2700 human inhabitants, mostly working three coal mines. The Spitsbergen reindeer, arctic fox and the polar bear are the only native land mammals. Sea mammals include various whales, seals and walrus. 40 species of sea-birds migrate to Svalbard for the summer.

The North Atlantic and the North Sea have a reputation for foul weather. Svalbard is an exception, with two thirds of summer days at dead calm to gentle breezes and only 4% of days with gales (RN Arctic Pilot NP11).

Most of the Arctic is technically a desert. Svalbard is no exception, with only around 200 mm of precipitation, mostly as winter snow. Summer temperatures average 6 C on the coast. Sea temperatures are low too. The West Spitsbergen current warms the surface waters to 2 C, but mixes with the East Spitsbergen current at about -2 C. Drysuits!

**I am organising a sea kayak trip for July to September 1995.** My basic plan is to fly to Longyearbyen, then explore the fjords, glaciers, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries on the western and northern coasts of Spitsbergen. The trip is open to NSW Sea Kayakers and friends. Anyone interested should contact me at the following numbers:

(02) 888 2073 (home)

(02) 887 8568 (work)

Andrew Eddy

## VISITORS AHOY

Greg Shepherd, a kayaker from California has been in touch via the Internet. He's planning on coming to Australia late this year or early next year. He's keen to paddle in Queensland and NSW. If anyone is planning a trip and would be willing to involve Greg, he can be contacted via email on Shepherd\_gd@hitco.com. Or via post at 3952 Myra Ave, Los Alamitos, CA 90720, USA. He'll be bringing a folding kayak. N.G.

## SEA KAYAKING — THE MAGAZINE

In recent correspondence with editor Chris Cunningham, he stated that "I'd love to carry more stories from Australian paddlers". Now guys and gals this magazine (unlike your poverty stricken newsletter) pays real dollars — and US ones to boot!

He has sent me a copy of the magazine's "Writer's Guidelines" which I am happy to photocopy and send to anyone who is interested. It is too lengthy to include here. So if the chance to make money and have an even better excuse to go paddling appeal give me a call. (02 4822876)

## WAVE-LENGTH MAGAZINE FEB/MARCH 1995

Geneticist David Suzuki is now writing a regular column. In this edition he writes about "A need for Nature—part of our destiny" and uses Biophilia, a biologist Edward O Wilson's term based on the Greek words for 'life' and 'love'. He quotes from two fascinating books Wilson's "Biophilia: the Human Bond with Other Species (Harvard Uni Press 1984) and "The Biophilia Hypothesis" (Island Press Washington 1993). In the latter, Yale Professor Stephen Keller says, "The biophilia hypothesis proclaims a human dependency on nature that extends far beyond the simple issue of material and physical sustenance to encompass as well as the human craving for aesthetics, intellectual, cognitive and even spiritual meaning and satisfaction ... a scientific claim of a human need ... for deep and intimate association with the natural environment... The degradation of this human dependence on nature brings the increased likelihood of a deprived and diminished existence ... Much of the human search for a coherent and fulfilling existence is ultimately dependant on our relationship to nature." Little wonder sea kayaking is such joy. L.H.



**COLEDALE SURFING WEEKEND**

by Dirk Stuber and Jacqueline Windh

On the Saturday morning a small but keen group (followed by late-comers) gathered at Coledale Beach: Arunas Pilka, Gary Edmond, Dave Malcolm, Gary Parker, Patrick Carmody, Michael Maleedy, Peter Adams, Dirk

Dirk reckons the surf was two metres - Jackie reckons it was more like five. People paddled as they felt like it, according to their own skill level (or sometimes a bit beyond). Boats were swapped, ideas were shared, encouragement was given. Most people had life-jackets and helmets (Arunas

or his boat.

- Dirk burying the banana, as promised in the promo material distributed by Gary.

- Dirk entrusting his Arctic Raider to Gary's care, then returning to the group to hear with horror the acrobatic manoeuvres that his boat had executed in his absence.

- Fishkiller choosing to land through all of the rocks at the north end of Sharky's at low tide - and being carried gently over them by a luckily timed swell.

- Dirk doing two backflips in his Arctic Raider at Sandon Point, and coming out of the boat at the beginning of a BIG set - again with no injury to boat or pilot - and as usual, rescued by the able and fearless Gary Edmond.

- Arunas celebrating his 40th

on the Saturday night at Coledale with a chocolate cake decorated with an icing figure of Arunas kayaking amongst the rocks. (Arunas at age 40 was noticeably less aggressive in the waves than he had been on Saturday, when he was only 39).

To all the beginners and surf-neophytes who didn't show up - you



Above: David Malcolm doing a high brace. (Photo: Jacqueline Windh)

Stuber, Jackie Windh, Mark Pearson (aka Fishkiller).

We had a range of short (whitewater) boats: two Wildcats provided by John Slattery of Canoe World, Gary's MI335, Dave's Alpha, Dirk's Magic Bat; as well as an assortment of sea kayaks. From the point of view of playing in the surf, the short boats were vastly more suitable - and, because they were plastic, we did not have to worry about damaging them!

After a short discussion, it was agreed that since none of the group members were beginners, we would go down to Sharky's Beach and have a play there. Sharky's is a beach break, with a rocky reef at the north end, which should be avoided (see below). Sunday we played on the point

break at Sandon

Point, which is known for its long ride favoured by wave-ski riders. Here the acrobatics continued, and some of us ventured into the reef to the south.

distinguished himself by paddling naked), and the safety rule of one boat per wave was mostly observed.

Highlights include:

- Mike getting creamed by a paddler surfing backwards (initials DS), and avoiding injury by executing a beautiful capsize-and-roll.



Above: Gary Parker exiting through surf in an Arctic Raider. (Photo: Jacqueline Windh)

- Patrick getting blasted by a wave inside the reef at Bulli Point and coming out of his Puffin amongst the rocks, without injury to himself

missed some expert instruction, as well as some good demos of both do's and don'ts. Hope to see you next year!





## Secretary's Rap



I've just returned from one month's absence. Fortunately most of that was spent paddling in Bass Strait with the inestimable Arunas Pilka. It was a good time—more will be said in coming issues. My absence has resulted in a delayed correspondence, also exacerbated by an unprecedented experience; summer employment. This has been keeping me busy and Dirk, the "Patron Saint of Students", happy. If you've sent an unanswered letter or are a new member the "backlog" is being caught up with. My unexpected absence has meant that the index catalogue will be postponed. The Royal Banquet paddle was also postponed because many of the regular paddlers were already committed. Correspondence was mainly bills and a couple of international enquiries. One of the latter led an English visitor, Leslie Montague, to join a group which spent New Year stranded on the Toll Gate islands with absurdly insufficient volumes of alcohol for a sleep under the stars. She was great company for such an occasion. G.E.

### PLANNING WITH GODOT

by Gary Edmond

Jean Anouilh once unduly criticised Beckett's play, *Waiting for Godot*, by lamenting the failure of anything to happen, anyone to come or go. All of which combined to make the experience terrible. Most of this, with a qualification on terrible, applies to the initiation of sea kayaking expeditions. Maybe the

tragedy in the play was that despite the actors being generally interpreted as itinerant derelicts, there was no mention of liquor. Whilst most of life and by implication smaller kayaking trips are conjured before sedentary and sober minds, in contrast the beginnings of expeditions are induced by alcohol. Sitting around a campsite drinking port, more starry eyed than

(Continued on page 18)



Above: Searching for Godot (Photo: Gerald Linde)



## CANOE & CAMPING SUPPLIES

CANOEING, LIGHTWEIGHT CAMPING AND OUTDOOR GEAR

The complete canoe and camping store!  
LAPS AHEAD IN SERVICE AND EXPERTISE

265 VICTORIA ROAD  
GLADESVILLE, 2111  
PHONE: (02) 817-5590

We stock a comprehensive range of fibreglass and plastic sea kayaks - singles and doubles - sea going, racing and estuary styles.

Demonstrator kayaks available. Books, maps and all accessories stocked.  
New, used and hire gear is available.

NOW STOCKIST of the MIRAGE range of sea kayaks  
17—19—22—22S and the NEW 24 double  
SIMPLY THE BEST!

See recently released Piranha range (UK), Creek 280 and Acrobat 300  
Also Perception (USA, Corsica and Corsica S wild water kayaks)



## OF SUNSHINE, GAUNTLETS & FLASHERS — A WEEKEND ON THE SOUTH COAST

By Nick Gill

A weekend on the south coast late last year showed how paddling in groups of mixed paddling ability can be enjoyable and challenging for all involved. Both paddles are short with (relatively) reliably safe landing and launching, however they also offer good 'play' opportunities for more experienced paddlers. For less experienced paddlers the two paddles offer short distances, an interesting destination, and a variety of paddling environments, including headlands, islands and beaches.

The group comprised myself, Arunas Pilka, Norm Sanders, Mark Pearson, relative newcomers to sea kayaking, Kate and Mick Crowe, and total newcomers to sea kayaking Michaela Lamb and Rod McDougal.

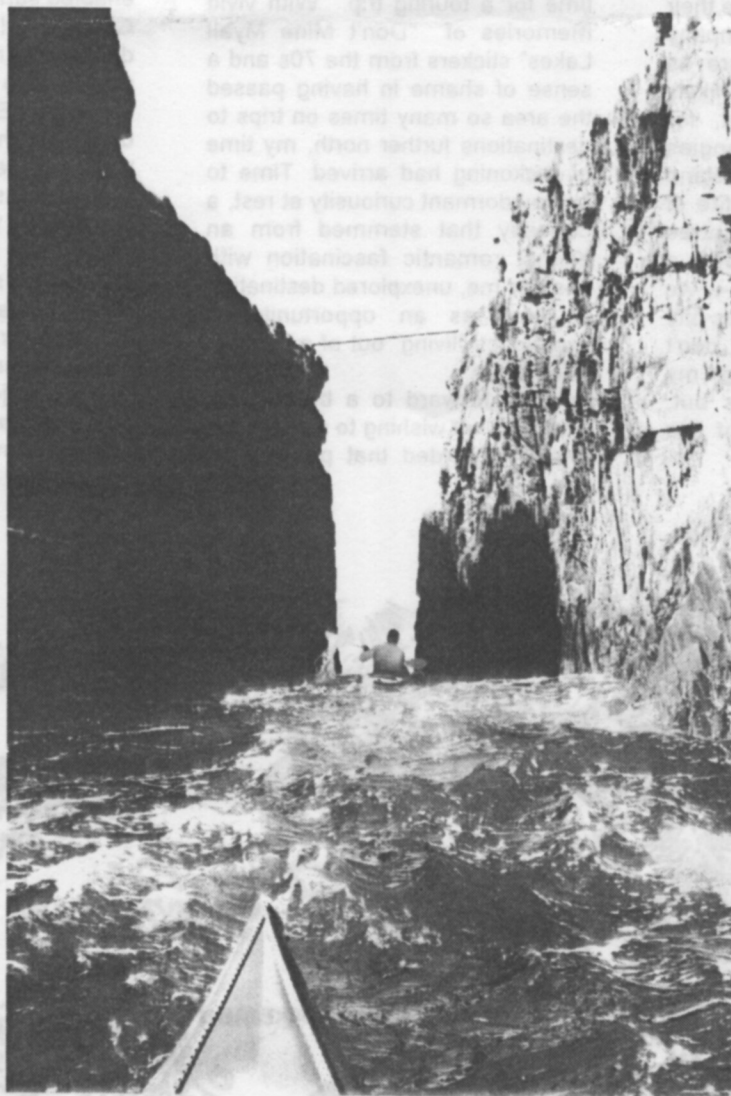
We drove down to the coast from Canberra on Friday night, heading for the camping area at Congo. To reach Congo, driving from the north, one drives through the town of Moruya, turning left off the main road at the 'Congo' sign, before leaving the southern limits of Moruya. From this point, follow the signs to Congo and/or 'Primitive Camping'. Camping at the 'primitive camping' site at Congo will cost you a few dollars per tent per night if the caretaker appears, and on my two visits in late winter and spring it has been entirely empty. There are toilets, a sheltered cooking area, and you should bring water. The campsite is located on a river, fringed with casuarinas, and there is a good beach and a rocky headland.

On the Saturday we woke to a warm, sunny day with only gentle winds.

Mick and Kate arrived at nine and we hit the water soon after. We paddled south, on a gentle swell enjoying the sun on our bodies. Along the sandy stretches we generally stayed some several hundred metres offshore, ducking in occasionally as rocky

islands or cliff lined sections of coast appeared. Not that this necessarily implied totally benign paddling, the peace being shattered when a bombora made its presence felt soon after starting out.

The destination that morning was Mullimburra Point, south of Congo. This headland is distinguished by the fact that its end is separated from the mainland by a crack in the rock some several metres wide. This chasm runs the width of the headland and makes for some serious fun in moderate conditions. A paddleable swell runs through a section about fifty metres long and three to four metres wide. Indeed, such fun is this, that we made numerous dashes. The point is also



Above: - Arunas at Mullimburra Point.

incised east-west and these notches provide for some good, rough water paddling around rocks and cliffs. Be warned, however, about the small beach immediately south of the point. This beach we named 'Bastard

Beach' for its propensity that day to show little mercy to those who wandered too close. The beach to immediately to the north however, is a good deal more sheltered, and it was here that we landed and had lunch. Mick also took the opportunity to practise bracing in the surf.

The return paddle went without incident, however, back at the campsite we had a visit from the local police, looking for the flashers lurking down at Congo. As it transpired, our somewhat immodest changing practices has not gone unnoticed by two young ladies, playing in the vicinity. They had subsequently told their mother, who in turn reported us to the police. Fortunately, the officer seemed more bemused than anything.

The following morning we packed up and drove north to Bateman's Bay, turning right off the highway immediately after the Moruya River Bridge to take the coast road which runs through Broulee and Malua Bay. The plan was to paddle from Surf Beach, on the southern fringes of Bateman's Bay, and which is signposted, to the Tollgate Islands, a popular place with sea kayakers. Surf Beach is a good launching place for the Tollgates as it is not only close to the islands, but sheltered and easy to launch from. Surf Beach is also a good place to learn some surf skills as it often has a gently breaking, small surf.

Many will be familiar with the Tollgates. In the right conditions they offer an interesting destination for less experienced paddlers in the company of others, as they are only about three kilometres from Surf Beach, can be landed on for a break, and have good scenery and cliffs on the east. For the more experienced, as some in particular will attest, there are gauntlets and notches in the cliffs that are fun to poke into and explore. Our paddle out there comprised a circumnavigation of the islands, lunch on the rock beach on the western side of the northernmost island and a surfing session upon our return to Surf Beach.



## MYALL LAKES PADDLE AN "INTRO TO TOURING" SOJOURN

By Alex Preema

Once again, the Myall Lakes sojourn for club members who haven't tried distance paddling and living out of a kayak was blessed with fantastic weather — tailwinds and sunshine heading north and idyllic fusion between heaven and earth touring about. It did change on the afternoon of the last day but dark clouds and wind are an effective antidote to post expedition blues. The port around the evening candle (and fire on the second night) was hardly necessary as we were already intoxicated by the Myall sunsets. Scarcely a mosquito was blatted and our possum guests were as charming as ever, unlike their Tasmanian cousins. And the company of paddlers produced a mixture as colourful and eccentric as you're likely to meet. I will never forget, for instance, the duel of the Trangias during our lunch break on Stag Island nor the tales around the campfire of life in a tree house in the Daintree rainforest. There was, however, a sour note to marr the weekend — we were plagued by people. Perhaps fifty or sixty over the three days! Ah, don't let me describe the event through my biased and slightly tired eyes but, rather, read the impressions of two club "Myall Lakes first-timers".

### Kevin Bones:

The Myall Lakes are a wonderful place to explore by paddle. There are a multitude of hidden inlets and vast expanses of lakes. The bird life in the area is extensive and there are plenty of good places to camp. On the weekend we were there, during the cooler months, there were relatively few other people around. It is a great place to clock up a few miles and share a relaxing weekend with other paddlers.

### Patrick Carmody:

Having started paddling in early 1994 with a Sea Proficiency Award completed and the ability to roll under controlled conditions, it was time for a touring trip. With vivid memories of "Don't Mine Myall Lakes" stickers from the 70s and a sense of shame in having passed the area so many times on trips to destinations further north, my time of reckoning had arrived. Time to lay my dormant curiosity at rest, a curiosity that stemmed from an almost romantic fascination with this, for me, unexplored destination as well as an opportunity to experience "living" out of a boat for a few days.

Looking forward to a break from work and not wishing to rough it too much, I decided that packing an

over-abundant food supply and other creature comforts would not only ensure that I was both comfortable and well fed but that I could also experience paddling a relatively heavily kayak. Arriving at Nerong on Saturday morning I met Alex Preema, our trip leader, Kevin and "Gages", all of us forming a complement of four, diverse individuals who had met for the first time. Subsequent to a round of introductions we were soon on the water and bound for Myall Lake to the north. The incredible vastness of the lake system became apparent very quickly.

Various exploratory diversions were taken en-route before completing the day's paddling assisted by a very strong tail wind, which, on occasions enabled surfing the choppy lake swell. Gages and I decided that a pre-dinner drink was in order as a magnificent sunset was slowly taken in across the lake. Eventually it was time for dinner. Whilst Kevin and Alex were well under way with meal preparations, Gages, a vegetarian, discovered that his fresh vegetables were still in the car. I was pleased to be able to share with him, from my over-abundant supply of provisions, a complete range of this favourite vegies, steamed in the billy, of course. We were joined by many curious possums, one of which insisted on hanging from a tree branch above my







Above: Afloat on the Myall Lakes

Trangia stove like and intending kamekazi for the duration of the cooking.

The second day was spend exploring Myall Lake, its foreshores and some of its islands. The group was getting along very well together and I found Alex's and Gage's knowlege of the flora and fauna we encountered very

informative. On the third day we returned to Nerong taking time to cross Bombah Broadwater to Mungo Brush, where a short bushwalk afforded a view of Broughton Island.

The most immediate reassurance I gained from our return to Nerong was the discovery of my thongs so

far into the extremities of my forward compartment that it was no wonder I couldn't find them during the trip.

**FACTS**

**Itinerary:** Nerong — Bombah Broadwater — Boolambayte Lake—Myall Lake and return

**Base Camp:** Shelly Beach

**Kayaks:** Rosco, Puffin, Mirage and Pittarak

**Distance Paddled:** 75km

**Most Popular**

**Stove:** Trangia



Editor's (and Author's) Note: There is an eight day Myall Lakes journey described in detail within the book "Canoe Touring In Australia. The tour begins at Bulahdelah, takes in all the lakes and ends at Tea Gardens. For the research of this tour I paddled a folding Pouch Eureka 2 sea kayak.

**NEW MODEL**

# PITTARAK

**The authentic new model single & double Pittarak now available -**

- 12 New features
- Choice of construction
- Strong
- Stable
- Fully fitted
- Day hatch

**SYDNEY SEA KAYAK CENTRE**



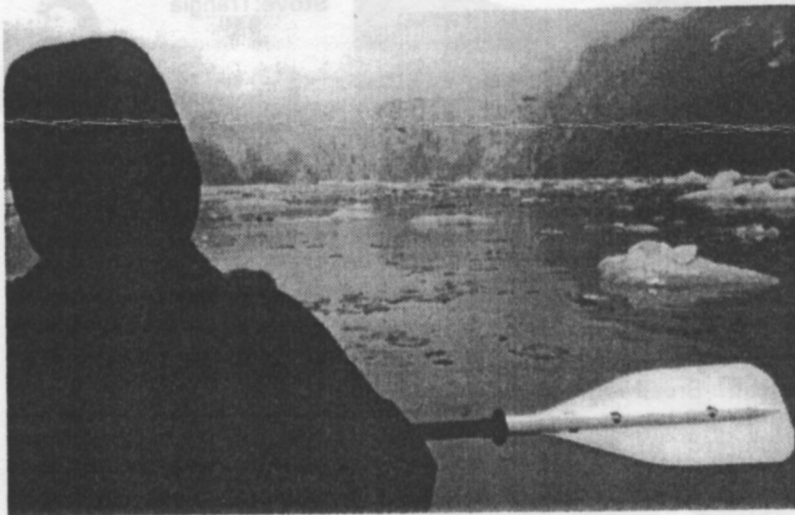
Proudly sold by  
**SYDNEY KAYAK CENTRE**  
 ON THE WATER AT THE SPIT BRIDGE  
 MOSMAN 2088 OPEN 7 DAYS

**Ph(02) 969 4590**

**GLACIER BAY**  
By Andrew Eddy

In 1794, Glacier Bay was only a dent in the shoreline. Now the glaciers of the Fairweather Range and the Takishna Mountains stand up to 105 km back from Icy Strait. This rapid pace of glacial retreat has left a living textbook of glaciation and plant succession in the hundreds of kilometres of inlets.

The flight from Alaska's capital, Juneau, to Gustavus takes only about 15 minutes in a jet. The aeroplane barely has time to climb before it



Above: Inuit tipped paddle blades with bone to protect them from the summer ice

lands again. On arrival at Bartlett Cove, the parks rangers give campers a very thorough indoctrination about safety, of both people and bears. The only places to camp, store and prepare food in the bay are at the high tide line on steep stony beaches, and these are the only places where bears can move back and forth. Lindsay and I heard our first bear sniffing around the tent that night.

The following morning we packed our hired double sea-kayak onto the "Spirit of Adventure", an 80 passenger tour boat, for a three hour trip up to

the drop-off point at Mt Wright. We had arranged to be picked up at the same point after six days in Muir Inlet, ready for a further drop, and four days in Scidmore Bay. The wildlife in the bay is so rich that before we reached the drop-off point we had already seen sea-otter, seals, sea-lions, black bear, humpback whale, bald eagles and a dozen species of sea-birds.

South-east Alaska is notorious for its wet weather, so we were surprised that the first two days were a heat-wave of 28 degrees and bright sun. The air temperature

and the temperature inside the kayak were in stark contrast with the water temperature. I tried wearing socks and

sandshoes but the hull, at 1 to 5 degrees, was too cold, and for the remainder of the trip we wore gumboots all the time we were on the water.

Our first night's camp was in Adams Inlet, on an island facing the outwash fans of Adams and Dirt Glaciers. The tidal range in Glacier Bay is about 5 metres, which creates a sizable tidal current. We spent the following morning idling on the water, watching the seals, terns and Canada geese feeding around us, while we waited for the tide to turn. Black bear and moose were visible in the distance.

That evening, we approached a likely looking cove beside Point McLeod. Neither of us were wearing our salt-encrusted glasses in the failing light. "Lindsay, what's that dark thing in the cove?" "It's a tree stump." "A few paddle strokes later..." "I think that tree stump moved." "That's not a tree stump, that's a bear!" "It is possible to turn a double sea kayak almost within its own length, when a bear is waiting at the water's edge. We paddled about 4 km further to pull out at

Rowley Point. At 11 pm there was still enough deep orange twilight to watch a pod of orca, a dozen cow and calf pairs, round the rocky point only 6 metres from the tent.

The next day, between Rowley Point and McBride Glacier, we paddled from mature spruce and hemlock forest, on shores exposed for over a century, to alder scrub, newly colonising land exposed in the last twenty years, to new shores of bare rock and silt. There was a little sandy beach, with enough room above high tide and far enough from the face of the glacier, for the tent. We cooked dinner in the freezing katabatic wind, and watched terns fishing in front of a cascade of rotten ice from the face of the glacier.

A day trip out across the inlet to White Thunder Ridge allowed us spectacular views, at 500m, over twin frozen lakes towards Riggs, McBride and Muir Glaciers. The warm weather of the first two days may have been the trigger for a spree of calving from the face of McBride Glacier: we gingerly pushed the last half hour of our way back to camp, through masses of small floes, well aware of just how fragile the kayak really was!

That night, the glacier made the sound of continuous rolling thunder, and sent half-metre high breakers down the bay. We woke to find car-sized pieces of ice beached from low tide to within a short distance of the tent, and had to wait for high tide to float the ice before we could get the kayak to the water. Then followed another nervous half hour pushing our way out of the inlet. Two days later we met the "Spirit of Adventure" for a short cruise up the West Arm and to our second drop in Blue Mouse Cove. While on the boat we had views of more humpback whale, grizzly bear, a kittiwake rookery, glaucous gull rookery and two families of mountain goat. Margerie and Grand Pacific Glaciers were actively calving in the midday sun. City buildings came off above water and shot up from well below the





surface too. That's why you are meant to keep the kayak half a kilometre back!

The next four days were typical weather for the misnamed Fairweather Range. Cloud sat just below the tops of the fjords of Scidmore Bay, reducing them to tunnels of rock and cloud. Drizzle and fog filled in the spaces. Waterfalls cascaded down from the snowline, at about 50 metres, straight into the sea. It had the sombre atmosphere that we had expected, and missed, for the previous week.

We were still on constant bear watch, but saw only their tracks and scat. Bald eagle fished near the mud-flats, while glaucous gulls tried to drive them away. One afternoon, lines of pigeon-guillemot, 10 metres deep and 2 to 3 km long, blocked our way up a shallow bay. On the afternoon of our last pickup the sun broke out, giving us superb visibility for more whale-watching from the tour boat.

#### FACT BOX

**Location:** Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska, USA.

**Transport:** Alaska Airlines from Seattle to Anchorage, Juneau,

Gustavus. "Spirit of Adventure", Glacier Bay Tours, to pickup and dropoff points.

**Group:** One with lots of white water experience, one with little experience.

**Boat:** Easyrider Beluga, double fibreglass sea kayak, hired from Glacier Bay

**Sea Kayaks.** Recommended: hire a boat from someone else, or bring

your own folding boat.

**Days paddled:** 10

**Side trips:** one day paddle & walk onto White Thunder Ridge, side excursions in Scidmore Bay to Charpentier Inlet, Wierd Bay.

**Best time of year:** Summer for the warmth, autumn for the leaf-fall. We chose early summer, before the US went on summer holidays.

**Constraints:** Prepare for cold water.

We were not well enough prepared for even a simple capsize in the very cold water (down to 1 degree Celsius).

**Charts:** Glacier Bay chart from the Parks Service office at Bartlett Cove.

See page 10 of this newsletter for advance notice of a trip to Svalbard.



Above: One of Alaska's famous moveable logs (see text).

# TASMAN 19

## A FAST, STABLE, SEAWORTHY SEA KAYAK

- Professionally designed & built
- Large front & rear hatch
- Amazing manouvability
- Huge carrying capacity
- Retractable beaching rudder
- Day hatch

The full bow and stern give amazing buoyancy and safety, while the slim overall beam gives outstanding speed.

Acknowledged by leading Sea Kayakers as a breakthrough in design, the "Tasman 19" will allow you to expand your paddling horizons in style.

SYDNEY  
SEA KAYAK  
CENTRE



A U S T R A L I A

OPEN 7 DAYS

Proudly built and sold by

**SYDNEY KAYAK CENTRE**

81 PARRIWI ROAD, MOSMAN 2088

ON THE WATER AT THE SPIT

PHONE (02) 969 4590 FAX (02) 969 4191



# Flotsam & Jetsam



(Continued from page 12)

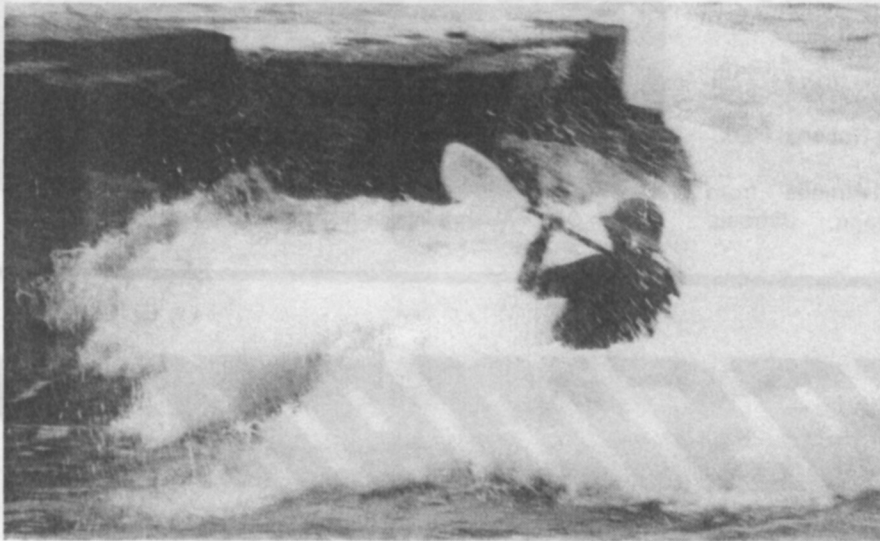
the sky, some reticent fool long ago seduced by naivete inadvertently speaks a thought. What might often pass as puerile foppery is not instantaneously admonished or rebuked nor stung with laughter. Rather a stage emerges, constructed from the brief but unexpected silence. Then the performance commences. The questions begin and discussion ensues. Ten minutes later adults are deformed by their commitment, albeit tentative, to some radical stunt which lay dormant in them for years. Then as quickly as it had started the momentum declines. Declines rather than perpetuates an embarrassing, possibly perverse, fascination. People take time to dream, to think, to rationalise, even ask their partners. But the propagation of this seed has begun - in a realm where there is no rock or bird or weed, only an individual and a goal. Pundits spend the ensuing days, weeks and months in contemplation. An ironic appreciation dawns. The most penetration and invidious of the abstract questions posed earlier can only ever be answered in practice. You must find Godot yourself, for he truly never comes. Only with this realisation can the logistics proceed.

This has been taken from *The Sea Canoeist Newsletter* (Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers) -  
 ♠ A WHALE OF A TIME ♠

Sandy Ferguson lifted this following gem from the Bask newsletter and I have lifted it from Sandy's newsletter. I am absolutely not making this up; in fact I have it all on videotape. The tape is from a local TV news show in Oregon, which sent a reporter out to cover the removal of a 45 foot, 8 ton dead whale that had washed up on to the beach. The responsibility for getting rid of the carcass was placed on the Oregon State Highways Division, apparently on the theory that highways and whales are very similar in the sense of being large objects.

So anyway the highways engineers hit upon the plan - remember I am not making this up - of blowing up the whale with dynamite. The thinking being that the whale would be blown into small pieces which could be eaten by seagulls, and that would be that. A text book whale removal.

So they moved the spectators back up the beach, put half a ton of dynamite next to the whale and set it off. I am probably not guilty of understatement when I say what follows, on the videotape, is the most wonderful event in the history of the universe. First you see the whale carcass disappear in a huge blast of smoke and flame. Then you



Above: Gary Edmond submarining in the Coledale gauntlet (Photo: Dirk Stuber)

hear the spectators shouting "Yah" and "Wee!" You then hear a new sound like "splud". You hear a woman's voice shouting "Here come pieces of .....MY GOD! " Something then smears the camera lens.

Later the reporter explains: "The humour of the entire situation suddenly gave way to a run for survival as huge chunks of whale blubber fell everywhere".

One piece caved in the roof of a car parked more than a mile away. Remaining on the beach were several sections the size of condominium units. There was no sign of seagulls, who had no doubt relocated to Brazil. This is a very sobering videotape. Here at the institute we watch it often, especially at parties.

\$

Sea Kayaker —The Magazine— is offering members of the NSW Sea Kayak Club a special discount on subscriptions. The standard price for an overseas subscription is USD\$27 for 6 issues (one year). Their club introductory price is USD\$23. Also, if 10 or more club members subscribe with this offer, they will give us a free subscription in the club's name to be used in our club library. The doubly good news is that existing subscribers can renew through this offer and get the discount. If you are interested please phone: 02—4822876.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

This edition is two pages longer than the last and (I hope) packed with good reading. It is heavily loaded with kayak travel pieces which I hope inspires you to start planning. For the next edition of the newsletter (May/June) I am looking for some additional material (anything from a par to a page) on:

Sea kayaking with children

Sea kayaks & mobile phones

Carts for sea kayaks

Logistics of trip planning

Sea kayak wilderness experiences

Paddling technique

Sea kayak building

Should we establish a forum for shared thoughts via a letters page? A lot of people feel intimidated by the thought of writing an article but could quite easily write a letter expressing something about which they feel strongly. If I receive more than 5 letters before the next deadline I'll try to set up the space. If you have an idea about writing an article for the newsletter, please give me a call on 02—4822876

Editorial Address: 91 Somerville Rd  
 Hornsby Heights NSW 2077

