

Salt

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB
ISSUE 96 | MARCH 2015



WEATHER CRAFT FOR SEA KAYAKERS

ARE YOU READY FOR
ROCK 'N ROLL?

CORSICA

MURRAY RIVER

COLORADO

ALSO INSIDE: Book Review | Vancouver | Shoulder Pain | Free Your Knees

Front Cover: Garry Wright contemplating the dark clouds approaching Sydney Harbour.

Gippsland Kayak Company



Princes Hwy, Stratford, Victoria 3862

Ph: 0429 489 249

Email: info@gippslandkayakcompany.com.au

Website: www.gippslandkayakcompany.com.au

CONTENTS

From the President's Deck	3
From the Editor's Desk	4
Saltiest Article	4
So, how do You get to Work?	5
Rock 'n Roll 2015	6
New Year's Eve on Sydney Harbour	7
Shoulder Pain and Paddling	9
Weather Craft for Sea Kayakers	12
Book Review	22
Sea Skills: Training and Assessment	23
Paddling by the Seat of your Pants	26
Corsica Sea Kayaking Trip	28
Lower Colorado River	32
The Murray Instalment Plan	33
Incident off Cape Banks	38
WomDomNom	40
Paddling Vancouver in Summer	42
A Gentle Interlude at Noosa	44
South Durras to Eden	46
Canberra – Lake Burley Griffin	50



NSW Sea Kayak Club Inc.

PO BOX R1302, ROYAL EXCHANGE NSW 1225

The NSWSKC is a voluntary organisation run by members who give their time freely to the club. Membership is offered yearly. Please see the website for details and application.

www.nswseakayaker.asn.au

PRESIDENT:

Campbell Tiley

president@nswseakayaker.asn.au

VICE PRESIDENT:

Adrian Clayton

vicepresident@nswseakayaker.asn.au

SECRETARY/TREASURER:

Rae Duffy

secretary@nswseakayaker.asn.au

TRAINING COORDINATOR:

Stuart Trueman

training@nswseakayaker.asn.au

TRIPS CONVENOR:

Shaan Gresser

trips@nswseakayaker.asn.au

ROCK 'N ROLL COORDINATOR:

David Linco

rnr@nswseakayaker.asn.au

INTERNET COORDINATOR:

Stephan Meyn

internet2012-13@nswseakayaker.asn.au

EDITOR:

Steve Hitchcock

editor@nswseakayaker.asn.au

Contributions yes please! Salt the magazine of the NSW Sea Kayak Club is published three to four times a year by the NSW Sea Kayak Club. The NSWSKC welcomes articles relating to sea kayaking for inclusion in the Club's magazine and website. Publication in the magazine and/or website is at the sole discretion of the editor. All articles submitted are subject to review by the editor who reserves the right to reject or edit material. Please email contributions as Microsoft Word or text files. Images need to be supplied at the highest possible resolution. All material is copyright. The contributor retains underlying intellectual property rights in the contribution however the contributor grants the club a global perpetual all-media license to publish the contribution in club communications, including in print and digitally. Reproduction in whole or part is strictly forbidden without written permission from the editor, author or photographer. Advertisers must adhere to legal requirements and undertake to indemnify NSWSKC against any consequences arising out of their advertisements. For further information contact the editor.

All views expressed in this magazine are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the NSWSKC.

IMPORTANT: Please review the Paddler Safety, Required Equipment, Grading System and Club Calendar sections of the club website.



From the President's Deck

CAMPBELL TILEY

Last weekend I had a perfect reminder of what the club is all about, at least for me. Eleven of us paddled out to Broughton Island for an overnighter, all with our individual objectives and aspirations. Some were old friends and some I hadn't met before. Stu was assessing two of us as Sea Guides and we had eight victims with varying levels of experience. Some had not done an overnight sea kayak trip, one was having a challenging battle with seasickness, and several just hoped to add to their destination list. Above other considerations we all principally wanted to simply enjoy the weekend.

Near perfect weather helped, and we all had new and memorable experiences. I first paddled to Broughton some years ago, but not nearly as long ago as Stu, and that trip still looms in my memory as one of my sentinel kayaking experiences. The beauty and tranquillity of Broughton (we did have good weather) and the opportunity to share the experience with a group of like-minded individuals is a life experience I would likely have missed if I had not become involved with the NSWSKC.

We paddled bouncy gauntlets one day and had several runs through Cons Cleft in quieter conditions the next. A hammerhead shark showed up circling the group just as we completed an 'all-in' rescue scenario. More memories to treasure.

From my perspective, everyone in the group shared a common love of sea kayaking and everyone contributed to the success of the weekend. We all left with new contacts for future paddles and a few new experiences to refresh

the memory banks. It was a great weekend.

While the club can never be all things to all members, the club trip leaders as a group, are always keen to put on paddles that members want to join. I get occasional feedback regarding limitations in the trips posted on the calendar. If you are hanging out for a trip to be posted in a particular area, let me know – there will almost certainly be someone keen to run it.

And now a few congratulations. The club depends on paddlers stepping up when ready to be assessed at various levels as they progressively hone their abilities. Congratulations to Nick Blacklock, Rhys Ward, Alison Curtin and Michele Powell for attaining Sea Skills and to Rae Duffy for her successful Sea Guide assessment. Thanks to Adrian Clayton and Stuart Trueman for making themselves available yet again for these assessments.

Finally welcome to the following new members who have joined since the AGM: Graham Smith, Skye O'Donnell, Kylie Shepperd, Gerard Rummery, Chris

Schulz, Rodrigo Matamala, Joel Turner, Beth Symonds, Terence Murphy and Michael James. I have met a few of you so far and look forward to catching up with you all.

Of course, see you all at Rock 'n Roll, Currarong.

And yes, Shaan Gresser and I did pass our Sea Guide assessments on the Broughton trip – thanks again Stu.

See you on the water!

Cheers,
Campbell

CHANGE IN DATES OF THE CLUB MEMBERSHIP YEAR

The Committee recently determined that rather than ending at the end of February, the Club membership year should follow the calendar year from January to December and that we would introduce this change for 2015. The 2015 membership year will therefore end at the end of December.



The Fearless Crew, L to R: Stu Trueman, Shaan Gresser, Campbell Tiley, Anne Cumming, Photographer Rodrigo Matamala, Nerissa Warwood, Mark Clarkson, Michael Taylor.



From the Editor's Desk

STEVE HITCHCOCK

Well a full year has ticked past since I sat down at this desk, and what an experience it's been. Through the club and this role, I've met some fascinating people, heard some wonderful stories and shared the best of them with all 300 of you. It was a scary uphill battle at first, but has now become a satisfying job in its own right. Still very time-consuming, but the end result is well worth those hours spent.

With this edition, I'm pleased to thank three businesses for their financial

support to this magazine; **Gippsland Kayaks, Rosco Canoes and Kayaks and Expedition Kayaks**. Please look out for them at Rock 'n' Roll, and make them feel welcome.

My thanks as always go to the 20 or so members who have contributed their stories and photos to this magazine. I'm sure you've heard this before, but if all members contributed one article to the magazine, they would only need to do so just once every 4 years to provide enough material to keep

the magazine going. So don't assume everyone else will fill your slot, please keep your camera and notepad handy, and send me a story after your trip, training or to share your technical skills and experiences. All material is very welcome!

I'm particularly keen to hear about those coastal trips, channel crossings, island hops and mishaps, amongst the changing landscape defined by the weather, wind, swell and currents. To all those photographers out there, it would be great to see more pictures of sea kayakers approaching the camera.

In closing, may I again extend a special thanks to Tim Wolstencroft who is wholly responsible for turning your submissions and my edits into the glossy artwork you see before you. Like many of us members, Tim has a full-time job and squeezes his voluntary magazine and other club assistance into his precious few spare hours between work, sleep and paddling.

Saltiest submission **WINNER**

I'm pleased to announce the winner of the 'Saltiest Article' from Issue #95 was **Paul Thomas**, for his comparison and progression through three kayaks; old-to-new-to-very old. Beautifully written, technically complete and reminiscent for many of us about our own best-loved kayak purchase. It also demonstrates that you don't need to write a lengthy report to win the prize. Paul's was just one page long.

Here is Paul modelling his new prize, a green short-sleeved jacket courtesy of **Expedition Kayaks**, beside his kayak number two.

Honorary mention also goes to Mark Schroeder for his rambling reminiscences over his 10 year paddling history. Thanks Mark, and thanks again to all contributors to the magazine.

On behalf of the club and the magazine, *I wish to thank Rob Mercer of Expedition Kayaks for donating the jacket*. I'll be in touch with Rob and Mark to determine the winner from this edition. May the saltiest submitter succeed!

EXPEDITION
KAYAKS
.com

www.expeditionkayaks.com



**EXPEDITION KAYAKS
HAVE MOVED!**

Drop in anytime from 0830
to 1800 Monday to Fridays.

3/185 Port Hacking Road, Miranda, NSW 2228
Phone (612) 9559 8688 or mob 0417 924 478

SO, HOW DO YOU Get to Work?

MARK DABBS

I have heard of many NSWKers who paddle to work. I am so envious. But wait, so did I once ... when I was working. Life is so hard when retired ...

Paddling the Parramatta River was most interesting not just because it was in a "no craft" zone, nor because the river-cat almost runs you down, nor because the river was narrow. But because at low tide you might end up stuck in the mud as the river cat wash broke over you. Ah, the great memories.

This is unofficial ... but I would launch just up river of the Silverwater Bridge and paddle to Parramatta weir. I took a wire brush to daily clean the moss and scum off the stone steps, then carefully exited the kayak and carried it over

the weir and relaunch in the canal. Entering the canal by kayak involved a 1.3m drop from the grass to the water. As the water was somewhat dirty I found my balance improved extremely quickly!

Then it was out again to get under the low footbridge (200mm clearance) and in to a special hidey-hole that I managed to convince council to supply me with a key. This way I didn't have to carry my white water kayak the final leg to work. Yes, a white water kayak. One of those kayaks that are tricky to paddle in a straight line, and if you stop paddling you do 360 degree donut spins. No rest while paddling!

Because I launched up river of Silverwater Bridge I was not aware it

was a no go zone for any watercraft. There were no signs up river. Perhaps it should have been obvious, as I used to literally throw my kayak off a retaining wall down to the water some 2 metres below then descend a rough, slimy, slippery wooden ladder and wobble into the kayak. Hoping no river cat came past and upset my fine balance in the process.

However, I remember one morning when a rubbish work boat came by and asked why I was paddling in an illegal area. I explained that I had bought the kayak to commute to work, had been commuting with no problems for three months, wanted to stay off the stinking roads, enjoy the beautiful river and get some exercise. Plus the river cats had never protested, only waved me by. After all that they suggested that "I never saw them" and I suggested "they never saw me" and we were both happy.

I used to hide behind the channel markers when the river cats passed to give them ample room. They were bigger than me! However, at low tide there was very little room, their wash was big, the mud and slime was very close to the bottom of the kayak and sometimes my kayak would end up in it. At those times I would get pretty wet with the breaking waves or wash.

I did decide that on windy days when the white horses started to appear causing head high spray, that I needed to keep my mouth firmly shut. I had an uneasy feeling the water was not very clean!

The paddle was generally in the order of 45 minutes, bearing in mind that I had a short, mind-of-its-own white water kayak. It was a great way to get to work. But those frosty mornings left a bit to be desired when the wind was up and the freezing waves were breaking onto me pushed by icy westerlies.

EDITOR NOTE: Any other kayaking commuters out there? Send in your daily commute experience to share with members.

Mark lying across the green kayak that he paddled to and from work.



ROCK 'N ROLL CURRARONG

DAVID LINCO



With Rock n Roll upon us, it's time to get your checklist organised to make sure you get the most out of this fantastic weekend. Currarong has got to be one of the best places to paddle in NSW. The choice of trips will mean you can chose to chill in the bay or test your kayak manufacturer's warranty in the caves around Beecroft Peninsula.

Based on your feedback last year, Rock 'n Roll is really about three key areas, being Trips, Training and Connecting with Friends. The timetable for RnR has been honed to perfection over the last 10 years. We seem to get the trips and training right each year (even though we are sometimes scratching for trip/leaders and instructors) but we can continue to improve on helping newbies get connected. Please don't forget to wear your name badge when walking around and use the hospitality area to talk up your kayaking experiences ... did you know I went out the other day and it got to 40 knots with a 5 metre swell ... couldn't take photos as was busy practicing my re-entry roll ... ahhhh good times.

This year we have to thank our exhibitors and NSW Marine Rescue and our volunteer team for making RnR possible. Our exhibitors make a HUGE effort in transporting their kit and running their display over the weekend. Firstly, please ensure you thank them for their support over the weekend, and secondly but most importantly "show them the money" when next you purchase anything kayak related. The exhibitors allow us to subsidise the RnR fee so make sure you support them over the weekend and throughout the year allowing us to keep costs low.

This year, sadly due to a fatality in the Beecroft Peninsula, NSW Maritime required us to have two support vessels (not kayaks) before they could grant the Aquatic Licence. With much pleading, NSW Marine Rescue were able to provide the "assisted rescue" to enable us to proceed. They will be patrolling Beecroft Peninsula on both mornings in accordance with our licence requirements. Given this will most likely be an ongoing future requirement, it may affect future RnR

pricing. Please extend your thanks to them at a fund-raising barbecue on Saturday.

If you are looking to purchase, upgrade, swap a kayak or any related equipment (swap meet on Saturday), you will be spoilt for choice this weekend. **Thanks to the following exhibitors** who have each generously donated \$500 of gear for our raffle draw. Additional tickets can be purchased at the Saturday night dinner.

Rob, Sharon and Mark from

EXPEDITION
KAYAKS
.com

www.expeditionkayaks.com

Allana from

ROSCO
CANOES & KAYAKS

www.rosco Canoes.com.au

Tracy and Roll from

SEA KAYAK
JERVIS BAY

www.jervisbaykayaks.com.au

Norm from

Helinox
lightweight outdoor adventure equipment

www.helinox.com.au

Wayne from

GREENLAND
DOWNUNDER
www.greenlanddownunder.com.au

www.kokororyu.com.au/greenland/

Trevor from

Fly Kayak Sail

www.facebook.com/kayaksails

Glenn from

Gippsland Kayak Company

www.gippslandkayakcompany.com.au



Nick Cunliffe.



Jason Beachcroft.

Along with great tales from Nick Cunliffe (BCU Level 5 Coach), Jason Beachcroft (just a quick paddle around Oz), Bill Smith (NSW Marine Rescue) we also have the Pogies (video night), Skills Workshops, Kayaking State of Origin? ... too many other events to mention so in short, just get ready for some full days, heaps of experiences, new friendships and an overall great weekend.

As always, I am keen to obtain your feedback to fine-tune RnR for years to come. Please provide your comments via the yellow feedback form in your welcome packs.



Nick Cunliffe

I'm an active kayaker and coach, based in North Wales. I've been paddling for about 25 years and owe many rewarding experiences to my involvement in the sport. I've lived in North Wales for much of this time – Snowdonia and Anglesey are amazing adventure playgrounds, with a wonderful outdoor community and a real sense of place.

My home is only 30 minutes from Anglesey's west coast tide races, with the rivers of Snowdonia on my doorstep. I love North Wales for its world-class paddling environments.

I'm a BCU Level 5 Coach, specialising in sea kayaking, with plenty of experience gained over the last two decades. Most importantly, I'm motivated to help my clients achieve their goals, discover new experiences, gain increased confidence and take their paddling to the next level.



NEW YEAR'S EVE 2014 ⁷

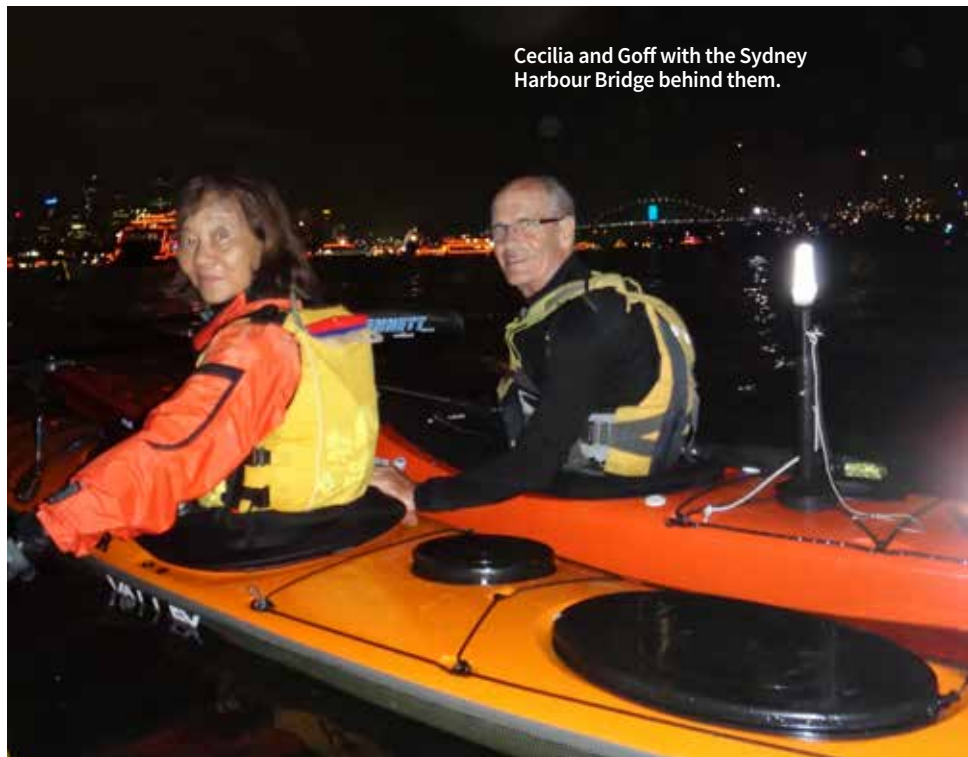
HANS SCHMIDT

Nothing ever turns out the way we imagine: On New Year's Eve, you would rightly expect terrible parking at Clontarf, playing chicken with every pleasure craft on Sydney Harbour, being turned away at every landing spot by overzealous rangers, every vantage point being packed with people determined to guard their territory and maybe rain to cap it off.

Now you know I'm pulling your whosits, because New Year's Eve was a warm, dry night with a brisk northerly blowing the bugs and fireworks smoke away from us. When I met Brian, Wendy, Cecilia and Geoff at Clontarf at 6pm the place was deserted. The northerly produced a nasty chop at Middle Head, but pushed our boats full of camping gear to our goal in record time: two small strips of sand just south of Bradley's Head.

A solid crowd of boats of all description was moored just off the rocky foreshore, allowing us passage to our chosen little beach. We shared this perfect spot for a while with a handful of souls playing ball; no dreaded packs of sightseers at all.

I attached my hammock to a couple of spindly trees growing some way up the steep wooded slope below the park walkway. Just before 9pm I paddled out between all kinds of motor and sailing craft toward the edge of the exclusion zone. Pulling up near a small run-about, its occupants welcomed me with offers of food and drink. Hooked up with a short leash, I joined the friendly



Cecilia and Goff with the Sydney Harbour Bridge behind them.

crew and waited for the early fireworks to begin. From our grandstand position all six barges and the bridge were visible.

The show, although spectacular, was only an introduction to the extraordinary event at midnight. We had just returned from a tour of Athol Bay to greet other boat owners when the year ended with a big bang and the best firework display I've ever seen, heard and felt. Truly jaw-dropping.

Then the partying began. Music from a hundred speakers rocked the Bay into the early hours, long after I gently rocked to sleep in my bed.

The birds woke us early to a fine day. After carefully dropping out of bed onto the steep slope, I climbed down to the beach, which had shrunk alarmingly.

Two tents sat on the sand only inches from the water's edge. Our five Kayaks floated, tied to a large bush hanging over the water. Geoff helped me move them to the next, slightly larger beach. On our return to camp, small waves were washing into Wendy's tent. She took the rude awakening in her stride.

We decided to pack up and head for breakfast. Leaving the armada of boats sheltering many a sore head behind us, we paddled to Balmoral. Sitting down in the warm sun with our cups of coffee, no one wanted the trip to end.

Lessons learned

New Year's Eve traffic on the Harbour is a cakewalk. Most boats are in place and at anchor well before dark. National Parks close Bradley's Head Park to the

general public, then they sell tickets to a select few. All access to the water is roped off, leaving the beaches to those coming ashore by boat or kayak. No one cared about us putting up tents. Pitching them after dark and leaving early helped, I suspect.

Don't let the unknown put you off. What's the worst that could happen? If it does, it's still something you'll remember and talk about for a long time.

EDITOR: These photos by Brian Burke. Where are the firework pictures? Resting peacefully well under the waves on the seabed inside Hans' camera ...



Small waves washing into Wendy's tent.

Shoulder Pain and Paddling

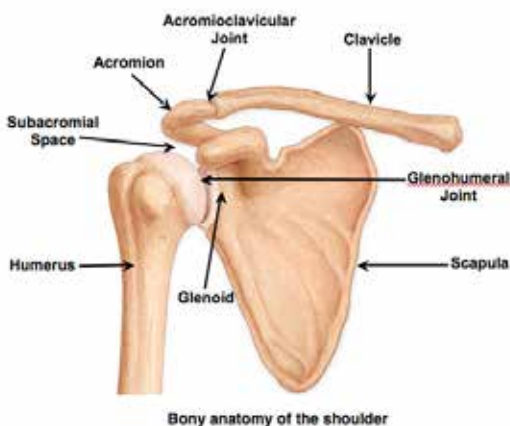
CATHY NOLAN, PHYSIOTHERAPIST



As a regular kayaker I am sure you have either experienced or know someone who has experienced shoulder pain. One thing I am acutely aware of is the shoulder can be under a lot of strain when paddling and after a brief but painful episode of shoulder pain myself, I thought I might share some information about the common causes of shoulder pain in paddling and how to help prevent it.

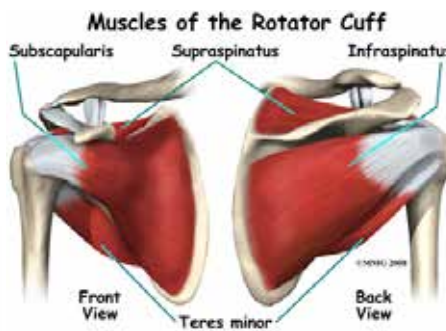
Anatomy of the shoulder

The shoulder, or *glenohumeral* joint, is a ball and socket joint made up of 3 bones (scapula, humerus, and clavicle). It is one of the most mobile joints in the body. Why? The socket, which the head of the humerus rolls around in is extremely shallow, making it quite unstable. It has been likened to a seal balancing a ball on its nose. It is this high mobility that allows us to reach in such a wide arc and overhead.



Shoulder anatomy.

The shoulder obtains its stability from static constraints (shoulder ligaments) limiting unwanted movements and dynamic constraints (rotator cuff and scapular stabilising muscles), which control the position of the head of the humerus as we move our arms into different positions. The rotator cuff muscles prevent the head of the humerus from moving up too far during overhead movements. The scapular stabilisers prevent the scapular from rising up too quickly when we raise the arm to the side. They are important for *scapulohumeral* rhythm, the integrated movement of the shoulder, clavicle, scapular and thoracic spine. In short, shoulder movements rely on a complicated interaction of muscles.



Rotator cuff muscle.

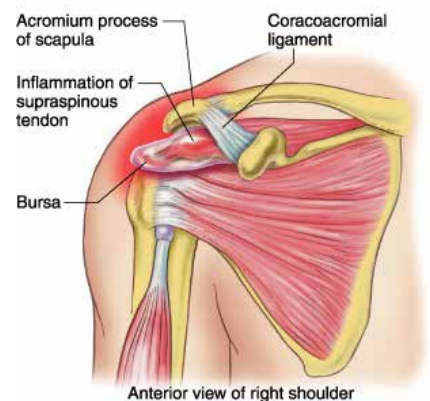
Shoulder Pain – Common Causes in kayaking

Unfortunately, there are lots of opportunities for shoulder pain in kayaking. Pain can be acute, such as when a high brace leads to a shoulder

dislocation or digging the paddle in hard tears the rotator cuff. Hopefully this type of shoulder pain doesn't happen to you. More commonly shoulder pain in paddling is associated with chronic types of injuries.

Impingement can occur when the rotator cuff tendon becomes irritated as it passes through the *subacromial* space. This can cause pain in the front or side of the shoulder especially when you move your arm overhead. There are many causes of shoulder impingement, but common in each type is an imbalance of the rotator cuff and scapular stabilisers.

Rotator cuff tendinopathy occurs where the cuff tendon becomes swollen and weakens due to overuse. There is usually localised pain on top of the shoulder and/or in the upper outer arm and a painful arc of movement out to the side (70-120 degrees). In



Rotator cuff tendinopathy

paddling, rotator cuff *tendinopathy* occurs when the rotator cuff muscles are repeatedly overworking at a mechanical disadvantage. This is usually due to incorrect paddling technique – being repeated 1000's of times. Commonly rotator cuff *tendinopathy* leads to impingement in the shoulder and can also lead to a rotator cuff tear if not treated.

Shoulder pain can also be referred from the neck and/or upper back due to stiffness in these joints.

Preventing Shoulder Pain

Here are some steps you can take to help keep your shoulder healthy.

Good posture. This is key in kayaking. Try this as a test to see how it affects your shoulder movement. Sit in a slouched position and try and lift your arms up above your head. Now do the same with your back in an upright position and see how much more freely your shoulder moves. An upright posture allows the head of the humerus to move further around in the socket and prevents it jamming into the socket.

Good technique. Good trunk rotation in forward and sweep strokes is important for shoulder health. Without it the shoulder is taken into a wider arc to achieve the rotational movement. It is at this end of range movement (arm behind the shoulder) that the shoulder is vulnerable under load, leading to strain on the rotator cuff. I think the concept of the paddler's box is an excellent one for avoiding unwanted shoulder movements during forward and sweep strokes and bracing as it encourages trunk rotation as the primary movement for the stroke.

Muscle flexibility. Kayaking for hours on end, especially if you sit in a round shoulder posture can lead to tightness in the *pectoralis* muscles and the posterior capsule of the shoulder. This tightness can hold the humerus in an elevated position creating impingement type symptoms. My two

favourite stretches are a foam roller/towel stretch and arm openings (See Salt 93). The big advantage of the arm opening stretch is that it also helps to mobilise the thoracic spine and neck.

Rotator Cuff/Scapular Stabiliser Strengthening.

Strengthening the

rotator cuff and scapular stabiliser muscles in combination with good posture, technique and stretching can keep your shoulders in tip top shape and help prevent shoulder pain. Here are some of my favourite rotator cuff and scapular stabilisation strengtheners.

External rotation exercise



External rotation exercise.



1. Hold a 1kg weight in your left hand and lie on the floor on your right side on a pillow.
2. Bend your right elbow to a 90 degree angle and tuck it firmly against your side so you palm is facing downward.
3. Pull in your abdominals
4. Set your shoulder blades by drawing down and slightly in.
5. Keeping your right elbow glued to your side, raise your right hand as far as you comfortable can.
6. Slowly lower the weight back to 90 degrees
7. Repeat x 10
8. Change sides.

T-arm raises exercise



T-arm exercise.



1. Lay on your stomach on the floor, or if you have one, on a Swiss ball with a 1kg weight each hand.
2. Pull in your abdominals and set your shoulder blades by drawing them down and slightly in.
3. Lift your arms out to the side for form a "T" position. Hold for 1-2 seconds.
4. Return to the starting position, controlling the movement all the way.
5. Repeat x 10

To progress these exercises build to 2 sets x 10. Once you can do 2 x 10 easily progress to a 2kg weight 1 x 10.

Wall push-ups



Wall push-ups.

1. Stand at an incline towards a wall with arms stretched out at shoulder height against the wall.
2. Draw shoulder blades down and in slightly and abdominals switched on
3. Slowly lower towards the wall, keep your shoulder blades set and return to upright.
4. Repeat x 10
5. To progress this exercise build up to 2 sets or try single arm push ups 1 x 10.

For strengthening aim to do these exercises 3 times per week over 6 weeks to notice a positive improvements.

Pre-kayak shoulder stabilisation exercises

Prior to setting off for a paddle practice some shoulder stabilisation exercises in the kayak.

1. Sitting in the kayak with good posture, draw the shoulder blades down and squeeze slightly in. Hold for 10 seconds, repeat by 3.
2. Again with good posture, hold your paddle out in front you perpendicular to your shoulders and then squeeze your shoulder blades by drawing them slightly down and in. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat x 5.

These exercises are all for people with healthy shoulders and should not cause you shoulder pain. If any of

Single arm wall push-ups.

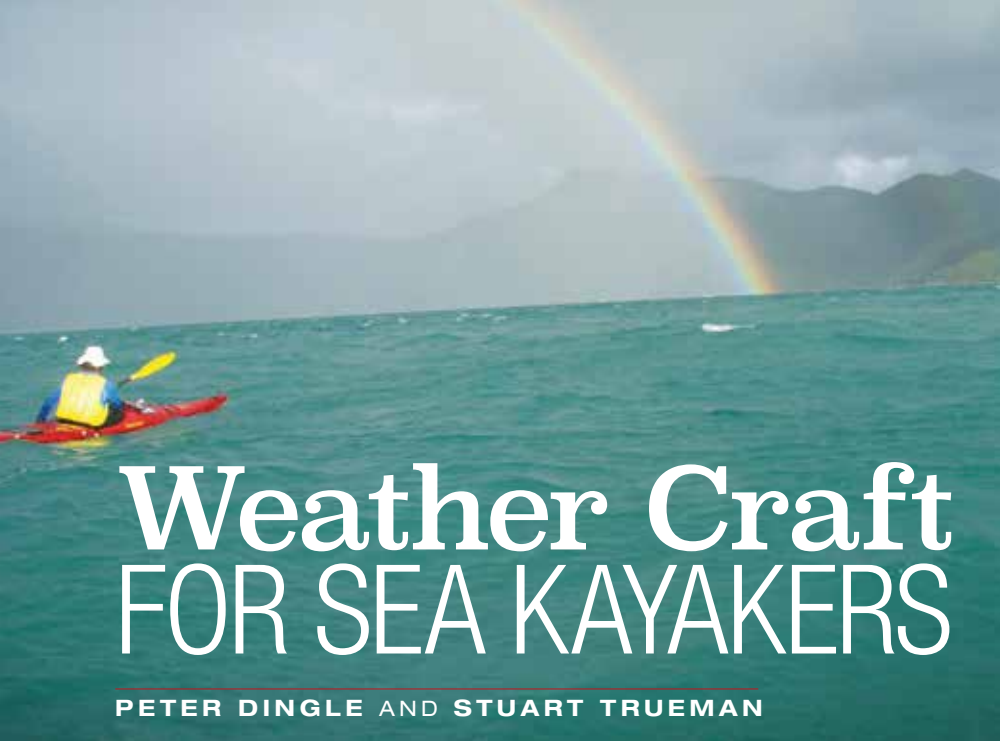


these exercises cause you shoulder pain, stop doing them and see a health professional to have your shoulder assessed. Also if you are currently experiencing shoulder pain then you shouldn't do these exercises unless under the guidance of your practitioner.

In my case of shoulder pain, I had impingement in my right shoulder. One of my scapular stabilisers was quite weak allowing my scapula to rise up too quickly when I elevated my shoulder, *frictioning* the rotator cuff tendon. Combined with a less than desirable forward stroke technique with not enough rotation, a blade that was slightly too long and a day job that saw me internally rotate my right shoulder for long periods tightening my pec muscles ... well it was bound to happen. With a little relative rest, shoulder-strengthening exercises, stretching combined with improved posture and technique (and a slightly shorter paddle), the impingement has disappeared.

To your happy and pain free paddling!





THIS ARTICLE IS SET OUT WITH THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS

CONTENTS

- 1. Three Weather Basics**
 - a) NSW Weather Normal Summer and Winter Patterns
 - b) Clouds
 - c) Weather Maps
- 2. Outdoor Forecasting**
 - a) Explaining Outdoor Forecasting
 - b) Winds
- 3. Weather Gear**
 - a) Internet and Smart Phones
- 4. Conclusion**

Weather Craft FOR SEA KAYAKERS

PETER DINGLE AND STUART TRUEMAN

Article originally written by Peter Dingle and printed in Sea Trek Issue 79, the magazine of the Victorian Sea Kayak Club. Adapted here for NSW weather by Stuart Trueman. Peter and Stuart have provided this information in good faith based upon their personal observations, please use the information as a guide only, to supplement your knowledge from other sources.

I would like to introduce you to the joys of reading signs of Nature that tell us about weather.

I often suggest that the greatest aid to sea kayaker safety is the J-word; Judgment. And for many trips, if not all, judgment relates to decisions involving working with or around the forces of Nature; wind, waves, tides and electrical storms.

Just as Bush Craft implies competency at surviving and living comfortably outdoors, Weather Craft implies understanding of the forces that affect our survival and comfort in relation to weather.

The obvious question is, 'Why would you want to know about 'reading-skies' when as sea kayakers we often have internet access coupled with the many good Weather Apps around?'

For me, I just love the information that you can gain access to with smart phones and tablets and I blend it with weather craft. When the forecast weather doesn't arrive, you have to rely upon weather craft to assist decision making. And of course, we don't always have internet access.

Weather craft assists in making sense of what you see going on around you and to better guess as to what is heading your way in the coming hours or days. Sure, weather forecasting is so good nowadays, that you need to be cautious about making predictions that differ, but sometimes the weather the experts predict just doesn't come; the wind direction is wrong, the wind strength is wrong or the timing of the predicted change is wrong. Increasingly they are brilliant at providing accurate forecasts, but you have to rely upon other sources for your decision making input if your chosen preferred source fails.

Before I start: I'm no weather expert. I'm just a self-taught mug who tries to make sense of what I see. I've been sky watching, reading and thinking about weather craft for some 25 years as an outdoor educator, but if what I write here is inaccurate, please provide feedback.

Weather is incredibly complex and I do not pretend to present myself as an expert. What I offer cannot compete with professional meteorologists, mathematical models and super computers. I have made many assumptions and omissions in the logic-train. The intended audience here is for mug amateurs like myself whom I want to encourage to be more weather observant outdoors in order to supplement safety on land or at sea.



1. Three weather basics

a) NSW Weather

"NORMAL" SUMMER AND WINTER PATTERNS

Firstly, keep in mind that the weather frequently does not follow the "normal" patterns. Always be prepared for conditions, which differ considerably from what "should" be happening.

In simplicity, east coast weather systems are a series of highs moving from west to east with fronts or troughs in between. In summer the centres of the highs are further south, usually around the latitude of Tasmania, and in winter they usually cross the continent on a latitude between Sydney and Brisbane. Cold fronts spin off from lows in the Southern Ocean and move up the east coast, more frequent and more severe in the winter, and usually petering out as they reach the NSW north coast. Occasionally stronger fronts move up the east coast, known as "southerly busters", particularly in summer. Troughs are shown on weather maps as dotted lines and are areas of low pressure lying between or within high pressure systems. Troughs can occur at any time of year, producing widely varied weather, ranging from cloud, rain and little wind, to violent thunderstorms and damaging winds. Treat them with caution.

Summer weather on the NSW coast is typified by days of calm mornings followed by afternoon North East seabreezes and a continuous south-east swell. The wind may then shift to N and NW, often quite fresh, ahead of a southerly change (cold front). Then there will be a gradual shift to SE and back to NE as the high moves into the Tasman.

In winter the highs move further north and the seabreeze effect is diminished. Periods of calm weather can be

experienced but with more violent and prolonged gales when they occur. Winds tend to be between north-west and south-west with a slight swell from the south-east. If the swell picks up it's a sign of bad weather from the south.

EAST COAST LOWS

Apart from a cyclone, East Coast Lows can generate the most potentially dangerous weather for the NSW coast. Remember the grounding of the bulk carrier "Pasha Bulka" at Newcastle in June 2007. East Coast Lows can occur at any time of the year, but are most prevalent during the winter months, with June and July statistically showing the highest frequencies. Some years there are only 3 or 4 in 12 months, other times there have been 3 or 4 in a month. The Bureau has become more skilled at forecasting them in recent years, and usually 2 or 3 days warning is given. These intense low pressure systems are usually associated with a trough which forms between two highs, and are often accompanied by an east coast kink in the isobars on the surface charts, with a high in the Tasman and another south or southwest of the kink. They often form off the north NSW coast and move slowly south before moving off towards NZ as they dissipate. They commonly produce winds in the order of 50 to 80 knots and seas of 5 metres or more. In September 1995 a wave height of 13 metres was measured at Bondi, and at Sydney Heads average conditions were 5 metre waves and 50 knots.

As the low moves off and clear skies return it is easy to be lured out to sea to be caught out with the remaining swell. There can be quite a gap between the swell as the low could have generated them a long way off. A wide mound of water reaching two meters in height will look innocent and pass unnoticed on open waters. However it is a very large amount of water which, when it sneaks in to the shallows of the coast

it quickly builds up into very powerful waves.

OFFSHORE WINDS

Offshore winds can be generated off NSW during the colder months of the year. These are particularly dangerous for kayakers caught out by the apparently innocent sea state. Conditions can look benign as the kayaker faces out to sea, sheltered by the land with the wind at their back, looking at flat seas with flecks of white ripples. However as you move further out to sea you realise that you were looking at the backs of the waves, the wind strength quickly picks up as do the size of waves as fetch increases. The further out you go the harder it is to get back, if anything goes wrong there is a chance it will go REALLY wrong as you get blown further out.

An article for further reading on the subject:

<http://nswskc.wordpress.com/1996/03/24/offshore-winds-26/>

b) Clouds

Clouds are Nature's way of telling us what is happening now and what may soon happen. Clouds are simply a visible form of moisture in the air. The more clouds there are, the more moisture in the air. Because of the brevity required here, I won't discuss HOW the different clouds are formed, but will instead focus on Cloud Height and the 10 main cloud types and what their significance is to weather forecasting.

CLOUD TYPES

Clouds are considered to be in three height bands; Low Clouds are below 2500m, High Clouds above 6000m and Middle Clouds are between the

Thin layer of Altostratus; nothing threatening but look for further signs of change.

two (2500-6000m). Cloud height is measured to the cloud base. As a general rule, High Clouds give clues as to what weather is coming in the longer term (days) and Low Clouds give clues as to what may happen in minutes or hours. At ground or sea level, we get no precipitation from High Clouds, minimal precipitation from Middle Clouds and most precipitation (rain, hail, snow) from Low Clouds. As deteriorating westerly weather approaches you will see the descending progression of clouds from High to Middle to Low.

Within these three height bands, there are the 10 main cloud types. At all heights there are what I call lumpy clouds and layer clouds; the lumpy ones are the Cumulus Clouds. These have some vertical shape to them and may be puffy, heaped ... or just plain lumpy. The layer clouds are the Stratus Clouds and are spread horizontally across the sky.

High Clouds are called Cirrus clouds. Three of the 10 cloud types are High Clouds. Cirrus means wispy or hair like and are sometimes called Mares Tails (like the tail of a horse) and these type of clouds are just simple called Cirrus clouds. If you have high clouds with lumps or ripples in it, it is called Cirrocumulus. If you have high clouds that are spread out like a layer, a strata, then they are called Cirrostratus. As it is so very cold up at this height, the moisture in the clouds is in the form of ice crystals. Seeing halos around the sun or moon indicates there is sun refracting through Cirrostratus clouds; a layer of ice crystals. No precipitation occurs from Cirrus clouds.

Middle Clouds (two of) have the prefix 'alto' to them. Thus middle height clouds with lumps are Alto cumulus and flat, wide spread middle height clouds are called Altostratus. When we get to discussing forecasting from the observations you make, middle clouds are helpful in that they can confirm if the cloud base is rising or lowering; signs of improving or deteriorating weather respectively. The slightest of precipitation possible from



Forced rest day: Nimbostratus with heavy rain and strong winds, Wilsons Prom.

Alto cumulus, and in my experience, Altostratus is a reasonably reliable indicator of precipitation coming; the sun behind the clouds has the appearance of looking through ground glass.

Thin layer of Altostratus; nothing threatening but look for further signs of change.

Low Clouds are the ones that hold the most interest for us. By far the majority of precipitation comes from these 5 Low Clouds.

- **Cumulus Clouds**, the puffy white cotton wool sort of cloud, are a fine weather cloud. These gentle creatures often occur under bright blue calm skies. They are formed by rising air (convection); a reason why glider pilots seek them out. Often in the morning as the sun rises over rain saturated ground, you will see cumulus clouds appear as

the sun evaporates moisture from the wet ground. As the sun rises higher, more and more cumulus clouds appear, until from about mid-morning, the sky is covered in a layer of grey, lumpy clouds ... Stratocumulus, and likelihood of drizzle.

- More frequently in summer, as the sun rises, cumulus clouds appear and can rise higher and higher becoming towering cumulus. If they develop further they get to be very high lumpy clouds indeed; the **Cumulonimbus** (Nimbo = rain bearing). These are the big thunderheads that can reach over 16km high, the ones we as sea kayakers actively seek to avoid for they can produce heavy bursts of rain, strong squalls and downdrafts, fatal lightning strikes and heavy hailstones.
- And **Stratus Clouds** are the low, layered clouds; the overcast sky

THE 10 MAIN CLOUD TYPES

High Clouds	<i>Cirrus</i>	Mares tails
	<i>Cirrocumulus</i>	High lumpy clouds
	<i>Cirrostratus</i>	High layered clouds
Middle Clouds	<i>Alto cumulus</i>	Mid level lumps
	<i>Altostratus</i>	Mid level layer
Low Clouds	<i>Cumulus</i>	Low and puffy/lumpy
	<i>Stratus</i>	Low layer
	<i>Stratocumulus</i>	Low layer of lumps
	<i>Nimbostratus</i>	Low and rain bearing layer
	<i>Cumulonimbus</i>	Thunderheads; rain, squalls, lightning

Sunsets are good for seeing different cloud heights; lower clouds fall into the earths shadow first as the sun sets.



which can produce either calm or drizzly skies and if they get thicker, darker and lower, they form Nimbostratus with heavy rain possible.

Sunsets are good for seeing different cloud heights; lower clouds fall into the earths shadow first as the sun sets.

IN SUMMARY

See the following table titled: The 10 Main Cloud Types and I recommend you do an internet search on Clouds to get a more thorough understanding and, in particular, the circumstances that contribute to their formation.

Sometimes you can see clouds at different heights moving in different directions. This is easier to see when on shore, standing under a tree where you can use an overhead branch as a fixture to determine relative cloud direction movement.

AIDS IN DETERMINING CLOUD HEIGHT

I find this difficult, so here are some aids I find helpful.

LEARNING FROM CLOUDS

For us as sea kayakers, bear the following in mind. Watch for change. This is the key to what will happen. A deterioration in the weather is signaled by a lowering of the cloud base (High to Middle to Low Clouds) and an increase in the percentage of cloud cover (from a sky with little cloud cover to 100% cloud cover). If you witness the reverse process happening (cloud base rising, more ‘blue holes’ appearing’), then the weather is improving.

On sunset, the higher clouds remain illuminated last; the reverse happens at sunrise with the higher clouds being the first to be illuminated with the lower ones still in the earth’s shadow.

Most jet aircraft fly above 10,000m. You often see the Contrails (condensation trails) of these aircraft. Watch to see if the contrails go above or below the High Clouds.

Another key factor is the DIRECTION of cloud movement. Before we understand wind direction, we need to understand more about Weather Maps.

All Australia’s mountains are below 2500m, so any clouds touching or near coastal hill tops are going to be Low Clouds.

Middle photo: threatening sky the afternoon before.



Bottom photo: The next morning: ‘Let’s sit this one out’ — 70+knot winds



c) Weather Maps

After understanding where most of NSW's weather comes from and how clouds can demonstrate friendly or unfriendly moisture content of the air, the third important thing to understand 'outdoors weather' is weather maps. After this short section, I hope you will be able to 'see' weather maps outside.

AIR PRESSURE

Weather maps are about air pressure. Air pressure is important as it influences hot or cold weather, wind, fogs, frost, cloudy or clear skies, rain, snow, storms or dry skies; all things helpful for happy sea kayakers to be interested in.

As in Clouds, there are 10 important items here also; the first 8 of them involve air pressure, so let's start there.

I assume most of you know weather map basics, so I'll skim over these.

The lines on weather maps look like the contour lines on topographical maps. Whereas contour lines join places of equal height, Isobars on weather maps join places of equal air pressure. The similarity continues with a closed contour loop indicating a high mountain summit; a closed loop of a High pressure cell indicating the

location of the highest air pressure. Similarly Ridges; places of higher ground descending from a summit ... places of higher pressure descending from a central High. In between mountain summits are low places called saddles; in between separate cells of High pressure are areas of lower pressure called Lows. Gullies or saddles on topographical maps become Troughs on weather maps. Contours close together mean steep ground; further apart gentle ground. Isobars close together means strong winds; further apart gentle or no winds. The similarity ends with contours remaining fixed in the one location; isobars move. We walk over contours, isobars 'walk' over us. Contours are fixed (barring bulldozers), isobars change constantly, including ridges or troughs coming and going.

Air pressure is simply the weight of air. If you were to stand on a coastal beach and imagine an open tubular column of glass, containing air, going vertically up to the top of the Stratosphere (about 50km), then the weight of all those air molecules would force down on the beach – a certain air pressure. Now consider another similar glass column containing air, perched on a high mountain top, reaching to the Stratosphere; the weight of air inside the column, I'm sure you would agree, would be less. The air pressure on a mountain top is less than at sea level;

air pressure decreases with rising altitude.

Weather typical of the centre of a High pressure system: clear skies, no wind, calm seas, smiley faces.

Air pressure is apparent in other forms; if the sun heats the earth's surface and any moisture in the ground is evaporated and rises with the warmed air. The rising column of air creates a lower pressure at the earth's surface; lower than those neighboring areas not heated as much. When you see a Low (L) on the weather map, it is simply an area on the map that has a lower pressure relative to the neighboring area surrounding it. The important thing for us is that it is from rising air that clouds form.

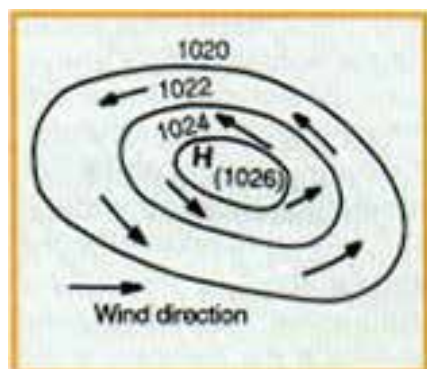
PRESSURE CELLS

Conversely, a High (H) on a weather map means air is descending towards the earth's surface. Remember, clouds require ascending air, not descending air, to form; that is why when you have a High Pressure Cell over the top of you, you often get cloudless skies.

Winds blow clockwise in a Low pressure cell, roughly parallel to the isobars (and slightly inwards towards the centre). Winds blow anticlockwise

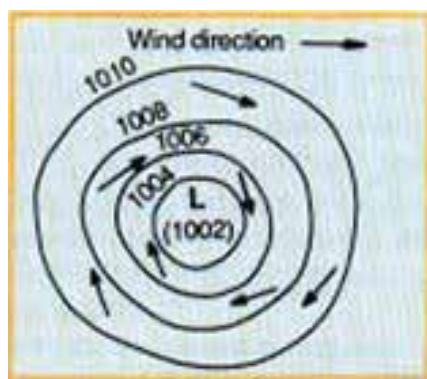
Classic signs of approaching Cold Front: lowering cloud base and 100% cloud cover.





A High pressure cell is simply an area of air pressure higher than its surroundings. In Highs, winds blow anticlockwise and roughly parallel but slightly outwards from the centre and have more settled air, with finer weather.

Diagrams courtesy of Bureau of Meteorology Boating Weather Series, 'Wind Waves Weather. Victorian Waters' (1989).



in a High, roughly parallel to the isobars, but slightly outwards.

So for outdoors people, knowing if there is a Low or a High coming over you is important, for Low's can signify unstable cold, wet and windy weather whereas High's are more symbolic of stable and steady conditions of relative warm weather. Low's can move quickly, Highs are often a lot slower. A fast moving Low or Cold Front (more on this shortly) coming in from the west will often be deflected SE down and below any stationary or slow moving High. Sea kayakers generally like Highs and are wary of Lows and Cold Fronts, but of course, watch the closeness of the isobars (the Pressure Gradient) for indications of wind strength and direction of any pressure cell. We as sea kayakers generally prefer isobars widely spaced for nice gentle paddling conditions.

COLD FRONTS

Weather maps also show us Cold Fronts and, to a degree, air temperature. A Cold Front is simply a parcel of air that is colder than the air it is moving towards. They originate in the Southern Ocean. Cold air sinks (can you remember riding your bike off the decent, you feel the sudden temperature change of the cold air lying at the bottom?). A Cold Front, having denser and colder air, slides along the surface like a big wedge and the pointy end of the wedge will be forcing any other air ahead of it upwards and over it as it slips underneath. Cold Fronts are called unstable in that they force the air on this leading edge to rise. As you know, rising air causes increased cloud formation, and the greater the difference in air temperature in front of and behind the Cold Front, the greater the violence in the rising air. For us as sea kayaker, Cold Fronts deserve great respect; not only can they elicit a sudden drop in air temperature, but if you look at Cold Front isobars, you sometimes see a sharp pressure gradient with the compression of the isobars (strong winds), heavy rainfall and a rapid change in wind direction, sometimes up to 90 deg. At such times, being in sheltered waters or better still, off the water, is best.

TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY

And finally, weather maps give clues to air temperature and humidity. Air tends to assume the characteristics of the terrain over which it has travelled. Thus a northerly wind that has travelled from a long way north of you will have travelled over the hot, dry inland of Australia and will thus be a hot and dry wind. Northerly winds in summer, as we know, are the most dangerous as their heat and low humidity (sometimes less than 10%) dries out the vegetation making for high bushfire risk. (I've been on two sea kayak trips where off-shore winds are blowing

smoke and ashes over us at sea.) Similarly, a wind travelling from way down south will be cold and moist as it comes up over the Southern Ocean from Antarctica. Be cautious though; a northerly wind can strangely, on the odd occasion, be cold and moist; the weather map isobars will reveal why. Most likely the isobar that is over your location will show that the majority of the winds journey to get to you has been over the cold and moist ocean, and very little of it has been over land.

DETERMINING CELL LOCATION

Nature strives for equilibrium, and winds are the result of nature trying to balance out the areas of High with Low pressures. The winds don't blow in a straight line from a High to a Low pressure but they in fact rotate (the earth's rotation affects this). For the Southern Hemisphere, in a Low Pressure Cell, the winds rotate Clockwise and in a High Pressure Cell, the winds rotate anti-clockwise. This is an important aid to understanding weather outdoors; for knowing this fact you can now more easily visualize weather maps outdoors.

Here's how you do it.

THE RIGHT HAND RULE FOR DETERMINING CELL LOCATION OUTDOORS

When looking at weather maps, to help you remember which direction the winds blow in High and Low pressure cells, use the Right-Hand Rule (for the Southern Hemisphere). If you hold your right fist with the thumb pointing up (i.e. pointing High as in High Pressure Cell), then your fingers are pointing and curled in an anti-clockwise direction; the direction the winds blow in a High Pressure Cell. Still with your right hand, but with the thumb pointing down (i.e. Low), then your fingers are pointing and curled in a clockwise direction; the direction the winds blow in Low pressure cell. (For the northern hemisphere, use the same process but with your left hand).

2. Outdoor Forecasting

So, with this amount of background information, we're now ready to nibble away at forecasting outdoors.

To summarize so far:

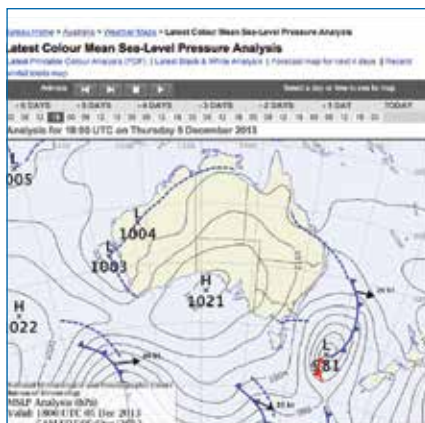
- Most of NSW weather comes from the west.
- Clouds indicate the atmosphere's moisture content.
- There are 10 main types of clouds over three different heights, with each cloud giving clues to its significance, method of formation and likelihood of precipitation.

And from this some aids to forecasting are apparent with:

- Improving weather signaled by raising cloud base and decrease in cloud cover.
- Deteriorating weather signaled by lowering of cloud base and increase in the percentage of cloud cover.
- Good weather is generally associated with Highs (High Pressure Cells).
- Poor weather is generally associated with Lows (Low Pressure Cells) and Cold Fronts.

So now, with understanding weather maps, we can go a step further.

Look at isobars on the weather map below. If you are on the coast just east of Melbourne, and you face into the wind, you will be facing roughly SW.



- A clarification to the point above, even though you may be experiencing a northerly wind, keep looking for darkening skies to the SW for this is where any severe weather blast from an approaching Cold Front will come from.
- If facing west into a westerly wind, then the High is on your right to the north and the Low to your left to the south. This means it is hard to interpret what is coming from the west, so the weather will remain constant until you see other signs. It's a 'too early to tell, wait and see' situation.
- If facing east into an easterly wind then the High is to your south (a more common pattern in summer). Similar to a west wind, enjoy the constancy of what you are currently experiencing and just wait and see.
- Contrails are also an aid to weather predicting: no contrail means lower moisture content in higher air so fair weather coming. A quickly disappearing contrail means not enough moisture up high so once again, no immediate weather worries, and a lingering contrail means higher moisture content and increased chance of precipitation in coming days. Look at the direction that the contrail moves; this will indicate the wind direction likely to be hitting you, possibly in the next day or so (a lingering east-west contrail may drift northwards indicating that southerly winds coming down to us on the earth's surface).
- Use your outstretched arm and hand as a guide to determine cloud drift. If you see a cloud bank just above the horizon, measure its distance above the horizon with your outstretched arm; for example, there might be a gap of '2 fingers high' between the horizon and the cloud bank. Check some minutes later to see if the gap has reduced to 'one finger high' or increased to 'three fingers high'. This will give you

an indication of whether that cloud bank is coming towards you or will miss you.

- It is my observation that clouds at different heights moving in different directions can be a forecast guide; the direction of higher clouds indicating the next wind direction to hit you. If there are 2 separate cloud levels, and say the lower cloud level is moving west and the upper cloud level is moving south, and it is calm at ground/sea level, then the wind direction next to affect you will be the first cloud layer above you, the westerly, and following that the next highest, the southerly. Use these clues to help time your dash to safety or sheltered waters.

b) Winds

CELLULAR WINDS AND LOCAL WINDS

So, as hinted at earlier, not only are clouds important in understanding weather, but so is their direction of travel. But we need to clarify between cellular and local winds. Cellular winds are the winds that represent the wind direction as per the isobars on the weather map. These are the winds important for us in weather prediction. Local winds are winds that may have a different direction to cellular winds (and some may be caused by cellular winds), and can trap you into making embarrassing predictions. For example, on the coast you may be experiencing a strong onshore sea breeze, or winds directed down valleys; ignore this and look to the direction of cloud movement above for making predictions. Similarly, on mountain ridgelines you can get Rotor Winds; a strong northerly wind coming over the ridge may rotate over you such that, depending upon where you are on the ridge, you may experience strong southerly winds; winds from the opposite direction.

HOW DO YOU FORECAST IF THERE IS NO WIND TO GUIDE YOU?

There are two scenarios for no or little wind; you are either underneath the centre of a High Pressure Cell (so expect stability in the weather, the current conditions to prevail but northerly winds...and hence a change.. at some stage) or the isobars surrounding you are very widely spaced apart. The weather will remain the same until you see further signs for changing your forecast.

SO HOW CAN YOU PREDICT SEVERITY OF WEATHER DETERIORATION?

The sky will generally give you signs on whether the forecast change implies urgent evasive action or casual observance. However, in my experience, accuracy here is not always possible. The clue is to not so much look at the clouds, but at the changes. Look for the classic signs of lowering of cloud base and increasing cloud cover. If it continues, and the sky gets darker and darker, and the sky takes on an angry appearance, then prepare yourself for strong winds and/or heavy rain. Sometimes you observe this lowering and thickening of clouds happening, and then at the next observation, the cloud base is thinning and the cloud base is rising. THAT was the change. It was just a mild deterioration in the weather. The key is to watch the sky constantly during the classic signs of weather deterioration.

3. Handy Weather Equipment to Take on Sea Kayak Trips

a) Internet Access and Smart Phone Applications

For us sea kayakers who operate at the margins of human powered propulsion when it comes to dealing with the wind and waves, there are few things more comforting (particularly on a multi day trips) than having access to information from weather professionals, IF you have internet access AND a means to recharge your smart phone. Discussing this will be brief for it can only be really learnt through personal use and besides, I have gone on far too long in this presentation already. But suffice to say, there are a few key things worth highlighting.

Things I have found particularly helpful from the excellent service of the Bureau of Meteorology (www.bom.gov.au) website are:

Four day weather forecast maps

- **Satellite:** helpful for showing intensity of coming weather systems and rate of travel. Helpful for trip planning.
- **Tides:** Particularly important where there are substantial tidal ranges and implications of resulting tidal streams. Check the tide tables to see what the lag time is between moon phase and Spring and Neap tides, and check which of the daily tides is the highest tide (if you misread the tide heights and you confidently left your boat untied overnight, it can be slightly embarrassing in the morning to find your boat missing having floated away during the night. You only do this once.)
- **Specific areas forecast:** for Sydney Closed Waters and all other coastal areas. Essential for trip planning.
- **Weather warnings:** Strong, Gale or Storm force warnings are also essential for trip planning and safety.

- **Rain Radar:** this is great for showing you what is coming your way. Apart from showing rain and rain intensity to your west, it shows wind direction and speed. Very handy if you have an open water crossing and you need to track the location of the oncoming Cold Front and its increases in wind speed and change of wind direction. This shows in real time (not what is forecast) what is happening right now in a specific location.
- **Marine Wind Forecast Map:** Shows a timeline of wind speed and direction that is forecast for today and in the days ahead. Great for trip planning.
- **Met Eye:** It is another way of presenting the information for a specific location. Gives wind speed, direction, chance of rain, barometric pressure and you can click on adjacent weather stations also.
- **NSW latest observations:** This shows the latest observations for all weather stations in the State. A wonderful aid if you wish to see if a forecast change has reached weather stations to the west of you ... i.e. to see what time frame you have before it hits you. Handy at looking at current wind speed and direction, as well as temperature drop if associated with a Cold Front (drops of 20 degrees over 15 minutes can have clothing choice implications!) A wonderful aid for on-the-spot trip adjustment.

Weather Apps for Smart Phones:

Explore the many options, but a few are Pocket Weather, Bay Winds and Willy Weather. They all use BOM information, but present it differently. They have excellent graphics for displaying predicted wind speed and direction, waves and wave heights, radar images. They are just fantastic; great for checking out the forecast when in the

sleeping bag and again in the morning. A wonderful aid to safer trip planning.

“Is it safe to paddle today with this forecast” — Weather and on-water decisions

The Weather Bureau provides an excellent service, and offer increasingly more accurate forecasts. But, as we are finding out, sometimes they get it wrong for our location.

Paddlers and trip leaders are often faced with this dilemma. The issue is when Wind Warnings are current or the forecast is for marginal or difficult wind speeds (and directions), but the conditions facing you when standing on the beach deciding whether to go or not, do not match what has been forecast. The problem is what to do with contrary trusted advice; the ‘stay-on-shore/amend your route’ implication of the weather forecast or the ‘these conditions before me indicate safe paddling conditions’ and in your opinion, your group can handle it. When do you trust your own judgment and when do you trust the Weather Bureau?

For this reason I carry an Anemometer (to measure wind speed). Though expensive, they can give peace of mind; and supporting evidence if disputes arise later about why you made the decisions that you did. (I carry my pocket anemometer in a clear plastic empty honey jar with a screw top; for waterproofness and impact protection. It fits nicely in the day hatch.)

Pocket anemometers are a great aid to determining wind speed. (Photo source unknown, but probably from Kestrel webpage)

This is a frequent dilemma: “There is a Strong Wind warning current, but current wind speeds are less than



10 knots.” This is particularly so for those responsible for school groups or novices on water and the legal implications of going against forecast weather warnings.

phone networks. I have not found anywhere on the Australian coast where I could not get reception.

There is an article on the subject at: <http://nswskc.wordpress.com/2004/12/24/short-wave-radio-58/>

Single SideBand Radio

The Bureau of Meteorology broadcast the weather forecasts of the entire coast of Australia at regular intervals.

A shortwave radio with SSB capacity will allow you to receive these reports. This will work in areas where you do not have access to the internet or



4. In Conclusion

As suggested earlier, the greatest safety aid is between your ears (Judgment), and sometimes you get it wrong. Using your smart phone can help reduce this risk. As suggested above, check observations at weather stations to your west in relation to wind speed and direction. As outdoor educators are aware, Coroner’s reports of tragic outdoor incidents have criticized leaders for NOT carrying and using available technology to ensure safety for trip participants.

The implication is, use the best advice at your disposal to make your decisions, and carry the technology that could be reasonably expected of a sea kayaker/sea kayak leader to enable

the gathering of this information to facilitate good decision making. The implications are stronger if you are responsible for other people’s children.

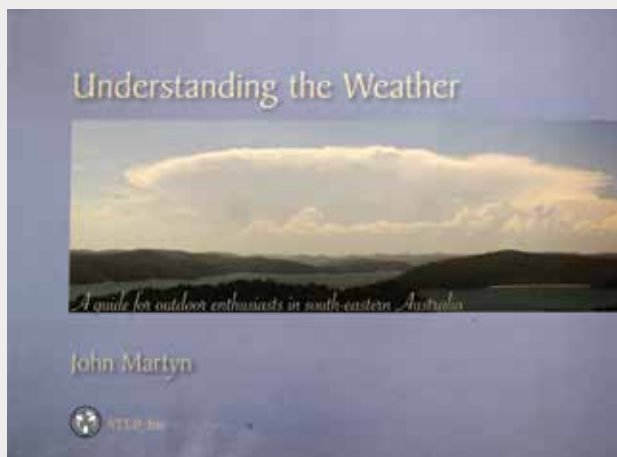
Increasing weather craft knowledge

The authors welcome input and corrections. They also hope that what is written here forms the basis for others to learn from, apply, modify, correct, add to and improve such that our collective weather knowledge can be improved.

'Understanding The Weather'

by John Martyn

BOOK REVIEWED BY **RUSS SWINNERTON**



Forecasting the weather is not easy. Even the professional Bureau forecasters, with access to computer modelling, multiple data sources, and near-continuous forecast calibration, still get it wrong occasionally.

In the end, it's up to you. 'Single-observer forecasting' is when you – the single observer – make deductions from the wind direction and strength, barometric pressure and trend, cloud patterns, and seasonal norms, to decide what the weather will do next, and whether it is safe to get on the water. Stuart's article in this issue describes the process in detail.

Even if you haven't had formal training in meteorology, don't despair -- there are plenty of resources available to help. And the book under review, 'Understanding The Weather' by John Martyn, is one of them.

John's written his book for 'the outdoor enthusiast in south-eastern Australia' – where his superb photographs have been taken. John proudly advertises himself as a member of the Cloud Appreciation Society, and it shows! His book is organised around cloud formations and the kinds of weather they signify on the coast of New South Wales. He places particular emphasis on adverse conditions, especially fronts and thunderstorms, making the book a very useful reference to assist in anticipating the onset of bad weather.

But to understand how the weather works, you need a broader overview, from the global situation, to the Australian continent, and then down to local systems and patterns, as Stuart describes in his article. The Mariner's Weather Handbook by Steve and Linda Dashew, a free download at <http://setsail.com/mwh.pdf>, is also a handy resource to help build your understanding of marine weather. Steve and Linda are long-time cruising yachtspeople, so have the independence of kayakers with an added tolerance for long periods without draft beer!

Although the Dashews write in American English, they've cruised extensively in the South Pacific, and so there is plenty that's relevant to the east coast of Australia. But it's not precisely geographically specific, and that's where John Martyn's book excels.

And to 'get' the weather, to be able to forecast the future from what you see around you – wind, pressure, cloud – you need a model: the weather map. John's book would really benefit from linking his photographs to the weather maps applicable at the time. Instead, he uses satellite images of cloud patterns – useful too, but more useful with the associated weather maps.

Stuart's description of local weather will help put John's book into a larger context, so you can build your understanding of how weather systems move across south-eastern Australia, and then use John's book to show you what those systems look like.

Putting it into practice

Stuart makes a good case for carrying an anemometer with you. For single-observer forecasting, it also helps to have a barometer to show where you sit in the weather map. And unless you want to keep a log to record changes of barometric pressure, you'll find it's easier with a barograph – a device that records pressure over time -- to give you the trend at a glance. Modern watches like the Casio Pro Trek triple-sensor can do that, and the trusty Garmin GPSMAP 60CSx does the same. Armed with the pressure, wind strength and direction, and the shape and nature of the clouds you can see, you can make sound judgments about what's in store.

There's a second opinion on barometers in the report of the 1975 British Nordkapp (Norway's North Cape) kayak expedition. These intrepid analogue-only paddlers logged their barometric pressure morning and evening, and more frequently when the weather was changing rapidly (and the report's worth reading, even forgetting about the weather): <http://www.ukseakayakguidebook.co.uk/nordkapp/1975%20Nordkapp%20Exped%20Report.pdf>.

'A barometer is not probably normally taken by sea canoeists on multi-day journeys. After using one on the expedition, I would highly recommend one to be carried. Although there are many visual signs of weather changes, and professional weather forecasts are generally invaluable, both together may be insufficient to make a correct decision concerning a journey. The value of a barometer is that it shows pressure changes and consequent impending weather change when there may be no visual signs.' pp 42--3

And don't wait until you're weather-bound on the coast of Norway or on a Bass Strait island to figure it out – you can check weather maps and your barometric pressure at home, to see if the weather outside reflects what you're expecting to see. Finding it hard to judge the height of clouds? Then check the aviation forecasts too, which give cloud heights, so you can calibrate what you see. Do this for a while, and it will soon become second nature.

'Understanding The Weather' by John Martyn
NSW Step Inc, 2013 152 pages, 19 x 26cm, RRP \$20.

SEA-SKILLS Training and Assessment

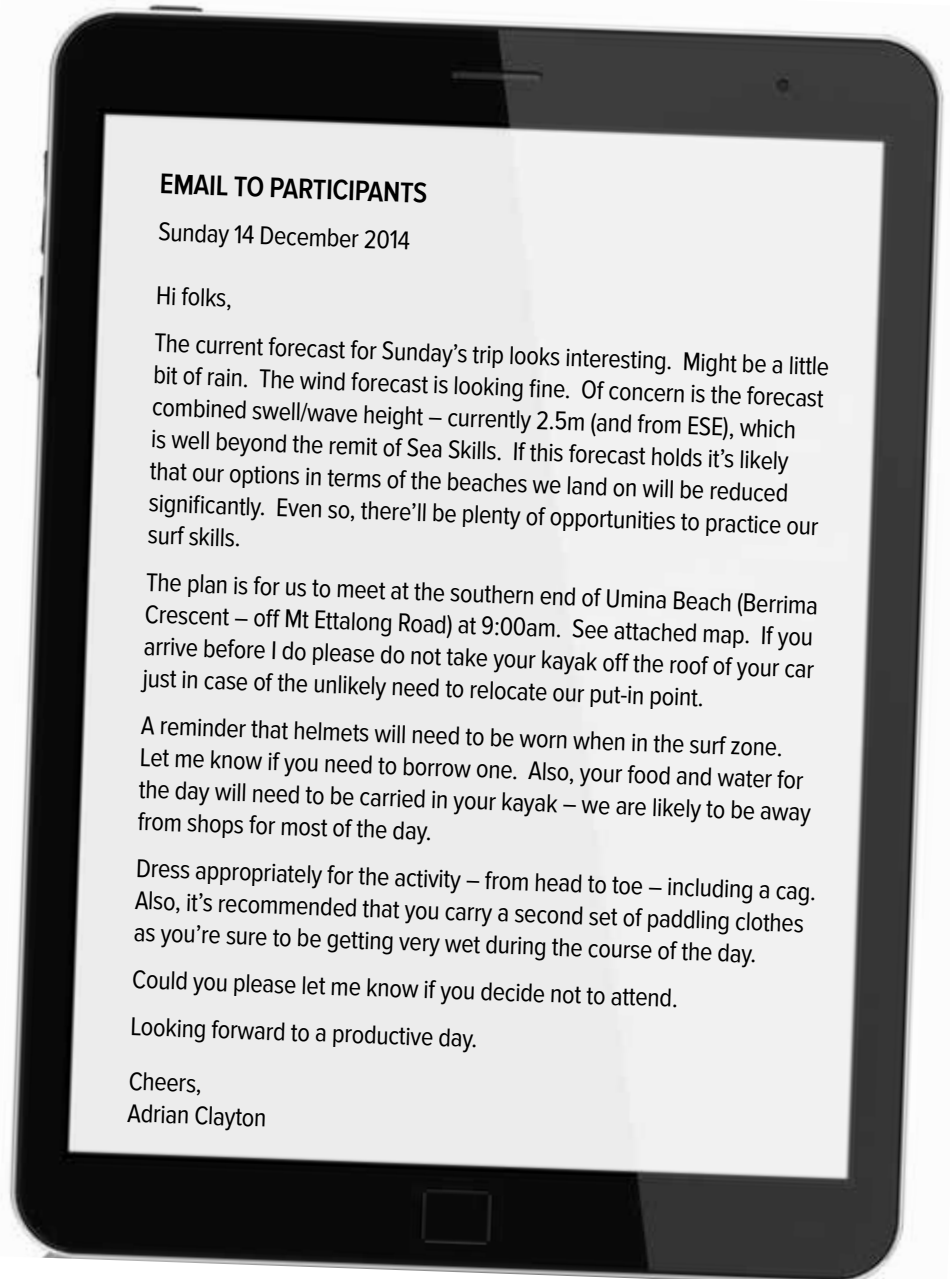


Beaches of Broken Bay (or Underwater at Umina)

JOHN ATKINS

This surf skills training day began with a briefing on the beach, the BOM predicted a 2.5 metre south-easterly swell pushing into Broken Bay, Adrian asked us to interpret the impact of this for the sites in the bay and then added information from his experience of the beaches we intended to visit. Caoimhin ran us through introductions and safety procedures for beach entry and exits then Fernando presciently warned us that skills we may feel confident of in flat water have a habit of breaking down in the surf!

We launched through small waves from the south corner of Umina Beach, paddled round to Pearl beach and practiced landing through a rough dumping shore break, with only one participant, me, getting wet. On the beach we discussed, then practised beach launches...definitely from the berm is the way to go. Timing and the skill of setting and keeping the kayak perpendicular to the waves were the key elements to success.



EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Sunday 14 December 2014

Hi folks,

The current forecast for Sunday's trip looks interesting. Might be a little bit of rain. The wind forecast is looking fine. Of concern is the forecast combined swell/wave height – currently 2.5m (and from ESE), which is well beyond the remit of Sea Skills. If this forecast holds it's likely that our options in terms of the beaches we land on will be reduced significantly. Even so, there'll be plenty of opportunities to practice our surf skills.

The plan is for us to meet at the southern end of Umina Beach (Berrima Crescent – off Mt Ettalong Road) at 9:00am. See attached map. If you arrive before I do please do not take your kayak off the roof of your car just in case of the unlikely need to relocate our put-in point.

A reminder that helmets will need to be worn when in the surf zone. Let me know if you need to borrow one. Also, your food and water for the day will need to be carried in your kayak – we are likely to be away from shops for most of the day.

Dress appropriately for the activity – from head to toe – including a cag. Also, it's recommended that you carry a second set of paddling clothes as you're sure to be getting very wet during the course of the day.

Could you please let me know if you decide not to attend.

Looking forward to a productive day.

Cheers,
Adrian Clayton



Caoimhin preparing to launch from Pearl Beach. Photo by Nick Blacklock.

Crossing the bay to Little Box Head we were given an on water briefing to safely negotiate the ferry channel and boat traffic. We broke into two groups, Steve and I went with Adrian and Caoimhin and worked our way into the waves breaking across the bar to practice bracing when hit side on. I then decided to try rolling down to let a wave pass over me, as I floundered to find the correct paddle orientation to roll up Fernando's words came back to me! After a wet exit and a struggle to cowboy back in I paddled a half full boat out of the surf zone and headed to lunch.

After lunch we spent more time in the waves, surfing with degrees of success but most importantly learning to make sure of the position of others in the group before launching down a wave. A good lesson for me as most of my paddling has been solo stuff and learning to work in a co-ordinated and safe manner, as part of a group was most valuable.

Our last lesson for the day was organising a beach landing with people in the area. Adrian sent Caoimhin in to act as a beach marshal while we waited his signal to come in one by one, again a very practical and necessary procedure on any beach when landing a group.

We debriefed, washed boats, Adrian stored away the sand he's using to build a small dune at Neutral Bay and we were then treated to a yoga session from Fernando in which my toes proved as elusive as my surf roll.

I'm sure all six of us appreciated the time effort and particularly the patience the group leaders displayed ... some of us have rethought trying for Grade 3, at least before considerably more surf practice. I valued the chance to assess my surf skills and to try things I could not safely attempt on my own. The advice given from three far more expert and experienced paddlers will certainly guide my skills development

for the next few months.

And perhaps one lesson that has a pretty much universal teaching application is encouragement. Failing is deflating, learning can be hard, but Adrian certainly lifted my mood with a comment that restored perspective ... "don't worry we've all been there"!

Leader:

Adrian Clayton (WS Tempest 170RM).

Assisting:

Fernando Charnis (Valley Aquanaut),
Caoimhin Ardren (Valley Avocet).

Participants:

Steve Hitchcock (Mirage 530), Roy
Davies Valley Gemini).

Nick Blacklock (Arctic Raider), Rhys
Ward (North Shore Atlantic).

Geoff Dauncey (WS Tempest 165RM),
John Atkins (Nadgee Expedition).

Owen Kimberley demonstrating a surf launch at Collaroy.



Note from Editor

I couldn't agree more with John, many valuable lessons were learnt that day. Most importantly for me, I realised I was far less experienced in surf than was expected for a sea-skills assessment. Many weekly paddles with friends in and out of the Harbour are insufficient preparation for handling the 1m surf at Pearl Beach and unpredictable soup that we found on the Umina Bar that day. Like John, I was out of my boat, underwater and becoming exhausted more than I should have been. I also blamed my inadequate thigh braces, poor-fitting skirt and unwarranted fear of spending too much time upside down. All these are fixable, and I'm pleased to say that practice, focus and guidance from experienced colleagues have already made a big difference.

Thanks Adrian, Fernando and Caoimhin for your guidance that day, and to Owen subsequently for more fun in the surf. Next time there's a sea-skills assessment day, I'll be ready.

Assessment Day

MICHELE POWELL

Yikes! A sea skills assessment day appears on the club calendar. I think it's time that I have go after a year of advancing paddling skills that I thought I'd never master. A registration is submitted. I'm quietly relieved to find the session full. This is short lived when someone drops out and I receive an email from Stuart Truman stating 'If you get this e-mail you are expected for assessment on Saturday 17th January 2015'. Rats!

However, it's the nudge I need. Stuart provides participants with a list of the Sea Skills Assessment requirements and a Sea Skills Study Guide. I have five weeks to acquire knowledge that I have been too lazy to focus on until now. Starting from a low base line, it's apparent that if I am to avoid complete disappointment and embarrassment at assessment time, I'm going to have to allocate time to the required tasks. There is a written assignment – preparation of a float and trip plan – in addition to a multiple choice 'exam', which is based on the references provided in the Sea Skills Study Guide. Participants are also required to demonstrate knot-tying skills. These requirements, and a copy of your log-book, are in addition to demonstrating that you have the necessary sea skills to undertake a safe paddle at sea.

Memorising cardinal marker colour bands is bog boring. However, a lot of the other material is actually interesting and the provided list of 'research questions' is informative to complete. The club's basic skills videos are very, very good.

Five of us were assessed on that Saturday. Prior to the day, Stuart provided participants with a program. There were no surprises. At the outset, he indicated that if we failed at a particular task, we'd be given another go. I found this reassuring – particularly when, wearing my surf helmet back-to-front, I was dumped doing a surf landing. However, it was also apparent that Stuart would not assess us as competent, if we could not demonstrate skills to his satisfaction.

At the end of the day, Stuart spent time with us individually and provided feedback. I found this to be a constructive session and his observations to be spot on. My navigation skills are wanting; I have room for improvement in surf; and my knot-tying is dyslexic. A couple of my strokes also need attention. However, he also provided positive feedback and left me encouraged to further advance my knowledge in the areas requiring on-going improvement.

I received my Sea Skills Award from Australian Canoeing a couple of weeks later. I'm going to frame it! Thanks Stuart.



Michele Powell.

Paddling by the Seat of Your Pants

ROB MERCER

(First printed in, and reprinted here with kind permission from, Oceanpaddler – Issue 43, the UK sea kayaking magazine.)

Every physical pursuit has its ‘buzzwords’ and key concepts, they change over time but always seem eternal truths when they first gain favour.

When I started paddling, being “at one with the boat” was the key. We were packed in tight with legs splayed, toes pointed and knees permanently locked under the deck.

Some time after this, the concept of “torso rotation” migrated from racing and ski disciplines to describe the best way to power your stroke; and “hip flick” was adopted from white water to explain the mysteries of the roll in two short crisp words.

Sagely coaches around the country stroked their greying beards and invoked novices to work on their torso rotation whilst helping them add more foam to increase their connection with the boat; an arrangement that worked better for flicking the hips than for facilitating rotation.

These were the days that skills sessions often began with an eloquent description of how the large muscles of the core, back and legs could be used to provide sustainable power usually followed by a demonstration of the technique that looked contrived, uncomfortable and nothing like the stroke we all knew our teacher would use for the rest of the day.

MARCH 2015 | SALT



Slowly it dawned on many sea kayakers around the globe that if they wanted to really rotate they would have to use their legs in much the same way as surf ski paddlers. Indeed when we first met Freya Hoffmeister in Sydney before she set off on her record-breaking circumnavigation of Australia her mantra for efficient paddling was “free your knees”

As in so many fields of human endeavor those at the cutting edge will borrow ruthlessly to achieve their goals. Freya melded the finesse and dexterity of traditional Greenland

rolling and bracing techniques and combined them with the biomechanics of elite ocean ski racing.

Some sea kayak designs have been meeting this demand for a higher knee position and straighter alignment of the legs along the centerline. In particular Rockpool and Tiderace are leading the trend by producing clean sheet designs that go further than just adding bumps to the decks of older models.

The value of the high knee and a less splayed leg position is that it allows



Matt, John and Bill south of Malabar.

the legs to bend and straighten as the whole trunk rotates; a very different approach to just having the upper torso twisting whilst the legs and hips remain facing forward and largely ineffective. Apart from power, this technique can reduce torque on your lower back and pressure on your buttocks reducing the strain and fatigue associated with sitting immobile for long periods of time.

As with so many techniques there are trade offs to consider. For a start, edging with the boat hanging off a raised knee will obviously interfere with the rhythmic bend and straightening of the legs, but edging by lifting one buttock and sitting heavy on the other cheek will often allow the legs to keep working. This edging without focusing on “knee-hanging” was very eloquently described by Jeff Allen as similar to “breaking wind whilst sitting on a barstool” (OP issue 39).

A session on one of the new generation of user friendly ocean skis is an excellent way to understand the appeal that Freya and many others see in

“freeing your knees” There is no back-band or thigh braces, the seat is shiny so you can rotate without friction and the lack of a deck can be quite confronting but gives you a chance to study what you actually do or don’t do with you legs when you are paddling.

My first impression of ocean racing skis was that they were half a good idea: sleek sea going hulls desperately in need of a deck!

As I sat on my new 12kg Epic v10 ski for the first time I couldn’t believe how vulnerable I felt. The stability was okay but every time the boat heeled to one side my knee would instinctively bend to lift the hull back onto an even keel and every time it started to twitch I would pull up with both knees. In a kayak my knees would have engaged with the deck suppressing these small movements that were dominating my first ski experience, but without a deck to pull against this reflex was actually making the situation worse and introducing an insidious wobble into my maiden voyage.

Necessity is a great teacher and the need to stay upright and keep up with the pack soon had me balancing with my hips and ignoring the reflex to grab at the non-existent deck with my knees.

What was different about the ski was the sensation that my core and hips were smoothly flexing to keep the boat under my head and shoulders without inhibiting my rotation. I also realized that in the competitive environment of ski racing a deck would be pointless, those bracing with their knees would be losing rotational power, thus giving a massive efficiency advantage to those using their legs and core muscles to drive.

Back in the sea kayak I find myself using balance more and gripping with my knees less. I am more aware of posture. I find I paddle with only light or no pressure under the deck except for rolling, bracing and extreme edges. I am more wound up for each stroke and my catch is more powerful and supportive in rough water. My best brace in most situations is another forward stroke. The combination of power and balance are self-perpetuating: the more you challenge your balance the better it becomes and the more you can rotate smoothly down to the seat.

The limitations imposed by the enclosed seating position, foot-pegs, thigh braces and a wider foredeck mean my legs are less active in the kayak, and the extra weight means that I need to be doubly careful to keep my joints well aligned under load, so I don’t make exactly the same stroke as for my ski but the principles remain the same.

Of course a good forward stroke is more than just leg drive and rotation, I don’t pretend that the above alone will substitute for personal instruction or even a comprehensive article on technique but hopefully it will encourage you to improve your balance, free your knees and find out what it feels like to paddle by the seat of your pants.



Corsica Sea Kayaking Trip

LISA MCCARTHY



Map of Corsica, with the black line showing our route.



Corsica is a small French island off the coast of Italy in the Mediterranean Sea. Reading Huw Kingston's circumnavigation of the isle planted the seed. We were fascinated by his reports of sheer cliffs and rugged coastal scenery! Mark and I committed to a 7-day kayaking trip exploring part of the west coast, a perfect conclusion to our 2-month European holiday (glacier travel, walking and climbing in the Dolomites).

Our planned route: Calvi, in the north of Corsica to the city and birthplace of Napoleon, Ajaccio in the south.

We chose to hire a guide and equipment due to our unfamiliarity with the area and its potential danger zones. It also meant we could take advantage of local knowledge regarding best camp sites without having to worry about maps, tents/sleeping/camping equipment as they would all be supplied. And most significantly, we don't speak any French and neither of us like cooking. An obvious solution!

Reno our likeable French guide was relaxed, easy-going, a competent kayaker with 30 years' experience. He had circumnavigated Corsica just two weeks prior to our trip. Due to big seas, they had to paddle 2km off the coast. On our trip, we had unbelievably calm conditions, which enabled us to do plenty of sea caves exploring, rock gardens and stopping in usually un-landable places. The area we had chosen to kayak was not offered as a commercial trip; we had played hard on our credentials (mine being rather dubious) and had to demonstrate some abilities; yes... we had to get wet!

Day 1 Calvi to Golfe de la Revelations

6kms | Wind 5-20 knots | Swell 1.5-2m

We were faced with a vast accumulation of gear, none of it lightweight nor compact (many tins of food). This was distributed and packed into our hired Prijon Seayak kayaks. True to custom, after a 2 hour paddle to our first destination, Reno made lunch, we dined, and then he headed off for a 1½ hour siesta! We weren't

prepared for this but it became a daily ritual. The wind had picked up with whitecaps everywhere. Fortunately the wind eased, but the swell didn't. A healthy 1.5-2m swell combined with unfamiliar kayaks, heavy paddles and being not at all 'kayak fit' (having spent the last six weeks trekking and sightseeing) made it a tough start to the trip.

Our first night's camp was at Golfe de la Revelations, a tiny pebbly beach only just big enough. Looking at the pebbles and then our paper thin, foam mats we started wondering about not bringing our own! After doing some rescue exercises in the lovely warm water we enjoyed dinner with excellent views. We hadn't gotten to sleep before the resident fox disturbed us. He was clearly accustomed to people, but he wasn't too taken with our objections towards having him hanging around.

Day 2 Golfe de la Revelations to Galeria

35kms | Wind 5-15 knots | Swell 0.5m

We were greeted to a beautiful sunrise. The coastline was very striking, morning tea was at the small Cala



Colourful Point.

Cadrea beach and we were able to venture into a sea cave due to the calm seas. A stop at a lovely beach called Baie de Coyani for lunch, and after the 1½ hour siesta, we reached the end of the wonderful granite cliffs. The weather was hot and sunny. We paddled past small, secret beaches, along Punta Ciuttone with some great rock gardening. The coastline was really stunning. We continued to head south with a light following breeze. I did my best to catch some of the small waves into the bay near the small village of Galeria. Here was our sandy little campsite, underneath the local cemetery high above us on the cliff top. Today, we had paddled 35km – with unfamiliar heavy paddles. No wonder I was tired! There were blisters developing on my soft (weak!) hands as the climbing gloves I was using, performed ineffectively as paddling gloves.

Day 3 Galeria to Girolata

35kms | Wind 5-18 knots | Swell 0.5 – 1.5m

Another glorious day paddling west across a bay past Punta di Stolla. The

sea was dead calm so we could explore the rock formations. Fantastic! The Scandola Nature Reserve surrounds Punta Validori, a very scenic and popular tourist area. Our guide stopped for a smoko on the Baie de Focolara, then on to darting around more interesting rock formations. We passed the dramatic Punta Nera, winding our way to the very popular beach of Marina d'Elbo for lunch. Here we discovered one of the first of dozens of Genoese towers; these are round, stone towers, which dominate many headlands around the coast. Near here, the rock becomes volcanic again. The Centrale Scandola NP was breathtaking. After a short afternoon break in the beautiful Cala di Gattaghig with its protected beach and gorgeous clear emerald waters, we then headed east to the tiny village of Girolata, a quaint, touristy place with no road access, only boat or rail. Our water containers were replenished here. We had two options; paddle back a short distance (10min) to a campsite, or paddle on some distance (30min) to a bigger campsite. Valiantly, I voted for this option, even though my sore arms, blistered hands and aching bum complained loudly. This larger beach provided a welcome campsite.

Day 4 Girolata to Plage d'Arone

32kms | Wind 5-20 knots | Swell 0.5 – 1m

We had more fun rock gardening through calm seas before we headed around the dramatic Cape Senino. We were advised that the Golfe de Porta can be a dangerous place in high wind, plus the beaches are very steep. Ficagliari was really lovely; we stopped here for a short break and ascended some stony steps up a shady gully popping out into a café! How good was that? The views were glorious, with the clear water, rocky headlands all against a brilliant blue sky. Real picture postcard material.

After lunch on a shady, rocky beach, the wind strengthened with whitecaps outside. No nap for Reno today, he was concerned about getting off the rocky beach safely and around Cape Rossu. There was a good bit of bounce, made quite exciting by the large boats roaring by, quite closely at times. There were several good-sized caves here in the Capanches de Piana area, we had to wait for a commercial vessel to retreat from one (it was that large!) and then we paddled right through it. Terrific! With the ever-changing scenery, we continued on in the hot afternoon



Entering the sea cave.

which illuminated the headland behind us. We were sluggish in our departure; we had three days to get to Ajaccio, so no rush! It was steady paddling along a shoreline, which was becoming more frequently dotted with villages and towns. There were more rolling hills as opposed to rugged cliffs. Two of the beaches recommended to us had houses close by or on top of the possible campsites. We chanced upon a lovely little un-named bay, which was surrounded by low, rocky walls making it quite protected. This sported some shade, views and a grassy tent site. Two old chairs located near a small, very old fisherman's shacks made the afternoon a leisurely affair of washing, reading, sleeping and avoiding the unexpected sunshine.

Day 7 Marina di Pevani to south of Capo di Feno (Donkey Beach)

18kms | Wind 5-18 knots | Swell 0.5-1.5m

Today's coastline is pleasant as we plunder through shallow rock gardens just for fun. Here we passed an impressive column of rock, with an eagle's nest crowning it. The wind picked up, and things become a bit rougher. We noticed a reasonable sized beach looming, but it sported a couple of dwellings close by. We

Mark waiting for that big wave.

sun. I had several finger blisters by this stage, which had me compensating by holding the heavy paddle in a different manner, along with a weeping sore in the webbing of my right hand. And my bum hurt like hell! We were a day ahead of schedule so stopped a little earlier than planned, at Plage d'Arone.

Day 5 Plage d'Arone to south of Cargese

20kms | Wind 5-10 knots | Swell 0.5-1m

We continued to be fortunate with the weather and paddled in and out of several rock gardens, until we arrived at Cargese, a small township high above the beach where Reno left us, together with the good weather. We resupplied our kayaks with food, water, radio etc. before we paddled off

in the late afternoon accompanied by showers.

The showers later eased but the cloud remained; a welcome change to paddling in full afternoon heat. Far off in the distance, we silently contemplated the headland that we needed to make our way around to our final destination. It seemed so far away! Assisted by swell, we reached our planned campsite earlier than expected. This site was our first ever 'treed' campsite!

Day 6 South of Cargese to Marina di Pevani

17kms | Wind 5-10 knots | Swell 0.5m

Overnight there was an amazing electrical storm lasting several hours,



Campsite.



passed on by, as Mark had spied a small, remote dwelling overlooking a rocky bay. We pulled in, and went for a site inspection. It appeared to fulfil all the Stu Trueman's requirements for weary kayakers! (Shelter, table and chairs, fresh water and views.) We dined on the verandah, overlooking the bay, very nice and civilised! Although it was a glorious sunny day, it was a relief to be out of the hot sun. Then we were startled by a friendly visitor — a donkey! He, and his friend hung around hoping for handouts, without success. A leisurely afternoon followed, we weren't used to this much lay-time!

Day 8 South of Capo di Feno to Parata (Ajaccio)

18kms | Wind 5-10 knots | Swell 0.5m

On our last day, we crossed the bay Anse de Minaccia in calm seas. Thankfully, this enabled us to paddle out and circumnavigate the Iles Sanguinaires, a large island off Pointe de la Parata. We rounded the southwest point and landed on a small rocky beach, not realising there was a formal landing spot just around the next point. Walking up to the enormous lighthouse, we observed stonewall ruins and the old original lighthouse.

The views were just incredible; we could see far up the coastline we had paddled. To finish off we paddled to the mainland landing at a beachfront Bar/Café that kindly let us call for our pickup. We were kindly welcomed to enjoy our cold drinks out the back, so as not to intrude our grotty bodies on the party booking at the front. Alas, we missed out on the local teacakes that looked so divine!

The weather was kind to us, sunny, light winds, small swell, great scenery, mostly easy days. A great kayaking trip in Corsica, there is something there to suit everyone!

Lisa McCarthy and Mark Dabbs paddled from Calvi in the north of Corsica to Ajaccio in the south, from 26 September to 3 October 2014.

Corsica mainland from Sanguinaires Lighthouse.



Lower Colorado River

Guided kayaking trip from base of Hoover Dam

ALEXANDER MANU

Having booked a trip to Las Vegas for ten days, being kayakers, then why not include a trip to the Grand Canyon and paddle the Colorado River? A quick search on google found the Viator website offering a 5 hour on water kayaking trip by the Desert Adventures Company. All up a 12 hour day with pickups, preparations, hiking, kayaking etc. It looked perfect so it was an easy decision ... my wife and I booked.

Fast forward to 21st Oct 2014 Las Vegas. We had a 6am pickup from our hotel to the kayaking centre at Boulder City for preparations, safety and trip advice. We then transferred to the vehicle towing the kayaks. After a short drive we arrived at a security check point near Hoover Dam.

Security was high so we had to produce IDs and be escorted by a federal officer to the launch site at the base of the dam, which was only accessible via a steep cliff winding road decent. There were six of us in the group accompanied by our guide Gary. My wife Erica and I had opted for a double kayak. After a bit of history of the Hoover dam, Colorado River and surrounds we set off at around 8am. It was an amazing landscape with the Hoover Dam just behind us, the new highway road bridge towering above us, surrounded by huge canyon walls and a crystal clear steadily flowing Colorado River ahead of us.

We commenced our downriver paddle through Black Canyon with the river dividing the states of Arizona on the left and Nevada on the right.

After paddling 1km through amazingly glassy water with huge bass swimming



Alex and Erica.

around and below us, we beached the kayaks. We had to lift the kayaks on to dry land, tie them together and anchor them to a rock as the height of the river here can rise suddenly, which could sweep the kayaks away due to water released by the dam to generate extra electricity. We then hiked about 2kms into an amazing canyon which had a hot thermal spring running through it. Returning to our kayaks we paddled another 5kms before beaching again. Another canyon but this time we needed to climb up the mini thermal waterfalls. After returning to our kayaks we paddled another 6kms through breathtaking spectacular scenery until we found an ideal spot for lunch. Here we relaxed and took a dip in the pristine clear cold water which was rejuvenating given it was a 32°C day.

We set off again down river this time paddling about 9kms surrounded by even larger canyon walls and mountain ranges in the distance before stopping one last time. We then hiked a 125 metre high exposed hill to an abandoned dam surveyor's hut site. At this point we realized how hot the day was as it is easily overlooked when on



Starting point at base of Hoover Dam.



Landing with the towering road bridge above us.



Lunch at the half-way point.

water.

Returning to our kayaks we paddled another 6kms downriver to Willow Beach Marina where at about 4pm our pickup was waiting for us for transfer back to the kayaking centre and then to our hotel back in Las Vegas.

In summary this is a highly recommended kayaking experience with an expert professional guide, not to be missed if visiting Las Vegas.



The Murray 'Instalment Plan'

BY CATHY MILLER

Gunbower National Park, June 2013.

Padding home

I grew up in Adelaide where the Murray River was South Australia's life-blood – well what was left of it after NSW and Victoria robbed it for irrigation along the way. The Murray supplied most of our water. I remember as a kid at primary school being taught that 'Every drop counts'. We turned off every tap, couldn't water the garden, and us three kids shared the same bath with one inch of bathwater, even the cat had to share. The tap water always tasted terrible (and still does!) so like most families in Adelaide we had a rainwater tank, which we filtered through pantyhose.

The Murray meanders through my childhood memories like it does through our country. I spent many summer childhoods at my aunt and uncle's farm at Paringa (near Renmark) on the Murray, where us city kids got a taste of country life and spent long

hot afternoons swimming in the river. When I was older, we joined another family for houseboat holidays at Mannum – they even tried to teach me to water-ski. When I was in my 20s, I joined a white water canoe club and I paddled the Murray River headwaters in the Snowy Mountains – both the Indi River (Upper Murray Gates) and Swampy Plains River. Then my Dad took up windsurfing at the age of 60 and built a simple beach shack at a remote spot on Lake Alexandrina called Clayton – perfect for windsurfing as the Lake is famous for its winds.

So this trip has had my name on it for a long time. For years, I've been dreaming of how I could paddle the 2400 kilometre length of the Murray, having already knocked off the top bit. My cousin still lives at Paringa, my family still has the beach shack at Clayton, my Mum and brother still live in Adelaide. Too many reasons not to do it.

We couldn't afford to be off work to do the trip in one go – and didn't want to wait till retirement, so Trevor Waters and I came up with an alternative plan – the Murray in Instalments.

The Instalment plan

Obviously if you can do the Murray in one hit the logistics are a lot simpler. Doing several trips meant we had to be very creative. You name it, we did it – ground crew, car shuffles, hire cars, taxis, paying locals to pick us up, begging favours from Canoe clubs, borrowing my brother's car, borrowing my cousin's car, catching buses, catching trains and even planes. I can tell you now nothing but nothing beats ground crew.



As we set off from Swan Hill, the locals can't believe we got all that kit in two kayaks, 12 January 2014.

1. Yarrawonga to Swan Hill. *405 kms in five days.*

We took part in the iconic and fabulous 2012 YMCA Murray Marathon paddling a Mirage 730. The river is closed to all other craft for the 4-5 hour window of the race, and there's a generous current, whoo hoo! We paddled with a virtually empty boat and shared ground crew with two other boats. What a great event this was, and kick-started our trip fabulously. We then had to 'back-fill' the distances above the Marathon, and a section in the middle.

2. Bringenbrong Bridge to Lake Hume. *175 kilometres in four days.*

Having finished the Marathon we then drove to the top section to begin working our way down the river in order. The upper part of this river through the lower mountains is gorgeous. The river height at Bringenbrong Bridge was 1.2 metres when we started, and at times the Mirage 730 was scraping on the Grade 1 gravel races until they released water to a much better height of 1.8m at the Bridge. With 90 kilometres to go, we entered the backwaters of Lake Hume and lost the river flow. This last section was not much fun, maybe it was the toll of paddling over 500 kilometres in nine days. The lake had drowned all the trees and there was nowhere to land that



wasn't full of smelly silt and what I called Croc-sucking mud (Crocs, the footwear, not crocodiles). The camp spot on the last night was abysmal, so we packed up at 4am and got on the water by first light so we could finish this section before the 40-degree plus temperatures hit us. This was the only section on the whole river I was glad to finish.

3. Lake Hume to Corowa. *145kms in three days.*

We did the rest of the river in two single Mirage 580s. We hired a car from Albury for the car-shuffle. The section just below the Dam is full of birdlife and is really beautiful. It was marvellous having river flow again after the tedious section above the Dam! We only had a few days, so pulled out at Corowa.

4. Corowa to Yarrawonga. *128 kms in three days.*

For this section, we shuffled two cars up and down. This pretty much cured us of this approach. You could do each leg three times up and back – so we knew we needed another plan. By reaching Yarrawonga we'd back-filled all our gaps ahead of the Murray Marathon.

5. Torrumbarry Weir to Murrabit. *142 kms in three days.*

This is the 150 km section that is skipped on the Murray Marathon between Torrumbarry Weir (end of Day 4) and Murrabit (start of Day 5), because there is no car access. By now it was getting too far to drive comfortably from Sydney, so we came up with a new plan. I got in touch with the Swan Hill Canoe Club who helped us out with the car shuffle. This was the June long-weekend, and we had to make 47 kilometres a day despite the short days. This section through Gunbower is gorgeous, and very remote. After the trip, we left our kayaks in the Swan Hill Canoe Club shed. As we drove away, I got separation anxiety almost

Cathy paddling through high cliffs near Mildura.



Cathy at one of our favourite campsites on the sand banks of a horseshoe bend, January 2014.

immediately and wanted to turn around the next corner and go back to get them. The 12-hour drive from Swan Hill to Sydney was our last long drive.

6. Swan Hill to Mildura.

We could no longer sustain the shorter opportunistic trips we'd been able to do, so for this leg, we set ourselves a target of 528 kilometres in 11 days, 48 kilometres per day. On Friday night after a day's work, we flew to Melbourne with all our kit, and caught the night train to Swan Hill. We were on the river the next day after buying fresh groceries and stove

The Murray Instalment Plan.



fuel in Swan Hill in the morning, marvellous! We had fabulous campsites on sandy river banks, watching the sunset and listening to the galahs congregating. We copped a lot of headwinds on this section, which grounded the water-skiers, but not us. 11 days later, we slipped through the Loch at Mildura and left our kayaks and kit at the Mildura Canoe Club and flew back home from Mildura.

7. Mildura to Paringa.

We paddled 307 kilometres in nine days. This was one of the most remote sections of the river, we saw hardly anyone except for the Loch-masters. Carrying water was a big issue here as there were no towns along the way, especially in the 40-degree plus temperatures. We carried over 60 kilos of water, topped it up where we could from the loch-masters. The river cuts through the desert like an oasis here. We stood on the cliffs and stared at the outback, the trees follow the river with nothing behind them.

NOTE FROM CATHY: The sediment is impossible to get out of the river water. We tried boiling it and purifying it as a last resort, and even then it made us sick. As we discovered, it needs to be filtered professionally for town use.

Nine days later as we neared Paringa, it felt very familiar – the cliffs, the orchards, the shape of the terrain. But after over 30

years, I couldn't pick my cousin Andy Lott's house from the river. Finally, we landed at a riverside shack and I went searching for some locals to ask where I'd find the Lotts. I even walked past a car with the numberplate 'Lotty' without realising – and found my cousin Andy and some friends drinking beers at the shed! We had a marvellous night, full of reminiscences. The next day we packed up our kayaks and kit and left it all in Andy's shed, right on the river bank. We caught the bus back to Mildura before flying home – the bus took just 1.5 hours to cover the distance we'd paddled in 9 days!

8. Paringa to Murray Bridge.

We flew back to Mildura early on Saturday morning, and drove



Cathy arrives at Paringa met by her cousin Andy Lott.



Trevor in the remote section between Mildura and Renmark.



The Goolwa Loch, after we reached the Mouth on our way to Clayton, 9 May 2014.

to Paringa. There's a quarantine restriction at the SA border, so we bought all the fresh food in Renmark. We pushed our kayaks off from Paringa with a crowd watching us depart! Even though there's almost no river flow, this section is really gorgeous, with dramatic red cliffs lining our way. The further we got into SA and the closer to Adelaide, the harder it was to find campsites apart from the commercial campgrounds. What a thrill to have my mother and brother meet us in Mannum! It was now May, and starting to get cold, so it was our last chance to finish before winter. I stayed another week with my family in Adelaide and did the planning for the final leg.

9. Murray Bridge to Murray Mouth.

We achieved the last leg with my brother's car and a second car for the car-shuffle. After reading stories of kayakers attempting to paddle across the lake and running into trouble in the high winds, we decided to take the longer but safer route along the eastern shore.

This was the route described by Mike Bremers at <https://sites.google.com/site/murraycanoetrip/home> although we took several shortcuts across the bays.

We had to wait a day for the wind to settle down before we could even leave for this section, but once the storms had blown themselves out, we had a marvellous run down the last part of the river and the

70 kilometres along the Lake. We camped on the lakeside then the next day with the wind behind our sails, we crossed the barrage at the self-opening Loch and had a wonderful run along the Coorong to the Mouth. Then given it was June and really cold, we decided to paddle back to the family shack at Clayton the same day, another 20 kilometres but it didn't matter that we landed in the dark – we'd made it.

Doing the river in instalments meant that the logistics were always a great challenge, and I really loved the trip planning. Each leg we came up with a different solution. The disadvantage of this approach was that we didn't really have the luxury of many rest days as we always had to meet deadlines, such as planes to catch and work to go back to! So we'd belt down the river doing an average of 48 kilometres per day. While we took 51 days to paddle the whole river, there was 25 transport/shopping days that were also our rest days.

The best thing about this plan was that each trip felt like returning to an old friend. I loved coming back to the river each time, with that warm familiar scent, the embracing arms of the red gums, the easy camping on the sand-banks, it truly was a great trip.

Highlights

There are too many highlights to write about in a short piece like this, but it comes down to the easy laid-back camping, the beautiful landscapes and the people we met. I've heard people say they think paddling the Murray would be "boring flat water". Well, it isn't. Don't think for a minute that this is a boring trip, it is full of variety and the landscape changes on each section from alpine through to desert, and high red cliffs in South Australia.

Cathy and Trevor on the last legs of the river with 100 kilometres to the mouth with Lake Alexandrina in the background.





Top Right: The famous Murray Princess paddle steamer 9 May 2014.

I loved the freedom of camping on the riverbanks – never under the older red gums because they drop their branches on you in the heat. We’d always look for the groves of saplings to camp next to. We soon learned that the best campsites were on the first big bend below the lochs, great big sandbars. I loved the campfires in winter, loved the birdlife, the cliffs, the colours, the scent of the river. I loved the cuttings we took into billabongs and creeks, where we’d see emus, kangaroos, other wildlife.

Then there was the camaraderie with the locals, the fishermen or even powerboat tourers we met along the way. We met a group of fishermen over 4-5 days who went up and back. We met another group of Whitney powerboat enthusiasts doing a rally – ironically they did around 47 kilometres per day – just like us. We were like the hare and the tortoise; they couldn’t believe we kept catching up to them.

I loved Australia Day in Wellington at the junction of the Murray and the Darling, where we took a half-day off (luxury!) and had a pub dinner with the locals. They’d taken down the back fence and brought in a truckload of sand for a beach party. We ate chicken parmy sitting on deck chairs dangling our feet in a kid’s blow-up pool, downing our beers and listening to local talent ‘Wazza’ butchering some very good songs. In over 40 degrees, they use outdoor fans with hoses attached (small holes in the hose to sprinkle water on everyone.) Priceless!

But the highlight for me was the



Trevor Waters at the Murray Mouth.

personal journey. My goal was to paddle 1900 kilometres to reach my cousin’s farmhouse at Paringa, then to meet my Mum and brother for a pub lunch at Mannum with 150

kilometres to go. To get to my family shack at Clayton, I had to paddle 2,400 kilometres to the mouth, then another 20 kms northeast back into the Lake. I really did paddle home.

LEG	DATES	START	END	KMS TO MOUTH AT END	DISTANCE KMS	AVERAGE DAILY KMS	PADDLING DAYS
1	27 to 31/12/2012	Yarrowonga (Murray Marathon)	Swan Hill	1410	405	81	5
2	2 to 6/1/2013	Bringenbrong Bridge	Lake Hume	2225	175	43	4
3	25 to 28/1/2013	Lake Hume Weir	Corowa	2080	145	46	3
4	28/2 to 4/3/2013	Corowa	Yarrowonga & 40kms Tocumwahl	1992	128	42.6	3
5	9 to 12/6/2013	Torrumbarry Weir	Murrabit	1486	142	47.3	3
6	1 to 12/1/2014	Swan Hill	Mildura	882	528	48	11
7	25/1 to 3/2/2014	Mildura	Paringa	575	307	38	9
8	18 to 27/4/2014	Paringa	Mannum	150	425	47.8	9
9	3 to 6/5/2014	Mannum	Murray Mouth & 20kms to Clayton	0	170	42.5	4
							51

Incident off Cape Banks

CHRIS THOMAS

It is mid-August and I decide to go for a paddle. The conditions are benign with light winds and low seas on a 1.5 metre swell. The afternoon is clear and mild but the water is very cold, about 15 degrees. Before launching at Malabar I grab my radio, although at first I can't find it. I meander south and turn back after rounding Cape Banks, quite at ease. I am not fit but this is a familiar coast and conditions are good. Things are going swimmingly. I stay quite close to the rocks, but not too close; there is some swell.

Just north of the Cape, for no apparent reason, I capsize. It should not be a big problem, but my roll fails. I know why

and I curse myself for not fixing it. I set up for a re-enter and roll but this fails too. I try several more times, getting up at least once but capsizing again. I am not carrying a paddle float. For some time I alternate between trying to self-rescue and resting, wondering what else to do. I am getting cold and tired. I could leave the boat and swim, but the swell on the rocks is not at all encouraging. Eventually I take the radio from the pocket of my PFD and immediately drop it. It floats, and I make the call, which is picked up by Marine Rescue Port Jackson. They tell me that help is coming. Okay. I hang onto the boat. After a while I notice that I have drifted

near to where swell is sucking the rocks dry. Better try again to self-rescue. I attempt a cowboy but can't even get my torso onto the deck. Why? I make several more attempts to re-enter and roll. Two of them succeed but I cannot stay upright; my upper body seems so heavy. The rocks are getting very close now and I try to swim clear, with the kayak. This is exhausting but, robotically, I make some progress.

Suddenly a helicopter appears when I was expecting a boat. It hovers for a while and I stare at it docilely until someone is lowered. He swims to me, secures me in a harness, and we are winched up. I still have my paddle



Chris Thomas on a better day.



in hand, like a pro (Ha!), but he tells me to drop it. I get into the chopper, exhausted and very cold. I am helped off with my cag, which is full of water. The chopper makes the 400 metre trip to base and I am taken to a hot shower where I stay for a long time. When I get out of the shower a paramedic takes my temperature and tells me to get back in. She asks me how long I was in the water but I don't know. I don't need medical attention.

Later I collect my boat from the beach at Malabar and the next day I find and thank the Maroubra lifesaver who towed it there. He tells me that it was very close to the rocks, and that he could make just one pass at it. He got my paddle too. He is a legend.

I have done a fair bit of paddling offshore around Sydney, both alone and in company, without incident. These were easy conditions. What went wrong?

- I am not as competent as I thought.
- I was very unfit and had a back injury.
- Both my roll and self-rescue used

to be solid, but I had not practised for some time. I knew of a potential problem with my roll (if the boat does not rotate to be fully inverted) but I had done nothing to sort this out.

- I was wearing a rashie under a cag. This was not adequate for immersion that day.
- Without me knowing it, my cag had completely filled with water through the open neck. It could not escape because of the very good wrist and waist seals. This may sound trivial, but it was not. It explains why I was so cold, and partly why I could not do a cowboy or remain upright after re-entering. Even had I been aware of this, what could I have done?
- A paddle float would have almost guaranteed a successful re-enter and roll, but I was not carrying one.
- Nor had I a plan. When I got cold I did not think clearly. I needed to have set a protocol ahead of time.

What went right? Not much except, crucially, the radio call. I had almost launched without the radio.

So will I still paddle alone offshore? Perhaps. But regardless, I will address all of the points above, thoroughly. I won't offer the reader advice, except to say that this can happen to you. It has happened to better paddlers than you or I.

Here are some things that I have learnt. From now on I will:

- View my level of competence very sceptically,
- Stay fit and keep my skills current,
- Dress for immersion, seriously,
- Carry all safety equipment and go home if I forget something,
- Have a plan,
- Tie the radio to my PFD, and
- Close the neck seal of my cag.

It surprised me how quickly I lost competence in cold water, and how few decent attempts at self-rescue I could make before becoming exhausted. Again, these were easy conditions.

Now I understand. I am privileged to have received such a lesson. To not lose the boat is merely a bonus.

Australian Designed and Manufactured by Paddlers for Paddlers for over 45 years

New Raider Series Kayaks
Now Available

Come and see us at NSW SKC
Rock n Roll 2015.....



ROSCO
CANOES & KAYAKS

Ph: 07 3359 9330 | E: showroom@roscocanoes.com.au | www.roscocanoes.com.au

WomDomNom

JOHN FRIEDMAN



PHOTOS BY PAUL BRANDON, SUPPORT TEACHER
AT DUBBO COLLEGE SOUTH CAMPUS

we know, age is no barrier to paddling and the pace of the journey reflected this.

Earlier, I mentioned country hospitality and I cannot praise the volunteers and organisers enough for the work undertaken to ensure a smooth journey. From our wakeup time of 5.30 am when breakfast had to be prepared and the camp packed up, all I ever saw were friendly faces and people willing to help. Some even lent their own kayaks to less experienced paddlers who found the going tough. The meals were first class — starting at breakfast (bacon, eggs, pancakes, cereal, fruit, bread, tea, coffee, juice, muesli bars, etc.), proceeding to morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a massive dinner. A movie night presented by Alison Plasto of the Western Plains ABC on the outdoor screen draped on the side of a truck was a highlight. The organisers ensured there were enough cans and bottles of soft drink, beer, cider and other beverages with an honesty system for payment. There were also unending numbers of sweets throughout the day with red frogs being the most popular.

When asked how we would like to spend our holidays, many of us respond paddling. We've heard talks and read articles about the enjoyment of kayaking in the Mediterranean, Asia, Europe and the USA, but not much about fully supported multi-day kayaking tours in Australia.

WomDomNom is arguably 4 days of the best kayaking days I have ever been on. I know that it is not tough like many of the self-catering expeditions we do — but it has an ingredient we encounter so rarely — Country Hospitality. WomDomNom (or Wellington on Macquarie, Dubbo on Macquarie, Narromine on Macquarie) is the initiative of a group of charitable people on the western plains of NSW. This year, the chosen charity was Black Dog Institute and over \$7,700 was raised from donations and profits.

On the first day of WomDomNom, over 120 kayakers met at the banks of the Macquarie River in Wellington for the beginning of 4 days of paddling. Under cloudless skies, we set off in

pre-assigned groups of between 8 and 13 paddlers. Paddlers came in all shapes, sizes and ages including one pirate and a number well into their 70s. One couple I spoke to had been married for more than 50 years, and they still enjoyed paddling together in their double! From my observation, the average age was well over 50, and as

All shapes, sizes and ages.





A welcome refreshment stop.

The first day's paddle of 36 km was from Wellington to Bril Bral reserve. The river level at Wellington was just over 2m. Any lower than this would have resulted in the paddling being less enjoyable. The often encountered shallow races and the unnerving willows around every sharp bend of the river made for excitement at times. Some paddlers used fibreglass kayaks but I am glad I used my plastic kayak due to the number of scrapes throughout the day.

The second day's paddle of 34 km

The author in his plastic Tui.



took us to our overnight campsite, the beautiful Lazy River Estate on the outskirts of Dubbo. This was our warmest day with many people stopping to jump in the water and a few practising their rolls to keep cool.

The third day's paddle of 44 km took us firstly to Dubbo from Lazy River, and then to our overnight campsite at Dickygundi Reserve. Many weekend paddlers joined us for this leg, some of them forgetting that kayaking practice before the event would have made their paddle much easier. Some

of us decided to go over the weir outside of Dubbo rather than around it as the water volume was suitable for a front on assault. This day had the only accident for the trip when one of the less experienced paddlers did not negotiate a bend correctly and had her leg pierced by a willow branch. Excellent emergency radio management was maintained and the ambulance could easily locate the injured paddler. A fellow NSW Sea Kayaker (who wishes to remain anonymous) was a participant in the rescue managing to transfer nurses and patient from one side of the river to the other in a double kayak that resembled a shallow bath.

The final day's paddle of 36 km ended in Narromine. Four days of paddling with people from all around NSW allowed you to listen to stories you would not normally hear, give you a better understanding of life on the land, and make you realise how unimportant it was if your city bus was 5 minutes late.

Will I be paddling this event again? Most definitely and I hope that many of you take the opportunity to enjoy this great charity event from November 26 to 29 2015.

(Further details at www.womdomnom.com and www.facebook.com/groups/womdomnom/).

Kayaks on their journey.





Paddling Vancouver

in folding kayaks—in the summer!

RUSS SWINNERTON

Kayak heaven could well be the coast of British Columbia, in Canada. We've done this before, flying across the Pacific with our folding kayaks for some paddling around Vancouver. But last time was over Christmas, crunching through the snow in our dry suits on the way to the put-in, bleak, cold, overcast, and miserable – and that's when it wasn't raining or snowing! Character building, certainly ...

Eighteen months later, we're back – same beautiful boats, completely different environment. Vancouver, in July, means 30-degree temperatures and endless sunshine – for day after day.

We get a real sense of the summery pace of life in Squamish, at the head of Howe Sound, about an hour's drive north of Vancouver. We're staying in a pub – a boutique brewery, the Howe Sound Inn – with multiple varieties of English-style draught beer, pub food, views, and a basement car park. So I ask at reception if it would be OK if we built our Feathercraft Wispers in the basement, so we could car-top them away in the morning to get on the water early.

"We're a working brewery", they say, "it would be too dangerous. You might get run over by a fork-lift."

Well, I suppose it could happen ... or worse, they could run over one of the kayaks!

"So would it be OK if you built your kayaks in one of our function rooms?"

Well, yes, we say, it would be OK. So we carry in the boats in their backpacks, and put them together on the carpet in an air-conditioned function room. Next morning, out they go, bags no longer, but proper kayaks, through the restaurant while the hotel is serving breakfast.

Squamish is a great place – but in summer, it turns into the kite-surfing capital of Canada. The summer sun heats up the air over the mountains, and that pulls in a massive sea breeze, starting mid to late-morning, at a reliable 20 to 25 knots every sunny day. The kite-surfers and sailboarders come from miles around.

The anabatic in-flow is the opposite of the katabatic winds that flow off the mountains and out of the sound in the winter, Mistral style – and on the

west coast of Canada, the gravity-fed dry cold winds are named after this place, 'Squamish' winds. The threat of the winds psyched me out last visit, keeping us close to Vancouver, but I hadn't expected them to be so strong in reverse.

The local kayak shop suggested we stay out of the fjord once the wind gets up – with steep sides the result of glacial action, there are no pull-outs, and you're committed to riding with the white-capped rollers until you reach the lee shore at the head of the sound. But wait, they said, there's more. The Squamish River, even after the spring thaw, was still running strongly and wasn't really suitable for skin-on-frame folders. So we were encouraged to stay in the estuary and harbour. That still gave us spectacular scenery with absolutely no anxiety.

Kite surfers dodging the old wharf piles at the head of the sound.



It was great paddling, with mountains, forests, sea otters, bald eagles — and not a single bear. We did a short Cessna 172 flight from Squamish with a local charter company, into the Garibaldi Provincial Park (past the Whistler ski resort), to get a closer view of the glaciers and mountains that pull in that boisterous wind. It was spectacular. If this wasn't a kayak magazine, you'd be getting lots more aerial photographs ...

After a couple of days in Squamish, we headed back to Vancouver to explore some of the other coastal areas closer to home, paddling through the marshes at the mouth of the Fraser River and the adjacent harbour at Steveston, where Meg's brother now lives. And then off the coast and into the rivers to the south, near White Rock. We had plenty of ocean to play in.

The folding kayaks were great, as usual — and we had no problems moving them over and back across the Pacific with Air Canada — apart from having to fill the rest of our baggage with paddling gear, to keep the boats themselves under the 23kg limit.

But we did wonder. In summer, there were kayaks for hire just about everywhere we paddled, which made the time spent building ours a pain (even in air conditioned function rooms — we could have been in the bar instead). We used temporary roof racks, foam cradles on aluminium bars held to the roof of the hire car with webbing straps, to move the boats once built. The racks were secure enough around town, but the folders with their sponsons deflated are very flexible, and I wasn't happy car-topping them at highway speeds. So we had a lot of kayak building practice ...

Still, there's something romantic about this kind of trip, heading off into the unknown with your boats in bags. Or into the known, for that matter, which is often just as much fun.

Top: Local fauna: A relaxed bald eagle, chilling on a rock.

Lower Top: Nice mountain lake paddling, but a long walk to the put-in.

Upper Bottom: Meg Keen paddling the Wisper XP in Squamish Harbour.

Bottom: Russ (blue) and Meg's (black) Feathercraft Wispers





a
Gentle Interlude
 at noosa

PAUL THOMAS

You may not think of Noosa Heads as being a worthy sea kayaking destination. The headland itself is scenic enough but you will need to dodge the noisy jetboats full of backpackers. The bar across the river mouth is wide and can be good for a play but there are long stretches of surf beach to the North and South so you can't go very far.

With these limitations in mind I looked inland to the upper reaches of the Noosa River during a recent family holiday to the area. Paddling the river can take you from the open ocean, through the built-up section overlooked by water-front apartments and homes, to the depths of a profoundly peaceful and beautiful national park.

You could start such a trip anywhere from Noosa Heads itself right up to the large tidal Lake Cootharaba, about 14 km up the river. For my trip I got a lift to a place called Elanda Point, which is in the North West corner of Lake Cootharaba. It was easily accessible and is already reasonably close to some of the best parts of the trip so it was a great starting point.

After launching at Elanda Point I spent the first couple of hours battling a stiff afternoon headwind and short choppy waves to reach the channels that would lead me to the Noosa River. As soon as I reached the channel the wind and waves disappeared and I was enveloped by rainforest reaching down to the water. That transition was

dramatic and memorable, and next time I do this trip I will spend more time in this rainforested section. Perhaps I will also do a side trip up the nearby Kin Kin Creek which actually looks bigger than the Noosa River. I won't be swimming though – I read in the nearby information centre that Kin Kin Creek is renowned by local fisherman as the best place in the region to catch bull sharks!

I had carefully prepared for navigating this section of the trip with its minor maze of creeks, channels and islands by printing out the good clear maps from the Qld National Parks website. I even took a compass. So when I got there I was a little disappointed to find big signs sticking out of the water pointing me up the correct channels. Fortunately that was the end of civilisation until I got to the first camping site at Fig Tree Point, which was followed by the next camping site (called Harry's) after another 5km of the Noosa River. The section between these two campgrounds is known as 'The Narrows' and also 'The Everglades'. This section has a



Morning mist on the Noosa River.

deserved reputation for its beauty and is well protected with no landing of boats allowed.

The Noosa River is stained dark by tannin. As a result the river is famous for the perfect reflections that it produces on a calm day. During my trip the reflections were always impressive and at one point quite surreal. I had blue sky all above me and blue sky all below. If I slowed down a little so that I couldn't hear the tinkle of my bow wave it was perfectly silent and perfectly calm. It felt like I was gliding through the sky. I don't think it would



be possible to experience that in a kayak on the ocean.

Having stopped briefly at Harry's I continued North up river. From Harry's there is another 15 km of river before the final available camp spot, with five campsites to choose from on the way. My plan was simply to keep paddling for as long as I felt like it and until I came upon a suitable camping site. During that day I only passed three campsites that had other people in them.

The river intersects walking tracks and a 4WD track at various points – so there are plenty of options for a bit of walking

to break up the paddling if that is what you want. You can also avoid the 4WD's by selecting one of the many campsites that are only accessible from the river

I spent the night at my peaceful site to awaken to a cool calm morning and mist on the river. The return trip the next day was relaxed until I had passed back through Lake Cootharaba and was on the lower Noosa River. This lower stretch of river has various attractions so it is worth a paddle if you have the time, but it is also strongly tidal. Due to the limited time window I had available I couldn't plan around the tides so my return trip was against

the tide and more like a training slog in a loaded kayak than a comfortable holiday cruise. Fortunately the family was staying right on the river so I was able to finish the trip by pulling up at our back door – very convenient.

So if you find yourself heading up to Noosa with a kayak why not try something different and head inland. Whilst the rest of the family are occupying themselves in the shops on Hastings Street you could be immersing yourself in peaceful rainforest. My trip was well worth it and if I get the chance I'll do it again – but next time for longer.

South Durras to Eden

BARRY MARSHALL

TRIP PHOTOS BY DAVID SARE



My brother, Geoff and a friend of his, David arrived in Sydney from Ballina three days before the New Year. The plan was to paddle from South Durras (just north of Batemans Bay) to Eden, being the last part of the south coast we had yet to explore. As the crow flies it is a distance of 150 kilometres but, as we had plenty of time, we hoped to poke around as much as possible up into some of the estuaries, which abound on that part of the coast.

Day 1. The next morning we left the northern beaches early in Geoff's truck and had a leisurely trip down the coast via the Royal National Park arriving mid afternoon at South Durras in balmy conditions. The first pack is always the most time consuming but eventually we got away in a light easterly breeze. Always a great feeling pushing off in a loaded kayak into an unfamiliar area. We paddled down to the Tollgate Islands, paddling between the islands and around the southern one seeing some incredible sea caves. We camped

the night on a pebbly beach in the lee of a building shielded from the sou-easterly.

Day 2. Was also New Year's Eve. We set off the next morning by 7 am calling in to a sheltered beach on the southern shore of Malua Bay in Batemans Bay for a morning break. Staying close to shore for the scenery, we paddled down to Shelly Beach on the southern side of the Moruya inlet, past some larger breaking waves on the point at Broulee for lunch. Shelly beach is a very pretty beach, which would be a perfect site for camping in its southern corner, especially outside of the holiday season. Although the swell was small there was a small breaking wave on the bar, which looked ideal for surfing. After lunch we headed for the CONGO! That is, Congo on the south coast. We paddled up the Congo inlet and found a great campsite about 2 kilometres further up. The walk down a bush road to the beach was a pleasant change from sitting in the kayak. A lone

fisherman had the beach to himself. Back at the campsite the mozzies were beginning to get active! Luckily we had repellents and a mosquito net head covering. Fast asleep as we entered the New Year.

Day 3. Up early, as usual, breakfasting on porridge and coffee whilst contending with the mozzies. We paddled out into a calm sea with the lightest of breezes and headed south past Meringo and Bingie (just love the names!). The nor-easter was picking up and pushing us effortlessly along towards Tuross Heads where we pulled in for lunch. The tide was flowing out of the river at a decent rate but, with the aid of some waves, we managed to land on the beach in front of the caravan park on the northern shore. The holiday crowds on the beach were entertained by the surfing kayaks. The exit after lunch was easy with the outgoing tide (although we had to punch through a couple of waves where Dave rolled without incident) and we then set off in a building nor-easter. We had penciled in Potato Point as a potential campsite but by the time we reached it we were flying along at a pace with the wind and swell at our backs. Past Potato Point, then Dalmeny we flew. Montague Island appeared to the southeast. We began to look for a campsite once past Narooma. We checked out a beach just south of the Glasshouse Rocks but found it far too rocky so we came back to the northern side and pulled in for the night. We had a good body surf to loosen up and enjoyed a night free from mozzies.

Day 4. We decided not to let the opportunity pass to see Montague Island and set off first thing in the morning. A very clear and calm morning but we had to contend with the sun reflecting straight into our eyes for the seven kilometre crossing. There must have been about 50 vessels off the northern end of the island where there is a seal colony. Fishing boats, dive vessels and sight-seeing boats abounded. There were people snorkeling with the seals. Landing is not only difficult on the island but it is also prohibited. We did manage to get



Geoff Marshall — late afternoon landing near Batemans Bay.

out of our boats in a cove with all the seals. The seals were a real highlight putting on a show with their antics. A mask and snorkel would have been perfect. We paddled around the island and then set off for Mystery Bay with the nor-easter at our backs once again.

At Poole's Beach we pulled in for a break and a swim amongst some surfers. Next was Wallaga Lake estuary for lunch and some shade at a solid carved shelter on the track to the beach. On exiting over the bar (low tide) I was knocked backwards, flat against the deck when I hit a wave about to break. Luckily I was able to catch my blade, which prevented me from being sucked backwards, but only just! We paddled into Bermagui, which is very protected, mid afternoon and wandered about the township. Geoff was suffering a fair bit due to the exposure to the sun. He refuses to wear sunglasses, sunblock and gloves but does wear a broad rimmed hat. Consequently his eyeballs take

a battering. Even David, who is a G.P., couldn't persuade him to wear protective eyewear. I did however persuade him to cover up with a spare child's T-shirt that I had and zinc cream. Until then I had never really realised just how ridiculous I must look wearing a child's T-shirt over my head – my brother looked like the elephant man! Geoff was keen to call it a day so we landed on the southern end of the beach just past 'The Blue Pool' and made camp for the night. Large schools of fish passed me as I awaited my turn to land and in the morning surfing dolphins rode the break in front of our camp site.

Day 5. Day 5 was shaping to be another warm day with nor-easterly winds but as we approached Cuttagee a sea fog enveloped us reducing visibility to about 200 metres (at best!). We crawled along the coast at Barraga Bay changing our heading whenever we caught sight of a rock — and this is a particularly rocky coastline with a lot

of bounce. When we eventually caught sight of the beach at Murrah River we decided to put in and wait for the fog to lift. The beach here is stunning — one of the nicest I saw on the trip (when the fog lifted). It has a reasonable looking right hand wave, which breaks into the beach formed by the outgoing tide of the river. David managed to upset the resident who lives in that beautiful part of the world by wandering too close to her premises (we did indeed think that it may be unoccupied).

The coastline south of the beach is rugged and wild – with jagged, twisted rock formations. We paddled into Wapengo Lagoon for a break in very hot conditions, and then relaxed in some shade on the northern shore for lunch. After lunch, we paddled out with an outgoing tide hugging the rocks in a channel on the northern side. The wind was building as the afternoon progressed and we made very good time to Nelson Beach in the Mimosa Rocks National Park. Paddling into the

inlet, which nestles in the northern corner of a very pretty and protected bay, we found a protected campsite on the northern bank in a grove of casuarinas. The wind was whistling by the time we pitched our tents. We walked over the saddle to the beach on the northern side, which was taking the full brunt of the wind, for a swim. The rocks on this coastline are a wild profusion and confusion of colour – twisted and layered. On breaking camp the following morning we were eaten alive by sand flies – the consequences of which I was to become painfully aware over the next few days.

Day 6. Again the weather was hot as we pulled into the southern corner of Tathra Beach with a bigger swell rolling in. By this stage we had done a lot of beach landings in surf. We were aware that a southerly change was forecast for the early afternoon so we were preparing for an early camp, at least until the worst of the southerly had passed. So cautiously we set off along a long section of a very interesting coastline without much of an opportunity to pull out if the southerly materialised earlier than expected. We made it to Bournda Lagoon for lunch and still the weather

was holding. Bournda Lagoon was a very unattractive campsite (marshy without shade) so we pushed on after lunch hoping to reach Merimbula.

The southerly hit us before we had rounded Tura Head and we had to beat into a solid southerly after rounding the point. David was holding up pretty well with a developing tendinitis of the wrist, which was sorely tested at this point. As we approached Short Head (very slowly) at the southern end of Tura Beach, I realised that there was another point (and Middle Beach) to round before entering the Merimbula inlet so we landed through considerably bigger surf in the southern corner. Again there were holidaymakers taking an interest in watching us land. We waited until late afternoon before we made camp on the point in this very popular place (Geoff sleeping on a rock ledge in his swag).

Day 7. The wind had abated overnight and it was calm and clear with a welcome reduction in humidity. The paddle from Short Point was as relaxed as is possible out at sea. The water was crystal clear without any swell. There were swimmers and kayakers in the Merimbula inlet

besides the ubiquitous fishermen. We were metres from shore all the way to Pambula where we took a break on the southern shore. This spot is so protected that large gum trees were growing instead of the usual stunted wind beaten scrub. We skirted around many rocks, passing the ‘pinnacles’ in the Ben Boyd National Park and pulled in for lunch and shade at the southern end of the beach. We were lingering over the paddle because Eden was just around the corner and the conditions were magical. On the approach to Eden Harbour there was an outgoing tide and we were a bit surprised by the strength of the current. A modern, French cruise ship, L’Austral was in port and Eden was bristling with well-to-do French people. We set up camp at Eden Tourist Park for a couple of nights whilst I hitched back up to fetch the truck – the bus service was fully booked.

In the days that followed, my sand fly bites became excruciatingly itchy and I thought I would scratch a hole in my legs – I would have gladly submerged my legs in a vat of boiling oil to relieve the itch. Geoff did recover from his exposure to the sun and David is now getting over his wrist problem. All in all, a great holiday on the south coast. I estimate that we paddled about 230 kilometres over the week with very easy conditions except perhaps for the heat, mozzies and sand flies.

Kayaks

Geoff paddled a Pittarak, though two thirds of his skeg broke off towards the end of the trip.

David paddled a Valley Gemini, a little slower but a very seaworthy boat.

I paddled my Mirage 580, great carrying capacity, though beach launchings can be a little tricky with the fixed rudder. Trying to snap the spray skirt on in a hurry in breaking waves whilst positioning the boat seawards can be challenging.

Geoff and Barry studying maps and avoiding mozzies at Congo River on New Years Eve.





Geoff and Barry attending anti mozzie fire at Congo River.

Food

BREAKFAST: rolled oat porridge, coffee, tea.

LUNCH: wholemeal wraps (made to hold together as opposed to

Lebanese bread which falls apart), vita-wheat biscuits, vegemite, peanut butter, honey, dried fruit and nuts, David brought some pepperoni and processed cheese.

DINNER: basmati rice (cooks quicker),

sardines, Tabasco sauce, fried preserved onions and salted whitebait (available at Asian markets)

SNACKS (out at sea): oranges (instant fresh fruit juice), dried fruit and nuts, ginger, liquorice.

Glasshouse Rocks with Narooma Montague Island just visible in the background.



Canberra Lake Burley Griffin

STEVE HITCHCOCK

It was a last minute decision to take my kayak to Canberra for Christmas, but a great excuse to escape the household chores and explore our capital waterway. Thanks must go to Mark Pearson for encouraging me to document my exploration and publish it here. In his words, it would be the first write up for many years so he said go for it.

The first thing you wonder, is where are all the locals? I went out twice, all day Boxing Day and the following Saturday morning. Despite decent 10+ knot winds on Boxing Day, not a single sailing boat was out. I pretty much had the lake to myself and circumnavigated it easily during the day.

Starting from Yeralumla, and heading clockwise, I saw an impressive waterways police boat (cushy job surely), golf club, Government House and then Scrivener Dam, with a Do-Not-Pass barrier preventing wayward kayakers from cascading over the weir. On the north side, Black Mountain looms large, and then I rounded the National Museum of Australia, an imposing architectural masterpiece indeed, though given its internal focus and artifacts, somewhat unnecessarily built on such a prominent peninsula I feel.

Going East, and cooling off under the Captain Cook memorial jet, you see the National Carillon built on Aspen Island, and turn into the trendy Kingston canals, where apartments and coffee



Trendy waterside apartments, but no people...

shops come down to the water's edge. I felt 100 pairs of eyes on me, as if they had never seen anyone use the waterways around them, and paddled on silently. Returning to my put-in beach, I passed the National Gallery of Australia, views up to Parliament House, Questacon, the National Library of Australia and a devoid-of-people yacht club.

On Saturday, the wind had dropped, so it was easy paddling across the Lake into three creeks:

Molonglo River, where I was passed by a couple of surf-skiers before reaching a sign at a bridge under construction which politely instructed paddle craft to turn back.

Jerrabomberra Creek, which passed through some beautiful and tranquil wetlands where many birds gathered and flowering lilies surrounded me.

Sullivans Creek, which meandered up to the Australian National University, with deep reflections of the trees and skies.

A couple of weeks later, I was staying near Bateman's Bay and paddling the busy rivers and out to the popular Tollgate Islands. I think that's where all the Canberrans had fled over the summer holidays.

LIVING OR VISITING CANBERRA?

Aside from sightseeing, Lake Burley Griffin does offer a great venue to put your kayak in, go for a workout paddle and hone your skills.

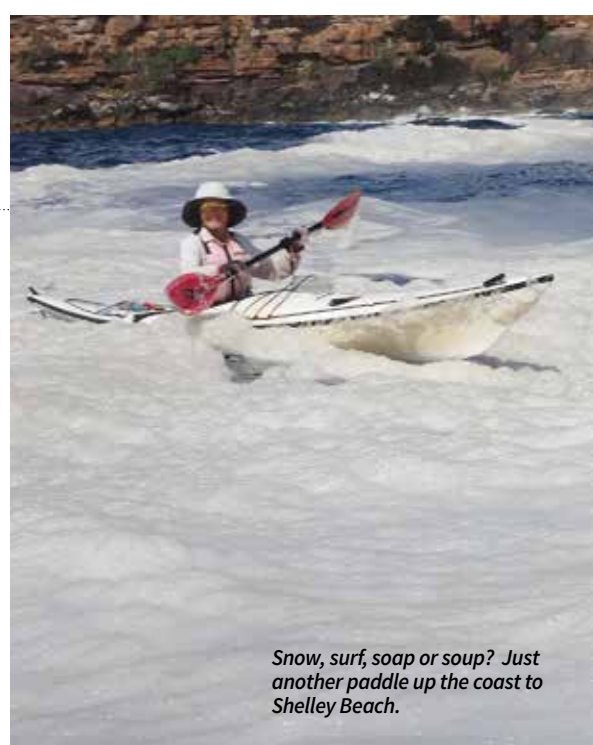
I intend to run an after work Lake Burley Griffin trip when I can, depending on interest. If you live nearby or just visiting, please contact me for a paddle.

Josh Andrews
josh.andrews@defence.gov.au



Sullivans Creek leading up to the Australian National University.

But ok to put kayaks in.



Snow, surf, soap or soup? Just another paddle up the coast to Shelley Beach.

Hans flying his Aussie flag.



Praying to Mecca or a back massage? Cecilia attends to Brian's rear end needs.



Fernando and David stress-testing a paddle. Two wrong ends don't make a right.



Alison sea trialing the Club's new self-righting system.

*Pebbly beach – See Corsica Sea
Kayaking Trip on page 28.*

