

# Salt

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB  
ISSUE 99 | DECEMBER 2015



**RnR 2016  
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## ALSO INSIDE

- ✓ Part II Beach Systems
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**Hawkesbury Canoe Classic Results and Pictures**



Front Cover: The start of the Hawkesbury River Canoe Classic on Saturday 24 October 2015. Picture taken from a drone by Craig Arthurson of Forster and printed here with his permission.

This Page: Club members Anne and Bob Cumming did a four day kayak trip in Botswana's Okavango Delta, one of the world's great safari destinations. The main dangers were hippos and crocodiles but the many elephants also added to the adventure, especially when the elephants decided to cross the river. They did the trip in 2012 with Kayaktive Adventure Safaris.

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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](http://www.nswseakayaker.asn.au)

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**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

One of the most rewarding aspects of sea kayaking, from my perspective, is the community it engenders. I have referred in previous pieces to this brilliant aspect of our own club but was fortunate a couple of months ago to be able to join the Bay Area Sea Kayakers, BASK, from San Francisco at their Rock n Roll equivalent which is an extended weekend of sea cave, coastal and pourover paddling. They hold the event at the same venue each year, based at a National Parks camping area at Mendocino, some 150 miles north of San Francisco. Mendocino sports an amazing coastline, riddled with complex caves and tunnels and with a series of rocky outcrops and platforms breaking up the incoming swell and providing endless options for rock gardening.

There were a lot of features in common with our RnR event with similar numbers and an on shore focus on catching up with old friends. The atmosphere was more informal than our RnR with no organised presentations but cocktails with a kayaking theme mixed by a group of members one night and a 'pot luck' where everyone brings food to share provided great opportunities to mingle. Given the schizophrenic attitude to helmets on our club paddles (more often in the hatch than protecting the head as is recommended by the Club) it was interesting to see them universally in use. Although the water is cold, a few hardy souls in wetsuits but the majority in drysuits, there was no shortage of combats rolls, bailouts and rescues as paddlers pushed, and found, their limits. The major downside for me is that I am now convinced I need another boat – plastic and short to support this close contact with rock. I have also

added a few decent scratches to my non-plastic vessel as a result of this new-found enthusiasm. In summary they were a very friendly bunch and I owe considerable return hospitality to my host Dan who provided transport, advice and accommodation and to Bill, a very active west coast sea instructor who lent me a boat and paddle to bang on the rocks – favours which I will hopefully have an opportunity to repay down under at some stage.

On the local stage Adrian and Stuart have continued their assault on training at all levels in the club and Vice President Tony Murphy is continuing his predecessor's commitment to contacting new members and helping them find their way to active participation in Club activities including the coordination of new members' paddles. If you have recently joined us and need assistance with getting involved in club activities, please contact Tony on [vicepresident@nswseakayaker.asn.au](mailto:vicepresident@nswseakayaker.asn.au) or any of the other committee members. And if you are a long suffering member and have an idea for a paddle that you would like listed and run, please me or a trip leader that you know of in your paddling area and hassle us to list the trip.

Please renew your Club membership before it expires at the end of December and register early for Rock n Roll. Organisation for the 2016 Rock n Roll at Jimmys Beach is well underway for the weekend of 11-14 March. The registration option will now be active on the Club website. Please register early to assist the RnR coordinator,

Dave Linco, who will be away paddling in the month immediately before the event and needs to get as much of the organisation as possible completed in early January.

Whether you are a crusty long term member or a new convert to sea kayaking, RnR is a great opportunity to develop or renew your paddling network. Block out the dates in your diary now and I look forward to catching up on the weekend.

New members who have paid their first membership in the last three months of 2015 do not need to pay again for 2016. Contact a committee member to sort out next years' membership out if you are a recent new member.

For those of you considering a northern Queensland trip, very experienced Cairns based paddler Tim Trehearn has published a detailed guide to camping and paddling options titled 'gone for shore'. Copies of this 100 page soft cover book are available directly from Tim. I can provide his email to anyone interested and the facebookers amongst you can find details by searching for 'goneforshore' on facebook. The area is on my agenda for an extended trip and my copy of the book will be an invaluable aid in the planning process.

See you on the water.



*Campbell relishing a 'pourover' paddle at Mendocino, some 150 miles north of San Francisco*



## From the Editor's Desk

STEVE HITCHCOCK

Belonging to this club has many attributes; paddling in beautiful environments away from the maddening crowds, establishing many friendships, health and fitness benefits, plus personal challenges. Our small membership fee provides so much enjoyment. So I've had no qualms about giving something back to the club through this editing role. Indeed, it's been my pleasure to turn your moments of kayaking pleasure into everlasting memories through our club magazine. I too urge you to give something back, such as joining new member paddles and volunteering to help at RnR2016.

Highlights in this edition start on the front cover. I'm pleased to publish what I think is the first drone photo in Salt, being the start of the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic in October. Many thanks to Craig Arthurson of Forster for supplying his pictures. We have 10 submissions this year including paddlers and landcrew, their epic stories and impressive results are set out within.

The private trips of our members continue to amaze me. Lisa McCarthy and Mark Dabbs have paddled Greenland, Coco Islands, Corsica, New Zealand and of course around Sydney; and that's

just this calendar year, writing up each one for Salt. Thanks Lisa and Mark!

On a practical note, I know many members appreciate the technical and personal pieces that appear in the magazine, and in this edition we have excellent contributions from Adrian, Caoimhin, Cathy, Darren, Stuart, Hans and Ruby. These are all scrutinised carefully by club experts before publication.

So thanks to all who have provided material for this issue. To the many others, Salt 100 is just around the corner. You'll need to get in quickly over summer to ensure your submission makes it into this milestone edition!

And finally a special thanks to Ruby Gamble who turns the stories you submit into the professional artwork before your eyes. Please show your appreciation to Ruby and all committee members, when you're enjoying the fruits of their (unpaid) labour.

## Saltiest submission **WINNER**

I'm pleased to announce the winner of the 'Saltiest Article' from Salt #98 was one of my most regular contributors and health fanatic, Cathy Nolan.

In her last article, Cathy implored us to stay hydrated before, during and after our paddle sessions. In Rob's words, "I really think the issue of hydration needs to be regularly covered and Cathy's article is very clear and easy to understand, so we vote Cathy's article as the winner."

Pictured is Cathy modelling her prize from Mark, in a somewhat hurried selfie, which shows more



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of Mark and his allegiance to a certain sponsor, than to Cathy's prize being an NRS H2Core shirt. For anyone looking to buy Cathy a Christmas gift, a selfie stick springs to mind.

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

[www.expeditionkayaks.com](http://www.expeditionkayaks.com)

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# Training Coordinator Report 2015

STUART TRUEMAN

The training calendar has been busy with a good variety of sessions. We are continuing to provide Sea Skills training as a priority based on the responses from club members on what training was required. We also put on a few trips last year and this year to give members the opportunity to be assessed as Sea Guides. This successful program resulted in four new NSWSKC Sea Guides.

This year and next the focus will be on the AC Instructor Award. Much of the training provided will be attended and run by those working towards the AC Sea Instructor award. As part of the re-vitalisation of the NSWSKC instructor base we are hoping to give Flat Water Instructors the chance to work towards the new AC award of 'Enclosed Sea Instructor' Award in 2016.

As a club we are required to audit our members with Sea Leader, Sea Guide and Instructor Awards. An email was sent out requesting evidence that your award is still current and you have a valid First

Aid Certificate. The response was less than overwhelming. Note that without proof that your awards are current, they will be considered to be no longer valid within NSWSKC.

## Thoughts from an assessor

I have been assessing Sea Skills for long enough to see trends. When I started assessing groups the main difficulty was the roll. Manoeuvring the kayak forward, backwards, round and sideways was generally done with confidence, although technique can always be worked on. The roll however was dreaded, and a stumbling block for many trying to gain Sea Skills.

The 'Re-enter and Roll' was regarded as a circus trick to be marvelled at from a distance and not a real consideration.

Now many being assessed for Sea Skills turn up with a good roll and workable 're-enter and roll'. However the focus having been on these manoeuvres may have been at the expense of other strokes.



## How do you know if I'm talking about you, and what can you do about it?

Check out the terrific 'Basic Skills Training Resources' on the web site. It has video footage covering all the basic strokes and what they should achieve. Get someone to film you, then compare your stroke with the video. It will give you some idea what an assessor is looking at and what they expect.

Practice your 'off side'. I used to have 'Left Days' I would only turn using left arm, brace on the left, roll on the left and hold a beer in the left hand. I still favour my right side in the surf and so make myself use the left when practicing.

Don't just practice in calm conditions. When you are paddling with others on a 'bouncy' day make use of the safety net they provide and work on a few different strokes, gain confidence in dynamic water. Not much point a sea kayaker having a sweep stroke that only works on flat water.

In closing, I would like to congratulate those who gained AC awards for Sea Skills over the past few months: David Linco, Steve Hitchcock, and Andrew Hunt.

## Salt #100

March 2016 will mark the 100th edition of the magazine. We have some ideas to help mark the special occasion, but need your help. Between now and Australia Day, please email the editor with your short answers to:

"What my club magazine means to me..."

G'day Steve  
Regarding sponsorship, the magazine is looking great and although only a small readership it is nice to be associated with it, so we will be glad to continue.

Cheers,  
Rob

Hi Steve & Ruby  
I am very impressed by the high quality of the magazine, it is a credit to the hard work of those who produce it.

Regards,  
Bill Thompson



DAVID LINCO



# Rock 'n' Roll 2016

**Friday 11 March to Monday 14 March (4 days/3 nights)**

## Member Registration

David Linco will be away in February so would appreciate member registrations for RnR to be predominantly completed in December 2015 and January 2016. If you have not already registered, please do so without delay at the club website.

## Interstate and Overseas Registration

If you are from interstate or overseas and wish to attend, there will be a \$10 additional cost to register for temporary membership before you can register for the weekend. Please join as an Interstate Reciprocal Member first, and then register for the RnR 2016 event as normal.

Any registration assistance should be directed to our Internet Co-Coordinator at [internet2012-13@nswseakayaker.asn.au](mailto:internet2012-13@nswseakayaker.asn.au)

Imagine a slice of the stunning coastline within reach of offshore islands, 50km of dazzling white beaches, vast sand dunes and rugged headlands. Not to mention the tranquil wilderness of nearby lakes joined by river ways to a pristine bay. Sounds like another RnR event?

On the second weekend of March being Friday 11 to Monday 14 March 2016, we are heading to North Coast Holiday Park at Jimmy's Beach. Located in Hawks Nest, Port Stephens the park is only three hours north of Sydney. Speak to Susan or Michael at the Holiday Park at Jimmy's Beach on 02 4997 0466 to book your cabin or campsite accommodation and

mention the Club to obtain your accommodation discount and late checkout on Monday.

Our theme for RnR remains to "Get Connected" and we look forward to helping you build new and strengthen old paddling friendships to keep you on the water throughout the year. The weekend kicks off with the Expedition Kayaks' Beer & Pizza from 5pm on Friday evening and continues through to Sunday evening with the Pogies (start preparing your kayak video submissions) and Naked Paddler (incidents throughout the year) segment with people departing on Monday.

Be sure to block out the full

weekend from Friday 11 through Saturday and Sunday evenings to Monday 14 March 2016 to ensure you capture the full range of activities and entertainment.

Jimmy's Beach is a favorite for many members, not only for the range of paddling options but also the very short beach portage. The core elements of the RnR formula will remain unchanged being to provide members with a full weekend of kayaking trips, training options and plenty of time for connecting and telling tall stories. New members will benefit significantly from the weekend in terms of gaining basic skills and linking up with paddling buddies to ensure regular trip options are

available throughout the year.

In the spirit of training, a new segment alongside the Pogies will be introduced next year on Sunday night titled "Naked Paddler" where we will spend time on "incidents" over the last 12 months. I look forward to hearing first-hand about helicopter rides, rock gardening anguish and surf dumping in order to improve our awareness of paddling safety. Make sure you stay on for Sunday night for lots of laughs and get involved to win some great prizes, including several first aid kits.

I am pleased to announce our 2016 keynote speaker will be Huw Kingston who has a great passion for the outdoors. Huw has spent over 30 years completing expeditions involving walking, kayaking, rowing and cycling in Australia and overseas and will be sure to entertain at the Saturday night dinner at Hawks Nest Golf Club which is within walking distance. We have limited seating

capacity of only 180 people at the Golf Club, so please register without delay to avoid missing out.

We aim to keep the costs of the weekend low and this would not be possible without the help of business partners. As at the time of writing this article, I would like to thank Mark, Rob & Sharon from Expedition Kayaks for their ongoing support of RnR since 2007 and once again for 2016. Our business partners allow us to raise funds through raffle sales, which ensure the weekend remains cost neutral.

Your involvement as a volunteer in making the weekend a success next will also be invaluable as the event is fully run by volunteers. More hands make light work, so if you are not leading a trip, please consider putting up your hand for a few hours for any of the following roles;

- Hospitality & BBQ Shopping – pre RnR
- Member Registration Packs – pre RnR

- Electrical Load Manager (sparkie) – Friday and/or Saturday
- Registration Desk – Friday pm & Saturday am
- Marquee Setup & Pack up Team – Friday am & Monday am
- Hospitality Team – Saturday am & Sunday am
- Beach Marshall – Saturday am & Sunday am
- Fundraising BBQ Team – Saturday pm
- Raffle & Surplus Product Sales – Saturday pm & Sunday pm
- Sat Night Dinner Co-Ordinator – Saturday pm
- Audio Visual Setup & Pack up Team – Sunday pm

Email me at [rn timer@nswseakayaker.asn.au](mailto:rn timer@nswseakayaker.asn.au) if you can assist in any of the above teams and if you don't see a role that fits your particular skillset, we can create one just for you.

I look forward to catching up with you at Jimmy's Beach.



HUW KINGSTON

On 26 April 2014 Huw and his kayak Miss Grape kayaked away from Gallipoli to begin a 12-month journey circumnavigating the Mediterranean. Ultimately mediterrannée would pass through 17 countries and cover 14,000km before Huw returned to Gallipoli 363 days later; two days before the Anzac Centenary. A human powered journey that was touched

by the power of human kindness throughout, Huw travelled by sea kayak, foot, and bike before finding himself facing backwards in Mr Hops, an ocean rowboat, for a couple of months from Tunisia, a mode of transport unplanned at the start of the journey. Miss Grape was Huw's companion for five months of the journey.

As a NSWSKC member, Huw founded the Coffee Cruisers back

in the mists of time. This group was renowned for terrorising holidaymakers along the South Coast of NSW in the search for caffeine, camps and massages. The Cruisers were a backlash against the mythical NSWSKC Bruisers, a supposedly hardcore 'pod' of crusty, smelly kayakers. In time, as the Bruisers aged and fell apart in internecine beach wars, many pledged alliance to the Cruisers.





## 39th Hawkesbury Canoe Classic 24-25 October 2015



### John Duffy

I found it a bit tougher than usual and the incoming tide and wind at the 6pm start obviously had something to do with that as I figured I paid for it later. I was extremely tired for the last hour and no amount of music, singing or shouting to myself was going

to change that. I even made the rookie mistake of going wide on the turn between N and O thinking the river turned the other way. In previous years I have chuckled at the inexperience of beginners who take that wrong line. It wasn't until I could smell the finish line at Bar Point that the tiredness lifted and I faked a burst of energy for the benefit of the crowd. I committed last year to take this year's event slightly less seriously and that made the whole experience more fun.

Highlights were as usual "meeting" lots of paddlers on the river plus the moon, which was a welcome addition this year. And of course just doing the HCC is a buzz that non-paddlers just don't quite understand. Lowlights? Just so bloody tired, but I'll be back for #15.



### Tony Murphy

An Avocet RM is not the first boat you'd think of for the Hawkesbury. But with time running out and no luck sorting out the seating in my Mirage, I decided I'd have to paddle the boat that I could sit in.

The Brooklyn or Bust (BoB) group was pretty large (60 kayaks), and when the starters horn sounded they all took off at a furious pace while I looked around feeling a bit shell-shocked. Pretty soon I was dead last, but oh well it's not a race and I just got on with paddling. There was about an hour and a half of ebb tide to play with, so I wanted to make the best of it. After two hours I'd done 17km and wasn't feeling too bad. I passed a few skis in my little plastic Avocet and had a little bit of a giggle. By then the tide had turned so I started working hard on finding eddies, and managed pretty well. Got to Sackville in 3:53, which was about 20 minutes ahead of my schedule...maybe my schedule wasn't right?

The tide was now in full flood, so I wasn't in too much of a hurry to get back on the water. But Karen gave me dry clothes and soup, restocked my boat with food and water and pushed me out into the river again in 20 minutes. Now I'm 40 minutes





ahead of schedule - guess I better get on with it! For most of the next sector to Wiseman's I was running the numbers in my head and kept concluding that my schedule of 3:45 was never going to happen! Still the flood passed before too long and I got to an OK speed, and then the ebb really got going and I started to fly! Happily made it to Wiseman's in 3:55.

Karen and Matt were there this time – gave me another change of clothes and some solid food. Don from the Lane Cove club gave me a great back massage, then time to get at it again. The ebb was still belting along and so was I. Made it to Low Tide Pit Stop in two hours and I was pretty chuffed. I was starting to slow down, but didn't really feel the tide against me till Sackville. I had a quick food stop on the water and my GPS trace showed me going backwards about 300m – not really what you want! From there it was quite a struggle. The moon had finally left us, though there was still enough starlight to see, and there was some really spectacular phosphorescence. I was fading though, and having yawning fits that had my eyes closed and head hanging back for a minute at a time. When I'd look

up again I'd drifted a long way off line (more Z's on my GPS record) and wasn't really sure which way I should be heading. The GPS trace gave me two options ... only one of which was correct! Well I got through that three or four times without any mishaps, and I started to spark up as some light appeared about Bar Point. I needed my wits about me there as the tide kicked me wildly sideways and my speed dipped below 4kph. Well, just gotta slug it out now.

Through Milson's Passage and I could see the lights of Peat's Ferry Bridge. Wasn't quite sure where to look for the finish, but it appeared of its own accord soon enough. Finished! The last 11km from Spencer had taken me 2½ hours, so I was very glad to call it a day. 5:34 from Wiseman's and 14:07 all up. But I felt pretty good –and still good the next day, which amazed me. Reckon I'll be back ... with a faster boat and a rudder next time.



### Ruby Gamble

It's a lonely race when you start early and paddle fast. I passed most of the Brooklyn or Bust crew by Sackville and was mostly on my own for the remaining 70km of the race.

I had a good ride from my start at 4.15pm, but a strong headwind ensured I didn't do as good a time as I had planned. Just metres short of Sackville (literally), I fell out of my kayak when a Maritime boat created wash just as I hit the strong eddy on the Sackville corner. A stronger than expected flood tide made sure I had a slow run from Sackville to Checkpoint H, then I cruised all the way from there to Checkpoint P (just before Bar Point) at 11-12 km/hr.

I kept stops at both Sackville and Wisemans to five minutes each, but had to stop five minutes at Low Tide Pit Stop as I was falling asleep. Someone held my boat quietly in the dark and the mud while I closed my eyes for a minute and had some food. I slowed down over the last 5km as the tide turned, but had made up enough time to arrive on target at 3am, finishing in 10 hours 48 minutes and within an hour of the record. I was the fastest single female paddler on the night, and may have been seen doing a fist pump at Mooney Mooney!

*Opposite top left: NSWSKC Happy Participants and Crew – before they started, photo by editor Below: "That's it, I'm never paddling again" said Tony Murphy, photo by Karen Darby*





### Mark Sundin

The start was somehow even more furious than other years, and despite having the experience to know that I shouldn't be chasing the K2 down the river, I couldn't resist and whistled through the first 10km of slack water in under an hour. The tide then turned and by the time the sun set, I was down to 7.8kmh and seriously contemplating pulling the pin at Sackville, the 30km checkpoint. It just seemed too early in the tide cycle to be going so slow, and I surmised that maybe spending the Thursday night before the race enthusiastically catching up with my old Randwick mates until 3am was biting me on the bum. Whilst I usually whizz past the Sackville stop, a little smug that I don't have to stop there, this year I pulled in, disconnected my knot of goo and drinking tubes, and stood in the mud. I stretched my legs, my back, looked around at everyone welcoming their paddlers ashore full of smiles and cheers, and decided to truck on after two minutes feeling very sorry for myself.

Inevitably in this race, if you can just tough it out, the tide turns and you start to feel better as the resistance on your stroke eases and the GPS

lurches into double figures. For me this was about an hour from my planned stop at Wiseman's Ferry, so by the time I skidded onto the astro turf lining the boat ramp I was feeling pretty cheery. A quick stretch, beanie on, and after a seven minute rest I had the balletic and quite wet David Little for company as we both chugged out of the lights and headed for home.

By now the tide was really humming and I was clipping it along, bang in the middle of the river, lining up the turns easily in the glow of a very bright moon, probably as perfect a set of conditions you could ever hope to paddle in this race. I caught Rodrigo after an hour & gave him a wash riding tutorial on the go, which he took on board, slipped his Taran onto my wash and hung around with me for a good hour chatting away in his South American lilt. He went on to do 11.30 in his first Classic, not bad for a guy who can really hang one in a mean sea, and only started paddling a year ago.

Just at the point I was starting to fatigue, a big old OC6 loomed behind me, and I took my chance to glide onto their slipstream and hitch a good thirty minutes up the line as they powered through the night. Six man paddling does look like fun, gotta give it a whirl one day...!

As the last big turn loomed, the head tide returned with a punch, however the bright night made it a little easier to get out of the full flow and catch a few eddies going my way. The last bit of the race has been a painful one over the years, but Saturday night with no goal time I just took it all in, alone for once and

enjoying the spectacular light show in the water from the bioluminescent algae that lit up the blackwater. Paddling real hard over the last 3km I was going just 7.6kmh in a ski well capable of going 13kmh, so the poor buggers behind me must have had a very hard run home.

I crossed the line in 10hrs 43mins, some 16 minutes outside my best time in last year's race, but last year I had a lot of training under my belt, in a boat that is probably a little bit faster, in an easier tidal year (this year I had 4hrs 30min with the tide, last year 5hrs 30mins). Even though it wasn't my fastest, I reckon it was the best I've ever paddled in a Classic. It just goes to show how silly it is to compare one Classic to the next if you're looking for a good time. We might get better, fitter, or worse, but no river is ever the same twice, right?

*Top left: Mark Sundin with mum Suzanne, photo by editor; Below: Neil Duffy and daughter landcrew Megan, photo by editor*





### Colin Melrose

This was my second HCC. I came back this year with my trusty plastic Boreal P200 with the goal of finishing, being able to walk and go a little quicker than the first attempt. Oh, and to enjoy the ride as well.

In the months leading up to the big night a combination of too much work, family needs and problems finding a landcrew meant I did not finally commit to the event till mid-September. I managed a 25+km paddle in early October then headed off to China for an 8-day business trip returning three days before the start. Hardly ideal preparation.

So it was with some trepidation I lined up at 4:00 pm for the start. The first half of the leg to Sackville went by pretty quick and I was happy with my progress. However when the tide turned, the 20km progress slowed considerably. I narrowly avoided getting wet while waiting for the Sackville Ferry. Two young guys with no plan to stop for the ferry ran into me from behind, turning my boat 90 degrees across the path of a second boat which rode up and almost right across my foredeck. A narrow escape, which got the adrenalin pumping.

Around the corner at Sackville, Junya, my landcrew had everything organised so after a 30 minute stop for food and to check my rudder, it was back in the boat and onwards, still into the flood tide.

Checkpoints E, F and G went by

without incident and then the tide started to ebb making for a quick trip into Wisemans. By this stage problems with my right shoulder were messing with my enjoyment of the moment. However a couple of neurofen, some hot food and a quick visit to the physio tent soon had me back in the boat, albeit at the cost of nearly an hour which I hadn't planned on.

From Wisemans the plan was to go all out and use as much of the ebb tide as I could. That worked for a while but then it turned again so it was back to hugging the banks, trying to pick up the eddies and nursing my sore shoulder as best I could. With the tide flooding again it became mind over matter.

Despite that it was a beautiful night. An almost full moon made the navigation easy and contributed to the scenery, warm water, fish jumping, pleasantly cool air temperature, small patches of sea mist, light winds and calm water. When the sun came out I was well past the Low Tide Pit Stop and making for Milsons Passage.

The tide turned again as I entered Milsons Passage around 0750

making for a great ride through to the finish. 9+ km/hr across the last 2-3 kms to the finish line was the fastest I went for the whole event.

A moving average of 6.8 km/hr and overall average of 5.9 km/hr resulted in a 16hr 58 minute time, slower than last year by almost an hour however I finished and was able to walk. Two out of three isn't bad in my book. Five days later and the shoulder is feeling good, no damage and I have recovered well everywhere else.

And next year? I will be back. It's in the diary and there is a plan; more training (at least two months), book a massage for the day before the race and a physio appointment for the Monday afterward. See you there!



*Above: John Hutchinson with partner and landcrew Michelle, photo by editor Below: The finish line on Sunday morning. Photo printed with permission from Craig Arthurson*





*Left: Rodrigo Matamala with landcrew Lambrini and Mark Hempel with landcrew Bohan, photo by editor*



*Right: The price of a good landcrew. Bohan getting amidst highway central for the perfect shot of Mark at Cattai, photo by David Linco*

### David Linco

This was a far cry from my paddling intention to smash the sub 12hr mark in this year's Hawkesbury Classic. My preparation had been going well until Friday afternoon; my boat was loaded, nutrition prepared but with a growing itching sensation in my eye. Next morning after an early GP visit, I knew my hopes for a personal best were dashed.

With my designer eye patch in place, I drove out to Windsor on Saturday morning for lunch duty but still with my landcrew & father in law Ron in tow, just in case my luck changed. I joined Mark (Blowfly) Hempel and Rodrigo (Bubba) Matamala and their landcrew Bohan (B1) & Lambrini (B2) to set up and prepare. B1 & B2 were busy helping boat setup and paddler comfort, so I set up the marquees and fired up the BBQ to keep the troops nourished. Having now resigned to not paddling this year and given that B1 and B2 were new landcrew (as was I?), I decided to join them through the night becoming Landcrew for Landcrew (L4L).

Once Blowie and Bubba had raced off, our next stop was Cattai for an encouraging wave. B1 led the vehicle convoy followed by B2 and L4L close behind. At Cattai, we proceeded down a steep descent onto a sandy beach about 200m before the official checkpoint. It was still early so we enjoyed the cool water and practised shouting and dance moves to the many passing paddlers and blaring kayak music. B1 was keen to capture the perfect fly by shot so stripped off to capture

### Mark Hempel

Three was a recurring theme this year for my Hawkesbury Canoe Classic campaign:

- > It was to be my 3rd time to compete in the event.
- > It was to be the 3rd time I raced in a different class in a different boat.
- > It was the 3rd time I have had a new landcrew assist me, hopefully this time they do not miss my finish for the third time too!

I also had a secret goal to finish in the 3rd hour of the new day!

Even though I was to compete for the 3rd time there was still quite a lot of "new-ness" about this attempt and I was really excited, looking forward to it.

My sea kayak, a Rockpool TARAN 18' was to be my ride. I had been paddling this boat for six months and was still in many ways adjusting to it.

Given that I could leave home and be on the water under Silverwater Bridge (on the Parramatta River) within 5 minutes, this would be the place for my intensive training. The 20km return trip from Silverwater Bridge to Gladesville Bridge was an early morning Sunday ritual extending from the cold months of

winter through to October.

Come race day I was completely happy with all aspects of my preparation. In a way all to be done now was the easy bit, paddle 100km as quick as I can!

The gun fired at 5pm to start the MRec Vet40+ category, one crazy guy took off as if the finish was at Windsor bridge! (He ended with a 9:40ish time) Myself an SLR-1 and a Flash formed the top four of our start and we stayed together until Sackville. We all knew what the tides were going to do between Sackville and Wisemans so it was important to get a wash ride to ease the agony. I arrived at Wisemans on track for my sub 11hr goal. Leaving Wisemans I was held at the Webb's Creek ferry, this was to be a blessing. A ski pulled up. I wash rode this guy on a Think Uno Max racing ski from there to well past the Spencer check point. He was really tough to hold, and he pulled away with two checkpoints to go. I just snuck through the Pass as the tide went slack and scored another ride off a passing double to the finish line. I set a new PB of 10hrs 21min 03sec, in the 3rd hour of the new day.

I am happy it is over for another year.



the moment snapping off some beauties as the paddlers raced by. B2 refrained from such behaviour and instead encouraged B1 to remain in the paddling danger zone long enough for Bubba who was not far behind.

Anticipating shuttle delays to Sackville beach we decided to set up early. The road was very well signposted. The race plan for Sackville was a re-fuelling stop for Blowfly and a fly by for Bubba. My suggestion of a new improved mix of cider infused nutrition mix was frowned upon.

With Blowie in sight, B1 leapt towards the beach providing an overall changeover under three minutes before pushing him out to "get back to work". Bubba was not far behind and clearly recognisable in the quickly fading light with the high angle stroke and strong cadence. B2 was on her feet, cheering him on and ready for an unplanned pit stop. His only words as he flew by were "When did he go by?". We were left pondering the meaning of this question though anyone who knows Bubba knew it was in reference to his paddling nemesis, Blowfly.

Being overly diligent and highly committed we decided to proceed straight to Wisemans.

The Dragon Team featuring Annie and Sue arrived in record time and as the ladies stepped out, Owen & Colin demonstrated years of landcrew skill with a precision changeover. They even posed for some happy snaps before setting off again. Blowie pulled up shortly thereafter for re-fuelling and GPS problems. Whilst B1 did the fuelling, I was handed the GPS to fix (given it was mine). After some fiddling around and more luck than anything, the unit was re-set and handed back with B1 pushing his paddler out with "No time for Chit-Chat, get back to work".

By this time, B2 was ready for her time to shine. After observing the challenges at the last two stops, she was down at water's edge reserving a landing spot for her paddler with gear bag over her shoulder. Bubba was sighted approaching fast and the cheering began, Bubba passed by and disappeared into the darkness, without stopping. B2 was left pondering the meaning of landcrew with the only comment from Bubba being "Meet at End and When did he pass?" We decided to push on.

The Wisemans to Brooklyn leg of the paddle can be tough. Not only is the paddler tired, but it gets lonely with very long stretches between other paddlers. The drive from Wisemans to Brooklyn is just as bad. Being tired, sleepy and still a good 6-8 hrs before a much-welcomed bed, the long & windy roads seem to never end. In truth, the alternate route via Pennant Hills would be much more comfortable.

With Blowie sighted, we were energised from our slumber and rushed to help him exit his boat after untangling his water lines. After getting him seated in a comfortable camp chair, the crew washed down the boat, packed away wet gear, loaded the boat and shoved him a bacon egg roll and strong coffee. 20 minutes later, he returned to humanity and the war stories began.

With Bubba's pending arrival and completion of his first HCC, B2 was awoken and once again on standby to greet her paddler. After 11 hrs of paddling, the high angle forward stroke remained true and cadence strong. Bubba paddled in with a beaming smile and was warmly embraced whilst B1 and L4L completed the pack down routine.

The landcrew role is certainly challenging and left me wondering which is the tougher deal. Having a group to travel with however makes it much easier. I for one, plan to be back on the water next year and aiming for a personal best.



**Ian Vaile**

Was that really my right rudder pedal breaking off? Here? Four kilometres upstream from Low Tide Pit Stop, with another twenty to go after that?

Yep, the pedal has definitely gone. After over seventy kilometres, tired, aching, full of self-pity, I have to do the remaining twenty-odd km of winding curves, tides, eddy currents and crosswinds, only able to turn one way. Edging a rudderless Mirage after that long in the seat is like turning a church. A long night just got longer.

This was never going to be a personal best time. My eleventh HCC in twelve years, it was the one I felt least prepared for physically and mentally. A complicated and busy year personally and professionally meant my training regime never really got out of its slippers. A few dawn paddles up the Lane Cove River (sometimes in my Dancer, for God's sake!), a single offshore trip of about 45km, some weekend paddles around the harbour and the daily commute and that was about it. Where were the repeated strenuous 40km training paddles of yesteryear? Nevermore.

So it was with heightened trepidation that I lowered my older-than-ever backside into the boat on Saturday afternoon, tended by my

generous landcrew Trine, took up my trusty GP and assumed the position.

Quick out of the blocks again at the start but by 14km I had drifted to the back of the pack from my starting group. Wasn't too fussed this year, I just wanted to finish in good shape and a not too appalling time. I was feeling OK as dusk deepened and found myself at Sackville earlier than I expected. The tides were benevolent until well after Wisemans so I didn't have the demoralising slog too early in the night. I found for once I was actually hungry at Wisemans, usually I feel way too full. Trine fed and watered me as I sat in my boat - damned if I was getting out! I spent a bit longer stationary this year overall, 12 minutes as opposed to seven last year, but I wasn't in a rush.

As I headed out from Wisemans I was paced by double loudly playing awful sixties pop (What's new, pussycat, wo-a-wo-a-wo-wo) and every time I managed to put some distance between us over the next 40km they would catch up when I slowed momentarily to think.

After I busted my pedal that music became the soundtrack to my ordeal, as it slowed me down just enough that I couldn't get away from them. Oh, the inhumanity!

Eventually, after a very uncomfortable twenty kilometres of edging and draw-stroking to the right and ruddering to the left, against a flood tide, I arrived at the nirvana of Mooney Mooney: 12 hour 37 minutes, some 50 minutes slower than my PB but by then I wasn't fussed. Trine and an unknown muscular young man extracted me from the boat and I limped off into the dawn yet again.



*The "Dragon Ladies" Anne Moore and Sue Smith looking eager to start, photo by Owen Walton*

### Anne Moore

This was my 5th HCC. Every year is different and presents new challenges and experiences. This year was the first time the moon made its appearance for a good length of the Classic and was visible at the finish.

I again paddled in the front seat of a SLR2 Long Rec kayak (commonly known as the double dragon) accompanied by a new paddling buddy Sue Smith. It's an excellent kayak for the HCC, very stable and performs well. In fact the quickest kayak this year. We planned to finish the race in around 11 hours to break the current record in the Women's Vet40+ Class for LongREC2.

Having a 4.15pm start meant we had the tide with us for the first 20 kms. What a flying start!!! Of course it doesn't last forever and we then battled into the tide for the next 30 kms. We had a short break at Wisemans that included having the worst coffee I've had for a long time, snapping at the landcrew, photos being taken by David Linco and sickness problems being sorted. We paddled on with the tide while attempting to wash ride another

SLR2 and SLR1 and having a short encounter with a double canoe and the sand bar made sure we stayed awake. Our luck ran out around checkpoint Q and we again battled into the tide for the last few kilometres to the finish.

We finished in 10hrs 29mins and 24 seconds breaking the current record by 45mins and were the first women over the finish line.

### Owen Walton

(Landcrew for Anne and Sue)

This year my good lady wife Anne Moore completed her 5th Hawkesbury Canoe Classic.

Originally she was going to do it in her pure racing K1, but to help her friend Sue Smith have crack at the Classic, she switched to a double. Thanks to our mate Jack Ward who loaned his awesome, "Double Dragon" (the original SLR2); 7.5 metres of clear coated, carbon fibre, purpose built racer, they were set. The girls became known as the "Dragon Ladies".

The next few weeks were spent setting up the boat to suit the girls, getting their hydration/feeding systems sorted out, whilst they went out for a few practice paddles culminating with a successful 50km paddle up the Hunter River. They were ready.

Col (the "Professor") Sheringham and I were again press ganged into the critical role of landcrew. Now we recognise the paddlers have a job to do, but the real intelligent part of the race is the responsibility of said landcrew! (All the paddler has to do is jump into the bloody canoe and paddle the thing.)

We prepared the maps, worked out the tides and timings, tactics, loaded the track into the GPS and mixed up the "rocket fuel". We loaded the boat on the roof, the girls in the back and at 0700 set out for Windsor. Upon arrival we set up the "camp" under the shady trees, got out the comfy



seats and hung the hammock. Whilst the girls lazed about we readied the boat, double checked everything, fitted all the required safety stuff then dragged it off to Scrutineering. With the finalisation of all this, our next role was to walk about the other competitors (looking for any good ideas we could use) but mainly to sledge, tell them all about unfavourable currents, possible storms and lots of other “helpful” stuff.

Mid-afternoon the girls set off to get their hands expertly taped by the qualified Physio staff. Upon their return we reckoned we could improve upon this and proceeded to add more tape. (Eventually at

around Wisemans, Sue had to remove this expert work – I won’t repeat the language she expressed on my work, but I reckon my career as a hand taper is at an end.)

After spending a lot of the afternoon reminding the girls to eat and drink it was time to go. We carried the boat down to the second round of scrutineering, loaded the girls in, gave them some further advice (totally unwelcomed) then set them off. At 4.15pm they took off, sprinting under the Windsor Bridge with the ultimate goal of arriving at the finish by 3.25am Sun, hopefully eclipsing their Class Record (Ladies Veteran 40+ Long Rec 2) of 11H 11m 28s.

We packed up and headed for their next and only planned stop at Wisemans. (This was a cunning planned strategy to “disincentivise” them from stopping for a bludge at Sackville.) We unpacked at Wisemans, set up all their re-fuelling, feeding and warm clothing stuff beside the pre-arranged spot near the boat ramp, then set off for a serious attempt on the bacon and egg roll consuming record.

Eventually we got the word that the girls had reached the Checkpoint about 11Km before Wisemans;

they were well ahead of schedule, despite battling through the run-in tide. They arrived, got out, (Anne was snappy, which is a good thing as it showed she was very serious) toileted and added some clothing. Meanwhile, we cleaned up the boat, re-fuelled their hydration systems and within 10 minutes they were gone, going at a good pace to try and get down the River as far as they could before the tide turned against them again. We packed up and headed for the finish near Brooklyn.

We got a great park near the finish ramp, then set off to continue our feeding quest with chicken burgers, before resuming with the bacon and eggs. We watched all of the quicker (male) finishers, then some 10H 29m and 24 seconds after starting, the big, black boat emerged from the night and crossed the finish line. The girls were smiling, we were cheering and their record was smashed!

If you can’t paddle this epic event, but still want to be actively involved, I thoroughly recommend you try landcrewing for a fellow paddler. It might not be as fulfilling as competing, but is still very satisfying. I’ll be back next year.

Paddler Name	No	Start	Class	Kayak	Landcrew	Time
Tony Murphy	234	4:00	BoB	Yellow Avocet RM	Karen Darby	14:07:23
Neil Duffy	245	4:00	BoB	Flame Red Tiderace	Megan (daughter)	13:29:58
Ian Vaile	152	5:00	MV 50+ LRec1	Green/White Mirage 580	Trine Beaumont	12:07:14
Mark Hempel	215	5:00	MV 40+ MRec	Red/White Rockpool Taran 18'	Bohan Johnstone	10:21:03
Martin Vanderpoel & Glen Boulton	210	5:00	40+ LRec 2	Battleship grey M730		13:04:47
Colin Melrose	140	4:00	BoB	Yellow Boreal P200	Junya Kato	16:58:48
Ruby Gamble	164	4:15	LO LRec	Blue Elliot's Renegade	Caoimhin Ardren	10:48:01
Anne Moore & Sue Smith	212	4:15	LV 40+ LRec2	Red/Black Double Dragon	Owen & Col	10:29:24
Mark Sundin	267	5:30	MV40+ ORS1	Evo II	Suzanne	10:43:57
Rodrigo Matamala^	264	5:00	MO MRec	Orange/White Rockpool Taran	Lambrini	11:35:42
John Duffy	101	6:00	MV50+ UN1	Sonic		11:15:48
John Hutchinson	288	4:00	BoB	Black/White Pace 17	Michelle	12:28:10
Eric Filmlter	104	4:00	BoB	Mirage 580	Gary Thompson	13:52:22

^First time paddled



# Magnetic Bilge Switch

DARREN FRIEND

The fact that a bilge pump would be an asset is simply common sense. The fact that it is a requirement for grade 3 boat compliance makes it more than a simple luxury item. It is a necessary attachment if one is remotely serious about paddling.

For me it was on my to do list for a long time, though not being gifted with handyperson skills, it was something that was always pushed to the back of the list. I always thought that either a solution would present itself (somebody would offer to do it for me) or I would upgrade with a boat that came with a pump installed. That day eventually came when TJ offered up his Epic 18X Sport with professionally installed pump. I quickly placed a purchase order with my financial controller and after some pleading, permission to acquire was granted. The boat was in near new condition and as TJ demonstrated with a flick of the

switch, the little pump jumped to life. It is here that the story really begins.

TJ explained that the pump had been professionally fitted by a well-known kayak manufacturer on the central coast. To my eye it all looked great and gleefully loaded up and raced home looking forward to paddling adventures in my new craft. When I got on the water and tried a few simple things such as the cowboy re-entry I found the pumps toggle switch sticking painfully into my upper thigh as I straddled the boat. Soon after I noticed it's protective covering had split, probably from being squashed by my bum. A replacement switch was purchased and installed by self, quite an accomplishment in itself, but after a short time the same problem occurred.

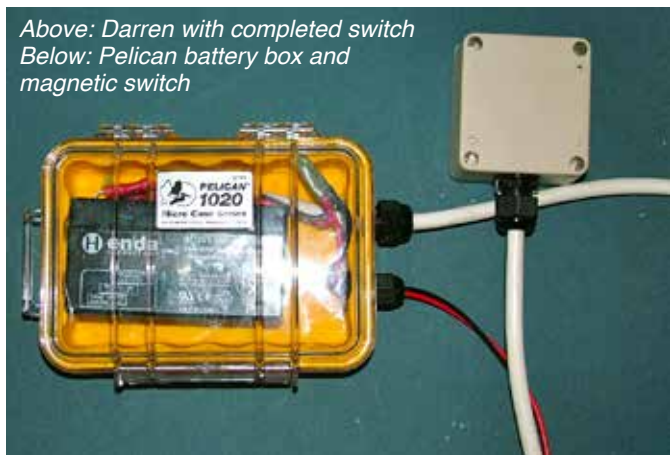
What to do? I consulted Rob Mercer, the wise old sage of the sea. "A magnetic switch is what you need," he said, and went on to list reed switches, circuit boards, soldering points, conduits and other incomprehensible items & activities. It all sounded a bit daunting and the idea of drilling holes in my boat was somewhat nauseating. So my research began. There were some previous articles and posts on the club website and magazine but these too,

were above my technical ability. I broadened my search and went to the virtual teacher of everything, YouTube. There were lots of 'how to build a switch' videos and then I came across a helpful video titled: How to Fit an Electric Bilge Pump "Magnetx" Sea Kayak Mirage 580. This video showed both the how to of pump installation, and featured a pre-built magnetic switch. A short search further and I learnt that the supplier and the manufacturer are both Australian and based in Victoria. The supplier's website gave me the choice to purchase just the magnetic switch, or as a kit, magnetic switch, battery housing with glands installed and pump. I tried the switch as a replacement for my Epic's toggle and found that to be an easy install. Emboldened, I bought the kit and installed a pump in my old plastic skeg boat. The YouTube video had some useful tips on the process and I completed it all without tears. I was intrigued that such a useful bit of kit was being produced cottage industry style here in Australia, so I called the creator, to get his side of the story.

## Neil Brenton's Story

About 10 years ago, I was kayaking one or twice a week - which meant replacing so-called waterproof toggle switches every 3-4 months. I decided to use what I knew from my trade and created a switch unit that can be retro-fitted to any type of kayak; double or single. The unit comes complete with a heavy-duty relay and spare reed switches all in parallel so if one fails, you won't notice. About two hundred units have sold across the world, so the product has had quite a bit of field-testing. I am now in the process of developing lithium batteries for kayakers too!

Above: Darren with completed switch  
Below: Pelican battery box and magnetic switch







electricwater.com.au

# SPRAYDECK COMPETITION

Thanks to those members who submitted their reasons for wanting a free spraydeck. Entries closed on 31 October, and their submissions and photos are below. To avoid any bias, I left the judging to Catherine Gardner-Gaskin from ElectricWater. The Club and I wish to thank Catherine for selecting TWO winners for their free spraydecks, plus donating \$50 vouchers to all THREE runners up towards their next EW custom-made spraydeck.



1st



## BILL THOMPSON

I need a custom-built Electric Water spraydeck because the cockpit of my kayak has been modified to accommodate my large size and now I can't find an "off the shelf" spraydeck that fits. My current spraydeck leaks and comes off the rim. I have written a Limerick to summarise my plight:

A kayaker paddling rough water  
If he has any brains then he oughta  
Wear a spraydeck that fits  
Without leaking bits  
Better choose Electric Water.



1st



## LISA MCCARTHY

I would like to submit an entry for the ElectricWater spraydeck competition please.

"Heaven sent my partner an ElectricWater sprayskirt. He worships it. I have since being praying to Heaven to send me one too, to replace my one from Hell."

## MEGAN PRYKE

From a waltz to a jive  
The seas are alive  
Dancing to the rhythm of the wind  
As a small spec in a great expanse,  
Across the seas my kayak is forced to dance  
I do not have gills  
Though I must be prepared to take a spill  
For I cannot ever be  
A master of those lively seas  
And when occasionally I take a stumble,  
The sea reminds me to be humble  
Because I want to stay a little dry  
Because I want to feel revived  
I am glad to have an ElectricWater.



## BARRY MARSHALL

I may not have the best reason for winning the new ElectricWater spraydeck but I just may have the best reason not to win it. I recently bought a second hand Dagger Coorong sea kayak and not one of my dozen or so spraydecks fit it, although I have modified one to make a rough fit which won't pass muster in the surf. I had been planning to purchase a custom-made ElectricWater spraydeck, so now I'm holding off till after the competition.

[www.electricwater.com.au](http://www.electricwater.com.au)  
[spraydecks@gmail.com](mailto:spraydecks@gmail.com)

0488 ewater / 0488 392 837  
PO Box 424, Dingley Village, Vic 3172

## TOM COX

People love their Reed Chillcheater skirts. They are light, they breathe, dry quickly and shed water well. However, they are susceptible to damage in assisted rescues. I have had my skirt for years, and someone owned it before me. It has seen its fair share of wear and tear. I tried repairing it with bicycle tube patches (no luck) and ShoeGoo (no luck). Eventually I found McNett's Aquaseal, a urethane repair sealant, which has kept my skirt alive for the past couple of years. I think it's time to move on to a new skirt!.





1

*Inspiration and measuring up*



2

*Plans of the skeleton*



3

*The skeleton takes shape*

## Reborn



HANS SCHMIDT

I know that sound of furious paddling behind me. An instant later Rob Mercer shoots past me in his red and white Taren 16, skipping effortlessly over the wave crests. If I had his boat, his skill and his strength...dream on!

I bet I could build a Kayak similar to that though, learn to paddle the skittish thing and improve my

forward stroke. Slowly the idea takes hold. Vague plans to build a faster, better-looking, Stripper finally

take real shape. Since my current Shearwater 17 Hybrid needs a refurbish after nearly four years of constant use, a new kayak is definitely needed.

Weeks later, plans finished, I look around for a source of decent timber strips to form the complicated curves that are possible with modern fibreglass or plastic. The shape of the hull, so critical to the final performance of

the boat, must be exact; plywood is out of the question. Western Red Cedar bends well and releases the temporary hot-melt glue spots used to hold the strips in place while the permanent glue sets. Wondering how many strips it would take to complete the project, I measure around the outside of a similar kayak. Seventy strips six meters long should do it.

I've got an old Cedar beam that long. Light enough to lift overhead with one hand, it's held up many a ceiling during 40 odd years of building projects. A weekend at the saw bench produces 56 strips 18mm wide by 5mm thick, plus violent hay-fever from a Cedar allergy. Some strips are marred by nail holes, but they can be plugged. That gives me an idea what to the name the Kayak: Reborn from old timber.

*Preparing the cockpit*



7

*Building the stern*



8

*Finishing the bow*



9



4

*Gluing the timber strips*



5

*The hull after sanding and oiling*



6

*Glassing the hull*

The work truck is banned from the garage for the duration of the build. In its place a heavy, square steel tube sits on trestles, ready for the 16 temporary stations to which the Cedar strips will be attached. Getting these right will make or break this project; they are like the bones giving our body its shape.

Many hours later the skeleton is ready for its Cedar skin. Great care is needed to cut the floppy five-meter long strips to the right length for a perfect fit between the hardwood bow and stern pieces. One millimetre too short and it's put aside to be used as a shorter strip elsewhere. Each strip is bevelled by varying degree along both edges so it follows the curve of the hull. It soon dawns on me that this boat will require a lot more time, effort and skill than the previous one. After work, after dinner and

on weekends you'll find me in the garage. Interspersed by periods of self-doubt in my ability to pull this off, I live and breathe kayak. Lek, my poor wife, knows that far-away look across the dinner table while I'm problem solving; she's lost me for the duration. By the end of October, after around 500 hours, she'll get me back.

Building a kayak is like creating a work of art; a wooden sculpture. No amount of effort is too much. While shaping a piece of timber, all my cares fade away; nothing else matters. I can't imagine anything else I would rather be doing.

When asked for how much I would sell a boat I've built, words fail me. They are not for sale; talk of money would cheapen the process, the pleasure of creating. Giving a kayak to a special person, on

the other hand, that would feel right. But not before I've had the pleasure of paddling it for a while. It's impossible to convey the feeling of sitting in a kayak I've built. I know this craft; every triumph, every mistake, every part of it. It will always be part of me, but it's not about owning it.

While my father was alive I longed to hear him say, just once, "well done, son, that looks great." I guess he was never praised by his dad; didn't experience that uplifting recognition of achievement. Maybe that's why I keep building, hoping to hear those words from him. All you fathers out there, don't miss the opportunity to praise your son's or daughter's efforts. While compliments from others are okay, nothing means as much as when it's said by you.

*Hans at work*

*Smooth lines of the finished hull*



10



11



*Hans and Lek christening Reborn*

# Elbow Pain in Kayaking

CATHY NOLAN



Elbow pain in kayaking is not uncommon. Repeated loading of the elbow joint by overworking the muscles of the forearm and/or the shoulder can eventually cause wear and tear on the tendons attaching to the bone. If you have ever experienced elbow pain in kayaking, the good news is that in the majority of cases it will resolve but will probably require some changes to your kayaking technique and ongoing exercise management to prevent reoccurrences.

Lateral elbow pain (or tennis elbow) is the most common site of elbow pain. This condition is caused by degeneration in the tendon that anchors the tendon and muscles of the forearm to the outside of the elbow. The degeneration is usually due to repetitive overload of the tendon cells, which causes microscopic tears in the tendon. The repeated tears lead to cell death and replacement by scar tissue. The scar tissue is not able to stand the forces placed on the tendon with repeated loading resulting in pain about the elbow.

The onset of elbow pain is usually 24-72 hours after a day's paddle or in some cases can occur straight away, such as when lifting a heavy kayak. There is localised pain on the outside of the elbow and this increases on touching the elbow joint. There can be a dull ache into the forearm itself and there can be a noticeable loss of grip strength. There is often pain when extending the middle finger of the affected forearm backwards as this activates the muscle tendon most often implicated in lateral elbow pain.

The main causes of lateral elbow pain in kayaking is repeated loading of the elbow joint due to poor paddle technique. This is usually due to a lack of torso rotation during forward stroke and instead using your shoulders with a bent elbow to pull the blade through the water. Other causes of increased load at the elbow is gripping the paddle too hard especially with your wrists bent backwards, which will load the tendon attaching to the outside of the elbow. Other causes can also include a lack of strength in flexibility in the forearm muscles and/or shoulder muscles of the affected arm.

comfortable light grip around your paddle shaft. If you are experiencing elbow pain, then it might be a good time to revisit your forward stroke. As you know we have some excellent instructors in the club to help you with getting the biomechanics right and video clips in the Basic Skill Training Resource section of the website to help revisit the right technique.

Also be mindful when lifting/carrying the kayak by the handles that your wrist is not bent backwards and/or elbow locked as this sustained load can cause a tear in the elbow tendon.

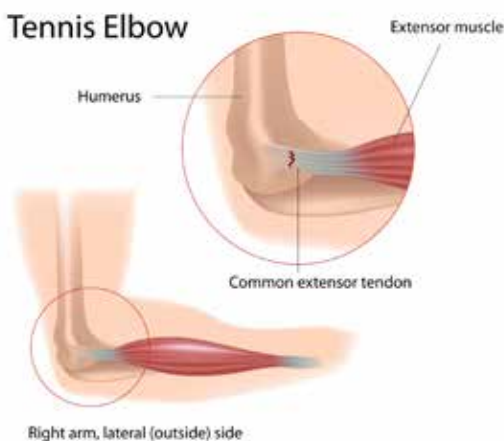
In the meantime, to settle the condition down, here are some of the treatments that can help.

## Short term or acute painful stage

The best treatment approach if you experience acute lateral elbow pain is to stay away from paddling until the pain reaches quite a low level and ice for 15 minutes not more than every two hours.

Other treatments that are also effective and will help you recover quicker are:

- Soft tissue therapy to affected area to release shortened/tight forearm muscles and break down scar tissue around the tendon
- Acupuncture or dry needling can be useful for pain relief and restoring normal muscle length to affected tissue
- Ultrasound (therapeutic) can speed up the healing process and help reduce pain levels
- Stretching tight forearm and/or shoulder muscles



## Treatment

No single treatment has proven to be totally effective in the treatment of lateral elbow pain. Rather there is a suite of treatments for various stages of the condition, which will result in resolving the condition in nearly all cases.

The key preventative for lateral elbow pain in kayaking is a good forward stroke technique and having a



Instructions: Keeping your elbow straight, slowly bend your wrist down using your other hand until you can feel a mild to moderate stretch pain free. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat three times.

### Medium term

Once pain has settled down, it is important to strengthen muscles of the forearm and in some cases shoulder to help prevent further episodes. It is best to seek advice from a physiotherapist or other qualified health professional as to the right type of exercises to specifically address for your needs. However there are some standard forearm exercises that are key in strengthening the extensor muscles in the medium term.



### Concentric strengthening

Place a 500g to 1kg weight in your hand and support your forearm on a table with your hand over the edge. Slowly raise your hand upwards and then slowly lower it back to the start position. Repeat x 10. Build to two sets. This exercise should be pain free or mild pain only. If it aggravates your condition,

the weight is either too much or you are attempting it too early in the rehabilitation process.

### Correct posture

Posture is key to good shoulder and elbow biomechanics. Try this as a posture check. Sit slightly slouched and take your arms forward and up over your head. In this position your shoulders are rotated slightly forward and it is really hard to straighten your elbows. Now sit straight on your sitting bones and spine upright. Now take your arms forward and up over your head. Does it make a difference to your elbow position? It probably feels a lot better and stronger in your shoulders and back. Any repetitive movement in a slouched position is going to place extra load in muscles in tendons around your elbow and shoulder joint, so have a check on your posture in the kayak to minimise this load.

### Graded return to kayaking

Once pain in the elbow has subsided, your grip strength has returned and you are making way with strengthening exercises and forward stroke correction (if needed), then this is the time to try out some paddling. A graded return

to exercise is exactly that. Start with a 30mins to one hour paddle to 'test' out the elbow and make sure symptoms aren't returning. The following day should be a non-paddle day as it can take 24 hours or so for pain to fully appear. If there is no pain, try another paddle a few days later, once again 30 minutes to one hour and if still symptom free, try a slightly longer paddle the following week following the same principals above, until you get back to your regular paddling routine. Pain should be your guide. You should always be pain free as you increase your distance and/or speed. If you develop pain, drop back on the distance/speed and consider some relative rest & ice in the meantime.

There are other causes of elbow pain in kayaking which are less common such as bursitis, nerve entrapment, inflammation with the joint itself and instability of the elbow joint, so if your elbow pain isn't settling, you might need to see a physio or your GP for an assessment and in some cases investigations.

I hope this information helps keep you pain free out on the water!

Happy paddling!

## 2016 National KASK Forum

Friday 26 to Monday 29 February 2016

Cobham Outward Bound School, Anakiwa, Marlborough Sounds, New Zealand

A social, fun weekend with plenty of opportunities to paddle, share ideas and learn, on and off the water. Registration fee is \$180. Kayak hire is available.

Your fee covers accommodation in bunkhouse, Friday night nibbles, Saturday breakfast, lunch, dinner, Sunday breakfast and lunch.

Registration form and queries to Lois Cowan at [loisc@paradise.net.nz](mailto:loisc@paradise.net.nz)

# Beach Systems and their Significance to Sea Kayakers

## Part 2

INSPIRED BY ADRIAN CLAYTON AND AUTHORED BY CAOIMHIN ARDREN



In Part 1 of this article (SALT Vol 98 September 2015) the formation and types of waves was discussed. This article continues on this theme, but focusses on the beach types found in NSW, their influence on waves, the formation of rips and how all these elements impact on sea kayak landing and launching through the surf zone.

Understanding these interactions and recognising them on the water allows us as kayakers to be forewarned and forearmed.

Beaches are classified into four broad categories:

- wave dominated
- tide dominated
- tide modified
- intertidal rocks and fringing reefs.

All NSW beaches and a large portion of the southern Australian coastline are categorised as wave dominated beaches, while the northern coast of Australia is predominately influenced by the tide. This article only addresses the six wave dominated beach types. Wave-dominated beaches occur where the spring tide range is less than 1.5 m and the average waves range between 0.5 and 3 m.

Before exploring the various beach types and the influence they have on the surf zone, it is important to clarify some terms of beach and surf 'features'.

**Rip currents:** Rips are narrow currents that flow from the beach between breaking waves. They are essentially carrying the volume of water 'deposited' on the beach by breaking waves, back out to sea. It is an effort by the sea to maintain equilibrium. They are usually confined to deeper channels between sand bars. Look for the 'clean green' calm water heading out between breaking waves. Generally rips flow fastest at low tide. They also experience rapid increases in speed (pulses) shortly after wave sets break.

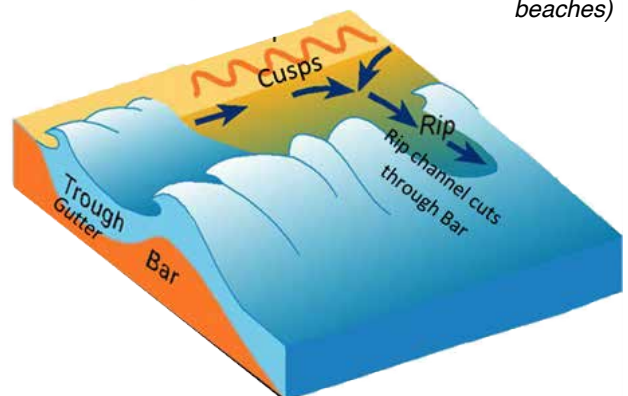
**Troughs, gutters and rip channel:** These are terms used to identify the deeper channels of water, usually with water flowing along the length of the channel. Troughs and gutters are usually used to describe the channel that forms between the shore and the bar. These transport the excess water sideways (parallel to the beach) before turning seawards and flowing out to sea, in a channel between sand bars, as a rip current.

**Cusps / horns:** These are the 'ridges' separating crescent-shaped troughs or swales, found on the foreshore at relatively evenly spaced intervals (see photograph of Pearl Beach).

**Swash zone:** This is the zone between the upper limit of a wave run-up to the lower limit of a wave run-down, i.e. that portion of the beach that is 'washed' by each breaking wave, but is 'dry' between waves – not underwater at all times. The swash zone moves up and down the beach face as water levels vary. Steeper beaches have a narrower swash zone.

**Aspect / orientation:** this is the direction in which a beach faces. Clearly the orientation of the beach to the predominant swell and wind direction will have significant influence on the beach shape. Beaches protected from the prevailing swell will only receive refracted waves (which have lost a lot of their energy), while a beach facing directly into the predominant swell and wind will be subjected to and shaped by the full wave energy.

*Below: Beach cross section – showing beach features (image from [http://www.ozcoasts.gov.au/conceptual\\_mods/beaches](http://www.ozcoasts.gov.au/conceptual_mods/beaches))*



## Beach Types

The six wave dominated beach types are differentiated between high and low energy beaches, as well as rip-dominated beach types.

It is important to keep in mind that **the descriptions below are only really applicable during 'normal' weather and tide conditions.** The surf zone, waves and rips will all vary dramatically during storms and during spring tides (high and low).

### High energy beach – Dissipative beaches

Usually these beaches have a low gradient with two or more sand bars (running parallel to the shore) separated by troughs. Incoming waves break on the outer bar and then reform when crossing each trough, to break again on the next bar – thus dissipating their energy in successive breaks over a wide surf zone up to 500m. These beaches generally have a straight shoreline with no rip currents.

### Low energy beach – Reflective beaches

**Warning!** – They are called 'low energy beaches' - do not be deceived, there have been more injuries occurring in the swash zone on reflective beaches than any other beach type.

Usually these beaches have a relatively steep narrow beach (coarse sand) and are found within bays or at protected ends of ocean beaches. Waves on these beaches are small (<0.5m) and 'break' directly onto the shore. The 'break' is more a case of collapsing or surging up the face of the beach. The energy of the wave is expended in the swash/backwash and the rest is 'reflected' back out to sea as an outgoing wave.

The strong swash, together with the coarse sand, builds up a steep beach face and often have cusps/horns at 15-40m intervals. The horns force the swash sideways into the centre of the cusp, before



Above: Pearl Beach – reflective beach showing shoreline cusps; Below: The northern end Catherine Hill Bay Beach is a rhythmic bar and beach (Photos - Andrew Short)

heading back out to sea as backwash from the centre line of the cusp.

In many cases there is a 'step' at the low tide level / bottom of the beach face of 15-30cm in height formed of the coarser sand particles. You may have noticed this when you last had a bad landing on a reflective beach; coarse sand in everything and a step you fall over when you head into the water to grab the stern toggle of your kayak.

### Rip dominated – Longshore bar and trough beaches

Usually these beaches are identifiable by the near-continuous bar located approximately 100-150m off shore that triggers the typically 1.5 – 2m high waves, together with a wide and deep trough running parallel to the shoreline. These beaches have widely spaced rips (250-500m) crossing the bar fed from the longshore trough.

### Rip dominated – Rhythmic bar and beach

The next rip-dominated beach type with waves averaging around 1.5m is the rhythmic bar and beach type. These are characterised by a rhythmic outer bar, which is separated from the beach by a deep trough. The bar is not uniform, but varies in width and height/depth along its length – like beads on a string. Waves break more heavily on the 'fat sections' / 'beads' with the broken wave and white water flowing off the bar into the deeper trough, where it moves shoreward and also sideways into a rip feeder current. The converging feeders turn and flow offshore as a rip cutting through the bar between 'beads'.





Above: Boomerang Beach – clear example of a Transverse bar and rip beach (Photos - Andrew Short).

Right: Lighthouse Beach – a Transverse bar and rip beach in foreground - but a longshore bar beach in background.

### Rip dominated – Transverse bar and rip beach

This is the most common of NSW's wave-dominated beach types. The name comes from the fact that the bars are perpendicular to (transverse) and attached to the beach, separated by rip channels. The rips are usually regularly spaced, typically 250 m apart along the NSW coast. The waves break heavily on the outside of the bars and do not reform as there is no trough on the shore-side, resulting in lower energy swash in the lee of the bars. While in the lee of the rip

*Below: Wreck and Box beach in foreground are Low Tide Terraces as well as the far end of Fingal Spit*



channel there is a higher energy swash/shorebreak. The shoreline undulates as deposition occurs to form the horns (ridges between cusps) and the cusps are scoured out in lee of the rip.

### Rip dominated – Low tide terrace

Low tide terrace beaches occur where waves average about one metre and have a moderately steep beach face behind an attached terrace/bar. The terrace extends (20-50 m) seawards from the bottom of the beach face at the low tide level, hence the name - low tide terrace. The terrace is often flat and featureless, but may be cut every so often by small shallow rip channels.

### Risks and the significance of the beach structure to sea kayakers

In the table below, we have separately identified the risks associated with each beach type and made suggestions on how to plan your transit through the surf zone for each.

There is no one perfect approach or path to take for each beach type. You need to observe what is actually occurring 'in front of you' before each launch and landing. The height of the tide, swell direction(s), wave size / interval period and timing between sets will have significant influence on what path to take.

Another factor to consider is that there are quite a few cases, especially on long exposed beaches where two beach types occur in parallel. For example a beach may have an 'inner bar' that would be classified as a Transverse Bar and Rip (TBR), but the outer bar operates as a Rhythmic Bar & Beach (RBB). Curl Curl beach, Wanda Beach and Garie Beach are a few examples of this.

Other major influencing factors are rocks, reefs and river/estuary



mouths. These additional elements will often occur at the end of a beach and completely alter how the beach operates in that part of the beach. For example there are frequently rip channels that flow out to sea alongside rocky headlands. This can be both advantageous or a trap when the bigger wave sets come rolling in.

In all cases:

- Do some planning before the trip. Look at weather, swell and tide forecasts. Consider the direction of the swell and its relationship to beach aspect. Rule out beaches that will be wearing the brunt of conditions during the trip
- Ask around for local knowledge from other kayakers and surfers
- Spend some time (before launching and landing) just observing and taking note of the timing of and how the larger wave sets react when they cross each bar or obstacle.

Find an elevated position to obtain a clear view of the beach so that you can get a clear 'map' of where the rip channels run and determine if you are able to make use of these pathways. Once you are in your kayak with the surf breaking all around you, you will not be able to see much except the waves in front of you.

Eric Soares and other Tsunami Rangers refer to these as 'green zones'. Once in the surf zone, paddle from one green zone to the next green zone. See re-published article in SALT Issue No 89, Jan 2013 by Eric Soares, originally published on the Tsunami rangers website at <http://tsunamirangers.com/2011/06/20/entering-the-surf-zone/>

But always remember – don't try to get too clever, the longer you spend in the surf zone, the higher the likelihood that you will be exposed to potential injury and you will be on the receiving end of thoroughly wet lesson.

## Acknowledgements

All credit goes to Adrian Clayton for this article. It was his idea and research that brought this article to life to follow his Part 1 article in SALT Vol 98 August 2015. On the long drive back from a Nadgee trip, we discussed Part 2 content and some of the extra info I was keen to add – so Adrian kindly allowed me to pull together Part 2.

Thanks also need to go to Stuart Trueman for his review of the content of this article.

I'd like to express my thanks and appreciation to Professor Andrew Short allowing the use some of his photographs and diagrams in the preparation of this article. Sources have been identified in the captions to each item.

The beach type images throughout the article were sourced from [http://www.ozcoasts.gov.au/conceptual\\_mods/beaches/wdb.jsp](http://www.ozcoasts.gov.au/conceptual_mods/beaches/wdb.jsp)

Invaluable information for this article was obtained from the book *Beaches of the New South Wales Coast* (2nd edition), Andrew Short, Sydney University Press, Sydney, Feb 2007.

*Below: Editor at his successful Grade 3 assessment – heading into the soup and surf (Photo - Adrian Clayton)*



## The Challenge

Help us raise \$40,000 for six month's funding of the Oasis Youth Network in Surry Hills.

1. Support David, Mark & Rodrigo in their epic crossing to Van Diemen's Land by connecting with us on the website page below to receive updates of the preparation and journey as the boys paddle over 400kms through some of the roughest water this world has to offer. Share the challenge with others by spreading the word on Facebook.

2. Partner with Oasis Youth Network to help break the youth homelessness cycle through education and donate a fixed amount, or an amount for every kilometre paddled.

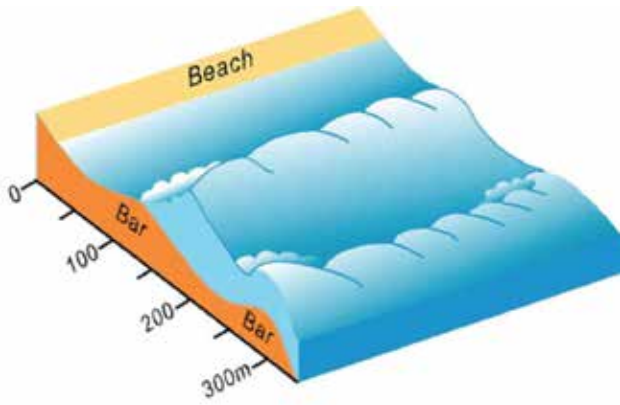
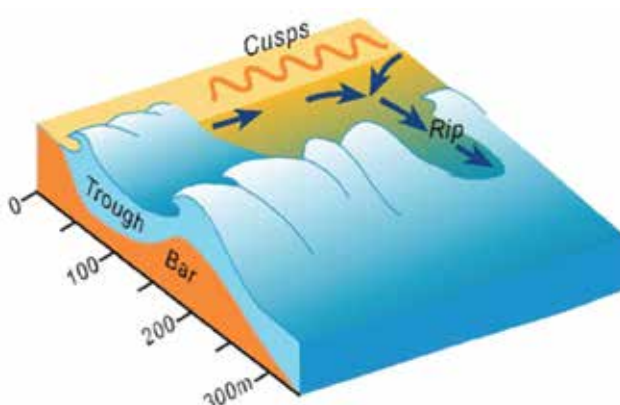
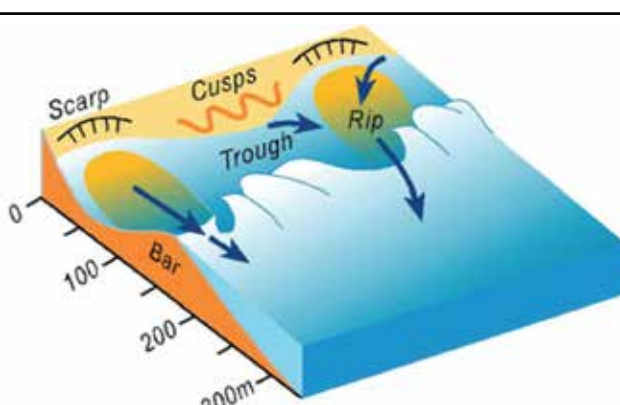
Join with us to change the course of a young person's life today.

Donate at: <https://give.everydayhero.com/au/kayak-bass-strait-2016>

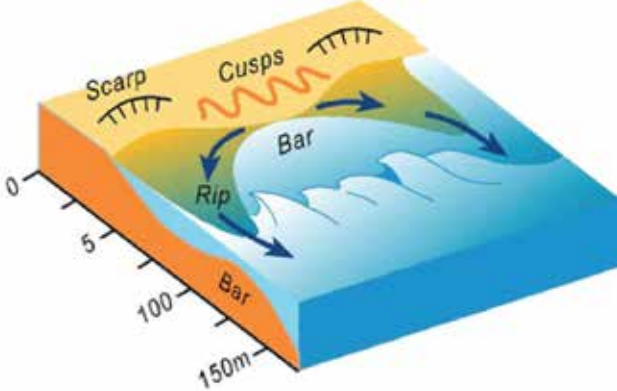
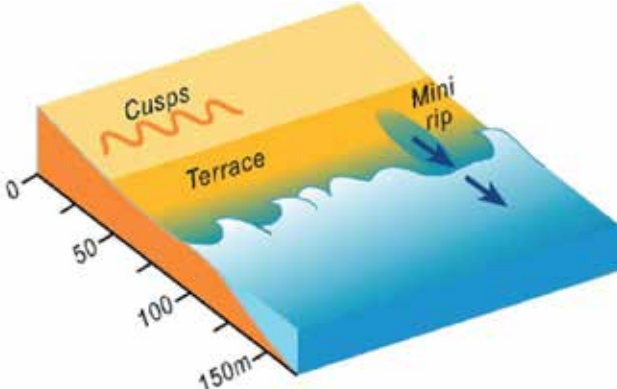
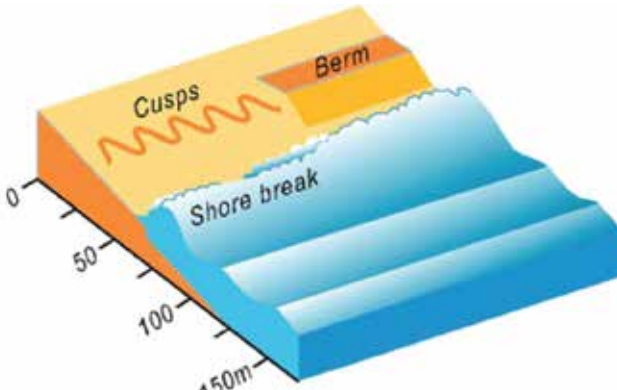
## CROSSING BASS STRAIT

KAYAKING TO THE END OF THE WORLD TO GET OUR KIDS OFF THE STREETS

All images in table sourced from [http://www.ozcoasts.gov.au/conceptual\\_mods/beaches/wdb.jsp](http://www.ozcoasts.gov.au/conceptual_mods/beaches/wdb.jsp)

Type	Diagram	Characteristics	NSW examples
Dissipative beaches		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low gradient, fine sand particles</li> <li>• Two or more sand bars</li> <li>• Wide surf zone up to 500m</li> <li>• Straight shoreline</li> <li>• No rip currents</li> </ul>	There are no beaches of this sort in NSW under normal conditions.
Longshore bar and trough beaches		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low gradient, fine sand particles</li> <li>• Generally one continuous sand bar</li> <li>• Deep wide longshore trough</li> <li>• Surf zone up to 200m</li> <li>• Straight shoreline, but may have a terrace or cusps</li> <li>• Rips in trough</li> <li>• Seaward rip currents 250-500m apart</li> </ul>	<p>Very few Longshore bar and trough beaches in NSW. Closest to Sydney – Seven Mile Beach south of Gerringong.</p> <p>Others found are long exposed beaches with fine sand on the NSW north coast.</p>
Rhythmic bar and beach		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhythmic outer bar - varies in width and height/depth – like 'beads' on a string</li> <li>• Bar not connected to shore</li> <li>• Undulating shore line</li> <li>• Deep wide trough flows directly into rip channels</li> <li>• Rip channels 250 - 500m apart</li> <li>• White water flows shoreward and sideways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bennett's beach</li> <li>• Catherine Hill Bay</li> <li>• Northern Avoca beach</li> <li>• Dee Why (mid section)</li> <li>• Curl Curl</li> <li>• Wanda beach (mid section)</li> <li>• Garie Beach</li> <li>• Windang (North of river mouth)</li> </ul>

Risks to sea kayakers	Launching & Landings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple impact zones with high energy waves sized 2-3m</li> <li>• Surf zone too wide to make use of lull between sets</li> <li>• No easy channels through break zones</li> </ul> <p>Leave these beaches to the Tsunami Rangers.</p>	<p>Luckily for us, there are no dissipative beaches in NSW in 'normal' conditions. With no rips breaking through the breakers/impact zone, one has no choice except to punch through each breaker zone, remembering that the further out waves will have the most energy (just when you are feeling really worn out). Timing to go out between sets is very difficult with such a wide surf zone. Plan to avoid landing or launching from these beaches.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two impact zones with high energy waves sized 1.5 – 2m</li> <li>• Surf zone too wide to easily identify lull between sets</li> <li>• Wide and deep troughs (with side rip) – long swim to beach if you lose kayak on outer breakers</li> <li>• Plunging waves on outer bar at low tide</li> </ul>	<p>Plan to avoid landing or launching from these beaches. However, if you need to land/launch on these beaches, given the size of the waves especially on the outer bar, it is often a good idea to try by-pass the outer breakers when landing by paddling through the impact zone in the rip channel. Once 'inside' the outer bar/break zone, one can then pick the best landing spot on the beach. Reverse this process when launching. Get through shore break into wide trough, then paddle into the rip channel to escape through the outer breakers.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two impact zones with medium-high energy waves averaging 1.5 m</li> <li>• Wide and deep troughs (with side rip) – long swim to beach if you lose kayak on outer breakers</li> <li>• Good chance kayak will be taken out to sea</li> <li>• Plunging waves on outer bar at low tide</li> <li>• Rip strength increases at low tide</li> </ul>	<p>These beaches are generally well exposed to ocean swell, so should be avoided unless you have local knowledge. If you need to land/launch on these beaches, given the size of the waves especially on the outer bar, it is often a good idea to try and by-pass the outer breakers when landing by paddling through the impact zone in one of multiple rip channels. Once 'inside' the outer bar/break zone, one can then pick the best landing spot on the beach. You can however expect to be pushed up or down the beach due to active side rip currents.</p> <p>For a launch, try to find an elevated view of the beach to identify the 'line' you will follow – once on the water you will not be able to see the clean green pathways. Get through shore break into wide trough, then paddle into the rip channel to escape through the outer breakers.</p> <p>If you do come out of your boat in the outer bar break zone, be aware that there is a good chance your boat will be caught by the rip current in the deep trough on the inside of the outer bar. Leave your best 'surfer' as your sweep to pick up any boats that get taken out to sea.</p>

Type	Diagram	Characteristics	NSW examples
Transverse bar and rip		<p>The most common 'surf' beach on the NSW coast. Beaches are generally exposed to ocean swell with waves in the 1-1.5m range.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bars are perpendicular to (transverse) and attached to beach.</li> <li>• Rips are usually 250 m apart in NSW.</li> <li>• Rips channels do "move" along beach, especially after storms.</li> <li>• Waves break on outside of bars.</li> <li>• Waves do not reform - lower Shoreline undulates horns &amp; swales.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boomerang &amp; Blueys beach</li> <li>• Bennetts beach</li> <li>• Avoca &amp; Macmasters beach</li> <li>• Putty &amp; Umina (middle section).</li> <li>• Sydney's ocean beaches including: Palm, Whale, Bilgola, Newport, Mona Vale, Bondi, Bronte and Maroubra</li> <li>• Killalea (The Farm)</li> <li>• Disaster Bay &amp; Nadgee Beach</li> <li>• Lots and lots more</li> </ul>
Low tide terrace beaches		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller waves about 1 m.</li> <li>• Steep beach face behind an attached terrace/bar.</li> <li>• Terrace often flat and featureless, but may be cut by small shallow rip channels.</li> <li>• Often found at estuary mouths and protected ends of beaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elizabeth Beach</li> <li>• South Bennetts beach</li> <li>• Zenith, Wreck Box and Fingal Spit beaches</li> <li>• South Fingal Bay beach</li> <li>• Terrigal Haven</li> <li>• North end Putty Beach</li> <li>• North Bondi Beach</li> <li>• Currarong Beach</li> <li>• Merrica River</li> </ul>
Reflective sandy beaches		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steep narrow beach (coarse sand).</li> <li>• Within bays or protected waters.</li> <li>• Waves are small (&lt;0.5m) and 'break' directly onto the shore.</li> <li>• Waves collapsing or surge.</li> <li>• Strong swash/backwash.</li> <li>• Often there is a 'step' at the low tide level / bottom of the beach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jimmys Beach &amp; Shoal Bay.</li> <li>• Maitland Bay.</li> <li>• Pearl &amp; Patonga Beach.</li> <li>• Bongin Bongin.</li> <li>• Fishermans (Collaroy).</li> <li>• Quarantine, Little Manly &amp; Wash Away beaches.</li> <li>• Watsons &amp; Camp Cove</li> <li>• Clovelly, Long &amp; Little bays.</li> <li>• Jibbon beach.</li> <li>• Bittangabee bay.</li> </ul>

Risks to sea kayakers	Launching & Landings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium energy waves of 1-1.5 m.</li> <li>• Diagonal rips line the break zone – in a capsize, it is easy to be caught and kayak taken out behind breakers.</li> <li>• Undulating shoreline means lots of sideways wash – get in/out quickly.</li> <li>• Plunging waves on outer edge of bar at low tide.</li> <li>• Rip strength increases at low tide.</li> </ul>	<p>To land, try to paddle in through the rip channel until on the shore-side of the impact zone and then head back into the surf zone to take advantage of the dissipated wash onto the beach on top of the connected bar. An advantage of this approach is that should you capsize in the surf zone on the bar, you have a good chance of you and kayak getting washed up to the beach (rather than have your kayak dragged seaward in the rip).</p> <p>Often the rip channels are not perpendicular to the shoreline, but at a 30 - 45 degree angle. As you reach the end of the rip channel (close to the beach) you will be exposed to breaking waves and a side rip current (see picture of Boomerang Beach). Continuing directly to the shore from the rip channel could expose you to surging waves on a steep beach face.</p> <p>Similar to a Rhythmic bar and Beach, find an elevated view of the beach to identify the 'rip channel line' to follow before launching. For a launch, you have two options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either launch off beach on the 'horn' of the connected bar, before then finding your way into the rip channel. (Launching on the side of the 'horn' will only expose you to a lot of sideways swash – resulting in a lot of foul language.)</li> <li>• Or launch into the middle of the rip channel embayment, down the steep beach face, timing it to avoid the larger surging waves.</li> </ul> <p>If you come out of your boat in the outer bar break zone, be aware that there is a good chance your boat will be caught by the rip current in the deep trough on the inside of the outer bar. Leave your best 'surfer' of the group as your sweep to pick up any boats taken out to sea.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small waves trap you into 'lowering your guard'. Lean or edge to the sea side and fall/roll onto shoulder.</li> <li>• At low tide – often get dumping wave on outside of terrace straight onto bare sand.</li> <li>• At spring high tide – reflective beach hazards.</li> </ul>	<p>Even though this beach type is the lowest energy rip influenced beach, it has the most variability as the tide levels change. At high tide smaller waves (&lt;1m) may pass right over the bar (unbroken) until they reach the steepish beach face, then act like a reflective beach. (See risks and issues for kayakers on reflective beaches). At spring low tide the entire bar is usually exposed as a terrace running parallel to the beach with a result that the waves break heavily on the outer edge. Between tides, these beaches generally provide ideal sea kayak launch and landing locations, with typically spilling waves dissipating their energy over the width of the terrace.</p> <p>Small waves and the flat gradient of a terrace is deceptive – easy to be broached in shallows 'slipping and tripping' up the beach – Do NOT put out your hand to stop falling over!</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of break zone is deceptive – traps paddlers into false sense of security.</li> <li>• Surging waves – strong swash and backwash</li> <li>• Surging wave and cusps combine to make difficult launch/landing</li> <li>• Usually very short time period between surges – hop in/out quickly.</li> </ul>	<p>Because these beaches are typically within bays and protected from direct ocean swell they are a favourite for launching, but they can be deceptive as they do hold some risk for us right on the shoreline. In 2014 a small boy playing near the swash zone at Pearl Beach was carried into the sea by the backwash from a surging wave and drowned.</p> <p>On a reflective beach, because all the wave energy is expended in a single break onto the steep beach, the swash and backwash tend to carry some power, enough to drag our kayaks back out to sea when we are still half in/out of the cockpit. With no breaking waves to contend with, for a landing it can be a good idea to get the skirt off and feet out before hitting the final 'break' zone. Ride the back of the wave/surge as far up the beach as possible, then hop out quickly when you are at the top of the swash zone. Don't send the old bloke with the dodgy knee in to land first!</p> <p>The steep beach face means the water becomes deep quickly making it awkward to try enter your kayak once it is afloat – best to get all set and closed up on the sand, then a quick launch to take advantage of the backwash. This can be difficult for kayaks with non-retractable rudders. You may be better off to consider a stern first launch.</p>



# An anxious paddler

RUBY GAMBLE

## What is anxiety?

People feel stressed or anxious when they believe themselves unable to manage or cope with a situation, particularly one with an uncertain outcome. The body responds with a fight-or-flight response, which will express as fear, confusion, raised heartbeat and muscle tension, and inability to process the situation.

Stress can also be a positive experience that motivates and challenges, making you more alert and better able to get through a tough situation. Stress and anxiety will pass once the stressful situation is over or the 'stressor' is removed.

There are a number of ways our attitude, personality and approach to life influence how we might respond to a stressful situation:

- problem-solving ability
- previous experience of the situation
- degree of control over what is happening
- general feelings of anxiety
- self-esteem
- available support.

*Activities which allow you to test yourself in controlled conditions are good for building confidence and skills, like Clayton's Rock Gardening (training session).*



## Anxiety and paddling

Paddlers often experience stressful situations due to the nature of the environment we enter in our boats. Fear on the water might be associated with:

- size or pattern of the waves
- tides and currents
- weather
- unknowns under the water (sharks, jellyfish, rocks etc.)
- distance from shore
- lack of skills
- feeling unable to keep up with other group members
- low confidence
- poor swimming ability.

An anxious paddler might have shallow, rapid breathing or may hold their breath. They may be unable to communicate, unable to act, or may act with bravado that results in foolhardy risk-taking behaviour. They could lose focus, hearing, experience partial to complete paralysis, or extreme tiredness due to the energy used to 'freak out'. This might be expressed through more bracing and/or capsizing.

## Anxiety and sea-sickness

There is a link between anxiety and sea-sickness. Motion sickness is a common ailment and is caused by repeated unusual movement. Your inner ear balance mechanisms feel different signals to those seen by the eyes, causing your brain to receive confusing messages and resulting in feelings of nausea. Once you have experienced motion sickness, you are more likely to feel it in future and with increased intensity.

Anxiety can worsen the symptoms, as the brain expects the nausea and responds. Anxiety also impacts breathing and rapid and shallow breathing can make motion sickness worse. This is why people can feel motion sickness before getting on an airplane or boat.

## Helping yourself

If you know you experience fear or anxiety when paddling, there are several things you can do.

### Before feeling anxious

Make sure you are well-rested, with a good night's sleep the night before paddling.

Prepare yourself. Understand what situations make you feel stressed, and decide which you can and can't control. Prepare for any stressful events in advance by visualising how you will respond. Think about times when you have handled a situation well, and focus on the successful ways you responded.

It can be useful to build a better connection to your boat. Rocking your boat side to side with your hips on flat water and learning the feel of your boat can prevent you stiffening your body when there is a swell.

### When you feel anxious

Controlled breathing can help to reduce or prevent anxiety. As soon as you start to feel anxious, take deep slow breaths and visualise being calm. This will help relax your body.

If you sense yourself starting to feel anxious, try to focus on how you will solve the problem at hand. Assess your own skill level and act on your best judgment.

Don't be afraid to let others know when you are anxious, particularly the trip leader. Their support may help you cope with the situation, and knowing you're anxious will help them manage the group's safety more effectively and understand what's happening when you high-tail it out of an area, or refuse to join the group in an activity.

## My story

My big fear is tipping over my boat and not being able to exit, so I will become anxious when I feel I am not in control of my boat. Concern about inconveniencing others will add to the stress of a situation.

I can often be heard crying out (particularly in surf), but the time to truly worry is when I start crying. My anxiety is also expressed through poor breathing management, for instance when rolling I lift my head as soon as I surface in order to drag in a breath (even though I could hold my breath longer), which results in me not completing the roll and tipping back upside down.

I have had a number of experiences that have contributed to this fear, including falling out of a raft in a Class 5 rapid and struggling to surface, only to come up under the raft; and panicking due to taking substantial time to release myself from my kayak cockpit due to tight skirts or unfamiliar thigh braces -

### Build confidence and skill

The more familiar we are with situations and the more success we have, the more we build confidence. Learn about waves, weather and local conditions. Build your kayaking skills gradually and in particular learn to self-rescue in calm and in more challenging conditions. Once you are comfortable with a skill at a particular level, gradually increase difficulty. A skilled teacher can help you with this process.

### Helping an anxious paddler

NEVER dismiss the way someone feels. Feelings can be reasonable or completely unreasonable, but they are very real to the person feeling them. Rather than passing judgement on their feelings, offer them methods or techniques to reduce their anxiety – and this does not include telling them to 'think of something else' or 'try not to feel

that way'. Well-meaning I'm sure, but not useful.

If you can catch up to the scared paddler – ask them how things are going. Remain calm, as the paddler will pick up on that calmness and respond to it. If they express concern about a situation, break down the activity for them. In many cases a bit of information can help a lot, for example telling them it's easier to turn on top of a wave than in the trough. Avoid correcting them repeatedly, as your focus needs to be on them building their confidence and believing in their own decision-making skills.

If the paddler starts to panic, someone needs to help out. Ideally the group leader will nominate someone (or more) to assist the paddler, such as providing an assisted tow, while the group leader makes sure everyone else in the group is safe and accounted for and understands their roles.



experiences that have left bruises all down my arms and legs.

In my head I know that I have the skills to survive. I know that if I fall out of my boat I can do both an assisted or self-rescue. Sometimes I can even roll. I am strong, fit and healthy, an excellent swimmer and can hold my breath for a very long time. In light of this, my anxiety is very unreasonable.

I paddle regularly with a very competent sea guide, who has often stepped in to help me manage a situation that he knows is likely to cause me anxiety. The best example of this is the time we were paddling with two other paddlers at Minnamurra. He asked them to paddle to a safe point beyond the waves and provide me with a path along which I could paddle most safely through the break and avoid the rocks at the destination. I avoided a potentially stressful situation, at the same time as building confidence and skills.

The more I paddle, the more confident I get and the less anxious I am. Paddling regularly, increasing my paddling skills, and exposing myself to a range of different conditions has also helped. Paddle with someone you trust, and learn to prepare yourself for difficult situations. And most importantly, breathe.



## Best of Both

HUBERT WIEST

When my alarm went off at 5am on a cool winter's day and I had to leave the comfort of my warm bed, I wasn't feeling that this was "Best of Both". Adrian chose this headline when he put up this overnight trip on the club website. The idea was to start at Elizabeth Beach, heading north towards Cape Hawke on the ocean before entering Wallis Lake at Forster/Tuncurry and then returning back down south on the lake to where we started.

I picked up Tom and we had an easy three hour drive from Sydney up to the tiny village of Elizabeth Beach – located between Seal Rocks and Forster, where Adrian used to live. It had been his home for several years, so I knew we were in safe hands.

The catchy headline attracted some more kayak enthusiasts of the club. We were eleven in total; Bruce, John, Tom, Nick, Deb, Ruby, Steve, John and myself, plus of course our experienced guides Adrian Clayton and Caoimhin Arden. The majority of us paddled Mirage kayaks (582, 580 and 530), with three Nadgee Expedition kayaks and Nick's Arctic Raider.

At 9:30 am Adrian gave us the briefing and off we went. The launch on the north-east facing beach was text-book perfect.



*Clockwise from top left: Map; Wallis Lake at sunset; Tom harvesting Cockle Weed; Landing at the camp on Tony's Island (Photo - Ruby Gamble); Nick and Caoimhin running to help Tom Cox land (Photo - Ruby Gamble); Enjoying the paddle north; Preparing to launch at Elizabeth Beach.*





The conditions were quite benign, a 1-9 knot wind from various directions (west to south) with a southerly swell and a secondary swell from east around 1.5 metres. We headed north, crossing the bay of Nine Mile Beach. Nine Mile Beach stretches a long way, but nine miles seemed to be an exaggeration. Further offshore we spotted a whale. It showed up only twice in order to take a deep breath, before disappearing into the

infinite blue. However it was too far away for any exciting photos.

After a while of paddling we finally passed Cape Hawke, continuing our path in a more westerly direction towards McBride Beach. We saw a pod of young dolphins showing their tricks. Already we could see our beautiful lunch site, with just the surf separating us from the beach. The waves weren't very big, yet some dumpers made it somewhat tricky, with Bruce failing to get the exact timing of Adrian's instructions "PADDLE HARD, PADDLE HARDER!" forcing him to surf on the crest of a wave directly onto the beach. He received an overwhelming applause. I personally had a less professional beach landing and took a refreshing dip after broaching.



After lunch we enjoyed the beach launch, which was expertly coordinated by Adrian and Caoimhin. Like always the surf seemed to increase dramatically when you sit in your kayak, but everybody managed to keep the kayak upright through the surf.



During the afternoon we paddled along a varied coastline with nice rock features and a bombara, which was totally tame today. After a further good hour's paddle we reached the entrance to Wallis Lake, a narrow channel between Forster and Tuncurry. Adrian had told us that this part could get quite choppy, but again not on this day.

It was close to sunset when we entered Wallis Lake, passing dozens of oyster farms. The glassy water and an impressive sunset escorted us to our campsite on Tony's Island in Wallis Lake. We had completed 29 kilometers on the clock. However due to the mild conditions we achieved it without getting too exhausted.

We had the secluded campsite to ourselves, perhaps not surprising given it was mid-winter. During summer time Wallis Lake and Tony's campsite in particular is said to be crowded by tourists and mosquitoes. We kindled a campfire and gossiped mostly about kayaking. The only downside of this wonderful spot was the trip to the amenities; a muddy track, nearly as long as Nine Mile Beach. I think some of us used other options...



After a peaceful night and a short brekkie we launched our kayaks on a sunny calm Sunday morning. We headed south on Wallis Lake passing Pelican Island, which is barely a real island. Hundreds of pelicans were sitting on a patch of sand in the middle of the lake. Quietly we watched them for a while, taking care not to frighten these funny looking birds. Adrian showed us cockle weed. If you grab a bunch of this water plant, you can be sure to catch some edible mussels attached to the lower parts of the plant. The water was crystal clear and we glided silently to Tiona Coffee Shop for a short break. Even in our smelly kayak gear we were pleasantly welcomed and beautiful banana bread was served by the friendly innkeeper.

During the rest of the paddle to the southern end of the lake we stopped to visit Green Cathedral,

an outdoor chapel, which is mainly used for wedding ceremonies. There was no Mass on this Sunday. While Tom tried to fill in for the minister, we were eager to get back on the water, some deciding to stand and paddle in their kayaks for a while.

Finally after almost 17 Kilometers we pulled out on Pacific Palms (the lake side of Elizabeth Beach) and had just a convenient 10 minute walk to pick up our cars from the beach on the other side.

Best of Both? Definitely yes. Thanks to Adrian for a wonderful kayak trip!

*Top: Hubert at Pelican Island  
Below left: Tom as Minister at the Green Cathedral  
Below right: Nick SUPing*



# Club Trip Tweets

## Ettalong to Maitland Bay



### Sunday 13 September 2015

Team Leader: Campbell Tiley

Club participants: Selim Tezcan, Deborah Cunneen, Bronwyn Davies, Roy Davies, Roger Merrell



On a beautiful, sunny spring morning, we set off from Ettalong to paddle to Maitland Bay. We experienced idyllic conditions and reached Maitland Bay in no time at all. After morning tea, we headed further north to Little Beach, which presented us with a rock shelf landing. Campbell, our intrepid leader landed first and then assisted the rest of the group to land without incident despite regular sets of one metre waves (big enough for nearby surfboarders in the bay). Special mention must be made of Bronwyn who landed with aplomb on the slippery rocks. She is one inspirational sea kayaker. After lunch, we cruised back to Ettalong with everyone getting a bumpy ride across the sand bars at Little Box Head. Return trip was approx 27 kms. Thank you Campbell for a great day's paddling, Roger

### 27 September 2015

Team Leader: Megan Pryke

Club participants: Ken Collins, Greg Prutej

Highlights for the day: exiting Lake Illawarra with an outgoing tide; punching southwards into a 15-20 knot headwind; lunch near the old loading wharf on Bass Point; large SE swell running; surfers on the reef break near our lunch stop, and a downwind run with increasing fetch on return.

Back at low tide at the mouth of Lake Illawarra and conditions were rougher than before due to low tide. We landed between wave sets at the beach just to the south of the break-wall then portaged our kayaks back into the channel. A strong tidal outflow provided opportunities for crossing eddy lines, breaking in and out. Within break walls we enjoyed lots of great spilling and occasionally breaking waves, friendly enough for a sea kayak though we had to be wary of the tidal outflow, which was dragging out murky lake water to the sea. Eventually the waves died down with the easing current, which was probably just as well as we did need to get home, though it was good to know we left as the fun was lessening off!



### Friday 9 October 2015

Team Leader: Stewart Morgan  
(on behalf of Owen)

Club participants: Steve, Hans, Geoff, Geoff, Mark, Barry, Brian, Bruce, Cecillia



This trip was about 16kms all up. The white line between Hornby Lighthouse and Old Mans Hat is about 1.3 kms, while the distance between the Gap and North Head is twice that at 2.6 kms. The NE wind at 10.30am, which was about the time we crossed the Heads as measured by BOM was 17 knots gusting to 23. A big thanks to all who provided morning tea! Stewart.

Newcastle

# The Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong (a.k.a “NSW”) Coastal Sea Kayak Challenge



Since the publication of Salt98, the following trips have taken place:

#3 Watsons Bay to Frenchmans Bay - 5 September 2015

10 participants led by Megan Pryke and Adrian Clayton

#4 Ettalong to Terrigal – 18 October 2015

13 participants, led by Campbell Tiley and Caoimhin Arden

To date the N.S.W. Challenge is 52 percent of the way to completion.

The run of luck in regards to weather ran out with two days of coastal Strong Wind Warnings delaying the overnight camping trip from Bundeena to Coledale which was scheduled for the weekend of 31 October to 1 November 2015. A high pressure system was stuck in the Tasman, with the risk of it edging closer to the coast and creating rough conditions near shore, meaning there was a real possibility of members not turning up to work on Monday. On the Saturday a small group completed a day trip from Bundeena to Boat Harbour then out to near Cape Baily and return via a stop over at Jibbon Beach, thus covering part of the coast.

Meanwhile, Raewyn Duffy is leading the Kurnell to Cronulla leg on 6 December. To be rescheduled is the Bundeena to Coledale stretch covering the Royal National Park; Nora Head to Terrigal; Pittwater (Palm Beach) to Long Reef which may also include a small GPS cartage from Ettalong to close the Broken Bay Gap and Coledale. So keep your eye out on the club trip calendar and join us!

Sydney

Wollongong

*Left: Completed sections of the NSW Challenge in green and remaining sections in red. Ettalong to Terrigal - Below left: Rhys Ward and Mark Clarkson sharing a laugh, Below right: Bruce Lew powering home*



## N.S.W. Challenge - Trip 4

# Ettalong to Terrigal

CHRIS YOUNG

One of the great things about sea kayaking for me is the scenery. Looking from the sea toward the landscape, formations and places hidden from view on the land where you live. This stretch of the NSWKC Challenge begins at the southern most tip of the Central Coast and took me back to when I bought my first sea kayak "White Fang". Living at The Entrance at the time I declared to my best mate "I'm paddling to Patonga can you pick me up in the morning?"; it was the scenery and challenge on this first trip that had me hooked.

This trip on 18 October 2015 would be the reverse, from Ettalong paddling north to Terrigal. Rounding Box Head after leaving Ettalong our group of 13 were welcomed by some healthy rebound combined with the SE wind and sea. Here I encountered a scene, which you don't get kayaking on your own, the sterns of 12 multi-coloured kayaks radically dancing, bobbing and whipping in wide arcs before disappearing behind the next swell! Cool! It amazed me how the majority of the group nonchalantly paddled through these rebound sections chatting away, lazily looking at the headland. I've seen friends fall out of their canoes and



kayaks for no reason on flat water and here were 12 boats moving with confidence. The 13th boat however was on high alert - I was having a hard time constantly adjusting to so many colourful variables only a few feet away. I stuck to my rules when paddling alone around headlands or points; no dawdling, no photos of that massive eagle, no prying my Turkish delight out of my pocket. Just head up bum down till calmer water. This was a new and exciting experience.

This first half of the trip has us paddling off the coast of Boudi National Park. An area with vast views over the northern beaches, with scenic bushwalks, camping spots, massive sea cliffs and some sneaky reefs and bomboras. Campbell had obviously been here before and had us paddle single file between Gerrin Point and a reef, which so far had not been visible. Sure enough a set came through to reveal a fairly sedate slab underneath. If we had still been paddling side-by-side, we may have had some too-close bumpy encounters with each other.

Maitland Bay was our stop for morning tea. Named after the SS Maitland paddle steamer, which crashed on the reef outside Boudi Point, this quiet crescent shaped beach can be a great place to stop for sea kayakers as there are no safe landing places to the north until MacMasters Beach. Great

snorkeling around here and cliff edge walking tracks too!

Paddling between Boudi Point and Maitland Bombora, the next section to Mourawaring Head is five or so kilometres featuring more cliffs and plenty of rocks. On that first trip of mine to Patonga, this strip had been a real challenge for me as I headed into a healthy southerly and had never paddled for over an hour in constant rebound. This time however was different. The wind was at our backs with terrific views of the land around Caves Bay and Bombi Point.

Passing the headland south of MacMaster, we at last sight beachgoers and surfers and leave the National Park behind.

It was interesting how insignificant the Skillion at Terrigal looked from the sea in comparison to the headlands we had just passed.

As the group rolled into The Haven at Terrigal, someone suggested that the Club President approve club funding for fish and chips! Meanwhile, we sorted out the mathematics of car shuffling and headed back to Ettalong.

My abundant thanks to our trip leaders and Sea Guides Campbell Tiley and Caoimhin Ardren.



## N.S.W. Challenge - Trip 3

# Frenchman's Bay to Vaucluse Bay

5 September 2015

## Reflections on a Tow

TOM COX

We were heading up the coast with a southerly swell and SSW winds of 15 knots gusting to 18 knots. I had my sail up and was having fun zigzagging across the back of the group, catching runners and zipping along.

The sea was dynamic, and bouncing around a fair bit. Bruce was in his newish Pace 17. I could see that he was struggling with the conditions, so I paddled up to him and offered to give him a tow. He said he didn't know if it would help, it was his balance that was the problem. We pressed on, but a little later I could see he was still having a hard time of it, so paddled up again and offered to tow him. Again he said it was his balance that was the problem, but if I thought it would help, he'd give it a go. At this point we were south of Diamond Bay.



I had (atypically) left my tow-rope at home. I was going to use Bruce's, but Megan pulled up alongside, offered hers and hooked it on. Up with the sail and off we went in a tow.

The sail was a great aid, but it took concentration to deal with the vagaries of wind and sail, the sloppy water conditions, dropping down the face of a wave and climbing up the next, the sudden yank on the tow line as the kayaks pulled in different directions, bracing strokes and quick strong plants of the blade into the water to keep upright.

kayak. Once he was back in, skirt on and ready to go, I reattached the tow-line. Megan stayed rafted with Bruce. I set the sail and off we went, the two of them in tow. Although it was heavy work, it wasn't all that hard. The sail made a big difference. Others offered to relieve me, but I didn't feel the need to stop. I felt like I could have kept going for a long time. At one point Adrian hooked up his tow-rope so that we could do a V-tow, but the sail was giving me so much oomph that after a while Adrian detached his line, and I continued on. I had hooked on the carabiner by clipping it up from underneath the deck line, as Adrian had taught us to do, but twice the tow-rope detached from Bruce's bow while under tow. The second time, Steve and Malcolm took over in a V-tow, and continued until we rounded South Head. Once we were in calmer waters, Bruce was fine and was off like a rocket paddling the remaining distance to Vaucluse Bay.

Having been the recipient of tows on two occasions two or three years ago, when I was lagging at the back of a group and the day was wearing on, it felt good to be able to offer that help to someone else.



We made some progress, and then Bruce lost his balance and was in the water. Megan called out, I stopped, dropped my sail, turned around and paddled back. Megan assisted Bruce to re-enter his

Some observations:

1. A sail can be a great aid in towing.
2. Always take your tow-rope. Don't forget it!
3. Use your own gear and you should know what to expect.
4. When it's windy, it's really hard to communicate with others in the group unless they are very close by. A whistle is good for grabbing attention, but shouted directions are easily missed.
5. Megan told me she hooks her carabiner through two deck lines where that is possible. I'll do that in future.
6. For a V-tow to work, tow ropes must be the same length, the paddlers must paddle side by side and quite close together. They must stay constantly aware of each other, and work as one. In most V-tows I have seen, one person does all the work.
7. Although it's highly desirable for the tower to look back regularly to check on the towee, in demanding conditions it's not easy to do. Having someone else keeping a close eye on the towee helps.
8. It's a good idea to practice towing regularly. This helps make sure that both methodology and equipment are right. Equipment failure meant this tow did not go as well as it could have.
9. For more on towing, see the NSWSKC Basic Skills Training Resources at <http://www.nswseakayaker.asn.au/homepage/basic-skills/towing>
10. At a recent sea skills training weekend, Stuart Trueman talked about the problem of one person doing all the work with V-tows. He suggested clipping the two tow-lines to each other if there's time, through rather than to the towee's deck line. Assuming no obstructions, this means the joined tow lines will stay in tension.



*Opposite page, Top: Tom Cox flying like a shuttle (Photo: Steve Hitchcock), Below: Adrian Clayton approaching Coogee beach, This page, Right: Megan Pryke approaching Coogee beach, Below: Group photo by friendly native beachgoer.*



# Rhyme of an Eastern Suburbs Paddle

MALCOLM BERSTEN



(with apologies to everyone who can write good verse!)

We gathered there at Vacluse Bay one brisk September morn,  
 "Hello" and "Good to see you friend" our smiling faces said.  
 The M's were there – Mark, Megan Malcolm Michael Mark – with Deb  
 and Steve, and Tom, and Adr'an too, a leader come to help.

We paired our boats and filled our boots to get us to the start.  
 For some thru Bondi back streets, the scenic route for sure,  
 whilst others followed GPSs by more familiar ways -  
 the back streets won that little test, not that anyone was racing!

At Frenchman's Bay we started to prepare, now serious and earnest;  
 so Megan gathered us around to brief and check our gear.  
 But wait, another now had come to join our special group,  
 one Bruce it was from way up north, from Forster he had come.

We cast about for smiling omens as we left the shore -  
 a joy to see around the point come Sharon's Sat'day fleet.  
 We figured in some tourist snaps around Bare Island Fort,  
 then out beyond Cape Banks we went, to open ocean now.

The sea was rolling small and soft, the breeze its gentle friend;  
 the sou'-ea' flow they forecast appeared to be quite true.  
 Some silken veils of sunlight fluttered up from down below,  
 the wide horizons beckoned out across the sparkling blue.

The rocky cliffs were colourful in orange, ochre and grey;  
 some golfers shared the headlands with walkers and wanderers too.  
 There's old Prince Henry now renewed with chapel and vibrant living  
 where once in old brick mausoleums the sick did lie, and cry, and die.

So, Little and Long Bays we passed but did not venture in,  
 for Coogee for lunch we were heading, and time had slipped away.  
 Then there was the broad Maroubra, the Bra Boys little haunt,  
 with ugly blue pavilion smudging the beachfront walk.

A horror in view at South Coogee, an ugly mash of houses  
 arrang'd around the clifftop like a barrio or slum.  
 A fortune you'd pay to live here, just to see the sea;  
 but such a sorry sight it is out here, from the sea to see.

In contrast is beautiful Coogee, with its old timber baths and its green'ry,  
 Its walkway a colonnade of concrete, curving gently 'round the sand.  
 We tackled the surf with aplomb and style, it was only little you see;  
 but landing with grace and elegance, now that's something else altogether.

Tom brought out some home-made goodies for all of us to share;  
 his bread and tasty fresh hummus made my sandwich seem rather glum.  
 We toasted his birthday bounty and soaked up the warmth of the sun,  
 allowing a reflection on friendship, this pastime we pursue can provide.



We set off again at 1.20, through surf that had grown with the breeze. The sun was still shining and warm, but in the grey of the clouds it was chill. With his sail aloft Tom embroidered the sea, tacking left and then right. I'm sure that I heard the sound of "Yippee" as he flew like a shuttle past me.

Past narrow Clovelly, around towards Bronte we steadily went. Now hold just a minute, for back there behind us we could easily have miss'd the rows and the lines of the tombstones, the memorials to the dead; as sombre silent watchers of our little passing brigade.

We stayed out from Bronte – it's a danger in there to eschew and avoid. Beyond glam Tam (arama that is) and sculptures not yet to be seen, and then across Bondi we paddled well out, in line with the tower ahead. A few hardy souls were 'sunning' themselves, for the selfie and to say that they did.

The sun had gone in behind some dark clouds; the chill in the air became cold. The wind it was rising and with it the seas, perhaps a metre and 15 in breeze. The water was grey, opaque, and malevolent, reminding us people that we must take care - for sea creatures we're not – out here in Neptune's domain.

Around the Ben Buckler we split into 2, the Gap our intended next gath'ring. The cliffs ahead were imposing; but the rebound had caught our attention! It came from all 'round, the left and the right, 'twas lumpy, and bumpy and grumpy. Exhilarating fun or fearful progression - a state of mind or reality.

As Bruce was struggling to keep a good balance a tow was attached to assist him. But over he went; a rescue ensued, by Megan relaxed as expected. Then Tom with his sail pulled them along till Adr'an joined in the tow; he couldn't keep up – who could? we observed – his effort to little avail.

Then the time did come for our tower to change so Mark and Steve took over. They started too wide with blunted effect, then narrowed and made it much better. We others looked on and gave our support and noted the change with approval. And Megan did what good leaders should - she watched and guided so calmly.

We rounded South Head from a distance, to avoid the wide breaking shoal. Then sudden alarm from creaking spars under strain: "The tow line!" "Keep clear!" A fool in his yacht was racing his way on a rhumb line too fast and too close! A matter of metres - that was the gap – 'tween his hubris and general distress.

At last we returned to a calm Vaucluse Bay too tired to practice our rolls. The sun was setting as we washed down our boats and changed into dry gear. A final debrief and thoughts on the day, then goodbyes, farewells and departure. The night it closed in on a memorable day for this very tired happy paddler!

## BOM UPDATE

### Update from the Met

The BOM has updated a number of their web functions, as recently passed on to us from Lisa Sainsbury, their Media and Communication Manager.

### Satellite imagery from Himawari-8

Near-real-time images are now available from Japan's Himawari-8 Satellite, allowing weather to be viewed in detail as it unfolds.

[www.bom.gov.au/australia/satellite](http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/satellite).

Himawari-8 generates about 50 times more data than the Bureau's current satellite with four times the current resolution, accuracy to 500 metres, and updates every 10 minutes, rather than the black and white images currently available every hour. This marks a spectacular new era in satellite meteorology—akin to switching from black and white TV to high definition colour.

### New swell maps on MetEye

MetEye maps now have new swell and wave map options including information now available on the height and direction of different swell conditions—as well as wind waves and total wave height.

[www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye/?loc=NSW\\_FA001](http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye/?loc=NSW_FA001)

Some locations have preformatted displays (for example, Collaroy): [www.bom.gov.au/places/nsw/MV33/forecast/detailed/](http://www.bom.gov.au/places/nsw/MV33/forecast/detailed/)

# Kayaking the Cocos/Keeling Islands

May 2015

MARK DABBS



*Above: The best kayaks*

The Cocos/Keeling Islands are situated 2750 kms northwest of Perth, Western Australia; the islands are a group of coral islands that form two main atolls. Only two of the 27 islands are inhabited.

“Australia’s last unspoilt paradise lies in the azure waters of the Indian Ocean, kissed by the sun and caressed by fragrant trade winds...” or so the tourist office reports.

Lisa and I were heading to Cocos to visit my brother who lives there, and teaches kiteboarding. We decided to take the opportunity for some kayaking as well. We have never heard of anyone kayaking around the Cocos so thought it could be very interesting.

The West Island of Cocos has a population of 150, the Main Island about 500. We were staying on West Island for eight days.

The temperature ranges from 27-29C throughout the year! And it’s humid. Although we were told that the period of our stay was not as humid as it can get in summer.

Being in the trade winds we had a constant breeze of 20-35 knots.

I believe in summer there are days of no wind and extreme humidity! Rain? Yes, we had our fair share. It rains every day so you carry on with what you are doing in the wet or dry. Besides, it is hot enough not to worry. The best time to visit is May–September, outside the cyclones and wet season.

The Cocos has many areas where the water is very shallow, warm, clear and uncrowded. Surf? Yes, there is a bit. Groups come here for the 3-6m dumping surf on the coral reefs and in the process get trashed across the coral. We decided that maybe a bit of surf kayaking could wait another day.

About 50-100m off shore the ocean bottom drops almost vertically for some 3,000m. Inside the reef there are “holes” in the atoll where the bottom drops similar distances. Quite eerie.

The planes travelling to the Cocos are rather small, so the opportunity to take our own kayaks would have required us to pack them into a large container and have them shipped to and from the Island. This method takes about three months each way. Needless to say, we used what we could find on the island. There was no kayaking hire

company; actually there is only the one shop. So lots of searching, scrounging and begging was required, to find the three kayaks that did exist on the islands.

Were the kayaks ‘sea kayaks’ and were they seaworthy?

Of the two best kayaks, one was missing the front buoyancy tank porthole cover, while the other had a trifle leak necessitating emptying every hour. Neither had deck lines, knee braces or stability. They both turned like an ocean liner and punched through rather than over the waves. Still, they were good enough to go paddling in, even if they failed their seaworthiness tests.

Ah, but the paddles were magic. Good thick, heavy aluminum shafts with very flexible yet thick, plastic blades. They did have a fixed feather of 90 degrees (or more). But even more importantly, they would not fly away in the wind due to their onerous weight. We did notice that our biceps were noticeably larger by the end of our paddling, helped considerably by hours of massage to overcome the cramps and muscle overload.

So, due to these four safety



Above: Lisa in the better kayak  
Right: Hermit crab

concerns – dumping surf, bottomless ocean, heavyweight paddles and un-seaworthy kayaks, we decided to paddle inshore around the atoll. Here we were amongst sea turtles in knee to waist deep water - absolutely amazing. The turtles were surprised to have us near them and took off like a shot. As the water was so shallow they were not able to swim too fast which was fortunate as we paddled after them in our bathtubs. We chased them for a short distance until they tired, or our arms felt like they were about to fall off. Then they would casually swim near our kayaks after they realised we were not going to harm them. I even had one enormous one swim under my kayak, which due to the shallowness of the water, rubbed the underside of the kayak and almost flipped me. They are beautiful creatures, very inquisitive, strong and fantastic.

West Island is about 10km long and 500m wide, so on land a pushbike is best for getting around and exploring the island. Especially as the highest mountain is a mere 10m high! But watch out for all the large crabs that scurry across the road just ahead of you. They would run one way then suddenly turn and go

the other way. Despite our best endeavours to miss them, some were more suicidal than others.

Besides the crabs, there were chooks and various birds which were introduced a century or so ago. There are no predators on the island so they flourish. The only other animals are mice. Nothing dangerous that will eat, sting, bite or harm you. On the beaches were hundreds of hermit crabs. So funny to watch them lugging their shells around and hiding should you approach.

We managed to borrow a tinny to motor over to and past Home Island and on to Prison Island, which we walked all the way around, in about four minutes. Prison Island is a little island where years ago, prisoners were left with no way off. Then continued on to Deception Island, where all the ocean crossing boaties land. The boat trip was too far to tow our kayaks. Besides I think they would have sunk from the wash and maybe taken us down with them! We wandered around here for a while then put on snorkeling gear.



The water was so crystal clear; fish were everywhere. There was a little bit of coral reef with fish swimming through and around it. Then my brother took us to “The Rip”. As the name suggests, very fast flowing water. Once across we were into the real coral. The fish! Amazing varieties, colours and simply heaps of them. This was a fantastic place, where the fish allowed us to almost touch them. We also swam over a few reef sharks, which left us alone, fortunately.

Oh, yeah, we also kite boarded. Lots of “air time” and face plants ... but that’s another story.

Our eight days were marvelous. The Cocos is a fantastic place, though we recommend you send over a spare kayak three months ahead if you plan to visit.

# Paddling in Skye



*Above: Boat Selection*



**KAREN DARBY**

In June Tony and I spent nine days on the Isle of Skye with six of those days spent paddling. Skye gave us great paddling with fantastic scenery and interesting weather. While organising the trip we had communicated with various companies in the UK about our paddling plans and ended up booking with Gordon Brown at Skyak Adventures. The plan was for three days of instruction and/or paddling, two days off and then a three day camping trip.

I checked out the weather on Skye at the start of June. The Sydney winter was warmer. I rethought my packing and put in my warmest paddling gear, which I really doubted would be enough. Selim's Facebook likes of Mediterranean kayaking locations started to look very attractive. Then people started telling me that they wouldn't visit the west coast of Scotland in summer because of the midges.

Finally we arrived on Skye with no car, to discover that it was a 12 km round trip from our B&B to the nearest town, and even then we didn't get as far as the supermarket. On the positive side our B&B was lovely, it was a scenic walk to and from Broadford with views over the water and we picked a mostly dry week to visit.

## Day 1

Started with a briefing, we met some other paddlers coming out with us for the day and got to select our boat from the large collection of Valley boats lying around. During the week I paddled an Avocet LV, Avocet and Nordkapp LV. The Avocet LV was my favourite. Tony paddled Nordkapps; standard Nordkapp LV, carbon Kevlar Nordkapp LV, a Nordkapp and the Nordkapp Forti. I think he wants a Nordkapp LV for Christmas.

We drove to Ord and paddled in Loch Eishort. Though not challenging conditions it was a lovely location. This was a day with lovely warm and sunny weather, though sadly not enough swell to have fun playing with the kayaks in the rocks. This was the only day we had other paddlers along.

Gordon tried to find something to challenge us but the conditions were way too easy. Some seals seemed interested in us and started following, keeping us entertained. In addition, Gordon gave us plenty of technique suggestions to consider as we paddled.

At the end of the day I convinced one of the other kayakers to give us a lift to the far end of Broadford. A good result, we finally found the ATM and supermarket. At dinner we started listing all the things Gordon had discussed during the day and were surprised at how many ideas he had given us. I just need to remember to put them into practice. It was then only an 8km stroll back to our B&B.

## Day 2

The weather was completely different on Day 2. Low cloud, showers and plenty of wind. We geared up in wetsuits and headed over to the tide race at Kylerhea. The tide was flowing strongly as we arrived, then watching the car ferry crossing made us realise how strong the current was. Seals passed by at high speed with heads out of the water watching us.



Initially we paddled out into the current and attempted surfing on the waves. Though not enormous the wind-against-tide conditions meant the waves were steep and they were enough to keep me focused.

Then we moved over to an eddy and worked on crossing the eddy line into the current and back into the eddy. Gordon emphasized that he wanted us to have a plan before starting. His point was that if you don't plan your strokes you will revert back to your basic strokes rather than more effective stroke combinations. After a few turns working out the best combination of strokes to calmly get out into the moving water and back to the eddy it was time to repeat this with our eyes closed. I was surprised to find that I did a better job of it this with my eyes closed. I had to rely on feeling how the current was pushing the boat and make the strokes based on that. I was back in

the eddy calmly and quickly.

After lunch the tide wasn't running so we headed out to work on boat handling in the wind. Lots of interesting ideas for us to take away and practice, to improve our boat handling. As the current again increased it was back to an eddy for more boat handling. Gordon had us trying to do 360's

in our kayaks on the eddy line. He could do this and keep the boat almost in one place with only a relaxed stroke or two. Not so pretty when we tried it. We could spin the boat but travelled a fair way with the current. Tony then managed a credible effort, I followed him out only to completely mess up my edging and end up in the water. Maybe Gordon was being kind when he said people who are used to rolling in warm water often fail to roll the first time they hit the colder water. I certainly rushed my setup and the roll never happened. Something to think about if I'm ever paddling in colder waters and just assuming that I will have an effective roll to get me out of trouble.

The hot tub in the garden at Skyak HQ was perfect for warming up after my swim. That and the now traditional stroll into Broadford for dinner.

### Day 3

Warm, sunny, no wind and no swell. One of those paddling days when you have plenty of time to look around and marvel at where your kayak has taken you. We drove over to Elgol, dodged the touts competing to sell boat tours and paddled on glassy seas over to Loch Coruisk, a freshwater loch in the Black Cuillins.

This is a favourite destination for boat tours and walkers. I couldn't stop taking photos with the combination of glassy seas and the beautiful scenery behind. First lunch was on a lovely sandy beach near Loch Coruisk and then we paddled off to circumnavigate Soay. In most conditions the ocean side of Soay would be a somewhere to be very careful. It was very shallow for a long way out. With no swell we paddled close to the cliffs and even got out on the rocks for a second lunch in the sun. A detour in Elgol for ice cream completed an excellent day of paddling.

This was the summer solstice, at 10 pm we still had sun pouring through the window of our room. The amount of light at that time of year is incredible. Sunset was around 10.30 pm but it was only really dark for two hours from about midnight. You could spend hours taking photos as the light changed.

Top: Tony Murphy in a Tiderace at Kyclerhea,  
Below left: Looking at Loch Coruisk, Below right: Second Lunch at Soay



## The weekend

We decided to hire a car for the weekend. We got soaking wet in Portree, nearly blown off the headland at Uig, ate lunch in the sun on a lovely beach, walked in the Black Cuillins and travelled to the mainland to a beautiful harbour that even had palm trees.

## Day 4

Gordon had arranged for a local paddling guide and companion Donald Macpherson to take us on the camping trip. Unfortunately we had to work with a difficult weather forecast. Very strong northerlies were forecast for later on the second day and all of the third day. We also learned that northerlies on Skye come from the Arctic and it was going to get very cold. The forecast limited our options. We considered a couple of plans and decided to launch from out the front of the Skyak HQ, head down to Kyle of Lochalsh, past Kylerhea and camp at Sandaig Islands. From here we had various paddling



*Left: Karen and Tony in front of Skye Bridge; This page: Donald and Tony launching from Sandaig Islands*

options around the Knoydart Peninsula. This area is one of the most isolated areas of Britain and is accessible only by boat or foot.

Our trip started with another day of lovely weather and fantastic scenery. We paddled under the Skye Bridge to Kyle of Lochalsh where we stopped to resupply at the Coop. We met some uni students spending the summer break paddling up the West Coast. It sounded like an interesting adventure.

Most of the day was spent looking for sea otters, they are rumoured to live in this area. If you have

read Ring of Bright Water by Gavin Maxwell the book was written near our campsite for the night.

No otters, instead I saw a lot of seals. The seals loved following the kayaks but

disappeared underwater when you turned to look at them. Donald pointed out that if you paddled backwards the seals are happy to follow and you can watch them. This technique worked really well.

Assisted by the current we powered down to our campsite. Tony recorded 17 km/hour as we passed Kylerhea. The campsite was a beautiful location apart from a midge or two. I spent some time watching what I thought were sea otters only for Donald to get a good look at them and decide we were being tormented by baby seals.



Tony arriving at Islornsay



**Day 6**

I was too sick for paddling. Tony had a lot of fun launching from Camus Croise and heading downwind in about 20 knots to Armadale. Donald provided some ideas on downwind paddling, including...put the skeg up!

I would recommend paddling on Skye, it was fun and we came away with many technique ideas to consider. At times I cursed the so-called summer weather. However when I look back over our photos from the trip to Europe it is the ones from Skye that catch my attention. A truly beautiful part of the world.

<http://www.skyakadventures.com/>  
Gordon Brown's business

<http://www.explorehighland.com/>  
Donald's business

<http://www.strathgorm.co.uk/> - Our excellent B&B. Alison was a lovely host and very helpful.

**Day 5**

It rained all night and through the morning. The day started with no wind and the midges went crazy. I understand why some people just can't face camping on the west coast of Scotland. We launched in wet conditions and found the wind was against us. Not the forecast northerlies that we had planned for but a lovely headwind. In addition I had caught a cold and was losing

interest in paddling no matter how spectacular the location. Our warm B&B seemed a more pleasant option. By lunchtime I was happy to agree to heading back over to Skye. Donald planned well and landed us at Isleornsay with a warm pub to sit in while we waited for our transport.

As the gale force winds howled around the B&B that night I was happy with our decision.

Club Trip Tweets



**Sharon's Regular Saturday Morning Club Paddle**

Leader: Sharon Betteridge  
Paddlers: Grade 1-3  
Date: Saturday mornings

**Where:** Usually a venue on the eastern side of Sydney Harbour, but sometimes we launch from Malabar or Frenchmans Bay, or occasionally further afield.

**Who:** All grades of paddler – all you need are the three P's – a pulse, a paddle (and kayak) and a positive attitude. (If you haven't done your wet exit and swim, let me know and I can organise it).

**How:** By sea kayak.

**What:** A paddle of around 8 nautical miles (or around 15 kilometres for the landlubbers). With an obligatory stop at a café for morning tea and to share stories. Where we go depends on the weather and sea conditions and the skill level of the group.

**Why:** Because paddling is fun, socialising is great, Sydney Harbour is a beautiful waterway to explore and you can improve your fitness and practice a few skills along the way.



# Sea Kayaking in Greenland!

LISA MCCARTHY



**“As the pack ice closed in around us, I glanced uneasily to the shore, less than five metres away from where I sat in my kayak. It may as well have been five miles.**”



*Top: Lisa at the campsite near Aappilotoq*

*Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Sermerunerit Glacier, in Prins Christian Sund; Lunch spot Imerdlugtoq; In Prins Christian Sund, which leads to the east coast.*

From the top of an enormous rock off the point, Belinda cried ‘there’s a lead through there’ pointing and adding directives to Stan, in the forefront. I followed him cautiously through the fast moving blocks of ice of varying sizes and therefore, speed; all carried towards the sea by the outgoing tide. Behind us, and therefore out of sight, Mark and Belinda were moving as fast as humanly possible, to enable Belinda to get back into her kayak, then frantically following us through the quickly closing lead; they were having great difficulty in achieving this. Only through supreme efforts did they both escape the clutches of the ice, with Belinda only narrowly avoiding disaster.

After this episode, we realised how very lucky we were to have learnt our lesson regarding icebergs, pack ice and fast flowing currents, without anybody being injured (or worse) and no kayaks damaged.”

Sounds intriguing, doesn’t it? But where, when, how, etc. The questions were endless and logistics seemed insurmountable. However, knowing some people who had kayaked there the previous summer was a big ‘heads up’. The fact that they wanted to go back again to explore more of the area ... well, it all started to fall into place just nicely.

Just getting to our destination took quite some time; from Sydney to Copenhagen via Dubai; then to Narsarsuaq (Western Greenland), finally by helicopter to Nanortalik. Over 30 hours in travel time, excluding changeovers.

Our first view from the aircraft, flying over Greenland, was spellbinding; rugged, snowy mountains, long meandering fjords and an enormous number of icebergs, right below us. Our helicopter ride was fabulous, with views of steep sided fjords studded with icebergs.





Nanortalik seemed like a charming village; there wasn't time to notice much else. Grocery shopping was quite an adventure. Some food items were obvious, but as none of us understood Danish, let alone Greenlandic, I was a little apprehensive about many items on the shelves. Ones that showed pictures were usually helpful. The rest was guesswork, with fingers crossed.

The departure of four heavily laden kayaks, with 32 days of food on-board, was observed with polite disinterest by passers-by. It never ceases to amaze me when that enormous pile of gear actually fits into my kayak!

Belinda warned us to take as many photos of the few icebergs floating around the bay, as we probably wouldn't see many more on the trip. Well, she couldn't have been any more wrong! With a glorious sunny day, no wind, and icebergs galore,

we set off south east, following the rocky shoreline. There was much excitement as we spotted some musk oxen ambling along the grass above the shore. These animals live much further north as a rule; it turned out these ones had been introduced to this particular island.

The plan had been to follow the coastline towards the island Nunarsuaq, before heading north into the extensive fjord system and exploring these, whilst still working our way east. Poor weather, rest days and days off for hiking had been factored in for a trip of this length.

We were graced with outstanding weather for almost the entire trip. Most days were so calm, it was similar to paddling on a mill pond, except the views were better. If this trip had been graded, it would have been an easy to medium trip. The trouble being of course, that this could never have been relied

upon. We fully expected many days of poor weather, with fierce winds such as the local Piteraqaq being quite common.

(Despite) Being so well prepared, due to the abnormal calm conditions, it came about that we reached our intended most eastern point, part way along the Prins Christian Sund well ahead of time. This allowed us to stay in some camps for two nights, affording time to do day hikes in certain areas. This proved to be a good relief from non-stop kayaking every day, and enabled Belinda to add to her professional photography collection.

Our four plus weeks found us constantly in awe of Greenland's spectacular scenery. We visited the tiny remote villages of Frederiksdal and Aappilotoq, absorbing as much of the local culture as we could. Nestled beneath towering snow-capped massifs, in protected bays,



these communities still lived in a relatively simple fashion. With no cars or roads, just boats and helicopters as the only means of transport, they were cut off from the mainstream, as we know it. Yep, they even gave the kayaking away, as tinnies are easier, and faster than polar bears & orcas.

We encountered some fast flowing currents, as the coastline was scattered with many islands. Not so bad, you might say, until you see a gigantic iceberg zooming along, and heading your way. Close to Aappilotoq, we observed the first of the 'pack' ice. We had to be careful, as the tide was ebbing, thus pushing them towards us. I also grew tense, as pack ice = polar bears. In Frederiksdal, one local thought us crazy, as we didn't carry a firearm, or any flares. Our leader had said it wasn't essential, but I did have a number of sleepless nights, particularly near Prins Christian Sund. This long 'Sound' is a thoroughfare from the east coast to the southern point. It also

provides a corridor for polar bears, who travel on the pack ice along it. I wish I had known this before we left. Bedtime saw me with my (tiny) knife next to my head, and our gas burner on my other side. If a polar bear should attack our tent during the night, I figured I could use my knife, and maybe singe its fur... just before it bit my head off. Then I heard about the Orcas, which got me worried again. Happily, we saw neither polar bears nor orcas, but we did see a few arctic foxes.

Paddling alongside the highest unbroken vertical sea cliff in the world was quite a buzz, but nothing really prepares one for the spectacle of an iceberg which fractures with an ear-splitting thunderous crack, like a canon shot, disintegrating into several (large) pieces, which then roll in the water until they reach their new equilibrium. This happened frequently, and was rather nerve wracking when it occurred whilst on the water.

On one occasion, Mark was the designated 'kayaker' model, with our request for him to paddle first towards, then to veer off past, an enormous tower of ice, which would provide splendid photographic opportunities for Belinda and I. Neither of us understood why he seemed reluctant to go past it, until it was our turn. Upon a closer approach, I noticed the structural fracture that spanned its entire vertical height. This was a matter of some concern, until I then saw the shattered, mangled mess of what its other side consisted of. I paddled harder than I have ever paddled in my life, until I got past the 'squeezy' bit between it and the steep, rocky shore where I could breathe easy again.

We explored all the fjords to the north of Aappilotoq. At the end of these waterways, were glaciers. Some had receded to the point of being five kilometres further back from where they were shown on the map. Who says global warming doesn't exist? Quite often,

there were birds nesting on the narrow ledges on either side of the glaciers. We frequently saw seals, sometimes in large numbers. They were usually inquisitive, but this is much to their detriment. The Inuits just shoot them.

Our extra 'spare' days allowed us to paddle the entire length of the Tasermiut Fjord, some 70km long. If that doesn't appeal, you can also do it on a jet boat. This massive glacier directly descends from the main Greenland Ice Cap, and was a wonder to behold. Paddling one's kayak right up close and personal to a Glacier as it spills into the ocean isn't what most people come across every day. To describe the experience accurately just escapes me. I could waffle on for some time, but that would still be inadequate. Let's just say it was an awesome, magical moment, a true 'must do'. It was one of several glaciers we paddled to that spilled into the ocean. It was fantastic seeing monster icebergs that had calved floating at the tongue of their glacier. But it was not a place to be when an iceberg calves, unless you wanted a few forced rolls!!

With the conditions so forgiving, we hardly used our cold or wet weather gear. Mostly, we pondered upon the substantial amount of warm gear

that we had brought along with us, at considerable cost. Those two extra thermals? Well, it turned out we didn't need them, because the weather was so good. Even so, we all used our pogies several times. I always used gloves, but the other three usually did not. Mark and I wore dry suits every day, along with top & bottom Polartec base layers. The others wore similar base layers, with dry top and dry bottom combinations. The dry suits were sometimes a bit too warm, but, only a little bit. If you dress for immersion, then you can't do without a dry suit. If it were much windier, wetter etc. then all our excess clothing would have been used.

Finding campsites was sometimes challenging, as there aren't really any good maps of Greenland, and the best we could get didn't show much. What would appear potentially decent usually ended up being sheer cliffs to the sea, or big bouldery 'beaches'. River or creek mouths were normally the best. As the tidal range is two metres, every night involved some serious grunt-work to move the kayaks high enough, then a reversal in the morning. However, there was no such thing as a camp without extraordinary views. There is

nothing to compare with camping amongst vibrant wildflowers, with blueberries within easy picking range, with jagged, snow-capped mountains surrounding and an imposing glacier on the other side of 'your' creek. And, we had them all to ourselves!

Hiking through the area is incredibly rewarding as well. Although very steep, we did not encounter any scrub as such, and being granite, the rock was easily negotiated. Occasionally we would come across an animal pad path, otherwise there were no tracks to follow. From these high vantage points, we could absorb the stunning scenery, but not necessarily escape the flies. To our astonishment, the vast mass of ice underneath the water line of the icebergs was incredibly large. We vowed not to paddle over anything that could have the potential to tip over, which may take us along with it.

We spent 32 days paddling through scenery almost too incredible to describe. I fully expected the trip to be exciting and memorable, but it definitely far exceeded my expectations. I loved the trip and can't wait to go back again, perhaps even in 2016 or 2017 I hope you can join us!



*Opposite page: Remote village of Frederiksdal. This page, Left: Campsite at Narssap sarq fjord; Right: Mark in Amitsuarsuk Fjord*

Mark Dabbs at glacier end  
of Kangersuneq Qingo Dleq  
Fjord (Greenland)  
(Photo by Lisa MCarhty)

