

Salt

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB
ISSUE 100 | MARCH 2016

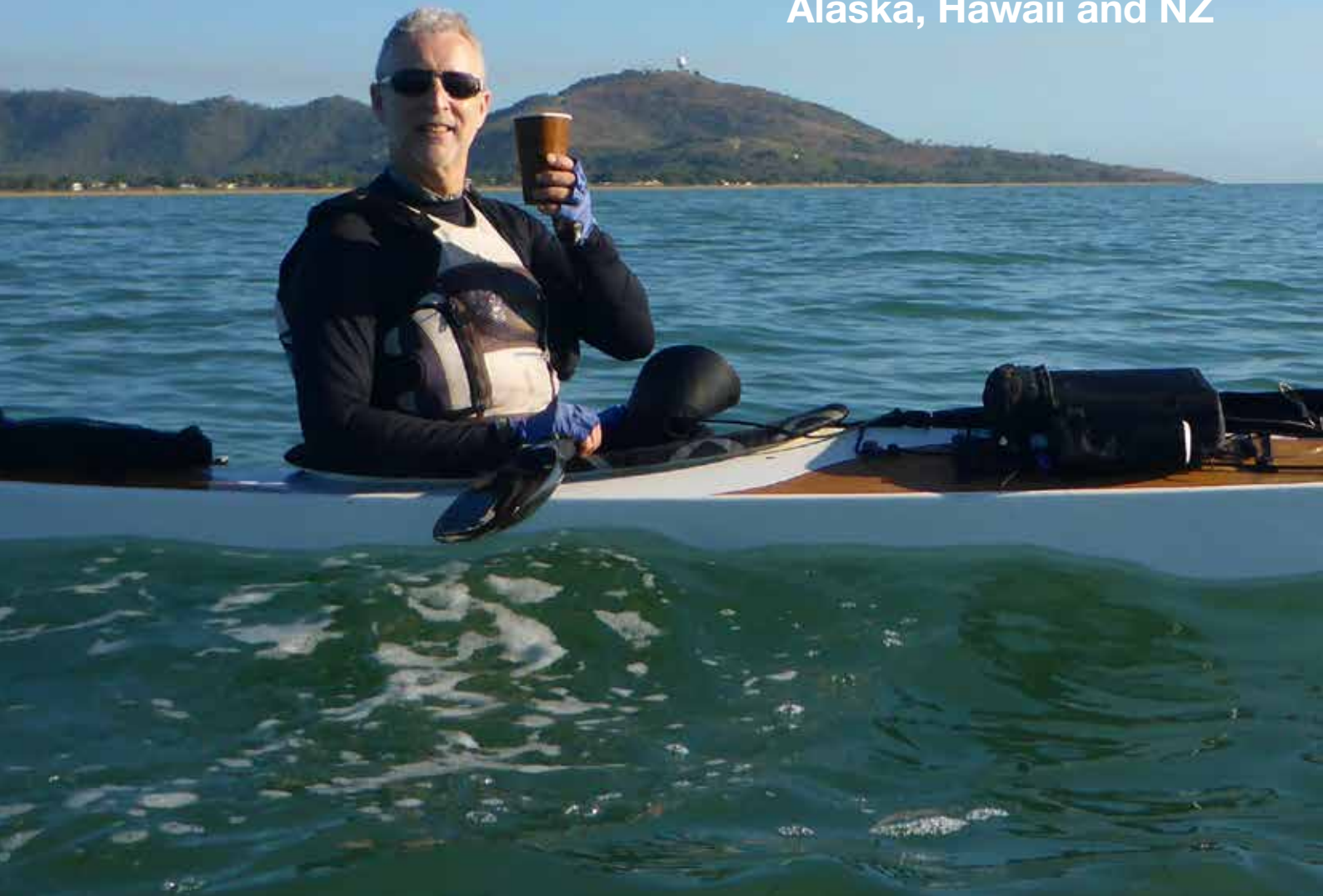


100th Edition!

Memories and milestones inside

PLUS

N.S.W. Challenge Updated
Whitsundays Preparation
Kayak Building Software
Alaska, Hawaii and NZ





Fernando entering the water in typical Fernando fashion

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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

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

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

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



From the President's Deck

CAMPBELL TILEY

members, both on trips and training through the Club calendar as well as ad-hoc trips with paddling friends who I met through the Club. This progression over some 6 or 7 years from a beginner focussed on sorting out my forward stroke and self-rescue skills to becoming a more competent paddler with the potential to consider more adventurous trips with the appropriate planning, company and support has been personally extremely rewarding. It also exemplifies some of the expressed objects of the club to advance sea kayaking with a focus on safety and skills development for members. I have a lot more to learn and will continue to look for opportunities to progress my kayaking skills and knowledge.

My advice to anyone wanting to get value from their Kayak Club membership is get involved with as many Club activities as you can and also look for opportunities to contribute to the club such as volunteering at Rock n Roll. The more members you meet, the stronger your paddling network in the club will be and this will increase your paddling opportunities.

Several days and a rather long car shuffle later, I arrived at the start and set up my tent at Cockle Creek. Time to press the send button and hit the sack. I'll see you after the trip at Rock n Roll.

See you on the water.

Congratulations to Martin Vanderpoel, Nerissa Worwood and John Atkins for working towards and recently gaining their Sea Skills certification; and to David Fisher and Rae Duffy for attaining Sea Instructor. Credit also to Adrian Clayton and Stuart Trueman for running much of the necessary training, Stuart for these assessment days and to the other instructors who contributed.

Sea Skills is a significant demonstration of personal skill and knowledge, all directed towards allowing you to safely expand your paddling horizon. Clearly you can develop skills without seeking confirmation through certification to an Australian Canoeing standard such as this, but Sea Skills can be a step towards leading trips and, eventually, instructor. Remember the support and assistance

that you have received from others in the Club and consider gradually improving your skills and certification so you can help new members down the track. We need a steady trickle of members through Sea Skills, Guide and Instructor certification to maintain the Club's commitment to training and posting paddles for members, so do yourself a favour and sign up for the Sea Skills training and assessment opportunities that will be available through this year.

When I wrote this intro for the magazine, I was up to my ears in logistics trying to get work and home duties under control so I could escape on a paddling expedition in South-West Tasmania. The paddling, trip planning and kayak camping skills that got me to this point have all been gleaned through the efforts of other club

Front Cover photo:

Mark Pearson paddling off Townsville in July 2015, with a just-found coffee cup.

Mark is one of our longest participating members, was one of our most prolific editors and (perhaps arguably) remains the most colourful contributor to the magazine.

I should point out that David Winkworth has contributed by far the most articles throughout the 100 editions, while Norm Sanders is runner-up. (Editor)

(Source: The new magazine index, sorted by author)

Check your Membership Records!

When you next visit the website, please check your membership details. If you're receiving Salt every few months, then your name and address are correct. But the other fields matter too. For statistical and insurance purposes, please check and update your:

- mobile number
- emergency phone number
- date of birth and gender.

Looking for an old article in Salt?

Go to our website and download the Contents from the Magazine Archive. It covers all years from 1989 to 2015 in an easy to use spreadsheet. Search by location, author or any word that's likely to be in the title!

Obituary

Dragomir Pejić

In January 2016 club member Dragomir Pejić passed away after a battle with gastric cancer. His passing came as a surprise to many of us, as he had kept this news to himself and his family following the diagnosis in March last year. Only a month prior to the diagnosis, Dragomir took part on a wilderness coast trip from Boydtown to Eden (Salt 97).

I have shared many trips with Drago. We did our sea skills assessment together and we continued to gain experience as we learned together. Soon after sea skills we enjoyed a week of paddling immediately before Rock and Roll at Currarong. On an ideal surfing day on Bundeena bar, I recall Drago expressing how he was getting the hang of using alternating edges with a stern rudder to get longer rides. When you have someone on a trip like Dragomir, who so obviously enjoys sea kayaking, his pleasure is infectious. He loved trips that explored new places and was sensible about challenges and genuinely appreciated the opportunities that the NSWSKC created for him. He has shared some of his experiences via the club magazine; a recent one was about his solo trip in Croatia (Salt 93).

His two grown sons and his wife Snez have experienced a very sad loss. He will be fondly remembered by many of us, so on behalf of his fellow paddlers, we pass on our deepest sympathy to Snez and the family.

Megan Pryke

PS. Look out for the Dragomir Pejić memorial paddle on Saturday 2 April on the trip calendar.



From the Editor's Desk

STEVE HITCHCOCK



I've heard some rumblings that my photo above is neither current nor kayaking related, and should be updated. True on both counts. But in my defence, the photo reflects the younger and agile person that lurks within me, as well as the stuck-behind-the-desk job that this role requires. For those that grumble, you can see the old man that I really am in kayaking gear in Dee's section several pages further on.

It's been fun working on this 100th edition, chatting to David Winkworth and related parties, rekindling the crocodile story. Plus I'm very appreciative of Dee Ratcliffe and Ruby Gamble for putting together the collections from past editors and popular stories from all our magazines. Thank you for all your hard work; collectively they are a great portrayal of our first 100 magazines.

Also in this edition, we have a number of technical articles, which I know are popular, including a recap on GPS use and a review of

the Kayak Foundry software. Cathy Nolan includes a contribution about lower back issues and warns me that she is now running out of body parts to discuss.

Megan provides an update on the N.S.W. Challenge, which is down to the last four paddles now, quite a success from all accounts. Then we have several trip reports from travelling members, including Hawaii, Alaska, New Zealand and Halong Bay. My Thames paddle seems a little insignificant in that context.

So thanks again to all who have provided material for this issue. To the many others, please don't procrastinate; send in your stories and I'll help you when help is required. The more people that submit mean more variety for us all to read.

And finally, special thanks as usual to Ruby Gamble who turns the stories you submit into the professional artwork before your eyes.

Congratulations to those listed below who have attained AC Awards:

Sea Skills

Martin Vanderpool
John Atkins
Nerissa Worwood

Sea Instructor

Rae Duffy
David Fisher

Hi Steve & Ruby

It's a great job you and Ruby have done with Issue 99 of Salt. Best yet! Can the bar go any higher?

What I liked about #99 was the balanced spread of articles – technical stuff, injury prevention tips and fascinating trip reports from destinations all around far flung places. Is there anywhere in the world where the Lisa/Mark combo haven't paddled?

Cheers, Adrian

Hi Steve & Ruby

Great job Steve & Ruby! Just got home and found the magazine waiting for me. I've scanned through all the pages - so many wonderful articles that I can't wait to read. I can tell that there's an awful lot of work behind it - the efforts have been worth it, well done.

Dee

Training Coordinator Report

STUART TRUEMAN



Worth doing Sea Skills?

It comes as a surprise to many NSWSKC members to find out what is involved in gaining the Sea Skills Award.

It would be easy to assume that making a kayak go forward, sideways, left, right then round and round would be enough to gain a sea kayaking award. The reality is that these skills can be just enough to get us into trouble if we don't consider the environment we paddle in. A good, strong, forward stroke, confident bracing and OK roll will get us out to open waters. A southerly change, building swell, dumping surf and not being able to identify a boating channel can get us into a helicopter or kayak repair shop.

Sea Kayaking is many things to many people. Your sea kayak may be happy getting wet for a few hours each week as it takes you for a morning coffee. Or it may be straining to get out of the garage to 'smash out' the next 50km helping you train for a Bass Strait Crossing. Whichever, to get the best out of the day, thought has to be given to more than "Does my PFD go with my jacket?"

But what could be more important than looking cool in your kayak? Well, that's where the Sea Skills award can help.

There are many aspects to consider when venturing out onto the open water, exploring these will soon distract you.

If you have gained the Sea Skills award, it means you have reached a benchmark allowing those

putting on trips to consider you for inclusion. Without knowing you, they can assume your level of skill, fitness and knowledge and what you are able to handle. Taking a group out with no glaring variations in ability considerably contributes to the success of the day.

It may be that the next trip you intend to do is to Tasmania. If that is the case then you should be able to turn up and confidently pass an assessment for Sea Skills. If you intend to do a committing sea kayak trip and you fail a Sea Skills Assessment you need to ask yourself some questions.

When you strive for the Sea Skills Award through the NSWSKC you will be trained by very experienced Sea Kayakers, most of whom have completed expeditions in remote areas. Expeditions give Sea Kayakers experience in the best and worst of what to expect. On an expedition you can't cherry pick the day's paddle, such as deciding not to paddle along the cliffs into a head wind, preferring instead to paddle down the river to the café. There is often no choice in where to paddle, and little option as to when to paddle.

It's worth remembering that experienced paddlers have worked out that matching kit is not that important on a wilderness trip, and it's all about considering and coping with the environment. That's what Sea Skills prepares you for.

NSW SEA KAYAKER

Newsletter of the NSW Sea Kayak Club Inc.

P.O. Box A1045 Sydney South, NSW 2000

Number 1

December, 1989

100 issues of the NSW Sea Kayak Club magazine

DEE RATCLIFFE

Following two initial meetings in August 1989, a meeting held on 12 September 1989 at the Burwood PCYC led to the formation of NSW Sea Kayak Club with a club newsletter titled NSW Sea Kayaker. John Bamberry became the first editor.

A list of all subsequent editors is available on the club website, in the Honour Roll. They are John Bamberry, Graham Mundy, Patrick Dibben, Alex Preema, Leigh Hemmings, Mark Pearson, David Whyte, Ian Phillips, Richard McNeill, Ian Coles, Sue Webber, Jacqui Stone, Dee Ratcliffe, Mark Schroeder and Steve Hitchcock. Fifteen in all, serving from one to four years.

The magazine began with requests for articles to be submitted on 5¼ or 3½ inch floppy disks, although handwritten or typed copy were also welcome. Early issues included the Club Calendar and meeting minutes, all in plain mono typeset print with photocopied A4 pages stapled together. Images were hand-drawn, maps were photocopied and photos were few and ill-defined. Sometimes errors were corrected by simply scribbling out the typed mistake and handwriting the correction. The typefaces varied and all sorts of photocopied articles were stitched together.

Issue 4 featured hand drawings of sea kayak sail designs, acquired from the Maatsuyker Canoe Club. In those early days the club had an editor as well as an editorial committee. Over time Classified Ads were included as well as information about skills awards – the Internet not being the readily available repository it is now. Issue 6 brought with it a call for a club logo. Issue 8 had a six-page document on the Definition of a Sea Kayak. Those early magazines were considerably shorter than more recent editions. Issue 14 reveals the use of word processing software with improved layouts, and also details how to access the club calendar via a dedicated recorded information phonenumber. By Issues 16 and 17 there are three column layouts, improved photo reproduction quality, and table layout for the trips calendar – newer technologies are emerging!

Issue 18 informs that the club spent \$2195 on the purchase of a photocopier, to be used in the magazine production (subsequently sold by Issue 26, early in 1996). By Issue 22 a number of regular columns have appeared, including the first Flotsam and Jetsam, and From the Net columns and



the magazine reaches 16 pages. Issue 25 reports on the club's Internet presence. Issue 27 has a Contact List with names, addresses and phone numbers of club members. The first colour, front page pictures, appear in Issue 32 and 37, however regular use of colour does not happen until Issue 49. Issue 41 advertises the club's new Internet Discussion Group, an email-based method for club members to communicate. Issue 44 was a record issue, running to 76 pages.

The 'Internet Discussion Group' mailing list for NSW Sea Kayak Club members is possibly the most important feature of the Club's Internet services.

Issue 41

By the time Issue 50 came along the magazine was in a regular format with modern technologies making its production an easier task (in some ways). A number of the editors have reflected on their time and share their reminiscences.



Mark Pearson

Editor 1995-97

I was Editor from 1996-7. Or was it 1995-6? Anyhow in those days we didn't have all the modern equipment to produce the glossy modern version of SALT. Luxury I say! Back in the 90s I'd spend days and nights cutting fresh reeds out of Lake Burley Griffin, drying them in the hot sun then crushing them using an old laundry press to make sheets of coarse papyrus. Each NSW Sea Kayaker scroll was then handwritten in ferrous sulphate ink using a simple quill pen made out of a pelican feather. And I never complained once, you just accepted things in those days!

But seriously, not having a computer at home, I was forced into using my employer's version of MS Publisher to put together the contributions. So I spent many a night and weekend at my workplace every couple of months. And MS

Publisher was a fiddly bloody programme - was always difficult to neatly fill the dreaded 'white space' in the three column format of the day. Physical photos were sent to me and I would scan them carefully to produce gloriously fuzzy black and white images. I recall that each edition took me about 40 hours of labour to get the 'master' ready for photocopying.

The photocopying process was enabled by club member Chris Soutter generously allowing the Club to use the large photocopier of his employer (a 'Big 5' accountancy firm). It was a team effort, about four of us would turn up to crank out the 200 copies of the magazine, and then label the envelopes and pack the magazines in. So this process was basically free to the club – these of course were the good old days when the membership fee was

\$20. I remember that producing a magazine that opened like a book was a massive breakthrough after the initial few years when they were simply stapled at one corner.

I enjoyed my time as editor as it was a creative pastime, and to actually hold the final master copy in my hand after all the hard work was a small triumph. Being editor also gave me the opportunity to commandeer the rather tame Flotsam & Jetsam column. I decided to transform it into an off-beat commentary on club events, with an emphasis on the adventures and mishaps of some of the various high profile club 'personalities' of the day. This cost me several friendships but on reflection it was all worth it. I never really liked Dirk Stuber or Nick Gill anyway.

14-15/11/92

**"Rock and Roll" weekend - Merimbula. Learn to roll your kayak RELIABLY, surf, re-enter and roll self rescue. Course notes provided (free), superb coastal paddling Bar-B-Que at night. An indication from probable starters would be appreciated A.S.A.P. Competent rollers are most welcome to roll up and help..(no pun intended!)
Contact David Winkworth (064) 951527 (H)**

*Issue 14 - Notice about
Rock n Roll event*



David Whyte

Editor 1997-99

I was the editor in the late nineties, taking over from Mark Pearson, with Issue 33. I enjoyed the creativity of producing the magazine using Microsoft Publisher to layout all the photos and text. It was often challenging getting articles and the Internet wasn't as widespread then meaning articles were often posted on CDs or in some cases even hand written and I would type them up. Mark was always reliable with his witty take on events even if the truth suffered - but only a little.

A large part of producing the mag was converting photos from slides or prints into a digital form. I don't think anyone had digital cameras

then but I had a slide scanner, which would do both slides and negatives. Originally the mag was a series of A4 prints that were stapled in the top corner. I came up with the idea of converting to A3 and folding in the middle with staples down the centre making it more like a magazine. The idea stuck and it has been a magazine format every since though the printing quality has improved dramatically.

I produced a few colour covers but wasn't the first as Mark had previously produced a colour cover. I did do a colour edition that featured the blood and gore from when Arunas was attacked by the

crocodile on their Thursday Island trip.

Once I had it all laid out I would drop off a CD at a local publisher who would produce all the printouts but not stapled. The Canberra pod would meet and we would staple them together and put into envelopes. Eventually the printing firm would print and staple and we just put the mag into an envelope. I believe, but am not sure, that in the end the printing company also posted them out as well from a mailing list that we provided. I was the editor for two years and enjoyed the job though it was quite a bit of work.

Turnbull

Malcolm

Clockwise from below: Issue 8 - Options for our club logo, Issue 25 - The NSWSKC goes online, Issue 30 - Look who was once a member!

by Internet Correspondent
Jim Croft

Following endorsement of the principle at the recent AGM at Honeymoon Bay, the NSWSKC now has a presence on the Internet World Wide Web, joining the ranks of several other kayak and canoe clubs around the world.

For the moment, as it is being developed, the site can be found at;

<http://155.187.10.12/jrc/kayak/>





Dee Ratcliffe

Editor 2010-12

I guess I just didn't jump back fast enough and exited the 2010 NSW SKC AGM as the freshly-minted editor of the club magazine, NSW Sea Kayaker.

The first issue was a huge challenge. I twisted the arms of friends, wringing out stories and articles. I opened Adobe InDesign, the software used by the previous editor. Fortunately I had a work deal, which allowed me cheap access to it. I stared at the unfamiliar layouts, the unfamiliar commands and cried. Jacqui Stone, my predecessor, came to my aid like a fairy godmother. She held my hand and walked me through the most important steps. She handed me a document with key instructions. She wiped away my tears.

I'd never been an editor before and had no training in graphic design so this venture really was a new endeavour. I quickly decided not to change much with the magazine layout. My time would be better spent on content, on gathering and sharing stories, images, reviews and technical articles from our club members. The club's committee was highly supportive and paid for me to attend a WEA training weekend on Adobe InDesign.

There were a few constraints to work around: the number of pages had to be divisible by four as printing was done on A3 sheets; best use needed to be made of the

colour on the front and back page spreads as well as the four-page colour spread in the centre of the magazine, the rest being mono. Adverts needed to be fitted in. There was the constant jigsaw of fitting in text beside images. Jacqui's template for the all-important Contents page guided me each issue.

Selecting the right image for the cover was always a challenge. Often a photo sent to me jumped out and declared itself highly-suited to being placed on the cover, for example, Issue 80 with Adrian Clayton's image of a hooded kayaker using a pool noodle, or Issue 81 with Nick Gill's image of his held-together-by-duct-tape very damaged kayak. Once the image was selected I needed to pick a colour for the banding on the front; each issue saw me with many magazines spread on the floor, looking for a colour that worked with the image and didn't repeat any recent front cover.

Advertisement was interesting. I didn't have time to chase new clients, and had very little time to maintain contact with existing clients. Social networking was becoming increasingly popular as a way for businesses to reach their target audience, often a much wider audience than that of our club's membership. So over my time, the ads dwindled and I was happy with that. It allowed more

space for displaying the colour photos from members. Luckily the magazine did not need the money from selling space to sustain it. While about half of a member's annual fee went towards the cost of magazine production, the club coffers continued to act as a "magic pudding".

Once I had completed the magazine, it was wrangled into a PDF format. I sent a copy to Peter Osman for proofreading. Peter's valuable contribution included not just error correction; he also kept an eye out for any matter that could be of a 'political' nature and often provided valuable advice. With Peter's tick of approval, I then sent the file to our publishers in North Sydney. Jacqui had given me another document on all the settings needed. I carefully followed these instructions, never daring to alter any. The publisher printed one copy and sent it to me via courier. It was always a nerve-wracking moment as I opened that envelope and checked. I'd give the okay to the publisher; club secretary/treasurer Rae Duffy would email them the Excel spreadsheet with names and addresses. The publisher took care of printing and distribution, which lessened the load tremendously.

Despite my initial crises, being editor was a wonderful way to interact with the wide world of sea kayaking.



Mark Schroeder

Editor 2012-13

In commenting on my time as editor, the first thing I want to say is “*mea culpa*”... Yes folks, I cheated, and I believe I was the first editor ever to stoop so low!

To explain: I have an advertising business and unlike probably any other editor I was able to draw on professional design and artwork skills - I had an employee do it for me. I did this because of the size of the task. You see the club magazine editor isn't just an editor. He/she also needs to produce the print-ready artwork, which is a distinctly separate task requiring completely different skills – it's really a two person job. I knew I could pull together an editorial stance, extract and shepherd the stories, curate the pics and so on, but unlike my predecessor Dee I didn't have it in me to attend a WEA course to learn the necessary publishing program skills, nor would I have time to apply them. Remembering I sit next to an expert in said skills, I took the easy way out, though I did of course pay for it in wages. The wages of (my) sin, you might say!

By the same token, this freed me up to concentrate purely on the editorial aspects of the magazine I wanted to address; the kind of stories to be included, the overall look of the thing, the quality of printing including use of colour. More specifically:

I wanted more stories about exploration at sea. This meant opening up the sources of material

beyond club members. I rationalised there's tons of highly readable and educational stuff being generated by the broader paddling community here and overseas. I definitely didn't want external material to dominate, and it certainly made filling the pages of the magazine easier. Privately I also figured that we, as a club, ought to be doing – and sharing – enough of interest to fill the mag, and if we weren't, well, maybe a little external inspiration would help push us along a bit. But perhaps the best part of including articles by people around the world who I greatly admire, some of them absolute legends of our sport, is that it gave me an excuse to engage them in conversation. This I really enjoyed – a true highlight of the job. And the fact that these legends were so freely forthcoming was gratifying and made me realise we are part of a great international community.

I wanted to better utilise our best internal resources and this meant including articles by members who have blogs, even if it meant re-publishing something that had been posted online. I wanted to incentivise member submissions; after all they do require quite some effort and fame alone didn't seem to be cutting it! So I established the “Saltiest Submission” award and secured Expedition Kayaks' sponsorship of the prize. I hope this is having an effect, but the fact remains that chasing members' submissions remains a drain on the editor's time.

I wanted to experiment with digital editions to see if we could reduce the cost associated with paper printing. And so we published the first (and so far only) pure digital edition of the magazine. Wow, this was controversial! After copping some significant complaints as well as support via email, I enjoyed a vigorous open discussion at the following Rock n Roll. What I learned is that the digital publishing platform I used was probably too tricky for many people, there are many who simply don't read things online.

I wanted to call it something that captured the romance and passion of sea kayaking better than NSW Sea Kayaker. This was a scary one. Changing the name of a well-loved and well-established entity is always going to be controversial and the dangers are many. To his credit, the club President at the time, Dave Fisher, fully backed me and gave me the confidence to rename the magazine Salt ...and not a word of criticism have I ever heard about it!

Overall I was pleased with the newly laid out publication (despite ‘cheating’!) I was a little concerned this may have made subsequent editors' lives harder, however, so far so good and current editor Steve is made of stern enough stuff that he's found ways to keep it up...and build on it which is fantastic and he's to be roundly applauded. As are all my predecessors who created and developed the magazine in the first place.



Steve Hitchcock

Editor 2014-16

This 100th edition of our club magazine marks my 8th delivery to you, a mere drop in the ocean over 26 years of Club history. While eight editions are certainly more than I expected when I cautiously took on this role a couple of years ago, I have no regrets. It's been a fantastic journey.

The committee was a little desperate for Mark Schroeder's replacement, when I contacted Campbell and offered to help. I had no previous experience in editing, and knew very few of the club's members. No problem I thought. How hard can it be?

Like many volunteer clubs, our committee glimpsed my semi-raised hand, and enthusiastically welcomed me to the fold, without any qualifications, experience or credential checks. My job had started, and as it turned out, the Mac files from Mark were incompatible with my PC and I had no knowledge of the required software called Adobe CS6. Mark had created a slick looking magazine, using professional software and resources, which I couldn't open and if I had, I couldn't read.

So there was early panic. I was somewhat desperate at the start, seeking and collecting stories from unknown folk and wondering how I was going to fill the pages. Then arguments broke out as my student

daughter unsuccessfully attempted the magazine layout. Finally, I bribed an old friend with a free dinner to finish the task. She said it was a one-off job.

The Melbourne printer stressed me further. No commitment to dates and no communication along the way. The truck went AWOL, with magazines and envelopes arriving from different sources on different dates. Then finally, my local postie over-charged me \$279, which took three months to recover. I don't use his services any more.

So that was my first edition. Late, over-budget and somewhat shorter than previous versions.

The good news is that the magazine and my job have improved substantially since then. To all those thinking about a committee or editing role, let me list the highlights.

- Recruiting Tim Wolstencroft and then Ruby Gamble to do the artwork and layout, has been the biggest help to this role. At a volunteer level, it is much more manageable and twice as enjoyable with two people than with one.
- Getting to know great members of the kayaking world has been a wonderful experience. While there are too many to name, it has been an honour to be rubbing shoulders with three of the four famous kayaking circumnavigators of Australia.

- There is a great privilege about being the first to receive and read member's stories from around Australia and the globe, and marveling in their exploits. I get to see very many photos of these trips, then judiciously choose the best ones to accompany the story.

- Commercial contributors are hard to find and even harder to retain. I value their contributions and really hope they get value from their commitments to the magazine. Special thanks go to Expedition Kayaks, Electric Water, Davlin and the annual Rock 'n' Roll sponsors.

- Amongst the articles that stand out the most to me, were the Club's 25-year Anniversary Weekend, Stuart Trueman's Circumnavigation of Britain, Jason Beachcroft's Australian Expedition Interview and the tell-all confessions by those paddlers who have come to grief and lived to tell the tale.

Today, the magazine still relies on contributions from you first and foremost. As editor, I prepare all the documents in Word and chase up high-resolution photos over a 4-8 week period. Then Ruby uses Adobe CS6 to massage these into 52 pages over a further four weeks, up to the final proof-reading checks. Finally, I lodge the printable PDF to our Sydney printer, who takes around one week to print and return the magazine in pre-labeled envelopes ready for me to lodge at a friendly Post Office. I've recently

cleaned up the database and negotiated bulk mail postage rates, which simplifies these final stages before it arrives in your mailbox.

The role is part editor, part project manager. I take pride in managing your submissions, streamlining the work for Ruby, delivering on-time, on-budget, a professional looking, quality produced, error-free, diverse content, consistent length magazine, to our members. It starts and ends with you.

Oh, and printing a drone picture on the cover of issue #99 was a first for the club!

Left to right: Issue 5 - Range of kayaks used, Issue 28 - Survey about kayaks used.

Seafarer
Estuary
Pittarak
Greenlander
Greenlander
Roscoe
Mirage
Greenlander
Pittarak
Mermaid
Nordkapp

	NUMBER OWNED	BOUGHT			RATING		% WOULD BUY AGAIN	
		New	S/Hand	Self Built	Dog	Good		Excellent
MIRAGE	18	15	3			9	9	89%
PUFFIN	11	8	2			8	3	73%
RAIDER	11	11	0			4	7	100%
PITTARAK	11	9	2			4	5	64%
G'LANDER	10	1	8	1		5	5	70%
SKERRAY	3	2	1			2	1	100%
OSPREY	2	2				1	1	100%
SPECTRUM	2	2				2		100%
SEAFARER	6	3	3			6		33%
TASMAN 19	3	3			1	2		0%
ESTUARY/PLUS	4	3	1			4		50%
SEAMASTER	2	2				1	1	0%
MERMAID	2	2				1	1	100%
ROSCOE	1	1				1		100%
BLUE MARLIN	1	1				1		0%
PHYSEGAR	1	1					1	0%
S. AURORA	1	1				1		0%
CHINOOK	1		1				1	100%
KAKADU	1	1				1		0%
PINTAIL	1	1						100%
D. APOSTLE	1	1					1	0%
S. DUNGBEETLE	2			2			2	100%
S.W.GREENLAND PLY	1			1		1		100%
OWN DESIGN	1			1			1	0%
	97	70	21	5	1	54	39	

NSWSKC around the world and back again

RUBY GAMBLE





Talking about trips

RUBY GAMBLE

In recognition of 100 issues of NSW Sea Kayaker and Salt, I volunteered to write an article that looked at the trips most often done (and written about) by members of NSWSKC during the magazines history. After tallying up the number of stories written about similar areas, there were some trips and regions that were clear winners in terms of sea kayaking adventures.

Of course if I had counted them, the most written about trips over the last 100 issues would have been about Sydney. Instead I looked for trips further afield that had a touch of the epic about them. I did tally trips in the Hawkesbury/Broken Bay region and also those down towards the Royal National Park and Wollongong. But even with their proximity to home, they couldn't compete with the most written about trips since 1989. Perhaps their proximity is why they didn't get written about in the magazine.

For instance, Jervis Bay didn't quite make the top four trips. I'm sure members have done many more trips in and around Jervis Bay

than some of the other top-rating locations. Other popular regions outside the top four and outside Sydney included the Far South Coast of NSW between Batemans Bay and Eden, and Far North Queensland.

In a hundred issues our trip reports have taken many forms, from brief factual summaries and poetry, to photographic spreads and highly enjoyable and exhaustive accounts of paddling conditions, including what was eaten for dinner each night. After reading 77 articles, here is my interpretation of what makes each of our top four trips special. Here they are in order of increasing popularity.

4. Broughton Island

Broughton is the place to test your mettle. For many authors it was their first time doing an open sea crossing, kayak camping, or paddling a gauntlet, slot or cave.

For others it was a different kind of test, with the island popular for testing advanced sea proficiency

and survivor skills. These weekends incorporated fun activities like completely flooding the front hatch, lugging gear and kayaks across the island, uncivil hours for launches, running gauntlets in big swells, difficult landings and launches, and navigation skill tests.

The route to the island was usually from Jimmy's Beach via Cabbage Tree Island to camp at Esmerelda Cove. Alternatives included starting in Pindimar and Fingal Bay. Two solo voyages were reported – both difficult – one a hall pass opportunity and the other going ahead despite everyone else cancelling due to the poor conditions.

The crossing to Broughton is fraught with difficulties. There was regular mention of 20-25 knot winds and 2-4 metre swells, fighting tides and coping with seasickness.

Top: It was popular to take a walk over Broughton Island – this is the view towards Looking Glass Isle, Yaccaba Head in background (photo by Caoimhin Ardren)



Above: Successfully negotiating Con's Cleft was something to be proud of – this is Rae Duffy on an unreported trip (Photo by Caoimhin Ardren).

Sharks chased paddlers and bit rudders. When paddlers weren't fighting the sea, they couldn't see it, with thick sea fog obscuring the island. Those that reported calm weather should consider themselves lucky, especially those that were able to enter Esmerelda Cove without interference from the famed bombora, which has a habit of appearing at the last minute.

All trips were over two to three days, with three days allowing a more thorough investigation of the island. At the top of the list of things to do on Broughton Island was paddling Con's Cleft. Not every paddler or even group was able to paddle here, and some paddlers tackled it despite the conditions. Also popular was circumnavigating the islands, Looking Glass Island, and Fisherman's Passage between Little Broughton and Broughton Island. Some skipped paddling to walk the island, while others practiced their rolls, snorkelled, sailed or went fishing.

Campers were kept company by turtles, eagles, dolphins, and penguins, with shearwaters (mutton birds) keeping campers awake all night by crashing into tents, and rats adding to the fun.

Most camping took place in Esmerelda Cove, but it was often noted that the neighbours inhabiting the fishing huts were less than desirable. Excitement at the introduction of the tent platforms dulled once everyone realised the securing points were inadequate. A mystery chef made an appearance, producing roast lamb on a camp stove and freshly baked bread. He's appeared in other locations too...

Below: Safely ashore at Nadgee River Beach (Photo by Nick Blacklock)



3. The Nadgee Wilderness

Nadgee is serious paddling. Articles describe difficult surf, dumping waves, reefs and bars, fibreglass repairs to boats and many, many rolls and swims. One article claimed that a group of club legends were unable to make it off the beach at Nadgee River past the seven breaks of "heaving, surging mess". Many trips reported being unable to land at Newtons, Little River, and Howe Beaches, and even the Mallacoota boat ramp.

A Nadgee trip usually starts at Eden in New South Wales, stopping at Mowarra Point, Merrica and Nadgee Rivers, and finishing at Mallacoota in Victoria. If done in reverse, it was more likely to be part of an extended trip starting at Bemm River in Victoria. Also popular was heading either north or south from a start in Wonboyn. Only one paddler reported a solo trip.

Seas of up to five metres were often reported with high winds of 25-35 knots arriving suddenly after periods of calm weather. Several groups raced approaching storms to get to a safe landing. There was mist, heavy rain, and this region more than the others had more paddlers reporting being cold and wet. The high winds had one advantage – many reported great sailing and speeds so fast they had to put all their concentration into staying

upright. All trips reported both rough and benign conditions, and one group said the conditions were so good they could have done it in two days instead of four.

Despite the difficulty, it was clear why people returned to Nadgee again and again. Camps at Merrica River were idyllic, and Gabo Island was a must for its views and wildlife. Several groups convinced the caretaker on Gabo island to allow them to camp when bad storms were approaching. They had to wrest the normally illegal campsites away from the penguins that flock to the island, and shake them off their tents in the morning.

A sea cave near Merrica River that opened out to allow landing on a small beach at the back got a few mentions, as did cliffs and rock gardens. Fishing was popular on land and at sea (although one paddler capsized trying to cut a tangled line). Abalone, mussels and salmon were often served up for tea, as was a mirth-inducing fish cooked in foil with 'herbs'.

Several (all male) groups got quite excited about the discovery of female bushwalkers along the way. One has to feel sorry for the girls given the descriptions of skinny-dipping ageing males with

Clockwise from right: The tidal currents near the Hook Island Resort (now closed) through Solway Passage between Whitsunday and Hook Islands, View of Whitsunday Island from Whitsunday Cairn (Ruby Gamble); Exploring cliffs on the south side of Green Cape (Nick Blacklock)

overgrown beards begging for massages and flapping fish about with enthusiasm.

2. The Whitsundays

There are two approaches to paddling in the Whitsundays. The first is to rack up distance and islands between Mackay and Airlie Beach and the second is to take a leisurely paddle of 10-15km a day from Schute Harbour around Whitsunday and Hook Islands.

Despite the white sand beaches and crystal seas, the trips were never quite as restful as the paddlers expected. Wind at 25-30 knots, two metre plus seas and 5-6 knot tides were mentioned with regularity, as were enforced rest days. In later articles the ferry 'Scamper' rises over the swell to rescue stranded paddlers, or to help them skip confronting crossings. If only everyone who got into trouble thought to call Scamper instead of

getting a yacht to tow their boat. Two were written off – one washing up in pieces on Hayman Island.

It's a great shame that the Hook Island Resort has closed in recent years given that nearly every group mentions at least a visit there. Apparently they were a rip-off for toilet paper, but the camp sites were considered good value, and the chance to be a little civilised without a significant cost was appreciated. Paddlers talked of stopping for food at various resorts, but some resorts (like Hayman) didn't take kindly to non-paying visitors, especially when they were caught replenishing fresh water supplies or washing their salt-encrusted body in the bathroom sink.

For those that were tempted by activities beyond paddling: walking, snorkelling, and fishing were popular. Snorkelling provided an opportunity to see manta rays, stingrays, turtles (also known as



A whale of a time in the Whitsundays

text and pictures by David Whyte



Above: This region provided the stand-out photo of all the articles I read – a photo of a humpback whale breaching only 20 metres from paddlers on the way to Keswick Island (scanned copy of the magazine with a photo by David Whyte), Right: Spike Bay on Clarke Island (Ruby Gamble)



hull-seeking torpedoes), sharks, clams (they can close on flippers), albino dolphins, dugong, and squid. On land the wildlife was less friendly, with snakes, crows, goannas, rats, possums, mossies, march flies and sandflies doing their best to make you miserable and steal all your food. Even the sea eagles were known to share the fishing catch!

You can eat like a king if you can hang on to your food long enough. Fresh tuna, lobster, and oysters abound. If you're too lazy to catch it yourself, just pull up a yachtie, as many paddlers snaffled fresh food, water, alcohol, tea and bikkies in exchange for conversation (yachties must be a lonely lot).

The campsites sounded perfect and largely unpopulated. There were always crowds at Whitehaven Beach, and the number of dive boats passing by made it difficult to skinny-dip on Hook Island, as one group found out. The relaxing atmosphere encouraged the sharing of yoga and poetry, and many said the best part of the trip was the people they were paddling with.

1. Bass Strait

We don't seem to tire of reading about Bass Strait crossings, perhaps because for many paddlers it's the ultimate challenge. The test is in the long open sea crossings of up to 65km (or more if you muck up the tides).

Trips were aborted because of injury, boat damage, going the wrong way, and prolonged poor weather. One account described two groups that hoped to pass each other halfway. The northern group made it as far as Snake Island near Port Albert and the other to Swan Island near Little Musselroe Bay. They sat on their respective islands for days waiting for a weather window, and eventually called off the trip.

Those that did set off usually made it. Some groups took over 13 hours

to do the longest crossing between Deal and Flinders Islands, but unless there were extraordinary circumstances, they struggled on against tides and tiredness with hardly a roll or bout of seasickness to slow them down.

Some were lucky enough to see their destination islands from the beginning of the day's paddle. Most could only see Hogan Island two hours after leaving Refuge Cove due to big swells or mist. Ship horns were much more dramatic when encountered in sea fog! One group making the crossing from Deal to Hogan Island (on a reverse trip) only knew they were near Hogan when the density of penguins increased and they could hear waves breaking on rocks. When the skies were clearer, albatross showed the way.

Only two paddlers wrote about the King Island route, possibly because the long 100km crossing from King Island to the mainland puts off all but the hardy. The fact that these two legendary paddlers both misjudged their landing at the end of the very long day is testimony to the difficulty of this option.

This has nothing on doing it direct, which leads to hallucinating tennis courts out of the mist, jumping into freezing water because it seemed like a good idea, and falling asleep before taking an unplanned swim.

For adventure, groups tackled Sea Lion Narrows and Moriarty Point on the eastern side of Clarke Island. Up to three metres of swell, sand shoals and reefs, and standing and breaking waves. Some writers seemed to be surprised they had emerged alive. One group decided to look for a different kind of adventure and cut the trip short with a ferry from Lady Barron back to Port Welshpool. This allowed them to avoid the car shuffle, but they did have to travel with 500 sheep.

Banks Strait was regarded as the hardest leg of the trip. It's an even chance that you'll get fair weather and calm conditions or 25-30 knot westerlies with 3-4 metre seas.

Tides pushed some groups past Little Musselroe, forcing landings elsewhere or a recovery paddle up the coast. The crossing obviously isn't enough for some, with people

continuing on to St Helens on the east coast or further along the north coast.

It's not all about the paddling. The wind often made groups wait for days to make a crossing in the right weather. Some made themselves useful by helping to install tanks and solar panels on the islands. Others went fishing or snorkelling, or on Flinders, hired cars to look around. From Trouser Point on Flinders Island, some climb Mt Strezlecki, many don't, some spend a whole day coming up with excuses for why they can't, and some are quite comfortable with why they won't.

A few mentioned Wybalenna, a thought-provoking memorial at Emita on Flinders Island where Aboriginals were resettled from the mainland to be "civilised and Christianised".

For some lighter entertainment, but mostly for real food, paddlers did anything to get to a pub, including paddling at night from Trouser Point across to Lady Barron Pub, and hitchhiking or walking to Whitemark Pub. Some stopped on the way down the coast, and others even called ahead to make sure they didn't miss meal service.

Not that paddlers were missing out on proper meals. If you think the yachties were generous in the Whitsundays, paddlers are a jammy lot in the Bass Strait, with locals and

yachties alike giving them soup and muffins, fresh tomatoes, crayfish, abalone, fish, lobster, roasted wallaby and mutton bird for a more local taste, wine, champagne, beer, tea, showers, lifts in their cars and rides in boats and planes, all in exchange for a chat. Locals on islands are even more desperate for company than people on yachts...

Paddlers eagerly sought out the now burned hut on Hogan Island and enjoyed being able to see the historical entries in the logbook describing other crossings. The resident rats led most visitors to become anxious to leave the island as soon as possible. This wasn't true of the other islands and coves along the way, where paddlers were happy to sit out the weather and enjoy the serenity and sunsets. They are pretty spectacular.

My summary only touches on the stories told about these regions. Ironically, three of the top four are represented in new articles in this edition of Salt.

If you're planning a trip in any location, including overseas, make sure you do some research in the magazine archive. The newly prepared excel spreadsheet index of magazine articles (available on the club website) is gold when it comes to researching trips – make it your first stop!

Below: Sunset from Spike Bay, Clarke Island (Ruby Gamble)



Most Memorable Magazine Story

THE EDITOR

So what has been the best story in all these magazines? What does 'best' even mean? Best-written? Most interesting? Oscar-winning? Most read or remembered? Jaw-dropping? Inspiring? Edge-of-the-seat-can't put-it-down article? In my short years at the club, the stories that seem to get the most airplay, are the rescues. There have been quite a few close shaves and several helicopter

rescues. And perhaps none of these rescues are as memorable as that of Arunas Pilka in 1999.

I asked David Winkworth who saved Arunas to recall that day, which he sets out below. As it happens, I've also heard from the pilot of the plane that spotted the trio after their EPIRB was activated, so let's start with his story...



Damon Pagani (the pilot) and wife Marjorie Pagani



With a crew of three and thirty passengers on board an EMB120 (Embraer Brasilia – 30 seat regional airliner) operated by Flight West Airlines, we departed Bamaga on Wednesday 18 August 1999 bound for Cairns. Five minutes later I received a distress signal from an EPIRB, which I reported to air traffic control and offered assistance to search. They said they had received reports of the beacon and expected that it was in the Shelbourne bay area somewhere. I was asked to proceed to the bay and search.

Upon arrival I commenced a search by aurally homing on the beacon using a process of progressively detuning the radio receiver whilst listening for a strengthening and weakening signal. I informed the passengers about what we were doing and enlisted their help to look out the windows and report any sightings to the flight attendant.

After a few minutes of searching I sighted a small island about half a mile away with some trees on it but one lone object on the other end of the island so I proceeded to investigate. There was a man standing there waving furiously and obviously very happy to see us. Written in the sand were the words 'CROC ATTACK ONE EVAC'. I reported the finding and location to ATC who said they would send a helicopter from Horn Island.

I noticed two vessels about five miles east proceeding North, about two miles apart. One appeared to be a large trawler so I flew over to it, circled, then flew low across its bow and over to the sand cay to try and get it to follow. I did this three times to no avail then flew over to the other vessel, which was a large schooner, and repeated the process, again to no avail, which was frustrating as I could see the people on board watching me. I

made a final low pass over the island and departed for Cairns.

In Marjorie's words, Damon was thrilled to have been the one to locate the beacon and the men, and direct the rescue machine to them. It was also very exciting for the passengers to be involved (and to fly low in such a large aircraft). Damon often spoke of that day, and of wanting to know what happened to the kayakers (although we did hear on the news that they were all okay).

These days, Damon is often flying in Vietnam. He is now the chief pilot for Pearl Aviation in Darwin and Aero Pearl in Brisbane. Marjorie is the CEO of Angel Flight Australia. Thanks to Damon and Marjorie for hunting us down after all these years and sending us their perspectives.



David and his kayak in 2008

David Winkworth

It was great to read the emails from Damon and Marjorie Pagani. I'm glad those mistakes of mine in the article have been corrected! Has it really been 17 years? It only seems like yesterday to me. My memories are still very vivid to say the least. I went for a paddle in the Bega River near home the other day, and saw a big odd shaped log in the water. Everyone would think it's a log, but my brain still says it's a croc, for a second or two. Weird.

Well, here are a few thoughts on that very close encounter with a crocodile. I'll try to keep them in some sort of chronological order...

I remember it as being a very windy day – hot and windy. Seas were well up and the lunchtime stop on that offshore little island was very welcome. The quick dip to wash off dried salt was briefly good too.

Arunas' cry as the croc took him was eerie. I remember it as a half cry / half shout. That's the best way I can describe it. He was being shaken around by the croc too. When I got out to him, all I could see was a long fat dark shape in "boiling" water. I didn't know if it was a croc or a shark at that moment.

You know, sometimes crazy things go through your head. When I grabbed it around the widest part of its body, I remember thinking to myself "wow, what a lovely smooth belly it has!"

And I remember when the croc had gone and we were standing there in thigh deep water with our combined four legs that we were in big trouble now. That would've been one pissed off croc out there! And going back to the beach I retreated backwards, looking out for the croc's return and being ready to grab it again if it came back. Pretty silly really, trying to do something to that powerful thing would be like trying to flag down the Indian Pacific with a candle!

So there we were then at the water's edge. Mike and I did a quick assessment of Arunas' wounds. Lots of puncture wounds and rips, mainly on his right leg. The back of his leg was the worst. There was also a big tooth hole in a delicate part of his anatomy. Losing your life is tough but possibly losing your manhood is worse!

There was also a deep open rip across the front of Arunas' leg in his

groin. I wasn't sure exactly where the femoral artery ran but it looked to be pretty close to me so I knotted my rashie around his upper thigh and I had a stick nearby to twitch it if the artery popped. Overall though, Arunas was pretty lucky, there wasn't much blood loss. He did accuse me of trying to infect him with my rashie though! The Thursday Island Hospital surgeon said it was only 2cm from the artery.

Mike and I worked as a pretty good team after that I thought. We opened every one of our first aid kits – and there still weren't enough bandages. We gave up on that in the end. One of us was always with him doing his obs in the tent while the other did things – the V sheet, the signal fire, the sign scratching in the sand.

Mike's EPIRB was singing away but we didn't know if it was going to work. Just what to do was running through my head over and over. Arunas was alive but infection was surely going to get him if we didn't get help very quickly. I thought of towing him in his kayak with Mike supporting him to Captain Billy Landing on the mainland but would there be anyone there? Arunas'

Greenlander kayak had a small cockpit - if we got him into it, would his leg stiffen so we couldn't get him out? So many thoughts.

Wasn't the sight of that plane welcome!!! It swooped in low, lights on, about five times. They were able to read our sign too. I later heard that they reported many croc tracks on the beach but they weren't croc tracks - just the way we moved the heavy kayaks up the beach!

Another three hours later and we heard the unmistakable low frequency hum of the chopper. That WAS good! Mike and I had cleared a little helipad, which they appreciated. They weren't there long, into the tent, check Arunas out, stick a line in, got him into the chopper and they were gone to Thursday Island. All was quiet except for the constant wind.

"Fuck, fuck...FUCK" Mike and I said to each other. "Did all that really happen?" We were so high, we didn't sleep for many hours.

We thought we were alone for the night but an hour later in came the navy. That was interesting. Two big rubber duckies full of sailors, all packing automatic weapons. When the croc reappeared off the point, they REALLY wanted to shoot it. You could hear all their weapons being cocked. Mike and I prevailed and they didn't shoot it, which was good.

I remember the Executive Officer on the beach asking if we knew what Mike's EPIRB had done.

"Sure" I said, "it got Arunas to hospital."

"More than that" he said. "There are three warships in the Coral Sea standing by to assist!"

The navy offered us a lift to Thursday Island, which was great but they didn't want to take our boats. I give credit to Mike's negotiating skills in them changing their minds. We weren't going to go with them if they wouldn't take the kayaks.

HMAS Huon took us. They were great on that ship but really, our feet didn't touch the ground - shower first, dinner with the Captain, then sleep, etc. Mike and I just wanted to sit and think. All these thoughts of Arunas being rolled by the croc and water closing over him. Awful.

They transferred us to the smaller navy boat at about 4am and I remember looking down at it over the side of Huon. It was a mass of media and video camera lights!



David receiving his award from the Governor General

Where did all these people come from so quickly? The attack was only lunchtime yesterday! We were very naïve.

There wasn't much to do on Thursday Island for the weeks while Arunas recuperated. Mike did some paddling with the locals and we did plenty of running and swimming too. They gave Arunas the choice of transferring to Cairns Hospital but he elected to stay there, and the care was excellent.

We did a story for commercial TV, which was OK. Ever the negotiator, Mike scored us a few nice nights in the up market Jardine Hotel. They

also gave us \$5,000 which was appreciated. We gave it all away to the hospital and the Helicopter Volunteer Rescue guys.

So, it was a happily ever after adventure for us all. We're all still paddling, Arunas' wounds healed well and the croc still swims.

The Governor General gave me a Bravery Medal the following year, which was nice but I must give lots of credit to Mike in caring for Arunas on that memorable little island. I thought we were a good team!

A few years later Arunas and I did a paddle from Cairns to Darwin. We even re-visited Macarthur Island, and I can report that the croc is still there, along with many others.

In 2005 I did a solo trip up north and camped with Queensland scientist Mike Bell doing turtle research on beautiful Ingram Island in the Howick Group. He'd done a croc survey on all the Barrier Reef Islands, and guess on which island he found the most crocs?

Arunas Pilka

The last word belongs to Arunas. He was back kayaking within a couple of months of that rescue and went back a few years later with David to complete the trip from Cairns to Darwin. He says that his injuries to the front and back of his legs were mostly soft tissue injuries, with no vessel, ligament or bone damage. They have healed well, there is still scarring, but much faded now.

These days, Arunas is retired and not doing much paddling, due more to a bad shoulder than anything crocodile related. He has an imminent paddle with Dirk Stuber going out to Montague Island, but otherwise lives happily ever after in Canberra.

Editor Note: The original article and photos can be found in the NSW Sea Kayaker magazine No 40, titled 'Dead Man Walking'

Personal Kayaking Reflections

BARRY MARSHALL

Approaches to training vary depending on the personality and aims of each individual. Particularly insightful was Matt Bezzina's article in a recent edition of Salt in which he discussed approaches to training and equipment. So, for what it's worth, here are some of my reflections regarding sea kayaking.

Sea kayaking unlocks the great highway of the planet. I am amazed at how few people I see out on the harbour mid-week when all the roads of Sydney are choked by thousands of cars. I rarely see anyone outside the Heads, and those that I do come across are usually surf club members ski or out-rigger training. Expeditioning in a sea kayak is liberating. Load up a kayak and the world is your oyster – cheap, healthy and safe provided one is fit and sensible.

Fitness is probably the most important thing. Your ability to grit the teeth and endure a tedious slog should overcome any bad judgement you may have made, such as when the wind picks up more than forecast or that tidal flow being stronger than expected. A few hours paddle a couple of times a week out on the open ocean will help to maintain a level of fitness sufficient to undertake a coastal expedition. After the first couple of days paddling your endurance will increase and those sore muscles will adapt to the task at hand. I have recently joined my local surf club so that I can train on boards and surf skis out in all conditions. The clubbies are a mixed bag with no shortage of competitive members (of all ages) willing to train hard.



Feeling comfortable in the surf and open ocean is very important. Fortunately I grew up in a family who loved the beach. We learned to stand up on surf-o-planes, progressed to 'foamies' and finally to malibu surfboards, long before leg ropes, small boards and ultimately sea-kayaks. A feel for the ocean is something that can be more difficult to develop as an adult who hasn't grown up in it.

Beach landings and launchings often present sea-kayaking problems. Practice in the surf. Catch waves and practice low bracing into the wave whilst raising the leading edge of the kayak when broaching. Learn to roll and be fit and dexterous enough to do a solid, consistent cowboy entry. It is surprising how easy it is but expect to get wet, and be prepared to roll. You'll roll less often as you gain experience.

I find landings easier than launchings. When landing I'll study the sets and wait just off the break until the last wave (I find it's often the third) and then paddle with everything I've got to stay on the back of the wave. In no time at all

you're through the impact zone and are well on your way to the beach. If a wave hits after this it is usually very weak.

Launching is more difficult because you have to time it so that you hit the impact zone in a lull and as it is further off the beach you find yourself sculling around a bit waiting for the right moment. When you make the decision to go, do not hesitate, do not relent – give it everything. The momentum you generate will add to your stability.

On exiting over a river bar down the south coast once, a wave stood up from out of nowhere and rather than hesitate I launched at it, punching into the bowl. Even though it wasn't large I was knocked flat onto my back deck but just managed to grip the water with the blade, which prevented me from going over the falls backwards. I've fallen in more often when I've been too casual and lacking focus in small conditions.

Be a little particular about who you choose to undertake an expedition with. A group will generally be only as good as the weakest paddler and compatibility should be a priority. Let the final decisions during the expedition be taken by the acknowledged group leader after inclusive group input, and look out for each other.

Above all else listen to the advice of more experienced paddlers and be humble. It is folly to think that you'll conquer anything out there. If you lose respect for nature, you'll pay a price.

Preventing Lower Back Pain

CATHY NOLAN



As you know, sea kayaking is a sport where you are potentially seated for long periods of time and repeatedly forward stroking to reach your destination. This can create a lot of compressive and/or rotational forces on the lower back. Good stroke technique combined with adequate core strength and body awareness will hopefully prevent you from having any episodes of lower back pain. Despite this, the reality is that 85 percent of us, fit or otherwise, will at some point have an episode of lower back pain in our lifetime.

The good news is, that for the majority of us, lower back pain will resolve within a three-month period. The bad news is that once you have an episode there is a 50 percent chance that you will have at least one other event. I will tell you why a little later and what you can do to prevent this potential recurrence.

Anatomy of the lower back

The lumbar spine or lower back comprises five large vertebrae, designed to bear the weight of the body. They allow us to absorb the stresses of an upright posture and lifting and carrying. The vertebrae are separated and cushioned by an intervertebral disc designed to absorb compressive forces on the spine and keep the bones from rubbing together.

Each lumbar vertebra make up a joint known as the facet joint (or for us in the trade a Z joint). The facet joint allows the spine to bend forwards, backwards, sideways and

rotate left and right, all important movements for sea kayaking.

Many muscles and ligaments connect to the lumbar vertebrae and act to stabilise the spine and limit unwanted movements. The two main muscle groups that affect the spine are extensors and flexors. The extensor muscles enable us to stand up and lift objects. The extensors are attached to the back of the spine. The flexor muscles are in the front and include the abdominal (core) muscles. These muscles enable us to flex, or bend forward, and are important in lifting and controlling the arch in the lower back.

Lower back pain and sea kayaking

Lower back pain in sea kayaking can result from aggravation of pre-existing conditions such as spondylolisthesis where one

Anatomy of the Lumbar Spine, sourced from C Eraxion at Dreamstime.com



vertebra slips forward of another or degenerative conditions such as spinal stenosis (narrowing of the spinal column) or trauma such as a stress of the vertebrae. In reality these are not very common (<10 percent).

The majority of lower back pain comes from non-specific causes. I am sure many of you have experienced or know someone who woke up with searing back pain, or bent over to pick up something and experienced acute lower back pain. There was no real mechanism of injury or cause. It is hard to put your finger on a single event.

In non-specific lower back pain one or more of the structures of the lower back have been damaged or injured and this often happens over time. The most common causes of lower back pain are damage to the intervertebral discs and the facet joint. This is important for sea kayakers as the most common way to irritate a disc and/or a joint is by torsional (or twisting) injuries and/or compression. That is sitting for long periods and suddenly twisting or twisting with a load. Sound familiar?

How to avoid lower back pain in sea kayaking

It will come as no surprise that maintaining a healthy back in sea kayaking relies predominantly on having good posture and paddle technique. Also critical is maintaining adequate core strength and optimal joint movement and muscle length. Some food for thought is that if you have an

episode of lower back pain, it is likely that one (or more) of the following “Oarsome Foursome” was not at its optimum. To prevent further episodes of back pain you need to address all four, as without adequate core strength and flexibility you are 50 percent more likely to have another episode of lower back pain.

The Oarsome Foursome



3D medical illustration of the pelvis bone, sourced from C Maya at Dreamstime.com

Posture

The best and most obvious way to avoid lower back pain in sea kayaking is with good posture. To avoid compression of the lumbar vertebrae and compressive forces on the intervertebral discs, make sure you are seated on the ‘sit’ bones of your pelvis and sitting up vertical. A slight forward lean with your trunk is fine, but not a slumped or rounded forward lean as this just compresses your lumbar spine and discs.

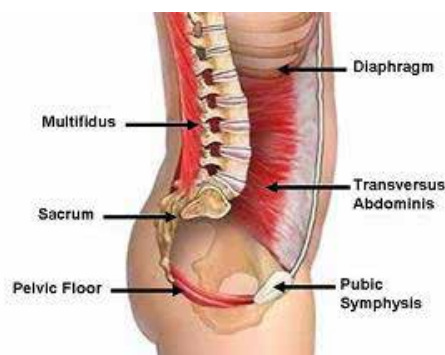
Technique

A good forward stroke technique will have you using your larger and stronger leg muscles to drive the rotation of your spine and minimise shearing loads on your spine. I would highly recommend attending a forward stroke clinic with one of the instructors in the club or watching the Basic Skills videos on the club website. I did and I haven’t looked back (no pun intended). It

will not only make your kayaking experience more efficient and rewarding but will protect your lower back in the long term.

Adequate Core Strength

Good core strength is a key factor in maintaining a healthy lower back. The core muscles act as a muscular corset to stabilise the spine (see Salt 94). They also transfer loads up and down the spine during movement. Interestingly research has shown that after an episode of lower back pain, the deep core stabilisers (transverse abdominus and multifidus) often become inhibited and they need to be retrained to switch back on in anticipation of movement. This makes core specific exercises a vital part of the recovery process after an episode of lower back pain to prevent repeat episodes.



Deeper core muscles

Flexibility

Flexibility is the range of motion that your joints can move through and/or the mobility of your muscles. There is an optimum range of motion for your joint movements and an optimum length/tension relationship for your muscles. If either of these or both are restricted this leads to stiffness. It is this stiffness or hypomobility that can contribute to injury to the intervertebral discs and/or facet joints in your lower back.

Following injury and as time goes by, flexibility is decreased and you don’t regain it unless you mobilise the affected joints and stretch the

affected muscles. In sea kayaking it is not only important to maintain flexibility in the lower back but also the lower and upper limbs. Sea kayaking requires coordinated movements of many muscles and joints. A stiff knee, foot or hip can affect your lower back as much as a weak core. Salt 95 has a number of good kayak specific stretches and lumbar mobilisations to help keep you limber.



Above: Lumbar rolls exercise
Below: Hamstring Stretches



Well I hope this information helps you to keep paddling pain free. Remember the majority of lower back pain is non-specific and can be managed on a long term basis. If you have severe unrelenting pain, or pain radiating down the back of your leg, then this can be more serious and you should see your doctor or allied health professional qualified to assess and diagnose the source.

Happy paddling!

The GPS and Sea Kayaking – Is it an essential tool or just a fashion accessory?

CAMPBELL TILEY

Navigation is the exercise that allows you to paddle safely to an intended destination and encompasses a wide range of skills from planning feasible launch and landing points to anticipating the effect of tide and wind on your course and avoiding known hazards. At a fundamental level you need to know where you are, where your next destination is and what direction you need to paddle to get there. Following is a personal impression of the place of handheld GPS devices in this process.

Russ Swinnerton reviewed GPS technology in detail in the June 2013 Salt, appropriately titled “Electric Dreams: The GPS Miracle”. GPS was first reviewed in our club magazine back in 2002, issue 49 by Richard Birdsey titled “The Wizard’s Magic” presumably referring to the remarkable device rather than the beard stroking and wizened practitioners. The global positioning system (GPS) relies on signals from around 27 satellites maintained by the US Air Force. The handheld receivers that we can use from a kayak cockpit triangulate a position from these signals with an accuracy of around three to eight metres, 95 percent of the time, far more precision than could be derived from any other method available to the kayaker except paddling up to a known object marked on your chart.

The unit I am currently using is a Garmin Oregon 600, which is a fairly typical handheld device. Usual battery life is around 12-18 hours on

two AA NiMH batteries, presenting a logistics challenge for continuous use during longer expeditions, as two fresh or recharged batteries are needed each day. It is a touch screen device, which makes it easy to use but the screen has an irritating tendency to be activated by splashed droplets if sitting on the deck. Marine charts or topographical maps can be loaded onto the unit and I find both useful.

But is a handheld GPS actually useful in a sea kayak?

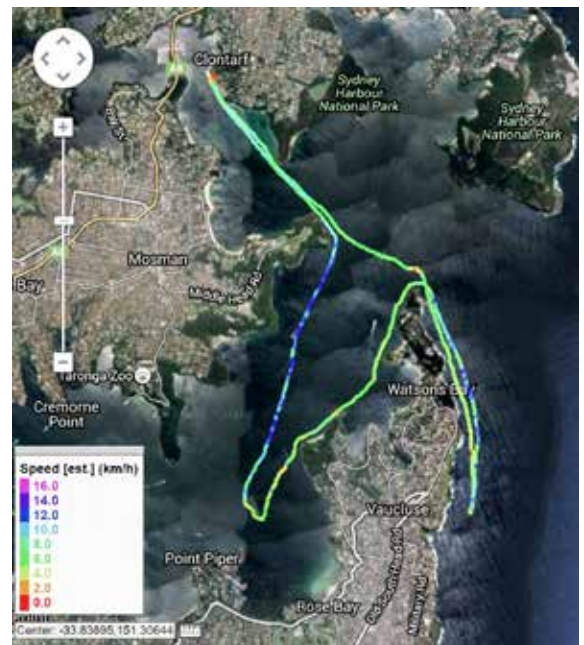
Simple trip logging is possibly the most commonly used GPS function. While some might argue that this is akin to stamp collecting, the ability to look back at distance covered and speed at various points in a paddle is very useful for fitness training and provides a concise visual record of the trip. There are a wide variety of options for converting data files uploaded from your GPS to a track on a map or on Google Earth including most mapping software available on PCs and online resources such as www.gpsvisualizer.com.

The log function can also provide important and useful navigation information including your current position, distance covered, average speed and ‘speed over ground’

which indicates the degree to which wind and current are hindering, or helping, your passage if you know your expected paddling speed.

If you have entered waypoints onto the device, either directly or using mapping software on a PC and have set a course or destination, the device knows where you want to go and will tell you how to get there by indicating the current

A trip log of a robust paddle with wind effect



distance and direction to your next waypoint and to your destination. If you have selected the waypoints wisely, this is clearly very powerful information, particularly if the destination is below your horizon or obscured by fog or coastal haze. In

his Devenport to Hobart trip report (NSW Sea Kayaker 83, 2011) Guy Reeve describes how he safely piloted a complex course in the dark between reefs by back-tracking over the previous day's course and 'trusting the force' of GPS.

While much kayak navigation is based on visual 'hand-railing' by identifying landmarks as you paddle



The data displayed can be customised to your needs

past them, GPS can certainly assist in circumstances where you cannot see these cues and would otherwise need to rely on dead reckoning, a technique using only your approximate speed, time and course to estimate your position. Identifying your intended landfall as you approach an unfamiliar coastline after crossing a large bay or channel is another situation where GPS can be very helpful although a plan B based on simple navigation and the principle 'aiming off' is an essential backup.

An additional function a GPS can provide to help make a long

Visually identifying your landfall can be difficult



passage is a measure of your 'lateral course error' or your current distance to the left or right of the direct course to the destination. This provides an accurate measure of the impact of a cross wind or current on your progress and can be used to fine-tune the course offset that you have, of course, calculated using a knowledge of the tides and the clock face rule or similar. On

a long open water passage tidal currents can take you many kilometres away from your course and add many kilometres to your day. If you cannot observe prominent landmarks or transits to indicate your true course, this GPS function can help you minimise the impact of tide by allowing you to alter your heading to compensate if you are being carried further sideways than you had planned.

BUT despite the merits of GPS, any electronic device can fail so it would be most unwise to ever be completely reliant on a GPS for safe passage in a kayak, even if a spare unit is carried!

Russ Swinnerton has drawn from his extensive experience as a professional navigator to whet our appetites with his navigation series in this magazine and also through his practical contribution to the navigation training weekends run over recent years by Adrian Clayton. He has covered the important skills required to get you safely to a destination using a compass, charts, some preparation

and some simple rules of thumb (and finger). Some knowledge of navigation is also required for sea skills certification. I strongly encourage anyone planning to venture beyond their familiar home waters one day, particularly if you are contemplating a multi-day trip, to do some reading, including Russ's series, practice the skills on your regular paddles and consider signing up for a Club Navigation Training Weekend, one of which will run later this year.



Just over half way to Deal Island and 4km down tide

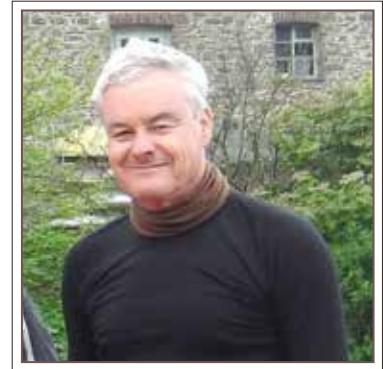
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- Sea Kayak Navigation: A Practical Manual, Essential Knowledge for Finding Your Way at Sea, second edition 2007 by Franco Ferrero

Kayak Foundry

Free Kayak Design Software

STEWART MORGAN



After seeing Hans Schmidt's strip-built fast kayak (Salt 99), I thought about building something similar. However unlike Hans who based his on an existing design, I am considering designing a kayak from scratch.

Before the advent of hydrodynamic modelling software, most kayak designs were developed and modified from previous designs. These can be traced back to the Inuit hunting kayaks of Greenland.

While basics such as length and width come from years of experience of existing designs, software programs can now allow designs to be fine tuned before committing to timber.

One such program I have been playing with is 'Kayak Foundry' written by Ross Leidy, a timber kayak builder in the US. It includes a link to a forum where users can post files of their designs for comment.

This program has also been used by commercial kayak manufacturers, including Tiderace. A few years ago Tiderace's website showed images of their then new Xcite kayak being modelled in Kayak Foundry software. Aled Williams the designer of the Tiderace range is a contributor the KF forum.

After downloading the software and reading the 10-page manual, I found the program relatively easy and intuitive to use.

The format is a number of windows showing plan, section and elevation of the design plus one showing hydrostatics. Initially opening a FILE NEW shows a generic kayak design, which can then be modified and saved as a new design.

The principle of modifying the design is by 'bending' the curves of

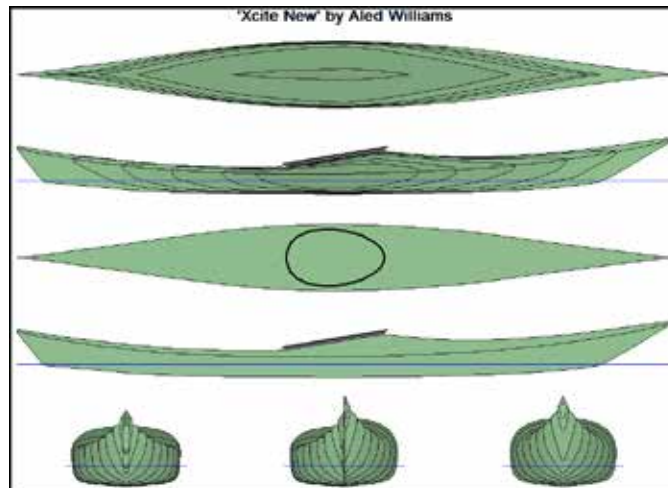
the sections, plans and elevations by using your mouse. This is just a digital version of the traditional shipbuilding method of flexing a thin strip of timber to form the desired curve.

The software calculates the hull's resistance to going through the water and also its speed, its stability, the cockpit location as well as other hydrodynamic information. By varying the design you can compare differing design options to see which performs best for your requirements.

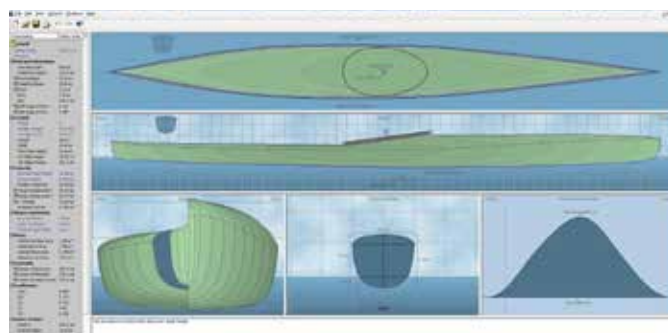
Once a design is finalised the program has the facility to print out cross sections along the kayak called forms, these forms when glued to sheets of ply or chipboard, form a skeleton over which the strip-timber hull is built - as shown in Hans' article.

The program also has an option to print out the forms to a reduced scale so that a model of the design can be built. The website has images of the construction of a beautiful ¼ scale model built using the same strip method as used for full size.

I made a model of one of my designs by printing out the forms at 1:5 and cutting them out of foam.



Above: Tiderace's Xcite on Kayak Foundry, Below: Screenshot from Kayak Foundry



Continued on page 27



Our Plastic Sea

NORM CARTER

Yesterday I went to a fish shop and bought some fish. My wife cooked it and it was great. No one will be surprised that we did not eat the plastic bag I brought it home in. That would be stupid, harmful and even if I chopped it up fine, maybe, in the long run, suicidal.

Yet that is what we are doing in a gradual way when we allow plastic items to enter our oceans, because these items break down into smaller and smaller pieces and enter the marine food chain, and one day - us.

A few years ago a group of young people saw the damage done to marine life by the millions of

discarded plastic items, which enter the sea every year – 80 percent of which are dropped on land and find their way to the sea by wind and run-off. They formed a not-for profit organisation called “Take 3”. Take 3 for the sea” is their motto, they simply ask you to take three pieces of rubbish with you when you leave the water. For those kayakers who are not already aware of this group and its work I recommend their website www.take3.org.au

Recently on a laid-back solo paddle I noticed plastic pieces in the water in Middle Harbour and more or less on impulse did a tour from the Spit to Grotto Point, Middle Head, Chinaman’s Beach and back to the



Spit, picking up bits of plastic as I went. The following is a photo of some of the 29 items I picked up, mostly shopping bags, bait bags, plastic bottles and bottle tops, kitchen food wrapping, lolly and potato chip wrapping, polystyrene packaging; even a partly deflated plastic basketball. And I missed quite a few. (Curiously, or maybe not, there was no plastic money amongst this lot.)

Kayakers are of course very close to the water and in a prime position to pick up small plastic debris from the surface. So I urge paddlers to ‘take three’ pieces of plastic from the sea or the beach and bin them, every time you go for a paddle.

That way, we can do our bit to help ensure our kids and their kids don’t eat plastic with their fish.

Continued from page 26

By then gluing them together and a little sanding, I produced a not too bad model, which gives an idea of the 3D form of the kayak.

Even if you don’t intend to build a kayak it’s an interesting exercise to see the effects of varying widths, and lengths on the stability and speed of various kayak designs.

Below: Stewart’s scale 1:5 foam model



Further reading on history:

Kayaks of Greenland by Harvey Golden

More on hydrodynamics:

<http://www.oneoceankayaks.com/smhydro/hydro.htm> hydrodynamics

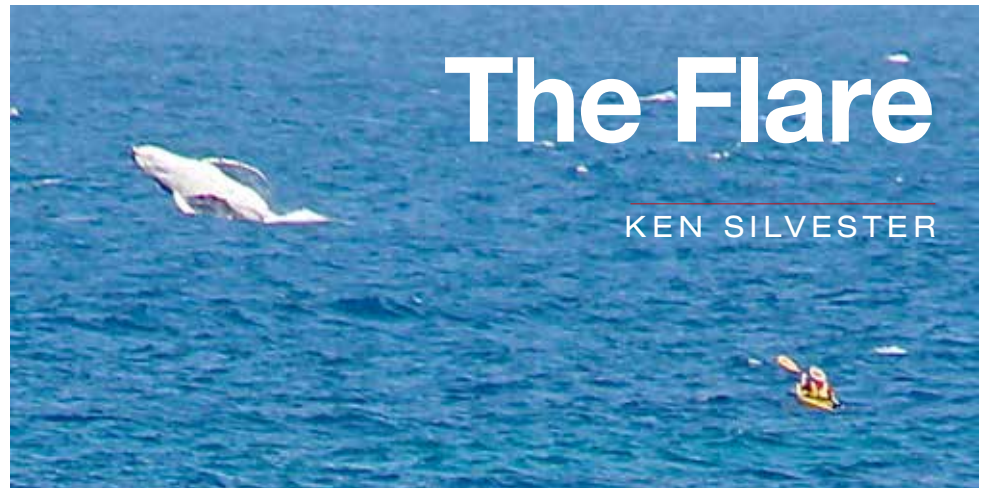
Kayak Foundry website

<http://www.blueheronkayaks.com/kayak/index.html>

There is no registration fee required to use it, however if you do use it and like it, you can make a donation via PayPal. If you sell designs developed with KF software, or sell kayaks built from KF designs, or in any way use the KF software commercially, you need to purchase a one-time distribution licence from Ross Leidy.



An encounter with a whale on a previous paddle outside Port Hacking



The Flare

KEN SILVESTER

As I took the trusty sea kayak out from my favourite launching place at Jibbon, it was sizing up to be another “learning experience” day. Almost immediately, I lost my hat, and turned around looking for it in what must have been all the wrong places. A fellow on the beach also looked as I circled in the chop, ready to pounce if it surfaced. I gave up, beached, and fetched another hat.

During the second launch a rather large wave took my sunglasses, but didn’t swamp me. So I courageously, (some might say “foolishly”) headed out to sea. The swell was biggish, but manageable. I set a course South for the elusive Marley. I really must leave earlier in the day to have any hope of arriving there.

I spotted an interesting feature just under the cliff-line. It may be a remnant gun emplacement, or possible a hermit’s abode, or a combination of the both. Not apparently visible from the cliff top, it is certainly worth investigating.

After some paddling, and without reaching Marley, I realised the time and with a prior engagement to get to, set a course for home. I hadn’t noticed but the wind was stronger and had been assisting me down the coast. Now I was ploughing headlong into it.

On reaching South Head at Port Hacking, my mind must have been elsewhere. Every other trip, at least a dozen, I have given this treacherous zone a wide berth. But not this day. I found myself over shallow rocks, in the surge zone. Not a safe place to be. So I shouldn’t have been surprised when the wave hit. It swamped me, and not having done Rolling 101, I took the only other option, to pull the spray skirt, and hang on.

I was disoriented on surfacing. I remember being surprised to see another wave coming towards me. I thought I should be facing landward. As the next wave hit, I desperately hung on to the gunwale, knowing my best hope was with the kayak.

So there I was, at the mercy of an elements. Fortune, certainly not management, had me being pushed past the rocks, into the mouth of Port Hacking. From previous experience at Eloura I knew that reboarding the kayak would expend energy reserves I did not wish to lose.

Plan B. I’ve had this flare for a couple of years now. This seemed like an ideal time to use it. There was a rock fisherman within shouting distance. I could not expect any direct help from him. A boat was anchored 50 metres away. They must have seen me, but made no move to approach. So out came

the flare. It worked beautifully, and kick-started the boaters into waving to me.

However, after five minutes I was beginning to wonder how many fishing reels they needed to reel in, as they had not moved. I thanked God that I wasn’t drowning, and continued waiting patiently. After what seemed like 10 minutes, Marine Rescue turned up, first talking to the boaters and then approaching me.

They threw me a tow-line, to get me into deeper water away from rocks.

Then they invited me aboard, and proceeded to tow the kayak. A better option soon emerged. They were able to pull the kayak on board and then forward full steam ahead. They explained that the boaters were also broken down, and that they had another rescue further out in Bate Bay to attend as well.

So they dropped me at the Eastern end of Jibbon, allowing me to walk the kayak back to the launch site.

So what have I learned from this experience?

I shouldn’t have become complacent. I’ll find someone to teach me how to roll and re-enter. It will save me the price of a flare, save me relying on others to be rescued and one day could save my life.

Club Christmas Paddle

JOANNE ALCHIN

Leading into Christmas, 18 very eager club members all with boats of different shapes and sizes set off on Sunday 20 December 2015 from Clontarf in jolly spirits for the annual Christmas pancake paddle.

Now the 19th member, who wasn't able to participate in the paddle due to an injury, was responsible for two important deeds. The first and foremost was to organise this very social event, the second, to reserve a suitable location in the park for the annual pancake competition. After fulfilling his duties Mark Alchin sat patiently awaiting his companions return.

Like all official club paddles, there needs to be a prominent leader. In good spirits for the occasion Tony Murphy enthusiastically volunteered. With ambitious contestants wanting to demonstrate their cooking skills by taking part in the "pancake cook off" with the hope of being recognised as the 2015 winner, the number of registrations grew and more leaders were called upon. Many thanks to Owen Kimberley, Stephan Meyn and Campbell Tiley for joining the leaders and ensuring everyone that registered could paddle.

The weather conditions later that day were forecast to be 30 knots with a strong wind warning on the harbour. The decision to stay in Middle Harbour was adopted by Tony and Mark for the safety of the group. With Santa hats on and boats decorated with tinsel (one even sprouted a Christmas tree) the paddle was enjoyed in relatively calm conditions before the winds picked up allowing all the 'Santas' to concentrate on more important social skills.

Once back on land the seriousness of the occasion was well and truly in action. The atmosphere became competitive as stoves were fired up and fry pans of various sizes were put to work filled with secret recipes. Then for the final touches as toppings were strategically placed on each pancake under the watchful eye of inaugural judge Campbell Tiley.

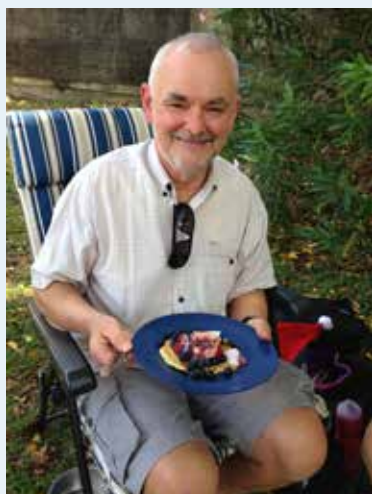
Realising his enormous responsibility Campbell surveyed the perimeter, examining and complementing contestants on their creativity. Despite having a difficult decision due to the strong competition by other contestants, Campbell chose Meg Keen and Russ Swinnerton as the 2015

pancake winners. The result was greeted by a rowdy cheerful applause. With trophy and certificate presented Meg graciously shared their prize – a box of chocolates – with all.

Paddlers and pancake creators were:

Meg Keen, Owen Kimberley, Brian Burke, Wendy Marceau, Stephan Meyn, Norm Carter, Campbell Tiley, Joanne Alchin, Mark Dabbs, Lisa McCarthy, Mark Fuller, Tony Murphy, Karen Darby, Steve Hitchcock, Ben Meredith, Diane Stanford, Russ Swinnerton, Raewyn Duffy and Neil Duffy.

*Left: Mark Alchin, the 19th member
Right: President Campbell Tiley
congratulating the 2015 Pancake
winner, Meg Keen*



Newcastle

Sydney

Wollongong

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

MEGAN PRYKE, CHALLENGE COORDINATOR



Since the publication of Salt 99, the following trips have taken place:

- #5 Wattamola to Austinmer - 22 November 2015. There were 13 participants, led by Megan Pryke and Caoimhin Arden.
- #6 Kurnell to Cronulla - 6 December 2015. There were 12 participants led by Raewyn Duffy.

To date the Challenge is 70 percent of the way to completion. All future trips are now on the club calendar, so hopefully the weather is not going to produce too many other challenges.

2016 N.S.W. trips remaining

- #7 6 March: Cronulla to Wattamolla (Week prior to Rock n Roll)
- #8 10 April: Palm Beach to Long Reef
- #9 21 May : Norah Head to Terrigal
- #10 18 June: Austinmer or Coledale to Wollongong

If the trip is shown as full there is a possibility that either another leader may join, or that someone already booked needs to pull out, so look out or ask the trip leader about getting onto the waiting list.

Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong (a.k.a. NSW) Coastal Sea Kayak Challenge

Bundeena to Boat Harbour (31/10/2015)

Wattamolla to Austinmer (22/11/2015)

Kurnell to Cronulla (6/12/2015)

DARREN FRIEND

When the NSW Coastal Sea Kayak Challenge was first listed, I was immediately hooked and began checking out my trip calendar for the rest of the year. With lots of dates to choose from I carefully scanned my work commitments and started scheduling work around the NSW dates.

Although I have been a club member for two years, work scheduling has to date conspired to limit my access to club trips. While I have attended a few training sessions, club trips were something that had been elusive that I had yet to experience, making me somewhat of a seasoned novice.

The first was an overnight trip planned for 31 October 2015 from Bundeena to Coledale. This was to be my first overnighter and included a surf landing. I booked and started preparing camping gear and arranged extra training in preparation for this trip. My ocean experience was limited to short trips outside of Sydney Harbour. This was to be a big step up for me.

31 October drew near. Trip leader Megan Pryke began posting weather updates from Tuesday; "The long term forecast looks good for a north to south run." Then "Sunday thunderstorms may be a concern, but other than that it



is forecast to have tailwinds all weekend." Then on the Friday before planned departure "There is a Strong Wind Warning current. The winds will increase on Sunday." Megan had now determined a beach landing was not possible, but had an alternative plan of paddle, drive and a hike to the camp-site. My first lesson in ocean kayaking, keep your plans flexible and retain as many options as possible.

*Left to right: Lunch stop at Boat Harbour (Tom C), Neil Duffy in full flight (Steve H)
Inset: Squid (at least we think it was a squid (Steven H))*



Saturday morning we met at Bundeena and it was determined that with the weather forecasts and the fact that Australia was playing in the world cup final early Sunday morning a new plan was needed. The camping trip was cancelled and instead, a day return paddle in strong winds from Bundeena to Boat Harbour would go ahead.

Paddling off from Bundeena we quickly crossed Port Hacking and began to feel the force of the prevailing winds. The winds were forecast at 25 gusting to 30 knots. Megan explained to me later that while the underlying swell was small the seas we experienced were being created by stronger winds than what we were paddling in, up to 2.5m and averaging 1.5m.

Everybody was enjoying the conditions as we made our way across Bate Bay to Boat Harbour for lunch. I was pleased that I had so far kept up and hadn't been put off paddling into the wind. The downward leg remained and I was looking forward to the challenge.

Starting back we were quickly pushed along. I was becoming increasingly aware of growing nausea added to fatigue. This started off as something slight that grew and grew. Halfway across the Bay, Megan noticed that my complexion was now matching the bright green of my plastic kayak. Pulling alongside to check on me the dam broke and lunch in all its splendour was quickly deposited into the sea. My worst fears were becoming reality. I was now the focus of the group as we limped across the Bay. We made an unplanned stop at Jibbon Head where I crashed on the beach before rallying for a final paddle back to the car park and solid ground.

Over a cup of tea later (no coffee for me), kayaking stories were shared and camaraderie enjoyed.

So our cancelled overnighter was soon replaced with a day trip

from Wattamolla to Austinmer. Again Megan was the leader with Caoimhin Arden bringing his experience to the group. Meeting at Wattamolla and arranging a car shuffle I stayed behind to explore the lagoon and waterfall while the cars were taken to Austinmer. With that arranged and the group prepared for voyage we made our way across the lagoon and beach and began our paddle south. Conditions were mild and we were carried along quickly. Arriving at Garie Beach each member made a safe and unremarkable surf landing leaving this writer to provide the sole pre-lunch entertainment. With useful last minute words of advice from Megan I started my chase in, mis-timed my wave, thought I could just let it pass but was caught up

and lightly dumped on the beach. The local surf lifesaving group were on hand to give applause and I received many comforting words of advice on my poor stroke selection as I retrieved my scattered gear and trudged up the beach.

Taking off after lunch into the light surf that had conspired to capsize my kayak earlier, all of us got away easily and without incident. We continued to be pushed along at a nice rate. The weather was pleasant and slightly overcast, keeping the temperature down. I again could feel nausea growing and was relieved to finally land at Austinmer with my lunch still intact. I believe we had covered about 26km on this leg. A quick pack up and car shuffle and we were on our way home.

Right: Geoff D, Rhys W, and Deb C paddling out from Wattamolla, Below: Geoff D, Megan P, Caoimhin, and Rhys, W at Sea Cliff Bridge (photos Ruby Gamble)





*Paddling past Kamay Botany Bay
National Park (Cathy N)*

The next instalment of the NSW Coastal Sea Kayak Challenge (NSWCSKC) was on Sunday 6 December. This time Rae Duffy was the trip leader and a number of people from the previous trips made up the ensemble. Meeting at Cronulla we were paired up for a car shuffle and made our way to Kurnell. Conditions were mild and we started off first crossing Botany Bay to link up with the previous NSWCSKC track and then turn south making our way along the cliff face of Kamay Botany Bay National Park. There was a bit of bounce and rebound with the more experienced of the group ducking in closer to enjoy the effect. Keeping myself out of that action I concentrated on my horizon, determined to avoid becoming seagull gourmet provider again.

We bounced along quickly making good time and arrived for lunch in Boat Harbour without incident. After lunch it was decided that the harbour was an excellent place to practice rolls. A variety of styles were put on display with Rae and Campbell giving advice and support.

Continuing on we pushed across Bate Bay and into Port Hacking and up Gunnamatta Bay finally working our way through the maze of cruising boats to arrive at the boat ramp.

While the trips above were not my first club trips or open water experiences they were significant to me in that they came clustered closely together and allowed me then to build on and take several firm lessons from each experience.

1. Don't ignore your physical well-being.

While I have spent my entire adult working life pushing my body hard and indeed to limits, that had all been within the relative safety of a dojo. Once at sea, even in the coastal waters around Sydney, one is isolated and vulnerable. I should have listened to my body the morning I was sea-sick. I wasn't feeling 100 percent as we left in the morning and should have mentioned this to the trip leader.

Consider what nutrition will work best. I am experimenting still but fruit and fibre seems to be a common theme.

2. Advice comes in many forms

Sometimes club instruction is direct, other times it's anecdotal or simply a passing comment. Caoimhin commented that "there is too much string on that deck" as he paddled past me. I had jumbled a deck bag, paddle leash and short tow rope together and with his comment ringing in my ears could see the

sense of it and have now cleared off the clutter. Later as we cleaned up I was still wearing my wet paddle shoes. Caoimhin pointed out I was a candidate for hypothermia because I had left alternative footwear behind.

Other members passed on tips as we paddled. The group paddle brings many years of experience together that newer members can tap into.

3. Practice, Practice

While I have attended several club training sessions and supplemented that with some one-on-one training it does need to be ongoing. I had undertaken surf landing training in October but six weeks later with no further practice, all the basics of that session evaporated when I needed them most. Make sure you get wet every time you paddle.

To conclude, I felt myself gaining in confidence and practical skills as I gained experience with these trips. The idea of breaking up the route into chunks brings more opportunities for club paddles. I hope this becomes a regular fixture on the club calendar, as it will allow more opportunities for newer paddlers to gain experience while exploring and enjoying the beautiful coastline we live on.



Leaders:

Campbell Tilley and Megan Pryke

Good followers:

Deborah Cuneen, Anne Cumming, Selim Tezcan and John Atkins.

Following Campbell through the slap and tickle of seas round the eastern edge of Looking Glass Island, Esmeralda Cove opened to welcome us in from the Tasman. We'd made it to Broughton.

The island is the last stronghold of the Green and Golden Bell Frog, the most northerly nesting site for the Little Penguin, a major site for Shearwaters and more recently increasing sightings of NSW Sea Kayakers. The latter have become habituated to the island group with Nadgee, Tiderace and Valley boats seen fleetingly through the ubiquitous Mirages, which infest these rocky shores.

To get to Broughton we'd left Jimmies Beach after Campbell's briefing at 8.30 pm. Campbell, the meteorological magician, had obligingly organised a clear sky, light winds, a run out tide for our first day and promised a clear sky, a bouncy nor'easter and a run in tide for our return.

Broughton Island

October 2015

JOHN ATKINS WITH PHOTOS BY SELIM TEZCAN

After an hour we rounded Yakaba Head, slipped past Cabbage Tree Island and made the crossing to Broughton. The long crescent of beach running up to Mungo Brush receded then made a slow advance as we closed kilometres towards the islands. I had time to get to know Selim and Anne and find out more about Campbell. Megan, I'd paddled with a number of times and she'd helped me improve my roll and given me some good insights into kayaking in the ocean. Debbie I'd also paddled with and owed a coffee from our last outing!

We set up camp at Esmeralda Cove after Campbell exerted his psychic powers to drive off a couple of young fishermen who had swags rolled out on the camping platform. Ten minutes after we arrived they bundled their gear into their boat and left. Anne claimed the platform and looked down benignly from her wooden heights as the remainder of us made camp on the greensward below. She then demonstrated the

art of kayak sailing in the sheltered waters of the cove. Sometimes upright and sometimes not, she appeared to so enjoy spending time examining the bottom of the bay that she left her facemask there.

I also had a good look at the bottom of the little bay. Snorkelling round it I saw less fish than I'd anticipated; a Port Jackson shark and one large red Mowie' being the only significant sightings. However there was coral! Small outcrops of hard coral, surely the most southerly in Australia.

Dinner was great, the company greater. The importance of club members getting to know the strengths and weaknesses of fellow paddlers was discussed and a test devised to judge elbow flexion.

In the course of the evening's broad ranging discussions the merits of sea urchin as survival food was raised, with Selim maintaining they are both delicious and nutritious. Campbell offered to try one to assess this contention, unfortunately

Broughton looking south. We had just circumnavigated the island so we could steal a caption from Stuart Truman..."All the way round...Broughton





Jimmies beach at the end of the paddle. Left to Right: Anne, Campbell, Megan, Deborah and John

With a friendly nor' easter and a following sea we crossed with a little too much group spread (mea culpa) but at good speed to Cabbage Tree Island and regrouped. We then returned to Jimmies Beach, packed our cars and debriefed.

try as I might I could not find even one of these spiky devils. So we'll have to see Campbell demonstrate consumption at a later juncture, perhaps Rock and Roll in March in front of a live audience would show what our President is made of!

Next morning we played in the bay for a while; I tried out Selim's Nordkapp - a lovely boat. I had

another snorkel and found and retrieved Anne's cunningly placed facemask. We then headed out and explored the north shore. We had a few relaxed hours, running a gauntlet into Providence Bay, coming ashore for a snack then poking in and out of various rocky slots and crevices until it was time to head south for Port Stephens.

And my debrief? Broughton is a fabulous handful of jewels cast in the sea, set against a backdrop of Mungo sand and a blue green shimmer of bush. Get there if you can!

Thanks to my companions for their help, instruction and good humour. See you again next time we crest a wave together.

Saltiest submission **WINNER**

EXPEDITION KAYAKS.com

I'm pleased to announce the winner of the 'Saltiest Article' from Salt #99 was one of my most regular contributors and trip reporters, Lisa McCarthy.

In Salt #99, Lisa wrote about her 2015 trip in Greenland with Mark Dabbs, Belinda and Stanley Mulvany. The pictures she took were incredible, and after reading her report, you felt like you were really there witnessing the calving icebergs, exploring the highest sea-cliffs and wary of straying

polar bears. A truly fantastic 32-day paddle.

Pictured is Lisa modelling her prize from Mark. In her words; "thanks Mark and Rob at EK for the terrific prize. I'm really looking forward to trying it out."

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



**EXPEDITION KAYAKS HAS
MOVED!**

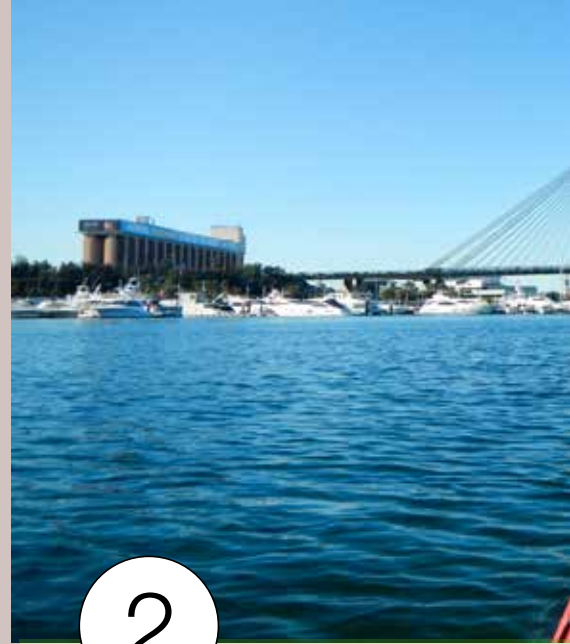
Drop in anytime from 0830 to
1800 Monday to Fridays.

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



1

1 Boat packed, trolley ready, time to get away to the wilderness for the weekend.



2

9 Had a visit from Owen Kimberly & Michele Powell



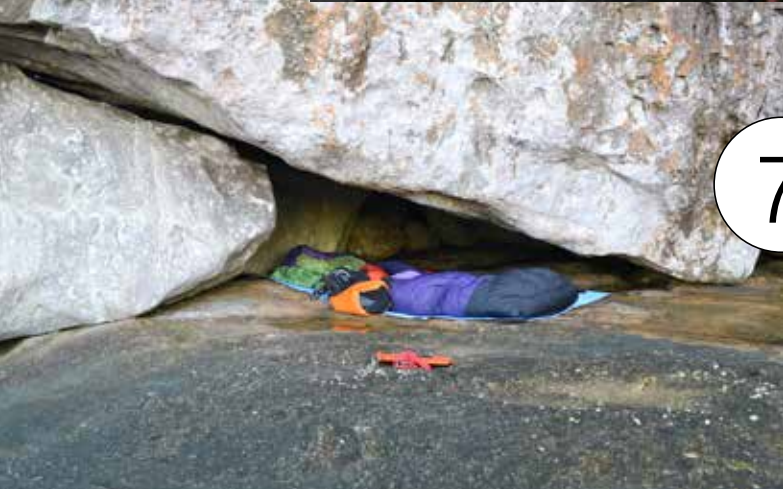
9



8 But my view from the bedroom was pretty good

8

En route, we saw a whale, dolphins, a seal, albatross and a green sea turtle. The other bonus is there was no phone reception!



7

7 I don't





2 Traffic was heavy getting out of town

3

3 Met Adrian Clayton near Bradleys Head



4 Met Mark Schroeder on the way and we found a nice place to land, with an ideal campsite

4



Cliff camp

MATT BEZZINA



5 We set up camp in our remote cove and cooked dinner to the sound of waves and a chorus of frogs!

5

6

6 Mark has a free-standing tent





Planning and Executing a Multi-day Kayak Adventure aka Whitsundays #3

NEIL DUFFY

Over the past six years Raewyn and I have made three trips to the beautiful Whitsundays region. The first two were based around the main islands of Whitsunday and Hook. Awesome trips, details of which appear in earlier club magazines. For adventure #3 we wanted something more challenging. So rather than tell you how beautiful the trip was, how impressive the coral is, that there are all sorts of interesting fish/coral/birds/turtles/whales/sharks up there, I thought I would tell you in more detail how we planned the trip and what we did to make it work once it was planned. Plus tempt you of course to do your own trip by including a few photos and anecdotes.

Previously some club members had paddled from Mackay to Bowen. With that as a basic backbone I spent some time looking at the map and decided that Mackay to Keswick/St Bees then out to Scawfell followed by a jaunt north, island hopping on the southeast trade winds to Shute Harbour or

Airlie/Bowen might be fun. Scawfell had been tantalisingly described as one of the most beautiful islands in that area by a number of club members. Some had tried to get there but the weather gods conspired to stop them and so Scawfell was one I really wanted to get to.

The general route was planned. Before “offering” shares in our venture we needed a “prospectus” including key decisions such as; time frame, “to sail or not to sail”, “own boat versus hire”. Each of the previous trips had occurred around July/August - always a good time to paddle up north, not too hot, nor too cold, stinger suits not required. The time frame for this trip would be the first two weeks in August 2015 – this was also dictated in part by a desire to miss the Hamilton Island Yacht Week which was due to start on the 16 August. Since Raewyn and I had just got our newish tourers sorted with sails – we agreed that it was going to be a sailing trip. We felt the fact that we did not actually have much sailing

experience was irrelevant – nothing like learning on the job. Being a sailing trip meant that it was also “bring your own boat”.

It is always fun to share these sort of adventures with friends so we soon had company sorted with Warren and Merridy Huxley joining us as well as Alison Curtin, fresh from her Bass Strait crossing. Our experience has been that five or six seems a good number on these trips.

Route sorted, people sorted, next came the logistics. How to get there and back. Raewyn and I had decided that we would take a leisurely week to come back to Sydney after the trip. Warren and Merridy would head straight back so this would mean two cars. Alison would fly back, as unfortunately work was beckoning. We planned to hit the water on a Sunday so Raewyn and Alison would work till the Friday and fly to Mackay on the Saturday meaning that I would head off on Thursday, pick up Alison’s boat and drive up. Merridy and Warren would leave Bellingen on

Friday and met us in Mackay late on the Saturday. The car shuffle was along the lines of, leave the cars on the street in Mackay, hire a car in Airlie Beach and drive to Mackay with drivers to bring the cars to the end point. As it turned out, this loose arrangement became somewhat firmer once we got to Mackay and met up with a local paddler named Rod Swan.

Because our group was experienced in multi-day trips (either kayaking or bushwalking) we all had our checklists of what to take. The non edible essentials included maps of the area (we used the maps from 100 Magic Miles

for the most part), laminated to prevent water damage, PLB's, VHF, Flares, mobile phones – Telstra plans gave coverage from some point on most islands which meant we could get up to date weather information. Another good source of up to date weather is the Bare Boat hire operators who give updated forecasts in the morning, which we could listen to on VHF.

One additional essential is the tide predictions for the area. The tidal range can be up to five metres. Arriving at low tide can mean a very long portage, so we took Ikea bags to carry gear to the campsite. Carrying mainly empty boats is

a much easier proposition. Carry straps are also a good idea to minimise popping deck fittings, though we did manage to pop one. Ideally you want to arrive and leave at high tide, though mid tide was sometimes a better option depending on the tidal flow to cross. Check the flows on the charts, as in narrow passages like Solway or Fitzallen, the wind against tide can lead to some impressive wave effects. 'Floods south / ebbs north' is a useful mantra in knowing which way the tide will push you. It is also useful to know about ferry gliding to manage the effect of tide on some crossings.



This page: Hill Inlet



*Above: Lost kayak
Below: Coral everywhere*

Food is mostly dehydrated or lightweight snack/pasta food. Chocolate is considered an essential on such trips not a luxury. Since you have to carry your food you need to consider seriously what to take – talk to club members to see what things have worked for them (and what has not). One food decision is to work out if people are going to share duties/food or look after themselves – we chose the look after ourselves option which meant Alison was the loner here. We did however all have plenty of snack food to share, Pringles,

chocolate, nuts etc. The Port and wine was “Chateau de Cardboard” as the inside goon bags fit nicely into the little holes between dry bays and can double as comfortable seats when empty, or maybe a paddle float for a bit of paddle float snorkelling.

The biggest supply issue on a trip such as this is drinking water. It is literally the deal breaker in terms of choosing a route where you are guaranteed a resupply. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service web site tells you that there is no water available on any of the islands we were planning to visit! Yet all up for the trip, each of us would need 50 – 60 litres of water, far too much to carry. At a pinch we could carry 30 – 35 litres so we needed a set of options. On previous trips we have utilised Scamper (a barge operating out of Schute Harbour) for a water drop on one of the main Whitsunday islands – this trip we would still be south of Scamper territory when we needed the water. We needed other options.

At this stage of our planning we were also looking at contingency plans for getting out to the islands from the mainland if the weather turned a bit nasty and was going to make the first day (our biggest day crossing 30km open water) impossible. Raewyn contacted a company called Megaforce about a ferry service to Keswick. She also contacted

the caretaker of the Keswick airfield who was more than happy for us to grab 10 litres each from his tanks. Part of water problem solved. A follow up call to the Hamilton Island marina gave us a second part to the solution – for the princely sum of \$18 per hour we could pretend to be a yacht and hire a berth at the marina. The fee included the use of the amenities (hot shower) and all the water we needed. Hayman Island was equally happy for us to stop by and get some water if we needed it. Water problem solved.

A good addition to your standard first aid kit for a Whitsunday’s adventure is a tropical antibiotic cream and a course of a broad-spectrum antibiotic. Cuts and scratches can become rapidly infected in tropical waters, early treatment with an antibiotic is very important. Raewyn was elected to visit the doctor prior to us leaving. The doctor was more than happy to prescribe the antibiotics once the nature of the trip was explained. We have used them each trip so far. This trip I scraped my leg on some coral and within a day was showing slight signs of infection, which we controlled with the topical cream.

Mackay Tourist information put Raewyn in touch with one of their staff who was also a paddler. Pam sent us a rather official email advising us the trip we were contemplating was not for the inexperienced. A polite email back



Paddle float snorkelling

Put your paddle float on your paddle, put your mask and snorkel on, tip your kayak over, then drift across the coral, right yourself and repeat.

describing the experience of the group elicited the warmest of responses. Pam was not going to be in Mackay when we were but she put us in contact with Rod Swan, who had done a portion of the trip we were planning. We arranged to meet up with Rod on our Saturday night in Mackay to get some local knowledge. One of the bits of information we got was the best place to launch - from the Mackay Harbour. The Mackay paddlers normally launched from the concrete boat ramp in the harbour. We had already checked this out as well as the "beach" that is in the southern corner of the harbour. As it happened, a police operation on the boat ramp on launch day meant we left from the beach. Not only was Rod useful regarding the launch point but he also offered to mind our cars until we came back. Much better than leaving them on the street. Car shuffle sorted.

You will note the evolving planning - it is always good to be flexible and to be willing to look at options that improve the plan. Launching from the harbour meant that we had a better chance of using the wind to help the first crossing than using the more common launching point further north of Bucasia.

So our plan had all come together. All we had to do was execute it. We had a great trip, made it to Scawfell - my personal highlight. Why? Well it is beautiful, but the big bonus was sitting looking out over the water at night and being surrounded by fire-flies - awesome.

My best whale moment? We had whale sightings most days but the best was watching a baby breach multiple times off Keswick on the first day - Alison and I were only about 100m away much of the time. Closely followed by almost running into a whale as we paddled into Whitehaven Beach.

My weirdest moment - paddling along between Cockermouth and Goldsmith minding my own

business and being run into by a shark. When I first saw the shark, I thought great dinner, and was all ready to reach down and grab it by the tail. It was about 50+ cm long, when I realised it was a little black tip reef shark. He duly rammed my boat right next to the cockpit, woke up, did a big shimmy and swam off.

My scariest moment - sitting on the beach at Schute Harbour and looking out towards South Molle

and seeing a wall of spinnakers. The Hamilton Island sailing week had begun and we had just managed our last short crossing before they would have run us down.

Editor's Note – QPWS do require camping permits

Below: Pretending to be a yacht at Hamilton Island, Bottom: Whale off Whitehaven beach



Teddy Bears Paddle

JOHN PIOTROWSKI



The plan was that four of us were to paddle from Mallacoota to Boydtown over a week, camping along the Nadgee Wilderness Coast and Ben Boyd National Park. But alas paddling plans are always subject to the weather conditions and the forecast for the first day was a gale warning for the South Gippsland coast.

Three of us rendezvoused at a cafe in Cooma after a long drive from Sydney; Adrian Clayton, Caoimhin Arden and myself. Campbell Tiley was delayed by a funeral but was hopeful of joining us mid-week. We checked the forecast on MetEye and decided to leave one car at Boydtown and drive the other down to Greenglade on Disaster Bay.

We camped there overnight, packed the kayaks and set off just as the forecast SW change hit. The amended plan was to paddle to Nadgee River, hugging the coastline

and using it as a buffer from the 30-knot winds that were forecast.

We paddled as far as Jane Spiers beach before deciding to assess the situation. There was still about 10km to Nadgee River and the SE swell and rebound was creating a messy sea, with the next few beaches not providing much protection from the wind. Caoimhin was not feeling very well and when I pointed out the red cliffs of our destination in the distance, he shook his head and said he doubted he could make it. No big deal, it was worth a shot, so we decided to head back to Merrica River to shelter from the wind and camp for the night.

The tide was rising and we were able to paddle straight into the river entrance. We paddled up the river as far as possible, checking out prospective campsites and to gather fresh water from the cascading

flows from the upper river. Adrian declared it was as clear as Gin and sweet to boot.

We camped up high above the northern end of the beach amongst the tea trees. The wind was howling through the valley from the SW. Light rain was falling as we set up camp. We erected a tarp as a wind-break and another to shelter from the rain. It was bitterly cold. I used all my Bear Grylls acquired skills to get a fire going. Soon the rain abated and the fire roared to keep us warm. Caoimhin was coughing like a barking dog and was not well. We had made the right decision turning back.

Now I don't normally feel the cold and hardly ever wear a jacket in winter, but Nadgee in August is bloody cold. Warming ourselves in front of the fire we were decked out in layers of clothes - beanies, thermals, jackets and ... I think



Opposite page: John exiting Merrica River (AC); This page top: Merrica Beach, Bottom: Caoimhin in teddy bear pajamas

to Disaster Bay, aided by my Bear Grylls shirt and the fact that someone had tied ribbons to the trees every 50 metres or so to mark the track. What a great little walk that was. Disaster Bay glistened like a jewel and now the sun was breaking through the clouds. We explored the foreshore before again navigating our way back to camp. We knew we were close when we heard Caoimhin's bark.

He said he was feeling better but still had his teddy bear pyjama pants on when he explored the rocks on the southern side of the river. Adrian and myself went for a cold (skinny) dip in the ocean – very cold but refreshing after the bush walk.

That evening we sat around the campfire discussing options based on the weather. Adrian had organised a rendezvous with Campbell at 1000 hrs the next day at Bay Cliff, where Wonboyn Lake meets Disaster Bay. After a few red wines and tall tales Adrian and Caoimhin took turns reciting their bawdy ballads and dirty ditties – a little more risqué than “what do you do with a drunken sailor” but very entertaining and apt for the moment.

Although we were only a few kilometres away from our car, we felt as though we were a thousand miles away from civilisation.

Next morning, with Adrian setting the pace, we left Merrica and rendezvoused with Campbell on the ocean as planned. He had parked his car at the boat ramp in Wonboyn and paddled the serene lake to the ocean. The serenity turned into an increasing roar as he approached Wonboyn bar and the peaceful lake had turned into a raging sea. He had a few while knuckle moments as he was met by some large sets that gave him a wet wake up call.

Caoimhin was running a fever ... he was wearing what appeared to be pyjama pants ... complete with teddy bears ... he needed rest.

Despite the fact that our first night's camp was only 3km from where we started, the aborted foray to Nadgee River and paddle up Merrica River clocked 17kms on the GPS.

Adrian and Caoimhin were keen to get to Nadgee River some time on this trip as neither had paddled south past Green Cape before. Around the campfire that night we toyed with the idea of Adrian and myself packing up in the morning and paddling to Nadgee River by ourselves, leaving Caoimhin to recuperate at Merrica by himself. We would make a final decision in the morning. We retired for the night and as I lay freezing in my minus five degree rated sleeping bag, I had a dream that we were launching a funeral pyre from

Merrica beach into the ocean with a flaming Caoimhin floating on the balsa pyre. I woke with a start ... Caoimhin had stopped coughing since we went to bed ... geez I hope he was alright ... what would Bear Grylls do ... a Balsa raft would be difficult to build here.

The next morning the wind was still howling from the south west and Caoimhin was still coughing. After last night's dream I wasn't keen on leaving him by himself so we decided to stay another day. This worked out well. We had another whole day to explore this beautiful natural environment.

Adrian and I decided to climb the northern hillside from the camp to get mobile reception and a forecast. A cairn marked a barely recognisable track and we climbed for about 15 minutes before we got coverage. I used all my bushman skills to navigate all the way back



Clockwise from top: Adrian and seals in Disaster Bay, Seals responding to Caoimhin's bark (AC), Resident goanna at Mowarry

Never the less, he made it out successfully in one go ... and right on time.

The forecast had deemed that we head north towards Bittangabee. At a leisurely pace we skirted the northern edge of Disaster Bay up to Green Cape. A resident seal colony near Constitution rock, responded to Caoimhin's coughing and came out to greet us and clambered all around our kayaks. Ah that's what his cough sounded like ... a seal bark!

We rounded Green Cape and arrived at Bittangabee in the sunshine. Caoimhin found a great little camp-site on up the hill on the northern side of the beach. Although the sun had been shining since our arrival it was still bitterly cold. Another camp fire meal as we warmed ourselves and Campbell tuned the VHF radio in for the weather report. This was an ordeal in itself as we had to

listen to the whole NSW coastline starting at Tweed Heads before it got to Twofold Bay on the far south coast. The forecast for the next few days was increasing strong north east winds to 30 knots on a 3-4m rising swell. We could paddle back to Wonboyn Bar or Greenglade or alternatively get an early start in the morning and try to get to Twofold Bay before the headwinds got too strong. We decided on the latter, mainly because Campbell hadn't paddled this coastline before and also I had been caught out on a previous paddle trying to land at Greenglade in a sizable NE swell. It is only really exposed to a swell from that direction.

We set off early the next day, skirting a very appealing campsite at Saltwater and then stopping at Mowarry for lunch with the resident goanna. Would have been nice to camp there, but the forecast was driving us to get into Twofold Bay

ahead of the headwinds. We timed it well as the wind started to pick up as we reached Boyds Tower. As we turned the corner into the bay, we were able to raise our sails for the first time on this trip as we searched for a campsite within the bay.

The NE wind never really got above 10-15 knots and the swell was nowhere near the predicted 3-4m. We sailed past the woodchip mill and the naval jetty and settled on a beautiful little campsite at the northern end of Whale beach, diagonally opposite Eden Harbour. Nestled under the gums and between the cowpats we enjoyed another camp-fire whilst we watched the glistening lights of Eden across the bay.

We were only a few kms from one of the cars parked at Boydtown, but we wanted to squeeze another days paddling out of the trip. The next day's forecast was again for strong NE winds and a rising sea, so we



Top left to right: Kayak parking lot, Campbell punches through the nasty little shore dump at Twofold Bay (CA), Below: Sailing into Twofold Bay past the woodchip mill

thought we would paddle across to Eden Harbour and explore the coastline and gauntlets all the way round to North head and Mew Rock, then raise the sails for the trip back.

The launch from our campsite was on an ebbing tide and there was a nasty little shore dump to negotiate. Adrian was last off the beach and copped a few nasty waves and made it out minus his beloved NSWSKC cap, which he vowed to retrieve on the way back.

The predicted NE wind never really got up again and neither did the swell. On the way back from Mew Rock, Adrian paddled back to our previous night's campsite to search for the cap. The tide was dead low and the shore dump was now

formidable. Poor Adrian got trashed trying to land and whilst we watched from beyond the breakers we could see him strenuously dragging a heavy boat with a cockpit full of water up a now rather steep beach in an effort to empty it. He eventually did so and searched the beach for his cap, but it was never going to be there because of the tide.

Getting off the beach by himself proved even trickier than the morning launch and he got trashed a couple of more times before eventually making it back out to us. It was good theatre and though we may have laughed at his misfortune, especially as he was covered in sand, we could only admire his toughness when he shrugged off the whole episode as just a part of sea kayaking. I tell you if it was me I would have been moaning and

feeling pretty sorry for myself. One tough hombre is Adrian. Hats off to you mate ... so to speak.

It was a short paddle back to the car at Boydtown, then a car shuffle to pick up the cars parked at Greenglade and Wonboyn before staying the night in a cabin in the adjacent caravan park and then heading back to Sydney the next day.

It just so happened that as we were packing the cars, a number of other cars started arriving with sea kayaks on top. A number of sea kayakers from the Victorian Sea Kayak Club had arrived; Dave Winkworth, Tony Barry and Vincent Weafer to name a few. We arranged to meet them for dinner that night at the Seahorse Inn and exchanged tall stories and true, rounding off a great few days of paddling this magnificent stretch of the NSW coast.





A Journey on the Na Pali Coastline... in search of Puff

MARK FULLER

In June 2015, 16 paddlers from five countries came together to seek adventure on the Na Pali coastline of Kaua'i Island (Kauai). Kauai has a land area of around 1,500 square kilometres and is one of eight islands making up the State of Hawaii. It is the oldest island geographically and the first of the Hawaiian archipelago to be landed on by Captain James Cook (in 1778).

The trip was first mooted in early 2014 and took nearly a year to

organise. It developed from a casual discussion between five kayakers and grew by word of mouth. It was not a long paddle; rather it involved a mix of kayaking, snorkeling, hiking and camping over eight days/seven nights.

Kauai Geography

Kauai has a split personality. The centre of the Island features the shield volcano Mt Waialeale at over 1,500 metres with rainfall claimed to be the highest in the

world. The south and southwest regions are quite dry and in parts very barren. Most of the island's 65,000 inhabitants live in the more temperate east coast or southeast corner while the northwest region is largely mountainous rainforest featuring massive volcanic ridges and deep ravines. This north and northwest coastline is called the Na Pali Coast and it is regarded as one of the most spectacular coastlines in the world. It is largely uninhabitable rainforest with huge



volcanic outcrops, many of which protrude directly into the ocean.

Na Pali can only be accessed by the Kalalau Track, which commences near the town of Hanalei to the east. While only about 20 kilometres long the track is demanding in parts and quite hazardous, especially as it meanders through tall cliffs and deep ravines. There is no other passage through or out of this territory. The Kauai authorities do not allow any permanent residency in the Na Pali region and have very strict controls on visitors.

The isolation and beauty of the Na Pali region has resulted in it being featured in many television shows and movies. These include Jurassic Park, Raiders of the Lost Ark, King Kong, South Pacific and the opening scene of Mash. Hanalei is legendary for being the home of Puff, the magic dragon featured in the classic song sung by Peter, Paul and Mary. One of our group's aims was to test this myth.

Preparation

Kauai administrators and indigenous chiefs do not allow professional guided tours in the Na

Pali region and have strict controls on visitors on foot and/or by boat. These included:

- Permits for each section regardless of the method of entry;
- Overnight camping in only three locations, with a maximum stay of seven nights;
- No landings by motored marine craft;
- Non-powered craft to respect sacred locations and reefs; and
- NO ALCOHOL (gulp!).

The only kayaks for hire are ocean size sit-on varieties and are available from two providers in Hanalei. This is because sea kayaks would probably not be able to withstand the volcanic seabed or rough landings. Our group rented from one of these providers but found the experience testing. Not all kayaks had rudders and several of them needed repairs. They were also two kayaks short (eventually rectified). On the flipside this provider handled the transport logistics well – storing all our valuables, airline bags and excess clothes under lock and key, and promptly picking us up from the

absolute opposite end of the island at the conclusion of the trip and greeting us with a cold beer!

Our group had one person who had camping and paddling experience in this region so he prepared the initial trip plan, organised medical supplies and safety/emergency equipment and took control of monitoring weather and sea conditions. Kauai has very consistent northeast trade winds in its summer and we needed to carefully plan our paddling legs around the timing and extent of these winds. In winter most of the northern beaches disappear in the storms and huge swells and may not reappear year on year. Contingencies were needed.

Our other major preparation matters concerned food, drink, cooking logistics and kayak/camping gear. The group handled these logistics by breaking preparation tasks into subgroups. We also took on two Kauai locals to organise purchases and pre-storage. They were also meant to paddle with us to keep an eye on safety, carry gear and assist with camping and cooking logistics as necessary – a great

*Left: A volcanic paradise,
Below: Sheer cliffs with a dual entrance cavern*





*Left: Typical multiple entrance caves with fresh water showers
Right: Cave with internal waterfall*



idea in theory but generally a failure in practice. They tended to do their own thing on the water, were lazy at the campsites and loved their food.

The Trip - Day One

The first day was largely about familiarisation, transport and logistics. Charts and maps were discussed, priorities debated and agreed, gear checked and repaired, supplies packed and labelled into drums and other containers, yaks loaded on the trucks and driven from Hanalei to our starting location at Haena Beach Park. Some very serious briefings about weather and ocean forecasts and contingencies also took place. We then pitched tents and got to know each other over a long dinner. Everyone on the trip knew at least one other kayaker but very few people knew many others.

Day Two

We woke on day two not to a brilliant sunrise and the sound of birds singing but to the shaking of tents prior to 5am. It was the state park indigenous ranger waking us to check each individual permit and ensure we understood the park regulations. It was still dark! We were then given ribbons to be tied to our tents for future identification. The day's activities included

snorkeling, exploring onshore caves, trial paddles to test the yaks (and the kayakers), a 10km return Kalalau Trail hike to Hanakapi'ai Beach (and beyond the Falls for those fit enough). The highlights were snorkeling with some giant turtles and the hike. Hanakapi'ai Beach is very treacherous with (from memory) over twenty deaths in the last few years, many simply washed off the sand. The sea caves were also quite dangerous, although exciting. You need to wiggle on your stomach to get through them and one rogue wave can cause havoc.

Day Three

Unfortunately, day three started like day two with our persistently irritating ranger again waking us before dawn because one tent did not carry a ribbon. He failed to realise that this was the supplies tent. After brekkie we loaded the kayaks and paddled to Kalalua Beach, which was to be our home for the next four nights. We picked up the tradewinds towards the end of the paddle, but combined with the swell this made for a rough paddle with the heavily laden yaks, especially those without rudders. The paddle to base camp one was not much over 20km but gave a good preview to what was to come. The coastline, scenery and mountainous canopy backdrop were mouth-dropping with numerous sea caves teasing us to explore them.

Days Four to Six

These three days and nights can best be described as idyllic bliss. We showered under waterfalls and camped in caves. Surely one of these is where Puff lived. In summary, we hiked some of the Kalalau Valley (with an adventurous few venturing up the mountain), snorkeled to nearby beaches and headlands, explored shore caves, paddled and snorkeled sea caves, undertook numerous bushwalks and played in a never ending number of waterfalls and rock pools. The nights were spent swimming at sunset then enjoying wholesome dinners before talking and singing around the campfire. One of our group bought a guitar and Puff The Magic Dragon was sung every night. While we respected the no alcohol rule every paddler had independently thought through the importance of emergency medicinal alcohol, just in case ☺, and the crevices in the caves acted as cool-rooms. Kayakers are well prepared.

The other highlight in this part of the trip was meeting the 'bandits', those who had hiked into Kalalau then overstayed their permit, some by as much as six months. These people, most of whom were in their late teens or early twenties, had carried on from those before them in maintaining herb and vegetable gardens, clearing the rainforest of noxious weeds and living in communal shanties. Quite

impressive. Unfortunately, a number of them seemed to have lost most (and in some cases all) of their clothes – but that was ok, we put up with that without protest. Some extra vegetables were a welcome addition to our diet.

Day Seven

We packed our kayaks and paddled to base camp two at Miloli'i Beach, a distance of maybe 15 kilometres. On the way we landed at Nu'alolo Kai for an extended lunch and to explore the historical ruins and cliff headlands. There is a lot of history in this area but unfortunately no overnight camping is allowed. With regret we eventually had to launch and continue the journey but not before negotiating a very tricky reef. One of our group snorkeled a safe passage for us with her yak tied to her foot.

The scenery on day seven was the best of the trip. Cave after cave beckoned us to enter, which with the calm conditions that morning, allowed us to enter many of them. If you have a fetish for cave kayaking then this is Mecca. We found caves with open inside ceilings, internal waterfalls, entry waterfalls, and one crème de la crème where you paddled into one cave and exited a different cave some time later. We all became cave junkies, darting into one when the swell was acceptable and daring others to join in or find a one better.

At last we landed on Miloli'i and

set up camp. Miloli'i had a rougher swell and tough shore breaks (with some obvious rips) and we were glad to arrive as the afternoon trade-winds made a complete mess of the ocean. It was a very different campsite. The rainforest and jagged mountain range were gone, replaced by a short flat plain mostly covered by rough brush but with a sheer inpenetrable cliff behind. Quite an extraordinary sight. There were also signs of a previous existence with a semi-restored workman's hut, bush toilet and a freshwater shower. This was a magic location to share our last night together, drink the remains of our medicinal wine and sing our final tributes to Puff.

Day Eight

We took our time getting started and cooked pancakes for our last breakfast. It was not going to be a long paddle to our finish point at Polihale (around 15 kilometres) but it had to be lined up with our transport vehicles and the tide so that we could see and navigate between the sacred reefs. We were also a little concerned about changing weather and sea conditions, particularly changes brought about by our change in direction to the south.

The later morning was spent leisurely paddling, swimming and snorkeling but got a little more serious as we approached our destination. The surf landing was

quite tough as we were restricted to landing on a less than optimal part of the beach between those sacred reefs. A few paddlers suffered wet exits and yes, we were being watched by yet another state park ranger to make sure we didn't break any rules.

Conclusion

A great trip with the best of paddling buddies. If you want a serious paddle then you could do this trip in a day, especially in an unladen yak, assuming favorable conditions and the trade-winds. But you may not get those conditions on the day and you would miss all the adventures that are available.

I reminisced with the two paddlers I already knew, met a dozen or so new paddle buddies, commenced scheming on our next adventure (the Baja Californian Sur is already on offer) and had a wonderful relaxing holiday with exceptional coastline and scenery. And as for Puff, well, we can't confirm that we ever saw him. However, one night after a few of those medicinal wines, and while the others were singing that song by the campfire, I wondered back to my cave and as I began to doze off I am sure I felt a pickup in the breeze and a shadow cross the outside of my tent. So who am I to say that it was not Puff sharing his cave with me.

"Puff the magic dragon, lived by the sea, and frolicked in the autumn mist in a cave near Hanalei!"

Mark and Steve carrying out their 'pack-horse' duties



Our Alaskan Holiday

MICHAEL STEINFELD AND AUDREY MCDONALD



The Kenai Fjords National Park in Alaska has many beautiful fjords and camping areas accessible by boat from the town of Seward, a small seaside town south of Anchorage. Seward is also the port stop of the big cruisers sailing north through the Inside Passage on the west coast of Canada.

A number of kayaking companies offer guided tours out of Seward but most do not rent single kayaks or leave the sheltered water within the fjords. Adventure Sixty North agreed to rent single kayaks and provide a guide on an expedition style trip, subject to their risk assessment of our skills.

Our trip plan was for the three of us, Audrey, our guide Jay and me, to load the kayaks and gear onto a water taxi and be dropped off at our furthest destination, Northwestern Fjord. We would explore this fjord, then paddle around the headland in the Gulf of Alaska and into the sheltered waters of Aialik Fjord. We would be picked up by water taxi for our return to Seward six days later.

At our pre trip briefing, Jay had a couple of concerns. One was the storm heading into the Gulf in three to four days, which would make the crossing from one fjord to the other too dangerous. Secondly, a moraine, which is just submerged at low tide, runs across Northwestern Fjord a few kilometres from the mouth and produces tidal currents and standing waves, which increase the risk of capsize in one-degree water.

After our three-hour water taxi-ride in 10 degree Celsius drizzly weather, we arrived at a beach in Northwestern Fjord. We packed our plastic Necky 17 kayaks and set off across the flat water. Our first campsite was on a large pebbled beach with smooth slippery rocks facing a spectacular calving glacier. As this is bear country, all food had to be placed in substantial metal bear proof lockers provided by the national parks. The scenery and atmosphere was stunning. We went to sleep after the sun set at 11.30 pm, lulled by the thundering of the calving glacier.





This page: Left: Audrey & Michael paddling at the base of the glacier in Northwestern Fjord; Below left: In the wild on a bad day, right: Approaching glacier. Opposite inset: Top: Oyster Catcher's eggs jealously guarded, below: Seal on ice

The next day we paddled further into the bay to the edge of the glacier. As the tide went out, harbor seals and their pups watched us as they floated slowly past on bus-sized icebergs. When the tide turned, they would float back. We kept at a safe distance from the base of the glacier as we were aware of the mass of the ice blocks falling and the resulting large and unpredictable swells. We camped again with views of peaks and glaciers to the west.

Paddling out of Northwestern Fjord towards the moraine caused Jay more angst as the swell from the low-pressure system was building and the standing waves were larger than he expected. However, Audrey and I were well versed with swell and a heavy boat provided more stability. As we headed out to the seas affected by the Gulf of Alaska, the paddling was no more difficult than on a swell day going out of Sydney Heads. After a six-hour paddle with a short toilet stop on a slippery rocky ledge, we headed into Aialik Bay and enjoyed surfing the waves taking us into the bay.

We set up camp in sheltered Verdant Cove,

expecting a lay day due to the storm and we were not disappointed by the storm's ferocity. Even in this protected area, the wind was swirling at 40 knots, knocking our cooking shelter to the ground. The rain was intense at times. We were comforted by Jay's delicious honey smoked salmon pieces and the beauty of our surroundings. Just us and a couple of oyster catchers closely guarding their precious eggs, all hanging about in the rain, wind, fog and the cold. Bliss.....!

The storm passed and after a day of rest we were able to move deeper into the fjord to set up camp in Holgate Arm. Before dinner, we paddled to get a closer look at Holgate glacier.

Jay had us up and on the water early the next morning so we could make it inside the lagoon at the base of Pedersen Glacier before the tide turned and the water would be too shallow to access.



There were a few other groups paddling in the area as Aialik Fjord is within the range of day and overnight trips from Seward. In our six days of paddling we saw numerous bald eagles, seabirds, humpback whales, Dall's porpoise and Steller sea lions but no bears. The days went quickly and we soon returned to Seward into the peak of Alaskan tourist season.

We continued our trip with a visit to Denali National Park famed for its bad weather and its big green shuttle buses. Mount Denali, the highest mountain in North America, has its own weather system and is mostly obscured by cloud. Unbelievably the skies were absolutely clear for the four days we were nearby. The snowy mountain soars above the tundra. The park operates with shuttle buses as private vehicles are restricted on the Park's only road. Passengers yell when they see bears, moose, caribou, wolves and the driver stops and the cameras start clicking. It still can be very hard to see some of the wildlife even when people point directly. It takes all day mostly on the bus for the return trip to Wonder Lake but you can get on and off shuttles to hike, explore rivers and the tundra or spend time at Visitor Centres.



Thames Paddle: with the Putney Bridge Canoe Club

Saturday 19 September 2015

STEVE HITCHCOCK

Visiting family and friends in the old Blighty is a nice change to the routine of work and chores at home, but I was going to miss my regular Friday Oandora paddle. So when I arrived, my first task was to find an accommodating kayak club to help me through this dry spell.

It wasn't long before I found the friendly looking website of the Putney Bridge Canoe Club in London, and contacted John Richards, Club Secretary about joining them on a Saturday morning paddle along the Thames. John was unable to attend, but he put me in touch with Peter Colvin, their Membership Secretary and Leader of the weekly Saturday paddles.

Peter was very obliging, offered me whatever club equipment I needed and gave me instructions to find their clubhouse on Saturday morning, around 25 minutes

walk from Putney station. In the meantime, I explored their website and clicked through to the link about rowing on the Thames. Here was the official Port of London Authority's rules of the road for rowers; "Rowing on the Tideway". How difficult can it be to paddle up and down a river I thought? Turns out, the rule book is 118 pages long and there are a lot of rules!

One of the main concessions to normal boating practice is that you can switch sides of the river back and forth to avoid the worst effects of the tidal current. It would otherwise be near impossible to paddle against the 4-6 knot current if this wasn't allowed. Working oarsmen have been doing this for over 100 years; it's called 'working the slacks'.

So Saturday dawned with a beautiful weather forecast of

around 14 degrees, mostly blue sky, light winds and a 5m outgoing tide. That's right, the high tide at Hammersmith Bridge at 6:30am was 5.2m decreasing to 0.2m at 2pm. It takes around 7½ hours for the tide to ebb out, but only 4½ hours to flood in. There is no slack tide. One minute it's flowing in, next minute it's flowing out.

It turned out PBCC's clubhouse is a bit like a Tardis. Deceptively small looking on the outside, but full of kayaks and equipment on the inside. Around 15 members turned up, extracted their vessel and gear, kitted up and attended the briefing, which was mostly for my benefit. The two key warnings were:

- The danger of getting swept into or under a moored boat.
- Not wandering in front of rowers. Apparently they are not so keen on kayakers, which seems a little unfair seeing as they are the ones facing the wrong way.

*Above: Put in at the Barn Elms Boathouse beach
Below left: The clubhouse of the Putney Bridge Canoe Club
Below right: Hammersmith Bridge*



The other note of caution was not to roll, which considering the state of the brown water and floating debris, seemed like wise advice.

We put in at the Barn Elms Boathouse beach, amongst rowers getting out and the Thames current sweeping Eastwards, and began our paddle upstream. What surprised me at first was both the lack of powered commercial or private craft, and the sheer number of rowing skiffs, from one man/woman up to eight men/women with their coaches in accompanying dinghies. We kayakers were clearly in the minority.

Group spread was non-existent, with the more experienced paddlers holding back for the newer members. We kept close to shore to avoid the rowers and currents, grouping tightly for the river crossings at the designated crossing points.

Our journey took us upstream

to Barnes Bridge, passing under Hammersmith Bridge and return. This is the same course as the annual Oxford/Cambridge universities rowing race, which is attended by thousands watching from along the banks, and by millions more on TV. In 2015, Oxford won both the ladies and mens races. The course is run upstream on an incoming tide for greater speed. While they can achieve the one-way trip in around 18 minutes, it took us two hours to go there and back. Of course, it was much faster on our return leg.

The PBCC conduct regular paddles on the Thames with weekly training sessions in a pool, as well as sea kayaking trips around the coast



Above: Peter Colvin, Saturday Thames PBCC paddle leader, Below: Steve with his borrowed kayak at the turn around point at Barnes Bridge

and white water kayaking on the Olympic course. They were indeed a friendly bunch, and welcomed me to join them again next visit. Thanks to Peter, Joe, Geoff, Simon and Kevin who were all eager to share their tales, and to everyone for making me feel so welcome.



Lessons learnt when kayaking with Kiwis

ADRIAN CLAYTON



The Tennyson Inlet incident

We were a group of four sea kayakers weathered in for the second day at Waiona Bay within Pelorus Sound. It was the third day of a planned 16-day trip in October last year in the Marlborough Sounds region of New Zealand's South Island.

The group's primary objective was a circumnavigation of D'Urville Island, which is located at the western extent of the outer Marlborough Sounds. It's a highly-rated destination by the Kiwi sea kayaking community: the plethora of natural rock features on the island's western side – sea caves, stacks and arches carved by storms in the Tasman Sea over many millions of years – being the major drawcards. The notoriety of the fast-flowing tidal streams through French

Pass, separating D'Urville and the mainland, adds further spice.

This was to be my second attempt at a D'Urville Island circumnavigation. My original attempt in 2013, accompanied by the peripatetic Dabbs-McCarthy duo (well known to readers of Salt), had been thwarted by unsuitable weather.

My paddling companions for this second attempt were Evan Pugh (with whom I'd hooked up with at the KASK forum in 2013), John

Looking west into Pelorus Sound from Alligator Head; Allen Strait in the middle distance separating Forsyth Island from the mainland.

Gumbley and Phil Alley. They were all Kiwis and experienced sea kayakers based in the North Island. Evan having had four D'Urville circumnavigations under his belt was the de facto leader of the group.

On this particular day there was a strong wind warning current for nearby coastal waters abating over the next 24 hours. However, the conditions deep within the sound were moderate. We were getting a little tired of being stranded at Waiona Bay - pretty camp site that it is. John, Phill and I saw a chance to do a diversionary day trip to explore Tennyson Inlet, the western-most waters of the inner sounds. Evan was feeling a bit tender in the wrists and wanting to rest them before we set off for D'Urville the next day, so decided not to join us. We set off around 8:30am telling him to expect us back around 3:00pm.

Not long after our departure from Waiona Bay the wind started building steadily out of

the northwest. Around lunchtime instances of water lifting off the surface suggested it was gusting 30 knots and more. Our course had us spurting in the lulls and doing it tough in the gusts. We had an off-water lunch break in the lee of a spur running off the 600-metre-high range separating the sounds from the Tasman Sea.

Our plan was to head back to the Waiona Bay campsite immediately after lunch with the expectation that the NW wind would give us a fast ride home. The plan required a major rethink once we saw what was happening in the more exposed waters we needed to traverse. The wind had increased significantly. The downdraughts from the surrounding hills were hitting the water with great force and gaining speed as they were funnelled through a narrowish bay.

I've never encountered enclosed waters so violent when I've been kayaking. There was a mass of white horses and there were

williwaws all over the place. I reckon we were looking at something nudging Force 9 on the Beaufort scale. The prospect of the three of us making the 1km crossing with the wind abeam to the next point without at least one capsize occurring was slim. The likelihood of being able to recover from a capsize – self or assisted – was marginal, at best. Cold water and a 3km fetch to the next shoreline were other concerns.

An attempt to paddle around the perimeter of the bay immediately proved futile -- snails would have overtaken us. Also, the conditions were making boat control extremely difficult – even though we all had rudders.

A retreat to a nearby beach out of the wind gave us an opportunity to consider our various options. On landing, John extended a "Welcome to New Zealand" to me.

Our preference was to return to Waiona Bay so we decided to stay put for 30 minutes to see if the





Left: Marlborough Sounds veteran Evan Pugh emerging from one of the many rock gardens found along the eastern shoreline of D'Urville Island; Right: John Gumbley enjoying a chat with a New Zealand fur seal deep inside Queen Charlotte Sound.



conditions would ease sufficiently for such an attempt. Other options were to try and get to the nearest township (Elaine Bay – 4km away and likely to involve a very hard slog for the last 2km) on the western shore and see if we could scrounge a bed for the night; or return to the spot nearby where we had lunch and sit out the night under the stars (and probable rain); return to the Department of Conservation (DoC) hut in Matai Bay (7km down wind through exposed waters) which we'd checked out earlier in the day. A quick audit of what we had in the way of food, cooking equipment, protection from the elements, etc revealed that we were, as a group, inadequately equipped to spend the night under the stars.

We were getting cold and reckoned we'd seen enough within 15 minutes to determine that conditions were unlikely to abate within the foreseeable future sufficiently to allow us to get back to Waiona Bay. We relaunched and headed off to the uncertainties at Elaine Bay. Our route would give us the opportunity to assess the conditions for a crossing to the hut in Matai Bay, which we favoured as our overnight

bolthole. After paddling 10 minutes or so we considered the downwind run into Matai Bay was doable so we changed course and headed for the hut. It was a hairy ride involving a lot of bracing at times but we arrived safely and in good time.

Obviously we were concerned what Evan back at Waiona Bay may be thinking. We were due back there around 3pm (a time which we had now passed). Given the topography, it was not surprising that our efforts to make contact with him through the agreed channel on VHF marine radio were fruitless. For some reason my companions were reluctant to see if they could get a message relayed to him through Channel 16. Having paddled with Evan for many years they were confident that he'd have worked out what had happened and that our return to camp might be delayed – possibly until the next day. They reckoned we had until midday the next day before Evan would call in the cavalry.

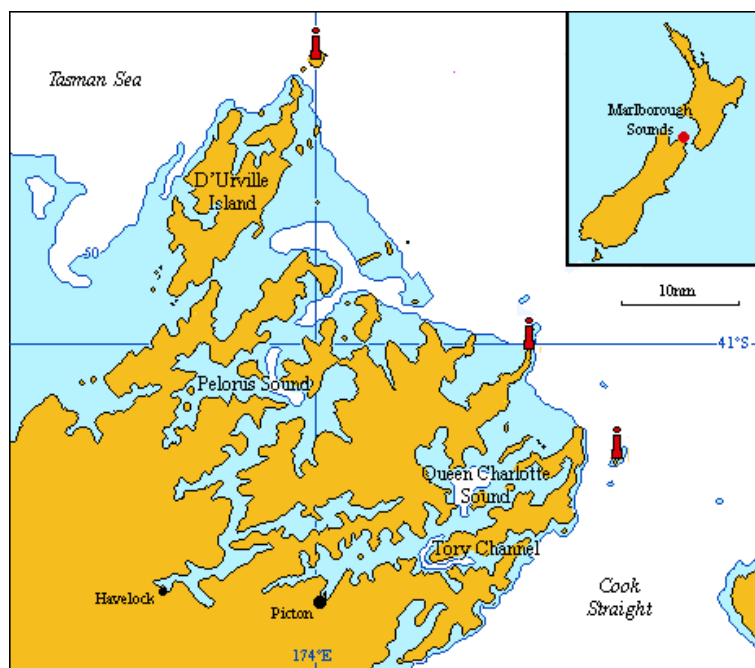
I experienced a sense of déjà vu arriving at the hut. I'd stayed in it for a couple of nights with Lisa McCarthy and Mark Dabbs back in 2013 during a Pelorus Sound trip, which we had substituted for our thwarted plans for D'Urville. Since then many improvements had been made to the hut. For this latest visit, John was happy enough to lend me his waterproof overpants so that he and Phil would be spared the

unflattering sight of me prancing around all night in my budgie smugglers. With "sleeping bags" conjured up from mattress covers by Phil, we had a very comfortable night.

We awoke early the next day to settled conditions and obtained a forecast through John's VHF radio. It indicated that we'd have a relaxed paddle back to the Waiona Bay campsite, approximately 13kms away. We were on the water by 6:00am and it was a relieved Evan who saw us come into view as we rounded the western point of Waiona Bay about an hour-and-three quarters later.

Reunited, we took the opportunity to reflect on the last 24 hours. John and Phil had got it right when they reckoned the previous day that Evan would wait until midday before putting out a mayday call. Evan was able to advise that the relevant wind speeds near D'Urville, as measured by the New Zealand Met Service, were reaching 42 knots. It was the common view of my companions that the winds we witnessed would have been significantly stronger as a result of the funnelling effect created by the surrounding 400 to 600-metre-high hills.

There were lessons all around from the Tennyson Inlet experience. The biggest one for me was that it would be grossly negligent to set off on any future paddle in an isolated environment such as the Sounds



Left: Map showing D'Urville Island on the Northern end of New Zealand's South Island; Centre: A succulent green-lipped mussel about to be devoured; more on the fire to follow; Right: Phil Alley savouring a green-lipped mussel hot off the fire at the Waiona Bay campsite.

(of which New Zealand has many) without a comprehensive remote area survival kit. To reinforce this point: there was a kayaking incident in Lake Tekapo (central South Island) a few days before we embarked on our trip. A group of 11 students in hired kayaks was caught in a fast-developing storm and many of them ended up in the water. Despite getting ashore on to an island, two of the group died from hypothermia. Others were hospitalised. Regardless of the questions the incident would raise, having the right survival kit may have prevented such a tragic outcome.

The Rest Of The Trip

We lost another day before we had conditions that would allow us to leave the inner sounds so it was Day 6 of the trip when we finally said goodbye to Waiona Bay. Our destination was Catherine Bay on the eastern side of D'Urville Island, 33kms away. We enjoyed moderate conditions for the most part plus the bonus of a 15-knot tail wind, which allowed us to make the 7km crossing from the mainland to D'Urville at a very brisk pace. My borrowed Barracuda Interface

reveled in the conditions and clocked up speeds around 15kph on some of the runners it surfed.

The uncertainty of the weather continued to dog our progress and the likelihood of completing the D'Urville circumnavigation was fast disappearing. By Day 8 we were back on the mainland, weathered in at the small hamlet of French Pass. It was Day 10 when we abandoned any thought of enjoying the west coast of D'Urville and, with some reluctance, headed east out of French Pass. Due to inter-island ferry bookings, we had seven days before we needed to complete the trip at Anakiwa at the base of Queen Charlotte Sound.

We arrived at Anakiwa with a day to spare even though we were weathered in for another day along the way. In all we had paddled in excess of 300kms from the time we started our trip in Mahau Sound near the township of Havelock.

Despite the disappointment of not achieving our main objective, this was a trip of which I will harbour many pleasant memories. We paddled along shorelines dotted with sea caves and the occasional stack and waterfall. There were plenty of rock gardens to tempt us.

We did some good walks involving a fair bit of hill climbing and enjoyed marvellous vistas over a very picturesque environment. We enjoyed regular close encounters with marine life – seals and dolphins especially. One memorable encounter with dolphins occurred the day we paddled to D'Urville Island when a pod of 20 to 30 bounded towards us at great speed. You could feel the energy as they passed beside and underneath us. We camped at DoC campsites (\$6/night) on all but three nights. They were all well maintained and had regularly-serviced pit toilets. Most had creeks nearby with flowing water as clear as gin. Apart from a couple of nights we had these sites to ourselves.

Our extended stay at Waiona Bay yielded some benefits. We enjoyed a couple of memorable feeds of green-lipped mussels that we had harvested at low tide and cooked on an open fire. Some of them were near the size of my palm.

The enforced lay days provided plenty of opportunities to chat – mostly about sea kayaking (where too much talk is never enough!). We swapped stories regarding the kayaking scene in our respective

countries and, apart from the types of kayaks we paddle, decided that there didn't seem to be too many differences between us. New Zealander sea kayakers strongly support their local brands – Barracuda, Q-Kayaks, Paddling Perfection being prominent amongst them. A few Mirages can be found but the British brands have not made their mark anywhere to the same extent as they have in Australia.

One feature that really impressed was the lack of human detritus in the waters in which we paddled. It was nearly 300 kilometres before I came across the only plastic shopping bag floating in the water.

Keeping Up With Kiwis

On the water the four of us were pretty well matched for pace. Evan's Barracuda Albatross and my borrowed Barracuda Interface revelled in down wind conditions. John's Barracuda Beachcomber and Phil's 15-foot Native Watercraft Inuit RM performed better into the wind. It all worked out pretty well in the end and we usually arrived at our campsites more or less at the same time.

Had there been a test of camping skills I would have come last by a long way. My New Zealand companions were in another class. An example of this was trying to

keep up with them when breaking camp. Evan would be on the water with his kayak packed around 45 minutes after he arose. To achieve this he'd forgo having breakfast until we had our first shore break. John and Phil weren't far behind him but included breakfast in their prelaunch routine. It was a source of irritation for me early in to the trip that I was so far (maybe as much as 30 minutes) behind. I started muttering about a borrowed boat and borrowed kit but really knew that these were lame excuses. Progressively, I introduced efficiencies to get on the water sooner. These included going to bed in the next day's paddling kit (an upside from this was the extra warmth generated by my neoprene socks, thus ensuring a better night's sleep) and adopting Evan's delayed breakfast tactic. Even so, on the eight times we broke camp during the trip I was last to get on the water on all but two occasions.

Cable Bay

I farewelled my paddling companions at Picton. Evan and John were catching the inter-island ferry out of Picton back to the North Island and Phil was off on another paddling mission in his Inuit, negotiating the stony races of the Clarence River. I headed off towards Nelson where the borrowed Interface was to be returned. I had a

few days up my sleeve and at Phil's suggestion took a small detour to Cable Bay (so named because of it being the eastern landing point of the first Trans Tasman telegraphic cable) for a half-day day paddle around nearby Pepin Island.

It was a detour well worth making. Within five minutes of launching from the beach I was threading my way through the first of numerous arch formations I was to discover. Rock gardens and stacks abounded. One rock was the nesting place of a big colony of terns. An encounter with a fur seal rounded off a great paddle.

While at Cable Bay I met up with Nick Woods, a local commercial kayak tour operator for the last 10 years. In response to my enthusiastic recounting of my paddle around Pepin, Nick told me I'd probably missed many of the best bits. He said it had taken him close to 50 paddles around the island before he had discovered all the delights it had to offer.

However, it was Nick's closing comment that really struck me: "The nature of Pepin and D'Urville is quite similar but D'Urville is 10 times bigger!"

Planning my next tilt at a D'Urville circumnavigation is already underway. Fingers crossed it will be a case of third time lucky.

Early morning passage through the Rangitoto Roads on the eastern side of D'Urville Island.



Halong Bay, Vietnam

PHILIP ROSE

Hạ Long Bay, literally “descending dragon bay” is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and a popular travel destination in Vietnam. The bay features thousands of limestone karsts and isles in various sizes and shapes.

Hạ Long Bay has an area of around 1,553km², including 1,960–2,000 islets, most of which are limestone. The core of the bay has an area of 334km² with a high density of 775 islets.

The limestone in this bay has gone through 500 million years of formation in different conditions and environments. The evolution of the karst has

taken 20 million years under the impact of the tropical wet climate. Several of the islands are hollow, with enormous caves.

Historical research has shown the presence of prehistoric human beings in this area tens of thousands years ago.

There are two bigger islands that have permanent inhabitants, as well as tourist facilities including hotels and beaches. There are a number of beautiful beaches on the smaller islands.

Barbara and I visited Halong Bay in March 2015 and enjoyed a scenic paddle around the bay.



*Adrian Clayton at Pepin Arch — at
Pepin Island off Cable Bay, northern
end of New Zealand's South Island*

