

Salt

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB
ISSUE 102 | SEPTEMBER 2016



Circumnavigate Tasmania

- Bass Strait
- Preservation Island
- Tasman Peninsula
- Bruny to Maria and
NW Tasmania
- Strahan to Cockle Creek





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NSW Sea Kayak Club Inc.

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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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From the President's Deck

MEGAN PRYKE



I was recently on a solo trip. Being able to achieve this reflects how much I've learnt over time from the generous sea kayaking community that is our club. Due to conspiring circumstances, I could not attend the first committee meeting. Thank you to Tony Murphy for conducting this committee meeting. At the time, I was my sea kayak, prepared to bunker down for a weather change.

With a mix of experience and fresh ideas, I am certain the current committee will function well. To the previous committee members, thank you for leaving the club in good shape.

NSWSKC AGM Report

The NSW Sea Kayak Club AGM was once again held at the Yarra Bay Sailing Club in July, following successful pre-AGM paddles out of Yarra Bay.

The committee sadly farewelled members who had made significant contributions to the club over the last few years including: Campbell Tiley, Stuart Trueman, Steve Hitchcock, Shaan Gresser, and David Linco.

Most of the new committee had been nominated prior to the AGM, but the new president was still uncertain. Fortunately after being nominated by John Piotrowski, Megan Pryke agreed to take on the president's role to cheers from the members. Her dedication to the club has been amply demonstrated by her commitment to running trips for members, so we look forward to her term as president.

The entire committee didn't retire at once, with Tony Murphy, Alison Curtin and Stephan Meyn continuing in their roles. In addition to Megan (who has been on the committee before), others new to the committee include Nick Blacklock for training, Selim Tezcan for trips, Ruby Ardren as editor, and Simon Swifte as Rock 'n' Roll coordinator.

The presentation of the evening was from Rae Duffy, who shared photos and stories from her recent trips around Tasmania with the

Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club. Many of the members make their own kayaks, and most carried fibreglass even on day trips (which is possibly also an indication of the more difficult conditions they have to deal with). They are big fans of sailing, typically carrying two sails, one a main sail and one a storm sail (smaller). The other difference is the mast is inserted in a vertical tube directly in front of the cockpit and between their legs.

Rae shared photos from her trip to Freycinet where she had calm seas. She then talked about her trip to the Hunter Group, where she tackled tides, the 'Dangerous Banks', mutton bird colonies, and sea eagles. During this trip she mulled over whether or not to tackle the Western Bass Strait crossing. Even the group Rae was paddling with didn't know what she was considering until she had made the decision to head north, as she wanted to avoid the external pressures of media, photos and charities etc.

Rae added a few extra tidbits to build on her Salt 101 article, such as finding out on reaching Apollo Bay that her boat had been seriously damaged in her launch from King Island – serious enough that if she'd seen it she may have decided not to continue.

The presentation was enjoyed by all, and ended a wonderfully social day and evening.



Cover photo: Heading out of Macquarie Harbour in SW Tasmania (Shaan Gresser, article by Matt Bezzina page 22); Right: Tim Pearse on Sydney Harbour (Rob Mercer)



From the Editor's Desk

RUBY ARDREN

I love everything about the Salt magazine. I love reading it, I love writing for it, and I love taking photos with Salt in mind, knowing that there's a chance they'll get published. I love that the members of NSWSKC are so ready to volunteer articles and photos, and I hope that continues under my editorship.

I've had a great year laying out the magazine under Steve's excellent guidance, learning the ropes and what works for the magazine.

While I'm editor, I will prepare a guide to submitting articles that will make sure we get the best out of your article. I'd also like to encourage our writers out there that want to extend themselves beyond trip reports. I'd like to see articles that talk about the history of kayaking or places we kayak to, or geography, or nature notes, and I'll always welcome technical articles as well.

I'm very happy to take on the job of editor and I hope I can continue to provide you with a magazine that you look forward to receiving.

Deadline to submit articles for December Salt - 31 October 2016.

Training Coordinator 2014-16

STUART TRUEMAN



The NSWSKC is aligned with the Australian Canoeing Award Scheme.

NWSKC members are taken on trips by those who have attained Sea Leader and Sea Guide awards.

These Leaders and Guides can tailor trips based on the Skills Awards gained by the participants.

NWSKC members gain these awards through members with Instructor awards.

All these awards are presented by qualified Assessors.

Without members who are able and committed to gaining these awards, the club could not offer much in the way of practical sea kayaking.

There is a continuous flow of members through the club and there is a need to maintain the flow of active members with AC Awards.

The Training Coordinator position develops opportunities for NSWSKC members to go up the award scheme by encouraging guides, instructors, assessors and interested members into action.

It's a process that is rewarding for all involved, including the Training Coordinator.

For me, the highlight of my two years as Training Coordinator culminated at a weekend in June, which was organised to assess two members as Sea Instructors.

This takes considerable effort and commitment from many involved:

- The two prospective instructors have to advertise their assessment/training day on the club website training calendar and process members who wish to attend training.
- Instructors prepare and present on various themes to other instructors and prospective instructors.
- Two groups of members have to register and attend training.
- Other members working towards the Instructor awards attend as assistants and to gain experience.
- Assessors and prospective assessors attend the two days.
- Accommodation is organised and funded by the NSWSKC.

The weekend coincided with one of Sydney's most intense weather events of the year. One hundred kilometre winds, huge surf (swell of 12 metres was recorded) and heavy rain, all represented in the news through the image of a row of Northern Beaches houses precariously leaning into the sea.

Despite days of dire forecasts everybody turned up and we managed to get an assessment done on the Saturday. Sunday was cancelled when a 'Storm Warning' was issued for enclosed waters!

The weekend was a showpiece of preparation and commitment by NSWSKC members for the benefit of NSWSKC members.



Last word from the Ex-President

CAMPBELL TILEY

After six years on the Committee and three years as President I am pleased to report that the Club is solvent, stable and intact.

Over the past two years, under Stu's direction, we have come a long way to rebuild the guide and instructor ranks and I expect that as we move into spring the trips calendar will reflect the recent increase in leaders and instructors. Thanks to Stu and Adrian in particular and for everyone who has put the time and effort into gaining these qualifications.

Australian Canoeing Awards presented by NSWSKC 2016

Jan 2016

Nerissa Worwood - Sea Skills 3

John Atkins - Sea Skills 3

Martin Vanderpoel - Sea Skills 3

May 2016

Megan Pryke - Sea Instructor

Caoimhin Ardren - Sea Instructor

June 2016

Campbell Tiley - Sea Instructor

Harry Havu - Assessor

Aug 2016

Matt Bezzina - Sea Instructor

Membership over the medium term has been in the 200-250 range but rose to a high point of just over 300, 3-4 years ago and is now just above 240. A few more members would probably help us to attract optimum registration numbers for special events like the navigation weekend, the nav challenge or rock n roll.

Stephan has been progressively updating the website with the aim of improving the ability for members to blog trip reports and, in particular, images and also to informally communicate. Hopefully we will be able to see some visible improvements in these areas before too long.

I am pleased to have located the full set of Club magazines and that they are progressively being loaded onto the website. The aim is to keep this and the online spreadsheet of contents up to date. There are some fantastic articles buried in the archives, well worth exploring.

I should publicly acknowledge my failure to meet the benchmarks set for me by the Club minstrel Mark Sundin – notably I have failed to introduce a Club song and I never got around to changing the President to Commodore – thankfully no-one else listens to Mark either unless he is holding a ukulele.

Working with all of the committee members has been a pleasure throughout my term. While we

have occasionally had some robust discussions, the atmosphere has always been positive, constructive and directed where it should be, at fostering sea kayaking. I would like to formally thank everyone for their contributions especially, of course, the current committee and to thank those members who have put up their hands for the incoming committee.

I would like to thank all of the membership for their support and assistance and I look forward to catching up on the water.

Top to bottom: Campbell will miss the adulation; and the brushes with royalty (with PC); Campbell rejuvenates on the Nadgee coast after the stresses of presidency





Above: An easy landing at Corrigans Beach, Batemans Bay (Image - Caoimhin Ardren)

R'n'R 2017

The next Rock 'n' Roll will be held over the extended weekend of 10 – 13 March 2017 on our beautiful south coast at Batemans Bay. This weekend provides club members with the opportunity to meet like-minded people, experience a variety of great paddling destinations and enhance their paddling skills via the free training courses. We will hopefully have a few equipment suppliers on hand to show and demonstrate their wares.

Batemans Bay is an ideal location for this event due to its wide range of paddling conditions that suit all levels.

The event will be held at Batemans Bay Beachside Resort (Big 4 Caravan Park) at Corrigans Beach; giving easy access to paddling in the open sea, around the bay or up the Clyde River.

Registration for the 2017 RnR will open mid January 2017. For those wanting cabins and powered camp

sites it is advised that they be booked sooner rather than later, as this weekend is also a long weekend for residents of the ACT.

As always we will be looking for volunteers to help with tasks such as registrations, cooking the BBQ and general organising.

More details about the 2017 RnR will be published in the next issue of Salt due out towards the end of the year.

R'n'R 2016 flashback Jimmy's Beach - where heaven & sea meet

HILDE MAILEN DOMAAS

Hei (= hi), I'm Hilde from Norway and I have been a member of the NSW Sea Kayak Club since March 2015. I joined the Rock 'n' Roll at Currarong, meeting the club members for the first time. I have been enjoying the milder climate in Australia coming from one of the colder corners of the world, and am happy to catch any opportunity to leave my 'student life' in Sydney for a paddle. I was also happy to be able to travel down to Hawk's Nest with some help from a member who supported me with camping and

kayak gear for the upcoming Rock 'n' Roll event - what luck!

The tent was set up on the sheltered Holiday Park campsite on Friday afternoon and lots of members from the club were enjoying the fish and chips at the Marquee area. Sharon and Mark had set up their stand, and I highly appreciated being able to buy fresh kayak gear for the season.

The location was fantastic, a beautiful part of the coastline with white and long sandy beaches



surrounded by picturesque green mountain tops. Saturday morning dawned with blue sky and waking up (unwillingly) to the distinct sound of the local birds.

After breakfast we gathered together for the weather and conditions briefing before the announcement of the many daily trips - and there were quite a few on the agenda. Among the many trips on the program was the trip to Broughton Island for the most adventurous paddlers and was quite popular. There was also an invite to

a 'coffee cruise' which I thought was quite a charming brand for a kayak trip. The training skills program ranged from basic skills, capsize trouble-shooting skills, along with some more advanced skills training.

Shelly Beach Trip

After some consideration I joined the group that aimed for a lunch and a swim at Shelly Beach: #summer#paddling#sunshine is just too tempting for a Norwegian. There was a short walk with the 'kayak on wheels' to Jimmy's Beach to meet up with a small group of three women and four men, including our trip leader Gary. The nice summer temperature invited me to take a short 'bath' before we entered the flat crystal clear waters with our kayaks. I was told that white sharks have been observed in Hunter waters and for a second some pictures from the film 'Jaws' flashed into my mind. Well, my boat is four metres long, so if I meet a shark it really has to be big, but hopefully they prefer feeding on baitfish and not a scared paddler. We were guided towards Shelly Beach where we stayed for couple of hours, with time for a swim, enjoying a lunch and summer life.

Left to right: Preparing to set off for Shelly Beach (Image: Hilde); and Chloe paddling on the Myall River (Image: Michael)

Sail away

The wind was already starting to rough up on our return, blowing straight into our faces at 15-20 km/h and there was no use holding your cap straight on the head. After the crossing over the water we could catch some surf from behind and when Neville, a gentleman in our group offered me his boat to try his sail I was really excited because that was my first time doing kayak sailing (it's not so common in my country).

After some practice and guiding I was able to manoeuvre the sail and speed up with the wind, and then I was thinking about the Irish folk singer Enya and her song 'sail away, sail away', so it made sense at that moment to sing the song.

Tea Gardens

The weather again didn't disappoint on Sunday and I thought it was great for exploring by kayak up to the Tea Gardens area with such a variety of waterways.

In planning for the trip I came across some useful navigation tips from a local kayak member useful for a safe paddle. Michael and his daughter Chloe joined me, with a map on the kayak deck ready to experience the tranquillity of the mangroves. We saw dolphins, seagulls and many fishermen.

Midway we sat down for lunch and rested and aimed for the town further up the Myall River.

Avoiding the fast boats we paddled along the mangroves. When crossing over to the 'other side' we had to find the right moment. The area was not overcrowded so there was not really a 'highway' to encounter, but to be on the safe side we paddled as fast as we could. Michael and Chloe had planned to buy a map in the town and when we almost reached the bridge we saw that we were running late and had to make a fast return because the Beach Marshall expected us back at the beach at 2pm. That was a good decision since we had to paddle towards the strong upcoming wind, which delayed the paddle half an hour. Our trio was quite satisfied and thrilled to sign in on time.

Thanks to David Linco for a fantastic, organised Rock 'n' Roll, and to the devoted trip leaders: one of them Gary who drove down all the way from Queensland to participate in the Saturday paddle and left early on Sunday morning. Many thanks to the generous 'neighbourhood' offering cold drinks. My memories from the "Tea Gardens" will forever stay with me.

Tusen takk.



Flexibility and Kayaking

CATH NOLAN



Flexibility is important in kayaking. Not only does it allow for better boat control and efficiency on the water but also reduces your risk of injury.

So what is flexibility?

Flexibility is defined as the range of motion (ROM) of your joints or the ability of your joints to move through different planes. It also refers to the mobility of your muscles.

All skeletal muscles have a resting length. When our muscles are stretched to the ideal length, it can maximize muscular contraction. If the resting length is shorter or longer, contraction is compromised. All muscles have an optimal length tension relationship which in turn affects joint range of motion. Why is flexibility important in kayaking?

Improves skill level

In kayaking good muscle and joint flexibility allows your joints to accommodate all the different angles required for good boat control (including rolling). For example, good hip flexibility assists torso rotation in forward stroke, and is important for effective edging and rolling.

Decreases risk of injury

Optimum length tension relationships of muscles and joints reduce your risk of injury, particularly muscle tears or sprains. There are several groups of muscles in the body that show a tendency towards tightness and also being over active in many movements, including kayaking. These include the hamstrings, calf muscles and some of the back muscles. These muscles are often

implicated in musculoskeletal pain and are prone to strains.

Increases efficiency



When muscle length and muscle contraction is optimised, you can obtain maximum power and efficiency during your paddle strokes, allowing for an increase in speed, less fatigue over longer distances and overall enhancing your enjoyment on the water.

What limits flexibility?

There a number of factors that contribute to limited flexibility. These include:

High muscle tone – This occurs when the muscle is overworked or

tense. Nerves supplying the muscle continue to provide a low level discharge and the muscle cannot fully relax so the resting length is altered. This in turn limits the full range of movement of the joint the muscle is attached to.

Stretch reflex – As a muscle is rapidly stretched there is an automatic neuromuscular response, the ‘stretch reflex’ that limits overstretching to prevent injury. Where the length tension relationship of a muscle is reduced, this reflex can start earlier, limiting joint range of motion.

Changes in muscle and connective tissue - As we age, muscle fibres are gradually replaced with fibrous connective tissue, which is less elastic. It increases stiffness of the joint, limiting joint range of motion, particularly in highly mobile joints such as the shoulder and hips.

Bony changes - Bony changes in the joints due to aging or injury can affect how the surfaces of the joints line up, decreasing flexibility and decreasing joint range of motion.

Poor posture - Poor posture can reduce the optimum length tension relationship of skeletal muscle leading to stiffness in the joints, as they are prevented from moving through their full ROM. Try this activity. Sit in a slumped position and raise your arms up over your head. Now sit on your sit bones, stack your spine up long and now raise your arms up over head. Do you notice the difference in your arm range of motion?

Previous injuries - Injuries to muscles and connective tissue can

lead to a thickening, or fibrosing of the soft tissue. Fibrous tissue is less elastic and can lead to decreased resting length of the muscle and reduced ROM in the affected joint.

What can be done to improve flexibility?

The good news despite both physiological and other factors, is you can improve muscle flexibility and joint range of motion through stretching. But what type of stretching is best?

Stretching can be grouped into three key types and all of these are important in keeping your muscles and joints at an optimum for either a day paddle or an expedition.

Dynamic stretching – is slow controlled movement which helps the muscles to stretch through their optimal length and take the joint through a full range of motion prior to doing an activity. It targets the most intensely used muscles in the activity, increasing their elasticity and as a result reducing injury risk due to muscle sprain/strain. An example would be standing hip rotations.

Static stretching – is where a muscle is held in a lengthened

position for 20-30 seconds. It is ideal for stretching connective tissue and helps lengthen a muscle. It is best to be used as a cool down after an activity. An example is a hamstring stretch after kayaking.

Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF)



PNF is a type of stretching that promotes elongation of muscle tissue. It aims to optimise the neuromuscular 'stretch reflex' response of the body. It involves stretching a muscle passively to its end of range, then either holding or contracting the muscle for six seconds, releasing and then stretching the muscle further to a new range and repeating 3-4 times. Yoga and pilates exercises are a form of PNF stretching.



To optimise the flexibility of your muscles and joint ROM in kayaking, it is important to do all three types of stretching. I would recommend dynamic stretching prior to hopping in your kayak, static stretching after and then either doing a session of yoga or pilates once a week...or making time for a good PNF stretch program once a week to keep you supple.

And finally, here are a few tips to remember when stretching:

- Always warm up before stretching. Stretching when your muscles are cold could lead to injuries.
- Stretch to the point where you feel some mild tension. You should not feel pain. If you do, stop and release the stretch. Try again in a shorter range, build up to the increased range.

Here's to happy and pain free paddling!





Paddling Tribes



VINCENT WEAVER

First off, the good news. Paddle sports are growing ... huzzah!

In my biased perception (always admit to bias early in a written piece and it makes your position unassailable) paddling is, where bicycling was, a few years back – surging and splintering into various new tribes.



The bash 'em against 'whatever takes their fancy' tribe in hammers and the like (hello Fer and Wade).

The 'diametrically opposed to the bashers' gear freak tribe. They are often seen at paddle gear expos many days before any queues form, or are sometimes spotted darting around shipping containers being lowered onto docks, crammed with the latest and greatest 'must have' boats, . They have an insatiable craving for the very latest 'stolen from NASA' space age 'weight saving' materials – these folk are rarely seen too close to the corrosive effects of salt water, and certainly not anywhere near hard abrasive surfaces such as rocks. They tend to wear an alluring combination of dark glasses (even in low light conditions), subtle scents and skinny black threads, especially if has a discrete (but not too discrete) label such as Prada or Calvin Klein; drive black vehicles of west European marques; and are sometimes seen preening in upmarket waterfront boutiques (5 star and/or 3 chef hats would you mind) establishments, smugly quaffing designer beer or sipping white wine from the same provenance as their vehicle.



The salt encrusted old men/women tribe of the sea who gaze through their cataracts somewhere over the horizon to some reef/island/iceberg only they can see. These folk are often found writing/editing in various paddling journals or lurking around water sport related forums.

Club members – in the words of Groucho – I don't want to be a member of any club that will have me as a member.



The more modest and quietly spoken tuilik tribe. The 'skinny stick' rolling folk 'at peace' in their 'skin on frame' qajaqs who sprinkle their conversations with unpronounceable unspellable terms and spend inordinate amounts of time perfecting roll number 35 – paatip kallua tuermillugu illuinnarmik (roll with end of paddle in armpit) whilst secretly checking out holiday brochures north of the arctic circle.



Newbies/neophytes 'yet to form' tribe allegiance. Is there any polite term for someone who has tuned enough with the cosmos to assimilate into one of the above tribes or create their

own? Go for it! Find a mentor (preferably not one trying to sell you stuff), have fun. I was only kidding about clubs - Groucho quote again - "He may look like an idiot and talk like an idiot but don't let that fool you. He really is an idiot." Unless you have an insanely valid reason, you are an idiot if you don't join a club. Check out the 'Four Stages of Competency' (in your favoured internet search engine, on a computer, which is turned on, has internet access...etc). Yes, I was once a blissfully unaware noob, in stage one, before I somehow caught that tiny chink of light that was the glimmerings of stage 2... and joined a club.



The Hobie loving fish yakker tribe who fish with lots of gear. So long and thanks for all the fish.

The 'I got it cheap on Ebay/Big W' tribe who somehow attach their 'watercraft' to their vehicle's roof racks, hoping they remembered to pack the PFD whilst wondering why their paddle blades are twisted and watching their 'sit on top' warping before they have even christened the damn thing.



The SUP tribe (quasi-Corona crowd and rarely seen in tuiliks). Lusting after long expensive carbon paddles and wearing not enough sun protection in their quest for the ageless blond tanned look. There is a WTF mutant hybrid of doing 'yoga on a SUP' in case you didn't know.



The whitewater tribe who whilst 'not frothing over river heights' and laughing at 'moving undercuts' as well as in the face of danger, scoff at Grade 5's and did you get that on the GoPro? Then there's the squirt boats – remember to breathe.

Apologies. If I have not offended you by somehow not including you in one of the above tribes (skek vs rudder, west vs east, south vs north, plastic vs composite, QLD vs WA vs NT vs NSW vs SA vs Vic vs Tas vs NZ vs NG vs Ca, northern hemisphere vs southern hemisphere, agnostics vs atheists) or totally omitting your tribe. You have every right to reply in an angry letter/article/blog/opinion piece in whatever forum takes your fancy.

Thanks to all of you that make paddling so much more than a sport.

To close with a quote (yes, me part of that tribe):

"Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats."

Kenneth Grahame (The Wind in the Willows).



Car Shuffles

MEGAN PRYKE

The reward of paddling downwind often makes a car shuffle a necessary evil and most times it is a pleasant coastal drive. The memory of car shuffles soon fades into the background when thinking of past great trips. Sharon's Betteridges recent report of a 780km bitumen and dirt road car shuffle for a 200km expedition trip perhaps puts shorter car shuffles into perspective even more.

Some ideas for managing car shuffles:

- Everyone should contribute evenly if possible.
- Having said that, occasionally locals may have more time or may offer to do more, or there may be restrictions on people's time that could be catered for without inconveniencing others.
- Cars equipped to carry more kayaks than one are great. Three is better than two kayaks.
- Have a boat minder or minders, i.e. people to be watchdog over the kayaks as cars are being shifted. Often these people have arrived with others in a car.
- Carry with you in your sea kayak the dry clothes and gear for the end of the day. The advantages are:
 - You have clothes with you if you need to go back or stop part way.
 - You know where your gear is.
 - You don't end up sitting salty, wet and sandy in someone else's car.
 - You can dry off while waiting for a car to return.
- Carry a set of kayak tie down straps in your kayak. The alternative is to confirm that there is a set for each set of cradles in the respective cars, however with the rush in the morning to get ready, confirming this could be easily overlooked so best to be self-sufficient.
- Rinse off your kayak before placing it on someone else's car. If it is your car and you rinse your own kayak it is best to carry some spare water and an old towel to lend to others.
- If your car is not at the end of the trip and you can manage the extra weight in your sea kayak, put your wet gear into your kayak at the end of the trip. Seal it with your spray skirt or cockpit cover. Split paddles will often fit into cockpits.
- Know the driving route. Believe me there are a lot of tricky roads and headlands along the coast! I have found the Google Maps app on my smart phone to be great at finding the best way with a proper hands free mount.
- If you can, do most of the shuffling at the start of the paddle. The result can be more opportunity for a social chat at the end of the paddling day.

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

Done and Dusted!

MEGAN PRYKE



The goal has been achieved!

Thanks for the many trip leaders who helped with the Challenge: Fernando Charnis, Adrian Clayton, Megan Pryke, Matt Bezzina, Campbell Tiley, Caoimhin Ardren, Rae Duffy, Tony Murphy, Mark Alchin and Nicholas Gill.

All up 43 different club members participated, doing a combined distance of 2750 km. The distance of paddling was 260km, including non-coastal distance needed for access. Those completing the maximum distance were Deb Cuneen, Steve Hitchcock, Mark Clarkson and Bruce Lew. These four paddlers got in early; Adrian's two-day trip helped them get an edge that they then maintained. No one actually did all the paddles, though some filled in sections they had not previously paddled. There are still sections of this coast I have not done.

It is hard to say what was the most challenging paddle, though the Norah Head to Swansea section followed the next day by Swansea to Newcastle were the two longest legs, being 34 and 33 km respectively. The swell was large, so close in conditions were rough. Well done to Adrian for leading this paddle, which had possibly the most complex car shuffle of all the trips. The final paddle was deliberately one of the shortest to allow time for a lunch celebration – thank you to Nicholas Gill for opening up his home.

Members have asked me what next? Although they are not that bad, my reply has been that whatever it would be, it would not involve another car shuffle!

NSW Coastal Sea Challenge

Terrigal to Norah Head

SELIM TEZCAN

Trip Leader: Tony Murphy assisted by Megan Pryke, Mark Alchin, And Nick Blacklock as a Grasshopper

Slow Group: Mark Alchin, Megan Pryke, Selim Tezcan, Deb Cunneen, Cath Nolan, Joanne Alchin, Geoff Dauncey

Fast Group: Tony Murphy, Brian Burke, Steve Hitchcock, Michael Taylor, Nick Blacklock, Paul Williams, Wendy Marceau, Alison Curtin



“Meet at 8 am at Norah Head”. That was the message from Tony to those who took part in the car shuffle. Sharing the car shuffle with Tony (the trip leader) made me experience some of the great challenges of organising a car shuffle. Thinking how difficult a task this is for our trip leaders led me to have an idea for a phone app, which I think has a worldwide market. The idea is everyone runs this app on their phones and puts in their location, how many people and kayaks they can carry, and their destination. The rest is done by the app. Please don't tell my idea to anyone. I am hoping to join the world's richest people by resolving this greatest puzzle of our time for the massive market of outdoor enthusiasts.

Below: Brian Burke and Wendy Marceau launch at Terrigal (Images - Steve Hitchcock)

It was just before 8 am and it was a beautiful morning at Norah Head. Seas seemed to be calm. Swell looked a decent size. Forecast for the day was seas under a metre with a 2.5m southerly swell. Wind forecast was SSE up to 15 knots. Although there was some concern about landing at Toowoona Bay for our lunch break, the day was looking good. We left a set of cars at Norah Head, with the mostly southerly winds meaning we would start our trip from Terrigal.

Terrigal looked vibrant and alive with so many people surfing, swimming and diving at the beach. There were 15 of us. Tony thought it would be difficult to manage a group of 15, so split the group into two. There was a higher number of female participants on this trip than any other and since enough ladies were standing in line with

one another I exclaimed “Ladies in one group and men in the other”. That was laughed off quickly and Tony proposed having a ‘fast’ and a ‘slow’ group and asked who wanted to be in the ‘fast’ group. Most men put their hands up so quickly that it made me think this was rehearsed the day before. I couldn't make a snap decision, as I was trying to compare my speed to those who put their hands up. Other than Alison and Wendy (in the fast group) I was (with Mark and Geoff) in with the ladies in the ‘slow’ group. My ego was severely damaged. Not because I was with the ladies (ladies you are beautiful) but I was in the ‘slow’ group. Yeah right Tony, OK, we may not be fast but does that mean we are slow? Why couldn't you name us the ‘standard group’? I needed to recover from this damage so I





Above: Steve paddling uphill “no hands”! (Image - Nick Blacklock)

rationalised my position with the following statements in my head. Those in the fast group didn't enjoy their surroundings. They just wanted to go from A to B. They had no appreciation for nature. They were fitness paddlers. They were water rats. They were so many other names. I felt a little better after this and soon we were getting ready to go on the water.

Although the sea state was glassy, swell was creating a good set of waves. We had to be careful getting out of the normally protected Terrigal, as some sets were reaching all the way in. The fast group got on to the water first. More damage to my ego! They were first because they could handle the conditions better than my group. They were to lead us out of the bay. Thanks a lot you heroes! ☺ Never mind - soon we were all on the water. Fifteen colourful sea kayaks decorated the Terrigal beach like water lilies in Monet's paintings and this beautiful scene healed some of the damages to my ego and we were off north to our midway stop, Toowoon Bay.

The stretch of coastline between Terrigal and Toowoon Bay presented some beautiful shoreline

but contrary to the forecast the swell was more from the East. We were unable to get a close look at the shore. The next 10kms was spent chatting and having fun and games naming where we were on the water. We discussed whether Avoca was north or south of Terrigal and were we looking at Forester Beach? As Mark Alchin had the map and GPS on his deck I thought he was quite entertained with our 'guesses'. Soon the fast group started to fade into the horizon. “OK guys” I thought, “- no problems. You just go ahead and get your coffee fix”. Bloody addicts!

Swell on a calm sea is very mesmerising. Swell was building from the right hand side of us. As it approached, it raised into a beautifully formed mountain. It had a very clean, vertical smooth elevation and formed a razor sharp crest. As it passed to shore side of us, silvery bright morning sunlight hit the back of the wave and with the small glassy wobbles at its slopes it made the wave shimmer like a diamond. This clean well defined form, that regular passing movement, that glassy shimmering of water soon made me enter into those blissful moments. I was in the water with diamonds.

When we reached to Toowoon Bay we gathered together on the water. Tony had already left for Toowoon

Bay with his fast group. He would report back the conditions to Mark over VHS. Although Toowoon Bay is a protected bay in many ways, the S/SE swell was rounding in and perhaps required a surf landing. Our nature loving group was content to have a break on the water. We didn't wait for a report from Tony and continued our journey to Norah Head without a landing at Toowoon Bay.

As we continued our journey we started to see the famous lighthouse on the horizon at Norah Head. Although it looked a little smaller than an average man at first, it started to grow slowly into a more recognisable shape and soon it became the measure for how close we were to our destination. We had hoped to see some whales but had no luck. A flying fish was the only wildlife on display for me.

Seeing the Norah Head exposed rock from a distance took me by surprise. I forgot all about it during our journey. I have visited this rock before by launching from Norah Head. As there was a sizeable swell and the sets were long reaching to shore side we decided to go around it from the eastern side. Being close to this exposed rock is difficult to describe. Passing swell sets covered it completely. When the water retracted away from it, the exposed rock emerged like a sculpture and giving us a glimpse of the wilderness that exists in this untouched underwater world. I watched the waves slam the rock with all their force and the water exploded up in the air like a water bomb and yet the rock emerged out of it totally unmoved. With so much water churning around us I was left in awe watching this power play between the water and the rock. I could stay there and watch it forever but I needed to keep up, this was no place for popcorn.

My group gathered once again before we made our plan to enter to Norah Head. Equipped with GPS way points and maps Mark took

us north of Norah Head before we made a turn south into the bay. As we rounded in, we could now see the waves rolling into the bay. Some sets were a good size and had quite a reach. At this point I could not see the fast group on the horizon. I asked Mark if Tony had reported back from Toowoan Bay. Mark said yes. But they weren't here yet. So we were technically faster than the FAST group! Somehow I didn't feel comfortable with this conclusion. Seeing the challenges

getting into the bay at Norah Head got me thinking about this whole trip with this fast and slow group in mind. Could it be possible that the fast group went first to check out the conditions for suitability for my group at Toowoan Bay? Contrary to my thoughts, could these people be the heroes, not the speed freaks, sacrificing their experience of nature for the safety of others? This thought however didn't last a second before I went naahhhh. Even if it is true perhaps

no member of NSWSKC will ever claim themselves to be a hero, hence the truth will never be known but at least a good lesson can be rehearsed here: never judge a paddler before the trip ends.

Thank you Tony Murphy for putting yourself under such stress to shuffle us around and for leading the trip, thank you Megan Pryke, thank you Mark Alchin and thank you fast group, you were good sports and you were fast but we came first ☺.



*Hands up at the finish
(Image - Selim Tezcan)*

NSW Coastal Sea Challenge Austinmer to Wollongong

GREG PRUTEJ

IMAGES BY NICK BLACKLOCK



I had only completed one previous chapter of the Newcastle – Sydney – Wollongong challenge (from Kurnell to Cronulla on 6 December 2015). But the prospect of sharing in the glory of completing the challenge with the club – and the club's offer to put on a free celebratory lunch at the end – saw me up at 4 am to make the trip from Canberra up the Hume Highway and over Macquarie Pass to join the team at Austinmer for the final leg into Wollongong.

Left: Megan (the NSW Challenge coordinator) providing a briefing before the final leg of the Challenge

Thanks to Megan Pryke's organisational skills and Nick Gill's local knowledge, the car shuffle to Wollongong Harbour was somehow pulled off without too much complication and the group of 14 gathered at Austinmer beach in good time. We started out in fairly calm, overcast and benign conditions. Rhys managed to turn the easy entry into a dramatic challenge, as he chose to try catching a few waves. The local break came up pretty sharply over a reef to the southern side of the beach. One of the waves was a bit of a monster and had Rhys in a massive endo, then out of his boat and back on the beach again



Front row: Nick Gill, Alison Curtin, Rhys Ward

while the rest of the group was mustering offshore. As Megan debated whether or not this had to count as only the second wet exit for the entire NSW Challenge, Rhys may have been heard to blame his new boat for the mishap and/or the fact that he had been out until the early hours the previous night. In any case we were still able to set off without too much delay.

To be honest the 18 km trip was fairly uneventful from a paddling perspective. Whatever little zephyr arose came over our left shoulders as we paddled south and was not enough to create any kind of sea that would test our skills. It was what I would call a pleasant day on the water. The mood was friendly and relaxed and little pods of paddlers took the opportunity to catch up with each other as we cruised along. Megan's achievement of putting together 14 club paddles over a year or so to cover the coast from Newcastle to Wollongong created a

lot of memories that everyone had enjoyed partaking of in different measures. While Megan herself tried to give the credit to good luck with the weather (only one of the planned legs had been postponed due to the elements) everyone else realised that it had been a major planning effort and a key contributor to the club's success over the year.

About half way from Austinmer to Wollongong a reef extends out from Bellambi Point, and the group had to paddle about a kilometre out to sea to get around it. The swell rose fairly sharply around the edges of the reef, so most people took a wide berth. Jeff went a little closer than most, and as a 2.5 metre wave reared up and broke in front of him, it was looking like a rescue could be on the cards. However, as the whitewash passed by Jeff remained upright in his boat, as calm and composed as if he'd watched it on TV. A nice brace indeed - Cecilia was very impressed!

The remainder of the trip into

Wollongong passed by without incident. Clearly a gesture to mark the club's accomplishment was in order, but the water seemed a little too cold for a swim – plus it was probably full of fuel. But on behalf of everyone Matt bravely leapt off one of the old stone structures in the harbour to make a celebratory splash. Nick kindly offered to open up his home for the club lunch at the end, and we all gathered there to enjoy the rest of the afternoon. Megan gave a nice speech and some prizes were donated by Expedition Kayaks for the club members who had participated the most in the Challenge. You'll know the winners when you see them on the water – they'll be the ones wearing the hot pink paddling tops.

Here's hoping the NSW Challenge will be attempted by the club again in the future. Many thanks to Megan and the other instructors and guides for creating this great highlight of the club calendar.



Left to right: A celebratory jump at Wollongong; Steve Hitchcock and Deb Cunneen are rewarded for completing the longest distances over the NSW Challenge.





CAKE! Did I just see free cake?

I hadn't been on the club website for a while so I thought I would quickly see if anything was happening when the News Flash section caught my eye. This definitely sounded like my sort of trip, so I decided to register straight away. Fill in my registration details and nothing happens, screen frozen. Try again, nothing happens, screen frozen. Another two attempts still no luck. I decide to SMS Caoimhin to let him know I tried to register four times without success and to leave a space on the list for me. Message I receive back "Website has crashed. Stephan is trying to fix it. Seems it is your fault". (Oops sorry Stephan)

So on the Sunday morning I wake up late; I forgot to set my alarm the night before. I've woken up to find overnight I've caught a cold and feel terrible. Great! No time for breakfast, just a quick shower, a traveller coffee and I'm out the door.

Wedding CAKE Island...and cake?

RHYS WARD

Having made a personal record time with my exit (10 minutes from waking up to leaving. I am not a morning person.), I was smugly thinking to myself what a great idea it was put my kayak on my car the night before rather than having to load up in the morning. Five minutes down the road that smug feeling was erased when I realised with horror that I had not tied my kayak down and any sudden stop was going send my carbon kevlar beauty hurtling down my bonnet to smash into a thousand pieces on the road or worse yet, impale the car in front of me. Very gently I pull over, get out my car in the pouring rain and rectify the situation.

Soaking wet and grumbling to myself I get back in the car and restart the long journey to Malabar when I realise that in my rush to leave I'd forgotten to make any lunch. Excellent, how good is my morning going? A quick stop at a supermarket, some muesli bars and a banana and I'm on my way again. To my surprise I actually arrive at Long Bay on time.

On arrival I'm greeted with the news

that half the group are no shows due to colds, flu, gastro etc. A group of five is all that is left (Caoimhin Ardren, Ruby Ardren [nee Gamble], Adrian Clayton, Darren Friend and myself). I start getting my gear ready and of course I have left the battery for my bilge pump at home. How can my day get any better? Lucky for me Caoimhin comes to the rescue with a spare battery. We launch and start paddling out of the bay, it's still raining but at least we have a surprisingly warm morning with light winds. As we round the headland and head north there is a 1m south-westerly swell rebounding off the cliffs and making for a fun bouncy ride. Over the next 500m the rain stops and the sun starts shining. This day is definitely getting better. I suddenly have the realisation that in our group there is not a single Mirage sea kayak and Nadgees make up the majority (Adrian-Nadgee Expedition, Caoimhin-Nadgee Solo and Ruby-Nadgee Bombora), surely this is a club first.

Before we know it Wedding Cake Island is before us. We stop and Adrian takes some photos of the

Left to right: Ships of the desert on Bondi Beach; Adrian enjoying his cake and eating it at Gordon's Bay. Opposite: Mr and Mrs Ardren at Wedding Cake Island.



newly married couple with the waves crashing onto the island in the background. An anti-clockwise circumnavigation of the island and we are on our way to Bondi with the promise of cake to speed up our paddle strokes. Unfortunately my bad luck holds and on our arrival at North Bondi we discover a problem with our proposed lunch stop. Even though it is winter, there are way too many surfers for us to make a safe landing without the possibility of sending a few surfers on their way into the afterlife. As we sit offshore debating the positives and negatives of five sea kayaks running amok through the line-up Ruby spots a few strange ships on the beach – ships of the desert that is, camels.

With the strange sight of camels on a Sydney beach falling behind us we backtrack south in the hope of finding a better landing spot for lunch. Tamarama and Bronte look

ugly so we keep paddling. Clovelly is a death wish with waves closing out across the narrow entrance. Gordon's Bay offers hope and we paddle in tentatively, watching the surfers catching waves off the cliffs between Coogee Beach and Gordon's Bay. With sighs of relief and pangs of hunger we make an easy landing at Gordon's. We find a nice spot on the rocks and set ourselves up for a picnic. The sun is warming us up and due to the reduced group size the cake slices are larger. This day has really picked up.

A long lunch and then a leisurely paddle back to Malabar enjoying the bouncy water off the cliffs again. We round the headland, enter the flat water of the bay, as we approach the beach I take a look behind me to see a nice little wave peaking up, paddling hard I catch the wave a long way out and call off the stand up paddle boarder dropping in on

my left. A hard bottom turn to my left to avoid the reef sticking out above the water line and a nice little side surf to finish the ride. I watch as Adrian and Caoimhin both catch a nice little wave each. Caoimhin and I finish with a few practice rolls.

We help each other carry our kayaks up the hill, pack up and had a quick debrief where Adrian quips that the trip listing was for an easy 18-20kms but checking his GPS we had travelled almost 25kms. He was most vocal in accusing our trip leader of disinformation.

It is always a surprise to that me that good company can turn a crap morning into a pleasant day. I would like to thank my fellow paddlers for wonderful day. Special thanks to trip leader Caoimhin and cake chef Ruby. Finally I would like to congratulate Caoimhin and Ruby on the recent marriage that this trip was commemorating.





Shipwrecks and Seals

The story of Preservation Island

RUBY ARDREN

Image: Preservation Island is situated at the southern end of the Furneaux Group of Islands north-east of Tasmania

Caoimhin and I decided to spend a few days last Christmas investigating the islands and testing the tides in the Banks Strait north east of Tasmania. I was fascinated to discover that Preservation Island had a history of shipwrecks, misfortune, industry and discovery. Who would have thought such a small island could carry such a story?

On 10 November 1796, the sailing ship Sydney Cove left Calcutta for Port Jackson in Sydney with provisions, spirits and goods

intended for sale to the colony. Only a month later the ship experienced heavy seas and began to take on water. The conditions didn't ease and so with continuing problems the captain decided to ground the vessel on an uncharted island in the Bass Strait. A camp was set up on the main island, with salvaged rum stored on a nearby small island out of the crew's reach. Four men died during the salvage operation (of the ship – not the rum, although that may not have been reported).

They had landed on the 207 hectare Preservation Island, situated between Cape Barren and Clarke

Islands in the Furneaux Group of Islands in the eastern Bass Strait. Most paddlers will come across Preservation Island when they're close to completing the north to south Bass Strait crossing. They had deposited their rum on what is now known as Rum Island.

After establishing a camp, a group of 17 men took the ship's longboat and set out for Port Jackson, 740km away. They only made it as far as Ninety Mile Beach, near Lakes Entrance in Victoria, before losing their boat, so set out on foot to cover the remaining 600km to Sydney. They had few provisions



Left to right: Plan of the wreck site, drawn by Matthew Flinders in 1798 (British Museum); Munro's hut on Preservation Island (Henry Laing, British Museum, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5678462>)

and no ammunition. A number of the party died of fatigue and starvation, with another killed by an Aboriginal man named Dilba and his people near Hat Hill. By May, the three remaining in the party arrived in Wattamolla, where they were taken by a fishing boat to Sydney.

A salvage operation was begun immediately with the schooner Francis and sloop Eliza sent to Preservation Island to pick up the remaining survivors and cargo. The curse continued on the return journey to Sydney, when Eliza was wrecked with the loss of the crew and eight of the Sydney Cove survivors. Two more salvage operations were carried out over the next year.

Although all survivors were removed from the island, it was soon to attract further investigation after the survivors of the Sydney Cove reported that the Furneaux Group Islands abounded in seals. This led to a 'seal rush' and between 1805 and 1808, 40-50 sealing vessels were located in Bass Strait. By 1810 the seal population was almost exhausted. The industry continued at a much smaller scale until the early 1830's.

Supplying the sealers was a man named James Munro, who settled on Preservation Island and supplied the sealers with mutton birds and produce from his vegetable gardens and crops, and acted as a storekeeper for their seal skins.

James Munro lived on the island with several Aboriginal women (thought to have been abducted from the Tasmanian mainland) and his half-caste children until he died in 1845. He fought the Government for the right of the sealers to retain their Aboriginal companions rather than have them removed to settlements. While it was a hard life for many of the women, it was still preferable to the life they could expect in settlements established on other islands.

After Munro died in 1845, Preservation Island was used primarily for grazing under a number of leases, with mostly absentee landlords since 1906. A runway for light aircraft was built in the 1950's, and today's owners took over the private leasehold in 1985.

Over the years, the wreck was a drawcard for explorers and criminals hoping to take advantage of the remaining supplies. A group of escaped convicts heard of the moored ship, but failed to refloat it to make good their escape. They were followed by a more reputable visitor in George Bass in 1798, who on a voyage exploring the south-eastern coast of mainland Australia hoped to find the Sydney Cove to replenish supplies, and in the process discovered the passage of water between Tasmania and the mainland, now known as Bass Strait.

The wreck of the Sydney Cove was finally located again in 1977 by divers, partly covered by sand in about 3-6 metres of water. The site has been stabilised and artefacts removed to the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston, Tasmania.

Today, the island is mostly Crown land, with a private freehold block of 20 hectares that has a hut and is owned by the Preservation Island Unit Trust. Up to 60 head of cattle are sometimes grazed on the island. A 10 hectare area at the south-eastern end of the island makes up the Sydney Cove Historic Site.

We visited the island as a 20km day paddle from our camp in the stunning Spike Cove on Clarke Island. There is a tidal current of 1-2 knots between Preservation and Clarke Islands, which is nothing on the tidal currents we experienced between Little Musselroe Bay on the Tasmanian mainland and Clarke Island, but that's another story altogether!

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SW Tasmania

Strahan to Cockle Creek

MATT BEZZINA



After paddling from Cockle Creek to Bathurst Harbour in 2014 I again found myself in Tasmania, only this time with two new faces and a more ambitious plan to paddle a one way trip from Strahan half way up the west coast, to Cockle Creek at the bottom of the Eastern side.

After a big drive from Sydney followed by a night on the ferry from Melbourne, more driving to Strahan and a punishing two day car shuffle across Tasmania by Stuart & Campbell, we were finally paddling out of Macquarie Harbour on a sunny day with a fair forecast.

The weather for our first day seemed great: no rain, temperatures around the mid 20's and light NE winds which was all good. It was that underlying and pretty much constant south westerly swell that was going to be the issue, as once we turned the corner and started to see bomboras (offshore reefs) explode around us without warning at least some of us, me included, got a bit rattled.

Discussions were had about what we'd do if we found ourselves on top of a breaking bommie, as we constantly scanned the sea for the humps of water that might give a clue to the presence of one of these underwater hazards. Although I had the latest chart on my GPS, many of these reefs were not marked, as much of this part of the Tasmanian coast remains unsurveyed. I'm told the most up to date charting in some places down there was done by Captain Cook!

After 41km we arrived at what was to be our first landing, Birthday Bay. After looking at the waves going into this reefy little beach I was steeling myself for another 40km to the next possible landing! Luckily Stuart Trueman had been here before and armed with that all-valuable experience and a wealth of intelligence gained from the likes of Matty Watton, Jeff Jennings and Laurie Ford, Stuart assured us it was going to be fine as long as we made a dash for a big rock, got

behind that without getting cleaned up on the waves hitting the outside of it, wait for a break in the sets and go hard across some rocks before turning 90 degrees and going straight into the beach. The landing went well overall even though Mark got rolled and Campbell had to capsize to stop himself from a hard smash into some rocks on the North side of the beach.

The next day we paddled to a small cove on the inside of Hibbs Pyramid where we had lunch before heading off again to land at Hartwell Cove, which was about the only place I'd picked out from Google Earth that we could actually get into to! After negotiating a few rollers and breakers on either side we paddled through a small gap into a magnificent amphitheatre of a bay. This was a wild and pristine place - problem was there was only a very small clearing for our communal area and it was difficult to find tent sites. Despite this I was thrilled to be there.



Above: Mark, Shaan, Stuart & Campbell. They didn't seem to have the same feelings for Hartwell Cove as I did!

The next day Stuart and I explored the option of paddling up The Wanderer River but like all the rivers down here there was a shallow bar and it was a real mess with incoming swell against outflowing river with a smattering of rocks. It could have been done with a landing on the beach to the side of the river but would have meant a portage and with our heavy boats and lack of group enthusiasm for the idea we turned around and headed out to sea, destination Mainwaring Inlet.

As we'd only paddled 20km to reach Mainwaring Inlet we set up camp and went up the river to explore this magnificent area. A Tassie Devil ambled along the shore as we paddled almost silently to find the head of the river and collect some fresh water. The next day we did another 40km to Mulchay Bay

but as usual the swell was big and most beaches were simply not an option so again Stuarts knowledge of a little slot was invaluable and so we paddled past a few reefs and breaking bommies to find an easy landing.

We used an Eaton SSB short wave radio to get our weather forecast, as of course the whole SW is totally off the grid so we were aware of a big blow headed our way. We had to make it into Port Davey before it hit, so although the forecast was for strong winds to 30 knots they were from the North West and as we were heading South East we were all go - I was looking forward to this. We hit the water and soon had the sails up and were blasting along. This is the day that most of the paddling footage in my video was taken. The wind was building and we were making some really good time.

Unfortunately things got a bit too strong and Stuarts sail ripped at about the same time his rudder

pedal failed. We had to down sails to keep together and so couldn't take full advantage of the conditions. It was exciting none the less. As we paddled past The Coffee Pot things were really lively and just as I mounted my camera on the back of Mark's boat I got picked up by a steep breaking wave and engulfed in the wave face, I braced hard. The wind, now at around 30 knots, just caught the tip of my sail and along with an almighty stroke I managed to bring the bow round and shoot down the face of the wave, the last thing I saw was Mark's boat with the camera pointed right at me. This was going to be some awesome footage - too bad the memory was full and we got none of it!

We all dug deep, especially Stuart as he now had no rudder, and rounded Vincent Point into the shelter of Port Davey. Now with a headwind we plodded onto Bond Bay where, again thanks to Stuart's intelligence, there would be a hut



Above left and right: Sails up; Right: The right Hut - complete with bath (upturned and discarded in the bush) Bond Bay

complete with bath waiting for us. We pushed on into a strengthening head wind until we were about two k's away and then, into the full force of what must have been in the vicinity of 35 knot winds arrived to a beach which was supposed to be where our hut was. We split up and scoured the coast. I saw a horizontal line through the bush so got out to take a closer look. There I found the ruins of some shack and the burnt out vegetation of recent bush fires. All in all a depressing place that I didn't think much of. I got back in the boat and went down the beach to find the others who were still looking for the hut. "How was it?" Stuart asked. "Depressing. We'd be better off camping in the bush" I replied. "So no hut then?", "No" I answered. "No bath either then" someone joked. "Well actually yes, there was a bath".

The weather forecast for the next day was for 50 knot winds and eight metre swells with a 100% chance of rain. We weren't going anywhere. We spent the next day cramped in the small hut chatting endlessly about very little, occasionally reading from Shaan's kindle and cooking and eating.



The next day, still with strong winds we headed up The Davey River as far as we could.

The wind took us up and the current helped bring us back but the last few K's were still a very hard slug and I was really struggling to make any headway. With strong winds and big swells set to continue we set off the next day to the Bathurst Channel. We stopped at Balmoral Beach and met some paddlers that were part of an organised tour with Roaring 40's. We were told there was another group staying

at Claytons Hut and as everyone gathered up and prepared to head up river I made the decision to simply stay where I was as I'd already been to Melaleuca twice, and I'd been relentlessly socialising with our crew for over a week now and just felt like spending time alone. Everyone headed off and left me in isolation on my own little beach. I cooked up some mussels I'd collected earlier, got my MP3 player to work through the speaker of my short wave radio and sat down to enjoy my rum and get pissed in paradise!



The next day was raining and windy - a perfect day to sleep off my hang over. The day after that I packed up and headed up river to find the others. Turned out they didn't stay at Clayton's as it was full but today the other group had left so we all paddled over to Clayton's and moved in. A Melbourne based yachtie, Bill and his friend Edna were moored at the jetty and joined us inside. Bill was impressed with what we were doing and especially impressed when we explained that Stuart Trueman had gone all the way around Australia. Bill and Edna were good company. The next day, again with strong westerlies, we headed back out to Spain Bay.

We headed off for the big one around South West Cape. It's a big day but thankfully we had good conditions with little wind and although the swell was still up it was back to it's 2 to 3 metres and so we were able to have a break at McKays Gulch. Soon after we rounded the cape and not long after set up camp at Ketchem Bay.

Things had calmed right down, not only weather wise but also because we were on the lee side of South West Cape and although the swells are still big it had a slightly gentler feel about it, also helped by the fact I was now in familiar territory. We busted out through the surf,

Clockwise from top left: Seals have taken over the dilapidated landing spot on Maatsuyker Island; Shaan in the water helping with a difficult launch at Maatsuyker; Abalone; Up Davey River towards the Davey Gorge

(the surf exit in the video is from Ketchem Bay) and were soon heading to - Maatsuyker Island!

After an exciting landing we walked up to meet the lighthouse keepers and learn a bit about this magnificent island. We had some tea and cake and then forced ourselves to leave as we still had a solid paddle ahead to make it to Deadmans Bay before dark. Instead of launching one at a time we helped Shaan get off the rocks (see

video for footage of this) and then passed all four boats to her to hold onto which she did by tying them together with her tow rope. Once she had all the boats we jumped in amongst the hoards of seals and swam out to scramble into our kayaks. I think it would have been better to just tie the boats together, swim from one side of the bay to the other tying the boats off at each side and just leave them afloat in the bay rather than trying to get

them ashore which was dangerous and caused quite a bit of damage to some of the boats including Stuart's which had a big seal land on it after a misplaced jump off a rock. Although I was filming this I had to abandon the shoot and run to avoid being trampled by a large seal myself!

In high spirits and feeling on top of the world we headed off past De Witt Island and onto Deadmans Cove where we had one of the

highlight meals of the trip - seven abalone that was given to Shaan by some fisherman we met on the way.

The forecast received that night was not good. Another system was building and we needed to move. The next day we punched into an ever increasing headwind past South Cape, South East Cape and finally into Cockle Creek. After a big day of headwind paddling of over 50 kms we were met by Raewyn and Neil Duffy who had kindly brought



one of our cars back and before we even got out of the boats had a cold beer in our hand. The yachties we'd met a week earlier, Bill and Edna, were also there to meet us and added to the celebration by popping a bottle of champagne. We were soon enjoying a fine BBQ again thanks to Rae & Neil.

This was a great trip with a really competent crew. Everyone in the group had worked very hard on their fitness and was well prepared. As a result there were no allowances made for anyone and we all travelled at a remarkably similar speed and had a common goal to get along and achieve our objectives which is what we did. I look forward to our next adventure.



Top: Strahan to Cockle Creek including side trips to the Davey Gorge and Melaleuca; Left: Mark Schroeder, Campbell Tiley, Shaan Gresser, Stuart Trueman, Matt Bezzina enjoying beers provided by Rae and Neil Duffy at Cockle Creek.

Monkey see, Monkey do...not see

Circumnavigating the Tasman Peninsula

MONKEY

IMAGES BY RUBY & CAOIMHIN ARDREN

MONKEY'S CHAUFFER: CHRIS YOUNG, MONKEY'S AIDE: ALISON CURTIN



Chris took me away from the loving arms of my carer (Chris' daughter) with the promise of sunshine, tropical waters and luxury accommodation. Then he took me to Tasmania to go kayak camping.

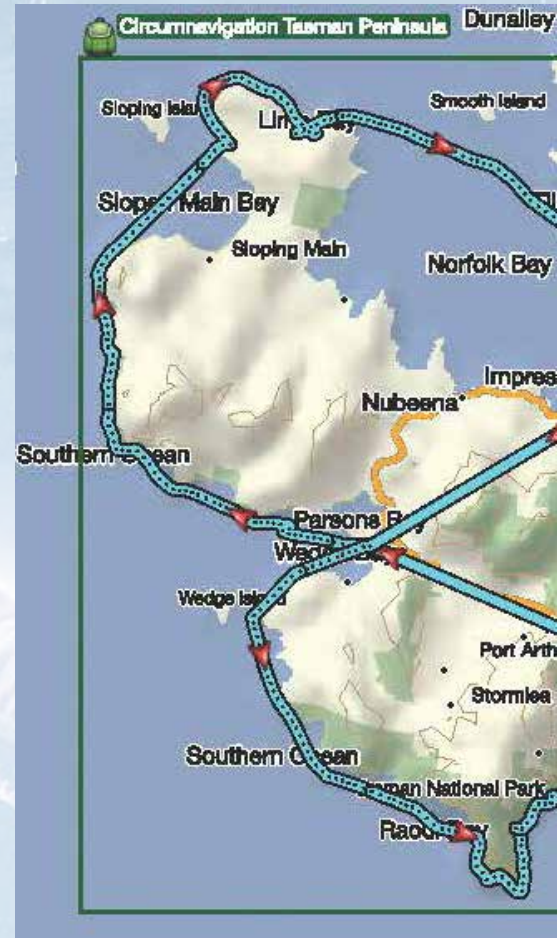
I got two days on the upper deck. The first was between Pirates Bay and Fortescue Bay, and even though I was dying of hypothermia after getting drenched by waves, I couldn't help but notice the amazing cliffs, caves, slots and sea stacks along this section of coast. Chris then hung me up in a tree to dry and packed me away in tight lodgings in the hold for the next few days with his smelly socks.

We spent New Year's Eve in Denman Cove in Port Arthur, where we enjoyed a champagne while watching a stunning sunset, and then I don't remember much until I surfaced again for the section from White's Beach to Lime Bay.

All was forgiven after a smashing 'after the paddle' paddle (on the upper deck) across Lake St Clair in Cradle Mountain National Park. At least I'll have a few stories to tell my carer...

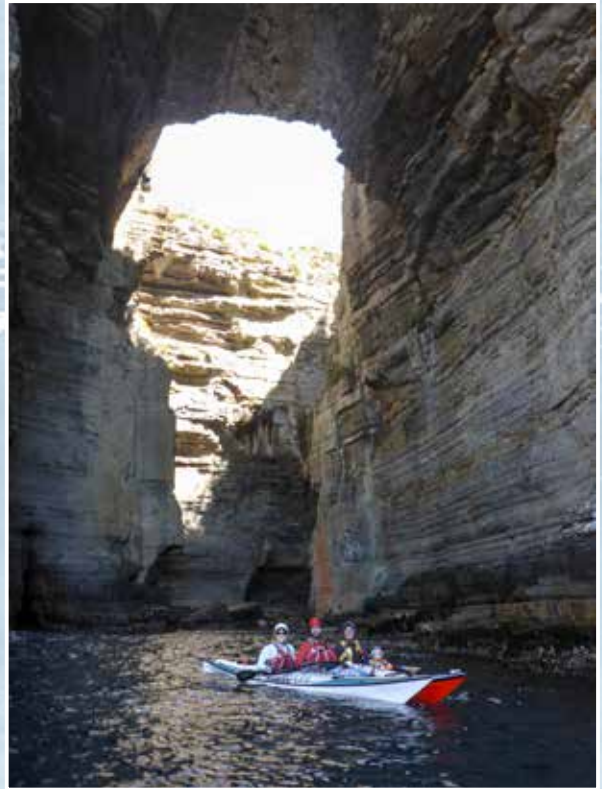


Day	Trip route	Distance	Conditions	Camping
Day 1	Pirates Bay to Fortescue Bay	26.5 km	0.5 m seas, wind 5-10 kn	Bivouac Bay
Day 2	Fortescue Bay to Port Arthur	32 km	1.5 m seas, wind 5-15 kn	Denman Cove
Day 3	Within Port Arthur	10 km	0.5 m seas, wind 15-18 kn	Safety Beach
Day 4	Within Port Arthur + car shuffle	16 km	1-2 m seas, wind 15-20 kn	White Beach
Day 5	White Beach to Lime Bay	36 km	0.5 m seas, wind 10-15 kn	Lime Bay
Day 6	Lime Bay to Eaglehawk Neck + car shuffle	21 km	0.5 m seas, wind 10-15 kn	White Beach
Day 7	White Beach to Port Arthur	43 km	< 0.5m seas, wind 5-15 kn	White Beach



Beginning at Pirates Bay, the section between Port Arthur and White Beach had to be done at the end of the trip due to poor paddling conditions.





*Clockwise from top left:
Sloping Main; Lime Bay;
Crossing Norfolk Bay;
Tasman Arch; Cape
Hau; Cape Pillar; Seal;
New Years in Denman
Cove; Cave in Port Arthur;
Refuge Bay; Cape Raoul;
Group selfie; Arch near
Cape Raoul; Paddymelon.*



We hitched from Port Arthur to White Beach to continue north, and then hitched from Eaglehawk Neck back to White Beach so we could finish at Port Arthur.





Ulladulla to Gerroa

BART MALECKI

Having recently moved to the South Coast, I decided to utilise the winter months to explore the approaches to Jervis Bay, as well as the vast Bay itself. I know that this area has been a favourite of many paddlers over the years but my water borne wanderings have not previously led me to this part of the coast. In retrospect, I should have done this a while ago!! What I discovered is a veritable paddling paradise. Where to begin? There is something for everyone here...abundant wild life, snow white beaches, towering rock cliffs, imposing bombies, sea caves, rock gardens and a vast amount of blue space. With relatively limited power boat traffic and an abundance of protected launch sites, there is more than enough around Jervis Bay to get any paddler off the couch – and surely a circumnavigation of the bay has to be one of the best day paddles around.

Over three trips I covered around 200kms of coast line between Ulladulla and Gerroa and around the Bay. I wanted to provide a bit of a taste of these great paddling opportunities as well as trip ideas for kayakers not familiar with this area...

Trip 1

Ulladulla to Vincentia 70kms

Around an hour drive south from Nowra, Ulladulla has a history dating back to 1830 having been used for ship building and commercial sea trade. Ulladulla Harbour is an ideal place to launch, with a nicely protected harbour beach. Having packed my kayak and waved goodbye to my support “crew” (of one) it was nice to paddle past the jetty and through the heads of the small bay, turning left to shoot up the coast. I love the feeling at the beginning of a trip, just as I push off and enjoy the first few paddle strokes in anticipation of what adventures will come my way over the coming days.

I must say that while it’s terrific paddling with friends and sharing the experience, I really enjoy solo adventure. It heightens the senses knowing that there is no one there to depend on and gives a great nomadic-like sense of freedom. With a general plan of attack, I love the ability to go with the flow and



paddle at my own pace while the world goes on around me. I can spend time investigating bits of interesting coastline, poking into rock gardens and enjoying the odd surf session.

Almost immediately I was hit side on by a fresh NW wind that seems to follow me whichever way I went (this mysterious wind changes direction but it always seems to be going against me). With messy chop slapping my beam, I tucked in and passed a series of beaches and rocky peninsulas and was joined briefly by a solitary seal having a peek at my kayak. Obligatory wildlife sighting...tick. Paddling in this area is exposed to southerly winds and swell and beach landings can be a little tricky. Thankfully there are a few rocky peninsulas striking out into the sea, which offer sheltered nooks. Greg Island was the first major point of interest with a series of reefs and the "Island" itself near the head of Lake Conjola. I had visions of skirting the inside, but as I got closer it was pretty clear that surfing over the reef was not going to happen. I passed a big group of surfers having a great time surfing the point and slowly made my way around.

The next objective was Red Head, near the township of Bendalong. Providing great shelter from southerly swell, the head is a little imposing with surf pounding

into its reefs. Eventually I glided past the last of the defences into calmer water. There was a choice of beaches for afternoon tea with a little sneaky shore break providing a great opportunity to look foolish trying to land – fortunately my dignity remained intact. After some cheese and crackers, mixed with a little sand (not on purpose, but a stark reminder of the importance of NOT knocking the cheese board off the kayak whilst dining on a beach) and a good stretch of the hamstrings, it was time to move. The wind was increasing, the sun was on its downward swing and the night's destination was still up for grabs. The last leg to Sussex Inlet is straightforward, albeit I will say that beach landings here do not seem overly inviting with plenty of reefs and imposing breakers pounding in. The bar into Sussex is interesting – two separate reefs with a gap in between them. I wasn't feeling brave so paddled around and snuck through on the inside. The swell was breaking along the gap and then reforming again across the bar, although the defences of the reef took the sting out of the breakers. I wound up catching a ride, bracing instantaneously and side surfing over the bar and into the tranquil waters of the inlet. This is a really beautiful spot with glassy waters surrounded by quiet forests. The tide can run hard through it, but otherwise it's a safe and easy paddle.

With camp set up just in time with the fading light, I sipped on some great port and contemplated the day. I think this is a fine day paddle with a few launch site options and escape routes. In a bigger southerly there would be plenty of rebound and care needs to be taken around the reefs and beach landings. Getting through the bar at Sussex would be tricky in bigger conditions. A paddle from Ulladulla to Sussex Inlet, or through the inlet into St George's Basin would be great, particularly given the relatively safe waters of the basin (although don't underestimate this body of water, particularly in a strong southerly). It could also be turned into an overnighter with camping in the Basin as well – which is a beautiful waterway and gives easy access back to the Princes Highway and Huskisson...after such a great day I was very pleased with myself and happily curled up in the tent with a book, falling asleep within three minutes, by 8pm!

Stronger north westerlies were forecast for the next day and the forecast was dead on...bugger – no sooner had I punched out through the small surf than the wind pushed me a few hundred metres offshore. From there it was bit of a battle in 20 knot winds, those ugly cold westerlies creating large chop in a small amount of room. I chipped away against the wind and chop and finally made the 7kms to Caves Beach, which took well over an hour. Caves is accessible by car and is a great surf spot where I frequently take my white water kayak to have a bash – not today. This is also a whale watching hot spot and I had been told that there were so many whales about that I would do well not to get caught in a sea traffic jam. So far, whale sightings...zero!



This page: Whiting Beach; Opposite: Sussex Inlet

This is a beautiful paddling area and there is a launch site at Summercloud Bay, which can be used as a spring board for a great day trip. Just a little further along is Whiting Beach, which is at the end of a long narrow bay and offers a safe landing spot and a great place for a break. Paddling into the little bay is amazing with crystal clear water and beautiful rocky walls giving way to a white secluded beach. This entire area can be enjoyed as a short paddle as there is plenty of exploring around the rock gardens and headlands – a watchful eye is required however; as there are abundant reefs around which can break unexpectedly.

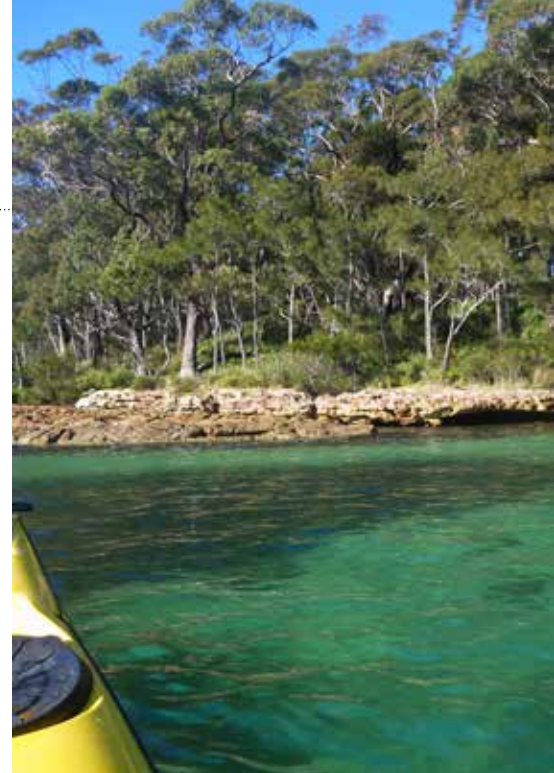
After a short downwind paddle towards St Georges Head (which houses the local seal colony), the coastline turns North Easterly - this provided a perfect windbreak making the longest stretch of the day far more pleasant. As I rounded the head, I glanced up the coast and the view was awe-inspiring. My jaw literally dropped as I poked around the corner and the gravity of the landscape opened up in front of me. Huge majestic cliff lines that seemed to go on forever, cracks, sea caves and rock platforms where small swell suddenly steepens abruptly and then dumps violently. In short...Paddling Heaven!!!

There is one beach, Steamers, which breaks up the scenery and provides a potential landing spot (completely exposed to any southerly sea state), but that aside, it's all rock. At some point I paddled past Cape St George, which is the site of a historical lighthouse constructed in 1860. This is an imposing, towering rock wall and another great whale watching site – quite famous in fact. Today's whale sightings...remain zero. While there were no whales, I was constantly accompanied by Gannets diving with great speed into the water as they hunted bait fish. Every so often my attention would be taken by a huge splash as one of these guys launched themselves through the

surface. Every time this happened behind me I spun my head around somehow expecting a huge fin to be following me - ahh the benefits of a vivid imagination and time to ponder.

Eventually the coast curls around and I was treated to the sight of Bowen Island and Point Perpendicular on the other side of the bay. With a moderate sea and a high tide beneath me, running the gap between Bowen Island and Murray's beach was a breeze and I was suddenly inside Jervis Bay. With a final break at the spectacular Murray's beach nestled on the south-eastern part of the bay, I was ready for a battle into the Nor Wester on my final 11km to Vincentia. As I set off, the wind dropped off completely and I had one of those fantastic paddling experiences in the late afternoon light.

In short, this is an outstanding paddling area, both for day or multi day trips. Summercloud to Murray's Beach is around 20km and is a spectacular day paddle. Care needs to be taken as this is an exposed piece of open water coastline with lots of rebound off the cliffs. The only viable escape is on Steamer's, a steep south-facing beach – which I would avoid at all costs in strong southerly conditions. For experienced parties, I cannot recommend this paddle enough for its scenery and sense of remoteness. Once within Jervis Bay there are abundant pick up points, Murray's boat ramp, Iluka Beach, Plantation Point, Vincentia or Huskisson. Logistics for an overnight option are easy. There is great camping at Green Patch or Honeymoon Bay (subject to frequent closure given the peninsula is a Naval bombardment area). It would be very easy to turn this into an amazing two day paddle by camping within the bay and then either completing a Jervis Bay circumnavigation or proceeding north around the Beecroft Peninsula and onto Currarong.



Top left: Green Patch; Other: Paddling in Jervis Bay.



Trip 2

Jervis Bay Circumnavigation

I think this must be one of the best day paddles on the coast. Much of the bay is sheltered from any breaking surf and for such amazing scenery and vastness of the marine landscape, this is a relatively safe environment and a very rewarding day out. Due to its vastness and fetch, the bay can turn nasty as the wind builds and this can happen quickly. So it should not be underestimated and normal rules of safety apply. The bay is 45km around and can be easily split into a multi-day paddle with a camp at Green Patch or Honeymoon



bay. My paddling buddy for the day, Andrew and I set off from Collingwood beach in Vincentia and headed anti-clockwise. With the N to NW wind forecast, we figured that we would get some assistance later on when we got a bit tired and cranky. We had a perfect winter's day with the wind staying pretty light, the swell modest and blue skies above us.

The first section took us past a series of the whitest of white beaches - including the famous Hyams beach. All was quiet and it seemed we were the only boats on the entire bay that day. Paddling past Iluka beach I looked down

and was amazed to see swarms of fish below us – the water was unbelievably clear and the schools looked amazing.

After a rest at Murray's beach, we paddled past Bowen Island and crossed the heads, bobbing up and down on a 1m swell. This is a completely open crossing of around 5kms. As we got closer to Longnose Point, the key danger of the paddle came into view. Pretty well known and clearly marked on marine charts, Bombora Rock is a shallow reef several hundred metres from shore that can break without warning, there are a few in this area. Like all such features, the big danger with these is that they break only occasionally and this varies on the prevailing conditions. We gave the first bombie a wide berth and turned to paddle towards Dart Point. A second bombie popped up ahead of us. With some bravado I decided to go in for a closer look to see if I wanted to have a surf. As I inched closer I missed the point where I drifted into the break zone – I looked back (and up) as a bigger set came through. The innocuous swell in the open ocean had suddenly steepened to a large and angry (I would guess 6 foot) breaker. Although when I tell the story now this has been upgraded to 12 feet and may eventually turn into a tsunami. The surfing was going to happen whether I liked it or not. The wave started to break,

I swore... swore again, had a brief ride down the face then it was white water everywhere – I had that brief second of fear but managed to keep it upright as the wave spilled and spat me out the other side. My GPS watch measured my highest speed for the day at 28.5km/hr and I was glad to move on!!

Andrew and I paddled past the myriad of beautiful rock gardens as we continued on the inside of Beecroft Peninsula – the paddling here is sublime. With abundant bird life, dolphins and an array of rocky nooks and crannies to explore, time flew past. Around Green Point into Hare Bay, the scenery changes again. In contrast to the rock gardens and white beaches, Hare Bay is a wide expanse of shallower water. With the various rocky peninsulas breaking up any southerly swell, the sea state in this part of the bay was like glass, not a ripple – every paddle stroke disturbed an otherwise perfectly clean surface.

We continued onto Callala Bay and had another rest. The day was getting on and we were getting a bit tired. After negotiating the reefs just outside Callala Bay we continued on the last leg past Callala Beach, onto Huskisson and back to Collingwood beach in Vincentia. After a few celebratory rolls, evening was coming and we got cold, so it was time to head home for beer and stories.

Would I do this paddle again? Absolutely.... and I will. I think it's one of the best day paddling areas on the coast and offers something different every time. There are plentiful launch sites, escape routes and places to land along the way. For such a long and wild coastline, the great advantage of the bay is that it is reasonably sheltered compared to completely open water. The scenery is rugged and beautiful and it gives the paddler a sense of remoteness even though civilisation is close by. For those that like to play around rock gardens, there are some opportunities as well and wild life (dolphins, seals, turtles, eagles and other bird life) is abundant. Key safety considerations are the crossing between Murrays Beach and Longnose Point (~5kms) most

of which is completely exposed to the open swell and wind. The reefs and bombies around the point need to be watched carefully, as I inadvertently demonstrated. They are well marked on marine charts. Also if the wind increases the bay can turn into a swarm of whitecaps extremely quickly. In winter, watch for the strong offshore Westerlies. In summer, as the almost daily afternoon Nor Easter rolls trough, there is nowhere to hide. This does offer an amazing opportunity for downwind paddling, but that's a story for another day.

For those planning some paddling – best short day trips would launch at Iluka beach (near Green Patch) to Murrays beach; Plantation Point to Huskisson; or out of Callala Bay to Honeymoon. For those looking for a more adventurous paddle, crossing the bay and camping or completing the circumnavigation are great options.

Trip 3 - Vincentia to Gerroa 80kms

My third winter trip and another solo paddle. I was really looking forward to paddling around the famous Beecroft Peninsula and exploring this section of the coast.

After a straight line crossing from Vincentia to Point Perpendicular (around 12 kms), where I finally enjoyed some decent whale sightings, I rounded the corner and started making my way along the cliffs. Just like the previous sensation on the southern approach to the bay, I was in absolute awe of the enormity of the cliff lines. Granted it's not the Zuytdorp cliffs, but the 15km paddle from Point Perpendicular requires some commitment without any straightforward landing spots along the way until you get close to Currarong. It feels exposed and remote and is a real paddling experience. If you like rebound, this is the place to be!!

I had lucked out with a great day enjoying light south-westerly winds and mild sea conditions. Tucking in at the base of the cliffs, paddling was easy going and the time flew by as I enjoyed the complete commitment of the journey. Soon I was at the famous Drum and



*Left and below: Beecroft Peninsula;
Opposite: Camp on Seven Mile
Beach*



Drumstick sea stacks, which is a well known diving and fishing spot. The sea stacks are a distinct and spectacular feature and a great place to spend some time and look around. As I was bobbing about having a look, I enjoyed another great whale encounter. Some 30 metres away, I saw the whale slowly descend below the surface....on a heading directly for me. After some concern about a possible mid-water collision all went quiet and I was very satisfied with the day's wildlife sightings...finally.

The wind came up a bit as I rounded Beecroft Head, then Little Beecroft Head and paddled into Crookhaven Bight and the small township of Currarong. Currarong is a quiet seaside hideaway and a great place to launch day trips from. It's about 8km on the water (one way) to Drum and Drumsticks, which is a perfect day paddle.

The next morning, I snuck in a surf session at Currarong Beach. The swell was timid but never the less it was great fun, albeit in a fully loaded kayak. I made slow progress along the long beach towards Culburra while surfing any decent waves that came my way – what a way to tour!!!

After lunch at Culburra Beach, the wind came up again - this time it turned against me and I had a bit of a battle as I headed up the Shoalhaven Bight past Greenwell Point (where the Shoalhaven river spills out in the open ocean) and onto Seven Mile Beach where a surf landing awaited me. The next day I was due to finish the trip in Kiama, some 20km north – on paper an easy paddle.

In the morning, as I set off and paddled a few hundred meters offshore, it was clear that Mother Nature was going to be having none of it. With a forecast northerly wind of 15 to 20 knots, I was plugging away straight into the headwind from the get go. After a bit of a battle, inching forward for almost an hour, I just got past Black Head, near Gerroa – about 3km for the day so far, and not what I would consider the most fun paddling, but certainly character building.

A decision needed to be made at this point. Family commitments required me to be picked up by the extraction team and being late was not an option. I made the mistake of getting a late start and missing the early morning low wind window. In retrospect the cooked

breakfast of fried ham, scrambled eggs and hot coffee was probably worth it. Given time constraints, it was clear that I would not make the pickup point in time and would need to alter my plans. I surfed in at Gerroa and made alternate plans for pick up. After a previous day of long beaches, I was really looking forward to the more varied coastline up to Kiama, but alas it was not to be. A good reminder of the flexibility that is required when open water touring, where weather has the final say. With a 30 minute wait for my pick up, the little break at the north end of Seven Mile Beach required some extra surf practice, so all was not lost.

If I was to sum up the paddling in this region, then I would say that the cliffs around Gerroa and Beecroft Peninsula are fantastic and I would be happy to visit this area over and over, and Currarong is a great spot to use as a base. North of Currarong, the Shoalhaven Bight is full of long beaches and offers less variety. While there can be some great surfing fun here, it's more it a transit area I think. Further north towards Kiama, there is great potential again, but that has to wait for another day.



Tasmanian Holiday

BARRY MARSHALL

Devonport to Robbins Passage

1 February 2016

I set off from Mercy Bluff on the western side of Devonport at 1pm after spending the night at the caravan park (the kayak was very heavily loaded). The manager told me I could park the car there until I got back – I had no idea when that would be as I was hoping to paddle down the west coast. After just a couple of hours paddling into a building nor-westerly I began to feel unwell and pulled into an estuary (Leith) to get out of the wind (now 20 knots) and the intense sun. I waited until the cool of evening to paddle around the estuary before pitching my tent in the bush. (11 kms)

2 February

I set off early with much more favourable conditions (10 knot nor-easterly and calm seas). I felt much better and was making good progress. Had lunch at a cosy estuary at Heybridge. By latish afternoon I was paddling past Table Cape looking for somewhere to camp when, to the west, Boat Harbour appeared as the most perfect campsite across the bay. Boat Harbour is a stunningly beautiful cove so I made for a piece of lawn to the side of the surf club. It was 5:20pm when I landed and spent the rest of the day (dark at 9:15pm) lounging around talking to the friendly locals and swimming in aquamarine waters. (65 kms)

3 February

Awoke to the lightest sprinkle of rain and calm, glassy seas. The coast west of here is stunning, an adjective which is much used when paddling in Tasmania! Wild rocky

outcrops and islands everywhere. However, by the time I reached the car park on the eastern side of Rocky Cape, the wind was hooting from sou sou-west. I gained protection from the considerable wind on the northern side but eventually on rounding the cape, I had to paddle into the stinging wind, which was coming in gusts. I ground my way to a community of unoccupied holiday houses (except for myriads of March flies!) where I pulled in and seriously considered camping for the night. The wind, as it commonly does after the initial front, eased ever so slightly so I put back in again figuring that, by making the beach further to the south, I might find a little protection. Along the beach, after another estuary (Hellyer), I found a little (rare) shade in which to have lunch. I plugged away after lunch now hoping to round the bay to have the wind aft. I passed the Port Latta loading facility (iron ore is conveyed 85 kilometres via a slurry pipe) and on to the sandy, northward curving bay. Eventually I unfurled the sail and took off. The further I went the more the wind assisted until I was flying along. The only hiccup was when I hit some very confused seas on a shallow sand bank formed by an estuary. I pulled in and found a very surprised couple, (I must have looked a bit strange – spray skirt, child's T-shirt over my head and zinc - appearing out of the ocean) who told me that I was in Stanley. They also said that if I continued on around the 'Nut' (the prominent and famous Stanley headland) that I would be more sheltered on the northern side. Sure enough, after rounding the Nut, I entered a calmer bay (the wind now had a touch of east to it and still howling). I pitched my tent nearby the commanding



presence of Highfield, the main residence of the Van Dieman's Land (VDL) company holdings. The huge VDL estate was established in 1825 and was the virtual government in this part of Tasmania for many years. (44 kms)

4 February

I wandered into Stanley and climbed the 'Nut' (great views) and headed to the port along a street of wonderful heritage houses (Joe Lyons, the prime minister, was born in one). At the port I got a weather report and then approached a fisherman who was tying up for some inside knowledge of Robbins Passage, Hell's Gate (the passage around Woolnorth on the north-west point of Tasmania; not the entrance to Macquarie Harbour) and the west coast. He looked at me squarely and said that I was f..... mad to consider it in a kayak, what's more, alone! On overhearing the conversation, another older ruddy fisherman stuck his head out and let out a spray of expletives on what he thought of pricks like me who put people like him at risk of rescuing people like me. He told me to go and read the epitaph to a young local fisherman who died trying to save that c.... Dicker (Tony Dicker, who was attempting to row across Bass Strait in a self designed row boat in atrocious conditions in 1986). I thanked them both for their frankness and headed for the epitaph in front of the Hursey seafood shop. I've always been one to defer to the knowledge of any local and these guys seemed like they had been to sea in the



Above: The Nut, Stanley.

area all their lives – they certainly managed to sow a seed of doubt in my mind. I headed off mid-morning in a wind about half the strength of the day before (still windy). Around the first point I paddled past a colony of seals on an island and on past a desolate wind swept beach with a strange, submerged stone wall which extended out to sea. Stanley is reputed to have the cleanest air (and is probably the windiest place) in the world as it is a peninsula that juts out into Bass Strait with nothing to the west of it. Around the point I headed back into the wind and looked for a place to pull in for lunch. I spied a tree so I landed on a sandbank about 500 metres from the shore, as it was low tide. I traipsed to the shore only to be thwarted by gorse and a barbed-wire fence so I sat down in the baking sun and had lunch. After lunch I decided to head for Smithton, which would offer me some relief from the wind and sun at least. Nothing along the way seemed great for camping. I

headed into the estuary and made my way to the estuarine, muddy Smithton. I now remembered having read an article by Matty Watton, the Tasmanian adventurer, where he launched in stinking black mud for one of his circumnavigations of Tasmania! Thankfully, there was a floating dock so I avoided the wade across the mud. It was right beside the free campsite which was a bonus. My neighbour that night was the Australian bush poet champion for the past few years and I had a private rendition of her more recent work (a very funny poem about the modern automated loo that sat across from us). (36kms)

5 February

Set out on the falling tide to explore Robbins Passage. Conditions were mild (hot but calm) and I quickly made it across Duck Bay to Perkins Island. At Shipwreck Point, on the western end of Perkins Island I could see west across the blue bay to Stony Point where I hoped to work out the best way to approach

the passage in regards to tides and channels. However, part of my way there I came across very shallow water and sandbanks. I decided to follow some markers (to my left) that led me to an oyster lease near the western shore. I decided not to head back again with the falling tide (and risk having a very wet campsite) so I got out and dragged my loaded kayak a hundred metres to a point which appeared to be above the high water mark. With no shade I pitched my tent and sat inside and sweltered! High tide was at 9 that night so I stayed put. A very stiff wind arose from the east (no surprise by now). I decided to stay the night and catch the following morning's high tide as it was at least cool by this time of the afternoon. (18 kms)

6 February

Awoke to a very stiff easterly wind and decided to head back to Smithton as an easterly wind, I had been informed, was the worst wind

to approach the passage, Hell's Gate and Cape Grim (don't you just love those evocative names!). I beat back into the wind all the way to Duck Bay and Smithton with broaching, choppy waves. I had already decided to hitch back, get my car and head for the west coast. Next time I would attempt it in company. The wind, and intense UV along with the prospect of being held up for days on my own suddenly didn't seem all that appealing. (18 kms)

7 February

Up early I easily hitched rides to Devonport in three separate lifts (one with an 83 year old aborigine full of great stories). I drove to Marawah and camped the night, again at a free campsite near the beach.

8 February

Drove to Arthur River hoping to ascend the river for a few days (after seeing what a howling westerly had done to the ocean!) but was thwarted by the bush fires that had been around for weeks and was threatening to break out of containment lines set by the weary looking fire fighters. By this stage I gave up on paddling the west coast and decided to head for the Gordon River at Macquarie Harbour. Stayed at beautiful Boat Harbour for the night.

Left: Gordon River, Macquarie Harbour. Right: Sara Island convict settlement, Macquarie Harbour.



Macquarie Harbour and Gordon River

9 February

I approached the tourist information office at Strahan and asked if there was anything I should know about paddling up the Gordon River. The lady said that I could catch a boat. "No," says I, "I have my own kayak." "You can't kayak up Macquarie Harbour," she replied. "Why?" I enquired. "Because boats use it," was her reason! Frustrated at trying to reason with me she put me on to another staff member who could see my logic in paddling. Eventually I got to launch from Mill Bay, to the west of Strahan, at 3pm and headed for the most notorious of penal settlements at Sarah Island. I paddled due south until I picked up the far shore, veered sou-east and headed straight for Sarah Island. I arrived at 7:15 after seeing a Tasmanian Devil on a mainland beach and made myself comfortable amidst the old ruins. The remoteness of the place that I found so peaceful was, for the convicts sentenced to the island, a living hell from all reports. (33 kms)

10 February

Set out after a self-guided tour of the island. Conditions were calm (very light drizzle) as I made my way up the Gordon River (flows about 1 knot). A boat (Stormbreaker) cruised past in the other direction having picked up

another group of rafters who had descended the Gordon. Saw a platypus when I stopped to stretch on a log. Trying to find anywhere to land on the Gordon isn't easy, as the forest seems to extend into the river itself. A camp with a building (Boom Camp) carved out of the forest appeared to be a possible campsite if I couldn't find anything else further up. The large tourist boat had caught up and passed me on its way to Liberty Point where passengers disembark for a walk in the forest before heading back to Strahan. A convoy of three sailing boats passed by heading, I was later to learn, for Sir John Falls.

Eventually I decided to turn back to Boom Camp or Sarah Island for the night as nothing looked very appealing as a campsite. Back at Boom Camp an older couple, Kevin and Anne, had pulled up in their half cabin boat and were planning to spend the night on their boat at the dock. From them I learned that the camp was open to the public – the building could sleep a dozen people with good facilities (with a donation box) and that a good campsite could have been found at Sir John Falls not far past where I had actually paddled. The camp was originally a staging camp for the timber-getters who rowed their 'punts' up the Gordon and Franklin Rivers seeking the amazing Huon, King Billy and Celery-Top pines, besides other valuable timbers. The



three of us lounged around on the dock reading, chatting and having mugs of tea. A seal even appeared. An incredible coincidence was that their son worked at the same café in Manly as my daughter. (46kms)

11 February

Set off early with the sky and forest perfectly reflecting in the glassy surface of the river. Again I was passed by Stormbreaker with another group of rafters. I paddled back via the northern shore of Macquarie Harbour for a change of scenery. Not long after setting off across the harbour I saw in the distance something that looked like a tide race with an unbroken line of breaking waves. As I got closer I could make out dolphins strung out in a long line bailing up a school of fish. A stiff southerly blew up as I rounded into Swan Basin with a lot of choppy waves. I headed for Cat Island and then set my sail for the final run back to my car at Mill Bay. (48kms)

Blackmans Bay to Maria Island and Tasman Peninsula (return)

17 February 2016

I had spent a few cold days waiting for an intense low pressure system, situated just south of Tasmania, to

pass far enough away to the east for things to settle. The BOM had 10 to 20 metre waves at its core plus gale force sou-westerly winds!

The day's warning was down to a strong wind warning for coastal waters so I headed off from a mate's place at Blackmans Bay, a southern suburb of Hobart (there were occasional three foot sets breaking across the bay), and headed along the coast to Tinderbox and into a considerable wind. I waited for conditions to ease and when they didn't I set off anyway to skirt around Dennes Point on the northern end of Bruny Island to see what conditions were like on its eastern side. Around the point conditions were worse (Dennes Point must get a good right hander when the swell is big enough!) so I headed back to Tinderbox to camp for the night. I met a local (Jenny) out for a walk here and she happened to mention that she was the 1977 Australian kayak champion (white water).

18 February

Launched early (my watch had given out) with a moderate sou-westerly wind and a moderate, southerly swell. Paddled around Dennes Point, keeping to the eastern shore of Bruny Island, until I was off One-Tree Point and then headed across Storm Bay (if only

it was called Tranquillity Bay!). By first paddling south along Bruny for some distance I managed to avoid the worst of a side wind for the crossing. Staying wide (a bombora was breaking) and right of Betsey Island (the inside passage looked shallow - Iron Pot lighthouse was away to my left) I aimed for Sloping Main. At Sloping Island I landed for lunch and even considered camping, but couldn't find a level piece of ground (boom boom!).

Landing at Dunalley just short of the canal (which separates Forestier Peninsula from the mainland) a local told me where I could buy some bread and that a good place to camp would be at Chinamans Beach at end of the 'narrows' where there were unoccupied shacks. The water was flowing quickly through the canal (luckily in my direction) and at its end, on the right, was a tiny beach, which I assumed was Chinamans Beach so I landed and made camp for the night. (55 kms)

19 February

A strong wind warning (cold) was out for coastal waters. Almost immediately after setting off the sou-westerly front hit with intensity so I beat my way back to the campsite to wait. Soon after the wind

Left: Riedle Bay, Maria Island; Right: North-west coast of Maria Island.



moderated so I set off again. When I approached the exit to the ocean I saw a large, protected beach on my right with shacks and realised that this must be the Chinamans Beach that the local had referred to the night before!

Out into Marion Bay, heading north, I decided to hug the coast for a while until I came up to the spectacular Cape Bernier. After a short rest in a protected cove I headed out across to Maria Island and, on finding that the wind had dropped, I altered course for Cape Peron on the southern tip of Maria Island so as to paddle down the eastern shore. No sooner had I fallen in with the island when the wind picked up again so I turned for the protection of Shoal Bay on the western side of Maria. The strong wind had swung westerly by the time I entered Shoal Bay and I flew to the beach. With the intense wind nothing looked great as a campsite so I landed and walked across the isthmus to Riedle Bay and it was like a paradise. Off shore winds and an aquamarine bay with a campsite amid a grove of casuarina trees (the needles of which had formed a

soft carpet). All I needed to do was porter some of my gear the short distance to the campsite – heaven! (40 kms)

20 February

With my perfect campsite I wasn't going anywhere else for the night so I paddled my unloaded kayak around to Darlington (with all its convict ruins) where I had lunch, after a short side trip up Four Mile Creek. After lunch I continued on around the northern end (looking across to Schouten Island) and down the eastern shore to Riedle Bay. The coastline has spectacular cliffs and even a couple of spring fed waterfalls that cascade into the ocean.

Walking back up the beach to the campsite I almost trod on a very healthy six-foot tiger snake (almost perfectly black). I made a mental note to watch more carefully where I walked in future. Another blissful night at one of the prettiest campsites I've ever known. (43 kms)

21 February

Awoke to a beautiful morning and set off early for the Tasman Peninsula. On passing out from

Cape Peron I made a beeline for Visscher Island (although it looked for all the world to be a cape from that distance). Conditions were very calm and the scenery on this part of the coast (when I eventually arrived) was brilliant. I pulled into the bay (another perfect little aquamarine beach) behind Cape Frederick Hendrick for lunch and the usual swim. I paddled on the inside of an island to exit the bay and was on my way to Pirates Bay. By the time I rounded the point into Pirates Bay a following wind had sprung up and on seeing houses, I decided to push on to Fortescue Bay. The wind had picked up to 25 knots by the time I entered Fortescue Bay (more tessellated rocks than you could poke a stick at) and again whipped across the bay with my sail up. It was getting late by the time I pitched my tent in the south western corner of the bay. (64 kms)

22 February

A worrying 'strong wind' forecast for the following day had me rethinking my plans for the day, but today was calm so I was up early and on the water. The conditions were magical and about to become more so. As I approached Cape Hauy I had no idea that a chasm through the

Below: The Pyramids, Cape Peron, Maria Island



cliffs would appear. I have never seen anything as magnificent on the water (or anywhere for that matter) as this channel (I now know it is known as the Candlestick and Totem Pole for the rock spires on the south side). The channel is about five metres wide and on entering I was dumbstruck (unlikely, I know) - a very large mother seal and two pups were lounging about on a rock inside the channel. The pups jumped in and followed me – the mother never even woke. And then the site of the Candlestick (112

metres) and the Totem Pole (60 metres) appeared (as if it wasn't already bizarre enough already). These dolerite spires have you wondering whether you aren't hallucinating. I would strongly urge anyone who hasn't already seen this cape to make the effort because without a doubt, it is worth every bit of effort.

I passed out into Munroe Bight and hugged the spectacular cliffs all the way to Cape Pillar and Tasman

Island. I believe that the sea cliffs here are the tallest in Australia (300 metres – North Head is 100). Seals were everywhere and on passing between Tasman Island and the mainland the seas began heaving. It was like the super cycle of a washing machine. The swells deflect off the island and the sea cliffs and create bounce from 360 degrees. Real hard going and it persisted for at least five kilometres before reducing to just a heavy duty cycle. Across the bay I could see a sandy beach, which I decided would

Although I didn't know it at the time, I was just about to paddle past Shipsterns, one of the most dangerous surf breaks on earth. The wind was freshening from the south as I aimed for Wedge Island. Wedge Bay was where I had pencilled in my next campsite but the morning broadcast about strong winds for the following day had me in two minds (I definitely didn't want to cross Storm Bay when it was rough). As everything was in my favour I altered course for Betsey Island, which was clearly



Left to right: Entering channel, Cape Hauy, Tasman NP; Totem Pole and Candlestick, Cape Hauy; Totem Pole.

be good spot for lunch. Crescent Bay, when I finally arrived, was very welcome – nestled in behind Cape West Arthur and Mount Brown.

After lunch (and waiting for a lull in the solid shore dump to launch) I headed for Cape Raoul hoping that the bounce wouldn't be as hectic. Because Cape Raoul is a narrow point, the swells deflect down either side creating far less bounce – fortunately. On rounding the cape a sailing catamaran sailed past from behind – a crew member was filming me and said that they would be at the Royal Hobart Yacht Club for a few days.

visible across the bay. It was a very long paddle – I was exhausted and weather beaten (the sun was setting directly into me) by the time I fell in with Bruny Island (I had altered course again when I could discern Bruny Island further south). Passing Dennes Point I made for my old campsite at Tinderbox to spend the night. (89 kms)

23 February

A very relaxed 7 km paddle back to Blackmans Bay along a very scenic coastline. The wind never got up all day!



Now where will we go?

MARK DABBS AND LISA MCCARTHY



We had just returned to Shute Harbour from the Whitsunday trip led by Owen and Michelle. The weather had turned foul, strong winds and rain for the next four days, so we returned a few days

early. This meant we had a few days spare before heading home. Where to go?

Out came the road map...mmm... Turkey Beach/Bay. That sounds different!

Where is Turkey Bay you may ask? In Queensland, between Shute Harbour and Brisbane. About one day's drive south.

Lisa and I arrived the following day round midday. After a leisurely lunch we sorted gear and packed. Due to the strong winds the trip was going to be a fast sail down the bay, being pushed by a southerly. Fortunately the rain had eased and we had lovely sunshine.

Turkey Bay...not much happens there. The locals came out to watch us pack and head off into the blue yonder...time passes slowly.

With our very rough road map, navigation was going to be 'interesting'. Especially as we had no clue where we were heading, what the camp sites would be like, if there were any camp sites and how shallow the water was going to be. One thing we did know, we were too far south for salties! (Cross!!)

With the sails up we flew, until we hit the shallows. It is probably worth noting here that the water is extremely shallow for about 600-800m from the shore. Any closer in and you scrape bottom. We were unaware of this and it took us a while to realise why we were going so slowly – the bottom was 100mm below us!

After one and a half hours we were beginning to get worried. No obvious camp sites. Heaps of mangroves, extremely shallow water, lots of swamp...mmm... maybe we will be sleeping in the kayaks?



A rocky headland looked promising. Fortunately it was not too bad, only a 100m carry. Even better, there was a flat area above high water that was grassy and had beautiful sand. Fishermen had camped here on numerous occasions and were even thoughtful enough to set up a rain catchment area emptying into a water tank. Shower for the night! Nice!

It was still very windy. Using some shade cloth left behind by the previous occupants we rigged a wind shield for the tent. Most necessary!

The following day is what some may refer to as 'slothful'. We managed a 45 minute down-wind paddle/sail to a headland. We had planned on paddling around the point and down the coast but on closer inspection we realised it would involve a lot of dragging of kayaks over the many sand bars, which stretched for a few kilometres. A lovely area to wonder around then headed back to our tents. Into the wind a bit longer for one and a quarter hours paddle. The rest of the day? Inspection of what turned out to be an island we were camping on. Once the tide went out we weren't connected to the main land. And did the tide go out! Had we arrived yesterday two hours later we would have had a 400m carry!

Our final morning and we were off early to beat the wind, forecast to 35 knots. We just made it, and had the tide with us for a change! Yee-hah!



Saltiest submission **WINNER**

EXPEDITION
KAYAKS.com

I'm pleased to announce the very worthy winner of the 'Saltiest Article' from Salt #101 was someone who regularly shares her impressive achievements and trips with Salt readers.

Mark and Rob both had to agree that the winning article in Salt #101 had to be Rae Duffy's account of how she came to be the first solo female to paddle across the Bass Strait via the

Western route.

Rae caught up with Rob Mercer but isn't modelling her prize. She said "Many thanks to EK, I'm now sporting a new hot green cag."

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



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My New Kayak and Her Maiden Voyages

Bass Strait Dec 2015

MICHAEL TAYLOR

I had ordered my new Nadgee Solo and was to receive it in the coming weeks. I was already a proud owner of a Valley Nordkapp, but after a previous trip to Tasmania, thought it better suited to surfing and rock gardening than expedition paddling. The main reason for choosing the Nadgee was probably that it had been tried and tested on some epic trips.

I had planned to take leave in November and December 2015 for a trip to Everest Base Camp, but went cold on the idea after the Nepal earthquakes. I decided that I would do a south coast trip in my new kayak instead. But then, speaking to my friend Gary Roberts about my thoughts, he suggested I do a Bass Strait trip. He had done three trips previously and was very encouraging and even dropped some marine charts off to me. I started getting interested in the idea and invited Gary to join me. After some days, he let me know he had his leave form approved and was going to join me. We hadn't done much kayaking together previously but had done some backcountry ski trips, canyons and rock climbs and we were confident in each other's abilities in the outdoors.

Gary saw a message from a QLD sea kayaker on the Sea Kayak Forum by a fellow named Tim McDermott, who was planning the same trip as us only three days after ours, and was asking if anyone

could help him transport his kayak to the ferry in Tasmania when he got there. Gary started conversing with Tim, and after consulting with me, had invited him to join our trip. From phone conversations, we all gained confidence in each other's ability's and agreed to join up for the trip.

I received my Nadgee some time later and set about testing the compartments for leaks and also testing the foot-pump and rudder in readiness for the trip. I ordered a new spraydeck and compass, and mounted a sail. For a decent pre-trip test of my new boat, I did a trip out to Broughton Island and on this trip I gained the confidence I needed in my boat and its setup.

Our final plan slowly came together. My wife Liz and I would catch the ferry to Tasmania, do the Frenchman's Cap walk, then I could leave my car in Bridport and fly back to Melbourne where Gary and Tim would meet me having collected my boat and gear in Sydney the previous night. I arrived in Melbourne from Launceston, after dropping my car off in Bridport with Jeff Jennings. Jeff, a well-known Tasmanian sea kayaker, had indicated to Tim in the SK forum that he was available to assist. Jeff was very hospitable to me and gave me some great tips for the trip and sea kayaking generally.

We camped at Tidal River that night, arriving very late and very

tired. Gary was so tired he fell asleep on top of his tent before he could pitch it. We spent the morning packing our boats and soon realised that three was a great number to have on the trip because it took three people to carry each loaded boat. We bid farewell to Tim's brother Brad who lives in Melbourne and offered to help us with the car shuttling. Gary and Tim had quite an audience of admiring fans on the beach prior to launch.

We set off in calm conditions but rounding the cape we were slogging into a solid easterly headwind. Once past the cape the wind reduced and we landed at Waterloo Bay for the night. The next day we woke at 3:30am and headed for Hogan Island in calm conditions. The 55km paddle was interrupted by some albatross gliding over us and a few cargo vessels as we passed through the shipping lane. After about nine hours of paddling, and with the island quite close, we realised our progress had substantially slowed and that we were in the grip of a strong tidal current. I remember being quite humbled by the current knowing the only thing I could do is keep paddling for hours more. Stopping for a break, or to wait for someone, meant rapidly losing hard earned distance. By the time we reached the protected cove, group spread had increased to 3-4 km. This leg of the trip took about 12 hours.

We got phone reception from the lighthouse on the hill and were treated by the view of hundreds of penguins on our way back to camp.

The forecast for the following day was not ideal consisting of strong headwinds. However, the three days after this were forecast to be much worse. These easterlies were becoming irritating in an area which is better known for having relentless westerlies. Waiting on Hogan Island for three or four days would possibly mean running out of water so we needed to get to the Kent Group (Deal or Erith Islands) the next day where water was available. We therefore made plans for another 3:30am start with the knowledge that if our progress was too slow we could return to Hogan with the wind behind us.

We set off from Hogan Island before sun rise into a bleak overcast day. The headwind slowed our progress significantly and we therefore decided to limit our breaks to every 75 minutes rather than the usual 60 minutes. For this leg we agreed to stay closer together due to the conditions and the need to raft up occasionally. Then approaching land, we found ourselves in another very strong tidal current. After paddling against it for some time, we decided to paddle across the current (ferry-gliding) to Wallabi Cove on Erith Island so we could get out of the current. There we rested a little before setting off for Erith Island hut, hugging the coast whilst battling against choppy confused seas, strong current and a solid headwind. The leg from Hogan Island to the Kent Group (Erith and Deal Islands) was only about 45km, but it was the hardest day of our trip, which took over 12 hours of solid paddling. Having reached the Kent Group, we were very happy because we could now rest and wait for the weather to pass before attempting the next leg to Flinders Island.

We relied on weather forecasts from a number of sources on

*Top two: Gary landing at Hogan Is;
Tim arriving at Erith Is;
Opposite: Michael leaving Hogan Is.*



our mobile phones since phone reception can be found on all the islands in certain spots. Tim was receiving emails from Karel Vissel, a man from Israel who offers a weather forecast service to sea kayak expeditions. Gary was getting advice from NSWSKC's David Fisher, and I was using the Bureau of Meteorology website. On this trip I came to appreciate that the BOM's forecasts can be quite conservative or worst case. Particularly on our Hogan to Deal Island leg when the forecast was borderline; the less conservative and more detailed sources proved helpful for us to make a decision to paddle. Also, we found that receiving emails was easier than accessing websites when reception was poor.

On the Kent Group of islands (Deal, Erith & Dover), we were stranded for three days and four nights waiting for the weather to clear. The first two nights we stayed in the Erith Island hut which was very basic accommodation but importantly had water tanks. The next day the wind picked up to probably 25- 30 knots. Tim and Gary paddled the 2-3 km across Murray Passage to Deal Island. They returned later that day having been well fed by the Deal Island caretakers (Roger and Meryl). They had also received an

invitation to stay in the luxurious workers accommodation on Deal Island. For the next two days we had a great time exploring the island and soaking up the relaxing atmosphere. On the fourth night, the kind caretakers invited us to a lovely dinner and home brew. We then set our alarms for 3am and got to bed early because the longest leg of the trip was planned for the following day.

The wind had finally changed and was now a pleasant 10 knots from the north. Once outside the channel we set our sails for the first time on our trip. Our progress was good and with the help of the sails, the improved weather conditions and being well rested, we found today's paddle to be significantly less challenging than the previous leg. We passed Wrights Rock and Craggy Island as we paddled a bearing to Royden Island, a small island just off the North West coast of Flinders. About 8-9 hours into the paddle, we again found ourselves fighting the strong currents and our progress slowed. When we landed on Royden Island we had again been paddling for over 12 hours, and had covered 69km. We had now finished the three long crossings of the trip that I was concerned about and was now quite relieved.

The hut at Royden Island was fairly basic but pleasant and spacious. The next day's forecast was for 30 knots building to a 40 knot nor-wester later in the day. We should have considered that we were comfortable in the hut and had plenty of water and food. In hindsight we should have waited there for another day or two. Instead, we considered that the conditions would be better earlier in the morning, the 25km to Whitemark would be done quite quickly, the winds were onto shore and that accommodation on Flinders would be so much better. So, we packed our boats and set off for the town of Whitemark. I can't remember what our plan was for pitching the tents in 40 knot winds.

We left the lee of the Island and were hit by the wind. With our sails up we were screaming along and thought we should get to our destination before the forecast 40 knots arrived. We had agreed to meet in the lee of a small cape but Tim and Gary must have forgotten. They seemed to be having too much fun, or just desperate to eat at the pub that night. I remember having the time of my life rocketing down wave after wave. However, the waves were becoming steeper, the wind was increasing, and the white caps started washing over



our boats. Then I saw Tim yell out before seeing Gary's upturned boat.

Tim and I then fought to turn into the wind to pull down our sails. I gave Gary an assisted rescue and because his electric pump had failed he had to empty his cockpit with his spray-deck on and sticking a hand pump down the front between his legs. When Gary was ready I released my firm grip on his boat and not so wisely, we raised our sails once more. The wind was absolutely howling at this stage but we needed to hurry because the forecast 40 knots was foremost in our minds. It wasn't long before Gary again capsized and exited his boat. Then as I was trying to get to Gary, I noticed that Tim had also capsized and exited but was able to self-rescue and indicated to me that he was okay. I then again used my valuable NSWSKC rescue training to get Gary back into his boat. This time we agreed not to raise sails again and to get off the water as quickly as possible. Luckily Flinders Island was only a few kilometres to our east which was exactly the direction of the wind and swell.

At first Gary could not turn to the east. His rudder had come loose and it wasn't until he locked it down that he could then turn his kayak. We made it to shore, all very relieved to be off the water.

Having landed safely at a big house with a yacht parked on a slip on the beach, we approached a cottage next to the house and knocked on the door with the intention of requesting a camping spot. The next thing we knew, we were being served tea and cakes by a dear lady, Afna, who must have taken pity on us after hearing about our harrowing experience on the water that morning. We had landed at a place called Blue Rocks and we were later also greeted with great kindness from the home owner, Luke Toonan, who invited us to stay at his place.

We spent the next two days on Flinders Island waiting for the winds to die off. Tim rang his contact Matt, who gave us a tour of an Old Butter Factory where he was staying and also lent us his car to visit the historical aboriginal settlement at Wybalenna, to visit the Furneaux Museum at Emita and to do the Mt Strzelecki summit walk.

For the remainder of the trip, the legs were much shorter and less committing and the weather was generally our friend. We camped at Trousers Point at the southern end of Flinders Island and then at Thunder and Lightning Bay on the south side of Cape Barren Island. We then crossed to Preservation Island and enjoyed the warm sun

before crossing to Clarke Island and camping at Rebecca Bay.

The crossing of Banks Strait was the last day and we were a bit weary of the tides having heard stories about strong currents and big standing waves. So we wanted to time our crossing such that we would be approximately in the middle at slack tide. Jeff Jennings had kindly offered to pick us up at Little Musselroe Bay in the early afternoon so we had to get another 3:30am start. We landed on Swan Island for a short break, and then as we were nearing our final destination we had become complacent. Not more than a couple of kilometres from Little Musselroe Bay we realised the current was picking up significantly and we had to paddle hard to avoid overshooting the little inlet.

In short, it was an amazing adventure. We had some challenges that we faced as a team and we all grew as sea kayakers. There was incredible scenery and wildlife and we met some very kind and interesting people. I'd like to thank my paddling companions for helping me to make this trip happen. This trip certainly gave me the inspiration and confidence to do more similar trips in the future.

Photo – Tim and Gary sailing past Mt Strzelecki





**“Unite on the Swan”
World paddle craft raft-up
record attempt Sunday 10 April
2016 to raise money for the
Waroona bushfires. Picture
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