

NSW SEA KAYAKER

Newsletter of the NSW Sea Kayak Club Inc.

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PRESIDENTS REPORT

Hi Paddlers, as I write to you I am thinking back over my recent trip to north Queensland. As we flew into Townsville en route to a five day canoe trip on the Herbert River, I was gazing out of the window at the islands in the Whitsunday group and wondering how several of our members were going, paddling around below me. This trip up north with seven or eight Victorian paddlers was organised between some of our members who had met on a club trip. This was our reason for getting the club going in the first place, and shows that the club is working. You too can use the mailing list, plus contacts from club trips, to get to know paddlers in your area, and organise your own trips.

Are your skills up to scratch? My own observation is that most members are not skilled in handling some aspects of sea kayaking. Most trips are out of sheltered bays and inlets and back into similar waters with no real danger under normal conditions. You should practice increasing your skills by white-water kayaking, and surfing wave skis or surf-yaks. The reason for this train of thought is to gear you up for changing conditions during a trip, where you must come through heavy surf when conditions are too rough to continue to your intended destination. Several people in Wollongong have been organising paddles to practice these skills eg. surfing days at Sandon Point and Austinmer or Woonona Beaches.

Finally please make it a practice to stick together on trips for safety, and to help trip leaders who must always be aware of other paddlers within the group.

Good paddling

John Slattery

TRIP REPORT

Mallacoota to Eden - December 1990 (continued from last newsletter)

After the previous days of activity at Mallacoota, breaking camp and packing the boats was a desultory affair; we knew we had plenty of time before Alice and Mark arrived so we took our time. Some final purchases, a last shower, a final cleansing ale etc. I think we were all keyed up in some way; pleasant prospects and fear of the unknown mixed with time to kill is strange brew.

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Larry Grey popped in to say hullo and tell us that he would be paddling as far as Gabo Island with us, which was good news. We were going to Larry's place on the evening before to see some of his slides, but couldn't go because his projector was on the blink, so this would give us a chance to talk to one of the doyens of Australian sea kayaking.

With the arrival of Alice and Mark, everyone jumped to the task of putting those last few items in their boat and helping Alice and Mark get ready. We also had to endure the scourge of all one-way kayak trips - the dreaded car shuffle. All the cars did a Keystone Cop chase of Frank, as he led the way for the 75 Km from Mallacoota to Bittangabee Bay. All of us then piled into Frank's Subaru for the return - six bums and five seats - very squeezey! Bittangabee was selected because it gave us the option of a safe exit if weather or time prevented the complete journey to Eden.

Back in Mallacoota, we checked with Larry and agreed to meet him at the entrance at 1800 for the paddle to Gabo, after which we headed for the boats and got into the water suffering a few hernia's hefting the heavily laden boats in the process. It was good to be on the water and off after all that packing, shuffling, waiting etc.

A 1m plus surf greeted us on the bar. It didn't look too bad but there was the occasional big set coming through which had to be watched and timed. Chris was unlucky enough to be a bit sideways when one of the bigger sets hit him and knocked him over. He rolled successfully, got knocked again, rolled up again but lost it after the third roll. His out-of-control Nordkapp did a nose stand and hit Alice and her Icefloe. Frank and Bruce rapidly surfed in to give assistance. Fortunately, no-one was hurt although Chris's boat did sustain some nasty damage to the gelcoat.

It was about 1830 when we all got underway on the 14Km paddle to Gabo Island, punching into a 10-15 knot northeasterly and a short, steep (about 1m) chop. "Just aim a bit left of the light", said Frank. The journey was uneventful but we were all glad to land on Gabo at about 9 pm.

Who should be there to greet us but Larry Grey in his Pittarak. No-one saw him leave but there is only one way to get from Mallacoota to Gabo, and that's the way we went. We can only think that he slipped past us during the drama in the surf and powered his way a bit more inshore than the route we took. Anyway it was good to see him as we wearily unloaded, carried the boats up off the beach and made camp in failing light, with the wind picking up and some grey clouds gathering.

Gabo Island, and it's smaller neighbour Tullaberga Island are two of the largest penguin rookeries on this part of the coast, so we had to compete with them going up the ramp from the beach and put up with the little buggers tripping over our tent ropes during the night.

After some hasty tent pitching, changing out of wet clothes, and cooking by torchlight, we whiled away the evening talking and playing Larry's didgeridoo. All this was lubricated by a cheeky little red, (not to mentioned the odd port and/or scotch) so it was a fairly hilarious night (morning actually). The "didg" was the highlight with everyone having a go and making some really disgusting sounds. Larry's position as virtuoso of sea kayaking didgeridoo players is safe.

With typical ingenuity, Larry has made his didg from 50mm plastic pipe which is jointed to allow it to be stored in a sea kayak, although I doubt whether it would fit through anything but a Pittarak's angled fore hatch. The secret to a good didg, according to Larry, is the lip orifice which must be smaller than the other end; Larry built up his orifice using silicon, which also gives it the right tactile feeling. The final touch to his high-tech. didg is the Aboriginal motif decoration (vinyl paint of course).

Tuesday, December 18 saw a late rise and relaxed breakfast. The wind had swung 'round to the southeast and picked up to about 20 knots, so maybe we were all hoping that the longer we took, the more the wind might moderate.

As we packed and carried the boats down to the beach, the owners of one of the two yachts moored in Gabo's tiny anchorage rowed ashore to take out another mooring line, which didn't auger too well. It turned out that Chris Mills had bought his Nordkapp from them in Sydney, which is a fairly bizarre co-incidence. They were very happy to see their beloved sea kayak restored to its former glory and being used in its element.

The wind was not going to moderate, so we hit the water at 1130 for the 16.5 Km journey to Black Head. As we pulled out of the shelter of Gabo's little cove, it was clear that the passage to Cape Howe was going to be pretty exciting. The wind was gusting up to 25 knots right behind us, creating 1 to 1.5m seas. John Dowd covers it pretty well when he talks about force 5 kayaking....."Large waves form; white-caps are numerous. Weather for experienced kayakers."

This was right on the margin for a lot of us, but personally, even though it was frightening at times, it was also very exhilarating; probably the most exciting thing I have done.

Cape Howe was our focus. Once we had achieved this objective, we would get some shelter from the wind, and the slant of the coast from here to Black Head would tend to take the sting out of wind for the rest of the trip.

It was during this crossing that Bruce Lee was re-christened "The Shepherd of the Sea" or Shep for short. It was really something to see Bruce and his Greenlander charging across the sea with paddle flaying and spray flying as he went to someone's aid or gathered in the stragglers. I think all of us were helped by Shep sometime during this trip.

Good luck, skill and Shep all contributed to us making Howe Bay, in the lee of Cape Howe, where we sought shelter from the wind and waves. We all rafted up to pump out, have a drink, something to eat, and a change of underwear.

The coast from Cape Howe to Black Head did not really have any decent place to land, so we pressed on in easier conditions for another hour or so to finally reach our destination at about 1430. No dramas here as the surf was only about .5m and spilling nicely.

Black Head, in Nadgee Nature Reserve is a very beautiful and comparatively isolated part of the coast, with good camping on or off the beach in the heath. Some of us decided to camp on the beach whilst others headed for the bush. However, pitching camp came a lot later. The wind had moderated and the surf was very attractive so some of us went for a swim whilst others played in the surf. Later on, Frank Brian and Shep carried their boats over the sand bar on the entrance of Nadgee river and paddled up this small, brackish, tanin-brown inlet where we all ended up swimming and having rolling lessons etc. The afternoon was spent in this delightfully relaxing way - a real tonic after the tensions of the morning.

Dawn on Wednesday, 19 December greeted us with cool conditions and drizzle. We were under way at about 1130 with a nice 5-10 kt. NE wind and lumpy but pleasant sea, which enabled us to hug the cliffs and examine the very impressive sea caves in this area. Shep nearly got creamed when he paddled into a cave and looked around to see a large green one just about to break on him; he hastily back-paddled his way out and needless-to-say, did not get in quite so close again.

We landed for lunch at about 1430 at Newtons Beach, heading off for Merrica River at about an hour later. By this time, the breeze had picked up to about 10-15 knots so it was a hard slog the rest of the way.

Merrica River hauled into view at about 1730 and was a most welcome sight, as the 18 Km from Black Head had seemed to me to be a lot longer. We towed the boats up through the narrow entrance into the small lagoon and paddled about another kilometre upstream looking for a campsite. Nothing suitable (except for the delicious oysters) so we paddled back to the entrance and made camp on the verge of the scrub and the sand.

Thursday, 20 December was overcast and dry but not a good day for paddling. A twenty-five knot wind, three metre swell and two metre waves are not ideal for sea kayaks, especially as we would have to cross the aptly named Disaster Bay and round Green Cape to reach our next objective, Bittangabee Bay. Frank decided to call a rest day and to get away very early on Friday to try and beat the wind.

Franks's decision was borne out when Shep decided to test the water and paddle out into the Bay. He made it nearly to Green Cape before returning with the report that the conditions were very rough; even he had difficulty, so it would've been out of the question to try the notorious Green Cape. Not to worry though, as we spent the day lazing around, writing up our logs, paddling, rolling etc etc.

The highlight of this interlude was probably when Mark donned his wetsuit and mask and retrieved a bag full of oysters off the rocks. We roasted these (and some mussels) on the coals of the one and only fire we had on the trip. What is there to say - how about delicious, wonderful, scrumptious, divine.....Mindful of the early start, we all hit the sack early.

The last day for most of us, Friday December 21, dawned overcast and dull. The swell had abated to 2 - 3 metres and the dreaded wind had dropped to 5 - 10 knots; not perfect conditions but good enough to have a go for Green Cape and Bittangabee Bay.

We were all aboard and paddling out of Merrica River by 0630. After we got through the surf and halfway across Disaster Bay, we rafted up to make the final decision on Green Cape. The swells were still big enough to cause nasty clapotis off the cliffs so Mark, Alice, Heli and I decided to head for Wonboyn, a small inlet in the centre of the crescent of Disaster Bay, whilst Frank, Bruce, Peter, Chris and Brian decided to have a crack for Bittangabee. As it turned out, it was probably six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. Frank and the others reported that Green Cape was "bloody rough" but quite okay, whereas we had to get through a fairly nasty surf over Wonboyn bar (which we all did okay).

The Wonboyn group started to walk to Bittangabee, and the Bittangabee group started to drive to Wonboyn so it was inevitable that we met halfway. Transfer from Wonboyn to Bittangabee was done quickly, and I guess the trip ended at about 1 o'clock on Friday.

We were all elated that we had finished and sad that it was all over. Chris and I had to get back to Sydney so farewells were hurried. For me, this was a fantastic trip, in a beautiful part of our country with fine companions. What more is there to say, except.....

Thanks to Frank Bakker on behalf of everyone. Frank's leadership, in sometimes difficult conditions, was always done with easy-going competence, understanding and humour which made for a safe and enjoyable trip.

Ron Chambers

REPORT FOR NSWSKC - DEFINITION OF A SEA KAYAK

This discussion paper attempts to answer the question, "What is a safe sea kayak?".

The N.S.W Sea Kayak Club decided to form a committee to make this definition out of concern for the safety of all sea kayakers.

Our first concern is that with the increasing popularity of sea kayaks in recent years, organisers of events such as the Hawkesbury Classic, have included a "sea kayak" class in races without an adequate measurement and construction specification. Some competitors may attempt to take line honours by entering specially built or modified craft which are not sea kayaks in the accepted sense, but ultra light and flimsy racing boats. This does not present a problem in itself, but if such a craft was sold to an unsuspecting person who subsequently went to sea in it, then the results could be disastrous. A clear definition of a safe sea kayak may help to prevent this.

Secondly as more people take up sea kayaking, a recommended equipment list for kayaks operating in open waters is needed. This is personal equipment or boat fittings over and above the basic design and construction requirements for sea kayaks, but which contribute to the safety of the paddler.

It is hoped that these two initiatives will encourage self-regulation by the sea kayaking fraternity. If this does not happen, then some over-zealous government regulation may eventually be enacted (as is the case in France) seeking to protect individuals from themselves, to the detriment of the freedom which draws people to sea kayaking in the first place.

WHAT IS A SEA KAYAK ?

"A sea kayak is a kayak equipped and constructed to be operated on the open sea."

However to come up with a definitive description of a sea kayak is a difficult task, because each paddler will have an opinion gained through experience as to what constitutes a good sea kayak. The type of paddling carried out and the conditions prevailing in areas visited will all influence that opinion.

We can define certain characteristics of a canoe which allow us to call it a kayak and we can define some special features of a sea kayak which will distinguish it from a sprint, marathon, slalom, polo, white water racing, surf, or touring boat, but this does not mean that a kayak designed for touring will not make a good sea kayak or that a specially designed "sea kayak" will prove to be a seaworthy craft.

Most of the currently popular sea kayaks are based on traditional Greenland native designs which have been modified to accommodate larger European body sizes, however there are several successful designs (the well known and respected Klepper series of folding kayaks for example) which do not conform to the "normal" long slender design characteristics of the Greenland model. So appearance alone can't be used to define a sea kayak. This leaves performance as the best way to approach the question.

WHAT MAKES A SAFE SEA KAYAK ?

Kayaks which meet ALL of the following performance, design, and construction criteria may be considered a "safe sea kayak":-

- be strongly constructed to withstand the pressures and bending forces associated with waves
- have a reasonable turn of speed
- have comfortable seating with adequate leg and foot room
- be fitted with decklines for rescue or towing
- have buoyancy material in both ends of the hull space (in addition to bulkheads or pod) to support the total weight of the boat, gear, and paddler when the hull is completely flooded
- have minimum cockpit volume
- be equipped for removing water from the boat while at sea
- be directionally stable so that it is controllable under adverse conditions without the use of a rudder or skeg
- be easy to recover from a capsize while at sea, both by the paddler alone, and with the help of others
- have minimal windage, to aid control in high winds
- remain stable when tipped to one side (good dynamic stability)

DESIGN and CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS

The following are some more specific guide-lines on construction and fittings for sea kayaks.

WEIGHT

Is dependant upon the materials used for construction however for fibreglass kayaks a lower limit of 3 kg/metre of length could be taken as a guide.

HULL SHAPE

CROSS SECTION - Hull shapes should conform to the generally accepted forms: U shaped, Vee shaped, Hard chine, Multi chine, Half round (or combinations of these shapes.) Flat-bottomed hulls are not acceptable due to the low dynamic stability of this hull shape.

Where half-round hull shapes are used, the Stability Ratio (SR) should be greater than 5:1

$$\text{Where SR} = \frac{\text{Beam on the water-line}}{\text{Draught of the loaded boat}} = \frac{50 \text{ cm}}{10 \text{ cm}} = 5:1$$

Whatever hull shape is used, the centre of gravity should be kept as low as possible, and the centre of buoyancy should be as close to the maximum beam as possible.

PROFILE - Curvature of the keel or "rocker" should be such that directional stability is not dependant on additional equipment such as rudders or fins.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

Any material approved by marine insurers and bodies such as the MSB for small boat building is acceptable for kayak construction.

Note: The relevant Standards Association of Australia standard should be consulted where applicable.

For hard shell kayaks materials include:

- Solid wood
- Veneers
- "Kevlar"
- Foam sandwich
- Polyethelene (must have an internal stiffening frame or "Pod")
- Plywood
- G.R.P
- Carbon fibre composites
- Aluminium and other light alloys

For soft shell kayaks use strong, flexible, waterproof materials, such as:

- Canvas
- Hypalon-nylon
- Rubberised canvas
- "Kordura"

Waterproofing may be either intrinsic to their manufacture (eg calendaring) or through the application of waterproofing compounds. All joints should be sealed to stop water penetration.

Frames should be constructed from marine grade materials such as:

- Solid wood
- Plywood
- Composite materials
- Laminated wood
- Light alloys

Where frames are not used, such as in an inflatable kayak, multiple separate air-chambers are to be used so that a single puncture does not deflate the whole craft.

ADHESIVES - must be waterproof marine types, such as:

- Resorsinol Formaldehyde
- Urea Formaldehyde
- Epoxy resin
- Polyester resin

- Polyvinyl resin

Note: Polyester and polyvinyl resins can only be used for bonding to the same materials.

FASTENINGS and FITTINGS - Must be salt-water corrosion resistant marine types, such as:

- Stainless steel
- "Monel"
- Plastic
- Brass and Bronze
- Aluminium

Fastenings made from different metals should not be placed together, unless a corrosion inhibitor is used.

FIXED or POSITIVE BUOYANCY

The kayak must have some form of positive buoyancy installed. The flotation material must be positioned within the hull space, so that the kayak remains controllable (ie the boat can be paddled) in the event of a leaking hatch or damaged skin flooding the hull.

This material can be a combination of:

- Foam (polystyrene in block form or polyurethane "blown" in situ)
- Watertight bulkhead(s)
- Air-filled bags eg waterproof gear bags or buoyancy bags
- "Pod" type cockpit construction eg "Puffin"

To calculate the amount of buoyancy required for a given boat and paddler use the following guide:

First calculate displacement (eg single kayak)

75.0 kg paddler	
+ 25.0 kg sea kayak	
+ 1.0 kg paddle	
+ 75.0 kg supplies and equipment	

176.0 kg Total displacement	

Then find the volume of flotation material required given that 1 cubic metre of air will displace 1000 kg of water.

	176 kg	
Minimum required flotation =	-----	= 0.176 m3 flotation
	1000 kg	

Note: 0.038 kg polyurathane (expanding resin) foam will expand to provide 1 kg buoyancy.

When considering the type of flotation material to use, a combination of blown in situ or block foam, and air filled bags would provide the most versatile solution, remembering that any waterproof gear bags stowed within the hull will act as buoyancy in the event of flooding. If possible the hull space should be completely filled with flotation material to minimise the amount of water within the hull. (You risk losing the kayak and possibly your life if the hull compartments are empty).

PUMPS and BAILERS

At least two methods of emptying water from a swamped kayak should be available.

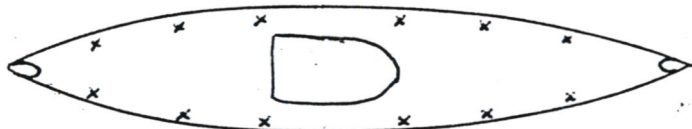
The primary system such as a hand or foot operated pump, dinghy self bailer, or electric bilge pump must allow operation under rough conditions when the paddle is being used to stay upright. Any system used should have a capacity of at least 25 litres per minute (Some pump systems can be rigged with a long inlet tube and "strum box" to allow pumping from hull compartments or other boats).

Note: Hand operated pumps may not be suitable for unassisted use.

A secondary bailer, such as a hand held pump, a cut-down plastic bottle, or plastic jug etc. should always be carried, tied to the boat by a suitable length of cord. A sponge for sopping up small amounts of water is also desirable.

DECKLINES

Decklines (or lifelines) should be made of at least 6mm braided rope, firmly fixed to the deck at approx. 800mm spacing as shown below:



RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT AND FITTINGS FOR OPEN SEA OPERATION

Sea kayaking, more than most other branches of canoeing, is completely unforgiving, the sea can be very dangerous. Well chosen equipment, careful planning, awareness of the limitations of yourself and your boat and a sound understanding of the environment in which you will be paddling will all contribute to the safe enjoyment of sea kayaking.

The following guide has been prepared from the collective knowledge of many experienced seafarers and sea kayakers, but it is not a substitute for personal experience. You have the final choice; if you are prudent, sensible, and well practiced you will get great pleasure from going to sea in a kayak; if you are not you will probably die or worse, cause someone else to die trying to rescue you.

PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES or P.F.D's - By Law a PFD to SAA standard 1499, 1512 or 2260 must be worn at all times when paddling on open waters. Even if you are on enclosed waters remember that it is much easier for searchers to find a floating body.

A SPRAY DECK - is recommended to prevent the cockpit flooding and to keep the legs warm (to avoid hypothermia) in colder areas.

COMPASS and CHART - should always be available. The paddler should carry one compass (for hand bearings) and have another steering compass fixed to the boat for use "hands-free". The steering compass should be installed with non-ferrous fittings. All magnetic materials (either in gear or part of the kayak's deck fittings) should be kept well away from the compasses. A chart holder (eg elastic cord attached to the deck) will keep charts, in a waterproof map case, ready for use whilst paddling.

TOW ROPE - made from floating ski tow rope, should be rigged and carried on the deck, (7 metres over-all in length, including a section of elastic cord as a shock absorber. Terminate the rope with stainless steel snap links for quick attachment).

A DROGUE - should be carried for extended journeys in open sea conditions. (The tow rope could also serve a similar duty by trailing in a loop from the stern or bow).

COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT - the minimum requirement is:

- a pea-less whistle which is designed for use in the water. (Many P.F.D's come with a whistle attached)
- a waterproof, shatterproof, signalling mirror
- a waterproof torch
- a small portable radio for weather reports

For extended journeys, or journeys in more remote areas the following equipment should be considered:

- Flares (Parachute or hand-held red flares, hand-held smoke flares as set out in the MSB's Safe Boating Handbook)
- Dye marker
- EPIRB
- VHF or 27mz marine radio

Note: Boating safety regulations outside NSW may require that special equipment be carried by all craft venturing off-shore. You should check for any local regulations before setting off on interstate or overseas trips.

RUDDERS and SKEGS - should be solidly constructed of marine grade materials such as aluminium, stainless steel, plastics, marine ply etc. "Beaching" type rudders or skegs are preferred. That is, they can be raised or lowered from the cockpit. If not the rudder must be protected from damage during launching or landing in surf or impact on submerged rocks.

LIGHTS - for operation at night, the minimum requirement is for a white light (electric torch or lantern) which can be shown in time to prevent a collision. Note: See MSB handbook for details of legal requirements.

DRINKING WATER - consumption is dependant upon exertion, air temperature and body size, but at least four litres per person per planned day (plus one days reserve per person) should be carried in strong sealed containers. (used wine cask bladders are excellent).

A FIRST AID KIT - conforming to the AYF Basic First Aid Kit specification should be carried.

BOAT REPAIR KIT - this will depend upon the length and severity of the journey, but at least the following should be carried:

- Roll of 50mm wide "duct" tape
- Knife (preferably a "Swiss Army" type.)
- Length of copper wire
- Spare rudder cable
- Pliers

On longer trips you should carry materials to effect permanent repairs to the boats or equipment eg fibreglass and resin, solvents and abrasives.

SPARE PADDLE - can be a single ended canoe-type paddle or a jointed double-ended paddle and should be easily accessible but stowed so as to remain in position under rough conditions.

CLOTHING - depends up conditions. You can be sure of one thing though; no matter how hot it is, you may need to get warmly dressed very quickly, and no matter how cold it was when you started your paddle, you could find yourself overdressed and overheating. The following list should be minimum in any Australian waters:

- Hat
- Tee-shirt or singlet
- Cag or spray jacket
- Thermalwear
- Shorts
- Long-sleeve shirt
- Sun Blockout (15+)
- Neoprene booties
- Swimming costume
- Optional sleeveless wetsuit (Long or Short John type)

NOTE: Spare clothing should be carried in a waterproof gear bag ready for use at any time.

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With the exception of the club newsletters and BCU pamphlets, all of these publications should be available from your local library. Some specialty canoe shops carry some titles from time-to time.

Quote taken from a display of "ship ashore on reef"....SUVA AQUARIUM SUVA 11.10.1984

"Ship salvage is a science of vague assumptions, based on debatable figures from inconclusive instruments, performed with equipment of problematical accuracy, by persons of doubtful reliability and of questionable mentality.

PENTATHLON MAN

by Peter Meredith

I think the biggest mistake I made that day was not checking the weather forecast. There were others, like not taking note of the subtle signs in the sky and the air, not consulting a map, not taking the right kind of shoes. It's a wonder that things didn't go more seriously wrong than they did.

But how can you read signs from a perfect day?

I paddled out of the mouth of the Tomaga River at Mossy Point, just north of Broulee on the south coast, on a brilliant mid-morning. My wife Sue had dropped me and gone off, promising to be back at the same place later. The sea was like a distorting mirror, undulating lazily under the fat sun. Not a breath, not a ripple. A cluster of surreal islands seemed to float, rising and falling with the soft swell, off to the north-west. I paddled in a straight line across the bay to Burrewarra Point. The swell was bigger there, but I was still able to sneak in between outcrops and get a close look at barnacled rock, pink and black in the crystal water. I was hoping to see some exotic sea creature, but all the action was taking place in the air: thousands upon thousands of butterflies were flying over the water in some kind of crazy migration that would take them out to sea.

I turned back and paddled slowly below the cliffs, checking inlets and tiny secluded beaches for a suitable landing spot. I'd brought food and snorkelling gear and wasn't going to let them lie unused. After all, if you've got big hatches you've got to put gear in them. And if you've got gear aboard you just have to use it.

I passed a bloke in a tinny raising cray pots. He ignored me. Not long afterwards I found what I was looking for: a beach ringed by cliffs and inaccessible from land. So I beached and went snorkelling.

I'd been nosing around in the shallows for a about 20 minutes when I heard the sound of an outboard motor. I looked up and, with my mask half out of the water, saw two worlds at once: waving kelp and flashing fish below, and in the upper world the cray fisherman's tinny speeding off towards Mossy Point. THAT was definitely a sign, though even at that late stage I failed to heed it.

Ten minutes later I was drying myself on the beach when an invisible hand suddenly picked up my kayak by the bow toggle, spun it round and tried to run off with it. At the same time I heard a roar in the trees on the cliffs above. Leaves, branches, my towel and t-shirt began to whirl about the cove. I looked out to sea and saw not glass-smooth water but a carpet of crawling, greeny-white froth. A southerly had hit. The cray man had seen the signs and I hadn't. I really resented him for that.

In a mindless panic I launched, vaguely intending to head

back towards Mossy Point. It was an insane notion, I realised as I tried to round the small headland outside the cove. The chop was already a metre high and the spindrift and froth were swiping my face, blotting out visibility to windward. I battled to make it round the headland, knowing that if I capsized I'd be on the rocks in 15 seconds.

Round the headland I found myself in a wide bay with a curving beach. At the far end of the bay was another headland and perhaps beyond that was a landing place closer to familiar territory. As I paddled across the bay I knew I'd never make it. The beam wind was making my ruderless kayak weathercock into wind and I was having to paddle on one side for long stretches. I was tiring fast. Twice, three times I nearly went over. And the waves were getting bigger by the minute, crashing over the boat and getting in my eyes, nose and ears. So I ran for the beach. My landing was messy, but the solid ground felt marvellous.

The beach was deserted. A solitary path led into thick bush. I had no option but to walk. So I shouldered the boat and plodded into the trees, wondering how much of this stuff I'd have to traverse before reaching civilisation.

The path was narrow and twisty and now and then I had to make fancy three-point turns to get round the bends.

After about half an hour a thong gave out, so I kicked both thongs off and walked barefoot. This might have looked impressive had there been anybody to witness it, but it sure made my feet hurt. As well, I could feel my spine being compressed into a curvaceous S. Sea-kayaking was beginning to give me a pain.

Just as I was thinking of hurling the boat into the bushes and leaving it there, I came to a clearing surrounded by a cluster of cottages all painted in environment-friendly colours and all empty. A surprised man came out of one cottage to greet me. From him I discovered why the cottages were empty: they were holiday cottages, and of course there was a recession in progress. Caretakers of holiday cottages during recessions are lonely people, willing to talk to anyone, even people who bushwalk with kayaks on their shoulders. Believing that the wind had dropped and that I might yet be able to relaunch and paddle to my destination, I asked him the question all sea-kayakers constantly have on their lips: "Where's the sea?"

By the time I emerged from the bush onto sand, I was running out of time. The beach stretched for maybe five kilos in a long shallow curve to a black blob that I took to be Mossy Point. I had less than half an hour to make my rendezvous. The wind was dropping but the sea still looked nasty, a kind of milky green, so I decided to leave the kayak and run. After a quick hit of fruit'n'nut chocolate bar, choc-chip cookie and Christmas pud with chocolate sauce from my emergency ration pack, I set off at a trot, wearing my PFD and carrying my paddle, confident that I'd make it in time.

All went well until I was about 100 metres from my destination. Then two sensations assailed me at the same

time:

1. A belching, backfiring nausea resulting from all the emergency food I'd eaten;
2. the realisation that I'd made an amazing miscalculation.

Yes, I'd forgotten about the river. It's dead easy to do that when you're in a kayak but a different matter when you're on foot. There it was, flowing swiftly between me and the car park at which Sue would be arriving any minute. Too swiftly? I didn't know, and the least thing I wanted was to be swept out to sea without a kayak while attempting to cross it.

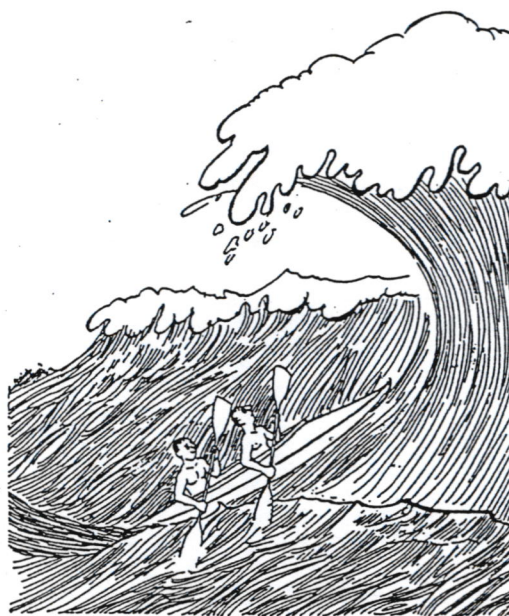
As I was standing there regretting not taking up hang gliding, I surferie trotted up from the beach I'd just run along. After a few remarks about the southerly, he came round to the topic that was evidently uppermost in his mind: "Lost your boat?"

He'd have loved it if I'd said yes, so I told him I was training for a pentathlon event -- kayaking, bushwalking with a heavy load, running on sand, swimming rivers and desk-top publishing. Bored by this, he plunged into the river and swam his surfboard across with the greatest of ease. That looks easy, I thought, so I threw myself in after him.

It WAS easy, but to onlookers it looked really impressive. Several people on the far bank watched in admiration as I negotiated what appeared to be vicious rapids. In fact the water was only a foot or so deep in places, and although it looked as if I was swimming, I was actually grabbing rocks and bits of seaweed and pulling myself along.

I hauled myself out on the far bank a minute before Sue arrived. Punctuality has always been one of my strong points.

We went back to retrieve the kayak, and later, over a mug of hot tea, it struck me that the southerly, being more a south-easterly, would have blown all those butterflies ashore. Who was crazy, the butterflies or me, I wondered.



'What a superb challenge to man's courage and determination. Let's go back.'

CLUB LOGO

The following ideas have been submitted for our club logo. We will be deciding which one to use at the AGM in September. If you are inspired by any of the concepts and you would like to bring along some artwork it is not too late, as we will be making a decision at the meeting.



 TREASURERS REPORT for JUNE 1991

Balance B/F from February 1991		\$1828.36
INCOME		
Membership - Renewals	5 @ \$20	100.00
	- New members 11 @ \$40	440.00
Donation		5.00
Bank interest		47.68

		592.68
EXPENDITURE		
Printing and stationery	29.29	
Postage		74.82
Insurance - Public liability	334.50	
PO Box charges		70.00
Bank charges		4.23

		512.84
Balance at bank 20/6/1991		\$1908.20

Shirley Abrahall
 Hon. Treasurer

COMING EVENTS

(contact the trip leader by 8 pm on the Wednesday before the trip)

July 14

Training day at Gunammatta Bay. Capsize recovery and paddling techniques.

Contact Ken McDonald 520 5349

July 20/21

Weekend trip on Tallowa Dam in the picturesque Shoalhaven Gorge.

Contact Michael Richardson Bus. 907 9766 VOLUNTEER LEADER WANTED !

July 28

Combined paddle and walk. Use your legs as well ! Sydney Harbour National Park. (10 - 13 km)

Contact Graham Mundy 528 2623

August 3/4

Weekend trip. Broken Bay and lower Hawksbury. Camping at Patonga.

Contact Michael Richardson Bus. 907 9766

August 11

Palm Beach to Manly.

Contact Cezar Ramos 809 1020

August 18

Day paddle Wattamolla, Royal National Park.

Contact Ken McDonald 520 5349

August 25

Fishing day. Fish from your kayak around the entrance to Sydney Harbour. Share your successful techniques or learn from others.

Contact Michael Richardson Bus. 907 9766

September

Annual General Meeting. Date and venue to be advised.

Early Notice for 1992

Carry the flag to the World Marathon Canoeing Championships to be held on the Brisbane River late next year. Anyone interested in paddling as part of the relay team should contact Ken McDonald on 520 5349 so that we can take part in this promotional event.
