

NSW SEA KAYAKER

THE JOURNAL OF THE NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB INC

Number 19

FEB MAR 94

DODGING SOUTHERN GALES IN A SEA KAYAK

Merimbula to Melbourne by Ron Mudie

On Saturday the ninth of October last year Gordon Carswell and I pushed our heavily-laden sea kayaks onto the waters of Wallagoot Lake, near Merimbula on the NSW far south coast. We intended to paddle together to Mallacoota where we would part company for me to continue my journey

excellent. Safe beneath my hatches were my four season tent and a new superdown sleeping bag. As things turned out I was glad to have both these items but more of that later.

As the first paddle strokes propelled the heavy boats sluggishly over the bar and out to sea, I thought about the trip



Above: Ron Mudie at play
(Photo: David Winkworth)

alone to Melbourne, taking up to a month if necessary.

Our sea boats were identical Skerrays - rotomoulded plastic kayaks made by Valley Canoe Products in England. They were seventeen feet long and had no rudders as we intended to employ retractable skegs for straight running in strong winds. Their styling was classic Greenland and their build quality

ahead. I felt good and strong after months of regular day paddles but viewed the Victorian coast with apprehension. So many unknowns. What would the seas and surf be like? How many gales would be encountered? I was to soon find out! The four or five days to Mallacoota

(Continued on page 4)

Presidents Report

A belated Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone.

In October Michael Richardson managed to get the Sydney Morning Herald to publish an article on sea kayaking in its boating column. He gave our club a mention and I was kept busy for a couple of weeks responding to enquires. We gained quite a few new members from this. Thanks Michael for the mention!

On behalf of all the club I would like to say welcome to our new members:- Stephen Bingham, Tony Bomford, Peter Brown, Richard Chidgey, Warwick Francis, John Freeman, Ric Galt, Diana Gould, John Hennings, Chris Horner, David Lucas, Michael Meek, Ian McDonald, Shannon McDonald, Graham Player, Norman Sanders, Gary Wallis, Tony S. White, Jacqueline Windh and Ross Winters. Note that we now have two Tony Whites! We currently have 117 financial members.

November's Rock and Roll weekend at Patonga was very successful with over thirty-five members attending. Although the mornings on both days were a bit drizzly the weather was great by mid-morning and a good time was had by all. Many achieved their first roll and others have learnt enough so that by the next lesson they should be there. Thanks are due to David Winkworth for his expertise and efforts as chief instructor.

NSW SEA KAYAKER
 A NSW Sea Kayak Club Inc
 Publication
 PO Box A1045
 Sydney South 2000
 Tel.(Infoline) 02 552-0028

President: Patrick Dibben
Vice President: Dave Winkworth
Treasurer: Dirk Stuber
Secretary: Vacant!
Trip Convenor: Dirk Stuber
Journal Editor: Alex Preema

EDITORIAL

Ron Mudie's article in this issue will probably make readers shudder at his use of a standard road touring map for navigation during his Victorian paddle. Why did he not, they will cry, use highly-detailed marine charts instead? I don't know. His choice, however, brings up one of my pet outdoor adventuring peeves.

Personally I abhor all highly detailed track and paddle notes on the grounds that their bend-by-bend, creek-by-creek and headland-by-headland descriptions deflower the magic of discovery for the adventurer. You might as well not go because the unexpected has already been revealed in print.

The ultimate purity, of course, is to use no maps at all. Alas, in spite of my noble adventuring morals, I too am forced to rely upon maps because I cannot afford the time in this chromium-plated age of consumerism to savour a journey of real discovery. I envy those who do. At this stage I must hasten to add I am not advocating my philosophy to all and sundry. In the interests of safety, detailed notes and maps are vital to many paddlers.

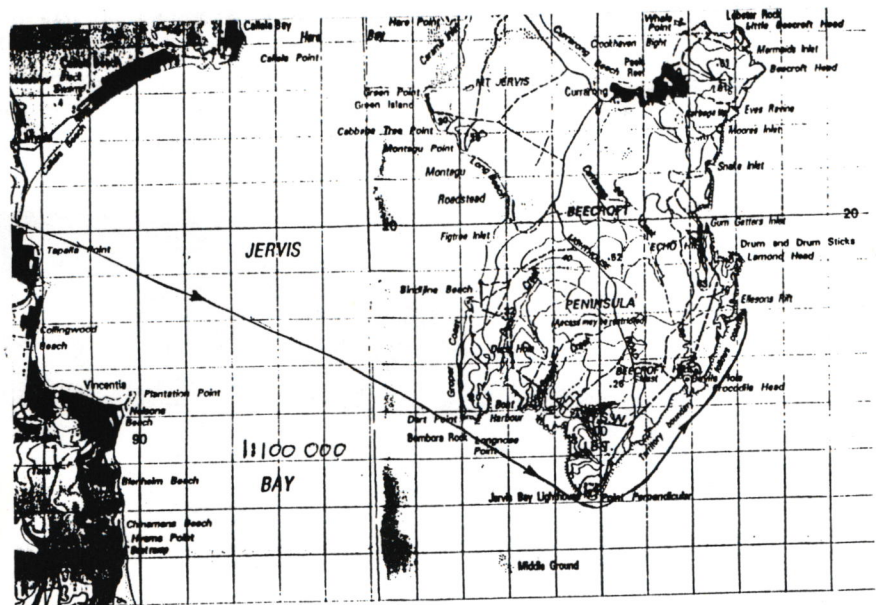
I guess it's a question of standards. Perhaps paddlers should strive to improve their personal skills and raise their standards and really extract the very most from their adventuring. It's like Robin Williams said in *Dead Poets' Society*: "Seize the day!"

SIX MONTHS AND A LEAKY BOAT

By Gary Edmond

This article attempts to outline a misadventure. Whilst not inherently interesting I trust a delineation of my exploits, some foolish, others calculatingly rational, might serve an heuristic function: reinforcing the primacy of sea-kayak maintenance and an awareness of personal limitations. During my university holiday, June 1993, a deficiency of ready paddlers combined with an admixture of

Through the dissipating mist muffled sunlight revealed waves breaking between Longnose Point and Bombora Rock about 4km east of Point Perpendicular. As I approached Longnose Point 2-3 m breaking waves made me reconsider my plan. But the challenge held me resolute. A combination of the recently acquired ability to roll, being a powerful swimmer and staying within relatively



blustering impetuosity led me to plan and attempt a solo paddle from Huskisson to Kiama over three days. Normally this paddle would be a comfortable trip of about 20-25km per day. Friends, who were walking in the Budawang National Park, provided transport to Huskisson.

The morning of the departure was overcast and seas were large: 2m seas on a 2-3m swell. The wind was negligible and the prevailing swell was from the SSW. I departed from Huskisson boat ramp at about 11.00am. A mist over Jervis Bay obscured the heads initially necessitating a compass paddle. The paddle across Jervis Bay was unproblematic.

close proximity to land can provide a strong sense of confidence.

The skill for any paddler is to contain this confidence below the threshold of impetuous arrogance. Included in any calculation is an appreciation of the appropriateness of equipment as well as physical and mental limitations.

Before attempting to negotiate the breaking waves, I paused to watch and choose the most opportune moment. When it came I paddled swiftly. One or two metres of thundering white water provides a powerful stimulus. This was just the catalyst required to propel me at a speed which would have made David Winkworth or Arunas Pilka proud.

(Continued from page 1)

As a follow up Michael Maleedy has been running a rolling practice in Sydney Harbour on the third Sunday each month. The next one being Sunday the 20th March.

As another follow up to the weekend Frank Bakker is marrying in Japan in March. Congratulations Frank and Mitsiko (spelling?).

Thanks to Darcy Ortiz our visiting Canadian paddler and Frank Bakker for a great talk/slide show on paddling in Canada. Darcy has now moved on to New Zealand and he has written expressing his thanks to everyone and said that kayaking was the highlight of his stay in Australia.

The Eden - Mallacoota paddle organised by Dirk Stuber in December was a great success by all accounts with about ten people taking part in the nine day paddle. They had a

minor hitch on the first afternoon when someone had an unscheduled beach landing and was unable to break back through the monster waves. They were forced to camp for the night but rejoined the group the next day after a portage! No trip report unfortunately - come on guys.

The Mystery Bay weekend on the 12,13th February had an attendance of around twenty people with thirteen people taking part in the paddle out to Montague Island. Darcy is already planning on making this a yearly tradition with a BBQ to celebrate.

This coming Saturday 19th February we have another Paddle/BBQ/talk. You may or may not be aware that I now run a sea kayaking tour business on Sydney Harbour so I may be occupied on Saturday - any volunteers to help organise the paddle & BBQ?

The club has received the latest copies of club magazines from the Investigator Canoe Club (S.A.), Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club, SeaTrek (Victorian club magazine) and the Sea Canoeist Newsletter (N.Z.). Copies of these are on file so let me know if you'd like to see them. We are also about to start exchanging newsletters with Lane Cove Valley Canoe Club.

I've been talking to Paul Caffyn again recently and he had a successful operation over Christmas/New Year and is recovering well. He is in the final stages of finishing his book 'The Dreamtime Voyage' on his Australian circumnavigation and will be visiting Sydney for its launch. I'll try and line him up as a speaker again when we get some dates for his visit.

Hope to see everyone at the talk with Gary Steer on Saturday, by for now.

□

BUYING A SEA KAYAK? COME AND SEE US FIRST FOR THE BEST ADVICE AND THE LARGEST RANGE IN AUSTRALIA

We manufacture & stock

- Seamaster
- Southern Aurora
- "New" Southern Skua
- Arctic Raider - Designed by Paul Caffyn
- Dusky Bay I Double
- "New" Dusky Bay II Double



CANOE SPORTS

ON THE WATER

The Boatshed, 11 Narrabeen St, NARRABEEN, NSW, 2101
Phone: 970-7099 Fax: 913-2636

Free Test Paddle Available Before You Buy

(Continued from page 1)

were uneventful except for strong winds around Eden and Twofold Bay. Normally we would have crossed Twofold Bay well out to sea but the winds forced us to skirt around the inside of the bay.

Fishing in Nadgee Lake was a big zero - surprising really after telling Gordon how good it could be there.

We zipped through the gut between Gabo Island and Cape Howe for the last thirty kilometres to Mallacoota. From there I was looking straight into

with an asterisk!

Imagine a 4WD, RACV truck, complete with flashing lights trundling along Ninety Mile Beach to attend to a smashed Skerray with plastic welding gear!

Next morning the Skerray was in the water at dawn, a routine I kept up unless bad weather forced a lay day. Some of the best paddling was to be had early before the wind sprang up. Entry or exit through the surf was always a worry. A fully laden kayak in surf can be dangerous - in big stuff it

came from - where I had lunch at sea. This I usually prepared on the previous day and kept in a waterproof container. Waves breaking over bommies WAAAYYY out to sea were a common sight all the way to Ninety Mile Beach.

A nor' easterly sprang up until Bemm River where the sea became slick and oily. This caused me to feel uneasy and slightly sick. A swell passed under the boat and suddenly I lost my sense of balance and I began to panic. This happened again and I moved well out to sea where a breeze sprang up and the feeling disappeared.

Just before dark I coasted into the shore and camped near Marlo, covering eighty kilometres, the best daily run for the whole trip. Off early the next day for the run to Lake Tyers, I paddled along mile after bloody mile of beach! I kept an eye out for the occasional big wave that might crash over me. I camped on the beach and enjoyed the sunset and sunrise.

Beach camping is great but rain makes the sand stick to everything and it makes it really hard to keep the tent clean.

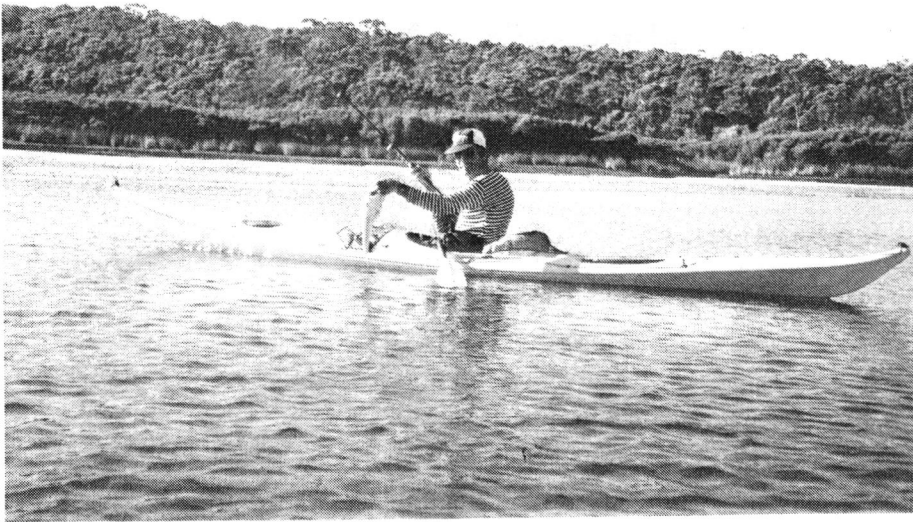
The following day was Sunday as I approached Lakes Entrance. I was really looking forward to this part of the trip because I planned to paddle into the Gippsland Lakes system and down lake Reeve to Seaspray and thence to portage over the dunes back into Ninety Mile Beach. The long beaches were beginning to bore me as there was very little sea life and the water was a dirty brown, courtesy of the Victorian floods.

Lake Reeve according to my NRMA map was a long, narrow lake running parallel to the beach and only a kilometre or so behind the dunes. My you-beaut NRMA map, however, let me down here badly.

Lakes Entrance is one of the largest fishing ports in Australia. It's also a life support system for the oil rigs that dot Bass Strait in this area. Scallop fishing is pretty big also.

The Skerray glided over diesel fuel floating in the harbour. I pulled into a sandy spit near the shops at 8am. Naturally the first thing I did was to buy a chocolate bar and an ice cream -

(Continued on page 5)



Above: Ron with a Dusky Flathead (released) on Nadgee River, Nadgee Wilderness (Photo: David Winkworth)

the teeth of the gales. I knew I was heading west at possibly the worst time of the year but child-minding arrangements didn't leave me with much choice. Whatever happened was bound to be an experience!

At Mallacoota Gordon's family was all around him as he loaded his kayak and gear onto his car. It felt strange with Gordon leaving and I realised I was finally alone. After Gordon left, I fished out my maps. Unknown coast lay ahead of me to the west. Much to Dave Winkworth's dismay I had planned to use a Mobil Brisbane to Melbourne road map....well, it's really simple. isn't it? Just head out to sea and turn right. My mother-in-law, however, came to the rescue and sent me some NRMA and RACV maps. So now I was in good shape. I could get breakdown service at any town marked

can be deadly. It was easy to become paranoid about stacking the boat in surf fifty kilometres from the nearest town. Losing boat and gear would be an expensive mistake.

I paddled to Wingan Inlet in Croajingalong National Park and entered the inlet past a large seal colony. They kept me awake that night with their fighting and barking. I was totally ignored by them when I yelled at them to be quiet. Apart from this the inlet is a pleasant camping spot. With highway access of about forty kilometres of dirt, a coastal approach is the way to go.

With Gordon gone I felt a bit lonely, a feeling that soon disappeared. I found comfort in solitude for the rest of the trip.

The following morning I headed to Point Hicks - wonder where that name

(Continued from page 4)

heaven after days of dehydrated food. I then called home and stocked up on provisions. With the gear and food stowed, I paddled between lines of fishing boats, aware of admiring glances from bankside anglers. There's no doubt about the graceful lines of a sea kayak. I spent a relaxing morning reading the Sunday papers and swimming at a shaded, sandy beach camping spot.

After lunch I paddled into the lakes system. Ti-tree grew right to the water's edge and the sandy beaches disappeared. Huge mosquitoes descended on me that evening as I pitched the tent. The disappointment with the lakes was settling in fairly quickly now but the worst was yet to come.

At dawn I paddled over to a professional fisherman hauling in nets and asked him about Lake Reeve. He wasn't much help but at least pointed out a band of black clouds building up on the horizon. That afternoon my hopes of reaching Seaspray were dashed as the lake turned out to be four inches deep! I still had fifty kilometres to go. Why wasn't this mentioned on my map!

I pulled the kayak the last kilometre to a small town called Loch Sport as sandflies and mosquitoes attacked me. Can it get worse? I thought. Yes it did. I sank in black, oozy mud up to my thighs. And then the gale hit. The wind blew sheets of water at me and hail and torrential rain lashed my body. The temperature plummeted and I shivered. I put on my paddling jacket and sat in my boat in the mud.

God helps those who help themselves so I had to do something. It was too far to portage to the beach and there was nowhere to camp in this swamp. I walked to the houses in the distance and two kind men drove me back to my boat in a dual cab ute.

This is going to be interesting, I thought as I noticed the ute did not have roof racks. "No problem, Ron", said one as he and his mate loaded my kayak across the back of the ute at right angles to the road!

Seventeen feet of kayak were balanced across the vehicle as we lurched along the sixteen foot wide road towards the

ocean in a gale.

"Get much traffic on this road?", I tried to say but no sound came out as I had visions of plastic and muesli scattered all the way back to Lakes Entrance.

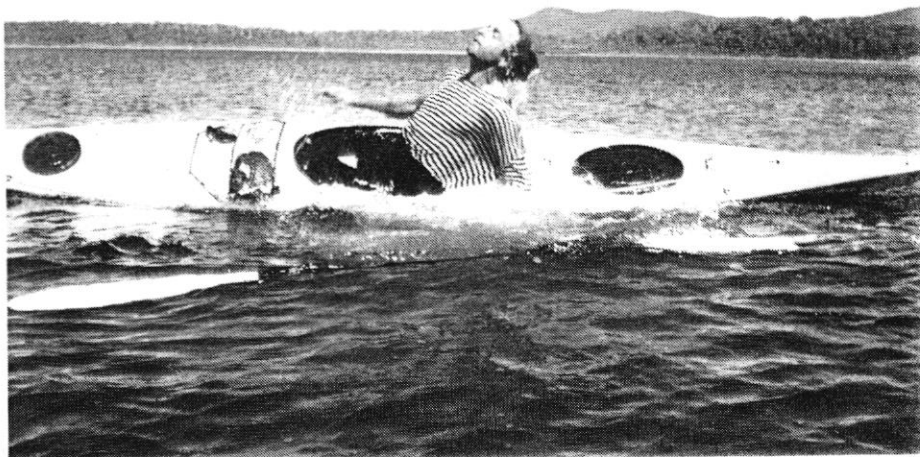
Well, we made it without incident. My new-found friends refused payment, writing it off as entertainment. I crawled into the tent that night as wind and rain lashed the coast. But not before I gave my boat a big hug.

The next day the law arrived! Two park rangers called me out of the tent. The gale was still in full force as we spoke but the mozzies bit on unperturbed. It was only a social call. That afternoon, after a short walk, I returned to my camp to find a can of insect repellent left by the rangers. I

As I watched the hazy horizon, a mountain range rose out of the sea. It was Wilson's Promontory and I was almost at the end of 130 kilometres of beach!

That afternoon the milky-brown water changed to sapphire-blue and I camped at the end of Ninety Mile Beach. On the following morning a tail wind surfed me into Port Welshpool where a campground afforded me a lovely, hot shower. The following day, October 28, was a rest day.

The next morning I pushed off while Port Welshpool was still asleep. A rising westerly gale pushed me towards Wilson's Prom. My kayak surfed on the waves to Refuge Bay where caution dictated to set up camp. I pitched the tent and then went for a short



Above: Ron Mudie completing a hand roll during his pre-trip training.

(Photo: David Winkworth)

wrote them a thank-you note when I got home.

The next morning the winds had abated and I pushed off into a fifteen knot headwind. My kidneys began to ache from the constant strain. I camped just past Seaspray on top of a sand dune where "farm smells" wafted in as I cooked dinner. I watched the sun go down and a feeling of contentment swept over me. I climbed into the tent and went to sleep.

The pain became worse the following day with the constant headwinds. Also the monotony of paddling along featureless beaches makes your mind do strange things. I was soon chatting aloud to myself and singing songs too.

exploratory walk and a swim. The gale was really winding up. The wind howled out at sea and dark clouds raced overhead.

My campsite was in the lee of the mountains, a good spot, I thought. When I returned to camp my tent was gone! This was serious! I looked around for footprints but there were only mine.

I found the tent 30 feet away on the top of a bush. My sleeping bag and gear were still inside! The culprit was the wind. I checked the tent and gear carefully. Everything was undamaged. I even retrieved the sand pegs. I was lucky. If I had lost the tent and sleeping

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

bag I would've been in real trouble.

During the night the storm raged around me, keeping me awake. The rain poured down. I was glad to be warm and dry in my tent and not cold and scared out at sea.

The following day the gale continued. I ate my porridge in bed and went back to sleep. What luxury!

At dawn the next day I pushed off for the rounding of the Prom. The weather forecasts came through my little radio via Launceston as there was bad reception of Victorian stations. Besides, Launceston was just across the strait, a journey I hope to complete one day.

The tip of Wilson's Promontory is truly impressive! The mountains rise straight out of the ocean and groups of islands dot the horizon. In my mind this area humbles all others as a kayaking destination. This was the highlight of my trip!

After rounding the Prom, I settled in at Tidal River as another 40 knot gale

stopped my progress. I pushed off at dawn on October 30, making for Inverloch. Big, rogue waves break at sea down here and I was really kept on my toes looking out for them. I covered 60 kilometres that day.

It was a Sunday and the area was packed with surfies and jet-skis. I waited until they all left before pitching my tent for the night.

Off early the next day, I stayed out wide to avoid the Hawaii Five-O waves. I finally called it a day at Pyramid Rock. I pitched the tent in a lovely clearing between grass tussocks and then saw a sign on a post. Expecting it to read "No camping", I found instead a "No Stopping Because Of Endangered Bird Nesting" message.

Yet another gale warning was issued for the following afternoon. I left at midnight to get to Port Phillip bay before the storm hit.

Luckily it was almost a full moon as I crossed the mouth of Westernport Bay. Dark cliffs towered above me on the other side as clouds covered the moon.

Suddenly the temperature fell and a nervous shiver went up my spine. I knew a gale was soon to hit!

I followed the cliffs for about 15 kilometres, reaching the lighthouse at Cape Schank just before dawn. The storm hit with a vengeance and it was impossible to paddle around the point. I struggled to paddle back into the wind to get within the lee of the cliffs. The sky was getting lighter as I thought I saw a beach not 500 metres from the lighthouse.

Yes, it was a beach and I soon had my tent up and was inside before the squalls hit. The gale blew continuously for the next three days and the rain hardly stopped. The forecast was rotten - rain and gale-force winds for the next week to ten days!

I then decided to finish the trip even though I was only thirty kilometres short of Port Phillip Bay. At dawn on November 3, I paddled off and surfed east to Flinders at the mouth of Westernport Bay, where my wife picked me up.

Q. Craft

CANOES & KAYAKS

.....FOR RIVER, LAKE & OCEAN

Sale, Hire, Repairs & Accessories.

We have a wide range of paddle craft from stable family canoes to expedition sea kayaks. Enlarged accessory range.

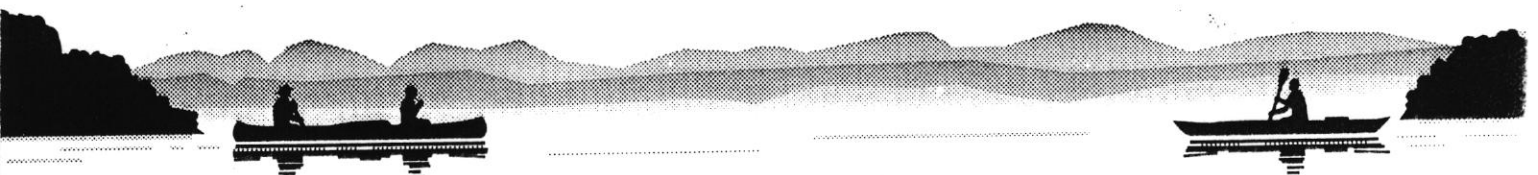
NEW LOCATION!

Big New Showroom

337 CONDAMINE ST. MANLY VALE

(About 300m north of old site, parking and hire boats at rear.)

Phone 907 9766



(Continued from page 2)

Having passed the breaking waves the normal swell appeared invitingly serene. Once I reached the entrance to Jervis Bay the water was bouncy but not breaking. Paddling was slow but after Point Perpendicular it was certainly entertaining if not sobering. I paddled in between 100-200m from the cliff face. Whilst there were no breaking waves the large ground swell and rebound produced the largest tosses I have ever paddled in. Paddling was comparable to moving slowly through 2-3m irregular compression waves. These were spectacular to watch and exhilarating to ride. Occasionally a toss peaked below the boat causing radical deflection and on a few occasions flight. So having rounded the Point I was making slow progress in quite turbulent conditions. There was no breaking white-water just the splashing and tossing of reverberating green water.

Now, this type of paddling is relatively unproblematic in a well maintained sea kayak. Unfortunately and somewhat embarrassingly (it's no fun being labelled "Submarine Man" at the local adventure store or experiencing Big John Slattery's soft, sensitive and didactic admonitions and remonstrances)

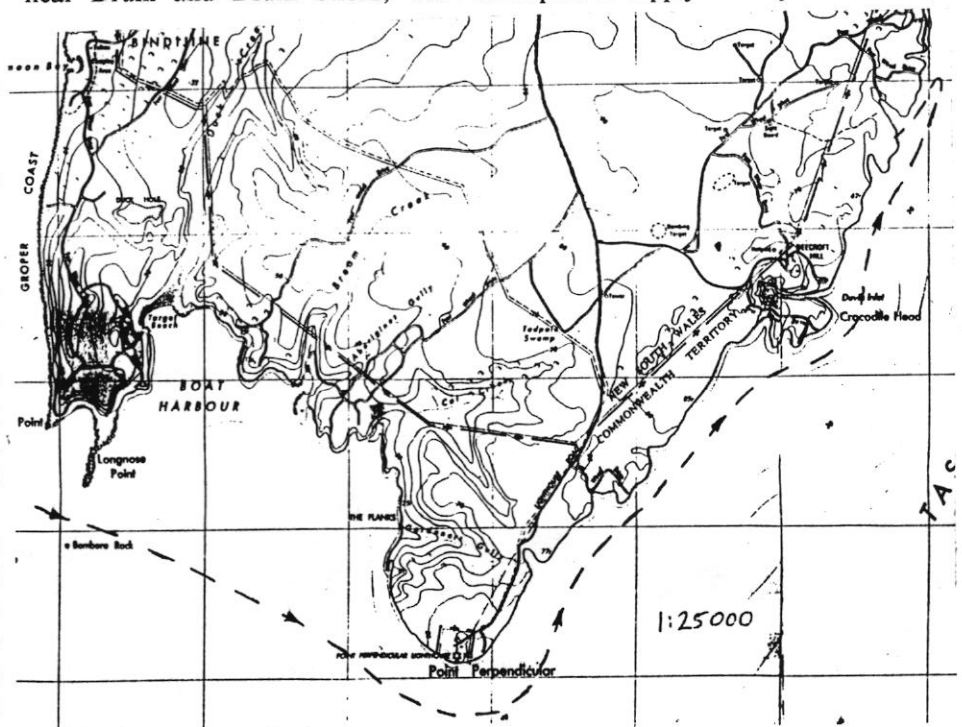
I lament the fact that my kayak was poorly maintained and probably not appropriately designed for a solo ocean paddle in testing conditions. I was paddling an Estuary Plus. Its large cock-pit and my osmotic spray-deck permitted an ever rapidly (that is exponentially) increasing volume of water to enter. Exacerbating this steady infusion was the inadequate sealing of the deck-lines I had fitted. Both of my hatches, a large rear and smaller front screw hatch, and their fittings contributed to the ever diminishing quantity of air and correspondingly buoyancy in the kayak.

Whilst paddling on large, clean seas was an exciting experience it also reduced my ability to evacuate water. The only facilities I provided were a bailing bucket and sponge and the seas made removing my spray-deck prohibitive. It became increasingly obvious that my kayak was taking

water. By about 2.30pm I realised that the quantity of water on board was going to provide a real problem. I began searching for a place to land. I had examined the map and knew this to be optimistic. This search required even closer proximity to the cliff line and more turbulent water which accentuated the influx of water into my kayak. At around 3.00pm I realised my search was hopeless. By this time I was paddling a very heavily laden kayak. I could feel the kayak's stability gradually changing and the added weight and movement of water resulted in increasing instability. The only substantive respite, Gum Getter's Inlet near Drum and Drum Sticks, was

hundred metres south. I paddled to the shelf and the fishermen who were perched about 25m above the water in a cave. I signalled that I was OK and would attempt a landing. By this stage the kayak was extremely sluggish and this compounded with the tremendous surge around the rocks prevented me from approaching closer than 20m to shore.

It was at this time that I first lost balance and capsized. I rolled back up, and could feel the weight of the water in all three compartments. I was sitting in about 4-5 inches of water. Realising my difficulty, one of the Samaritans, I mean fishermen, attempted to supply a heavy tuna line



about 2km north.

Paddling along the cliff face searching for somewhere to land had left a perpetual lump in my throat. I am employing "land" in a most euphemistic capacity. The variation in water level on exposed rock shelves ranged between 3-5m. This was not necessarily breaking but the surges around rock platforms were enormous. Whilst contemplating a seal landing, I thought it odd that I espied no seals on these rocks.

When I reluctantly made the decision that I had to attempt a landing but found no suitable venue I decided to return to a shelf within the purview of two fishermen I had seen a few

which I eventually fastened to my kayak.

A heavily laden kayak with many litres of water in substantial swell provided him with his sport for the afternoon, but five minutes later when the line snapped and no progress had been made my plight remained unchanged. The water surrounding the rocks was very rough and the line jolted the boat causing more instability. During the time I was attached to the fisherman I capsized and righted perhaps half a dozen times. The last time I needed a rest so I evacuated the kayak and held onto the deck-lines for a couple of minutes.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

I decided to give the seal landing one more attempt: I re-entered and rolled. By this time the spray-deck had become superfluous.

Once again I could not manoeuvre the kayak close enough to ride a surge onto the shelf. In retrospect I'm glad! By this stage it was evident that I was tiring and becoming increasingly susceptible to hypothermia.

Acknowledging this predicament I made the difficult though necessary decision to abandon the kayak and about \$1500 worth of camping gear. To this end I strapped the paddle to my kayak and with no reluctance I pushed off the kayak and headed for shore which was about 80-100m away. It was quite difficult going.

By riding surges I slowly moved toward the rocks under the reassuring perusal of the two fishermen. As I suggested earlier the water movement around the rocks was substantial. Fortunately I had considerable experience swimming off rocks including the Blowhole at Kiama and innumerable entries and exits during more than a decade of skin and

SCUBA diving. I approached the rock shelf cautiously and rode a surge which placed me high on the rock face providing an opportunity for a rapid scramble before the next wave. I quickly crossed the rock platform where the larger sets were breaking (up to 2m) and climbed an easy grade to safety. No cuts!

Yes, the fishermen called me a "crazy bastard". It was with mixed feeling of bravado and pride in surviving the ordeal and sentiment of failure for not fulfilling my plan and having arrived in the predicament in the first place causing the loss of gear and personal danger that I returned with them to their car. The provident young fishermen were particularly hospitable and humorous. They revealed how they had taken a photo (now in my possession: the wide angle lens makes the detail very small and unfortunately unsuitable for publication, however if anyone would care for examination feel free to mention it) as I had passed initially. They later sent it to me with a brief letter concluding "P.S. You are MAD!!!" You should see where they and their fraternity fish around

Beecroft! I found the next few days to be unwittingly conducive to reflection. Fortunately the story did not end there. After notifying the police of my contribution to sea flotsam I was "launched" to infamy by a series of ABC radio announcements which seemed to confirm many of the claims Noam Chomsky had made.

"The mystery surrounding the discovery of an abandoned kayak off the far south coast has been solved. The kayak was discovered 25km off Bermagui late yesterday afternoon and there were concern about its owner had disappeared (sic). However Woonona man, Gary Edmonds (sic), has solved the mystery. He said the kayak belongs to him. He told police he abandoned the vessel after it started taking on water while he was paddling off Jervis Bay yesterday."

This is the transcript of one of the least apocryphal accounts.

(Continued on page 9)

Canoe Specialists

Our Comprehensive Range of Kayaks includes -

- AMEGA K1
- The All New Sting K1
- The All New VANDAL TK2
- VIPER TK1
- VECTOR TK1



- REGAL K2
- The Famous MIRAGE
17, 19, 22 & 22S
- GREENLANDER IV
- TASMAN TWIN
- ESTUARY • EXPLORER

PLUS A FULL RANGE OF ACCESSORIES

- ♦ Thermal Clothing ♦ Drink Harnesses ♦ Foot Pumps ♦ Buoyancy Vests
- ♦ Spray Decks ♦ Propellers & Conventional Paddles

All our Staff are experienced Hawkesbury Canoe Classic Paddlers.

On the water at the Spit Bridge, Mosman.

OPEN 7 DAYS PH: 969 4590

(Continued from page 8)

About three days after abandonment I received a phone call revealing my kayak was found 25km off Bermagui. That is almost 200km south of Jervis Bay. A fisherman, Barry Spence, had found the kayak floating off the coast. The buoyancy and waterproof bags had meant that my kayak which was listing far beyond the plimsoll line remained positively buoyant. My gear survived in its entirety, even the paddle. The kayak sustained superficial damage to the bow.

In retrospect I suppose my adventure has served a propaedeutic or heuristic function. That is it has provided a means to new learning or somewhat of a gestalt shift which I have outlined succinctly below.

The first issue is to avoid complacency in regard to sea-kayaking maintenance. Be neurotic in hunting leaks and repairing damage.

Secondly, tailor the activities to the type of kayak you possess. Some boats have more obvious limitations than others. It must be stated however that even designs which are not traditionally recognised as expedition boats might handle treacherous conditions if well maintained and paddled by a competent sea-kayaker; as Arunas Pilka has demonstrated.

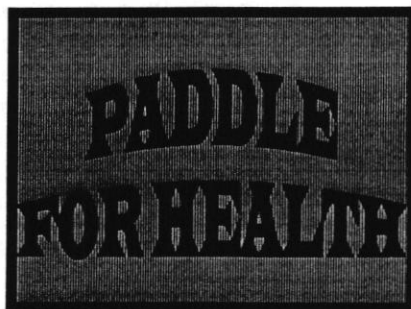
Thirdly, provide a system of bailing which could cope with any conditions including isolation. I don't like electric pumps as they are prone to sudden failure and require constant maintenance. Ideally a pump which can be used without removing the spray-deck is preferable. Even better if the pump can be foot operated to allow hand free operation. For those who might contest that rafting up would provide a mechanism for circumventing the gradual accumulation of water it must be suggested that weather and sea conditions can make this prohibitive. Very large seas and or strong winds seriously impede the ability for kayakers to raft. Similarly this also precludes the option of paddling alone, or self rescue even where others are present. It should be noted that kayaks with smaller cock-pits and compartments with restricted volume are less vulnerable to flooding than

other designs. Fourth, my ordeal also reinforces the need for buoyancy. Whilst buoyancy may not sustain a leaking kayak in a state which can be paddled it can provide something to hold on to and if abandoned will prolong the hope of rediscovery provided the kayak doesn't break up.

Fifth, my experience has forced me to reconsider the expediency of seal landings in our relatively warm coastal waters, especially in large seas. Recently I had the pleasure of watching Dirk Stuber™ exit his Arctic Raider near a rock-shelf, admittedly in relatively calm seas, and swim to shore towing and then carrying his kayak up the rock platform.

This approach while also exposed to difficulties in large menacing oceans provides a means of minimising damage to kayak and paddler. Kayaks are very difficult to control once you land on a rock shelf still embroiled in moving water. If the paddler does not exit the kayak promptly on the ebb of a surge it is very likely that they will be returned to the ocean. Often this will occur over a drop from the platform left by the receding surge. I think this issue needs some discussion.

And finally I must respond to those who would question the nature of solo paddling. I believe there is and always will be a place for soloists. I am not in the habit of giving people precise details of my solo paddling activities to subvert the need for others to risk their lives. There is a great psychological lacuna between group and individual paddles. To restrict the freedom of paddlers would represent an intolerable extension of state control and normalisation. However, I think that for those who paddle alone there is even greater need to be competent, have their gear well maintained and abide by the Socratic entreaty to "know thyself".



SOUTH COAST REPORT

By Dave Winkworth

Kindred Spirits

Another bachelor down! Frank Bakker recently announced his engagement to Michiko from Japan. Frank and Michiko met in Alaska last year and spent time sea kayaking among icebergs and skiing during the northern summer.

They plan to marry in Japan in March and, we all hope there'll be an Australian celebration to follow! Congratulations and best wishes to you both.

Bass Strait Fever

Victorians Andrew Lewis and Peter Dingle called in recently to do some south coast paddling. They had been sitting at Port Welshpool and Wilson's Prom waiting for the right weather conditions for a Bass Strait Crossing for weeks.

Their dislike for the huge standing waves and tidal races around some of the Bass Strait Islands meant that a crossing would be restricted to times of neap tides. When good weather didn't co-incide with the tides, they abandoned the attempt until possibly Easter.

Andrew and Peter's planning and preparation have been meticulous, (they're even leaving the watermelon at home!) - if anyone is planning a similar trip, I'm sure they wouldn't mind sharing their knowledge.

Two-piece boats

Detachable bows seem to be the go this year!

Andrew Lewis (Mallacoota) arrived recently with fresh resin patches all around the fore-section of his Greenlander while David Malcolm's Arctic Raider was well and truly speared by another kayak, shearing off the bow at the footrests.

Rather than indicating possible faults in design / layout, it seems to me that we may sometimes underestimate the momentum of a sea kayak (loaded or not) on a wave.

Hopefully we'll all learn a lesson from these incidents. Good luck with the repairs David!

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)
Nadgee Wilderness

As you may have heard around Christmas, Nadgee Nature Reserve (south of Disaster bay) has been declared a Wilderness area - the only coastal wilderness in NSW.

MP's from this area are objecting to the declaration of Nadgee and Deua River areas (near Bateman's bay) by threatening to resign. So far they're keeping their jobs!

Paddling Courses

The NSW Branch of Canoe Education is conducting quite a range of sea-kayaking courses this year.

If you're new to sea-kayaking or just want to improve your skill level, these courses are a great short-cut to knowledge. They cost a few dollars but I believe they're worth it. Remember also that there is no substitute for time in your boat!

Caught in a net

It's amazing that we still see new boats on the market with shock-cord zigzagging all over the deck.

Come on sea-kayak manufacturers - this stuff is useless for retaining gear on the deck - one wave and it's gone.

Let's see some practical sections of netting for gear stowage please. You never know - a sensible deck layout may clinch a few extra sales.

Cyclone Season

Way up north it's cyclone season. Thankfully we don't get those beasties down here but we do occasionally get HUGE cyclone generated swells from the NNE.

It is a great experience to paddle these swells if you ever get the chance. Unfortunately they don't last long, maybe a day if you're lucky.

The last ones to reach this coast had a forecast of "calm seas, swell 5 metres". On this occasion, 2 boats motored out across the Pambula River bar at 6 am one day on perfectly flat seas. They obviously didn't obtain a forecast beforehand because while they were out fishing, the swells moved in and closed out the bar.

These guys were going back across the bar come hell or high water and that's just what happened - high water right over the roof!

Ironically, a few hours after their swamping, the swells subsided.

Carpal Tunnel Update

Further to the "Health Report" in the last issue of NSW Sea Kayaker, I had surgery on both wrists.

Feeling has returned to my fingers but recovery of gripping strength and weight support on hands (such as exiting a cockpit) has proved to be very slow. Once again, if your fingers get "pins and needles" while paddling, it's time to evaluate your paddling style.

Also, no matter what the sea conditions are, DO NOT grip the paddle tightly. Time in your boat and confidence in your ability will lead to a more relaxed style and grip.

Patonga Post Script

At the Rock 'n Roll Weekend at Patonga a few things became apparent, apart from a lot of people wanting to learn to roll:

(1) Paddle leashes - these little items are almost indispensable in rescue situations or re-entry and roll-up manoeuvres in rough seas. Whether they're made from shock cord or the genuine curly plastic matters little. Clip your paddle on and you can confidently drop it in the water to attend to a rescue etc, knowing it is on the end of the cord, not 50m away in the current.

(2) A lot of paddlers found out how much water their cockpits can hold and how destabilising that water can be when moving in unison with the boat! You can reduce cockpit volume by adding blocks of foam to bulkheads etc or going to the extreme.....by moving bulkheads

Of course when bailing out the boat you should not ask "how do I get rid of all this water?" but rather, "What is all this water doing in here in the first place?"

(3) Self rescues are something all paddlers should practice. If you can roll, practice the roll.

If not, you should practice an upright re-entry. This will spur you on to develop a reliable roll because unassisted upright re-entries are not easy and are downright tiring!.....especially in conditions wild enough to knock you over in the first place.

Paddle the South Coast and really enjoy sea kayaking!

For Sale

Sea Kayaker magazine (1984-1990) most issues. \$3 per magazine. Phone Geof Bartram (044) 786263.

Sea Farer Plus - Virtually new, hardly used, ~\$1200. Contact Nicholas Gill (06) 251-2079 (h)

Puyseguers (2) - Sisson designed and built. Fitted out for touring. Approx \$1,000 each. Contact Mic Longhurst 018-621-754

Child's Kayak - Specifically designed for 6 to 12 year olds. Complete with custom skeg. Contact the Editor on 063-513267

Wanted

Second-hand Greenlanders (2)
 Contact Janine Randell on
 06-259-1031