

TONY NIDERBERGER

4/5 PRIORITY RD WAWERTON 2060

❖ NSW Sea Kayaker ❖

Newsletter of the NSW Sea Kayak Club Inc. P.O. Box A1045, Sydney South, NSW 2000: Phone (02)5520028

Issue 24

Aug. 23/1

August 1995

FURNEAUX By Gary Edmond

It was a dark and stormy night.

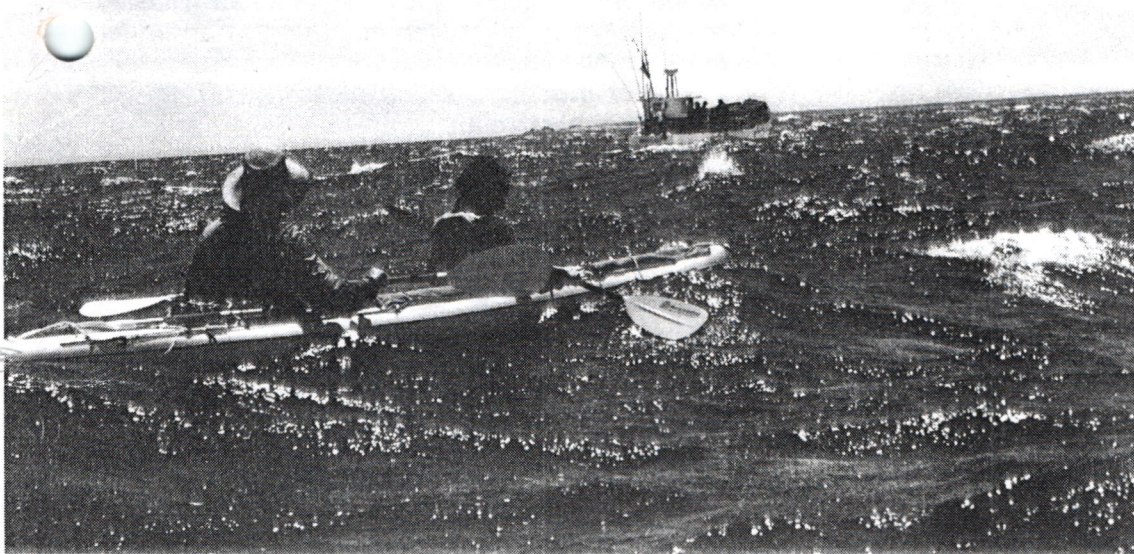
published in the following edition of the NSW Sea Kayaker. Despite interest from a number of people, the knowledge that Arunas Pilka and Gary Edmond counted

initial disquiet concerning the transportation of our kayaks we were glad to discover that they were safely catered for on board the yellow baggage trolley for the nominal fee of \$25. The Bass Strait crossing was uneventful and Arunas commented that Lake Burley Griffin was often rougher than the Strait. We met the only other mainlander to make the trip, John "Romper Stomper" Stomps, in the ship's bar that night.

When the ship docked in the morning we were dutifully met by the vigilant Commodore Emery and his crew the fair Veronica Steane, (not to be confused with Veronica Emery). After loading our gear and boats we headed straight to Little Musselroe Bay. The drive across north-eastern Tasmania provided our first insight into the paddling ensemble

for the coming month. At Little Musselroe Gary loaded his reworked Pittarak expeditioner, Arunas delicately caressed his still virgin and incomplete Arctic Raider, John

(Continued on page 3)



Above: Veronica and Mike watching a cray boat check its pots.

Recently our entire club received an invitation from the Tasmanian Sea Canoe Club's Commodore (the venerable Mike Emery, not to be confused with Laurie Ford of the Matsyker Is. Canoe Club,) to participate in a combined clubs paddle to the Furneaux Group, namely around Flinders Is. With due haste this notification was passed on to various members, the info-line and

themselves as ambassadors of the first order seemed to dissuade those initially enthusiastic. Obviously a month's leave at short notice precludes many worthy potential paddlers, not just those from our own club. Access to the ferry and the logistics of transport both to Melbourne and then from Davenport to Little Musselroe Bay made the organisation formidable. Fortunately much of this was alleviated by the generous and facilitative nature of the inestimable Commodore Emery.

Gary arrived in Canberra on Friday, via a lift from his generous friend Sol Mendes, alias Goncalves. After some last minute purchases Arunas and Gary set off for Melbourne on Sunday, January 8. After a night of semi sober revelry in Eltham, where Arunas had arranged to store his car, we were dropped at the wharf. After some

In This Issue

Furneaux	1
Equipment: Deck bag/Paddles	6
South Coast News	7
Glennie Islands	8
From the Net	10
Illuminating Experiences	12
Paddling Communication	14
A Fisherman's Tale	16
Flotsam & Jetsam	18
President's Report	18

NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB INC
PRESIDENT: David Winkworth
 (064) 94-1366
VICE PRESIDENT: Patrick Dibben
 (02) 810-7242
SEC: Gary Edmond: (042) 84-0836
TREASURER: Peter Adams
 (02) 4564915
NEWSLETTER ED: Leigh Hemmings
 (02) 482-2876
TRIPS CONVENER: Arunas Pilka
 (06)2487828
SOUTH COAST NEWS: Nick Gill
 (06)2491123

MONUMENTAL STATIONER PRESS

Q. Craft

canoes and kayaks ... for river, lake and ocean

337 Condamine St. Manly Vale

Tel 907 9766

Fax 907 9717

FREEDOM!

5.4m. FULLY FITTED SEA KAYAK . \$1,850

Q Craft Freedom is now paddled in frigid Scandinavia, tropical New Guinea and quality conscious Japan.

This new design expedition sea kayak has been a great success. Now paddled in Scandinavia, Japan, all over Australia, and presently undertaking a major New Guinea expedition, these kayaks are proving to be a match for any in the world!

**ROOF RACKS,
SKI RACKS,
KAYAK CRADLES,
BIKE CARRIERS.**

WE STOCK ALL TOP QUALITY BRANDS TO SUIT EVERY MAKE AND MODEL.....
GUTTERLESS, 4WD, HIGH ROOF, WHATEVER!

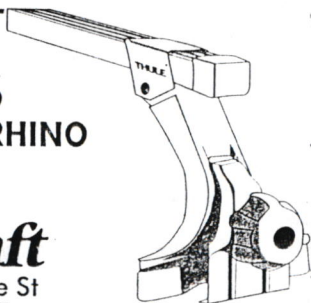
NEW !!!!!

MAGNETIC SKI CARRIERS.

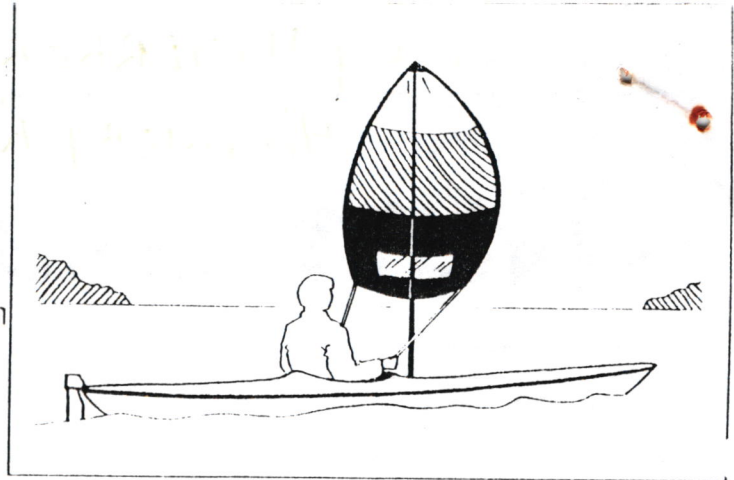
VERY EASY TO FIT!

ROOF RACKS
ROLA, THULE, RHINO
CARAK, RAK

Q. Craft
337 Condamine St
MANLY VALE
907 9766



**DRIVE IN
AT REAR**



Q Craft Sail Kit-

Simple and efficient.

Sail kits, especially for Sea Kayaks, can be more than just toys. An efficient, easy to rig sail can greatly extend your "cruising range" as well as adding fun. The Q Craft rig is light and easy to handle and the telescopic mast stows away inside the kayak. Our mast-step incorporates an under deck storage box for the sail or other oddments.

For a demonstration please call in to our Manly Vale showroom.

FREE FITTING FOR CLUB MEMBERS!

KAKADU

NEW MODEL OUT NOW!

4.8M, 20 kg. WEEKEND TOURER.

"THE POCKET SEA KAYAK"

The design objective was to produce a kayak manoeuvrable enough for close inshore, harbour use with the tracking ability needed for windy Sydney summers, one with good speed but the stability to cope with ferry wake and chop. The KAKADU offers all this and more. For an hour or so on local waters, or a week away, the Kakadu has that elusive balance at a very reasonable price.

PITTARAK *SPECIAL*

Off-season discounts on Pittarak for club members. Save money on a quality Q Craft expedition sea kayak.

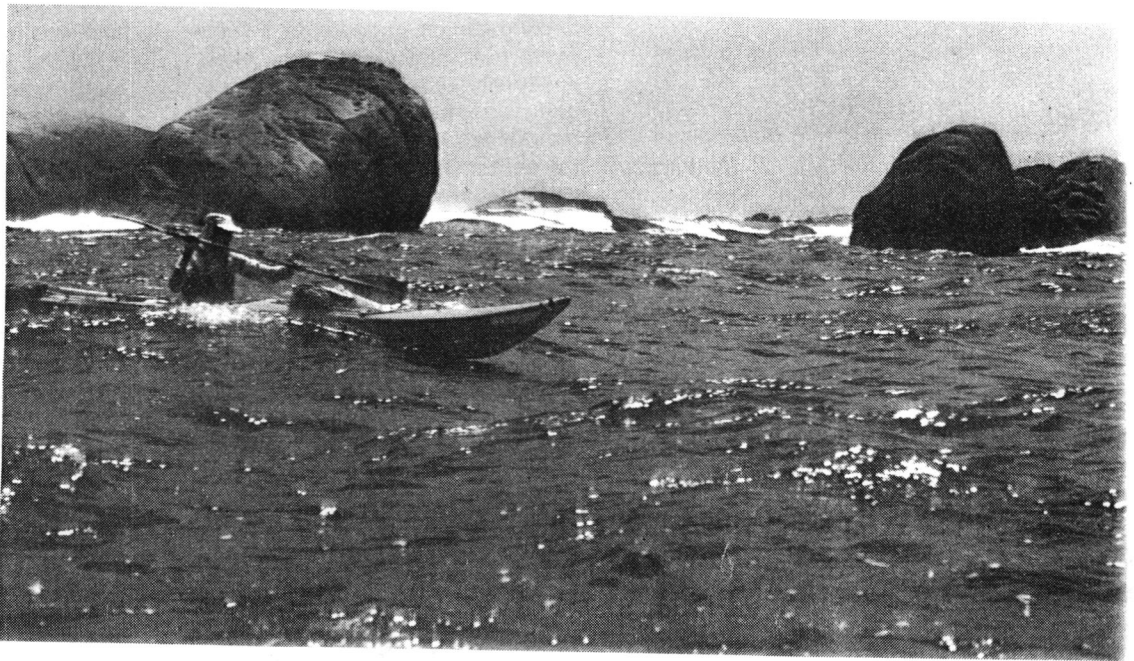
PYRANHA!

The range of Pyranha White Water Kayaks gets better and better. Come and see the amazing 2.3m Micro Bat



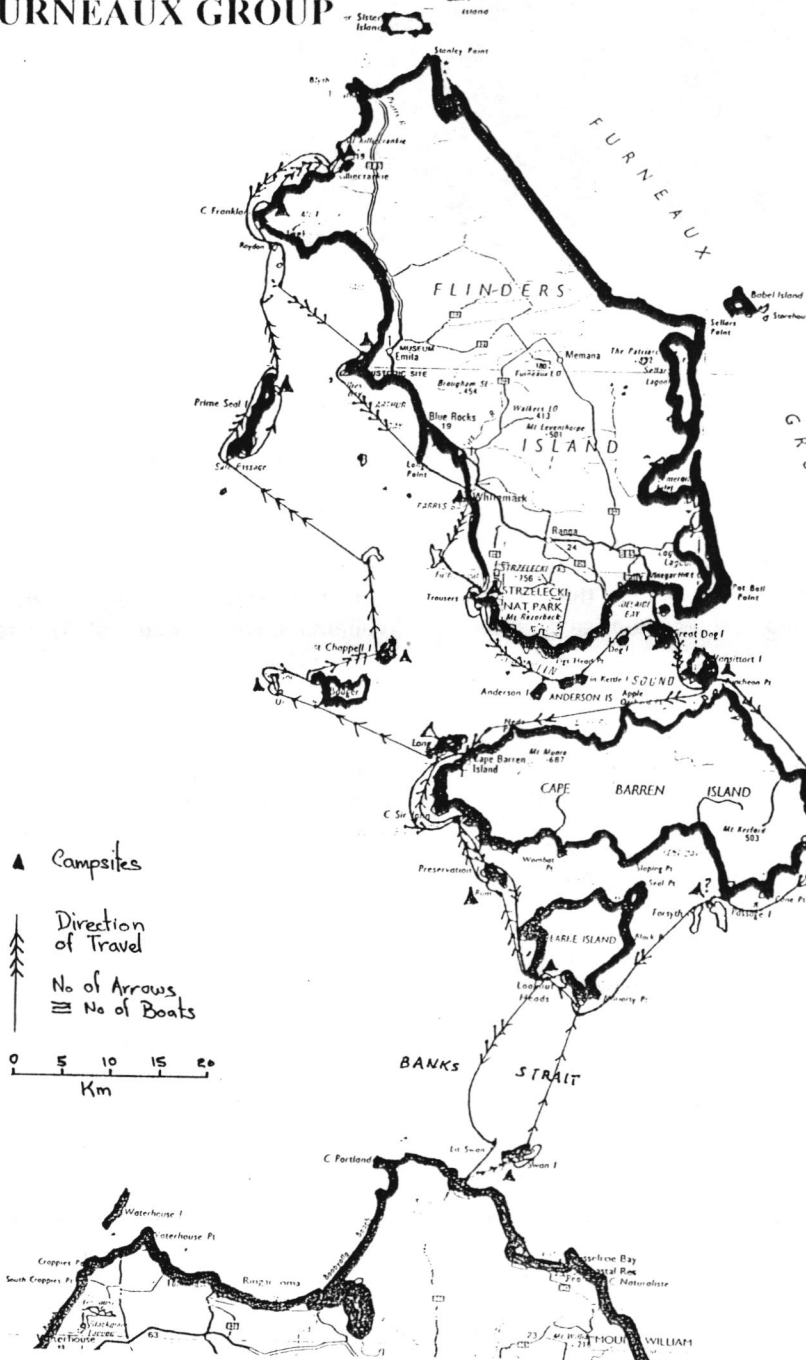
(Continued from page 1)

proudly displayed his ancient and almost seaworthy ex-Frank Bakker Iceflow whilst the august Commodore Emery and sybaritic Veronica loaded all their worldly possessions into their ex-US Navy aircraft carrier, "Greenlander Double". We spent a couple of moments on the beach as we waited for the resin in some of Frank's repairs - from a number of years earlier, to harden. After a couple of hours of packing they reached a jelly-like consistency so we set off to spend our first night on Swan Is. about 5km offshore. We arrived there and set up camp on dusk.



Above: John Stomps rounding Cape Frankland.

FURNEAUX GROUP



We had all heard of Bank Strait's fearsome reputation: these included local accounts of up to 5 knot tides and standing waves up to 20ft high occasionally breaking when very strong winds worked against the swift tidal currents. In the morning we paddled around to the Swan lighthouse where we were hospitably met by the Island's lessees who operate a small scale holiday retreat - real isolation. The sage-like Commodore, who had circumnavigated Flinders Is some 15 years earlier, demonstrated considerable respect for the 18km crossing. After careful consultation and checking of tide times and ranges, charts, bearings, astral projections and bio-rhythms we set off on our crossing. It proved uneventful due to ideal weather conditions.

After 2.5 hours under a warm sun we arrived at South Head on the southern tip of Clarke Is. The water was very clear and not very cold so we went for the first of our many dives. Within an hour we had enough

(Continued from page 3)

crayfish and abalone for our modest appetites. We paddled on to picturesque Rebecca Bay where we camped and dined in surrounds which surpassed our cuisine. A pattern repeated for much of the 21 days.

The next day we headed to Preservation Is., site of the wreck of

looking for a piggy-back. Terry spent hours talking about snakes, snake bite victims, fools in sandals and the fine biological balance maintained on this unique island. He demonstrated his technique of catching and tagging the snakes and of determining what they had eaten by forcing the bulges in the bodies out of their mouth before

and weather reports so we spent our days out of the rain or walking the local mountains or the route to the shop.

Being always conscious of our return trip and the need to have a number of spare days to burn for the return crossing over Banks Strait we decided to head south along the western coast of Flinders Island. We paddled south to the tragic site of a nineteenth century Aboriginal settlement. Wybeleena had been the site of the attempted deportation of, what was then believed to be, the last Tasmanian Aboriginals. The site of the buildings, chapel and graveyard appeared to offer a very interesting historical perspective. It was a picturesque location which must have hidden the great tragedy inflicted upon the relatively small group who were forcibly transported there. Eventually the very few survivors were returned to mainland Tasmania. As for the cemetery, it boasted only European graves, with the exception of a recent monument in dedication to the scores of unnamed Aboriginal people who perished.

the "Sydney Cove" with its cargo of rum, then to Cape Barren and Long Islands. It should be noted that the inhabitants of Cape Barren have developed their own system of mathematics which they employ at their only store, the food co-op - be warned. We landed on Beagle and Badger Islands staying on the more remote Goose Is. From Goose we headed to Mt Chappel Is, supposedly dreaded home of the most concentrated tiger snake population in the world.

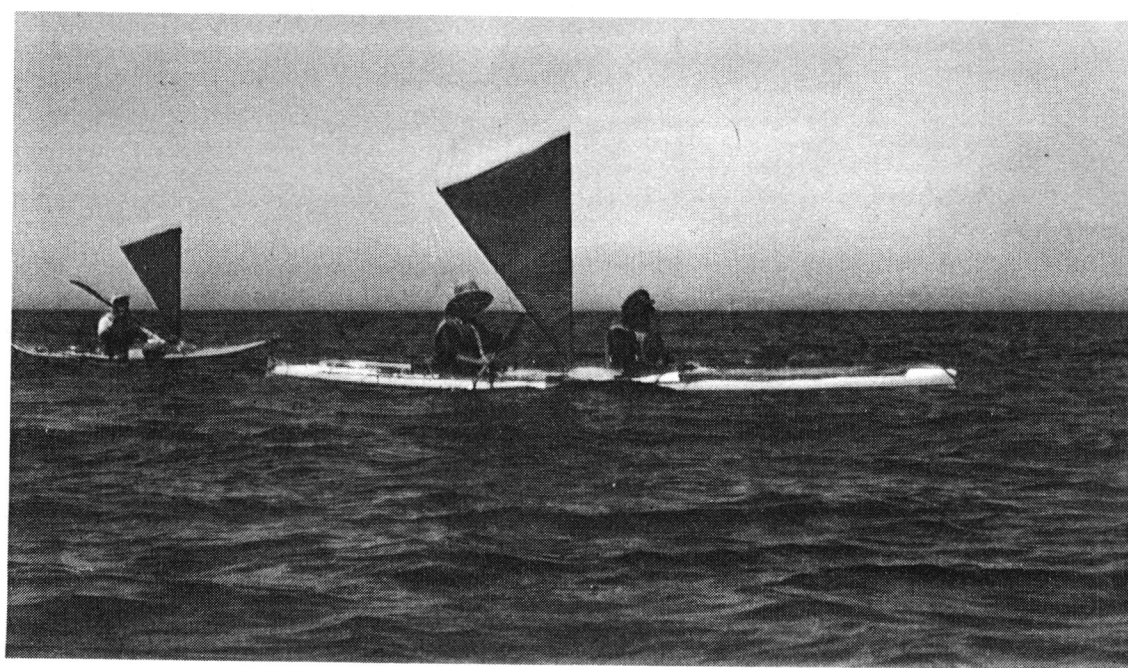
After an overcast day spent walking around the island and up its two hills, we eventually stumbled upon Terry Schwaner, herpetologist (snake-man). Terry's initial reaction was one of amazement. Not at our presence, but at the fact that Arunas and Gary were wearing Texas (sandals) whilst walking through the often dense scrubby growth in which the mutton-birds and tiger snakes were to be found. Before we met Terry the group was wondering if the apparently exaggerated claims about the snake population were merely stories. After we met Terry Arunas and Gary were

sliding them back along the length of the snake.

After two nights on Mt Chappel Is. we headed to East Kangaroo Is. then on to Prime Seal Is. On the way a tail wind spread the group considerably. Gary got ahead and eventually paddled the eastern side of the island whilst the others paddled the western side. After some initial concern we met up again late that afternoon. The days remained warm and sunny. Paddling north we passed numerous cray boats and islands. We hit Flinders Is. for the first time expecting to camp on a beach but were hospitably put-up by Pat and Roo Blythe. They provided accommodation, water, good company, and, most notably, a warm shower. After an entertaining and informative night we continued our paddle to Killiecrankie. This was to be our furthestmost port. We had intended to reach the Outer Sister Is. but two days of very bad weather changed this plan. It might also have been due to apathy, or contentedness. Killiecrankie had a shop with ice creams and chocolate

Our next port of call was the largest city on Flinders Is., Whitemark. It is a small town on a very shallow bay. Get the tides right or walk your boat! Whitemark allowed reprovisioning from its bakery and hotel. South of Whitemark we camped at Trouser Point. So named because either a box of trousers once washed ashore or a survivor of a local shipwreck ran ashore without any. We dived and swam in the intense heat and the following day ascended Mt Strezlecki, the highest landform on the island. The strenuous walk was rewarded with showers and mist.

We decided to take an alternative course back to Rebecca Bay so we entered Franklin Sound and ran its currents to Great Dog Island. A night paddle led us across to the Lady Barron Pub for some dinner. Fortunately happy hour co-incided with our arbitrary visit. Returning to our camp at night across the 2-3 knot tide proved less challenging to those who had imbibed. Even if you are



Above: Tasmanians and Victorians at home using their sails.

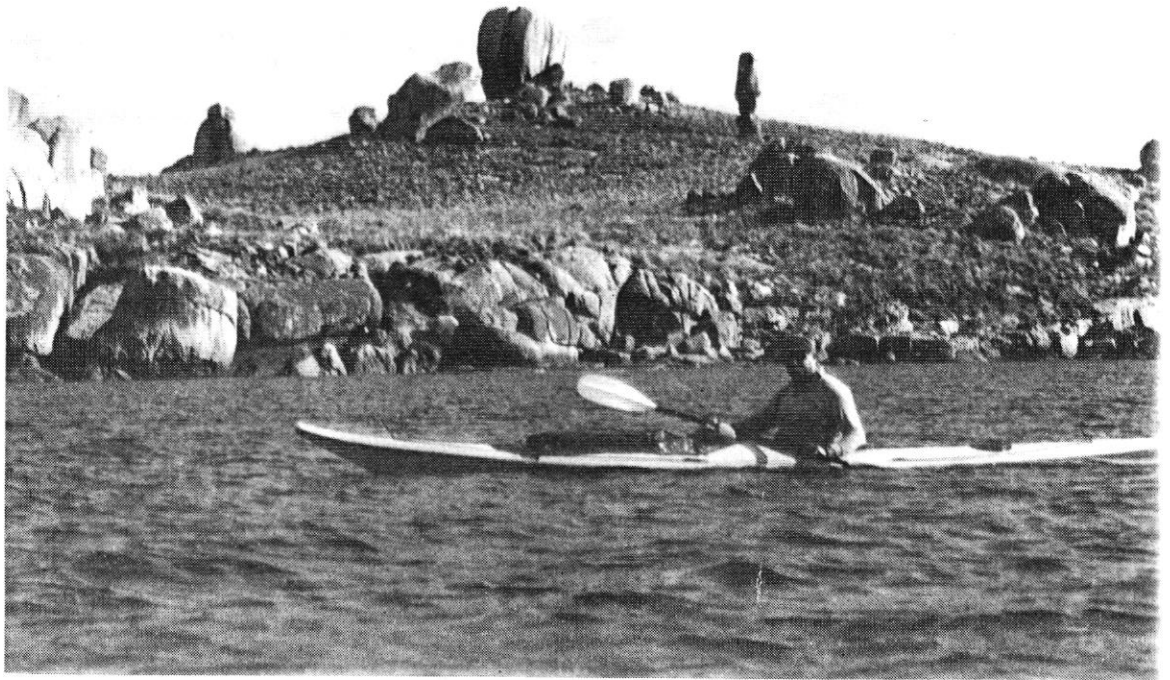
(Continued from page 4)

inebriated, trust your own sense of navigation. During the night Gary's thermal rest was punctured. He recommends Gaffa tape for longer trips.

The channels between the islands were open to substantial tidal movements. Heading to the wreck of the "Farsund" on the sand shoals off Vansitart Is. we were paddling currents and eddies which resembled mild white water. The "Farsund" an early insurance job, was guarded by some large waves. It was too rough to board, but it cut a haunting image on a rather bleak day in the breaking waves.

Bad weather again forced us into our tents to re-read our various materials. Royal Commissions get boring after a while, and chocolate only lasts so long when it's your easiest escape. Arunas and Gary decided that for the return trip to Rebecca Bay they would part company with the others and paddle the more challenging east coast. So into a mild wind and a large ground swell Arunas and I left the camp whilst the others waited to catch the incoming tide and rising wind, which eventually took them back down a serene west coast in very good time.

From Vansitart Is. there are sand shoals extending kilometres and producing an extensive series of breaking waves. Added to the 2-3m swell occasionally breaking over a kilometre out to sea, was a drifting sea mist, rain and an on shore wind pushing us into the break-zone. We paddled about 1km offshore but occasionally had to go much further out to detour around reefs. It wasn't time to be running gauntlets. We had had our share of action with the occasional steeper swell breaking. At one stage Arunas was capsized but much to the relief of Gary and himself was upright almost instantaneously. The paddling was consistent but demanding. As we rounded Cape Barren we could see the waves standing up and some very rough water as wind met tide. We paddled around the Cape timorously but soon discovered that the water movement



Above: Arunas passing the granite boulders of Long Island.

looked much worse than it was. it was entertaining being thrown around in large swell which didn't break. It occasionally pushed the whole boat underwater up to our armpits!

Rounding the Cape we put in to a tranquil bay and ate and rested until the tide turned. We rode the tide and wind making the next 14km in an hour. When we arrived at the dreaded Sea Lion Narrows which has a reputed flow of up to 12 knots we observed very unusual water movements. There were dead flat areas next to 1-2m clapotis and large swirling whirlpools. This was shortly after the tide had turned. We camped on Forsyth Is. and the next day met up with the others at the bottom of Clarke Is.

We waited for two days on Clark before we had weather amenable to all the paddlers. We set off and slightly misjudged our speed and the tide forcing a demanding paddle for an hour or so to maintain some vestige of our course. We rested on Little Swan Is. and observed the young pelicans being raised there.

With the mainland only 5 km away we paddled with great relish. We arrived into the estuary at Little Musselroe against the tide and slowly paddled up to the boat ramp. The slow process of unpacking, and the journey back began as our paddling adventure closed. We had had over three weeks of exploring

the islands and each other: an experience for which everyone felt much richer.

It would be inappropriate to conclude without sharing some reflections on group interactions on longer trips. We suggest that where the group consists of competent paddlers they should utilise some negotiation strategy once the broader aims have been determined. Honesty and accommodation are the most useful elements to reaching some acceptable consensus. Employing such strategies allows a good deal of diversity and enjoyment. Also don't be too concerned about breaking the group up on occasions to maximise various paddlers' adventure and satisfaction.

Finally, we thank the Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club for their great company, hospitality and friendship. They are great people and any members down that way should not refrain from saying G'day.



FACT BOX

- Boat:** Greenlander Double, Iceflow, Arctic Raider, Pittarak.
- Paddles:** Assorted, 3 spare.
- Stove:** Trangias, 2l fuel each
- Water:** on average 8L, sometimes 12. John - 27L?
- Travel:** Tasmania - ferry; Little Musselroe - friends.



Equipment



DECK BAG Mk1

By Nick Gill

Many will be familiar with the inadequacy of the standard shock cord deck fittings on sea kayaks. Surf + shock cords = lost water bottles, sponges and so on. I also find that netting is not always up to the job in surf. One can purchase deck bags,

about 5cm larger than the bottom so that it would be easier to access the contents. However, access is quite tight, and I would leave more room if I make another one. You could also try gusseting at the sides as Jackie Windh has done. This gives you far easier access to the bag, but it also gives your bag a higher profile on the deck. I made a large eclosue flap from a piece of

denim cloth, doubled over, glued and stitched, and sewed velcro onto it. I sewed this to the base of the bag, and then sewed the opposing velcro to the top of the bag. I then double stitched up the sides of the bag. I sewed the nylon cloth on as edging to cover up the rough edge of the shade cloth, and had the eyelets and reinforcing cloth put in at Jurkiewicz Adventure Sports in Canberra. The bag is secured to the deck by olive cleats and shock cord. This set-up has so far withstood some large waves reaking on and over the deck and a

natural acceptance that to paddle a kayak you use a double paddle with feathered blades. And yet this is neither natural nor based on Inuit tradition. Many of the hundreds of Inuit kayak designs were actually paddled with single bladed paddles. And, though they developed virtually all the hull shapes we use today as "modern" sea kayaks, the Inuit people didn't use feathered paddles. And yes it is possible to feather even a traditional ultra thin blade (though the wind cutting advantages would be non-existent).

One of the commonest complaints from paddlers is 'paddler's wrist' - and the most often recommended treatment (particularly when you must continue on the trip) is to use non-feathered blades. Do you paddle with feathered blades or not? Why? Have you tried both?

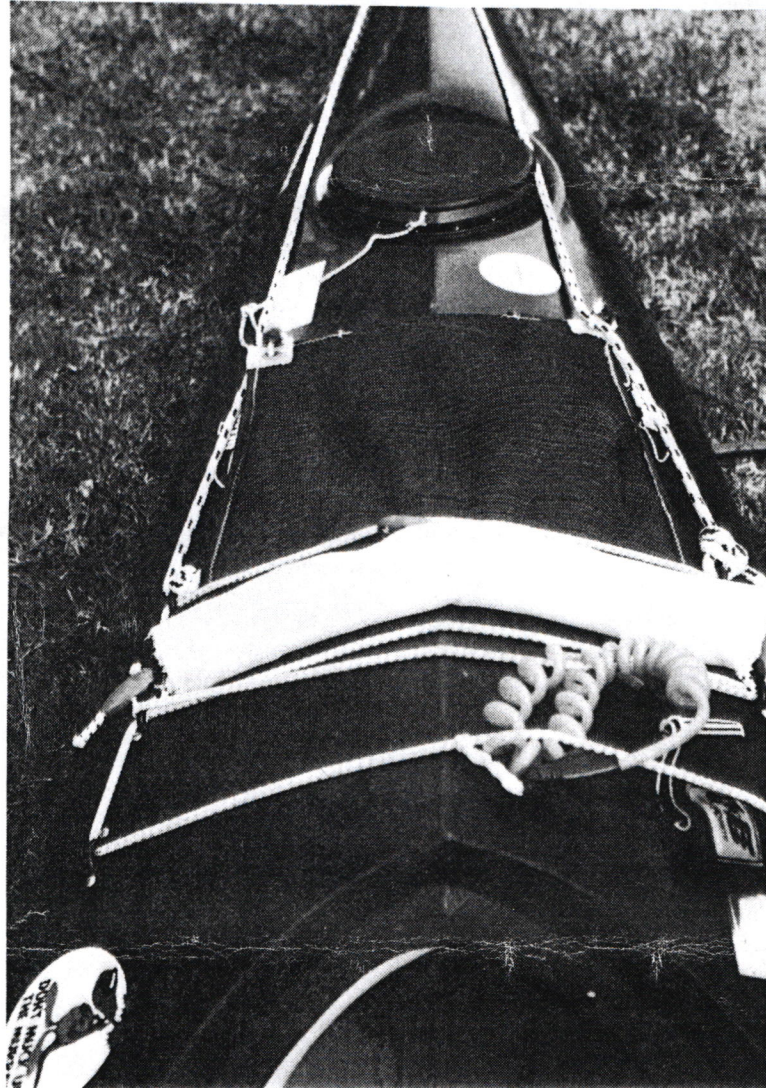
In his book "Complete Folding Kayaker", Ralph Diaz, says that feathered paddles may have an edge in a foldable boat. Though he does make the point about ensuring the feathering angle is not too great and to engage in stress free paddling.

In his epic "Dreamtime Voyage around Australia Paul Caffyn used feathered paddles.

Gary Edmond

I must confess that I use and have used a feathered paddle because that was the only type of paddle handed to me originally. As far as the argument runs, those who advocate unfeathered paddles do so primarily because of relief to the wrists. Though a few reflective paddlers such as Norm Sanders have a teleological/ontological justification for their preference: ask him about it sometime. So far I have only experienced serious wrist irritation on one occasion, presumably from gripping the paddle too tightly. On my recent paddle across Bass Strait my wrists did "twinge" a few times though I don't know whether that was from the blade orientation or paddling more than 50kms regularly. I'm thinking about having a trial with unfeathered blades as paddlers like Evan Shillabeer and Arunas Pilka seem to have alleviated irritation altogether though such action. If you are comfortable stick with whatever you have.

Can we get any feed back from other club members?



but I decided that I would try and make one.

The materials I used are as follows: shade cloth (from hardware store) denim cloth for a closure flap (I happened to have an old pair of jeans) velcro, shock cord, olive cleats (from a marine store), lightweight nylon cloth for edging, brass eyelets and heavy nylon cloth (for reinforcing around eyelets).

I began by measuring the area on the deck where I wanted the bag to be. I then cut the shade cloth slightly larger than this area. I cut the top of the bag

number of surf capsizes.

To reduce the chance of losing the contents of the bag if the velcro fails (quite possibly), I run the deck shock cord across the neck of the bag with an olive cleat connecting the ends of the shock cord. With this arrangement I can tighten the shock cord if going into surf or rough seas, and can loosen it off for easier access at other times.

PADDLE PREFERENCE

Today there just seems to be a





South Coast News



FROM THE TUROSS POND

For those interested in the behaviour of coastal rivers, Norm Sanders reports that Coila Lake at Tuross has risen after recent heavy rains. However, he reckons another metre is needed for the lake to breach the beach and flow out to sea. An indicator that all has not been quiet down south is the Norm Sanders visitor index. The index has been high lately with various Canberra paddlers lobbing in, in succession over a three week period. Norm is reported to be recovering well and is back at his desk writing.

FOR THAT INEVITABLE MOMENT

Those participants in the rescue weekend held over April 8-9 to whom I have spoken say it was time well spent. There was discussion on theory, technique and various rescue options. The weekend was held on Lake Wallagoot, near Tathra, and Saturday was spent mainly on the water practising rescues, and being rescued. On Sunday there was a short ocean paddle.

FOOD FESTS

It seems that the Royal Banquet paddle along the Royal National Park went well. Apart from the food, which was apparently excellent, the event

was well organised by Gary Edmond. Attendees report that everybody stayed together, and one told this correspondent that the "hot dogs didn't go thrashing off into the sunset". Gary came in for high praise for staying behind the group and making sure all were coping. It was also suggested that the rating system worked. Everybody came prepared for a grade two paddle and paddled accordingly. As a result the group maintained cohesion and paddlers weren't left behind.

Further to the food front, some testing of pre-made Asian pastes has been going on. If you are looking for that taste sensation without the effort, many of the curry and other pastes and soups on the market are worth checking out. They are also light and easily packed. My favourite is Laksa, a spicy SE Asian coconut dish. If you carry dried tofu, freeze dried vegetables, powdered coconut milk and dry noodles, you can quickly whip this dish up and not pay a weight penalty in the boat. The ingredients above are all readily available at Asian groceries.

ARE WE IN DIVINE COMPANY?

There is a strong rumour going around that Mark Pearson of Canberra is a rain god. On three separate occasions lately rain has followed Mark on his paddling trips. This phenomenon has now been observed at Tuross with Coila Lake now filling, at Merrica River in Nadgeen Nature Reserve over Easter, and at the Royal National Park during the Royal Banquet weekend paddle. Just be wary when Mark suggests a paddle!

CLIFF SURFING

Surfing into cliffs may not be everybody's cup of tea, but Mark Pearson and I gave it our best shot over Easter in Nadgee Nature Reserve. While I simply tipped myself while still in deep water to avoid a collision. Mark was not so lucky. One of the casualties of this encounter was Mark's paddle. Fortunately we had a couple of spare paddles, and Mark was able to use one of these. So if you are thinking of giving up on that spare paddle that you have been carting around on your deck for years and have never used, think again. Alternatively, if you don't already have one, you might invest in one. Nick Gill
See paddle tip on back page!

**NEW
MODEL**

PITTARAK

**The authentic new model single & double
Pittarak now available -**

- 12 New features
- Choice of construction
- Strong • Stable • Fully fitted • Day hatch

**SYDNEY
SEA KAYAK
CENTRE**



A U S T R A L I A

Proudly sold by

SYDNEY KAYAK CENTRE
ON THE WATER AT THE SPIT BRIDGE
MOSMAN 2088 OPEN 7 DAYS

Ph(02) 969 4590

GLENNIE ISLAND, WILSONS PROMONTORY

By Rob Jung

I have the good fortune to have friends who are writing and photographing for a forthcoming book about Australian wild islands. (Alasdair McGregor and Quentin Chester with a publishing

know little about folding kayaks (or of their superior seaworthiness compared to plastic boats) so the assembly of my craft created considerable interest and some scepticism about our intentions. One West Indian who passed by knew better. He had seen identical

we arrived it was not an ideal place to land in a kayak, since the tiny beach had disappeared. There were some sloping, coarse textured granite slabs in the NE corner (only room for one kayak) and so we lifted *Beach Master* onto these. Fortunately this spot was 50 cm above the high tide mark, so this became her dry dock during our stay.

This turned out to be the easiest landing place in the entire group including nearby islands as well - Anser group, Rodondo Is, and Norman Island. In general the nature of the islands doesn't encourage human visitors. They are difficult to move around on (if you care about the wildlife) and finding campsites is difficult.

Great Glennie Island is covered in tussock grass and granite boulders with slabs on the seaward margins.

Only occasionally are there patches of those dense teatree thickets for which the Prom is notorious. The nesting birds have fertilised the islands giving good soils which allow the tussock to flourish, (again in contrast to the Prom). There is generally no surface water, although we did see water trickling down a granite slab into the sea from the southern end of the island. With such a high bird nesting population, I would be loath to drink it! With the tussock it looks easy to walk around the island, but the spaces in between the tufts of grass are riddled

date of April 96.) During the past six months, I have taken a little time off work to join them on some of their research trips. August last year I visited islands off the eastern Northern Territory coast and in October the Recherche Archipelago near Esperance. The most recent trip was to less remote parts - Great Glennie Island which is off the Western coast of Wilsons Promontory. We got to all these islands in different ways. This time I was pleased to have the chance to use my folding double Klepper sea kayak, *Beach Master*.

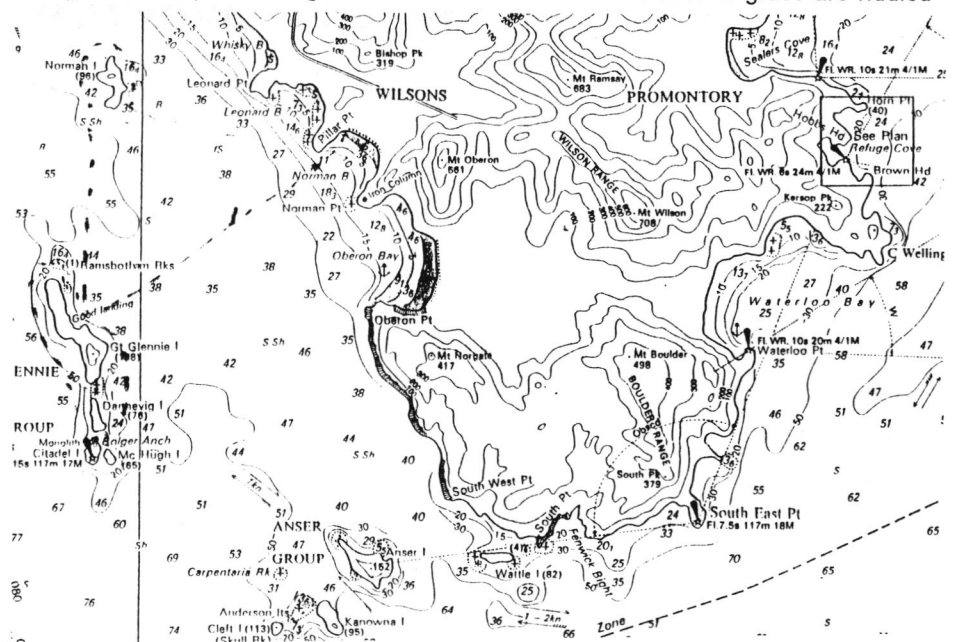
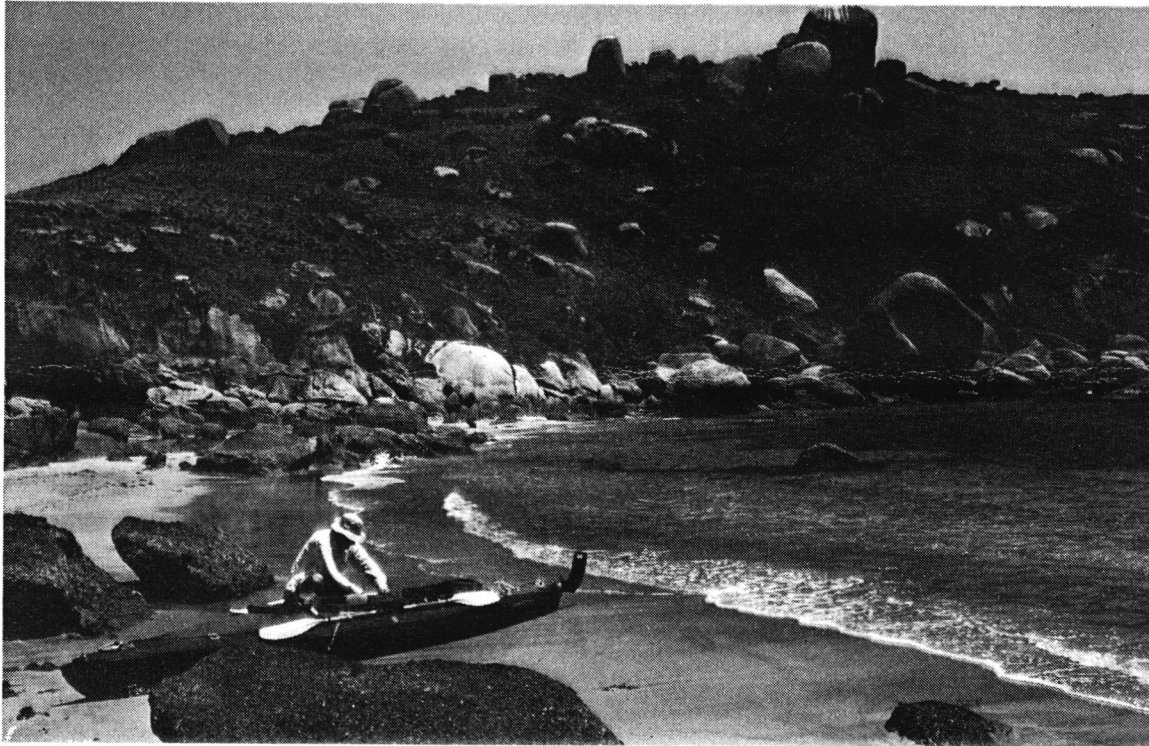
Glennie Island is a nature reserve and a wildlife sanctuary. Mainly in the summer months, short tailed shearwaters (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) and little penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) nest there in many thousands. Consequently the Victorian National Parks service isn't too keen on visitors at any time, but especially then. However they issued Quentin with the necessary research permit.

Tuesday 27th:

We assembled the boat on a perfect afternoon on the main beach at Tidal River. Australians in general

craft used to traverse his island group. I focussed on getting the boat organised, leaving Quentin to answer most of the questions.

We left Norman Bay late in the afternoon. It was a pleasant time to do the trip—a leisurely 90 minute paddle into a gentle NE breeze. We landed in a small harbour on Glennie marked "good landing" on the charts. It would be sheltered under most conditions (faces north), but at high tide when



with bird nesting burrows. Walking must be approached carefully, and even then the ground underneath gives way. We always wore gaiters while walking around the island. We didn't see any snakes, just a few skinks. On other Bass Strait islands black tiger snakes abound.

It was fortunate that we landed on a balmy evening, as we didn't have to find a sheltered tent site, just somewhere relatively level. We pitched Quentin's tent on a sloping granite slab near the waters edge and *Beach Master's* docking place. This meant that at dusk we had ringside seats as hundreds of Little Penguins came ashore. Because of our presence at first they were hesitant about moving past, but nesting instincts soon overcame their caution. When we retired they swarmed all around the tent, serenading the night with their raucous husky voices.

Wednesday 28th

Quentin's Walkman was ostensibly brought to listen into weather reports, but it was also a source of cricket scores and other important information. The weather reports we obtained were general and not specifically for southern Gippsland, however they told us that a significant cold front was moving through later that day. So, we decided to go for a cruise around our island group *before* the front arrived. There was a northerly blowing so we had good sailing conditions down the western side of Glennie Island to Citadel Island.

We saw some Cape Barren Geese (*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*) on Dannevig Island and landed through a kelp bed at the southern end of the island. Typically the geese flew away before they were close enough for a good photo with my 300mm lens. They were generally seen in pairs and there were a number of them on these islands. They eat a lot, and their living places tended to be denuded of vegetation.

We were back on Glennie when the change arrived. It was

heralded by a pleasant southerly. I thought at the time, that perhaps we should have sailed down to the Anser Group in the morning and then come back with the southerly! However within a few hours the wind strength became violent, with spray being whipped off the water in large sheets, like spindrift from powder snow. It became imperative to find somewhere else to camp, and with difficulty we found somewhere - on top of a ridge, snuggled in amongst the crevices between granite boulders. These campsites were for one person only. Fortunately we had two tents. We later found out that wind speeds of 110 km/Hr were recorded at Pt Lonsdale.

The high campsite had its compensations - a superb outlook to Wilsons Prom. In my past life as a Victorian, I had made numerous trips to the Prom, including a partial traverse of its mountain backbone. Quentin hadn't visited before, so it was the perfect place to recount to him some of these past memories. When nightfall came the Shearwaters filled the sky in their thousands. Little Penguins first announced their landfall with soft squeaking sounds before proceeding to follow their foot pads

Friday 30th:

The windy weather continued for the next two days but it gradually eased on Friday. In the afternoon we went for a paddle towards the Anser group but the big swell and backwashes convinced us that it was prudent to return early.

Saturday 31st:

With another front predicted for the evening, we decided it was a good idea to leave today. We returned via Norman Island, hoping to land there, but at high tide that option wasn't promising. With a NW breeze we sailed most of the way to Pillar Pt before the wind died. Only a short paddle remained to reach Norman Bay beach. To the surprise of some beach sceptics we had returned, in weather now as tranquil and sunny as it was on the day we left.

We had made a journey to an island, which I would normally *not* choose to visit. I enjoyed the experience, but felt glad that few others would feel tempted. I feel that this is one place where other lifeforms are free to go about their affairs without too much disturbance from humans. This is not completely true of course. I was very quickly reminded of this by the story from the National Park rangers when we got back. They told us that there



and rock climbing routes to nests in the heights above. Our rocky monuments formed part of their territory and their nightly singing made sleeping difficult.

was a large oil spill rapidly drifting east towards the Prom and the islands we had just left.





From the Net



BOOK REVIEW

THE DREAMTIME VOYAGE

By Paul Caffyn

\$35

It should be enough that the bloke does the most amazing paddles, but he is expected to be a great photographer and a great writer as well. In one sense it's tough to review this book of his paddling epic around Australia, because I find Caffyn's writing style uninspirational and it seems the publisher has been forced, by price considerations, to present the images in clusters- probably the least appealing way of showing photographs.

The good, bad and bloody dreadful features of organising and then doing such a voyage are set out in, at times painful detail. Personality clashes, which are often a source of turmoil, loom as a greater threat to the failure of the journey than any other factor. I personally would have liked to have seen a little deeper into the mind of

the man. Probably the best clues to what was going on are the portrait images of Paul as he temporarily metamorphoses into an older man.

From the point of view of a paddler this is a worthwhile addition to your bookshelves. Worthwhile for the gems of knowledge from a world class sea kayaker which can be eeked out of its numerous pages. *"Fed up with the extended skeg on the kayak...I cut it off with a hacksaw blade. I would revert to my ...system of using a deep draft sharkfin-shaped skeg on the stern. This skeg is slung below a triangular sectioned fibreglass sleeve, which slides forward 12" from the stern to lock into position. A short length of shock cord attaches the skeg at the stern while a long cord passes along the deck to the cockpit. When leaving a beach through surf, the skeg sits in a 'tripped' position on the stern horn. Clear of the shallows, I pull the long cord and the skeg slides*

forward into position with the 10" deep blade biting into the sea below the hull. In following or quartering sea conditions, the skeg prevents the stern from skating off to either side and enhances the ability to carry out long surfing rides."

Also for paddlers, particularly house bound, work bound, family bound people, the mere fact that you can escape those bound blues for hours of virtual reality paddling is good enough reason alone to buy the book. On another level, put across your \$35 and feel good about it. At least some of this money goes to a bloke who does his absolute best for sea kayaking.

And as Paul Caffyn says in his Author's Note, *"If it (the book) inspires just a few readers to get off their chuffs and tackle a challenge, no matter how big or small, it has been worth all the effort."*

L.H.

Review copy supplied by Q-Craft. -



TASMAN 19

A FAST, STABLE, SEAWORTHY SEA KAYAK

- Professionally designed & built
- Large front & rear hatch
- Amazing manouvability
- Huge carrying capacity
- Retractable beaching rudder
- Day hatch

The full bow and stern give amazing buoyancy and safety, while the slim overall beam gives outstanding speed.

Acknowledged by leading Sea Kayakers as a breakthrough in design, the "Tasman 19" will allow you to expand your paddling horizons in style.

SYDNEY
SEA KAYAK
CENTRE



A U S T R A L I A

OPEN 7 DAYS

Proudly built and sold by

SYDNEY KAYAK CENTRE

81 PARRIWI ROAD, MOSMAN 2088

ON THE WATER AT THE SPIT

PHONE (02) 969 4590 FAX (02) 969 4191



CANOE & CAMPING SUPPLIES

CANOEING, LIGHTWEIGHT CAMPING AND OUTDOOR GEAR

The complete canoe and camping store!
LAPS AHEAD IN SERVICE AND EXPERTISE

265 VICTORIA ROAD
GLADESVILLE, 2111
PHONE: (02) 817-5590

We stock a comprehensive range of fibreglass and plastic sea kayaks - singles and doubles - sea going, racing and estuary styles.

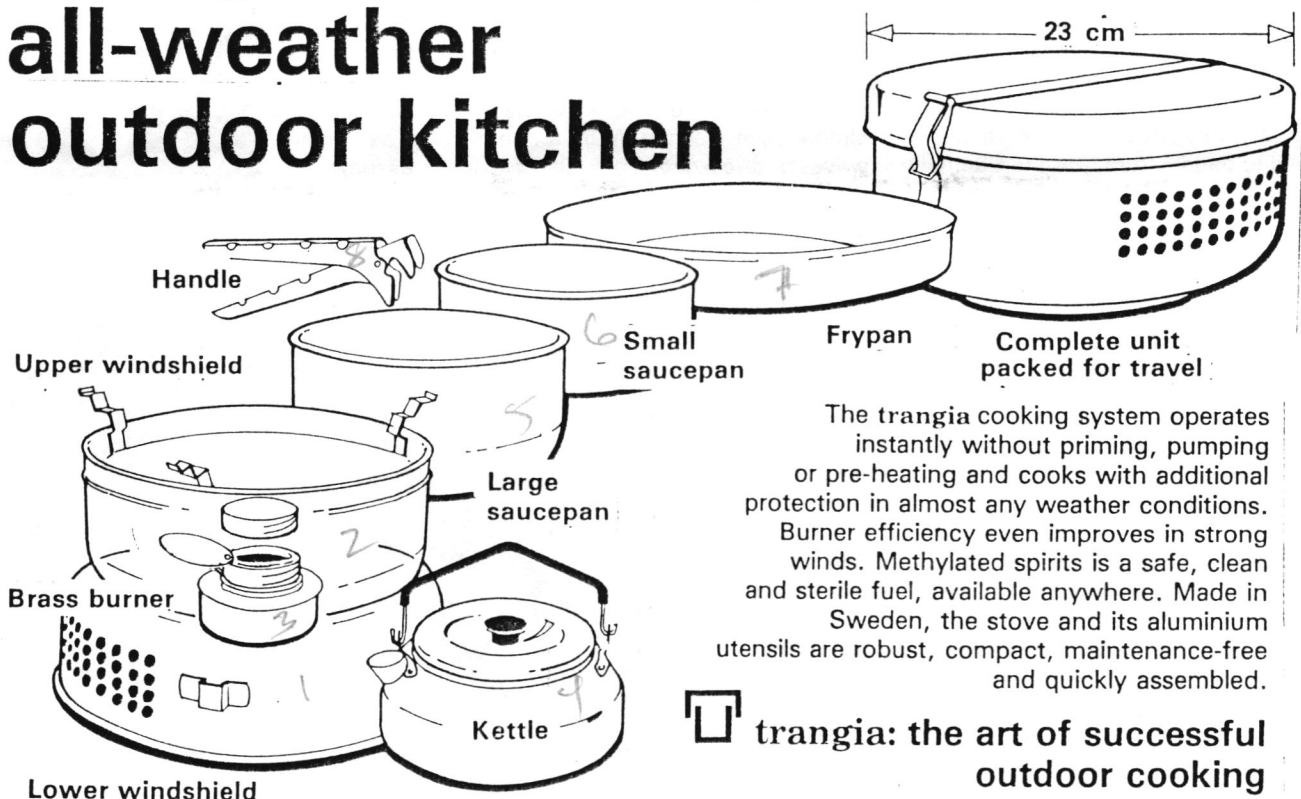
Also K1, TK1, TK2 & K2 racing craft

Demonstrator kayaks available. Books, maps and all accessories stocked. New, used and hire gear is available.


NOW STOCKIST of the MIRAGE range of sea kayaks
17—19—22—22S and the NEW 24 double
SIMPLY THE BEST!

See recently released Pyranha range (UK),
Creek 280, Acrobat, Micro 230 & Mountain 300 wild water kayaks

Trangia the complete all-weather outdoor kitchen



The trangia cooking system operates instantly without priming, pumping or pre-heating and cooks with additional protection in almost any weather conditions. Burner efficiency even improves in strong winds. Methylated spirits is a safe, clean and sterile fuel, available anywhere. Made in Sweden, the stove and its aluminium utensils are robust, compact, maintenance-free and quickly assembled.

 **trangia: the art of successful outdoor cooking**

ILLUMINATING EXPERIENCES ON A DARK NIGHT

By Arunas Pilka

"Who's stupid idea was this night paddle?" The answer to this question posed by Jackie as we were about to set off was that yes, I had thought of it all by myself. I was to be reminded of my answer innumerable times as the calamities of the weekend unfolded. The weekend started badly on Friday afternoon with me being passed on my way back from work on my pushbike by a girl. A few kilometres further on I had an head on collision with another rider, fortunately neither I nor my bike was damaged but the other rider's front wheel had turned itself into a taco, which was only fair as the collision was his fault in the first place. On Saturday afternoon while doing the car shuffle the NSW constabulary showed an interest in my speeding vehicle, their attention leaving me \$99.00 poorer. With all these portents of disaster, any sane, reasonable & intelligent person would have called the whole thing off, and failing that, if he had any real friends they would have talked him out of it. But I'm not that lucky & the show was to go on.

Five of us, Gary Edmond, Evan Shillabeer, Dirk Stuber, Jackie Windh and myself had met at Ulladulla Harbour and the forecast was for North Easterlies with two Southerly changes to come through. The first of these had passed through at about 1pm and had been so weak that it only briefly managed to moderate the North Easterly. The second front we guessed would also be weak so we decided to paddle from North to South and did the car shuffle accordingly. Just before setting off, Evan decided to get an updated weather forecast and was informed that the second front had hit Green Cape at about 4pm with wind strengths in excess of 30 knots and was expected to reach Sydney by 11pm. We decided that, rather than redo the car shuffle, we would set off regardless and if the wind got too strong turn around and head back to Ulladulla.

I had asked everyone to organise their own lighting so that we might have a range of ideas evaluated for their effectiveness. Gary had opted for a large red Cyalume (aprox 200mm), Evan had the same setup only in green, Jackie had a 100mm green

Cyalume sticking up from an elastic headband making her look like some sort of high tech Hiawatha, I had the same Cyalume stitched into the back of a baseball cap and Dirk had a pathetic little 50mm blue Cyalume that Garry had done a messy job of stitching onto the top of Dirk's hat (Gary's philosophy on workmanship is to do the worst job possible so that no one will ever ask you to do it again). Dirk did later at Brush Island put on a large red Cyalume.

And so we set off at about 7.30 pm into a lifting South Easterly of about 15 knots. The bouncy conditions had us all feeling uncomfortable and realising just how much we all rely on visual cues for paddling. After a while though our bodies grew accustomed to the movement of the kayaks and we started to feel more comfortable but the progress was slow into the Southerly and we decided to paddle on to Crampton Island (12km) and make a decision there whether to continue on or not. At Crampton Island we stopped for something to eat and a cup of coffee and because the wind seemed to be dropping rather than increasing as expected we decided to go on. Rather than go around the island we opted for paddling through the gap between it and the headland. This meant we had to break out through the surf. As I was paddling out through the breakers I saw Gary's red Cyalume going in the wrong direction back towards the beach, I thought "if Gary can gad about surfing why shouldn't I" so I turned around and surfed one back into the beach, surfing at night is fun, try it some time. As it turned out Gary hadn't surfed back in on purpose, he'd simply been cleaned up by a large wave and carried back in. The others took a dim view of our antics, after all we still had over 40km to go, so on we pressed.

The next bit of excitement came at Brush Island. After the surf at Crampton Jackie was a bit dubious about shooting the gap between the island and the headland again but Gary assured her that it was hundreds of meters wide and at least 50 feet deep. Wrong again Gary. As we paddled into the gap a large set came in, steepened and started to break. Some frantic paddling saw everyone come through unscathed albeit fairly wet. Gary and I mused that this also was a good spot for some night

surfing but the need to press on once again denied us our simple pleasures. Our next stop for refreshments was at Depot Beach. From Depot Beach we had only 15km of the 55km journey to go. We had had an enjoyable paddle, the weather had improved, we had had a little excitement, we had enjoyed each others company and in a few hours we would be rewarded with a warm dry bed, things were going well but things were about to change.

Grasshopper Island just South of Depot Beach has a narrow and fairly shallow gap between it and the headland. Swells were refracting around the island entering the gap and breaking where the water shallowed. This resulted in broken waves going in opposite directions and colliding in the middle. For Gary, Dirk & myself this proved irresistible and so we paddled headlong into the gap, surfing one wave into an oncoming wave proved to be great fun, Gary and I made it through, Dirk got capsized but rolled up and the three of us assembled on the other side to wait for the other two. In the meantime Evan and Jackie had decided that they didn't like the look of what we had just gone through and that they would rather go around Grasshopper Island. That was the last we were to see of them until we got to Bateman's Bay. Gary, Dirk and I waited for about 15 minutes before deciding that they must have either gone around or gotten into trouble going through. We spent a further 15 minutes or so scouting the general area for them then Gary & I paddled around the island in the opposite direction that they would have gone. When we got back to where we had left Dirk he was gone. We assumed that he must have seen the others and paddled after them.

Gary and I then separated by about 200m and paddled off in the direction of Bateman's Bay hoping to see them, after about 10-15 minutes

we could not see them and decided to go back to Grasshopper Island. Back at Grasshopper Island we saw a torch light on the headland and later heard Dirk's voice. Thinking that he must have found the others we paddled back to Depot Beach and found Dirk who had seen the flashing beacon on the headland and thought that it was Gary's strobe. By this time I was feeling almost physically ill from worry over Jackie and Evan. We decided considering that it was close to dawn to wait until there was enough light and conduct a thorough search. On finding no wreckage we assumed that Jackie and Evan had paddled on and that we should do the same.

In the mean time Jackie and Evan had come around the island not been able to find us, spent about an half hour searching and decided to paddle on. The amazing thing was that during that half hour we had been searching for each other in an area of no more than 200m x 400m and could not find each other.

With sunrise the wind had picked up and was now blowing from the South East at about 15 knots, Dirk decided that he was too tired to keep up with Gary and me and that rather than slow us down he would pull out at South Durras.

Gary and I plugged on into a frustrating head wind, still worried about Jackie and Evan. Tired from exertion and lack of sleep this was no longer fun and we both were looking forward to it being over but worse was yet to come.

As we approached North Head of Bateman's Bay the large SE swell was causing bommies to break off the headland. To save ourselves some distance we decided to try to sneak through a gap in the headland that we had both been through often before but in calmer weather. From where we had gone through the gap we could not see out to sea where the swells were forming to break, there were broken

waves coming through but none were more than half a meter high and so we ventured out into them. What we had not realised was that we were watching a lull in the waves and that they were typically much larger. A large set came through and Gary, who was just in front of me only just made it over the first one, I was expecting him to be

driven back into me and so I stopped paddling and lost all my boat speed. As a result the wave picked me up and drove me straight into the rocks, I managed to roll up and start paddling out again but was clobbered by an even larger wave which pounded me against the rocks once again. I was winded and could sense that the boat had been damaged, I bombed an attempted roll and abandoned ship. The next wave mashed both me and the boat into the rocks again this time breaking my near new kevlar Arctic Raider in two. After being pummelled by a few more waves I finally dragged myself and what remained of my kayak up onto a small rocky beach at the end of a narrow gully. I was bruised and suffered cuts and abrasions but was extremely lucky that I had not hit my head and drowned.

Gary after watching this paddled around to a beach inside Bateman's Bay and climbed over the rocks to where I was. We gathered all my gear and formulated a plan for retrieving both myself and my kayak.

While all of this was going on Jackie and Evan had arrived in Bateman's Bay expecting us to be there already. After waiting a while they drove to Depot Beach and searched the area for our corpses and kayaks. On not finding them they drove back to Bateman's Bay to find that we still had not arrived. Fearing the worst they decided that it was time to alert the authorities. Not knowing exactly who to call they contacted Telecom's directory service and were given the number for Coast Watch (Coast Watch is a Customs Department service involved in detecting smugglers). Coast Watch took down the details but told them they were the wrong people to inform and gave them the number for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority who took down the details but told them they were the wrong people to inform and referred them to the NSW Water Police in Sydney who took down the details but told them they were the wrong people to inform and suggested calling someone

locally. Evan then looked up the number for the local volunteer coastal patrol who promised to keep a lookout. After all these phone calls Jackie and Evan returned to the caravan park at which we were to finish in

time to see Garry, on his own, paddling hard towards them. God only knows what they thought in those minutes until he got to the beach. When he did get there he told them what had happened and they radioed the coastal patrol who picked me up from North Head.

When the Coastal Patrol got me back to the docks there was an irate young constable waiting who had been notified by the Water Police in Sydney. Angry that he had not been the first informed he interrogated me for a while before giving some stern advice on boating safety.

From there it was a matter of driving around to North Head Beach to recover the pieces of my kayak before setting off home after what had been although a fairly traumatic night one filled with illuminating experiences.

Some of the Lessons Learned

Cyalumes although the only real alternative for long night paddles are only clearly visible for about 200m (this is the large ones when still fresh), also it is difficult to deploy them so that they are visible from all angles. To get all round coverage you probably need two, one front and another at the back, to this end red or orange ones are preferable as they do not disturb night vision as much.

It is really easy to get separated at night.

It is important to discuss a rendezvous should the group get split up. This needs to be discussed in detail and it should be checked that each member of the group has the same understanding as to where, when, under what circumstances, etc to go to the rendezvous point. This also applies to daylight paddling.

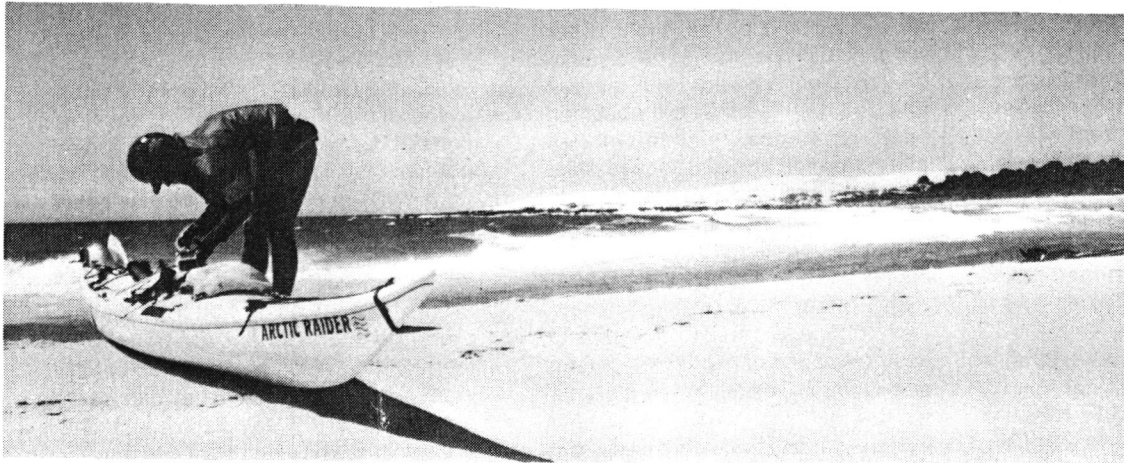
All members of a group should be agreed as to in what circumstances the authorities should be notified and each group member should know the correct authority to notify.

At the end of a long tiring paddle feats of bravado such as dangerous gauntlets should not be attempted.



COMMUNICATION WITHIN YOUR PADDLING GROUP

By Jacqueline Windh



Incident 1. A friend and I decided to go on a four-day paddling trip in Clayoquot Sound, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. She is a seasoned paddler, and has worked as a kayak guide on Clayoquot Sound for seven years. Two friends of hers had been asking her to take them out on a paddle, so we decided to take them along. These two guys were very fit, and used to living outdoors, but they had never paddled before. I would rank my friend as high in both experience and in local knowledge. (Clayoquot Sound is a meandering bay with many islands, so has strong tidal currents. Some areas are well protected from any swell, but other areas are open and exposed, with a pounding surf and absolutely no safe landings. There have been sea-kayaking accidents there in the past). I would rank myself moderate in experience, but I did not have any local knowledge. The two guys had no experience and no local knowledge. It seemed obvious to me that my friend would be in charge - she would have full right to make any decisions regarding paddling routes and conditions and safety. I would be "second-in-command", with some input to decisions, and the two guys would have to live with our decisions. Although we did not discuss it, the two guys seemed happy with that.

On the last day of our trip, some decisions were made that I did not feel comfortable about. We left quite late in the day for a long, committed paddle along an exposed, surf-battered coast, and around a point where waves converged and interfered with one another. On top of that, one of the guys was sick, and the weather was poor - a 13 knot

headwind was predicted for our first 10 km. By then, I had just resigned myself to keeping quiet, and going along with my friend's decisions - after all, she was the one with the

experience.

As I slogged away into that headwind, I started stewing about things...we could have left at least four hours earlier if we had been organized, and I wasn't sure that the exposed route we had chosen was wisest, given the conditions and our sick companion. I started losing confidence in my friend's judgement. When we finally rounded the point we had been aiming for, and conditions became a bit more conducive to speaking from the boats, I decided to discuss this her - to find out why she had made those decisions.

Her response: "The decisions I made!! What decisions? I didn't make any decisions! I work as a guide for a living - I tell people what to do for my job. Now I'm on vacation. When I go paddling with my friends, on my days off, I don't want to tell people what to do - I just want to have fun. I didn't make the decisions - we all did!"

Incident 2. An incident was mentioned by Nick Gill in Club newsletter 22. After paddling around some rocks, a group of paddlers returned to a sheltered beach for lunch. However, one of them had decided to have a look in a little bay, where he ended up coming out of his boat in some nasty surf. A rip was carrying him out to sea, and he had become separated from his boat. Fortunately the other group members had noticed that he was missing, and had returned to look for him immediately. They arrived in time to collect him, his boat and other flotsam and to help him back

in.

Incident 3. The "Safety" article in a recent edition of Sea Kayaker relates an incident in which a paddler died (Fall 1994 issue, p. 46-48). Five paddlers were camped in Blackstone Bay, Alaska. On their first morning, three of them paddled up to the top of the bay, a distance of about 5 km, to look at the glacier. Late that afternoon, the other two paddlers set out to do the same short trip. The groups passed one another at about 5:00 pm, had a snack together, then split up. When the group of two reached the head of the bay, ice falling from the

glacier badly injured one paddler and knocked him unconscious. His companion got him to shore, treated his injuries, and started slowly towing him (in his boat) back to the camp. She eventually got him back to camp at about 2:00 am, and she woke the other three people up. However, the injured person died a few hours later. These three incidents share a common factor: a lack of communication amongst group members.

In the first incident, we did not communicate on leadership: whether or not we had a group leader, and if we did, who it was. The two guys and I assumed that my experienced friend was the leader. She, on the other hand, had no intention of acting as a kayak guide on her few summer days off!! Upon our return, she and I discussed the situation. I felt that, as a very experienced paddler taking inexperienced people out, she had no choice but to take on the leadership role to some degree. She said that she had not really considered that before, but realized once we had discussed it that, like it or not, in that situation some responsibility must be taken. I realized how important it is that these things are talked about before embarking on a trip.

In the second instance, a very simple bit of communication was missing: "Hey guys, I'm just going in there for a few minutes!". That's all.

In the third incident, again a simple bit of communication might have saved a life, such as: "We should be back by 8:00. If we're not back by 8:30, come looking for us." Amazingly, in Sea Kayaker's analysis of the incident, they point out only that there is a safety advantage in

travelling in groups of more than two people, and that it might be wise having a two-way VHF radio. I myself find it shocking that at 2:00 am the three companions could be asleep in their tents with no apparent concern for two members of their group, who had not returned from a short paddle.

My point in writing this article is not to say you should or shouldn't do certain things - it's that you should say certain things. I don't think groups necessarily should or shouldn't have a leader. That depends entirely on the make-up of each individual group, and on the nature of that particular trip. But I do think that it is important that the subject should be brought up. Everyone should know exactly what the terms are. Is there a "leader"? If yes, do they have full rights to make all decisions, or only decisions concerning safety? If there is no leader, does everyone then have equal right in making all decisions?

For a lot of us, we end up doing our trips with people we paddle a lot with, and we are very familiar with their attitudes and their skills. In cases like that, it might be awkward to assign one person as group leader. It might be more prudent to just set out some "group policies". One, in my opinion, should be letting people know where you are going - if you want to check out a little cove, or if you head off somewhere and see that your companions are not following, tell them what you are doing! It is very disconcerting to be paddling with a group, then to notice that someone is missing. Looking for that person can also generate a dangerous situation, as a group suddenly, and without mutual agreement, splits up as different paddlers go left and right and behind that rock, looking for the missing person.

Another "group policy" that I think should be discussed is how far apart people should paddle. Obviously this varies with group size and paddling conditions. A small group in rough conditions might choose to stay within shouting distance of one another, which might be only 50 metres. On the other hand, a large group in moderate or good conditions might be able to spread out quite safely; before doing this they should discuss whether there is any policy about staying in pairs, and when and where they will reconvene. Some other "group policies" that people might want to discuss are surf landings (whether the entire group should meet together outside the break before the first paddler lands, in case anyone has reservations about

that particular landing, or needs help retracting a rudder or stowing gear), and paddle signals to use for communication when people are outside shouting range.

Another thing to talk about in advance as a "group policy" is what to do if a group wants to split up in an emergency situation. In many cases it is safest to stay together - that way there is more help available if ever needed. But what do you do if you are out to sea and a sudden wind blows up - you know a good-sized swell is being generated and many potential landing sites will be a bit gnarly. Two group members are a bit tired or panicky and want to go back to where you launched from, and the other two members feel that that site will be closed-out and difficult to land at - they know of another site, further away but safer (they reckon). Should the group split up? I think a "group policy" should be made at the beginning of the trip, saying either "we stay together at all costs" or "it's OK to split up". Again, which option is chosen will vary depending on the make-up of the group and the nature of the trip. If the first option is chosen, it will require either a group leader, or some sort of group decision-making policy, as it will probably require some group members going along with decisions made by others.

Another situation is when a group splits up under more amicable conditions - on a day allocated to day tripping, for example, two want to do a nice relaxing gentle paddle and two want to cover some distance and batter themselves a bit. Fine - but talk to one another!! Each group should know where the other is going, and when they expect to be back. I like to give two times: e.g. I expect to be back by 6:00, but don't start worrying or searching unless I'm not back by 7:00.

When paddling with people you have not paddled much with, I think it is important for people to familiarize each other with their skills, and any limitations they might have due to their equipment. (Had we discussed this before the Pain and Suffering 60 km paddle last May, it would have saved Dirk Stuber a bit of embarrassment - he got himself rescued on my behalf by the Coast Guard, thinking I was in trouble due to the strong headwinds). This can mean finding out how far they can paddle,

whether they can (or will) fight a headwind, whether they are comfortable with surf landings, as well as making sure that they understand what kind of conditions might be encountered on the trip.

I know this is all pretty basic, and just common sense, but perhaps it is so basic that a lot of us overlook it (myself included!!). I just thought by writing it down, we might all pay a bit more attention to our group dynamics and communication skills. As basic as it all seems, simple communication amongst group members was not effective in the three incidents related above. In two of them, it would have saved a bit of angst - in the third, it might have saved a life.

Happy paddling!



(Continued from page 18)

we paddle in groups. I suppose my beef here is that I don't want the authorities to focus attention on us.

Let's put our own house in order by getting as many members as skilled as we can. There are members in the club with skills to pass on and only too happy to do it.

Come to our training days, ask questions and practise. Remember, *T.I.N.S.F.T.I.Y.B.

Our **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** for this year, we propose, to be held at the **ROCK AND ROLL WEEKEND at HONEYMOON BAY ON SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER**. The reasons are simple: it's a great place and the Rock and Roll weekend is our biggest yearly gathering. We'll have some more details on this soon plus advice on setting up your boat for rolling practise. Don't miss the weekend.

Keep paddling

David Winkworth.

(*There is no substitute for time in your boat.)

**FOR SALE
RARE
FAUNA**



UNCLASSIFIED AD

Nick Gill is selling his beloved Puffin (though what he has been doing with this cute northern European bird all these years is a complete mystery). Just on the odd chance that he is referring to his plastic sea kayak, give him a call on (06)2491123

A FISHERMAN'S TALE

By Mark Pearson

In October 1990, after some very enjoyable years of land-based fishing, I felt I that it was time to open up my horizons by purchasing a boat. What I wanted was a craft that was inexpensive to run, easy to transport and fun to use. In my ignorance I thought I was going to end up with a Canadian canoe, but by chance rang the owner of Wild Country (now defunct) in Canberra, who did an excellent job in extolling the virtues of kayaks. He listed the

moment was at Lake Eucumbene in September 1992 (a time of year when immersion and death are closely related), when steep waves threatened to swamp the kayak. I was forced to employ strategic leaning of the kayak to avoid this - my first 'technical' manoeuvre I think.

My most interesting catch in the Spree was a Hairtail in Coffs Harbour. Hairtail are eel-like, bright silver and over a metre long. They are also incredibly strong with a compliment of teeth that would be envied by the

shops. My first test paddle was in a Pittarak, which I rejected because of its tippiness (I now know it was the Expedition model) and cramped cockpit. I also suspected that it would be the type of boat that might attract the 'hoon' element in the sea-kayaking fraternity (this, regretfully, has been confirmed during subsequent club outings).

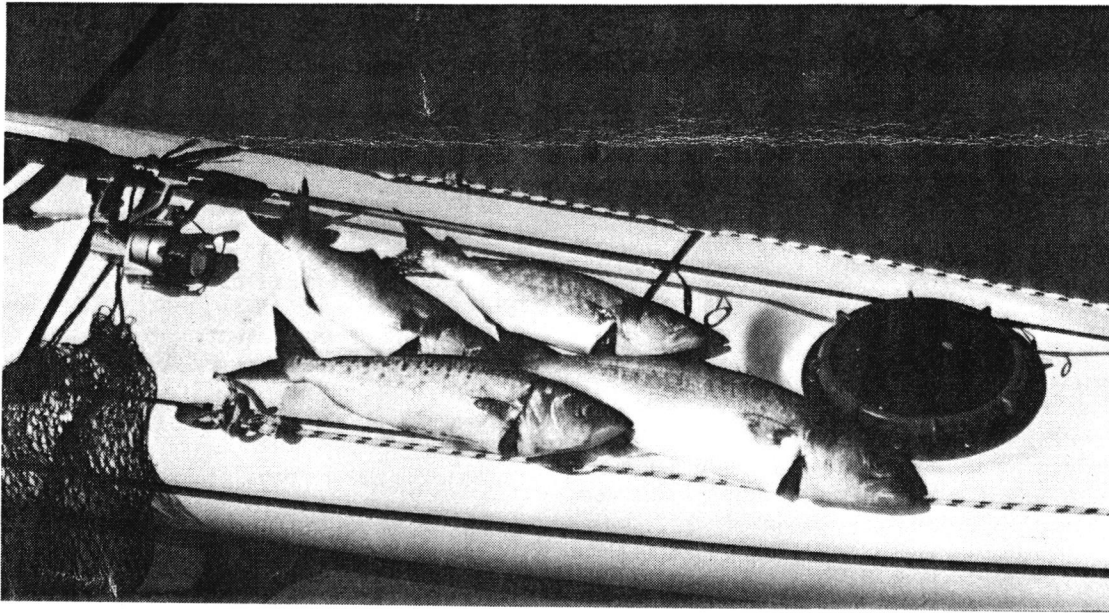
Also paddled were a Seamaster (cheap but too short), and a Southern Aurora, which felt OK. My final choice was a Seafarer Plus. It offered stability, good tracking and a huge cockpit for storing fishing gear,

plus it was \$300 cheaper than the more 'fashionable' boats. Due to late delivery, the supplier was good enough to install, free of charge, a fishing rod holder behind the cockpit and a combination kneetube/mast step. This latter accessory provided more useful storage space, plus the potential for a second rod holder in the mast step (one day I might even get a sail!).

Now the Seafarer presented a whole new range of storage problems. Whereas the Spree allowed tackle to be stored in the area behind the front seat, the Seafarer only offered vulnerable areas on the

front or rear decks. I decided that, where possible, smaller tackle items would have to be stored on the body. I considered a trout-fishing type jacket with lots of pockets but eventually decided on a much cheaper option - a money belt. The belt pouch holds small containers of lures, sinkers and swivels plus spare line, hook sharpener and mini-pliers (for unhooking fish). A sheathed knife also goes on the belt. This set up has proven an excellent storage method - the pouch is easily accessed, the gear is safe and my paddling style is not affected.

Larger items such as a keep net can be stored under the foredeck netting (Dave Winkworth's state-of-the-art keep net clips to and overlays his foredeck netting). A folding landing net (handy for hard to handle fish like flathead) can be stored under the shock cord on the rear deck. Set up as described I never have to risk opening the sprayskirt for equipment. Now many kayakers are more than happy to attach a lure to 50 lb



Above: Freshly caught tailor.

advantages of kayak over canoe - lighter, easier to use in the wind, and faster - meaning that reasonable distances could be covered in a day. The only drawback I could see was stowage space, though this was a potential challenge rather than a drawback. I decided that this was the way to go. Little did I know at the time, but this conversation was to change my life somewhat.

So I bought a two seater Geoff Barker 'Spree' (my girlfriend was to be occasionally press-ganged into crewing the front seat), a beamy kayak of 18 feet and 32 kg. The Spree was designed for lakes and estuaries, so was fairly flat bottomed with excellent initial stability and ease of turning. She had fore and aft decks, a long skirtless cockpit area for the paddlers, and no bulkheads. For fishing, I attached angled PVC tubing to the back of the front seat, thereby allowing two rods to troll lures simultaneously. Nastiest

creature in 'Alien'. As they are also great to eat and this one was much too long for my keep net, I decided that the only place for it was the rear hatch. What then took place was a titanic struggle, during which it was unclear who was predator and who was prey. A few minutes later I had the hatch cover on and was able to claim victory, but only after an anxious stocktake of my fingers.

I occasionally ventured out to sea, which I found exhilarating, but opportunities were limited by the craft's inability (not to mention my inability!) to handle surf entries or landings, and by the general vulnerability of having no spray skirt.

So, in September 1993, my loyal crew member, worried about this growing attraction to open sea paddling in the Spree, urged me to invest in a real sea-going kayak. But what model? I didn't know any sea-kayakers so I was at the mercy (so to speak) of the kayak

breaking strain line, unwind a few feet of this from a handline and tow it around. This style of fishing does not appeal to me for three reasons;

- . there is little skill required after hooking a fish
- . my experience is that lighter tackle generally gets better results
- . a fishing rod is far more pleasing to operate

I therefore like to use a slender two-piece 6 foot rod and fixed spool reel fitted with 6lb line (sometimes 10lb if I am using a lure the size of which might attract a larger predator). I partially assemble the rod on land by threading the line through the eyes and then attaching a clip-swivel to the end. When launching/landing in the surf the rod is securely stored inside the cockpit alongside the seat. Once at sea the rod is easily set up and a lure attached to the clip-swivel. For security the rod can be clipped to a short length of elastic cord secured to the deck before it is placed in the holder.

Given that I have not yet developed an anchor (who want's to keep still anyway!), my standard technique is to tow diving lures at various depths as close as I can to headlands, behind bomboras and over shallow reefs. The running depth of the lure can be further varied by the length of line released from the rod. The motion of the lure transmits to the rod tip, which will quiver or twitch depending on the lures 'action' (a sensitive rod tip helps here). When this quiver is at it's most noticeable you are at the optimum speed for the lure, so this is the speed you should paddle. If the rod's action changes or it becomes still the lure is no longer moving unhindered and may have picked up some flotsam. A thick handline of course would not alert you to this problem.

A fish strike is normally not hard to miss - the rod jerks down and the reel emits a classical 'scream' as line is stripped off by a fast running fish. But this is not always so. On several occasions I have casually stopped paddling to reel in a supposed large piece of seaweed, only to have the 'seaweed' spring to life once it gets close enough to see the kayak. It is often the bigger fish that do this.

When playing a fish, the paddle can either rest across your sprayskirt or can be left trailing in the water where it will slow drift slightly. As two hands are required to hold the rod and work the reel, the kayak must be kept in balance entirely with the body. Surging swell, rebound and chop can

make this very interesting, and it may become necessary to paddle fifty metres or so to a safer place to play the fish.

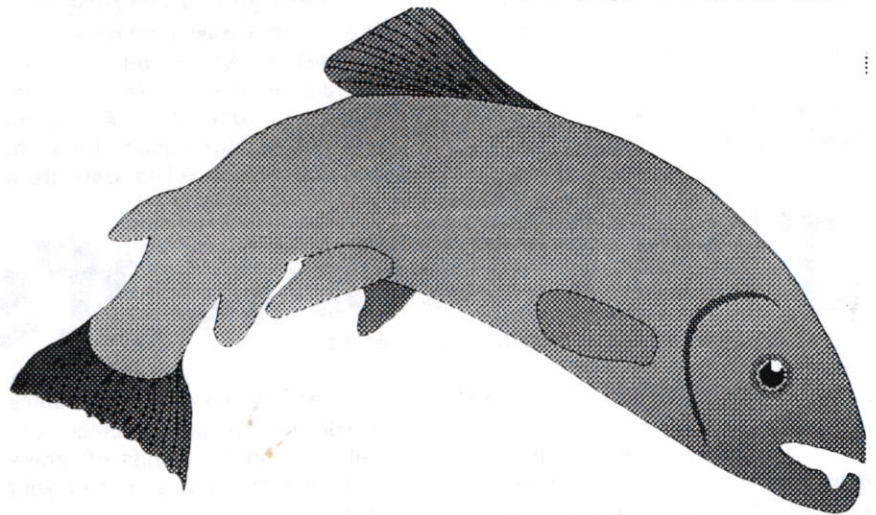
Dawn and dusk appear to be the optimum times for this kind of fishing, particularly for tailor, salmon and other surface predators. Cloudy days also seem to produce better results, but I have had good fishing in brilliant sunshine so don't let this put you off. If an attractive lure is presented at the right depth and speed in the vicinity of fish there will always be a good chance of a strike.

To maximise your chances look for any feature that might be attractive to fish. This might be a turbulent area of 'white' water that may be churning up crustaceans etc. or an area where large numbers of baitfish have gathered. Similarly, always keep an eye out for bird action - excited diving birds could mean bait fish

Autumn, whereas species like Bream and Trevally, although also migratory, seem to be around all year. One thing is for sure, it's hard to beat eating a fresh fish you've caught yourself.

Of course I am well aware of the mixed feelings that some 'purist' kayakers have towards this activity. It is however possible to maintain a high ethical standard when fishing. So only keep enough fish to provide a fresh meal for family or friends (or trip companions). Release anything under legal size, treating the fish as gently as possible (filing down the barbs on hooks also assists here). And if a purist is paddling close by as you are catching a fish, respectfully warn them of the situation and ask them to look away to avoid distress. This will not be easy - purists tend to gather round excitedly when word gets round that a fish is on!

The sea-kayak can venture into territory that no other craft can - chaotic, surging, rock-strewn water



are being attacked by larger fish. If you are lucky enough to get close to this activity, paddle around and drag your lure across the feeding zone - paddling straight through it is likely to spook the fish.

What species might be encountered? They include Salmon, Tailor, Bream, Trevally, Wrasse, Squire, Pike, Bonito and even Squid. And of course there is always the chance of latching on to something large and strong such as a Kingfish or Striped Tuna. The sheer variety makes the fishing all the more interesting. The seasons do play a part in what fish are around. For instance, Salmon and Tailor tend to follow a south/north migration which makes them more numerous around the Sydney area in

which would give a motor-boat owner a heart attack. Fishing from one can therefore be as much a skill as rolling or surfing, in that it involves balance, dexterity and judgement. Add to this the underlying physical work out and you have a very satisfying all-round activity.

And as I have got more and more into sea-kayaking I find that fishing is but one avenue of interest in this wonderful sport. The best kayaking trips now involve camping somewhere remote and scenic, exploring sea-caves, playing in the surf, doing some 'masked' rolls to check out the underwater views - and maybe catching a fish at the end of the day for the ultimate seafood laksa.

Interested?





Flotsam & Jetsam



Dear Sir,
I would like to express outrage at the article 'Waiting for Godot' published in the March issue of this august publication. On finishing the article, I was aghast by the realisation that it contained only three words that I had not seen in print before. Mr Edmond's previous article, the epic 'Sinking of the Estuary Plus', contained no less than 27 words either unknown to me or impossible to pronounce. World class writing indeed! Whilst I concede that 'Estuary Plus' set an impossibly high standard, the sudden 89% reduction in exciting new words with 'Godot' is simply not acceptable. What's even more galling is, despite the simple prose, I remain bewildered as to the actual point of the article! How can the kayaking fraternity hope to improve it's collective vocabulary with this meagre offering. Come on Mr Edmond, lift your game!

Yours perapetaciously
Mark Pearson

PADDLE MODIFICATIONS
If you want to alter your current paddle, shorten it, unfeather it, or feather it, you don't necessarily need to go out a buy a completely new one. I have recently shortened one paddle and turned another into a spare paddle. All you need is a fibreglass cylindrical insert to go in the shaft and some araldite or epoxy resin. Simply cut your paddle in half, smear araldite or resin (**wear gloves**) on the inside of the shaft on on the insert, reassemble the paddle, and then clamp the paddle shaft together at the desired angle. If you want to make a spare paddle, the butterfly spings that go inside the shaft and hid the two halves together can be purchased from suppliers of windsurfing gear. Nick Gill

FAREWELL COMRADE
The South Coast contingent saw Jacqueline Windh off in May. Jacquie, apparently celebrating her recently gained Australian citizenship, has gone back to Canada. She is off to work as a

kayak guide on the British Columbia coast. Subsequently she is taking up a post-doctoral fellowship at McGill University for a year. Thereafter she plans to return to Australia.

HEATED ROLLING
As a lead in to the November Rock and Roll Weekend (**and AGM**) LCVCC is organising rolling nights, 8pm on Sept 8, 15 & Oct 6 & 27. Location is the **heated** Ryde pool. Cost is only \$10 and all you need is your PFD. Details Allan Jones 4494718.



The President's Report

ANY LATER AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN ISSUE 25

Over the last six months or so there have been a few incidents at sea during club paddles which compel me to comment on our Paddle Grading System and general preparedness of members embarking on club outings. The club's Paddle Grading System was developed by Gary Edmond for use by event organisers to "categorise" their particular paddle. It is of course hoped that members of varying paddling ability will then use it to assess the difficulty of the event against their skills and make a decision as to whether or not they are competent enough to participate in that event.

With me so far? It's fairly straightforward.

Ok, it is imperative that members are familiar with this grading system and adhere to it. We all know that sooner or later someone will travel 500kms or so to a club paddle rated as a grade 3 only to be told that the grade has gone up to No. 5 due to sea and wind conditions.

What should that paddler do?... Retire gracefully, I hope, because it's

important that you know your limits and do not intentionally place your well being in the hands of others when you are clearly "out of your depth".

So, before going on a club paddle, what about a little research. Get a map of the area, the larger the scale the better. Call the organiser and discuss the paddle. Ask them to give a "worst possible" scenario re the seas and weather. Watch the weather maps leading up to the paddle — call the Bureau of Meteorology recorded weather information. If you have trouble interpreting weather patterns, give a fellow member a call— talk to members who may have done this particular paddle.

Next, check your safety gear — you should practise using it in your boat too!

You should have a paddling jacket accessible **AT ALL TIMES** and other warm clothing. (Test: can you put your paddling jacket and extra clothing on while in your boat in

choppy or rough seas... without rafting up? Rafting up may not be an option in some sea conditions).

Do you have a pump? Can you use it and brace too? If you use a bailer, is there room between your legs to bail while seated.

A paddle leash is a must, as it a tow rope of at least 15 metres. Does your tow rope deploy smoothly when you need it. Are your towing points easily accessible?

What about the engine...your BODY! All the gear in the world is not much good if you run out of steam. Look at the required distance for an advertised paddle. Know your limits! Can you paddle the distance into a headwind? The ocean is a wilderness — it does not suffer fools gladly. At the moment, water temperature in my piece of ocean is around 10 ° C.

Please don't make other members suffer through having to rescue you because of your bad preparation. Ok, sometimes things happen which even in hindsight are seen to be unavoidable. That's alright — its why

(Continued on page 15)

Tow Rope 15 metres (M.M.)