

Salt

THE MAGAZINE OF NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB
ISSUE 90 MARCH 2013



Welcome to the future

SALT GOES DIGITAL

**MAKING THINGS,
BREAKING THINGS**

FNQ PADDLING PARADISE

BEAGLE PASSAGE

Photo by CJ Kale www.lavaphotoart.com

Inside VALE CHRIS JAMES | NEPEAN RIVER | VIC PADDLEFEST | IRELAND TO SCOTLAND | ROCK N ROLL PREVIEW



A president travels on his stomach
Photo by Richard Barnes

■ ■
It's time to
register for
Rock n Roll and
renew your
membership

■ ■

from the **PRESIDENT'S** Deck

Vale Chris James. I'm sorry to have to bring to Club members news of the incredibly sad and sudden passing of our kayaking mate and family man, Chris James. Just prior to Christmas and whilst his family were visiting relatives interstate, Chris took the opportunity for a quick fitness paddle in the early morn and sadly drowned whilst on the paddle. I passed this information on via the Club's enews system in an effort to ensure everyone was informed.

Chris was particularly well known within Rob Mercer's Tuesday night group as a exemplary paddler, mentor in matters within and outside kayaking, motivator, and all round good bloke. I've listened to many stories about Chris since his passing, all of them positive. I knew Chris, and whilst I can't say I knew him well, I had paddled with him on some of those Tuesday nights, and knew of his skills and his generosity from different events I've been to. To me, Chris was a gentleman.

I'm pleased to report that Chris' funeral was well attended by Club members and we pass our deepest condolences to Chris' many family, friends, and colleagues. Rob Mercer has kindly written a eulogy for the magazine.

On a lighter note, I can advise that planning for the Rock and Roll event is coming along nicely. Don't miss the opportunity to be amongst the largest

gathering of sea kayakers in the country and your chance to meet new paddling buddies, rekindle friendships with people you've not seen in a while, and enjoy some paddling in Port Stephens. Later in this magazine is all the information you could hope to want to know about the event. Well done Campbell Tiley for your hard work and organizational efforts.

Congratulations to Fernando Charnis and Megan Pryke, both of whom have secured their Australian Canoeing Sea Leader qualification.

While I'm congratulating people, we should offer our congratulations to Raewyn Duffy. Rae, shortly after securing the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic handicap line honours, class win and class record in October, went on to win the handicap line honours from day one and then extend her lead each day thereafter in the Murray Marathon in December. Congratulations.

2012-13 memberships in the club ended on 28 February. If you haven't already done so, could you please renew. Go to the club website, log in, and click Club Memberships. If you need them, there are instructions under the FAQ section in the left hand menu.

Keep paddling
David Fisher, Club President

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Photo by Rob Mercer



1



2



4



3

CAPTION CONTEST

Can you suggest a good photo caption for these pics?

The best captions will be published in the next edition of SALT (yes, and that's the prize!).

Send your suggestions to editor2012-13@nswseakayaker.asn.au

- 1. The Legend: Stu Trueman, Photo by Matt Bezzina
- 2. The Fashion: Rob Mercer and Dave Fisher, Photo by Owen Walton
- 3. The History: Smashed on Bermagui Breakwall, Photo by David Whyte
- 4. The Figurehead: Galen Lofstedt and Dexter Granville Island, Vancouver. Great video at tinyurl.com/dexterkayak



Photo by Rob Mercer

from the **EDITOR'S** Server room

Who said this?

"I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions I have been entrusted to take the game winning shot, and I missed. I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

Answer:

Michael Jordan, arguably the greatest NBA player of all time and a hero to millions.

If it's good enough for him, it's good enough for SALT.



W elcome to the world premiere of SALT digital. Don't you feel so... modern? Publishing is in turmoil... massive print facilities are being closed down daily throughout the world as content charges online. Why? Because print is hugely expensive and it requires resources that have major environmental impacts (paper, ink, transport).

And so it is that your humble club magazine feels great empathy for sister publications from the New York Times to the Daily Mail, and fellow publishers such as News Corp and Fairfax! There is no doubt that in the next few years, most of the content produced by these organisations will be read online. We just got there first!

Our experiment of increasing the scope and size of the magazine seems to have been popular with members (more feedback is always useful!), but they come at a cost. A significant chunk of your membership fees get spent on paper and your committee's plan is to reduce this cost by migrating toward digital, and spend those freed up funds on producing the best possible publication we can.

Don't worry all you luddites, we're not abandoning paper just yet. The plan is to produce alternating digital and paper editions for the next couple, and see how

we go. We may get back to two paper editions per year, or a single bumper edition, depending on your response over time. The plan would also be to produce a greater number of smaller digital editions in between... ultimately giving you more to read overall.

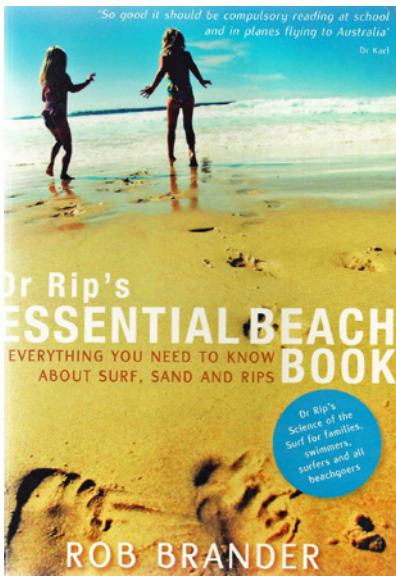
Our kayaks are designed on computers, we use computers to plan trips and to navigate, some of us use computers for training and stroke analysis; although we're not the youngest sporting participants out there, we're well and truly engaged with technology.

So curl up with your laptop or tablet, and please enjoy the inaugural edition of SALT digital. And let us know what you think – are we Michael Jordan... or Oscar Pistorius?

Cheers
Mark Schroeder

PS don't forget there's a Wasabi carbon touring paddle to be won for your Saltiest magazine submission (photos, videos, text, drawings whatever) thanks to Expedition Kayaks, so get off the water and send in your stuff!

COUCH KAYAKING



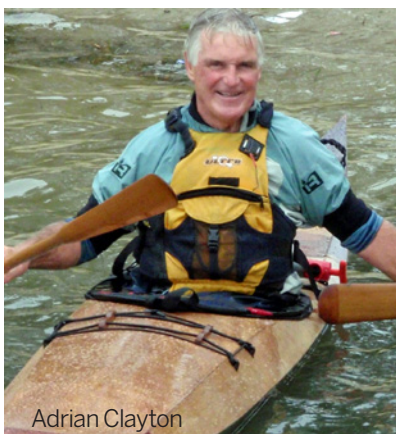
Dr Rip's *Essential Beach Book Everything you need to know about Surf, Sand and Rips* is aimed at beach users (a very big market in Australia). It is written by Rob Brander, a senior lecturer and coastal morphologist at the University of NSW. The nickname "Dr Rip" was bestowed on Rob back in 2001 by the lifeguards at Bondi Beach when he started to deliver his "Science of the Surf" talks to the beach-going community and school groups.

The book is written in a light, entertaining and highly readable style and makes for an easy journey from cover to cover. It's not big on detail but effectively gets the point across on the numerous issues it covers. Beach types, wave types and rips form the core of the work and it is packed with practical information on how to enjoy the wider beach environment in a safe manner.

In colour throughout, the book contains many photographs of beaches from around the world and there are numerous diagrams to support the text. At the conclusion of each of the 6 chapters there is a summary ("The Bottom Line") of around 9 points which provides an easy way to get a handle on the issues covered in the related chapter.

The only criticism I have of this book concerns the various breakouts (anecdotes, side lights, etc) that interfere with the flow of the main text (in one instance the reader needs to skip 4 pages in order to complete a sentence). Despite this perceived flaw, the book will serve me well when preparing training sessions related to sea kayaking in the beach environment.

Published by the UNSW Press in 2010 and reprinted in the same year, the book is A5 format, contains 238 pages. I paid \$32.95 for my copy at Dymocks. ■



Adrian Clayton

EDITOR'S NOTE: readers should also check out the excellent Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Beachsafe website which includes a listing of every beach in Australia, providing a brief description of the beach characteristics, dangers, access, parking, whether its patrolled, as well as photos and a map.

The data is drawn from the Australian Beach Safety & Management Program (ABSAMP) which was established in 1990 as a joint program between SLSA and the Coastal Studies Unit at the University of Sydney, and is the most comprehensive study ever undertaken on the beaches of any part of the world's coast. This information pertains to 12, 219 beach systems, 2,615 barriers and 2, 433 coastal drainage systems so that should keep you busy for a while! There are 17, 200 digital images covering all beaches.

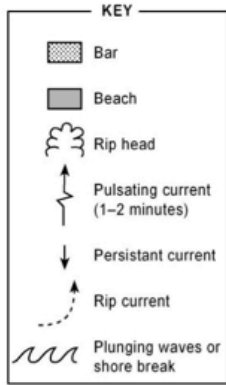
Data on each beach is acquired from a range of interrelated sources: topographic maps and aerial photographs, aerial and ground site inspections, beach conditions and published data.

Fantastic resource, it's all online at beachsafe.org.au or if you have an iphone, all 12,000 beaches can be accessed via an app beachsafe.org.au/iphone

Book News

Scott Rawstone has just published a new paddler's guide to NSW featuring 101 paddling trip descriptions, maps, and GPS co-ordinates. SALT will contain a review in our next edition.

BEACH TYPE AND SAFETY RATING



PLEASE NOTE:
This model represents average wave conditions on these beach types in micro tidal (< 2 m tide range) regions of Southern Australia (South Queensland, NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and southern Western Australia).

BEACH SAFETY IS INFLUENCED BY:
HEADLANDS – Rips usually occur adjacent to headlands, reefs and rocky outcrops.

OBLIQUE WAVES – Stronger longshore currents, skewed and migratory waves.

HIGH TIDE – Deeper water and in some cases stronger rips.

LOW TIDE – Rips more visible but normally more intensified due to restricted channel.

RISING SEAS – Eroding bars, stronger currents, strong shifting rips, greater set up and set down.

HIGH TIDE AND RISING SEAS – More difficult to distinguish bars and troughs.

STRONG ONSHORE AND ALONGSHORE WINDS – Reinforced downwind currents.

MEGARIPPLES – Large migratory sand ripples common in rip troughs can produce unstable footing.

CHANGING WAVE CONDITIONS—Rising, falling, change in direction or length—produce a predictable change in beach topography and type, the reason why beaches are always changing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Short 1979
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© NSW BEACH SAFETY PROGRAM, 1992

Increasing wave height

<p>DISSIPATIVE</p>	<p>CHARACTERISTICS Dissipative – waves dissipate energy over a wide surf zone, 2–3 m breakers, straight bars, trough and beach.</p> <p>HAZARDS High waves and wide surf zone restrict most bathers to the swash zone; safest bathing is in the swash zone with care of the set up and set down.</p> <p>SAFETY LEVEL AND HINTS 9/10 (stay close to shore, do not bathe in outer breaker zone).</p>
<p>INTERMEDIATE LONGSHORE BAR – TROUGH</p>	<p>CHARACTERISTICS Consists of shore parallel bar and trough. 1.5–2.0 m breakers, moderate rip currents and straight beach.</p> <p>HAZARDS Deep trough and distance to outer bar restrict most bathers to the swash zone and inner trough, safest bathing is in the swash zone and in the trough away from rips.</p> <p>SAFETY LEVEL AND HINTS 7/10 (stay close to shore and avoid deep troughs and rips).</p>
<p>INTERMEDIATE RHYTHMIC BAR & BEACH</p>	<p>CHARACTERISTICS Consists of rhythmic (undulating) bar trough, and beach. 1.5 m breakers, distinct rip troughs separated by detached bars.</p> <p>HAZARDS pronounced changes in depth and current between bars and rips, safest bathing is on or behind the bars during lower waves, hazardous during high waves and high tide.</p> <p>SAFETY LEVEL AND HINTS 6/10 (wade or swim to shoaler bars, avoid deep troughs and rips).</p>
<p>INTERMEDIATE TRANSVERSE BAR & RIP</p>	<p>CHARACTERISTICS Consists of attached bars, rip troughs and undulating beach. 1.0–1.5m breakers, distinct rip troughs separated by attached bars every 150 - 300 m</p> <p>HAZARDS Pronounced changes in depth and current between bars and rips, safest bathing is on the bars.</p> <p>SAFETY LEVEL AND HINTS 5/10 (bathe on shallow bars adjacent to rips, however bathers can be washed off the bars into rips inexperienced bathers may unknowingly enter rips).</p>
<p>INTERMEDIATE LOW TIDE TERRACE</p>	<p>CHARACTERISTICS Shallow bar or terrace often exposed at low tide. 0.5–1.0 m breakers.</p> <p>HAZARDS Safest bathing – safe at low tide, deeper water and weak rips at high tide.</p> <p>SAFETY LEVEL AND HINTS 3/10 (watch for plunging waves at low tide).</p>
<p>REFLECTIVE</p>	<p>CHARACTERISTICS Reflective – waves tend to reflect back of the beach. 0–1 m breakers, only occur on very low wave beaches and on harbour beaches.</p> <p>HAZARDS Safest bathing – safe apart from deep water close inshore and from shorebreak during higher waves. steep beach and abrupt drop off to deeper water can make access difficult for elderly and children.</p> <p>SAFETY LEVEL AND HINTS 2/10</p>

Mind the

Preparing for open ocean crossings.

I have made something of a transition lately from being a notoriously short attention span, park & play coastal pilot, to embracing & getting a bit addicted to the committing open sea crossing.

I wrote after completing my first big one, a 95km journey from the top of Fraser Island out to the tiny Lady Elliot Island:

"You'd be forgiven for thinking that crossings of this nature are boring. There is nothing to look at, the horizon is endless & the miles are there to be made, no other option. The truth is that constantly surfing, trying to link runners, watching the troughs as they appear in front of you, watching your heading, having a quick drink plus another dozen multi tasks becomes all encompassing."

Put the idea of a thirteen hour paddle with nuttin' to see but the horizon to me three years ago & I would have rolled my eyes, just prior to them glazing over.

However like most things that aren't easy, the feeling of commitment, that lovely sense of being very small that only oceans & mountains can provide, and the satisfaction of preparing for and then pulling off an open sea crossing, is quite compelling.

I think there are three elements of preparing for a crossing that need to be considered.

First of all you have to be fit. I know most of us aren't in this sea kayaking caper for the chiseled abs and VO2 ratios, but thorough & targeted conditioning is the most important element in successfully completing big days on the sea. I'm particularly time poor, so in preparation for trips involving big distances I use short, sharp sessions with extensive interval training, cross training like running, swimming & biking, & I never train for more than about an hour. I have a plan, and I stick to it as well as I can, with the bad little

fairy in my conscience chirping away reminding me that I don't want to be the guy that lets his mates down by tanking.

When I asked more experienced paddlers about the best way to prepare for big miles the majority view seemed to be 'miles & miles & more miles'. Unfortunately my life doesn't allow that sort of time commitment so I prefer a more intensive alternative. Now that I've used my model for a few different trips & events, I can honestly say even if I had the time to 'do the miles' I'd still do it my way. The reason is simple, the big mileage days carry with them a hangover of extended recovery, and if you're doing them once or twice a week you're bound to develop some form of over-training injury.

I save the longer training days to the end of my preparation, and they're all about making sure my arse isn't going to hurt after four hours in the boat, and tending to other issues that can occur on the sea (such as changing a water bladder or putting on another layer, anything that might present a challenge in rough water).

In practice, my aim is be able to operate at a much higher level of intensity than anything I'd be doing on a day's sea paddling, and the result is that mostly the going feels well within my limits.

Secondly you have to have your technique ironed out. Trip reports are littered with episodes of a slow burning swollen wrist, incapacitating shoulder soreness etc. These things are entirely avoidable if you spend some time making sure your forward stroke isn't putting any power down on an overextended joint. If you're not sure you're capable of sorting these technical aspects of your stroke out by yourself, get some good coaching.

Remember also the extra torque required to propel a loaded boat, and factor that into your preparation. You can do this very easily by extending your paddle shaft a couple of centimetres past

GAP



your normal length, using a larger paddle blade, putting a bungee around your hull, or deliberately seeking out headwinds. Any of these adds a surprising amount of resistance.

Thirdly, you need to know how fast you go. I know it's basic navigation, but you shouldn't allow yourself to fall into the trap of overestimating your ability to make ground. There are plenty of optimists who have stared at a little island failing to get any bigger, wondering if maybe an uncharted current has got them, while their realist buddy sits alongside knowing exactly how much longer there is to go. Only one of them is enduring self-inflicted head messin'...

Again I prefer to measure my ability with something more scientific than 'Geez, I felt good today'. I systematically record my training speeds & my output, via a heart rate monitor, on each training paddle.

Why? Here's a scenario. 20km from your destination having covered 30km in 4 hours, a headwind that was predicted, freshens beyond the forecast wind speed. Your speed through the day has been good, over 7kmh, but the headwind threatens to slow you down to 4kmh, and that last 20km suddenly looms as a 5-hour epic.

With my preparation, I know that running along at 7kmh thereabouts I'm well within the threshold of effort that will fatigue me. I've done this first 30km without going near any reserves. So, considering I'm well fuelled, I know that I can lift my effort from a rate where I'm cruising at say, 125 heartbeats per minute, to one substantially more demanding at 135 beats per minute (and still be able to comfortably maintain that output for a few hours). I don't need the electronics in front of me to tell me where that next level is, my training tells me where it is. Lifting the tempo should

increase my speed to somewhere around 6kmh into the headwind, & I'll drop two whole hours off that final exhausting stretch to safety.

And therein lies the key to it all. On a crossing of any kind, speed equals safety.

Now that you're well prepared, know your capabilities, and have every confidence that you'll be able to sort out any problems you might have by yourself (if you have to), you sit in your little kayak on the sand and stare out at the expanse you're about to commit yourself to.

It's a daunting feeling, but at the same time it's liberating. That moment where the preparation is done, and now you've just got that big stretch of water to get stuck into.

My advice for people having a go at a decent crossing for the first time is to embrace the challenge, understand & manage the risks, and accept that if your preparation is piss poor then so too will be your performance. The flowery term 'embrace the challenge' means 'make sure you want to be there'. I know from my time playing sport that you could always spot the guys who stepped up a level but didn't really want to be there, and they rarely succeeded.

I remember vividly the first time I looked around & couldn't see anything except water.

Wow.

There aren't that many moments in our cocooned modern lives where there are very real consequences for stuffing something up. To me this realization that 'there are consequences here' is the essence of adventure.

Don't listen to anyone who tries to tell you it's boring...!



By Tadhg de Barra
 Courtesy Treasna na d Tonna
 Irish Sea Kayaking Association

Northern Ireland to Scotland

Three weeks before.

Perfect weather. Heat haze. I found Donaghadee and found a 24-hour garage and found an early opening greasy spoon. Travelling to any new place, you worry about necessities such as food, toilet and water. Of course, I would find them. Why worry? People there must eat, drink and toilet too. I thought the kayak was ready. I thought I was ready. I went out, south of the Copeland Islands some 30km East of Belfast.

For me there is only one real threshold in sea kayaking, that of going beyond my wading depth. Going out farther than I can swim is no threshold. Only vaguely do I know how far I can swim. And I do know enough about tide, wind and temperatures to know that assumptions of swimming distance are unreliable. No, for me, there is only one threshold, that of going from the coast farther than you can wade home and after that you are at sea and it does not matter if it is fifty meters or miles.

I had done my calculations, my tidal planning, I was satisfied with my weather window. The only unsatisfactory element was that I could not see Scotland on the other side, which I had hoped to do. For me, it is all about stacking positives in my favour and reducing my vulnerability let me explain; Much research into "tragic accidents" shows that they rarely occur in the wake of a single catastrophic event. Far more likely is that they occur as a result of a series of negative events which, each having occurred in succession, finally result in a terminal event. Unfortunately, much of our psychology focuses on the terminal event, much to the neglect of preceding and contributory events. Aware of this insight, I try to use it when paddling solo. I am always wary of negative events which though in and of themselves benign and non threatening could if

preceding other negative events, constitute a threat to me. Every negative event causes me to reassess my vulnerability to further events. For example, forgetting a water bottle is not life threatening per se but dehydration will make me more fatigued by the end of my paddle and fatigue will impair my decision making and dull my eskimo roll. Will I have critical decisions to make at the end of the paddle, is it likely that I will need my roll?

To counter this slippery slope to tragedy, I am constantly and actively trying to stack positive events in my favour. One such positive event would be to have the Scottish coast in view. This would mean a negative event such as a GPS breakage or compass falling overboard would be less threat to me. However while I didn't have the Scottish coast in view, I was satisfied with the level of risk I was assuming the GPS was working and tethered! I went to sea.

One never knows how one will feel on the eve of a big paddle. Physically, you are quite wary of having an off day. Just as some days, you cannot feel the blades and all is smooth and clean, there are rare off days when the paddles seem leaden and the kayak appears to be towing a bucket. You are just feeling yourself out making sure you are not having one of those rare off days. You will not feel the same as your best training day paddle. The kayak will be heavier in the water, with all your added safety gear and you will be overdressed, overhydrated, over-fed, over-caffeinated and overexcited. It takes time to settle.

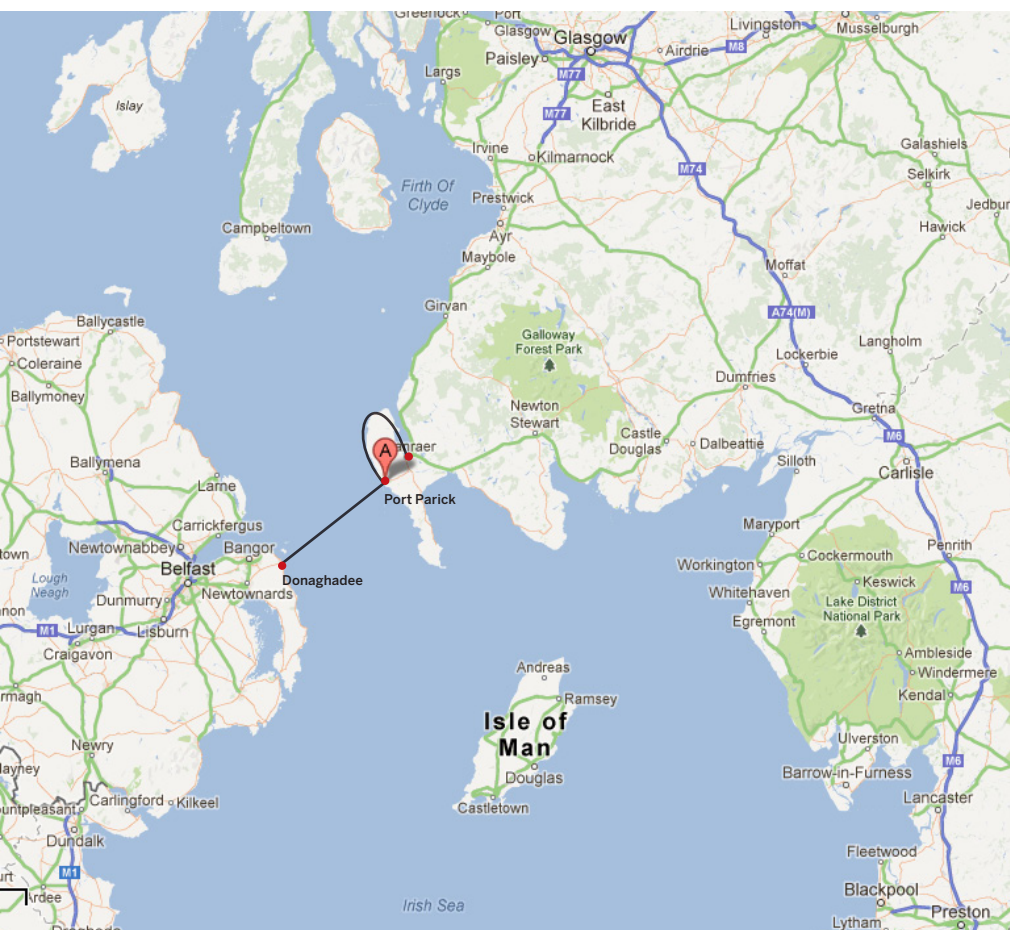
But it did. As I paddled out to sea, all felt good. However, on the water, things were not happening as they should. I primarily use a GPS for reading my speed and my speed was down despite knowing that I was making a reasonable effort. Similarly, the direction of drift of my kayak on the tide was not as I had anticipated. I was drifting quite rapidly north when I expected to be ferry gliding north across

the south going flood. This was not right. This was quite a "negative event!" My tidal planning was off – on a trip where it was critical. On my first big crossing, I was not happy. This was a fundamental error and I recognised it as such. It immediately undermined my confidence in my ability to safely accomplish this crossing. No Scotland in view and now this! I had an image of myself hurtling down a slippery slope.

I turned around and paddled back to Donaghadee, my tail between my legs but curious to know what had gone wrong. Incidentally, the paddle back to Donaghadee south of the Copelands was quite a slog another anomaly. Subsequent analysis showed two contributory factors to the error in tidal planning. Firstly, in my excitement to get the crossing done, I had launched an hour or so early. While I was aware I was doing this, I hadn't factored this into my tidal planning. Thus I didn't have an explanation for what was happening on the water around me, which unnerved me. A lesson learned. Second, as I was heading back into shore an hour later, the southern rim of the Copelands was channeling the ebb against me, further increasing its strength. Fortunately, I had the fitness to make good progress through that.

Two weeks before.

Perfect weather again. I had sorted the tidal planning issues and my confidence had returned. I managed to get a day off work and headed north in blazing sunshine. I hoped to be able to see Scotland this time. It was five days into a High Pressure system and all was settled. The wind predictions were so good I thought I might meet other paddlers making the crossing. Is it still a solo paddle if there are others on the water near you? I became resentful. Unnecessarily so. I remember peeking at the sea through the rows of redbrick houses as I entered Donaghadee and my heart sinking.



Fog. Thick fog, as bad as I had seen it. The air cooled dramatically as I neared the harbour, indicating that the fog was well established. Fog is a significant negative event. Apart from the navigation and sea-sickness difficulties, chances of a rescue craft finding a kayak in fog are small. It greatly worsened my vulnerability. Perhaps the fog may have cleared out at sea but this as not an assumption I was prepared to make. I went for a paddle late that afternoon again in fog to test my navigation skills and paddled around the Copelands. I could see little evidence of the fog clearing further out from land and the ships in the channel were still using foghorns. I returned home quite frustrated. Is this crossing a runner? More than that, I wondered if my demands for “perfect” sea conditions were unrealistic? Was my risk minimisation unreasonable and incompatible with a sea crossing or sea kayaking in general? Lesson learned; go early in your High Pressure system. More research on fog, its types, its formation and its unpredictability. Again I waited.

The day of.

Early July. Perfect weather window. Marching season. I passed tens of unlit bonfires on my way up to Donaghadee, which despite its obviously Gaelic name (Domhnach Daoi, meaning “Daoi’s church”) is predominantly Protestant. The town was festooned with

Union Jacks. Bored ex-army types wondered the streets – larger cans, military surplus clothing, smashed noses, weathered skin – a self appointed underclass who owned the streets this month. Much like Paddy’s Day when the Irish village drunk is king for a day. Here I was with my southern reg car and stupid looking boat on the roof... But Scotland was in view. I left contact details on the windscreen as I often do during a long paddle and again chatted to Belfast CG, who have always been amiable. There was a light northerly wind F2/3 but it was with a flooding tide so they together calmed the sea wonderfully. It did not take long to see Killantringan lighthouse about 2kms north of Port Patrick. You know you are well out to sea when ships under full steam are passing both behind and in front of you. I tended to only look forward toward my destination rather than looking back to see what sort of trouble I had gotten myself into. It is a cliché with crossings that you paddle for hours without landmarks appearing to come any closer to you but.... The trick was to focus on landmarks around your target and only episodically check your target. Then you begin to notice its slow steady increase in size. The closer you get to your destination, the more you have to fight the urge to point the bow at it. But you must maintain your predesignated heading because the tide continues to work close to the coast. I pulled

into Port Patrick four hours and nine minutes after setting out. Normally I advocate paddling home on crossings, toward the familiar, but there is a unique thrill to have paddled to a different country in your kayak.

The accents were different, the money was different, the signs were different and I found this different place in my little kayak. After washing the sea salt from my face, I sat in the sun and ate a hearty pub meal enjoying the sense of otherworldliness. After an hour or two, the tide had turned and I took to the sea again. While the normal habit is to paddle home, my sole resolution was to complete the crossing. When I got back out to sea, my light northerly was now a wind blowing against an ebbing tide. The sea state had picked up. Not significantly, but there were white caps all about. I paddled out a kilometre or so and studied my GPS as I did so. My speed in the rougher water had dropped. A quick calculation informed me that I would probably arrive back at Donaghadee close to dusk. I was not happy with this situation. Thus I elected to paddle on to Stranraer and get the ferry home the next morning. In terms of distance, it was much the same. Another 40kms. But it meant that any paddling in the dark would be done inside the sheltered waters of Loch Ryan.

I was quite fatigued by the time I reached Loch Ryan. I had been battling a light headwind for twenty kms. As could be expected, the wind died toward evening depriving me of a tailwind down the Loch. It was a safe if slow painful 20kms slog with regular food stops and shoulder stretches down to Stranraer.

My opinion of golf has always been low. I concur with Mark Twain’s view of it as a “long walk ruined.” Its jowly adherents, a bunch whose sense of social exclusion is as well developed as their paunches have destroyed some of Ireland’s greatest beauty spots. Yet again, golf was to incur my wrath. As I hobbled around the streets of Stranraer, dead on my feet, I found all the B+B’s booked out because the Scottish Open was in town. Drunken golfers spilled out of pubs. Needless to say, my yellow drysuit attracted some less than inspired comments which the protagonists chums found hilarious. In the end, I rang the harbour master and got permission to camp on the yachting harbour pontoon for the night. Behind the locked harbour gate, rocking gently on the pontoon, with my trusty kayak beside me, I slept the sleep of the dead. ■

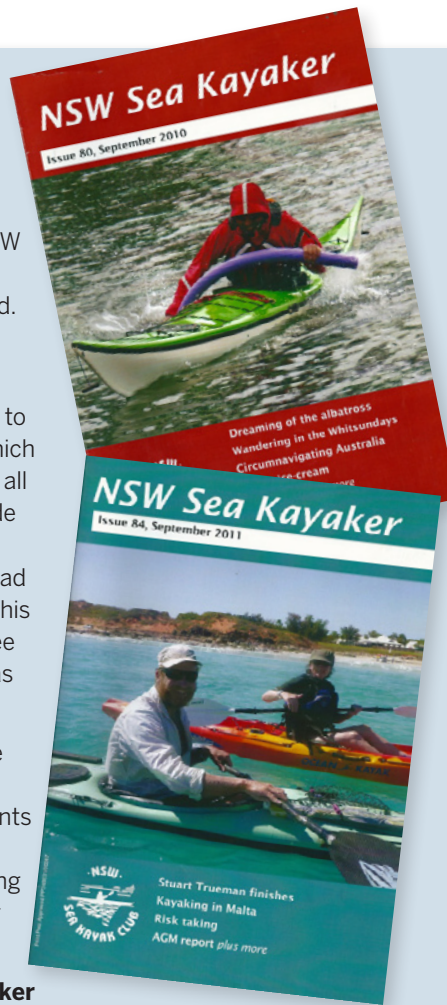
Back issues NSW Sea Kayaker magazine

As part of the renovations and renewals to NSW Sea Kayak Club's website, back copies of the magazine, NSW Sea Kayaker, were also moved. They are now housed at <http://nswskc.wordpress.com/>

No longer editor of the magazine, I found time to post online the issues of NSW Sea Kayaker which I edited. Not all articles were published as not all were intended to be shared with the whole wide world. No photographs have been added; two reasons: major one being time needed to upload the files, and second that members received this print magazine as part of their membership fee to the club, getting articles with the photos was part of that premium.

The range of articles posted is quite incredible in its breadth and depth: trip reports, training ideas, reviews, incidents, poetry – all testaments to the skills of our club members both on and off water. Access to the articles can be by using the Yearly Index, Archives column, front cover images or Search bar.

Dee Ratcliffe – Past editor, NSW Sea Kayaker



Sweet spot

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were getting cold so they decided to light a fire in their boat. It promptly sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too. (See, I told you it was bad...)

Getting married? Birthday? Why not have a kayak cake?

Speaking of having your cake and eating it, Magic Mud is a Canadian business doing a steady trade in making kayak-themed cake toppers. Made from clay they're permanent so you could have one sent over. magicmud.com



The Magnate and the Paddler

A modern kayaking fairy tale

A high-powered Mining Magnate stumbled across a group of Sea Kayakers returning from a paddling and fishing trip in small fishing village called Watson's Bay. One had a kingfish and some salmon in a bag on his foredeck. The businessman complimented the kayaker on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them.

The kayaker replied, "Oh I've been trolling a lure for a few hours to get these. I always catch some." The businessman then asked why didn't he stay out longer and catch more fish? The kayaker said he had enough to feed his family that night.

"But what will you do with the rest of your day?" The fisherman said, "I'll have lunch and a beer with the rest of the group, go home, go through my trip photos and send the best to SALT magazine, wash my pfd and fiddle with my seat rest. Then I might have an afternoon nap with my

wife, stroll to the pub for an evening meal where I'll sip rum and lie to my friends about how many kms I covered today. I have a full and busy life."

The Mining Magnate scoffed, "I make billions from exploiting the common wealth, and I know how to help you. You know how to fish – you should spend more time fishing, sell your catch and with the proceeds buy a bigger boat to catch more, and with the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats, eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this little launching beach and move to the glamorous Central Coast and eventually Byron Bay from where you will run your expanding enterprise enjoying massive tax breaks and ignoring public approbrium."

The kayaker fisherman asked, "But, how long will this all take?" to which the Magnate replied, "15-20 years."

"But what then?" The Magnate laughed and said, "That's the best part. When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich, you would make millions."

"Millions, really? Then what?"

The Magnate answered, "Then you would retire. Move to a small fishing village where you would go kayaking, have lunch and a beer with the rest of your group, go home, go through your trip photos and send the best to SALT magazine, wash your pfd and fiddle with your seat rest. Then you might have an afternoon nap with your wife, stroll to the pub for an evening meal where you'll sip rum and lie to your friends about how far you kayaked." ■

By Megan Pryke
Photos Alan Pryke



Paddlefest and return

It was like a sea skills assignment come true ... Ahhh, well, hmmm, just a few differences... Instead of a pod of four sea kayakers there was about a hundred; we didn't circumnavigate Phillip Island, unless you could count the collective effort of the hundred paddlers; and we had a base camp rather than moving on each day.

The 2012 Victorian Sea kayak Club Paddlefest HQ was set approximately in the middle of the 20km long Phillip Island which lies about 150km SE of Melbourne. A spate of windy spring weather exhausted itself on Friday leaving the weekend with glorious sunny paddling days. For me it was a trip down memory lane having spent most of my school holidays and many weekends as an islander, well, at least one resident friend awarded me the title of a "near islander", a major promotion from the touro class.

THE PADDLES

Luckily, the swell was kind enough to allow for trips from and to some of the southern coastline which is constantly battered by Bass Strait swells. On Saturday I joined a group of grade 3 paddlers led by Peter Costello for a south coast trip. We started

paddling from Kitty Miller Bay which is a shallow bay, flanked by reefs and per my sea skills assignment it was not a guaranteed safe landing or launching place. Our launch involved waiting and timing to get out between the bigger sets. Gerard was first to tackle the danger zone. He encounter the froth of an oncoming breaking wave, his bow was pushed shorewards, he capsized and rolled up graciously, a bit of a brief high bracing before stylishly peeling off the blue water shoulder to continue his journey out. Having noted Gerard's experience I choose a different line.

Once out of Kitty Miller Bay Pyramid Rock could be seen. Due to its shape, Pyramid Rock is not just any semi-detached rock island, it's a local icon which can be recognised many kilometres away. The water between the Pyramid rock and Phillip Island was looking a bit too rough, so out to sea we paddled around the rock. Once on the eastern side we could get closer to the dark chocolate coloured pyramid sitting on a platform of strawberry coloured granite.

Our landing was at YCW beach, a surf beach where some of the sting of the dominant south west swell is reduced.

During the morning's car shuffle time I noted large spilling waves breaking across the length of the beach, I hoped it would not get any worse with the falling tide. Upon landing we spread out to allow space for mishap. Lulls don't last forever, I side surfed towards the shore, glad it was a spilling wave.

The biggest challenge of the day was getting the sea kayaks down and up the treated pine stairs between the car park and beach. Turning a 5metre kayak around landings with 90 degree bends involved getting the sea kayaks up to shoulder height and some three point turns. It was completed efficiently with no-fuss teamwork.

Meanwhile, my husband Alan was on another trip led by Robin Boundy on a more sheltered side of the island from Ventnor. With the outgoing tide they experienced





urn

speeds of up to 11 km per hour. As they approached the Nobbies the north westerly facing shoreline is affected by south-westerly swells coming from Bass Strait. These coupled with a strong outflow and mixing of currents caused waves that Alan described as paddling uphill. By the time they turned around the tide was close to its lowest point thus the opposing current had lessened.

On Sunday the cumulus clouds were more spread with a gentle North Easterly wind. It was too good not to get out for a paddle. Alan and I both went to Cape Woolamai with at least two clup trip leaders and many other happy paddlers. It was a magical day. I have many memories of Cleeland Bright. It was where I had attended the local Little Nippers, where I learned to windsurf and sail. As a kid, a major expedition was to walk along the beach, past the dunes to the old granite quarry. As an adult it is just as magical to paddle the same shore, however you do it at high tide and you can get even further than the quarry and then into a sea cave! Pink granite boulders capped with orange lichen with a blue green sea, blue skies above the highest point on Phillip Island and good company, what more could you want on a paddling trip.



Sunrise on Mimosa Rocks



Cape Woolamai

THE PRESENTATIONS

There were four quality presentations on Friday night – a Whitsundays trip presented by Jeanine and Bob, a trip that presented its biggest challenge early on in rough conditions caused by tidal currents. Then Neil, Raia and Rohan presented collectively on their Vancouver Island, Canada trip. Highlights for me were the sea otters and the tiderace near Discovery Lodge, a location where you can hire performance Nigel Dennis Romanys. On Saturday Tina and John presented a Vanuatu expedition where they used three piece Valley Etain sea kayaks. A very interesting trip with long between island crossings that were usually windy. Volcanic islands, lush vegetation supporting small local communities, getting tribal elder permission to camp out and the cultural tradition of land diving made for a very interesting and varied presentation. John and Heather a more seasoned sea kayaking couple made a presentation about a commercial sea kayaking trip in Croatia with its amazing towns set on and into towering limestone cliffs and series of small rocky islands. The Adriatic Sea coastline is impressively vertical, rocky and rich in history with many islands providing places of usually calm seas.

Alan and I were warmly welcomed by Terry Barry as NSW guests and received many good tips from Victorian Sea Kayak club members on places to go as we returned

along the coast to Sydney. Nick advised us of camping options and contacts for Corner Inlet. We camped on Snake Island which allowed us to explore the northern coastline of Wilsons Promontory. Granite Island supported a large colony of Pied Cormorants. We timed the tides well and had two good days before the westerly winds picked up making for an interesting crossing back to Port Welshpool. Conditions were on our beams, the wind on port and the incoming tide on starboard.

For the rest of our travels back to Sydney the wind was generally too strong for open water paddling, however it was lovely just to see the coast. We both agreed that the entrance to Narooma Harbour was amazingly rough thus best visited on foot rather than assuming a safe landing. We also bumped into David Winkworth and paddling friends at Mallacoota Inlet having spotted the conspicuous signs of sea kayakers at the campsite. Dave announced that the days of seeing a sea kayak and being guaranteed to know them were gone, nonetheless evidence is that you will know at least one paddler in a group.

The VSKC hospitality and advice made our trip much more enjoyable, it would be great to see some interstate sea kayakers at the NSW SKC Rock and Roll. ■

By Alexander Manu and Frank Riitano

TWO Guys, TWO Sea Kayaks, ONE River, EIGHT Weirs and THE GORGE.

Nepean River: Menangle to Bents Basin and Beyond in Sea Kayaks

It has become standard procedure now: surf the internet for trip preparation for our next kayak adventure, Google maps, Google earth, YouTube etc.

We researched our trip run and to our surprise there was no record of anyone ever having attempted or completed the Nepean River from Menangle to Bents Basin in a kayak let alone in 5.3m full length sea kayaks fully laden with camping gear and supplies..

After further investigation via government websites and Google earth we began to understand why..... on this stretch of the river eight large weirs cross the river and then from the last weir at Theresa Park, a 4.5 kilometre stretch the Bents Basin Reserve National Park Gorge. In it, a narrow deep pristine gorge with some rapids, many rocks and boulders, which appeared to require carrying and dragging

of the kayaks. This seemed to be the major obstacle and a big unknown, but we had a contingency plan. The trip run was carefully planned. Drop off at Menangle Rd Park on the Nepean River, then paddle 25kms to Cobbitty Rd Bridge Cobbitty. Then camp by the river the first night. Next day paddle 17kms to the starting point of Bents Reserve Gorge at the Theresa park weir. At that point survey the site and determine if we would proceed down the rapids and gorge. If not then paddle back 17kms to Cobbitty, being the closest suitable land crew pickup point. If we decided to proceed down the gorge there would be no turning back, it would be a huge 4.5km unknown to Bents Basin Lake and then paddle 11kms onward to Wallacia, camp the night and then the next morning paddle 25kms to Penrith. The other determining factor was rain, as when this

stretch of the Nepean River is in flood it can be ruthless and dangerous.

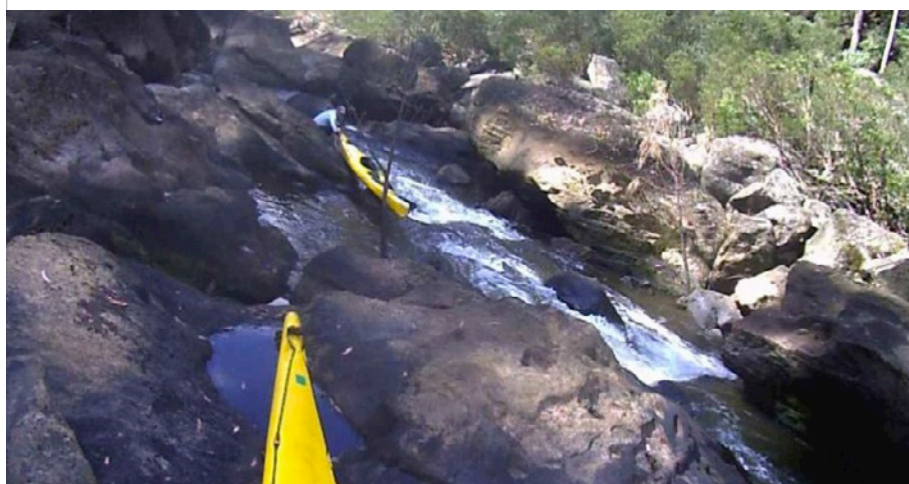
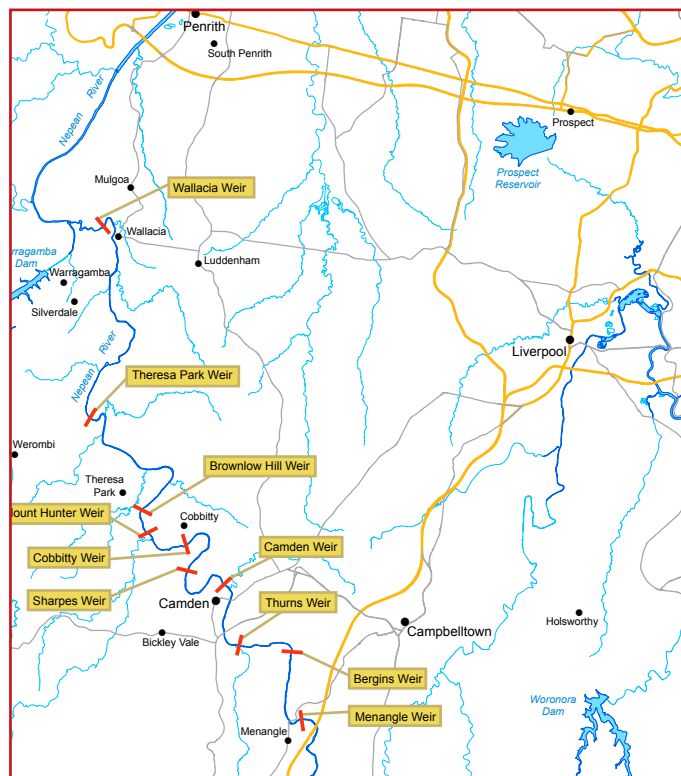
Never backing down from a challenge we thought we would atleast live through.....it was decided..... go go go !!!

It was Friday 14th September mid morning, we loaded up and set off with our driver for Menangle and arrived 1pm at the park near the bridge that crosses the Nepean River. We packed our kayaks with supplies and then dragged them 250 metres to the edge of the Nepean River.

Now it was time to put our trip planning to the test. Approximately 27.5kms with about 4 to 5 hours of paddling to our overnight stay at Cobbitty with 4 unknown weirs to overcome along the way.

Beautiful sunny day, off we went paddling away down river pristine smooth water with a tiny current. Along the way either side of the river were 2-3m sloping sandy banks lined with willows and greenery. About 2kms downstream the river narrowed and then forked into two, in our path was a barricade of twisted and mangled fallen trees. We had carefully negotiated our way through and at times had to get out of our kayaks and drag them over and under the fallen trees blocking our way. Once through it was pristine river kayaking for the next 13 kms with birdlife abundant, Ibis and water fowls frolicking along the river banks.

At this point we passed the Camden Valley Way Rd River Bridge. It was about 6



meters above our heads, as we looked up we were amazed to see countless large driftwood wedged in between the steel beams of the underside of the bridge. To our astonishment we realized the full force of this river during flood given the wood was deposited so high up.

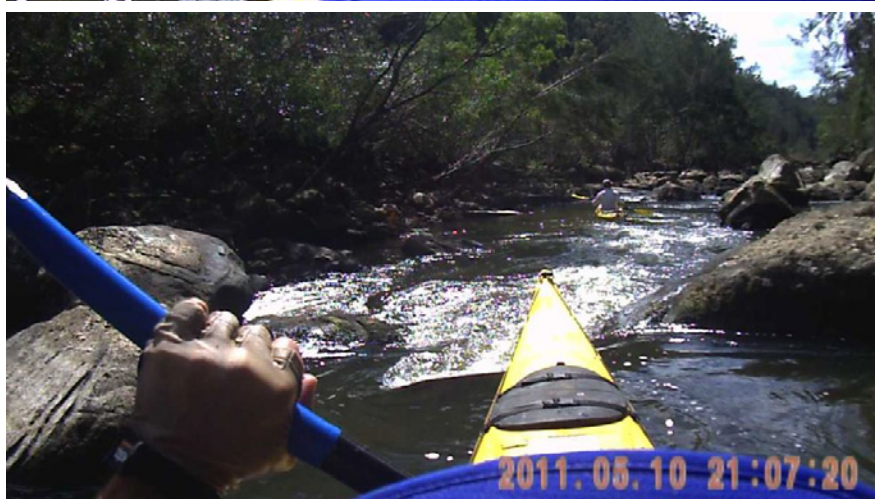
During this stretch of river we had passed two weirs without fuss as they appeared to have been broken up due to the aging of time and floods.

From here on it would be another 12.5kms to the Cobbitty Rd Bridge which was our planned camping spot for the night.

Having passed the overhead road bridge 1km downstream we were faced with our first large weir, the Camden Weir. It was a beauty, we paddled right up to the edge of it with a 3m drop facing us on the other side. The water streamed over it slowly as thankfully there had not been rain in the Nepean River valley for sometime. Still we were not going to kamikaze over it, not with 5.3m sea kayaks that's for sure. So this was the first major weir, the procedure was paddle to the side of the weir, check which side of the bank was friendlier to us for getting out of our kayaks then carrying one at a time dragging them along the river bank, spillway, rocks and weaving through trees and brush to get to the other side of the weir being the lower level of the river. It was slow and painstaking stuff, about 20minutes work....but well within our measure.

So Camden Weir done on we went. Another 5kms and it was now Sharpes Weir... more of the same...no problem same deal we got around it. It was now probably another 6.5kms to our planned camp spot at Cobbitty, only one more weir to go for the day. On we paddled a good steady pace covering about 6kms an hour.

But the light was now fading so we had to consider a camping spot for the night. In receding light we came across Cobbitty Weir. It looked a really tough one to get around as both sides of the bank were very rugged, so we decided we should make camp. We paddled back a bit and noticed a clearing we had come across earlier. So we paddled to the left river bank got out and had a look around. Yes, it was perfect. A nice clearing, looked like deserted public land where we would not bother anyone and lots of potential fire wood. We unloaded our gear and pitched the tent. We then gathered fire wood and with a bit of boy scout training had a great fire going and cooked our dinner. We kicked back and just kept warm via the fire while we star gazed. Brilliant crisp night, what a spectacle the heavens put on for us. It was now



time for sleep, it was 10pm and we realized it was going to be a cold as night.

After a restless night on what seemed like a bed of concrete and a freezing six degree Celsius temperature, we woke to the sound of birds at about 6am. Had our breaky and we were off by about 8am nice and early. First up we had the weir waiting for us. Out we got again and dragged and carried our kayaks to get around it. We came across two huge carps rotting by the riverbank, obviously the fisherman who had caught them didn't think they were good eating. Back into our kayaks and down river we went again. We passed under Cobbitty Road Bridge and again looking up some 5 metres there was debris lodged under the bridge from a past huge flood. On we went another 4kms until Mt Hunter Weir faced us. This was easy, as this weir had a slopping ramp so we just launched our kayaking onto and down it and no problem.

Another 2km paddle and we hit Brownlow Hill Weir, another case of getting out of our kayaks and dragging them around the weir.

After this we now had another 10kms of paddling before we would reach our greatest test at Theresa Park Weir at the start of the formidable Bents Gorge. The river just seemed to keep going endlessly bend after bend. After about 6kms we decided to stop at a clearing on the river bank and have a bite to eat it was probably 11am now. Suddenly probably about 250m away on the other side of the river we noticed movement in the river, someone or something seemed to be in trouble. We got back into our kayaks and raced over to investigate. To our surprise it was a cow which at some point came down to have drink and was caught and tangled up in ropes in the water to head height. We paddled right up to the cow, it appeared exhausted. I pulled out my 60cm bladed machete and began cutting through the rope. We had an audience though as we were soon watched by about 20 cows and a bull that wandered down pretty much egging on the rescue attempt. Once free the cow bolted, but it started swimming to the wrong river bank

and got itself into all sorts of trouble again. So we decided to get out go for a walk and find the owners. Once up the hill, a farm house was some 3kms away, we yelled out with our best Koowee calls but to no avail. We were wasting valuable time as we knew we had bents gorge ahead of us.

On the way back to the kayaks we found a bulls skull, horns and all...what a trophy that would make as we mounted it to the rear of one of the kayaks. Ok we had wasted 1 hour with the cow rescue. On we went and after about 20mins the river narrowed, the banks become steep rocky and mountainous. Just one more bend and there it was Theresa Park Weir, against it were two rotting dead cow carcasses. Again we paddled to the side of the weir, got out and surveyed what lay beyond the weir. Yep, cliffs both side of the gorge, mild little rapids and lots rocks and boulders, yet we could only see maybe 200 metres down river. It looked tough it looked ominous. We debated now whether we should turn back and paddle 17kms and negotiate all those weirs to get to Cobbitty for a pickup or should we go on down the unknown. Again we thought ...no one to our knowledge has ever done this section in 5.3 fully laden sea kayaks.... Were we crazy to go on ? Yes. Well we had come this far so what the hell.

So, one last weir to haul kayaks up and over. We dragged the kayaks down to the rocky water edge... in we got and off we

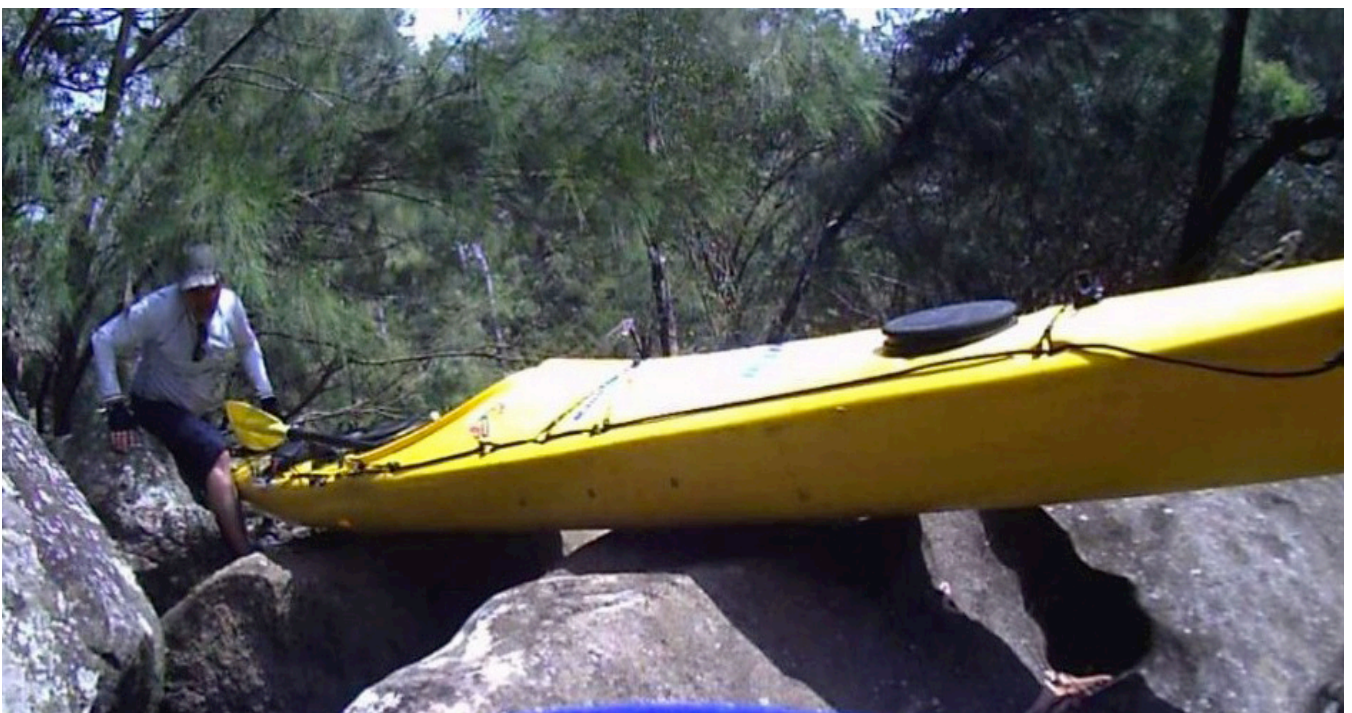
went....paddling down some 30 metres of mild rapids, following that some 150 metres of beautiful still water. On both sides of the river was lush sub-tropical fauna with huge boulders and steep cliffs rising some 50 metres atleast. After the still water section rapids again and this time even worse, huge rocks and boulders blocking our way forward. It was impossible to go through them even around them via water. So we had to exit our kayaks and then carry them around these massive obstructions. It was extremely hard going carrying and dragging our kayaks, in the process we were using every muscle in our bodies.

On it went it now.... small section of flat water or slow moving water, then rapids, some negotiable and some not. Exit kayaks, drag down rapids or around rocks, over rocks... whatever it took. And it went on hour after hour. There was no end in sight. What we were looking for was the Bents Basin lake, as sighting that would be our salvation. We were not going to rest or stop... on we went. After two and half hours of this relentless slog Frank checked the GPS on his iPhone.... it indicated we were more than halfway through the gorge. We were not sure whether it was a relief or torture because at this stage we were already fatigued from the sheer battle.

But the flat water sections of the river through the gorge was sheer kayaking heaven,

so it was worth every bit of the relentless slog. Anyway after another 2 hours of what ended up being an epic struggle we finally sighted Bents Basin lake. What a relief and what joy it was to near the end of the gorge section. So one last section of rapids and the necessity to exit and drag our kayaks again over rocks to the lake. At this point there were some bystanders who looked at us in amazement probably wondering where we had come from. Anyway by now we were practically oblivious to our surroundings, so totally exhausted we paddled across the lake and to the opposing grassed area. We got out and basically collapsed on the grass and marvelled at our effort. We were starving hungry, so fired up the mini-burner and cooked ourselves a meal.

It was now close to 5.30pm.... we had contemplated pushing on to Wallacia another 11 kms away, but it was another unknown so we canned the idea. Besides we were wasted. The next decision was, do we camp the night and push on in the morning or call for our land crew pickup. As it was I had just recovered from a nasty flu the week before and this trip had taxed me again, so land crew pickup it was. We dragged our kayaks about 400m up to the Wallacia end car park. It was now near dark we gathered firewood and not before too long we had a raging bonfire going. We now just kicked back and reflected on our kayaking exploits while we waited for our pickup. ■



Floating ideas

PFD Development

Please meet Henry Freeman. Henry was a lifeboat rower on the English coast in the early 1900s. Remember that all the lifeboats then were rowed - no outboards, no radios, and for most lifeboat crew, no PFDs. The bulky cork PFD that Henry is wearing in the photograph was experimental at that time.

His crew was often called out to rescue boats in distress. On one occasion of particularly bad weather, his crew towed five boats to safety. They returned to sea to attempt the rescue of another boat. All the rowers were issued with the cork PFDs but sadly, all the crew except Henry took them off because they chafed badly. The entire lifeboat crew, with the exception Henry, perished at sea on during that rescue attempt.

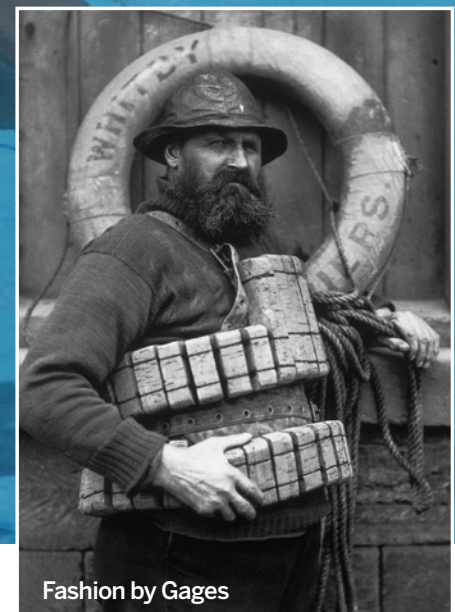
Lessons for us from this? Hmmm, we can see how far PFD design has come in 100 years but they do have to be worn! Uncomfortable PFDs are bad news, especially for paddlers, as we need to be able to PERFORM (ie. paddle for long periods) to keep ourselves safe.

PFD Tinkering

Do you like to tinker? I do. There's always something going on in my shed, that's for sure. I've just made a humungous ice chest for base camps and my new kayak design is progressing well. An ongoing project of mine is making sense of inflatable PFDs! In Australia, PFDs are compulsory in all small boats so there are heaps of designs on the market - and cheap too!

I have an inflatable PFD, which I take on tropical trips. It's too hot to wear a conventional PFD up there so I have an inflatable one, which stows easily in the cockpit. (In remote northern Australian waters, if you come out of your kayak and can't get back in, you're likely to be eaten before help arrives so a PFD just helps the cavalry find your body!)

Anyway, these inflatable PFDs are dead-set the most uncomfortable things to wear. They are all multi-fit and for taller people that means that the waist-strap becomes a chest strap. So, I lengthened all the straps, added ladderlock buckles and it's now pretty good - the waist strap is actually a waist strap - and



Fashion by Gages

locks below my ribs if I inflate it, instead of riding over my head.

I removed the CO2 cylinder paraphernalia (now mouth inflation only), which made it really compact and light. All this is probably technically illegal so I'm not advising anyone to do likewise! I also stitched the back of the collar shut so that when I inflate it, the only air chambers are on my chest.

The big test was in the pool at one of our rolling nights - it worked! Enough flotation for me to float face-up and not bulky enough to stop me swimming or climbing onto my kayak deck! My conventional foam-filled PFD, by comparison floated me face-down.

So, it's a work in progress - some pockets to put on the front, a few clips etc., but it keeps me off the streets!

Enjoy your paddling. ■

Thanks to NZ Sea Canoeist for permission to publish this article. Henry Freeman photo printed with permission of the RNLI (UK) (Royal National Lifeboat Institution)

By Damiano Visocnik

Why I modify MY KAYAKS

■ ■

“If it isn't broken, improve it. A small, clever tweak can improve how something works for years to come”

(from Sugru*)

■ ■

Legendary and out spoken kayak tinkerer Damiano, aka GnarlyDog, shares the whys and techniques of his craft.

Far too much stuff is badly designed, or not designed to last. Somehow that quote from Sugru resonates with me. I have often found myself improving the design of stuff I buy, often because it doesn't fit/work or because it fails.

When I started paddling I bought a used fibreglass sea kayak. If I think of it now the fit of that boat was awful but I didn't know better at the time.

When the hull developed a crack where resting directly on the cross bars of my roof rack (the previous owner assured me it was OK to

with all improvements I could do to ill fitting or badly designed kayaks.

Areas that I have now improved in my kayaks vary from reinforcing weak hulls and decks to creating thigh braces.

As my kayaking skills improved I found myself wanting a closer fitting cockpit to be able to manoeuvre my kayak, instead of just paddling it; a cockpit that doesn't engage my body wasn't very secure in waves and surf.

I soon realized that the emphasis I once used to place to a “comfortable” seat shifted towards a performance hull instead. I abandoned ruddered kayaks to favour skegged ones: I found the latter much more interesting and rewarding than the “cruiser” style kayaks I was once attracted to.

As a skegged kayak requires a good amount of body English to be paddled in dynamic waters, I started to pay attention to thigh braces and the way they were designed in a cockpit that offered little or no contact for the legs. Some kayaks come from factory with foot braces inadequate for a solid contact and I soon realized that I needed to fabricate my own or improve the existing ones.

Foam bulkheads that leaked in my friends' kayaks were replaced with fibreglass ones. Weak chopped-strand decks that cracked during rescue drills were reinforced with a layer of glass, carbon or Kevlar.

So many projects that initially sounded so daunting suddenly revealed to be so simple. I just needed the motivation to work in my shed instead of watching Big Brother on TV :-)

I work with epoxy because I find it easy to get the mix right when small quantities are required. I also find epoxy adheres better to existing laminates regardless of the base resin; polyester, vinyl-ester or epoxy kayaks are a good base for my epoxy work. I even successfully create epoxy keel strips on gel coat hulls. I specifically use only West System and so far I



GnarlyDog out of the garage
Photo by Tess Dodd

* Sugru (which means 'play' in Irish) is a material invented by a young product designer in the UK. It's a self-setting rubber that moulds like play-dough, bonds to almost anything and turns into a strong, flexible silicone rubber overnight that's fine in salt water and sun. Sugru has fixing things at the heart of its approach. sugru.com

transport it that way and those fancy cradles were a waste of money) I was devastated. I knew that fibreglass could be repaired but I would have to take it to a shop and pay big dollars.

A fellow veteran paddling buddy suggested I give it a shot myself; he convinced me it was very easy to patch a simple crack accessible from the cockpit. I thank him for that because it opened the wonderful world of fibreglass repair and manufacturing.

Soon I realized that fibreglassing is as simple as smearing honey (resin) onto a piece of cloth (fibre) and my imagination could run wild

haven't had the problems of developing a skin allergy despite not using gloves when handling wetted out cloth.

I am lucky to have a very good supplier of technical fabrics 20 minutes drive away. CG Composites retails exotic fabric where I can find woven carbon, carbon/Kevlar mix, twill and other weaves of fibreglass. As long as I don't pester the staff with silly questions they are happy to accommodate my needs to purchase small yardage (not less than one meter though) of the oh-so-sexy carbon fibre cloth.

Most of my work is done at room temperature and I don't use fancy vacuum pumps although I have been lusting over one for a while.

In summer my garage gets a bit hot and I prefer to do my epoxy work later in the evening where a falling temperature will prevent degassing (according to manufacturer's specification). In summer I use an epoxy that is designed to set a bit slower since in the heat the ordinary mix would not give me enough time to lay up.

I often also use epoxy mixed with microfiber to create the perfect glue for attaching items to the hull/underdeck. I found out that epoxy on its own doesn't work for me and in the Queensland heat often loses its bonding capabilities but once epoxy is mixed with a filler it becomes incredibly strong. There are two enemies of epoxy: silicone and UV light. While sunlight exposed epoxy work can be successfully handled with special UV resistant hardeners (or painted over) I find that epoxy will NOT stick to silicone contaminated laminate, no matter how hard I clean it up. Only deep sanding that removes any trace of silicone is suitable for further bonding with epoxy, or any other type of glue. I therefore no longer use silicone in any kayak application but prefer a polyurethane sealant (like Sikaflex) where removal can be done with simple methylates spirits.

My favorite tool in the shed is the Dremel (high speed drill) where I can cut and drill with precision without delaminating like can occur with careless use of hand tools. A job that used to take hours to prepare/modify can be done in a fraction of time with a Dremel. I have to be careful to wear a respirator when sanding carbon as it can cause serious lung problems.

My least favorite material is Duct Tape. After 20 years of backpacking, riding and sea kayaking I have only used it once, not in a critical situation. The reason I don't like Duct Tape is that it leaves a very nasty glue residue that is a pain to remove. Leaving a Duct Tape emergency repair in place longer than necessary (ie once you get back home) is outright ghetto and leads to future failures.

Experience has taught me that a well prepared/maintained kayak (or other equipment) will rarely fail in the field while jury-rigged repairs treated as permanent often lead to inconvenient fails, sometimes dangerous. ■



Thigh braces



Foot plate bar



Seat rebuild

By Dee Ratcliffe

Far North Queens

with the headwinds all beh



■ ■

Out doing what we
love, where few
venture, under our
own steam, following
our chosen path

■ ■

Standing alone on the sand, away from all the holiday-makers, Harry called to us, his urgings lifting both our spirits and our bodies.

With one last spurt we paddled that final kilometre, landing on the sands of Palm Cove in far north Queensland.

Our journey started 21 days earlier from the shores of Townsville, 20 nights under canvas, 12 islands and 380km. No, it started months before when three of us shared a phone conference and dreams.

A trip along of the coast of Hinchinbrook Island morphed into an expedition from Townsville to Cairns. Almost five months of planning and preparations passed before we gathered in Lindfield, Sydney to load up, finalise checklists and get a last night's

sleep before the road trip commenced.

Driving quietly out of Sydney, the dark skies lit by planets, Mike, Peter and I went north for 2,500km staying first in a WWII bunker in Miles, Queensland and then in the last cabin available within a 300km radius of Mackay on a wet and windy night.

With 380km to cover in 21 days, we had lots of back-up options if the wind and weather gods chose not to favour us. If the Australian Defence Force needed to undertake some last minute bombing practice, we had a plan. There were alternative finish places noted on our GPS waypoints, phone numbers for alternative caravan parks, maps given to our pick-up driver. Yet to our amazement, as the days unfolded, we were where we were meant to be. Apart from one

Island behind us



Aboriginal fish traps

decision to change campsites due to cyclone damage, our plan worked.

It was an ambitious plan: a group of six who never all came together until the night before, never paddled together as a group until Day 1; new and untested kayaks and gear; various body ailments. A plan that started and ended with long, open crossings of 35km. Perhaps our audacity in the face of potential obstacles earned us safe passage.

When Saturday 21 July 2012 dawned clear and bright, we transferred kayaks and all our gear across the road to the sands, loaded and made ready to launch. Finally all the preparations stopped. All the mad hustle and to-and-froing came to an end, this was it. With heavy kayaks, we set out from the protection of Magnetic Island. From Acheron

to Havannah, we passed from military target range into the Palm group of islands and on to the national parks of Orpheus and Hinchinbrook.

The first few days were a shakedown. By the time our first rest day, on Orpheus Island, came round we had some repairs and adjustments to undertake. After that our routines developed and we moved from beach to beach taking in the ever-changing scenery, relishing in the tropical waters and finding joys in the great outdoors.

Each island has its own persona. One with granite boulders protecting it, and perhaps us, with its sense of special place in the air. One became a playground at low tide, a place for fun and exploration. Many confined us to their beaches, impenetrable,

although there was one that let us through to its summit.

Hinchinbrook Island is a place apart; an island big and high enough to create its own weather. Early mornings could be clear with the summit of Mount Bowen (1,121m) standing tall and ominous; barely-there wisps of cloud growing and developing into complete cloud cover over the summit by midday.

Our first encounter with Hinchinbrook was from the south, at Sunken Reef Bay. A grey and overcast day matched the windswept nature of this beach. Literally windswept – Cyclone Yasi had tossed flotsam and jetsam all along the shoreline. It provided a creek where we could wash in brackish water. While Margot and I

CONTINUED

explored and examined the plastic junk amongst the strewn timbers, the others walked inland and upward to Mulligan Falls. Next morning the surf settled, the skies cleared and we made our way north, stopping at Zoe Bay en route. There we moved six loaded kayaks off the sandflats to above the high water mark before exploring, snorkelling and swimming in the clear fresh waters below Zoe Falls.

We kayaked in the territory of the saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*). We never saw any crocodiles or even signs of them. I did once feel spooked by the bay we were in. It was late in the afternoon, the tide had come in over the sandflats resulting in warm, murky water. There was a creek by the mangroves on one side of the bay with a crocodile warning sign. Lippy and Margot had gone ashore to scout for the campsite. I floated in my kayak, remembering the description by Sandy Robson of the bay where she had been attacked, and stalked, by crocodile. Too many parallels with this little bay, I nervously waited for the others, silently urging them to quickly and carefully return to their kayaks and deeper waters. No campsite found, they followed my telepathic thoughts and we moved, to another bay, another beach, a proper campsite found by Peter and Shaan.

On this beach we re-arranged our plan and stayed put for a while, enjoying early morning yoga, dips into the lagoon, views of Mount Bowen, the company of bushwalkers, hikes further north to Nina Bay, Beach and Peak and the unexpected dramas of a bushwalker in trouble and in



need of helicopter rescue. A fall while rock-hopping across a creek led to a bad cut on her leg, not a major drama except that she was miles from anyway, in a remote location.

Leaving our campsite on Hinchinbrook we sailed northwards, stopping to examine the deserted and cyclone-damaged Hinchinbrook Resort near Cape Richards. Crossing to Gould Island we arrived just as a working party completed the installation of a proto-type plastic picnic table and benches. A rest day was spent exploring a corner of this island with its ancient Aboriginal fish traps, spying finches as they built a nest right at the outer end of a tree branch, safely out of reach of sea eagles and goannas, and being bemused by the approach of a bundle of twenty-three teenagers who squelched across the mud flats of low tide. Fortunately, once they burned off some steam with a soccer ball, they settled, camped away from us old codgers and were polite and friendly to encounter.

From there we tripped further north, through the Family Islands group, now into the heart of Cyclone Yasi damage. Here came our first mainland encounter: a food parcel pickup, a haircut, a visit to the wonders of the modern supermarket and a meal in a restaurant. Despite all the conveniences, I was glad to push off Wongaling Beach the next morning, kayak again fully laden, back to the island solitude. This time to the Barnard group of islands, Stephens then Kent. From there we tracked back to the coast, whale-watching as we went. I took Margot's advice and was careful not to fall into the mouth of the Johnstone River, a known crocodile habitat. Flying Fish Point

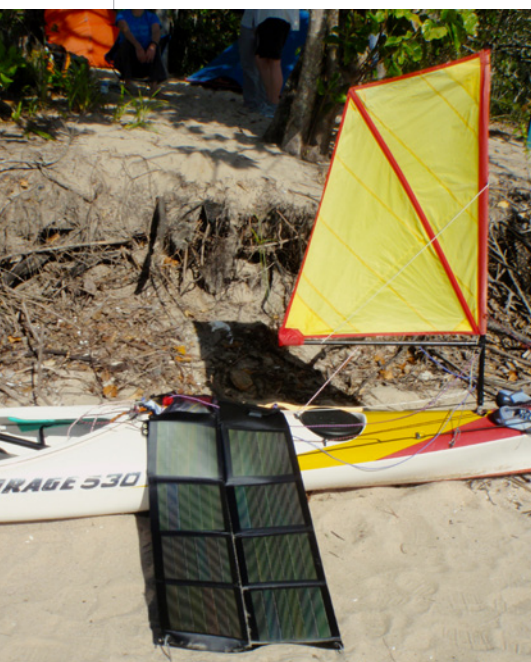
bizarrely was exactly that – schools of fish flying from a predator, right to the very edge of the water. If we'd still been in the kayaks with open cockpits, we'd have collected dinner.

From there we followed the mainland coastline for 10km seeing rainforest covered slopes sweep down to pristine, deserted beaches. A turn east and then 20km out to the next island. This crossing wasn't tricky or rough, yet it demanded my every ounce of strength and focus. Arriving, Peter and I took the scenic and rougher route to the campsite, exploring the more exposed eastern shores of Russell Island.

Our luck continued to hold and on we went to High Island, and further again to land at Fitzroy Island with its tourist resort. A few hours, a few beers, a tasty lunch, all enough to convince that even though the campsite was accessible and well-ordered this much civilisation was too much civilisation for our final night 'out'. An afternoon crossing to a mainland bay, that didn't have that mainland feel due to its isolation, and we set up camp.

Our final day was another 35km crossing, just like the first day, only this time there was no lunch spot for landing. We were 15km out from Cairns, bee-lining it to our destination. The seas were calm and flat, the sun shone and we suffered. No winds for sailing, no puffs even for relief, no changing scenery for entertainment, just mirror-flat water, as if the wind and weather gods were telling us we'd been looked after for 21 days so be grateful and be glad.

And we were. Out doing what we love, where few venture, under our own steam, following our chosen path. Right to where Harry called us home. ■



SANDY ROBSON COMPLETES INDIA

– Another record

On her epic 5 year 50,000 km voyage from Germany to Australia that started early in 2011, Sandy Robson has just become the first Woman to paddle the entire west Coast of India. She has been using local media coverage along the way to increase awareness about pollution and overfishing, both of which she has witnessed in large measure.

Sandy is retracing German canoeist Oskar Speck's journey in a kayak along the same route, from 1932 to 1939. Her full story can be read on her brilliant website www.sandy-robson.com

In case you're inspired (and wealthy), Sandy says "I am not afraid of pirates, but I am afraid of not having enough sponsors to keep this expedition going". ■



David Whyte shows classic form at Jervis Bay





Remembering **CHRIS**

On 16th December 2012 my esteemed friend Chris James unexpectedly passed away whilst paddling off Sydney Heads. He was just 48 years of age.

Chris was a great mate and with Mark and I, had formed a successful paddling team completing the North Reef Expedition and the “Degree South” paddle. Needless to say we had many more trips in the pipeline.

Chris was an AC qualified Sea Guide and had completed all the training and on water assessment for the Sea Instructor Award. He was an exceptional mentor able to strike a fine balance between adventure and risk: he enjoyed the challenge but tempered this with a need to provide safe backup for those who were testing their skills, and, most important, he lead by example with his kayaks always fitted out to the highest standard. His personal skills and fitness were something of a benchmark amongst the regular Tuesday night paddling group and the club in general.

Chris was a dedicated volunteer for the NSWSKC, and it used to amaze me how often he found the time co-lead the Tuesday paddles amid his heavy business schedule. He was a stalwart Guide at Rock n Roll weekends, his groups always coming back with stories to tell and smiles on their faces.

His generosity was legendary: First Aid Courses, Instructor workshops, Navigation

Training and Sea Leader programs were all hosted by Chris at Nielsen Park Café when he was proprietor.

Chris’s latest contribution to the club was to model basic sea kayaking strokes for a series of video clips to be used in the club’s new E-learning resource. When you see this footage you will understand why so many new paddlers wanted to paddle like him.

Reminiscences somehow take a little of the edge off the loss: they keep Chris with us in the stories of shared adventures and we can see how his positive influence continues to resonate through the local kayaking community.

Last week I spotted one of the newer Tuesday night paddlers tacking away from the cliffs in a series of skillful zigzags; picking up runners on the rebounding waves. It was a pleasure to watch someone making their boat work so well in these dynamic conditions and before I had a chance to say anything he gave me big grin and confirmed my suspicions saying: “Chris taught me how to do that!”

I would often ask Chris to keep a special eye out for those likely

to need help or extra support on the water. If conditions were likely to be tricky he would always end up buddied up with the most likely paddler to need a rescue and with a few kind and well chosen words Chris would build their confidence and understanding so the capsizes seldom happened.

Whether you were lucky enough to paddle with Chris often or maybe just looked forward to catching up with him at Rock n Roll I know you will join me in acknowledging just how lucky we have been to have Chris in our paddling community and to join me in passing on our deepest sympathy and messages of support to Chris’s loving wife, Sally, and their three beautiful girls Casey, Lucy and Darcy. ■



The line of BLUE

By Trevor Costa *owich*

One last line, up and over, and then I have made it, beyond the breakers.

Sitting in my sea kayak looking back towards the beach, it never feels quite right. It's another world out there, a weird alternate world where the dark backs of the waves become lighter as they race away, to tumble on the beach.

The poet Hart Crane wrote of the dangers that await the careless swimmer, beyond a certain line in the waves, beyond which 'all is lost'...

"There is a line. You must not cross nor ever trust beyond it. The bottom of the sea is cruel".

But if you do cross the line, look back towards the beach, where the dark

becomes light blue.

Do the denizens of the deep stare at this light blue line and shiver in fear of what lies beyond? Is this the same line the leviathans shun, but seek out when all is lost, to thrust themselves beyond?

Is there a whale poet who writes "The sand of the beach is cruel"?



Trevor chasing the line photo by Andrew Eddie



Logbook UPDATE

For those of you in the club that like to record your training and trips, you will now notice that the committee has updated the

log book. Some of the changes are cosmetic and other changes have been to amend word choices that have created confusion.

For example, following discussion at the club leaders' development weekend held in February 2012, the word 'assess' was changed to 'observe'.

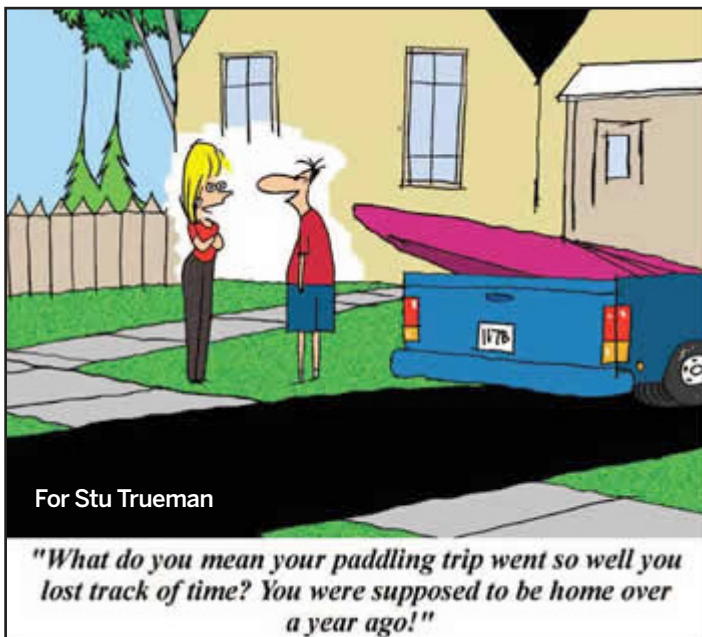
Previously Page 3 was headed Assessment

Record with columns for Skill Assessed and Assessed by. This has been changed to be Observation Record, Skill Observed and Observed by. For a number of reasons, the word assess caused problems. Often club members understandably thought that a tick in a skill box implied they had been assessed and considered to be competent. Whereas it was intended to mean they could perform the skill, i.e. they knew the mechanics, yet in many cases, needed further practice to become more adept with a particular skill.

Most of our instructors are not qualified as assessors, which again led to confusion about what level of skill competence 'earned' the tick.

To clarify and simplify the club's use of the logbook, that is, use by both instructors and members, the word became observe. Now a tick implies that member has been observed perform that particular skill. Assessment of skills happens as part of the AC Sea Skills assessment. Our assessors will often precede an actual assessment day with a pre-assessment where the assessors will observe and advise if the assessee has the standard of skills required.

We have also added some more guidance regarding club policy about grading and boat fit out. If you haven't accessed it for a while, please go and take a look...it's formatted ready for you to print out and use. See image at right. ■



ANAGRAMS 'R US

Sea Kayak Club:

Aback leaky us • A scab leak... Yuk
A lake, buy cask

Salt Magazine:

Amazing tales • Anti Zeal Mags
A Meal At Zings (followed by...)
Mega Anal Zits (ouch!)

Eskimo roll:

Romeo skill • Slim looker • Or lose milk

Q: Why did the paddler cross the channel?

A: To get to the other tide.

Q: Why can't Hawkesbury paddlers change a lightglobe?

A: They can't do that many turns.



NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB Kayaking is life, the rest mere detail

Home > About the Club > Key Documents > Forms > All Documents > Public > Forms

- Home
- About the Club
- Club News
- Membership
- Contact Us
- Committee Members
- Key Documents
 - Forms
 - AGM Minutes
 - Policies & Guidelines
 - Other Documents
- The Club Honour Board
- Paddler Grading System
- Newsletter Archive
- Annual General Meetings
- AGM Minutes
- Trips
- From Our Club Magazine

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Name	Created	Size	Downloads
Trip Planner	2012-01-19 22:21:27	45.66 KB	99
Paddler's Logbook Version:1.3	2011-11-05 17:11:45	209.9 KB	143
Incident Report Form	2011-11-05 17:09:39	61.53 KB	79
Direct Observation Form	2011-11-05 17:08:40	18.99 KB	94
Float Plan	2011-11-05 17:06:29	11.29 KB	102
Trip Waiver	2011-11-05 17:03:32	41.95 KB	125

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By Campbell Tiley

ROCK n ROLL UPDATE

Jimmys Beach, Hawks Nest – March 15 to 18

Time is running out to register for Rock n Roll the premier social and paddling event on our calendar. Don't miss out on this weekend of paddling, catching up with old friends, making new ones as well as gear to check out and skills to learn. Registrations close on March 12, register via the club website.

Two highly experienced paddlers will present, paddle and teach at RnR 2013:

Nigel Foster is an expeditioner, kayak designer and coach. He was the first to circumnavigate Iceland by kayak with many inspiring expeditions following. He has published extensively and has an instructional sea kayaking DVD series. Since 1985 he has taught and designed equipment and since 2007 has been head of R&D at Point65. His latest book "Encounters from a Kayak" was released last November.

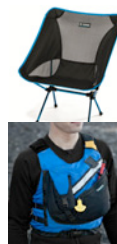
Les Allen, a leader in the WA kayaking community, is an advanced instructor and assessor and an experienced expeditioner, having paddled most of the WA coast, Bass Strait and the east and south coasts of Tassie. He was a founding member of the WA Sea Kayak Club and runs training programs for Canoeing WA. His visit has been made possible with the support of Expedition Kayaks.

VENUE – Jimmys Beach Holiday Park at Hawks Nest is on the northern shore of Pt Stephens about 3 hours drive north of Sydney. The park's been upgraded substantially over the past year. To book accommodation contact the resort directly. The managers Barry and Karen offer a 10% discount if you mention that you are attending RnR: jimmysbeach@nchp.com.au or 1800 662 209.

CATERING – Beer and pizza on Friday evening will be provisioned once again by Expedition Kayaks. Saturday's presentation dinner will be provided by Hawks Nest Golf Club, a 20 minute walk from the campground with a courtesy bus for the trip home if required. Dinner must be booked at registration, with a vegetarian option. Other meals need to be self-catered. Consider congregating at the marquee for meals to meet and chat with other attendees.

RAFFLE – We have an exciting range of equipment to raffle. Purchase your tickets on-line at registration – you will receive them in your registration pack at Jimmys Beach. The raffle will be drawn on the Saturday evening.

First Prize: Helinox Chair One donated by Helinox, Kokotak PFD, deck net and reflective deck line kit, donated by Flat Earth Kayak Sails



Second Prize: Full carbon two piece paddle donated by Flat Earth Kayak Sails



Third Prize: Deck net and reflective deck line kit donated by Flat Earth Kayak Sails

NSWSKC MEMBERSHIP – You need to be a financial member of the club to participate. Memberships are annual and expired on February 28. New members can join at the time of their Rock n Roll registration.

SHORT FILMS AWARDS NIGHT – the Cannes Film Festival of Kayaking takes place on Sunday evening with a prize for the best short video of your personal kayaking experiences or story. Come along and help

This event is sponsored by

EXPEDITION
KAYAKS



choose the winner. Entries are still open, email rnr2012-13@nswseakayaker.asn.au to submit.

SHOW US YOUR GEAR – gizmos, electronics and great inventions. Mad inventors bring your inverters, solar panels, comfiest-seat-in-the-world and other gizmos and convince the passing parade on Sunday evening that it is all essential. Any kayaking idea is eligible. Winner's prize donated by Solar Australia.

PADDLING TRIPS – scheduled with our trip leaders and instructors each morning on Saturday, Sunday and, more informally, Monday, destinations and direction depending on the conditions. Afternoons will be left for onshore activities - talks, skills sessions and workshops. You are free to organise paddles independently although we request that you log your trip details, departure and return on the Trip Log at the HQ cabin. If you are likely to want to paddle on trips involving surf landings or gauntlets, please bring your helmet.

Don't forget to thank our sponsors for the weekend:

Gold Sponsor: Expedition Kayaks
Rob Mercer, Sharon Betteridge and Mark Sundin
www.expeditionkayaks.com

Silver Sponsor: Flat Earth Kayak Sails
Mick MacRobb
www.flatearthkayaksails.com

Silver Sponsor: Solar Australia
Brad McPherson
www.solarauswholesale.com.au

Bronze Sponsor: Helinox
Norm Moxey
www.helinox.com.au

Rock and Roll 2013 Programme as at 4 March

Jimmys Beach Holiday Park, Hawks Nest, March 15-18 2013

HQ = Head Quarters - Cabin BH2

Friday 15 March 2012

1700	RnR 2013 open for check-in	Marquee
1730	Beer and Pizza provided by Expedition Kayaks	Marquee
1800	Bring Dinner and drinks to Marquee and mingle	Marquee
1930	RnR 2013 check-in closes	Marquee

Paddling trips can be organised amongst club members but all trips during the RnR must be logged including the names and grades of those going, destination, return time, communication option (VHF or phone). Departure and return must be logged with the beach master - see procedure in registration papers

Submit short Videos for consideration for the Sunday video session - see criteria on website and submission process. There will be a stunning prize for the best video.

Saturday 16 March 2013

0700	Yoga before breakfast - Rae Duffy, Shaan Gresser	Meet at Marquee
0700-0830	HQ open for check-in	Marquee
0800	Tripleaders briefing - Megan Pryke	HQ - Cabin BH2
0845	Welcome address and announcements	Marquee
0855	Weekend safety and on-water procedures - Megan Pryke	Marquee
0900	Registration for Saturday trips and training	Marquee
0930	Meet tripleaders for morning trips and training	Beach / Startpoint
1330-1400	Morning trips return for lunch; sign off with beach master	Beach / Marquee
1500-1630	Forward Stroke - Rae Duffy, Mike Eggleton	Marquee
1500-1630	Kayak outfitting, modifications and repairs - Andre Janecki	Marquee area
1500-1630	10 ways to turn a kayak - Les Allen (register in am) Mick MacRobb will be available all weekend for sail fitting and tuning	Jimmys Beach Flat Earth Tent
1715	Leave Jimmys for leisurely WALK to Golf Club and pre-dinner beverage	Marquee
1800	Dinner at Hawks Nest Golf Club - allow 25 mins to walk	Golf Club
1900	Vale Chris James - Rob Mercer	Golf Club
1905	Club President - Welcome, Address, Raffle Draw	Golf Club
1930	Nigel Foster - "Stepping Stones"	Golf Club
2030	Les Allen - "Tales from the Wild West"	Golf Club
2130	Walk or courtesy bus back to camp ground	Golf Club
Later	Gather around fire (conditions permitting) for philosophising and chat	Marquee / Firepit

Sunday 17 March 2013

0800	Tripleaders briefing - Megan Pryke	HQ
0830	Registration for Sunday trips and training	Marquee
0900	Meet tripleaders for morning trips and training	Beach / Startpoint
1330-1400	Morning trips return for lunch; sign off with beach master	Beach / Marquee
1500-1630	Skin on Frame Kayaks - Folding and using - Mick MacRobb	Flat Earth
1500-1630	Nigel Foster - Directional control (if demand following am sessions) - Register in am	Jimmys Beach
1730	Gizmos, Gear, Remote Power - What do we all need for that 2 week remote trip?	Marquee
1800	Dinner break - if eating in the campground, come to Marquee area, be social	Marquee
2000	RnRfest (Tropfest it aint!) - Selected short videos	Marquee
2130	Hopefully more philosophising and chat	Marquee / Firepit

Monday 18 March 2013

0830	Tripleaders briefing	HQ
0900	Registration for Monday trips and 'Log On' for private paddles	Marquee
0930	Meet tripleaders for morning trips	Beach
1230-1330	Trips return, sign off with beach master	Marquee
1500	Rock and Roll 2013 Close	

Rock n Roll 2013 Sponsors

Gold	Expedition Kayaks
Silver	Flat Earth Kayak Sails, Solar Australia
Bronze	Helinox

By Mark Schroeder

DISABILITY KAYAKING

Going places

Kayaking from the Port of Sale to the sea at Lakes Entrance, a distance of 120km over 3.5 days would be an adventure for most of us.

For Andrew Bedggood and many of the 60 paddlers he's taken with him on the trip twice, and will do so again later this month, it's more than that.

and significant funds raised for charities.

Andrew has been joined by a supporting committee, but the event continues to be organised essentially by him on an entirely local basis with no State or Federal funding.

Here's what Andrew himself has to say about the event:

In 1983, at the age of 19, founder of the Sale to Sea Disability Kayak Challenge, Andrew was involved in an accident on his way home from work where his car ran out of fuel five minutes from home. Whilst standing behind the car, another vehicle ran off the road and collided with him and the rear of his vehicle at 100km per hour. The impact basically cut Andrew in two and resulted in his right leg being amputated below the knee, left leg crushed below the knee and head injuries.

As a part of his rehab, Andrew began kayaking the local waterways around Maffra in East Gippsland and it was during these times on the water that the thought of doing something big in a kayak began.

In 2009, he organised the Sale to Sea Amputee Kayak Challenge to raise awareness to amputee issues as well as promote active participation for those living with a disability.

The adventure was undertaken by Andrew, two other amputees and three individuals with various types of disabilities, to highlight victory over adversity and to promote a positive lifestyle.

Since then it's become a biannual event, broadening its focus from amputees to disabled people of all sorts, with 60 participants last year

“True character is often found in adversity, but true strength is held in one's mind. Vision impaired, hearing impaired, physically disabled or just setting themselves a goal to succeed, these people set out to conquer the Gippsland Lakes and kayak from the Port of Sale to the sea at Lakes Entrance.

Kayakers paddle across Lake Wellington, to Loch Sport, then on to Paynesville, Captains Cove, Raymond Island and Metung, with the final day finishing up at North Arm, Lakes Entrance.

Being on the water is an escapist experience for people living with a disability. It offers physical relief from the pressure of physical pain and ailments. The experience of floating on the water through beautiful scenery, free from shackles of wheel chairs and prosthetic limbs is also incredibly liberating.

The endurance of the human spirit is evident in all those who participate in the Challenge. We witness extraordinary feats of perseverance by people who were already behind the eight ball before even commencing the gruelling trip. The support for one another, the encouragement to push forward and the camaraderie amongst everyone involved make the Challenge what it is, a unique event that

enables people of all abilities to set themselves a goal and go for it.

Courage is not always found on a battlefield or in times of great danger, it is in the hearts of everyday people who strive to succeed no matter how big the Challenge. Strength of mind will eventually overcome what we perceive as a

barrier and allow us to succeed in whatever goal we set ourselves. I am not about to let my legs beat me and would just like to encourage those who want to have a go, to get out and live their life”.

The 2013 Sale to Sea starts on March 13 and is set to be the biggest and best yet. I'm sure you join me in wishing Andrew and his fellow paddlers every success.

I've been sidelined from paddling for a few months with an injury resulting from a cycling accident (well, two accidents actually but that's another story). Crashing badly in remote bush during a mountain bike race, I landed head first, folding my back the wrong way. For a while the medics suspected I had broken my back and it scared me, but the requested airlift was soon downgraded to an ambulance and eventually I was cleared of serious damage. Being in a remote area, that ambo ride cost \$2000 plus the \$4000 bike was broken however I was helped by an insurance claim through the Paraplegic Benefit Fund (PBF) which backed the bike race I was in.





In appreciation, I have lined the PBF up as the charity for which the Rose Bay Challenge kayak race on April 14 will raise funds. I'm helping to promote and organise that race, and in doing so have been seeking to involve a physically disabled paddler to further the PBF message. That's how I came across Andrew's event described above. Speaking with Andrew

was fantastic, the man's enthusiasm radiates through the phone. However, Andrew didn't know any Sydney based disabled paddlers. So I kept digging and a whole world opened up.

First I discovered that four million people in Australia (18.5%) reported having a disability in 2009, according to Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC).

And whilst there are lots of disabled cyclists,

to paddle a few strokes!

But I love a challenge and I love the freedom of being on the water – so I persevered and finally managed a few strokes, then a few more strokes, then a few sprints and a marathon." Last year Kara created history by winning Australia's first Para Canoe World Champs medal - bronze in the women's V1 LTA Final in Poznan. She went on to win a second Bronze medal four hours later!



runners, swimmers and more, and each of those sports has a whole ecosystem of support, coaching, facilities, clubs etc around it, disabled paddling – or paracanoeing as it's called - is decidedly lower profile. However, that's set to change thanks to the decision that paracanoeing will make its inaugural Olympic appearance at the 2016 Rio Paralympics. Paracanoe incorporates canoe, outrigger and kayak disciplines. For some time Australians have been competing in the disciplines at a world championship level – and doing very well 2012 Australian Paracanoeist of the Year Kara 'Bullet' Kennedy commenced paracanoe in February 2010.

I'd been paddling outriggers with a Gold Coast club for 2 years when I was asked if I was interested in trying kayaking.

In February 2010 I sat in a kayak for the first time.

Within the first five minutes I knew this was going to be a huge challenge just to stay upright, before even attempting

2011 Paracanoeist of the year Brock Ingram is excited by the crop of emerging para-paddlers getting ready for Rio. "We're expecting a huge influx of people from other sports, like hand-cyclists for example. They are all built like brick shithouses and know how to make their hands go forward really quick. I think they could turn that into some real power in the boat," he said. Brock finished 5th in the men's K1 LTA in Poznan.

I hope we see growing interest, support and participation in NSW in and by disabled paddlers, but clearly there's a long way to go. If you're interested there's a Paracanoe development workshop next Sunday March 10th at 10.00am at Manly Warringah Canoe Club. Get involved if you can help. ■

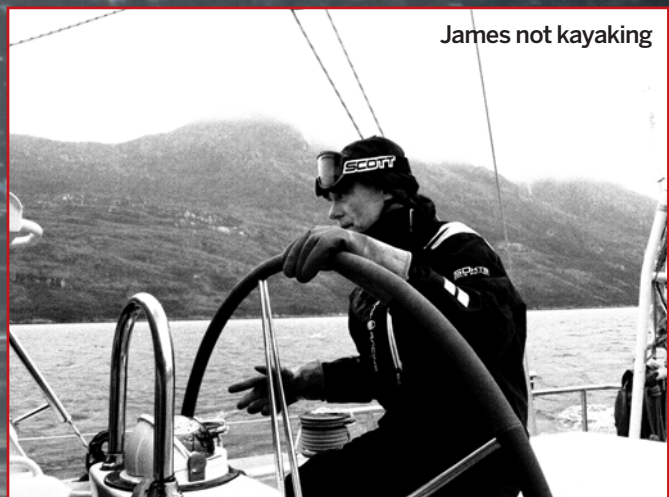


Andrew Bedgood

By James Johnson

Through **BEAGLE CHANNEL** and round **CAPE HORN**

A kayak story...with lots of sailing and walking.



James not kayaking

By James Johnson

It wasn't supposed to be a kayak trip, but kayaking was the icing on the cake for my trip last year to Chile.

Over a period of six months Hunter, a mate of mine, persuaded me to go sailing in Chile. I joined seven other Australians who had chartered a 73 ft yacht to sail down the Beagle Channel, exploring the fiords and bays along the way, then sail out and around Cape Horn and back. Since I was travelling so far, I thought Hunter and I should go a bit early and do a walk, and that's how the holiday started.

Ushuaia styles itself "The city at the end of the Earth", but depending on your definition of "city" that title should probably go to Puerto Williams, a couple of hours by small boat down the channel. More a cowboy town really, established to support the naval base there, horses graze in the streets and dogs follow you around hopefully. This was the jump-off point for our walk, the Dientes Circuit, five days in the mountains behind town. This is a kayak story, so I won't go into the details of what was a great walk.

Back in Puerto Williams we found the Micalvi, the local Yacht Club, which is housed in a naval vessel that had been brought into

the bay at high tide and sunk in the mud. A mixed collection of sailing boats moors around it and at night it opens as a great bar serving pisco sours that are deceptively easy to drink. It was my birthday and a visiting sailor from Latvia made sure we celebrated it in his country's traditional way; I was thrown in the air sitting in a chair by a collection of drunk people, once for every year of my birthday.

Anyway this is a kayak story and the kayaking started the next day. Pelagic, the sailing boat which was to be home for the next two weeks arrived in Puerto Williams, so Hunter and I joined the others, who had come from Ushuaia, on board. It was then I saw a new looking Necky plastic sea kayak being raced away to shore on the inflatable dinghy - it had been used on a film trip to Antarctica and was going to be stored ashore. After some negotiation via the VHF radio, it was returned and I was kitted out with drysuit, PFD, Werner paddle etc. Things were looking up.

It was blowing over 45 knots so the port was closed to navigation by the Navy. I thought I would paddle upstream and explore, but within 10 minutes I was being followed by a vehicle on the shore and subsequently given a good talking to in Spanish. Apparently I was violating the port closure.

Down to 35 knots next day and we were allowed to leave. We motor sailed down the Channel with three reefs in the main, taking half hour turns on the helm, wearing wet weather gear, ski goggles and heavy gloves. It was about 5 degrees without windchill and there were two lamb carcasses tied to the back of the boat curing nicely in the salt spray, ready for bbqs and lamb curries on the nights ahead.

Arriving at Yendagaia, our destination for the next two nights and a deep protected bay, we had thousands of sea-birds and some whales to keep us entertained. So this is where the kayaking really starts. There were also two inflatable kayaks on board and the other James on the trip joined me next morning exploring the bay. We disturbed what must have been 10,000 smelly sea birds, before encountering 20 smelly Antarctic sealions. What we really wanted to see were whales.

We could see whales spouting in the distance, but after a half hour or so of paddling towards them we weren't getting any closer. No sooner had we turned for home than a pair of humpbacks surfaced in front of us, about three metres apart, and just sat on the surface. James had a gopro camera, and for the next 6 minutes he filmed us and then as we drifted closer, ending up a paddle length away and looking down the blow-hole of the nearest whale when it surfaced. Drifting behind I ended up between them, at which point they vanished in a short surge of power.

I headed out later that afternoon for another visit to the whales. The bay had great patches of milky green from the glacial river that fed it and the whales seemed to prefer the clearer dark waters. After an hour or so, I saw spouts in the distance, again I followed and got no closer, but as soon as I gave up, they headed my way, then disappeared. For a long while I had my little waterproof camera videoing the water where I hoped they would appear, and suddenly one whale then the other surfaced, so close that they filled the screen and the camera struggled to focus on them. They were big. They surfaced a second time and then gave me the classic view of a fin lazily curving out of the water, waving, and slipping out of sight.

I should give you a bit of an idea of how this kayak trip went. After you finish paddling, you climb back on board, get out of the drysuit, have a hot shower, then settle in the warm saloon with a glass or five of Chilean wine and some cheese while dinner cooks and look at the day's photos and video on the laptop. Or read from the boat's library of history and natural history books about the area. I'm afraid club trip leaders are going to have to lift their game.



Nearly kayaking... as soon as we find the lake



Kayaking



Hiking above the snowline

Anyway the Pelagic carried us to a series of delightful fiords, complete with glaciers tumbling kilometres down into the bay. Some parts of the bays were so chock-a-block with chunks of ice that the kayak had to bump its way through and over them. Up in the hills above one bay was a lake and a 20 minute portage had me exploring in fresh water.

One of the hikes we did took four of us well above the snow line. There had no real discussion of how far we would go that morning, no sleeping bag or extra food was packed, there was no track and only one route through a cliff line below us, Laura who was one of the crew from the boat who went with us hadn't been up before, the weather was closing in and our tracks were disappearing in the snow. We had no radio with us. The snow was waist deep in places. The summit kept receding in a series of false summits and it was getting late. We made a deadline of 3.00pm to turn back. At 2.55pm we were on top, the weather cleared for photos and it all worked out fine. It could so easily have gone another way.

Of course you had to watch the weather even with the cushy set-up on board. One short evening paddle almost brought me unstuck when the wind picked up from nothing to lots and I battled to get back against it. I learned the shortcomings of VHF; my radio couldn't raise the Pelagic which was within a kilometre but was tucked behind a cliff.

And around Cape Horn? It didn't disappoint with 55 knots and a rolling sea all night - but this was less than it had been for the previous week. The first person to lose dinner (and it looked like lunch and a smorgasbord breakfast came up too) set off a queasy reaction among the crew, with several going out in sympathy. Our watch took in the fourth reef at about 10.00pm, reducing the area of the main to about the size of a sea kayak sail. Then just after dawn we saw and rounded Cape Horn. Fantastic.

Next day it was calm enough to go ashore at the Cape and stuck on the wall of the lighthouse was a signed postcard from Freya Hoffmeister. She had been through only weeks beforehand on her trip paddling around South America. That is of

course another way of having a kayak trip in these parts, but I didn't for a minute feel inadequate.

I had one last paddle before we returned to Puerto Williams. While we anchored in the lee of an island, I headed off for an explore in the kayak for a couple of hours. The kelp was like giant black tagliatelle and I saw all sorts of marine mammals, which I tried to identify when I got back to the library. Some I only heard as they surfaced behind the kayak, gone before I could see them. But there was no mistaking the Orca cruising close past me when I entered one little bay.

The place is spectacular, the people were tremendous, the sailing and walking were adventurous at times, but the unexpected kayaking really made the trip for me. ■



Washriding humpbacks

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The NSWSKC is a voluntary organisation run by members who give their time freely to the club. Membership is offered yearly. Please see the website for details and application. To contact the club, please email:

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



Photo by Rob Mercer