

No. 100 August - September 2002

THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

Photos by Max Grant of the Lake Rotorangi Excursion.
See trip report by Susan Cade on page 17.



Starting out from Glen-Nui, with one of the houseboats in the background.

Unusual shape for a houseboat!



**The Journal of the Kiwi Association
of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc. - KASK**

KASK

KASK, the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc., a network of New Zealand sea kayakers, has the objectives of:

1. promoting and encouraging the sport of sea kayaking
2. promoting safety standards
3. developing techniques & equipment
4. dealing with issues of coastal access and protection
5. organizing an annual sea kayak forum
6. publishing a bimonthly newsletter.

The Sea Canoeist Newsletter is published bimonthly as the official newsletter of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc.

Articles, trips reports, book reviews, equipment reviews, new techniques, letter to the editor, and moments when the word 'Bugger!' was said singularly or often {referred to by some as incidents} are sought to enliven the pages of the newsletter.

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KASK Annual Subscriptions are:

\$25 single membership
\$30 family membership.
\$35 overseas

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KASK HANDBOOK

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COST:

New members: gratis

Existing members: \$14 + \$1 p&p

Non-members: \$18 + \$1 p&p

Make cheques out to KASK (NZ) Inc Trade enquiries to Max Grant.

THE LRB2, or the Little Red Book 2nd. Edition, is a mammoth compilation on all aspects of sea kayaking in New Zealand, by many of the most experienced paddlers in the Universe. Following a brief introduction, the handbook is divided into six sections:

- Kayak, Paddle & Equipment
- Techniques & Equipment
- The Elements
- Trips and Expeditions
- Places to Go
- Resources

Each section contains up to nine separate chapters. The Resources section, for example has chapters on:

- guide to managing a sea kayak symposium
- Paddling Literature
- Author profiles
- Guides and Rental Operators
- Network Addresses
- Sea Kayaks in NZ listing

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EDITORIAL

KASK Membership Questionnaire

Thanks to all those who took the time to answer, and particularly to KASK president Vincent Maire who compiled a comprehensive 23 page membership survey report. In his committee column (p.19), Vincent has discussed the results of the survey and discusses what took place with the two day KASK committee meeting that was held 27 - 28 July, in Wellington.

With respect to the survey, both the handbook and newsletter rated highly with readers. The ranking from highest to lowest in terms of topic interest in the newsletter is as follows:

- 1 NZ trip reports
- 2 Upcoming events
- 3 Paddles & techniques
- 4 Bugger file
- 5 Gear & gadgets
- 6 Letters to the editor
- 7 Risk Management
- 8 Training
- 9 Regional news
- 10 Conservation
- 11 Boat design
- 12 Medical/fitness
- 13 Overseas trip reports
- 14 Boats/gear for sale
- 15 Book reviews
- 16 Profiles on people

Shocked and stunned, I was, to see book reviews featuring so low on the list. I did request from Vincent the names and addresses of all those newsletter readers who rated book reviews so lowly, so I could personally admonish them. However as Vincent was not forthcoming with the addresses, I will remind readers of a quote from Cicero: 'A room without books is like a body without a soul.'

However it is pleasing to see techniques, the bugger file and gear and gadgets featuring so high in the list. And there is no excuse now for not writing up your latest NZ paddle, as it is such reports that readers feature top of the list.

NEWSLETTER No. 100

I asked several Kiwi paddlers, who have been involved with sea kayaking for over 25 years, for their thoughts and reflections on the meaning of life and sea kayaking. The reflections from both Kerry Howe and Kevin Dunsford show how much has changed over the years with respect to kayaks and kit, and it is interesting to see how strongly spray-skirts feature in their reflections. Both stories are a joy to read.

Jan Eggar has touched on how her husband Graham initiated the first 'Sea Canoeist Newsletter' and circumstances of the first plenipotentiary meeting of the KASK executive which was held in Graham's bathroom. (I do recall Graham saying he'd had a gutsful of the way things were developing in Auckland with sea kayaking. He decided to form an association of sea kayakers (ASK), however I thought this was a rather mundane title and I persuaded him that KASK would roll off the tongue much easier. Graham then stated categorically that I was to be president, with one major condition that I kept my mouth shut!)

And Grahame Sisson and Su Sommerhalder have both brought a little humour into their reflections.

Thanks to the contributors, Max Grant for arranging the printing, and to the Ruahine Whitewater Club for the distribution.

KASK SUBSCRIPTIONS

A reminder from the treasurer that subs, for
2002 - 2003 are now due.

Single:	\$ 25.00
Family:	\$ 30.00
Overseas:	\$ 35.00

**This will be the last
reminder and final
newsletter for the previous
subscription.**

THE 100th ISSUE OF THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST 10 OR MORE YEARS...

To celebrate the auspicious occasion of newsletter number 100, I asked several paddlers who have been involved with sea kayaking for up to 25 years for some personal reflections.

FROM: KERRY HOWE

My sea kayaking world over the past 10 or more years has changed as dramatically as society and technology have changed.

I used to paddle a battered fibreglass whitewater kayak on the sea. I used wing nuts to bolt on a home-made aluminium skeg so that I could paddle it in a straight line. Then I could barely turn it. In my mind it became a real sea kayak the day I fitted deck lines. I got the idea from a British canoe book. It had no bulkheads, and any water entering the cockpit sloshed from end to end. I used it for short paddles in calm seas on summer holidays in Northland and Auckland. I knew no one else who wore a spray skirt and paddled a kayak on the sea. I got lots of very funny looks. In the early 1980's I came across Paul Caffyn's 'Obscured by Waves' which described his circumnavigation of the South Island. I was utterly inspired by this journey, as I have been by all his subsequent adventures. It was not just the amazing feats of long distance paddling that fascinated me, but also the simple yet delightful possibilities of being totally self contained, of coming ashore in some remote location and setting up camp and watching the sun set and drifting off to sleep.

My lonely little sea kayak world was soon revolutionised by technology and by my discovery of a small but grow-

ing sea kayaking community in the 1980's. I once lived in Palmerston North and joined Max Grant's Ruahine White Water Club. Despite its name it also organised sea kayak trips, and I took the life-changing step of buying a slightly damaged Puffin, complete with pod. It weighed a tonne, but I loved it and kept it for over 10 years. My first day trip in the Puffin was with David Herrington. We went from Plimmerton to Pukerua Bay, just north of Wellington. It's a short distance, but I thought we had almost circumnavigated the North Island. David must have been long-suffering that day as he patiently paddled at my snail's pace, and then silently tolerated my gloating afterwards about my stunning achievement in my new plastic boat. I had no idea then that David regularly sea kayaked across Cook Strait at the drop of a hat.

Apart from going to rolling lessons in the local swimming pool, I did not have any formal training, but simply by going on Club trips and watching others meant that I was on an amazing learning curve. I cut my sea kayak teeth on day trips around various parts of the lower North Island, such as Kapiti and Mana Islands, and Cape Kidnappers. There was always a near gale. Eventually I went on fantastic Club trips further afield, such as circumnavigating D'Urville Island, and exploring Queen Charlotte Sound.

The D'Urville Island trip (I think it was in 1992) was a real head banger for me. It was winter and it snowed. I almost died. One night I put on my spray skirt and life jacket to try and get warm. Afterwards I vowed never to be cold and uncomfortable again. During the trip I envied other peoples' efficient and classy gear. So at great expense I moved on from a duffel coat to a goretex jacket, from damp cotton and bulky wool to slinky polyprop and snug fleece clothing, and from a summer-weight fibre sleeping bag to an arctic down one. I abandoned my A-frame pup tent and went for an alpine-rated MacPac model with space age fabric and aircraft-grade aluminium poles. I replaced my primitive hexamine tablets with a cooker powered by blue gas canisters. And I

learned how to eat straight from the pot rather than mess about with an assortment of silly plates that needed washing and could never be packed properly in the Puffin's slippery compartments.

In the last 10 years there has been flourishing of sea kayaking activity in New Zealand and a sharing of knowledge. I attended KASK forums where I met famous sea kayakers and learnt so much. When I moved to Auckland I joined Vincent Maire's very active sea kayak network, ASKNET, and attended the Coastbusters symposiums. Sea kayak clubs and networks sprang up in many parts of the country. There were trip reports, tips and techniques to read about in club publications, as well as in KASK's Sea Canoeist Newsletter, and the marvellous KASK Handbook. Glossy overseas books and magazines on sea kayaking appeared in bookshops and libraries. I still treasure a sea kayaking feature in a 1992 New Zealand Adventure magazine. Today thousands of people go sea kayaking, and my sprayskirt no longer gets funny looks.

The first generation of sea kayakers in New Zealand, those before the 1990's, often came from a white water background, technically proficient but still new to the marine environment. In the 1990's there seems to have been more of an immediate maritime orientation for those taking up sea kayaking for the first time. There was a growing awareness of the usefulness of the fundamentals of coastal navigation, and of understanding weather patterns, and of tying proper sailors' knots. I and other sea kayakers completed Coastguard's Day Skipper and Boatmaster courses. There are now many sea kayakers who can identify an east cardinal marker, or the lights of a powered vessel longer than 50 metres constrained by its draft heading directly towards them in the blackness of the Rangitoto channel. There were also courses for sea kayakers on basic skills and self-rescue as well as on previously unheard of topics for sea kayakers such as leadership, risk management, and first aid. Ordinary sea kayakers became more adventurous and went touring in amazing loca-

tions. Some combined their travels with other activities such as tramping, fishing, drawing, writing and photography. Many sea kayakers became more politically aware about issues such as marine pollution, conservation, access to waterways, and the pros and cons of eco-tourism. And every one of us has come to share a pathological hatred of jet-skis.

The last 10 years have also seen a flooding into the country of new technologies and other goodies. There was a whole new range of plastic, fibreglass and kevlar sea kayaks to choose from. The best ones were made in New Zealand by a range of competing manufacturers. I guiltily abandoned my Puffin for a younger, sleeker fibreglass craft. I moved from those smelly blue gas bottle stoves to an ultra-efficient white spirits model, from ex-army oblong aluminium pots to stainless steel copper bottoms, from a foam mat to a Therm-a-rest, from a beloved boyhood sheath knife to a Leatherman, and from a bulky Dolphin lamp to a mini-Maglight and a stylish headlamp. Then came the VHF radio, the cell phone, and the GPS....

Once upon a time you had to buy your outdoor toys in grotty ex-army surplus stores whose customers seemed to be either dirty old men in raincoats or thin, bewiskered tramping club types who had manic eyes, wore sandals and smelled of fresh sweat. Now there are ultra-modern outdoor centres selling gadgets, clothing and wilderness dreams to normal urban folk. And you can surf the internet and buy the latest products from anywhere in the world.

Sea kayaking in New Zealand has become an industry, a business, and a major recreational activity. Yet some of the basics remain unchanged. I'm still in a long, narrow craft with my butt at water level and a paddle in my hand. My course and my fate continue to depend on my decisions and efforts. The sea and the weather remain potential challenges. And the most magnificent coastline in the world is still there to explore.

Kerry Howe
(krhowe@wave.co.nz)

From: GRAHAME SISSON

It was the spring of 1976. My visitor Vic Hague told me he wanted several sea kayaks so that he and some mates could paddle the coast of Fiordland. Vic had heard of someone in Nottingham who made such a boat. I too had heard of this new boat. The VCP Nordkapp had been recently featured in 'Playboy' Magazine as a groundbreaking new product. The 'Playboy' photo gave no hint to the lines of the boat. Standard issue for that publication - all glitzy touchups and heaps of distortion.

Many Airmail letters later, a deal was cut with the designer Frank Goodman. A visit to the bank manager resulted in a bank loan secured against some unspecified (whole?) part of the house. The bank manager told me straight that I would be better off buying a corner dairy.

There was a lot of eager anticipation by the time the mould arrived from Nottingham. I was mainly freaking out about the security of my house. Vic mainly seemed to be freaking out about his planned trip.

After an initial flurry of production activity relating to Vic and his mates, things settled down to a point where the Nordkapp sold slowly at about 12 per year. Nice sideline! The Nordkapp still sells steadily 25 years later to customers who seem to list sea kayaking as their main sporting interest. This time span possibly beats the VW Beetle for length of continuous production.

I judge that about now, the house is just about safe again. Maybe the bank manager was right! In hindsight the business plan was a product of starry eyed innocence. But nobody can deny - Vic and I sure did kick-start something back in April 1977.

Grahame Sisson - August 2002

From: JAN EGARR

Wow! 100 issues of the newsletter.

In the very first issue, even before No.1, when Graham was testing the water to see if enough people were interested in a newsletter, he wrote:

'Who is going to write it? Well I did say that I would edit it, but really I am no great expert sea canoeist and it will not be long before my store of knowledge is going to be exhausted so I am rather hoping that you will all be able to contribute something - either express an opinion, tell us about something you have tried, tell us about a trip, or a place to visit, maybe just ask a question. The worth of the project will depend very much upon your contribution.'

Well, you contributed to the 34 issues that Graham edited, and now, 11 years later, you have reached the 100th edition. Congratulations to the editor, and to all contributors who have continued the newsletter.

By Newsletter No.7, Graham was suggesting a get-together over the summer, and the first Sea Kayak Forum took place on February 11-12, 1989 at the Mapua Leisure Park (sold recently to an American couple for about \$NZ4 million).

KASK was begun one day when Paul Caffyn came to visit us and Graham was in the bath, relaxing his aches and pains but worrying about trends which were developing within sea kayaking circles. The two of them discussed, hatched and developed the idea of an association of sea kayakers there and then. (Our bathroom is quite large with an old-fashioned claw-legged iron bath and room for several chairs although if I remember correctly, Paul stood while they got hot under the collar(?) and decided to do something about it!)

Sea kayaking really went ahead for people other than the already dedicated few, when Grahame Sisson built the first Nordkapp in New Zealand. Graham and I were fortunate to test

the prototype at Kaiteriteri. We subsequently stayed with the designer, Frank Goodman and his wife, Doreen, in Nottingham and went with them to Taunton to go sea kayaking in the mist. Frank is now in his 70's or 80's and his great passion is paragliding throughout Europe, especially Spain!

I haven't really followed trends in sea kayaking much over the intervening 11 years but have continued to do a little paddling in my river kayak, open Canadian and the sea kayak Graham built, on the Waimea Estuary where we live, along the coastline, (including a trip with my three children and Paul at a sea kayak forum), a trip around Doubtful Sound with Doug and Matthew Rankin and Martin Unwin, and with the children and the Rankin family around Abel Tasman National Park.

The kayaks on top of vehicles have changed a little and I have seen some of the wonderful kayaks which John Dobbie has developed; the new craft are certainly more comfortable to paddle at sea than the river kayak I usually paddle at home. One major change has been the phenomenal increase in sea kayaking companies and the number of people who go kayaking around our coasts and estuaries. It is great that people get out of the cities to recharge themselves but this very influx affects both the natural elements and also the wilderness experience, or rather, the lack of it due to the crowds of people in kayaks or in camps along the shores. Companies, local bodies and government departments have major decisions to make about how our coastline and estuaries will be managed, not least in the Tasman District Council.

Thank you to Paul for continuing as editor. I remember when Paul returned from Alaska two weeks before Graham died and came straight up to Mapua to tell us about his trip. Afterwards, Graham said wistfully that he'd love to be able to go paddling in Alaska like Paul had. The Arctic Circle was one place he really wanted to visit.

The newsletter continues to inspire us

all with stories of trips and places we'd like to visit. Reaching a dream goal is an inspiration to strive for.

Jan Egarr

From: KEVIN DUNS福德. Confessions of a Sea Kayaker

In the beginning was the word. And the word was ... skirt. Apart from the early days of trying on my mother's wedding dress, like you do, this was the first time I, as a bloke, had actually worn a skirt for an extended period – it felt good, like real good, and I knew I was hooked. Was it the feel of the tightness against my waist, the feeling of being confined, safe, warm and dry, or maybe the surfacing of some long suppressed urge? Whatever it was, wearing a skirt down the Wanganui River changed my life forever.

As soon as I returned from that eventful Wanganui trip in the early '80's I knew what I had to do – get a skirt of my own, that I could wear whenever I liked. I consulted the widely acknowledged Auckland experts, Peter and Su Sommerhalder, and told them I wanted a skirt for all occasions, suitable for river wear and sea wear. I ended up with a compromise, a white plastic skirt with a matching red 3+ metre tube with a hole half way along it – called a venturer kayak.

I now had everything I needed for days and nights of fun. The first weekend, I decided to try my luck, packed six day's food and goodies into the Venturer, donned my white plastic skirt and headed up the coast from Milford past Auckland's North Shore beaches, the first night's destination the tip of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula. On setting out, the wind was blowing 20 knots from behind and rising. After I had covered only the first few km it was blowing 30 knots and still rising. I had a choice, call the whole thing off – or head diagonally across to the end of the peninsula and try to out run the gale. What a ride –

9.5 sea miles in one and three quarter hours and I didn't have to paddle a stroke! I used the paddle for steering, and broached down every wave until I reached Shakespear Park at the tip of the peninsula. I emerged, shaking like a leaf with fear and excitement and immediately had to have a pee. This is when I discovered just how versatile a skirt can be, no zipper, no buttons, just squat and squirt.

Relieved, and having discovered why it is called a spray-skirt, I tried pulling the fully loaded kayak out of the water and it hardly budged. Some muscled looking guys up on the beach looked on, I could see their smirks. To lighten the load, I began unpacking my black rubbish bags, full of essentials, taking them up the beach. After the fifth bag I noticed their smirks straightening out and after the eighth, tinkling with bottles of wine, they were falling over themselves to help. So this is how the fairer sex work on unsuspecting guys like us. I was learning.

During that first expedition I learnt about fear and excitement. I discovered the thrill that self-propelled travel can provide, even for non-sporty plebs. The kayak had no water-tight compartments and no air-bags, apart from black plastic rubbish bags full of stuff. It was all kept dry by my lovely little skirt but, like any 'lady' walking down the road on a windy day, I realised that if my skirt blew up it could be very embarrassing and a bit cold too. I realised, like Sergeant Schultz, I knew nothing.

I sought knowledge. At the local library I was introduced to Skirt God, Paul Caffyn. In reading about his kayaking around Stewart Island I discovered that I was not in Heaven after all, there was a Devil whose name was 'Overfall'. Like all religions this Devil was only alluded to from time to time, just enough to scare the living day-lights out of me and ensure that I kept searching for salvation. Next, I read his book Of circumnavigating the South Island ('Obscured by Waves'), but still no answer. It was not until Paul and I were 'virtually' rounding Cape Reinga, the mystical Maori spirit departing place of the north, that the

secret of 'Overfalls' was revealed to me. Although I had found out about the Devil, I also discovered the Devil had helpers, serpents whose names were 'Big Rolling Surf', 'Hard Head Winds', 'Point to Point', 'Standing off 5 Miles Out' and the head serpent "Capsizing".

I knew I needed to be in the presence of a Master. But in those days there were no sea kayaking courses and a local master was not easy to find. My wife eventually booked me in on an Eskimo-rolling course with Guru Ray Button. Although Ray had a white water background he knew the secrets of our religion and had me rolling on the third try. He taught me to believe in technique over brute force, to be a true believer in the skirt, and never take it off for anyone. To the loss of latter-day local seekers, Ray was drawn to the south in search of loyal followers.

By this time I had worn out my old white plastic skirt and now wanted fashion and style. I selected a jet-black, sleek, hip hugging job that stretched tight over the latest fashionable yum-yum yellow plastic Puffin. I could roll and I knew about overfalls. But what use is fashion with no one to show it off to? Two things simultaneously conspired to change this.

Firstly, paddling around the local beaches I saw another skirt-wearing bloke, an ex-cop called Clive Hookham! So, there were other believers and with that name it had to be a sign.

Secondly, my parents saw an advert in the local rag for something called the 2nd Annual Coastbusters Convention at Long Bay. Vincent Maire took a dream of Dave Robinson's, applied good management and exceptional motivation skills and the result, Coastbusters, is still the premier Auckland sea-kayaking event after many, many years and is now a KASK event.

Wearing a skirt by your self is great but being part of a movement is something else again. At Coastbusters there were blokes and even girls doing it;

manufacturers, kayaks, training, events and gear - and gear - and more gear. I had found heaven. However as you, dear reader, will know, whenever you find perfection, something always comes along... In my case Vincent asked me to go on the Coastbusters committee for the next year's event. This turned out to be another step on the path to a higher plane of the skirt religion.

Running a couple of Coastbusters events taught me that big things are just the sum of a whole lot of smaller things and with help from lots of skirt-wearers, smaller things are easily achieved. I became good friends with Vincent's brother Gerry and we contrived a cunning plan to get our wives back into wearing skirts with kayaks attached, which since has led to many interesting trips. Wearing skirts tends to attract lots of others with the same fetish - so it all grows.

A time comes in every seeker's journey where there is a need to retreat to find the inner self. This is when you appear to be anti-social and just set out to sea alone, wearing only your kayak and of course, your skirt. It is in these moments that I have learnt the most about who I am. Total self reliance has shown me just how small I am in the scheme of things. It is so easy to just ... disappear. And how everything we depend on is interconnected and just how fragile those connections are.

Now you, dear reader, if you are still reading, will already know all this. You may even have acknowledged your own skirt-wearing fetish, but there is one thing that, as yet, I have never been able to answer - and maybe you can help me with this. Why is it, that I have never met even one kayaker that has much money, or assets apart from kayaks and gear? Ah! There is still so much more I have to learn.

Kevin Dunsford

From: SU SOMMERHALDER (Auckland Canoe Centre)

Certainly since I joined Auckland Canoe Club in 1965 (Peter came to NZ in 1966 but had previously paddled in Switzerland) there have been huge changes in the types of kayaks available and the whole attitude to kayaking in general - even a name change - it was of course canoeing in those days.

The funniest thing to happen to me at the shop was when a young man and his girlfriend came in to buy a sprayskirt.

He put one on but the body was a bit tight. As he yanked it down, his shorts and underpants went with it and the lot wedged around his knees. There he stood, bum in the air as he tried to release at least his undies from the tangle. His girlfriend and I were holding on to each other, helpless with laughter, probably not the best form of customer service. He very quickly purchased the next size and left. I suspect he has never come back.

Su Sommerhadler

FOR SALE

Make: Paddling Perfection
Model: Slingshot
High performance sea kayak
Very Good Condition
Colour: Red/Black
Location: Auckland
Price: \$2,850
Tel: Dave 021 887 433
or (09) 575 9220

THE 'BUGGER!' FILE

**Report compiled by John
Kirk-Anderson**

Sea kayaker Rescued from a Strong Offshore Wind Situation.

A sea kayaker with limited experience is determined to upskill, after he capsized and was blown offshore.

The paddler, a 46 year old male, had owned his QK Penguin for about four months, and had no previous experience in kayaking. In that time he had paddled on lagoons, and on the lower stretches of the Waimakariri River. He paddled alone and had picked up tips from kayakers he met while out in his boat. The weekend before this incident he had paddled in the surf at Taylor's Mistake.

Shortly before 3pm on Sunday, September 8, he drove to Pines Beach, about 12 kilometres north of Christchurch, and walked down to the water's edge to check conditions. A surf of about 1/2 metre was breaking, and a light northwest wind was blowing offshore and down the beach.

Wearing a buoyancy vest, a cotton top, and Lycra shorts, he launched into the surf which was similar in size to that which he had experienced at Taylor's Mistake the weekend before. He had no difficulties in breaking out through the waves, and once beyond the breaker line he turned to catch a ride in. He noticed at this point that the wind was stronger, as a result of having moved beyond the sheltering trees that give the beach its name.

A larger swell appeared astern, and, not wanting to surf it in, the paddler turned into it. During this turn a gust of wind hit him and he capsized. He was not concerned, as he had practised re-entering his kayak by climbing onto the rear deck and sliding his legs in. He was confident in his ability to get back in, but had only tried it in calmer conditions.

He climbed up and lay face down as he slipped his legs into the cockpit, but as he turned over he was capsized again. He attempted this manoeuvre eight or nine times, all with the same result.

As he floated in the water with his kayak he was aware of a car following his progress down the beach. He was close enough to the beach to identify the colour of car, but not recognise the make, or see the driver. He waved his paddle but got no response. As he drifted south he was concerned that as he approached the mouth of the Waimakariri River, about 1.4 kilometres south of his start point, he would be subjected to stronger winds from the open country.

The paddler considered leaving his kayak and swimming to shore, but reasoned that the orange kayak would be more visible than a lone swimmer. He attempted to tow the kayak using the bow line. He was confident of outside help, aware from the actions of the car that his predicament was being watched. He did not feel cold, but was aware that his bare feet were cooling.

Soon he saw a rescue vessel from the Waimak-Ashley Lifeboat approaching, and felt relief. It came straight towards him, and he remembers seeing the stern of the boat as it swung around him. Being asked his name was the last memory he has, and he knew nothing of his helicopter flight until he awoke in the Emergency Department of Christchurch Hospital.

He remained in the hospital overnight for observation, and apart from hypothermia he lost some skin off one hand, probably caused by his repeated re-entry attempts. He has had no after effects, and is philosophical about the incident. He "didn't feel he was going to die", and has felt more at risk while cycling.

Observations by author:

This paddler is lucky to be alive. Had bystanders not raised the alarm and emergency services responded quickly, he would likely have been

carried well offshore by the wind and the outflow from the Waimakariri River. He had spent over half an hour in the water by time of rescue, while not dressed for immersion. He felt he could have stayed another half hour in the water. His rescuers described him as incoherent and unable to assist himself.

A NIWA scientist confirmed that surface water temperature in the area is currently 10 - 11° Centigrade. Immersion time graphs show a lightly clad swimmer in such cold water has a survival expectancy of one to two hours.

Despite his limited experience and skill, this kayaker chose to paddle alone in surf. He is physically fit, and trains regularly. He was confident that he could re-enter his boat, but his skills were not sufficient, once the conditions become rougher. The offshore wind removed his chance of returning to the beach.

With his options of re-entering his kayak and returning to the shore now gone, he was reliant on outside assistance for his survival. He was lucky that bystanders saw his plight and took action. He had no means of attracting attention had these people not been there.

Recommendations by the report compiler:

The weather forecast for this period was for northwesterly winds, 45 km/hr in exposed areas. The kayaker checked the conditions at the beach, but did not have the experience to appreciate the sheltering effect of the tall pines. Read "Orrible Off-Shore Winds", by Paul Caffyn in newsletter (No. 99, June - July 2002) for the effects of these dangerous conditions.

Paddling alone is a rewarding experience, but without developing strong skills and judgement, any problem can rapidly become overwhelming. Having another paddler alongside is no guarantee of safety, but with proper training mutual assistance can be life saving. Over-estimation of skill is a very common situation.

Cold water kills! Dressing for immersion is a vital part of sea kayaking. A wet suit or dry suit will improve comfort and extend survival times significantly. Cotton clothing should never be worn while kayaking, due to its cooling effect when wet.

Swimming is a sure way to speed heat loss as the physical activity brings warm blood to the body shell, where it is cooled. If alone, the HELP position or in a group the HUDDLE, goes some way to reducing heat loss. Remove as much of the body from the water as possible as, despite the wind-chill effect, the heat loss will be lessened. Water conducts heat 25 times faster than air of the same temperature. This paddler realised afterwards that hauling himself onto the hull of his boat would have helped. Abandoning the kayak to swim to shore is not recommended, as swimming ability is much reduced in cold water.

The last chance this kayaker had was outside rescue, but he had no means of raising the alarm. He was very fortunate that others did this for him. Carrying signalling equipment is no substitute for skill and judgement, but it can be a last hope. A whole battery of signals is available, from pyrotechnics to electronics, and it is important that paddlers consider their options, as luck is not to be relied upon.

This kayaker has had a learning experience, and plans to upskill. He will paddle with others and has not been put off sea kayaking by this experience.

He has since joined the Canterbury Sea Kayak Network and has inquired about joining KASK.

We can all learn from this incident, and I thank the paddler for his frankness in discussing this incident. Thanks also to the Waimak-Ashley Lifeboat and other organisations and individuals who helped with this report.

John Kirk-Anderson

Instruction Officer
KASK

TECHNICAL

NEW ZEALAND RESCUE COORDINATION CENTRE

Personal Distress Beacons - Now how do I use this thing?

Your family, being concerned for your safety, has given you a personal distress beacon for your birthday. They have seen glowing reports on TV telling how, if you get into difficulties, you could activate this device and rescue will be just a few minutes away. However, as we all know, television often only presents a quick snapshot of the real picture, usually with a twist to reflect recent events. In this short article we will look at what a personal distress beacon is, what you can expect of it and the limitations of its use.

Your personal distress beacon is nothing more than a small radio transmitter that transmits a swept tone signal (it sounds like a 'whoop... whoop' tone when received on a radio). The beacon usually transmits on two frequencies in the aviation bands, 121.5MHz (civil) and 243 MHz (military). Broadly, beacons using these two frequencies can identify where you are, but Search and Rescue (SAR) services will not be able to determine if the distress signal is associated with a major air disaster, a tramper with a sprained ankle or a false alarm.

The most capable (and more expensive) beacons also transmit a digital message on 406 MHz that can be identified from a registration database at the National Rescue Coordination Centre (NRCC) in Lower Hutt. These newer beacons can enable the NRCC to identify who you are, more accurately and more rapidly locate where you are, and arrange to contact or inform critical individuals or organizations or your possible emergency, but the beacon is not able to give any indication of nature of your problem.

All beacons are known by generic names, depending on their applica-

tion: Electronic Locator Transmitter (ELT) when fitted to an aircraft; Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) for marine use; and Personal Locator Beacons (PLB) for personal use.

Please note that ELTs, EPIRBs and PLBs all work the same way but their construction specifications can be different. For example, EPIRBs are waterproof and float upright with the antenna vertical. A PLB won't necessarily meet those specifications. Similarly, PLBs are designed for the rugged environment of use overland. An EPIRB may not be as resistant to rough handling as a PLB. Also some beacons are not designed or built to the technically demanding standards required to operate effectively with the international SAR Satellite Aided Tracking (SARSAT) system.

So here is Tip 1. You may be relying on this thing to save your life or to reduce hours of agony waiting for rescue. Make sure the beacon is appropriate to the environment in which you may need to use it and that it is identified as COSPAS-SARSAT system compatible!

And while we are tipping - Tip 2. You need to read the instructions prior to your first trip with it and ensure that the battery is in good condition. If you need it in a hurry, the last thing you will want to do is to read the instructions during an emergency (or in the dark, or when it's wet, etc) or find that the battery is dead!

Frequently asked questions about distress beacons are:

- (a) how and when should I use one;
- (b) how long will it take to be rescued; and
- (c) what does it cost to be rescued?

Firstly your beacon should be used as a last line of communication to alert authorities that you require assistance, and only in genuine distress. The NRCC will treat it as a fully-fledged distress alert and may utilise rescue assets that are also required for other important work such as locating missing aircraft, assisting vessels in distress or medical evacuations. If you

have access to a phone or radio network you should use them first because you can then indicate exactly what the problem is and get a better-focused response. It is also likely to initiate a quicker response than with a beacon.

Only if these measures fail or are not available, or if you are requested to do so by SAR authorities, should you activate your beacon. **Tip 3: Once activated leave your beacon on until rescued or instructed to turn it off.**

Once activated your beacon's signal can be detected either by satellites in low-earth polar orbits, or by overflying aircraft. How quickly you are detected will depend on where you are and the frequency of flights or satellite passes within line-of-sight range of your beacon. Across the Australia / New Zealand region the average satellite detection time is less than an hour, but it can be longer - up to a few hours occasionally. Don't count on less than a few hours in your thinking.

Once the alert signal is detected the search and rescue system swings into action. A number of factors will dictate the speed and type of response that is activated. The NRCC does not own any aviation assets for SAR. Instead we engage commercial operators with particular capabilities appropriate to what we perceive is the nature and location of the distress incident. In locating a distress beacon, the satellite system provides us with a position that is probably within 10-20 kms of the actual location of the beacon.

We often rely upon helicopters with VHF Direction Finding equipment to further localise and identify the individuals or vehicle that is in distress. Appropriately equipped helicopters are reasonably scarce, are spread throughout the country and tend to be located at the major population centres.

These helicopters are in demand by several of the emergency services, such as ambulance, and they are not always immediately available for SAR tasks. Also, if your problem is weather-

related, rescue crews may not be able to reach you quickly because of terrain and low cloud or the same weather conditions that have caused you trouble. Despite this they all do a great job, often in the face of very trying conditions.

If a helicopter is not available a fixed wing aircraft will be dispatched to establish the location and, hopefully, the nature of the problem. Depending on what is found by the search and rescue unit, the appropriate response will be put in place, given available local resources.

So, in the worst case, it may be two or three hours before the distress beacon is detected and confirmed by the satellite system. The NRCC may need to engage a fixed-wing aircraft rather than a helicopter and weather or darkness or terrain may interfere with the SAR operation. While it's difficult to predict times precisely, the response time could be described as "several to many hours, maybe not until the next morning."

The bottom line is that a beacon provides the NRCC with a high probability of detecting that you are experiencing difficulties (that's why you carry it, right?), but the task of actually locating you and rendering appropriate assistance or rescue may not be as quick as you possibly imagine or would hope.

So here is **Tip 4. Your part in a successful search and rescue is to be alive when rescue arrives!!**

Tip 4 might look trite - but don't ignore it. Injuries, cold and dehydration are killers. First aid equipment and training, warm clothing, and supplies of drinking water in arid areas and the addition of a life jacket and a liferaft in maritime areas are sovereign remedies. A beacon is important but no substitute for survival preparations.

People in distress have been known to sit tight during daylight hours and only set their beacon off as night approaches. This is not a good idea. It is very hard for airborne search and res-

cue crews to establish much more than a position at night unless communications are established. If you are using your beacon at night a light of any kind can assist search crews to locate your exact position.

Tip 5: If you think that your situation may deteriorate to the stage where you may need to be rescued, now is the time to activate your distress beacon - not later.

Who pays for that aircraft and expensive helicopter sent to look for you? The Government pays directly and cost recovery is rarely practised. Hence you pay indirectly along with every other taxpayer in the country. Because of this it is important that you keep your beacon in a safe place. Unfortunately every now and then one gets stolen, particularly from boats, and activated as a different form of vandalism.

The NRCC also receives many inadvertent alerts from beacons dropped heavily in a flight bag, rattled in the boat on the trailer, accidentally allowed to get wet ... etc. Not only does it cost the taxpayer for the NRCC to investigate and resolve these incidents, they also absorb search and rescue effort and can block the distress frequencies that may be needed for an actual emergency situation.

Tip 6: Pay attention to your beacon's security! You may help to reduce inadvertent and malicious distress alerts if you take good care of your distress beacon. More importantly, it is much more likely to be sitting there ready to go when you need it if you take the time to look after it on each and every trip.

So, to summarise, you now appreciate that a distress beacon will not necessarily produce an immediate rescue, as sometimes depicted in the media. Like everything, it has its capabilities and limitations. Used as part of your kit bag of survival and safety items it will not disappoint. Please remember **Tip 4 - be alive when the SAR rescue unit finds you.**

If your beacon is ever activated inad-

vertently, turn it off and inform the nearest Police Station or call emergency services on 111 and ask for the Police, who will inform the NRCC of the distress beacon false activation. Your beacon may have been detected, and SAR resources may already be tasked to find you. There will not be any charge, either for the beacon activation or the 111 phone call.

Remember that your distress beacon is like your insurance policy - hopefully you never have to use it but, if you do, it needs to be available, appropriate and current.

NRCC
August 2001

TECHNICAL

Running a Surf Session by Rob Gardner

The surf is fun and a great place to very quickly build up skills and paddling fitness. It can also be dangerous and seriously damaging to kayaks, bodies and pride. The following article is based on a briefing put together for a play in the West Coast surf with the Auckland Canoe Club last year. It is designed as a memory jogger and guide to the sort of things that need to be considering when running or participating in a surf session.

Safety Safety Safety

For the kayaking business person, safety can be looked at as an exercise in basic risk management:

1. What are some of the things that might go wrong today (eg., parting company with your beloved kayak)
2. What is the likelihood of the event occurring (very high if the surf's pumping).
3. What are the consequences of it happening (a refreshing swim, a hurt kayak and/or body).
4. If the combined likelihood and consequence are considered to be high then it's common sense to do something about them. Therefore we need

to look at what can be done to lessen the chance of the bad event occurring (reduced likelihood) and/or what can be done to lessen the damage (reduced consequence).

So with everyone standing on the beach looking at the inviting surf we should be trying to determine what might go wrong and how best to avoid it? Here are a few discussion points from a non-exhaustive list:

- Do all paddlers have helmets?
- Does everyone know where the first aid kits are?
- Is there mobile phone reception in the area? Is the group carrying VHF radios?
- Does the group want to use a safety person on the beach to land "abandoned" kayaks and provide assistance if required? Does that person have fins/wetsuit/lifejacket?
- How should a person in the water get the Safety Person's attention if required? A Safety Person on the beach can be used to give signals to less experienced paddlers eg., arms or paddle held horizontal means wait for this set to pass before coming in. Arms held vertically means 'all clear', paddle like hell now!
- Keep the elbows close to the body when bracing - an outstretched arm bracing on a wave can result in a dislocated shoulder.
- Generally roll if another kayak is coming towards you on a wave. Don't roll if you are the one on the cresting wave as that will expose your submerged body to the other kayak.
- After a wet exit, hold your kayaks bow and stay on the seaward side. Don't put hands through the toggle loop in case the kayak wants to spin in a wave.
- In the shallows, beware of the weight of waterlogged kayaks. Ensure people won't be in the way if a wave carries an abandoned kayak onto the beach.

Local conditions

- What areas need to be kept clear of such as swimmers, boat ramps or rocks.
- Where is the rip? You'll probably want to kayak in the rip as the waves are smaller due to the depth and out-flowing water. But don't swim in it if you get dumped, swim parallel to the shore to get out of it before heading back to the beach.
- What is the tide doing and how is this effecting the waves and shape of the beach? How many waves are there in each set? Are the waves spilling or dumping? How is the weather affecting them?
- How far out is the furthest breaking wave - you might meet it when you think you're successfully cleared the surf zone.
- What is the wave height when it breaks - This will indicate water depth as the wave breaks when the water is about 1.5 times the waves height

Kayaks & Equipment

A sea kayak's deep V hull is designed for running straight and fast but this hinders its ability to turn when coming in on a wave. Kayaks with very little air in the bow like the Storm are fast but will tend to dive for the bottom when the stern is lifted up by a following wave (That's why wave ski's have wide bows with proportionally lots of internal air space up front).

There are pro's and con's of using a paddle leash in the surf. The pro's (me) say it allows the 'dismounted' paddler to keep control of the paddle and therefore the kayak with one hand. Also, if not being held on to, the drag of the paddle slows the kayak as it heads for the beach. The con's say there's a chance of the paddler getting tangled up in the leash. You can argue amongst yourselves on that one.

Check that everything is secure on the kayaks. Some people take fins (flippers) strapped to their lifejackets in case of a long swim back to the beach. These and spare paddles need to be secure yet accessible.

Techniques

Rudders don't work in surf and they will bend as the kayak comes in sideways (broaching) on a wave. Leave them up.

Lean well back when coming in on a wave to stop the bow from diving. If (when) the kayak goes into a broach, lean well into the wave with the paddle on top of the wave and the elbows locked tight in against the body.

The sequence when catching a wave in is generally:

Use the paddle as a stern rudder when the wave picks the kayak up

As the kayak starts to turn the stern rudder becomes a low brace turn

When the kayak is in full broach the low brace turn becomes a brace with the paddle on top of the wave (always keep the elbows locked in to the body)

As the wave loses its energy, the brace becomes a draw stroke to pull the kayak over the wave before the kayak hits the beach

These skills alone provide for a high standard of competence in the surf but a roll is needed for big waves. Good rolling skills will not only bring the paddler back up after a dumping but will usually prevent the capsize in the first place.

If a capsize does occur in a wave, rather than just ejecting, try putting the paddle out at 90° and pulling down on it. The wave/undertow combination will often roll the kayak back up again even for someone who's never rolled before.

Etiquette in the surf

The person on the wave has right-of-way. Stay well clear of them

Respect surf board riders - We catch the wave earlier than them and once on a wave we're generally totally out of control.

Launching

On the beach get lined up with the rip

Count waves (you already know how many to expect in a set) and determine the distance to the furthest breaking wave which is what you have to get out past.

Get set up on dry land ensuring everything is secure with rudders up and locked.

It's often good to first get warmed up, get wet and get the feel by playing in the soup before heading out to the cresting waves. Play around and don't be pressured to go all the way out if you don't want to.

Breaking Out

Pick the gap between sets as this is when the waves are at their smallest.

Paddle hard and get some momentum up. Lean well forward and reach past the wave with the paddle as each one approaches. Pull hard through the wave, don't rely on your momentum to get you through it. Never adopt the "T" pose i.e. arms up with the paddle held high - it's a very unstable pose and you've likely to get a smack in the face with the paddle shaft when the wave hits.

If you've mis-judged your run and are about to get hammered by a big cresting wave, adopt the set-up position as though you are about to roll. This will protect your face, chest and paddle from the waves impact.

If you can, try rolling under big incoming waves so the hull takes the force, but get down and in the set-up position early.

Keep going out well past the furthest "known" cresting wave

Surfing In

Pull the rudder up and check everything is secure.

Find the rip and start counting waves to pick the gap between sets

Danger time! Get lined up but be careful not to go too far in or commit to your run too early. Back-paddle to let any near cresting or unwanted waves go under you

Pick a small wave and come in on its back. Stay with it as far as you can - you'll need to paddle hard to keep up with it but don't go over the 'falls' when it breaks. This is when the waves expend most of its energy (been there, done that and it hurts!)

When you are in the soup between waves, paddle hard to oppose the undertow (the outgoing flow of water). The more speed you have, the less impact the next wave will have on your back.

As a wave hits you from behind, lean well back. There is a risk of breaking your bow on the bottom if you're leaning forward and the kayak nose-dives. You'll have to make a quick decision as the kayak starts to broach (turn) and get the paddle on the correct side to brace.

Lean hard over (45° plus) and brace into the wave. Ensure the elbows are locked in close to the body.

If you tip over, adopt the set-up position which will prevent the paddle from being pulled out of your hands and the wave may very well roll you back up again.

Some people like to come in backwards. They paddle forwards to meet each wave bow-on then resume back-paddling between waves.

Another option is to play sacrifice if you can roll; Adopt the set up position when you enter the surf zone, let the wave do its worst then roll up again after the wave has expended the worst of its energy.

Author's Background

Rob started paddling in the mid 70's with the Palmerston North Canoe Club down the Manawatu Gorge and various rivers of the region. He left NZ in 1978 to sample Australia's white water rivers only to find there were none. He contented himself paddling the

flat, dirty rivers of NSW, Victoria and South Australia. On a whim he bought a wave ski which subsequently saw many years of faithful service from Far North Queensland to the surf

beaches of NSW and South Australia. In the 90's he discovered sea kayaking and promptly changed codes but still enjoyed putting his new kayak through its paces in surf. Upon his return to NZ

in 2000 he joined the Auckland Canoe Club, designed and built a couple of wooden kayaks, imported a third and goes paddling whenever his family releases him from parental duties.

OVERSEAS TRIP REPORT

ALASKA

Clint Waghorn has spent the past four northern summers in paddling a circuit from Prince Rupert (in northern British Columbia) up the inside passage to Skagway, down the Yukon River to the Bering Sea, then back along the coast of Alaska to Prince Rupert. In summary the previous stages were:

1999 Prince Rupert (B.C.) to Skagway, Alaska, down the Yukon River from Whitehorse to Chevak

2000 Chevak to Chignik, on the south side of the Alaska Peninsula

2001 Chignik to the Copper River Delta, near Cordova

The 'Waikato Times' has covered Clint's trips with a series of well written articles with colour pics, and these have been reprinted in past KASK newsletters. Clint's trip of 2001 was reprinted in n/1 No. 94. After paddling from Chignik to the Cordova, he'd set out on the last leg to Prince Rupert. In the Copper River Delta, a veritable minefield of vast drying mudflats and channels, he spent an uncomfortably long time in his kayak without being able to land. After some serious soul searching, his gut instinct told him to head back to Cordova and save the last stage for another year.

In the northern summer of 2002, Clint aimed to paddle from the Copper River Delta to his original start point at Prince Rupert.

ALASKA - 'TIME TO CALL A TRUCE' by Clint Waghorn.

(first printed in the 'Waikato Times'
5/08/02)

Kawhia farmer Clint Waghorn continues the last leg of his four year long kayak trip around Alaska, and soon

reaches the point where he turned back last year.

Beneath a hot Alaskan summer sky I launched 'Serenity'. My New Zealand made kayak caught the incoming tide rushing past my camp on Spike Island, not 200m from Cordova's small boat harbour. The hum of summer activity that is a small Alaskan fishing community continued. The town, the people oblivious to what I was about to attempt. Again.

Orca Inlet fills with water from Prince William Sound, covering shallow mudflats and creating access to the Copper River Delta - a world, a universe, so different it defies imagination. In one metre deep, clear water, I rushed over the mud and sandbars, spooking hundreds of flounder, bulleting away in puffs of mud. My own progress, too, was fast. Aided by two day's rest, a good current, a hot clear day and a good forecast my optimism was high.

It wasn't, however, without nerves. I admit I was scared. Despite the 8000km of kayaking I'd done here, everything pointed to this being a dangerous rarely attempted, wild, swell-battered coastline that would take all my skill, motivation and luck. I really wondered if I had the mettle to continue.

The Copper River Delta is a 280,000ha mosquito ridden marsh - land of sloughs, mudflats, ponds and intricately woven blind channels and sandbars - a nightmare to navigate without the benefit of hard earned local knowledge.

Copper River itself boasts the earliest run of salmon in Alaska, and the red and king salmon caught here attract premium prices in world markets. The delta is also an important spawning

ground for herring and these attract seals and sea lions. The rich tidal mud is a haven for shellfish in turn feeding a healthy sea otter population.

I left Cordova and the last 15km of Orca Inlet behind me in two and a bit hours and entered the 'Flats' as locals call them, by following a line of red channel buoys and stakes marking sandbars. Having visited the Flats last year I had the benefit of experience and knowledge that mistakes bring. I knew where channels did and didn't go and how the low-lying islands corresponded with those marked on my topographic map.

You see, the flats are extremely shallow - all but the main channels are high and dry at low water. Picking the right route is critical or you spend hours waiting on the tide.

I worked out to the scrub-covered 15km-long Egg Islands, about 7km offshore, then squeezed between smaller grass islands to another channel leading to a maze of hidden channels. How good was my memory? I used the GPS.

It was hot and steamy beneath my paddling jacket and I concentrated on a high liquid intake of tea and water and occasional snacks.

Glass calm seas were a joy to paddle on and I raced along thinking this wasn't too hard. Of course I was still in protected water, sheltered by a chain of low lying grass-covered islands bordering the seaward side of the flats. The surf was there, though, and try as I might, I couldn't ignore its roar. I knew that in a day or so I would have to pass out through it.

Late that day I fought the outgoing current from Pete Dahl Slough, entering the boggy, bug filled marshland to

find a camp. I had been in the boat over 11 hours and put in 65km behind me. I landed on the hard mud amid the stench of thousands of rotten, spent herrings. At 1am, I ate a late dinner, a Wal-Mart microwave meal I cooked in the billy, and crawled to bed - noting the sudden arrival of a bank of cloud from the south-east.

The next day, under leaden skies, I progressed just 30km before an outgoing tide dictated an early stop. I camped on a flat, brush covered island, hunting out a small depression filled with swamp water.

A cold wind built to a steady 15 knot south-easterly and the Cordova commercial gill-netting fleet arrived that night, ready for the morning 'opener' - a 24 hour fishing period announced by the Department of Fish and Game.

The roar of powerful jet boats woke me at midnight and all through the night I listened to them. The morning dawned windy, cold, damp and miserable. Nothing I wasn't used to.

But here again, not 5km beyond my turnaround point last year, I had severe doubts. Doubts I struggled to comprehend. I had come back to complete this journey, to push myself hard. But suddenly, again, I had struck some kind of invisible barrier - a mental one. And I have to admit it beat me. Maybe it was just the miserable conditions and I looked for an easy out. But if I had thought this was the case, I would never have got this far. I didn't leave shore that day. Two or three times I changed my mind - I was going, I wasn't, I was.

Finally my return to the delta, to face the gremlins of mind versus matter, was over. And I knew that my decision last year was right. There was something there I wasn't comfortable about and it was time to call a truce. Perhaps a few more years of surf kayaking experience would bring me back.

A cow and calf moose, and four brown bears eating dead herrings farewelled me as I broke camp. In a huge 85km day with nothing more than two flasks of tea and a can of bully beef - and a

building 20 knot south-easterly - I returned to Cordova in a weird emotional mix of disappointment, relief, yet also contentment. Contentment that I'd had the ability to turn around when a risk outweighed reward.

And in the following days, as I planned the final months paddling with my girlfriend Becky Middlemass, who is accompanying me on some parts of this trip, I came to accept my decision - hard though it was. Cordova old salts knew of my trip from 'dock talk' last year and they agreed.

I will not say I will not go back or attempt it again, because Alaska gets in your blood. Nobody likes leaving a job half done, a mountain half climbed. But I think at the day's end, what matters is the journey itself, not the end, the hilltop, but like life, the steps you take, the things you learn and the experiences that stay with you forever.

Back at Cordova I linked with the MV 'Bartlett' and enjoyed a six hour journey to Valdez, reuniting with Becky after a few days of solo paddling around Valdez Arm. We crossed the Gulf of Alaska on the state marine ferry 'Kennicott', a monthly summer, two day journey over the North Pacific's heaving seas - broken only by a brief stop at Yakutat.

As we entered South East Alaska at Cross Sound we joined the rain and murk of the panhandle's evening. The highlight was watching breaching displays of both orca and humpback whales feeding in the massive rip tides of Inian Pass.

In the ship's solarium passengers dozed in sleeping bags until rudely awakened by our arrival at Auke Bay ferry terminal. In the dark, wet and tired, at 1.30am we wheeled the kayaks up the ramp and off down a dimly lit highway.

After a couple of wet, windy nights, having provisioned at Juneau, we were glad to leave and set a course for Glacier Bay National Park, supposedly the Taj Mahal of Alaska's south-east. During the 120km paddle, Becky cut

my hair with a blunt pair of scissors which I had used to cut fibreglass cloth - the result suggesting I should stay out of town a while. But two days later we were invited to stop at an upmarket fishing lodge, once again enjoying the comforts of a hot shower, soft bed, and somebody else's home cooking. After four days of wet, miserable conditions, it was what we really needed. The guides were surprised we had arrived from Juneau, despite it being just around the corner. It seems people are reluctant to push their abilities beyond the safe haven of sheltered bays.

For several days, including four of warm, clear weather, we circled Glacier Bay. On our return paddle to Juneau, we met two other Kiwi adventurers, Garth and Kevin Irwin, who had kayaked from Victoria on Vancouver Island to Glacier Bay via the Inside Passage and were now returning via the Outside Passage. We spent a couple of hours yarning; they cooked us a meal and re-provisioned us for a couple of days.

Two 40km days later we were still a day away from Juneau but had to camp and wait for Lynn Canal to settle down to a manageable state. Big tides and currents, wind and rain had whipped to a rolling mass of waves and neither of us were going anywhere near it. For a couple of days, we sat around a smouldering campfire, eating fish, listening to wolves howl across the bay, watching a black bear with two tiny cubs, and awakening in the night to a passing humpback whale and once to roaring sealions.

Juneau, population 30,000 or so, is Alaska's state capital. There is no road access but the centre supports a booming tourism trade based on the cruise ship industry.

For us, though, it was a time to re-provision, enjoy some luxuries, pick up mail, send messages and then launch again into the wild world of Alaska's south-east passages, unsure of what our journey around the next bend would bring.

Clint Waghorn

NEW BOOKS

Recent additions to my library include:

Title: 'Kill the Tiger'

Sub Title: The Truth about Operation Rimau

Author: Peter Thompson & Robert Macklin

Published: 2002

Publisher: Hodder Headline, Australia

Contents: 306pp, 21 b&w photographs, 2 maps, 3 appendices, bibliography & index

Size: 230x150mm

Cover: Limpbound

ISBN: 0 7336 1448 5

Price: A \$29.95

Reviewer: P. Caffyn

With a long established interest in the wartime foldboat raids on Japanese occupied Singapore, I was rather keen to get my hot little hands on this latest book, particularly as the rear cover blurb notes, 'Kill the Tiger tells what really happens to the Rimau commandos from the early beginnings and success of the mission, to their intense and courageous fighting. It names the men who betrayed them in their hour of need and uncovers the political chicanery which hid the true story behind red tape and bureaucratic lies for years to come.'

The authors certainly carried out a power of research, as listed in the nine page Sources chapter, and although there is fascinating detail on the make up of the various wartime British, American and Australian intelligence agencies, there are no major new revelations with respect to operations Jaywick and Rimau. There always has been doubt, after the scuttling of the junk with their equipment, sleeping beauties and radios, whether the Rimau operatives did in fact paddle into Singapore Harbour and mine shipping as they escaped south to meet with the submarine. There are no damage reports in the Japanese Navy records for that time. And nothing new with respect to the escape, evasion, and ultimate capture and death of all the operatives. Information in the text is not linked at all to the Sources chapter, which I found disap-

pointing. Operation Jaywick, which has to be one of the most outstanding, long distance, gutsy raids in commando history rates only 15 pages in the book.

The authors do write at length about what they term the first and second betrayals; the first in the failure of the submarine 'Tantalus' to keep a 7 November RV at Merapas Island to pick up the Rimau operatives. The RV was not visited by the submarine until the night of 21 November. The second betrayal was the failure of Allied bureaucracy to pass on information from an Ultra intercept on 22 October that Operation Rimau was in trouble with the discovery of the commandeered junk. Failure of this information to be passed on meant no rescue mission was attempted and the 23 men were effectively written off.

Although published this year, there is only passing mention of the 30 years of research undertaken by Major Tom Hall, whose visits to the islands of the Riau Archipelago, landed on by the Jaywick and Rimau operatives, and interviews with locals pieced together the previous sketchy details of the final days of the 23 member Rimau team. Hall in fact located the remains of two of the Rimau operatives on Merapas Island in 1989, who were identified with the help of forensic scientists and finally laid to rest in the Commonwealth war cemetery at Kranji, Singapore, in August 1994.

However the last two pages of the book notes Exercise Rimau Retrace, in which six Australian army paddlers ferried from Singapore to Batam Island in late October 1994, and then paddled some 500kms to Dabo on Singkep Island. (They paddled three ancient Kleppers, and a full account of their trip was published in the February 1995 newsletter of the Victorian Sea Kayak Club.)

Two maps at the front, one of Australia and Singapore environs, the second of Singapore and the islands of the Riau Archipelago, are only small scale location maps with no routes marked for either operation. I was disappointed also with the photos,

which are in a central plate section; only one shot of a kayak and only a bridge pic of the 'Krait.'

In my library I have now a total of five books on the Jaywick and Rimau raids, and I would recommend any of the following for a more detailed insight to the actual raids:

'The Heroes' by Roland McKie, published 1961

'Return of the Tiger' by Brian Connell, published 1961

'The Heroes of Rimau' by Lynette Silver, published 1990

'Krait The Fishing Boat that went to War', by Lynette Silver, published 1992.

Both the McKie and Connell books are well written with excellent detail and photos, particularly of the Jaywick raid. The Lynette Silver book (which is based on the research of Major Tom Hall) however is the best all rounder for the most accurate account particularly of what transpired after the failure of Operation Rimau. Her second book 'Krait' is a full history of this former Japanese fishing boat, including her long return voyage from Exmouth to Singapore and back, up to her restoration and final voyage to a dock at the National Maritime Museum in Sydney, where she is still on display.

To conclude, 'Kill the Tiger' is an good overview of why operations Jaywick and Rimau were shrouded in secrecy for so long.

P. Caffyn

Title: 'Two Girls Two Catamarans'

Author: James Wharram

Published: 2001 Reprint

Publisher: Crociera Totale

Contents: 181pp, numerous b&w photographs, 1 map, bibliography

Size: 240x170mm

Cover: Limpbound

ISBN: 88 87210 04 7

Price: \$52.95

Availability: Boat Books Auckland

Reviewer: P. Caffyn

This book has only a brief reference to sea kayaking, but is one of the classic

sailing yarns, that was first published in 1969. Fortunately I saw a brief review of this reprint in the British 'Canoeist' magazine. The book describes the building of a catamaran in 1954 in England, and then setting off from Falmouth in 1955 for a voyage around the Atlantic. James Wharram built the 7.2m 'Tanagaroa' for the voyage out, and the 12.2m 'Rongo' for the return journey four years later.

Several aspects of his voyages were at the time considered unconventional, using hulls based on Polynesian canoes, sailing with two young ladies, who were in the habit of shedding their clothes at every opportunity, and while in Trinidad, they were happy to mix with the coloureds rather than the white community.

The link with sea kayaking occurred when they sailed into the port of Las Palmas on the island of Gran Canaria. The trio were treated like dirt by visiting British yacht crews, but were visited each day by Hannes Lindemann who paddled out in his canoe to the catamaran to drink tea. Hannes loaded up his 17' Klepper with stores and set out on October 20, 1956 for his second solo crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. A photograph shows the laden Klepper, with mast up, alongside 'Tanagaroa'. In his book 'Alone at Sea', Hannes describes waking up on board 'Tanagaroa' on the day he was about set off paddling.

A sketch map inside the dustjacket outlines the route of the voyages. In a nice touch, the photographs are included with the text, with up to two pics per page.

The last chapter is titled 'Epilogue' and brings the history of James and his two ladies up to the present day.

I have yet to locate a first edition in second-hand shops, but the reprint of the classic is available from Boat Books in Auckland.

P. Caffyn

(In the next newsletter, reviews of the biography of R.M. Patterson, author of 'Dangerous River' and Jennifer Hahn's 'Spirited Waters'.)

HUMOUR

Hold the line please, Caller (received from Malcolm Gunn)

This is apparently a true story which occurred very recently in the Telecom Call Centre in Lower Hutt. The Operator received a call from a somewhat irate and very worried Pacific Islander who it seems needed some urgent marriage guidance. The call went like this:

Telecom: How may we help you?

Customer: I haff a big problem with my phone bill. My wife, she think I haffing an affair!

Telecom: Okay sir, and how can we help you with this?

Customer: My bill haff all these calls to Salulah and my wife think I haffing an affair with this woman but I never heard off her before. I need to trace these calls please.

Telecom: Sir, I'm sorry but the bill won't actually tell you the name of the person you're calling, just their number.

Customer: This one iss.

Telecom: What phone do you have sir?

Customer: A mobile. I tell you this.

Telecom: No sir, what make? What do you have in your hands?

Customer: An erection.

After a moment's silence, the gallant Telecom worker continued:

Telecom: Um, sir? Could you spell that for me?

Customer: For sure - E..R..I..C..S..S..O..N. Erection.

Another moment's silence from Telecom and suddenly the penny dropped.

Telecom: Sir? Can you spell Salulah for me?

Customer: For sure. C..E..L..L..U..L..A..R. Salulah.

The end of the conversation was unfortunately not reported.

Late for School Excuse (I plucked this from a book of Aussie yarns.)

In a small West Coast rural school, one primary school pupil, John, was generally late arriving at school. One morning, his teacher who was sick and tired of the lame excuses John offered for being late, decided it was time to put a stop to the nonsense.

When John strolled into class 30 minutes late, the teacher demanded an explanation.

"Well sir," said John, "it's because my old man wears a short pyjama coat."

"Go on," requested the teacher, dreading what was coming next.

"Well sir, Mum had washed my old man's pyjamas, but a shower of rain came and the pyjama pants got wet on the line. That meant he had to sleep in his short pyjama coat."

"During the night, a fox tried to get into the chook yard. Dad, woken by a commotion from the chooks, got the double barrelled shotgun out of the laundry and went sneaking across the backyard, with both barrels cocked and the gun thrust out in front of him. Unfortunately he didn't realize that our old English sheepdog, who is half blind and totally deaf, was following him across the backyard."

In the darkness, Dad stopped suddenly and bent over to peer into the chook yard, hoping for a shot at the fox. The old sheepdog, not realizing Dad had stopped, kept going. His cold, wet nose went under Dad's short pyjama coat and touched him on the behind."

"Well sir, both barrels of the shotgun went off, and that's why I'm late for school. Even since 6am this morning,

NZ TRIP REPORT

Lake Rotorangi Excursion 23rd – 25th August 2002 By Susan Cade

The party included

Diane Adam (Penguin), Mike Wilkin(Torres), Mike Coburn (Nimbus – early puffin)
Max Grant, Rob Adam, Mary Jo (All Paddled Tasman Express's)
Julie Woolf (Southern Aurora), Nick Campion (Southern Skua)
Bob Talbot(Ecobezhig)
Jenny and Dennis Taylor (Dobbe Double)
Susan Cade(Looksha)
The Wooden Boat Brigade
Malcolm Gead (Chesapeake Light Craft West River), Janet (CLC Cape Charles Model)
Paddled with wooden paddles constructed from a inuit pattern printed and written up by
Kerry Howe in KASK, made out of western red cedar, light but terrifically strong.
Steve (Another CLC design I think)

Background, History & Location

This scenic hydro lake east of Eltham, it is the longest man made lake in New Zealand. It has over a 100km of shoreline, which has been cleared for recreational use.

The Patea River was identified as a major hydro resource in 1974 and flow gauging quickly confirmed its potential. Feasibility studies, environmental impact reports and audits, water rights investigations and tribunal hearings together with Town and Country Planning hearings all followed before necessary approvals were obtained and construction could begin. The dam took almost ten years to complete from the time the first project investigations began until the first power was produced. It commenced generation in May 1984. The Patea Dam was the first large compacted dam to be built in New Zealand

with tertiary sandstone and siltstone material. The Dam itself is 82metres in height with a crest length of 160metres. Its maximum depth is 57 metres, estimated volume is 175 million m3, overall length 46km, with an average width of 130metres

It is now owned by the Egmont Electricity Board.

The Trip

Friday night saw some of us traveling late into the night down back roads to Glen Nui Station.

Five of us stayed in a wonderfully quaint shearers quarters on the station and met the local farmers, who are very welcoming. There is a band of wild horses on the station and also a hundred year old shearing shed. A section of the Rotorangi Gut Buster Race has been run on this property, which a younger Max Grant has completed. Two of our number camped that night in the Glen Nui Domain where the houseboats are now stationed, these apparently haven't been used for years and are almost derelict. Another two camped at the Rotorangi Dam camping area and made friends with the very friendly and helpful resident engineer.

The big start was on Saturday morning and the Lake was hit from all directions. Dennis and Jenny used their GPS which helped keep them on course, to safely navigate up from the Dam. This is no easy feat as the lake has many branches and in places it can be difficult to actually tell which is the main route, and not a branch. Also the lake can be very still and tranquil making route assumptions difficult. Dennis and Jenny took about two and half hours to get to the Hawera Ski Clubrooms, with no detours. They were well and truly settled, to be the welcoming committee, for the rest of the team.

The rest of us gathered at Glen Nui Boat ramp. Three going down from the Mangamingi bridge, and the others paddling up to meet them before finally heading down the lake. Rob and Bob were able to join us for a short run, which was great. However unfortunately there wasn't a lot of lingering as by the time our latest

paddlers arrived to start it was 11am, and we knew we didn't have oodles of time.

From Mangamingi to the Hawera Ski Clubrooms the lake is mainly surrounded by farmland. However there were some special side trips up small streams with waterfalls, and more densely clad bush. The lake had many trees felled before it was filled, however there are still patches of still standing remnant ghost trees and also floating logs about. We had the treat of seeing the local Glen Nui farm dogs at work, a grandstand view in fact. The weather was a real mix, of mainly fine weather, with a period of gale force winds, which was picking the water off the surface, we were so pleased that they were tail winds. We finished off in light rain on arrival at the clubrooms. We spent about 5 hours on the water

To add to the bugger file, after all this, one canoeist was sitting in his boat feeling really pleased that he was secure that he had his life jacket on...to realize that evening that he had left it behind! Bugger!

Well Diane, Rob and Bob did some great work liaising for us and we were lucky indeed to have the use of the Hawera Water-ski clubrooms. It was a great spot. Even if you don't have access to the clubroom, the BBQ area is great; a 5 metre square BBQ shelter, with three closed in sides. There is a good flat area to camp, with public access toilets. With full key access we also got hot water and use of two showers. As it was a wet night this proved to be great. We were able to eat in comfort and warmth, unfortunately we ate so well and had so much excellent food we were not able to do it justice!

Sunday saw us regroup differently with some heading straight downstream to the dam, others doing some exploration enroute up and downstream from the club rooms. The weather was a real mixed bag of light rain, wind and patches of sunshine. This was a day of actually being in the real bushy area of the lake. The sides of the lake were steep sided, with

regenerating bush. There were minimal areas you could land, and funnily enough most of us stopped in the same place for a break, an established camp site on the true right. Unfortunately we didn't have time to explore all the branches, but noted worthwhile places to come back to at a latter date. We entered into some wonderful narrow gorge type off shoots, with wonderful solitude and beauty, and even saw an island to circumnavigate. We had to keep an eye on the map so we didn't have an unwanted excursion.

The bugger moment this day was another member, having kindly given another a hand, to sort out a boat adjustment, let his paddle go and was

shocked to be informed that his paddle had sunk. Max explained how he had seen what he had thought were two white perch. The unfortunate paddler was just getting ready to borrow a paddle after deciding the brown low visibility waters were not a great dive opportunity, when his paddle mysteriously reappeared. Whew! (I wonder, should this go in the great mate's file)

It was a very pleasant day and we all made good time to the dam. Where we were amazed at the enormous piles of logs that had been removed from the lake.

Rob met us with Max's car , so Max

was able to get promptly back to Ashhurst for a family event that couldn't be ignored. At this point Mike Wilkin kindly helped again for the second time, with the transport shuttle, a three-hour return from the Dam to Glen Nui Station.. Everyone headed home just as soon as their transport allowed

While waiting for the transport to return the remainder of us sheltered from the rainy periods under a tent fly, and had a walk. around the dam area. This included part of the Rotorangi Hydro walk which goes over the dam and through black beech. We did part of it to the lookout point, overlooking the power station. The whole walk takes about 40 minutes.



KASK Rotorua Lakes Sea Kayak Symposium 21-23rd February 2003

This sea kayaker's gathering combines keynote speakers, workshops and paddling trips. Two kayaking trips are central to the programme;

A paddle in Lake Rotoma, known for its clear depths and bush clad edge.

A paddle to Mokoia Island, a bird sanctuary in Lake Rotorua to hear a dawn chorus including the rare songs of stitchbirds and saddlebacks.

It is based at Keswick Christian Camp right on Lake Rotorua.

The cost is \$120, including great accommodation and food.

Contact Emma Haxton via e-mail ehaxton@xtra.co.nz

Watch for more info via the KASK website. Full programme out soon.

Emma Haxton

Committee Column

from Vincent Maire

Election weekend (July 27 & 28) saw the KASK committee meeting in Wellington for two days of planning and discussion. The focus was very much on the future of an organisation, which now has nearly 600 members from all around New Zealand.

The weekend started with a presentation on the results of the membership survey carried out in May and June. This valuable base of information has enabled your committee to focus its attention on some key areas of the organisation. A summary of the survey results will be published in this and future issues of the newsletter. Many thanks to all those who returned their questionnaires, however we still wish to hear from members who have been late in returning their questionnaires. We intend to add these results to the overall baseline of information.

A considerable amount of time was devoted to discussing and debating a national sea kayak qualification. This issue has been quietly bubbling away for some years now and it seems major progress is finally being made. KASK has signed a memorandum of understanding with the New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association (NZOIA) and the Sea Kayakers Operators Association of New Zealand (SKOANZ) to develop a training structure that meets the needs of both recreational and professional sea kayakers. Three members of the KASK committee, John Kirk-Anderson (Christchurch), Maurice Kennedy (Wellington) and Rob Gardner (Waiouru) are working on this with

John being the KASK representative in discussions with SKOANZ and NZOIA. We will keep you posted on developments over the coming months.

KASK finances went under the spotlight in Wellington. We have never been a cash rich organisation in the past and nor will we be cash rich in the future. We are not encouraged by a recent report that due to a decline in the sales of Lotto, the Lotteries Grants Board has cut grants to outdoor safety organisation by half, from \$11.75m last year to \$5.12m this year. This will directly affect Water Safety New Zealand, of which KASK is a member. WSNZ has funded KASK courses in the past but this avenue could be in doubt. The direct result is that the offer of a fifty percent contribution from KASK to regional networks for running the Leadership course is temporarily withdrawn until we have a clearer idea of funding streams. The only thing we do know for certain is that KASK must seek other income opportunities over and above the \$25 annual subscription. Any suggestions?

The Wellington meeting was a real success. It enabled us to discuss many topics in much greater depth than can be achieved in our six weekly telephone conferences. It also enabled some committee members to put faces to what had been voices over the telephone. As a direct result of the meeting you can expect to see changes in membership recruitment, the website, the newsletter and have the opportunity to participate in more KASK forums around the country.

Happy paddling
Vincent Maire. President

\$110 to climb Mt Tarawera

The news that it now costs \$110 to climb Mt Tarawera is a national scandal. Even worse, access is only permitted by joining a guided tour. This means the days of sea kayakers basing themselves at Hot Water Beach and adding a day on the mountain as part of their activities on this magnificent lake are well and truly over.

Sadly there does not seem much that outdoor adventurers can do about the situation. The Maori owners have every right, it seems, to charge whatever they wish. While many complained about the previous charge of \$23, trampers and kayakers being the equitable people they are, appreciated that ownership incurs a cost and paid the required fee. However, a 378% increase, plus the attitude of the owners that they do not want New Zealanders up there, only wealth foreign tourists, appears to be a racially motivated action.

As well as being a wonderful place to explore in a sea kayak, it is a lake with three very special destinations; the campsite at Hot Water Beach, the ascent of the mountain that erupted 116 years ago and the walk from the outlet of the Tarawera River to the incredible waterfall where the river comes cascading out of holes in a high cliff. This is why it was always popular as a long weekend destination with sea kayakers.

Although the KASK conservation subcommittee is discussing the issue there seems very little that can be done by just one organisation acting on its own. This is an issue that requires political leadership plus the orchestrated efforts of the entire outdoor community.

Don't hold your breath.
Vincent Maire

CALENDAR

KASK FORUM 2003 - 28 to 30 March Port Underwood

Whites Bay at the entrance to Port Underwood, the Rarangi Surf Lifesaving Club rooms, and adjacent DOC campground. The club house has shower and toilet facilities, bunks for 20 for those who don't want to camp. The club room upstairs has a good sized room for communal meeting, and a large uncovered deck area outside. The campground, adjacent to the beach, is a nice grass area with native shrubs and trees. The bay is on the east coast, north of Rarangi, and is sheltered from the northerly, north east and westerly/NW winds. It is at the south west end of Port Underwood, along which the coast is riddled with caves. Fishing is excellent.

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