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# NEW ZEALAND SEA CANOEIST

**The Journal of the Kiwi  
Association of Sea Kayakers  
(NZ) Inc - KASK**

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**Thanks to all the contributors**  
**Layout & Editing:**  
**Paul Caffyn**  
**Proofing: Karen Grant**  
**Deadline for next newsletter:**  
**25 September 2013**

**EDITORIAL**

**NZSC feedback from Kerry Howe:**  
 Brilliant cover - probably the best ever! Congrats to artist (and cover designer).

I have often wondered why if NZ sea kayakers claim to be such touchy feely types who commune with nature and its essence that so few, if any, appear to paint/sketch the life-style, or write poetry (not doggerel). So here's a first?

**Northland Canoe Club Mini-Forum**  
 See p.2 for a bit of background and a registration form on p. 20. For me, these weekends are not to be missed with a mix of excellent off and on the water sessions, plus nights of dancing, singing and general carousing.

**New KASK Administrator**  
 After two years in the role, Kay Pidg-eon found undertaking the role plus a new full-time job was too much and tendered her resignation. Our thanks to Kay for her sterling work with the KASK finances and memberships. Fortunately it didn't take too much persuasion to rope in local climber and caver, Karen Grant. She has provided the following brief bio:

'Hi KASK  
 I'm pleased to be able to help out and Kay has kindly shown me what I need to do. It's a good thing though that I'm not still living in a caravan as the handover came with a rather large and heavy box of historical stuff, and goodies for 'care packages'!

I've been an avid rock climber for a few years and now I'm also right into caving, especially where there's SRT gear needed. Abseiling past the fluted rock of vertical shafts is just amazing.

I'm the Programme Administrator for Outdoor Education at Tai Poutini Polytech in Greymouth. This is

a great place to work (lots of gear to borrow) and in a great place to live, the rugged outdoors is so close by. I am active in GreySAR and the West Coast Alpine Club, also assisting both as treasurer. Since getting into caving, I have also joined CaveSAR and I've had exhilarating underground experiences that are beyond words.

I haven't been all that fond of getting wet in the past but I'm 'warming' to it. I've since scored a few hours paddling a sea kayak around Lake Brunner with our Diploma students and although I found the wet exits easy, re-entering unaided needs lots more work. I'm keen now to up-skill enough to tackle the scary sea, explore our coastline, and hopefully paddle with you one day.

In the meantime, you can get in touch with me via admin@kask.org.nz, and see if you can keep me busy with your subs rolling in - Karen G.'



**Subscription Renewal Time Again**  
 Please renew promptly. A form with your details is included. When paying with direct credit, please include adequate identification details especially if your surname is Smith or Brown. And a reminder from John Gumbley: 'KASK members can get a significant discount from DoC when purchasing an Annual Hut Pass. Just show evidence of your membership when purchasing your hut pass ticket (does not apply to Great Walks).'

**Photo Credits:**

Cover: If you can identify this lighthouse and the island on which it stands, you deserve a lolly. No it is not in the Bahamas or some clear blue sea paradise. This stunning Belinda Mulvany photo is of the Dog Island lighthouse, on one of the few safe days when it is possible to paddle out to, and land on this island in Foveaux Strait.  
 Top Left: Owen Shrimpton with the Brothers Islands and Cape Koamaru in the distance. Photo: Doug Aitken  
 Bottom left: On the crossing to White Rocks. Photo: Doug Aitken

## KASK Committee 2012 - 2013

Ian McKenzie	– President	email: mckian@xtra.co.nz
Doug Aitken	– Committee	email: douglasaitken@hotmail.com
Sandy Ferguson	– Webmaster	email: kayakamf@gmail.com
Paul Caffyn	– Publications	email: kayakpc@xtra.co.nz
Shawn Walsh	– Committee	email: Shawn.Walsh@codeblue.co.nz
Conrad Edwards	– Committee	email: conrad@conradedwards.net
Tim Muhundan	– Committee	email: tim@paddler.co.nz
Karen Grant	– KASK Administrator	email: admin@kask.co.nz

### KASK Facebook - from Doug Aitken

The KASK facebook page continues to grow in usage. There are now 145 members. There a few dozen of us that contribute regularly, but posts from others are greatly encouraged! Topis in the last few months have ranged from how to paddle big distances in a day, photos from the Canterbury Network's winter trip to the Sounds, Greenland paddle users arranging a get together, and people organising trips and looking for paddle buddies. It has been great for sea kayakers from around New Zealand to be able to be in touch with each other, and share pictures. Hopefully it will go from strength to strength.

If you want to join go to Facebook, search for Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers, and request to the join group, or send me an e mail: douglasaitken@hotmail.com and I'll send you an invite.

## KIWI KAYAKING EVENTS KALENDAR

**Date: 15 – 17 November 2013**

**Northland Canoe Club Mini-Symposium**

**Date: 29 November – 1 December 2013**

**Marlborough Sounds Pilgrimage**

Where: Ratimera Bay Dress theme: Steam Punk

**Date: 28 – 31 March 2014**

**KASK FORUM 2014**

Venue: Anakiwa Outward Bound School in the Marlborough Sounds

**Date: 15 – 17 November 2013**

**Northland Canoe Club Mini-Symposium**

Roll on summer, let's hope it's similar to last season, with lots of long sunny days. The Northland Canoe Club is well on the way arranging this mini symposium.

(see page 20 for the registration form).

**Contact for more info: Lynnis Burson: lynnburson@hotmail.com**

The aim is to encourage people interested in kayaking to enjoy a weekend of kayaking, and socializing, with an opportunity to refresh their skills and maybe even learn some new ones. Paul Caffyn will be the guest speaker on Friday evening telling us about how he got into kayaking. John Kirk-Ander-son will be taking courses on Sat and Sun aimed at Leadership skills, Ken Marsh will be helping participants who want Rolling skills honed and John Cook will be guiding the surf training, while other members will be covering assisted and self-rescues. A physiotherapist will be taking an interesting hands-on session on Saturday morning, and Saturday night will have club musicians getting us in the swing for singing and dancing.

One of the main aims of the weekend is for novices to have a chance to see if they like kayaking with the HAVE A GO DAY on Sunday. This is a separate session from the main symposium, with a cost of only \$15 for the day. Mark Gary will be lending his boats to those who don't have one and will be taking this session which will cover the very basics of kayaking skills. People participating in this will need to bring their own lunch.

The club is looking forward to a great weekend.

## KASK AGM Reports

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**9 April 2013 (abridged)**

Thank you to the 2013 forum committee Evan Pugh, John Hesselting and John Gumbley and to KASK committee members Paul Caffyn, Conrad Edwards, John Hesselting, Shawn Walsh, Sandy Ferguson, Sandy Winterton and Doug Aitken for the various things they have undertaken in the six months that I have been president.

### KASK Committee

#### Activities:

Six Skype meetings; all the sea kayak networks and clubs emailed to say hello and to check that we still have the right contacts. Most have replied, a few corrections handed on to Paul for the *NZ Sea Canoeist*.

We have processed/discussed a new publicity brochure, website improvements, a review of the handbook, safety guidelines, representation to the National Pleasure Boat Safety Forum (Maritime NZ)

#### Achievements:

- Forming a KASK committee, decisions which will flow on to outcomes
- Website rejuvenation, awards to be presented at the AGM, Facebook page.

#### Aspirations:

- Mandate from other paddle sports organisation for our continued representation to National Pleasure Boat Safety Forum & Water Safety NZ.
- Handbook updated and promoted as a benefit to KASK members and as an important feature to meet the 'objects of the society' (there are 8 objects', listed in each newsletter). Introduction of a structure to describe skill levels across the networks, perhaps advanced training for some who might promulgate their learning, possibly a warrant of fitness for those leading trips so that they can do so with confidence.
- Coordinated application for funding to Water Safety NZ to assist with the development or assessment of skills, safety training and self assessment guidelines
- Publication of a revitalised promotional brochure to increase awareness of KASK.

**Life membership**

The recommendation from the Committee (from nominations received) was then put to the meeting and endorsed by the AGM (as required by the rules). Granted to Max Grant and John Kirk-Anderson with thanks for their contribution to KASK.

Ian McKenzie



**ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

from KASK administrator  
Kay Pidgeon

Financial balance: \$21,409.62  
Membership: 362, comprising  
North Island 203; South Island 141;  
Australia 10; UK 1; Philippines 1  
(See table below for region  
breakdown).

Membership has fallen slightly though fees remain the same as last year and are still good value for money with the DoC discount available to current members. The introduction of 'Electronic Receipts' has been a great success (reducing postage which is a huge part of KASK expenses). Members are issued with

a receipt when the bank statement is reconciled making it easy to confirm membership when booking with DoC.

There was some confusion with the Membership Renewal Form this year however payment is needed BEFORE the end of September (subscriptions run from 1 August through to 31 July the following year) or a lapse in newsletter mail outs may occur. Thank you to all paying by cheque for making them payable to 'Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers' rather than KASK.

I have received several newsletters marked "Return to Sender". Please remember to notify me admin@kask.co.nz of any changes to contact details.

Please post renewal forms or send them electronically just prior to making an electronic deposit or Direct Credit into our bank account. This year there were quite a few pay-



Kay

Breakdown by Region	Year 12 (2011-12)	Year 13 (2012-13)
Canterbury (Region 12)	95	78
Auckland (Region 1)	84	72
Wellington (Region 9)	42	43
Tasman (Region 10)	25	23
Waikato (Region 3)	22	23
Bay of Plenty (Region 5)	18	24
Northland (Region 2)	15	18
Otago (Region 13)	14	9
Marlborough (Region 11)	13	13
West Coast (Region 14)	7	9
Southland (Region 15)	6	9
Manawatu (Region 4)	6	11
Overseas (Region 16)	5	12
Taranaki (Region 8)	4	4
Hawkes Bay (Region 6)	3	3
Wairarapa (Region 7)	3	3
	362	356

ments with insufficient details on deposits to allow me to identify them and issue a receipt.

It has been a privilege to be involved with members of KASK and to work alongside Paul and the rest of the committee. Hearty thanks to Paul for his continued support even when he faced some personal adversity – I could always rely on him as 'walking' 'membership-database' or personal details he recalled of some lapsed members returning to the fold.  
Kay Pidgeon

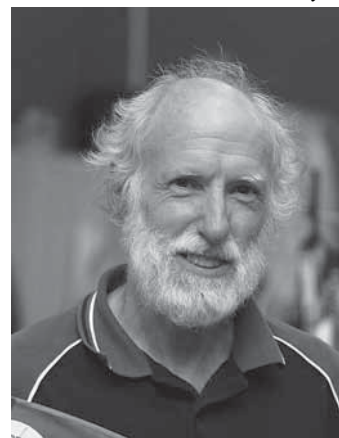
**Webmaster's report**

from Sandy Ferguson  
The website has had a few edits during the year with headings followed by a few lines of the start of the item, the full item then on its own page. The main limitation has been the lack of contributions from KASK members. This has left the Webmaster to add copy that is his slant on sea kayaking, hopefully without any bias.

The discussion forum has been locked down by the provider for a month of discussions and no archiving. The KASK committee is looking at moving the site to WordPress making it easier for others to contribute without going through the Webmaster .

Despite all of this, the Webmaster is always ready to add copy to the site and even just a rough version can be sent to him to add to the site. Edits to the original will be done and the contributor will be able to confirm that they are suitable and correct before uploading.

Sandy



**PUBLICATIONS & SAFETY**

from Paul Caffyn  
*New Zealand Sea Canoeist*

The high standard of the New Zealand Sea Canoeist magazine has continued. My thanks to all those paddlers who supplied stories, reports and photographs. My main criteria for magazine material is high quality writing along with good photographs with story-telling captions. Please continue to keep the photos, reviews and stories coming.

My thanks to Format Print in Petone for making the printing and delivery process so smooth for Kay Pidgeon and myself. Aside from member copies, the magazine is mailed on a contra basis to the USA and UK and Australia. A PDF version is supplied to our overseas members along with NZ government agencies, harbour masters, NZOIA and WSNZ.

*The KASK Handbook*

Currently we have only 20 copies remaining from the 750 printed in 2008. Only 60 copies were supplied to new members and trade supply in the past 12 months. The KASK committee is considering a 5th edition, but there is a power of work involved for the editor, and careful consideration has to be made of numbers to print, given the slow down with sales in the past 12 months.

**Safety**

The paddlcraft incident database is up to date to the end of 2012. Database incidents are those involving death, serious injury or rescue by outside authorities. For the 2012 year, there was only one paddlcraft fatality – this was a 22 year old Italian paddling a 30+ year old wooden kayak, who drowned on Lake Te Anau. If there is an incident meeting those criteria in your area, please let me know with either website links or newspaper clippings.

As KASK paddlers, we still need to be vigilant in promoting safe sea kayaking, and please do your bit with a word in the ear of a paddler who is an accident waiting to happen.

The October 2012 *NZOIA Quarterly* focused on water safety, and it included my two page article ‘Paddlcraft Fatality and Incident Analysis 1983 - 2011 and Future Safe Paddling Initiatives.’ To highlight the need for both wearing PFDs and carrying at least two means of emergency communications, I wrote of the two young French paddlers who drowned at night in Lake Wakatipu. Despite wearing neck yoke lifejackets, they had no radio or flares or lights and were not able to signal their presence to the searching boats and helicopter.

There is still no progress yet with the change re PFDs from mandatory carriage of to the mandatory wearing of. A continuing presence at the National Pleasure Boat Safety Forums is essential for KASK to represent Kiwi paddlers, and Sandy Winterton will attend the next one in May. Sandy Winterton has also continued his role with WSNZ liaison for the past 12 months.

**KASK Committee**

Although we had a shaky start after the 2012 AGM with a lean committee, my thanks to Ian McKenzie for stepping in as president, and to Doug Aitken, Conrad Edwards, Sandy Ferguson, Sandy Winterton, John Heselting and Shawn Walsh for melding as a good working committee in the past 9 months. My thanks also to Kay Pidgeon, our Administrator for her consistent high standards with the KASK finances and membership.



The photos above are of two wandering bands of Superheroes and Superheroines who were to gather for the night of 16 February in Ratimera Bay for the annual Marlborough Sounds pilgrimage. Windy weather curtailed the wandering of the band which included Xena, an Egyptian pharaoh and Catwoman. This was exceedingly fortunate in that the band who braved the weather to Ratimera Bay, included another Catwoman, thus a serious catastrophe (catfight) was avoided. The editor was awarded the best dressed prize for his role as the invisible man. Steam Punk is the costume theme for the 29 November gathering later this year.

# TECHNICAL

## Using Sea Kayaks on Rivers by Peter Sommerhalder

Amongst my paddling buddies discussions emerged about using sea kayaks safely on rivers. Competitors in events like the Coast to Coast are using their sea kayaks, rather than purchasing a second boat, if competing regularly in Multisport is not their ambition. However paddling a sea kayak in whitewater conditions could lead to very serious accidents. Getting trapped inside a crushed cockpit, or washed into tree branches or willow roots in fast flowing rivers, could end up as a fatal accident.

I think sea kayaks can be used on rivers. To do this safely, some rules and skill factors have to be observed.

### River Grading

Whitewater rivers are graded the world over using a scale from 1 - 6:

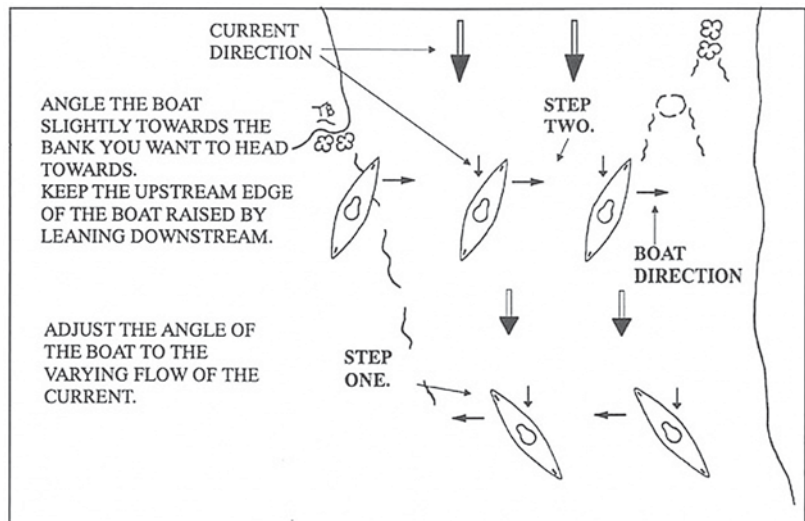
- 1 – Slow flowing gentle water, no obstacles.
- 2+ – Fast flowing current, safe passage visible, no obstacles in main flow.
- 6 – Not paddleable, risk of life. Yet in today's whitewater paddling circles dangerous Grade 6 rivers and waterfalls are being paddled!

In my view Grade 2+ is the limit using a sea kayak on flowing water. This relates to places like Waikato River, Wanganui River and Waimakariri River.

### Paddling Skills for Rivers

The skills needed to negotiate a river are really basic paddling strokes, and the ability to read the water. River paddling is no harder than sea kayaking or surfing a kayak at the beach.

Sweep strokes, forward and backwards, are essential. Repeated sweep strokes will turn a 5 m long sea kayak briskly, especially with the rudder up. A kayak with rocker turns swifter than one with minimal rocker.



From Terry Bolland's  
Canoeing Down Under 1994

### Ferry Glide Forward

(see diagram above)

Forward ferry glide means paddling facing upstream. By angling the kayak away from the bank into the current and keeping paddling, the kayak will cross the river to the other side, like a ferry attached by a pulley to a wire rope rigged across the river. The aim is to set the angle so that you are not getting washed downstream by the river current. The rudder on the sea kayak is of great help for this manoeuvre. But you should practice the forward ferry glide using your paddle strokes only, with the rudder up.

### Ferry Glide Backwards

(see diagram below)

Now try the backwards ferry glide. You are facing downstream, paddling with the river flow. Paddle backwards to stop getting washed downstream. Set the kayak in an angle to the current and glide across to the far riverbank without getting spun around by the current. This is done with the rudder up. In fact on a river all steering is best done with the rudder up, using the paddle.

*Backpaddling moves kayak to the left*  
*River flow down the page*



The backwards ferry glide is the most needed skill on rivers like the Wanganui. Again and again you are aiming down the V of a rapid, keeping in the main river flow. Unexpectedly a boulder or small island divides the main flow ahead of you into two channels. You are heading bang on for the obstacle in a heavy loaded single or double kayak. Back paddling will slow you down, and in most cases you will be able to hold your own, which means you are no longer pushed towards the boulder.

Still facing the obstacle you now angle your stern to the left or right, still paddling backwards. This will move you sideways and away from the boulder. When you are clear of the obstacle you glide forward again and past the obstacle. This also works in situations where the main river current is aiming into tree branches overhanging the water.

### Reading the water

This is an important factor on all river trips. Watch the main flow. Does it aim into a sieve of willow trees or boulders? Back eddies, whirlpools, sandbanks in river bends are spotted while paddling. On whitewater, rapids are scouted from shore before attempting to paddle them. This has to be done on every trip, as changing water levels and floods can change or even block rapids with driftwood and debris between river runs.

### Cockpit designs on sea kayaks

Most modern sea kayaks, plastic and composite, have a large cockpit. Spraydeck materials from stretchy neoprene with strong bungy cords are securely fitted, yet can be released without difficulty. This makes exits and re-entries easier for those paddlers without rolling skills. However it does not stop decks from imploding and filling cockpits with water quickly. Built-in bulkheads front and aft of cockpits do give strength to the cockpit hull.

Above factors combined show that sea kayaks are suitable for use in rivers. Indeed I prefer to use my plastic sea kayak for the Wanganui River to the fibreglass whitewater or cruising kayaks from the old days. Competitors in the Coast to Coast are increasingly using sea kayaks for the 60 km leg on the Waimakariri River. The rapids are classed as Grade 2 plus, which means a suitable channel through the rapids can be seen. The extra stability of a sea kayak, compared to Multisport kayaks, might just prevent a possible capsize, which means not 'wasting' valuable time doing a self rescue.

I have encouraged trips on the Waikato River with sea kayakers in the past. In fortnightly sessions over four or five Sundays we paddled from Cambridge to Tuakau. Most participants had never paddled on running water before that. We practiced sweep strokes and ferry glides on the way. There were a few enlightened faces from people mastering new 'tricks' at the end of these scenic trips. The annual club Wanganui river cruise, and Wanganui trips with Boys Brigade always began with two days practice in empty kayaks at Cherry Grove in Taumarunui, before heading down stream into the 'unknown'.

In the Auckland area there are some tidal flows where ferry gliding can be practiced - the flow under Tamaki Drive in and out of Hobson Bay, especially at the entrance to Judges Bay. Under the bridge of the Hibiscus Coast Highway in Orewa on an incoming tide. The closest conditions to a 'real' rapid after high tide

are formed at Waiau Pa, near Kingseat, in South Auckland.

Peter Sommerhalder

### Starting out! by an old time all-rounder Max Grant

I've often heard people comment that a background in whitewater kayaking has been of some benefit when sea kayaking. When I'm taking people sea kayaking for the first time, those who have come from a whitewater background, do pick-up on certain aspects of sea kayaking quickly. The two areas where they mainly benefit are their ability to handle choppy conditions more confidently and they have a greater understanding of the effects currents have on the kayak, especially when dealing with tidal streams and rips around outcrops and small islands, etc.

A kayaker paddling down a river with small rapids with chutes and back eddies, soon learns the art of 'reading the water'. This ability to read the water is transferred over to sea kayaking where it does not take long for kayaker to recognize similar water patterns when kayaking at sea. This ability becomes more evident as a kayaker learns more about the tides and the water patterns that are formed by the tidal flows.

A whitewater kayaker often displays more confidence going out into the surf and paddling in rough conditions, especially if they have played canoe polo and have mastered the technique of rolling the kayak upright after a capsize. But there are also a few drawbacks in having a whitewater background. I always remember the first time I kayaked off the beach and out to sea - it all seemed so easy. But then I caught a nice wave to surf in on. Halfway in I broached sideways, lent what I thought was the right way and got dumped. And it happened several times before I learned that when riding in on a wave you lean into the wave and not away from it as in whitewater. I remember the first time I kayaked to Kapiti Island with three

of my mates. We were like fish out of water and ended up having to be rescued by the local Coast Guard!

So while a background in whitewater kayaking certainly helps in certain areas of sea kayaking, there is still a lot to be learned about kayaking at sea, no matter what background you come from.

### Early Whitewater Background by Paul Caffyn

I believe that playing in swift flowing rivers of up to Grade 2 rapids is superb experience for dealing with tidal stream affects. Back in 1977 when Max Reynolds and I set off around Fiordland in our brand new Nordkapps, neither of us had any serious offshore sea kayaking experience.

What we did have was decades of whitewater paddling experience - Max with serious whitewater kayaking, myself with that as well as K1 kayak and Canadian canoe paddling. The techniques of ferry gliding, using back eddies to work upstream and turning into the lee of rocks, were well entrenched, so when it came time to deal with the monster tide races and overfalls off the southwest corner of Stewart Island, we had the necessary skills and it was just the matter of adjusting for the bigger scale of tide races plus the affect of wind against tidal stream direction.

My usual pre trip training upstream in the Grey River, working upstream against the current, utilizing back eddies in the rapids and ferry gliding from bank to bank, has been so beneficial for dealing with massive overfalls and strong tide races encountered during my expeditions.

Both Peter and Max's comments are well worth considering for encouraging novice paddlers onto moving water before tackling the pointy extremities of New Zealand or passages through such as Tory Channel, French Pass and Cook and Foveaux straits.

(see also pages 96 - 98  
of *The Kask Handbook*)



## NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORTS

### A Winter Trip to Outer Queen Charlotte Sound by Doug Aitken

see colour photos on page 2

A group of four paddlers from Canterbury Sea Kayak Network completed a four-day trip in Queen Charlotte Sound in mid July. The original plan had been to paddle out of the Tory Channel, and head down the coast to Port Underwood but after the recent Southerly storm the seas were still running at three metres and a forecast northerly wind of 20 knots made us go to plan B, which was the outer Queen Charlotte Sound.

#### Day 1.

After a very frosty start we launched from Whatamango campsite out into a beautiful day on Queen Charlotte Sound. With a light tail wind we passed to the south of Blumine Island and got to Pickersgill Island for lunch in under three hours. Shortly after lunch a 15 knot northerly picked up and we decided to head across to Cannibal Cove to be in lee of the prevailing wind for the next day. We crossed via Long Island and Motuara Island and arrived at the Cannibal Cove campsite by 4.30 pm. This is a very pleasant sheltered bay, just round the corner from the more famous Ship Cove. It was named by Captain Cook, who witnessed a cannibal feast here. There are still the remains of some walls and foundations in the bush from when there used to be a farmhouse here too.

#### Day 2



Cape Jackson. Photo: Doug Aitken

We decided to paddle 13 km up to Cape Jackson and back to Cannibal Cove, as it was sheltered from the northerly wind. Half way up to the cape we stopped at the wharf in Anakakata bay, which is the base for the Queen Charlotte Wilderness Park. The cape used to be farmed, but it is now returning to native bush, and it attracts visitors who can walk from Ship Cove out to the cape on private tracks and stay in a lodge overnight.

At the cape we were out of the shelter of the land and there was a tidal stream running, kicking up metre high standing waves. While this would be a great spot to surf and play in the rough water, its exposure and remoteness combined to mean we didn't! And it was interesting to think this was neap tides. If you were planning to go round this cape at or near spring tides you would have to plan it very carefully. We enjoyed a mid afternoon finish back at the camp-site and started making plans for tomorrow.

#### Day 3

The northerly wind had abated by this stage and we headed out on a 10 km crossing to White Rocks, near Cape Koamaru on the other side of the sound. The crossing went well and we arrived at White Rocks in calm

conditions. They were not white at all, and we surmised they either used to be covered in bird droppings, or they were named on a rough day with swells smashing against them. We enjoyed views of the nearby cape, the Brothers Islands beyond in Cook Strait, and the North Island beyond that. From the rocks we crossed to Cape Koamaru and found a beach for a break. The afternoon was spent exploring the coast of Arapawa Island, looking for wild camping spots for future trips. There aren't many! We paddled on in flat calm conditions and finished the day at the campsite on Blumine Island. This is a nice, west-facing site that gets sunshine late in the afternoon, which is not to be underestimated on a winter trip.

#### Day 4

This day was basically a paddle back to the car at Whatamango Bay. All went smoothly until we got about halfway back. There was a bank of fog hanging over the inner Queen Charlotte that we did not want to be in when crossing the main channel. There was also an Inter Islander ferry making its way up the Tory Channel at about 15 knots, that we did not want to get in the way of. We decided to dash across at Dieffenbach Point, against the tidal flow to get back on the southern side before getting into the fog.

Queen Charlotte is a classic sea kayak destination with lots of options to suit weather conditions and experience levels. Winter can be a great time to go, with many calm days. There are plenty of DoC campsites to choose from - we had all our camp-sites to ourselves.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

I read with interest Evan Pugh's review of the new Stealth range of camouflage tents (*NZ Sea Canoeist 164* page 20). I too bought one with the sheep scene, thinking this would be ideal for those nights one must camp unobtrusively on farmland. Within 30 minutes I was surrounded by over 200 sheep. The incessant all night baaing was bad enough but the attention paid to my tent by the ram was quite annoying. Next weekend I was moved on by a DoC ranger for introducing livestock into Paparoa National Park. The other designs are equally problematic. The tent showing a stag in rain forest could be problematic during the roar and the scene of kea in sub-alpine meadows would be asking for trouble.

Yours Concerned Camper.

Kerry-Jayne Wilson

## OVERSEAS REPORTS

### Around Ireland From Barry Shaw

(see colour photo on p. 23)

This summer I kayaked around Ireland with my partner Justine and a friend of ours Roger Chandler. We completed the 874 nautical mile circumnavigation in 43 days which gave us time to fit in plenty of exploring.

The coastline around Ireland is pretty spectacular with its many cliffs, exposed headlands and deserted islands. On a lot of the islands there is still evidence of monastic settlements of centuries gone by. Probably the most famous being The Skelligs with its beehive monasteries which lies about 20 miles off the west coast.

The hospitality we received from the people of Ireland was fantastic. Total strangers would invite us in for food or drink and at times a shower and a bed. We were very fortunate with the weather as this summer was a very dry one with not too many strong wind days.

The strongest winds were on the two last days when we had to battle gale force winds.

I attempted to kayak around Ireland alone in the winter of 2006 but developed the dreaded tendonitis in the first couple of days. I always planned to return one day and it was well worth the wait. I'm sure it wouldn't have been as much fun as this year.

Barry advised Justine has a huge smile (see photo on page 23) on her face after having spent 40 minutes on the island in the background, and she was blown away by the beauty and amazing bird life on Skellig Michael.

Note: Barry and Justine paddled around the South Island back in the summer of 2007-08.

### Following in the Paddle Strokes of Victoria Jason

It seems such a long time ago now that Victoria Jason paddled through the North West Passage of Arctic Canada, then not long after publication of her lovely book *Kabloona in the Yellow Kayak*, cancer claimed her life. When I saw the news item below from the CBC website, I thought what a gutsy lady giving this North West Passage a go on her own.

**Damaged kayak cuts short solo Arctic trip - 57-year-old paddler stops halfway to Gjoa Haven**  
from the CBCnews North  
[www.cbc.ca/news/canada](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada)  
posted 9 August 2013

A Yellowknife woman travelling solo by kayak in the Arctic has had to cut her adventure short.

Diane Hache, 57, set off from Tuktoyaktuk, N.W.T., in June. She paddled through snow and heavy winds for most of July but her kayak sustained damage, so she has stopped in Paulatuk. "I was on a survival mode I think the moment I left Tuktoyaktuk," she said. "It is so frustrating. Since I landed here the weather is just awesome, it's warm. I don't have to put on three to four layers to sleep at night."

Hache said anyone she ran into while paddling was helpful but also surprised to meet a woman paddling alone. "They look at me, and then they look around and say 'Where are your partners?'" she said. Hache said at one of her camp sites she saw



*Diane Hache and her kayak after arriving at Paulatuk.*

plenty of polar bear tracks. It was the only place to stop for miles so she put up an electric barrier for protection and hoped she wouldn't have to use her gun. When she did finally see a bear, it was on shore and she was in her kayak.

Hache also encountered four rowers from Vancouver who are also travelling the Northwest Passage this summer.

At one point, some stormy weather left her with wet gear and a wet sleeping bag. "All of a sudden I turn off a point — there's a camp. I said 'There's somebody looking after me up there, for sure!'"

Hache said she paddled 980 kilometres and is about halfway from reaching her goal of Gjoa Haven, Nunavut. She said she'll pick up where she left off next summer. Other than having to call off her trip early, she has no regrets. "It has been a tremendous experience," she said.

"Three years ago when I did the Mackenzie, I thought that was the highlight of my life, but it's nothing compared to paddling the Arctic Ocean." Hache said she'll leave her kayak in Paulatuk over the winter, where it will be repaired before she returns next summer.

## Books & NZ Sea Canoeist

For any queries re sourcing titles or availability, please email me at: [kayakpc@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kayakpc@xtra.co.nz)

### Paddling Books for Sale

In a listing of new and secondhand paddling titles, I have 40 books available. Email for viewing.

### Past KASK Newsletters Available

Unfolded hard copies of most newsletters are still available - swap for stamps. On the KASK website, PDF copies of newsletters back to the dark ages can be downloaded.

## From your Traveling KASK Correspondent in North America Sandy Ferguson

One thing that strikes me here is design, just how badly some common things can be designed. Take a toilet roll holder. When it becomes a major technical job to load a new roll into the holder something must be wrong. As for water taps, we must by now have come across all the combinations - lift, twist, push, pull and a combination of each of those. And is it obvious which way? No.

If a design is ugly, it is American, including cars. However in Buffalo and Milwaukee we came across some of Frank Lloyd Wright's work and at first mistook it for the designer of some beautiful work, the Scot, Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Now to kayaks: A group of us from CSKNet did an eight-day trip in the Queen Charlotte Islands, north of Vancouver Island. I'd expected the worst, heavy rain all the time and impenetrable hordes of mosquitoes. We got three days of cloudless skies followed by grey but sun in the afternoon and I killed half of the mosquitoes, both of them.

The kayaks - we had Seaward *Tyees*, a good load carrier and if you saw the way we were provided for, you'd realize why capacity was important. We used the aft end for our gear and the guides filled the fore ends - filled them. Some of us also had 10 litre drums of water ahead of the rudder pedals. The two doubles carried the larger items such as the stove and large pots. The doubles were a *Necky* and undefined (no name) double of similar size and shape.

The *Tyee* - hydro dynamically they didn't appear to be the best shape as they pitched in a short sea, something my *Mac50* design doesn't do. But it was the outfitting that left a bit to be desired - there were no aft decklines and the fore deckline were a bit iffy, being terminated with bungy. The seat backs were a bit of flat HDPM

plastic bolted to the sides and curved round. The problem with them was trying to keep them up so you didn't end up sitting on them. Worst was the rudders - there was no way for them to go down again after running over kelp, a common thing we had to paddle through, often, long strands of it and a type we don't have in NZ.

Andy made the comment that desk fittings would be done to a price but I could have rigged it for half the price (removed a lot of useless bungy) and made the whole thing work far better. Back in Vancouver I looked at *Delta* kayaks and they were much better rigged - proper decklines and rudder hold-downs.

That said, the outfitter is stuck with what the manufacturer does. However they aren't when it comes to paddles. Considering I'm 183 cm (6') and the majority of paddlers would be shorter, as were the previous group, which were all women, providing 230 and 240 cm paddles is the height of stupidity to put it bluntly.

My feeling on this is possibly not helped by an old cycling shoulder injury (torn muscle) waking me up at 2.00 am for the next few weeks and it is still giving trouble during the day. A wee after this injury happened I did a five-day kayak trip and later 38 days round Fiji, neither trip causing any problems because I was using paddles of a sensible length.

The paddles we used were Werner *Skagit's* and for some reason they are only made in 220, 230 and 240 cm lengths. Further reading of Werner's website leads one to believe that by and large North Americans don't

know how to paddle properly. From my quick survey on Kayak Fishing's forum no one uses more than 225 cms (taller than me and much wider sit-on-top) and most use shorter and paddles on broad beam wide sit-on-tops. One comment - 'I'm 185cm - Ferg's supplied the 214 cm.'

Relating back to Werner's website and their comment on "Low Angle Paddling" relating to using long paddles - we were watching paddlers in Buffalo Harbour and one quickly realized that a vast number of kayakers and hence buyers of paddles are those who go out for a Sunday paddle, six strokes and then a rest, all the time lying back in the seat. Still not a reason to have long paddles but obviously what is meant by LAP is no way 'proper' paddle technique.

When one considers we probably have more Olympic kayak gold medal winners, Olympic gold medal kayak winner with kayak shops, more top multisport paddlers and more long distance touring paddlers per head of population than anywhere else in the world, that should say something.

Sandy Ferguson  
(in Buffalo near a waterfall)

*The Canterbury Network paddlers in the Queen Charlotte Islands*



### A 'Bugger!' File Incident from the Olde Country from an email received by Alan Byde:

Hi Alan

Thought you might be interested in an article in the *Echo* yesterday about a guy who was kayak fishing for mackerel off Hartlepool, who had caught about 20 fish and had them in a 'keep' net over the side of his kayak when a seal took a liking to the fish and capsized him! He was about a mile off shore and was spotted by a couple out for a stroll. He was quite lucky to survive. He had a wet suit on! Always bloody freezing at Hartlepool! Have you ever fished from a kayak? If I did it, I would use outriggers with buoyancy floats! Malc

# THE BUGGER! FILE

**Close Call in Nelson Area**  
2 June 2013

by **Chris Ingram**

Never judge the Day Ahead from  
your Put-In weather

I didn't waste a moment in accepting his invitation for a Sunday morning paddle. We were enjoying a gorgeous spell of calm late autumn weather - June. I was staying beachside with a friend, and this older neighbour had just offered to take me around the point and up 'Alligator Stream'.

"It's small river nearby, then follow the beach to an estuary past several other explorable streams. You're in luck as the king tides are in about midday." Having taken out parties of young people for many years, he'd gathered together a dozen or so boats and gear for their shallow, estuary trips.

We met at 10.30 am and I chose from his 12 ft / 3.65m *Olymp 5* kayaks - 'old fashioned' fibreglass shells with cockpit, seat, spray deck and chunk of tethered white expanded polystyrene tucked inside as buoyancy. No rudders in those days. A sturdy paddle and good lifejacket completed our gear.

It was just a few minutes to portage to the beach - almost high tide - and in our polyprops we set off east over a 500 metre long submerged rocky point and up the creek to explore, having just enough width to turn around at the road bridge blocking our progress. Further east we explored a couple more creeks then along to the estuary, calm and reflecting trees, with waders gathered on the sand spit.

With the now falling tide, further rivers were inaccessible, so we retraced our journey, the westerly reciprocal course now requiring us to travel the full ½ km off shore to round the now exposed rocky point. Heading for its tip took us further off shore from the sandy beach we'd followed on the outward journey.

Halfway along I noticed ruffled water, cats paws beam-on with the southerly breeze strengthening to nudge us imperceptibly, then alarmingly, out to sea. "Jeez! I'm heading in," I shouted.

"Back Beach," came the enigmatic reply as I turned head in to the near gale into the shore, hunkering down, blown backwards in the squalls, clawing my way forward during the lulls. Battle conditions. Combat kayaking. I had plenty to occupy my mind, but other thoughts crowded in. 'I'm in an unsuitable craft. If capsized with wet exit, it would assume the vertical and quickly blow out into Cook Strait with the wind strengthening further from land.

'I've no glasses strap, blind without them, no compass, no whistle, no cellphone or other means of communication. My friend's wife is at church, while my host doesn't know where we were going or when to expect me back. The water's cold, the wind is blowing like a banshee, the ebbing king tide of 3.8 m means it's deep under me, and could suck us out and away.'

'If he or I capsized - an assist or rescue attempt might compromise the other. Best to abandon one's craft and seek a tow in, clinging onto the other's bow, or stern kicking for added propulsion.'

'DON'T CAPSIZE!' I clawed my way in during easing of the near

gale force winds (22-27 knots or 40-50kph) plus gusts to the beach and safety. My companion made it soon after. We portaged back to his house.

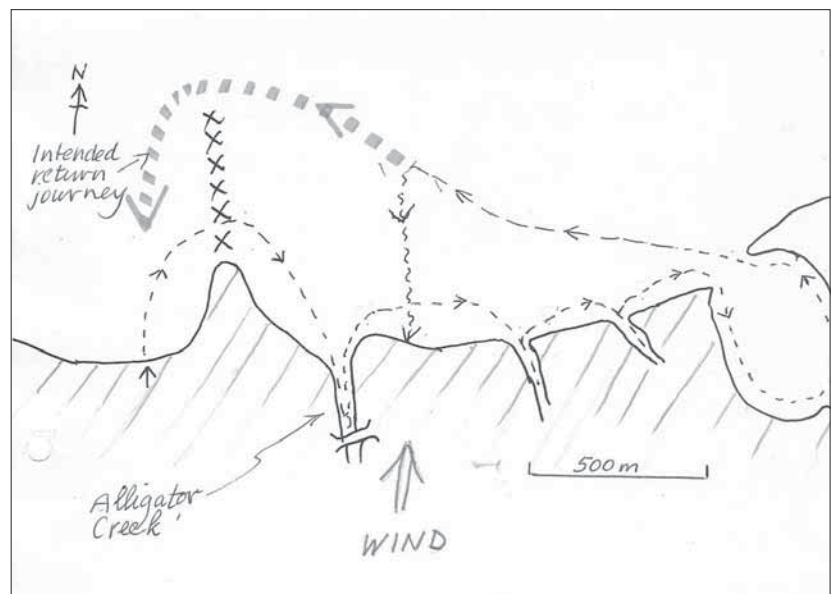
Later, back at my host's home in sober mood I reflected on this episode while writing notes - lining up the lemons, assessing vulnerabilities. Contemplating my risk and how, in letting my guard down on that calm and sunny day, put myself in danger of death, drowning or hypothermia.

### Counting the Lemons

1. After days of fine weather neither of us checked the weather forecast - on the radio or internet. I'd been using my iPad in my host's WiFi home, so had access to all the forecasts.

I later read in Max Grant Q Craft Sea Kayak Safety Booklet - about Banks Peninsula - but surely applicable to the South Island generally: 'Paddlers in this area should be experienced and well equipped and take particular note of any southerly changes forecast as they hit violently and with little warning.' The South-erly Buster is a fearsome creature.

2. No Pre trip discussion - or risks disclosed; no Plan B. I hadn't asked for the details of the brief invitation given over dinner to, 'Explore Alligator River and along to the estuary'; no map or sketch of our route and discussion of weather, emergencies - no get-out points, signalling, dangers; no review of safety equipment and communications; no completed



2 minute form or note left with each of our people at home, with emergency services to call after 'be back' time expired.

3. Several important items I'd left in my suitcase were:

- cell phone. Having no access to condoms, I could have used kitchen snap lock plastic bags for double bagging similar to Maritime NZ free 'keep it dry' bags.

- glasses strap, compass, whistle
- an EPIRB for goodness sake - I was part way through an adventure holiday.

4. A glance at the Olympic's internal bare hull should have red flagged our need to stay close to shore in case of having to swim for it. No deck lines, but without internal buoyancy they might have encouraged us to cling to the (now) vertical hull (chunk of polystyrene at only one end) being blown out to sea and gripped by the outgoing 3.8 m tide.

5. Water temp was 10°C. We had poly prop top and bottoms and shorts, with lifejacket over. Swept out to sea, both 75 yrs +, if we had 800 metres to swim, we'd possibly have a 50/50 chance of reaching shore, provided no cold water shock, and we were strong swimmers. However that strong wind catching our bulky buoyancy aids would have reduced our odds of reaching the shore.

6. That 2 minute form would have stated '2 men, yellow life jackets, in 2 white/ yellow 12 ft kayaks departed 11.30am from xxxx to visit yyyy and return. Estimated time of return

2.30 pm, send S A R by 3.30pm if not returned. (Midwinter, with darkness at 5.00 pm.)

7. Wind strength verified at the local airfield as 22 – 27 knots. Branches were blown off trees, and a local lady I meet later commented that at that time, 1.00pm, she had been blown off her bike by the wind.

8. My lesson from this incident is to now approach every kayak outing with a questioning mind. Can I trust this Leader with my life? His gear? Do I know where and when we are going and returning? The Forecast? Have I the boat, knowledge, skills and safety gear to get me back to shore safely? If I don't return who will contact SAR with full details, and when?

As stated in Cathye Haddock's Mountain Safety Manual #38: 'An adventurer should take responsibility for keeping themselves safe, whether with a leader or not.'

We were fortunate to survive. I was very scared. One for the Bugger! File.

Chris Ingram

**Editor's Note**

As the owner of the kayaks is a local identity and community stalwart, Chris is keen not to disclose his identity or the location. But is it not time that it was pointed out to this local identity that if he had taken out young folk without years of paddling experience, this incident could have led to a tragic loss of life.

*The Olymp 5 kayaks are on top of the rack, one of which Chris used. These were a whitewater design used by Kiwi paddlers in the 70s.*



**OVERSEAS REPORTS**

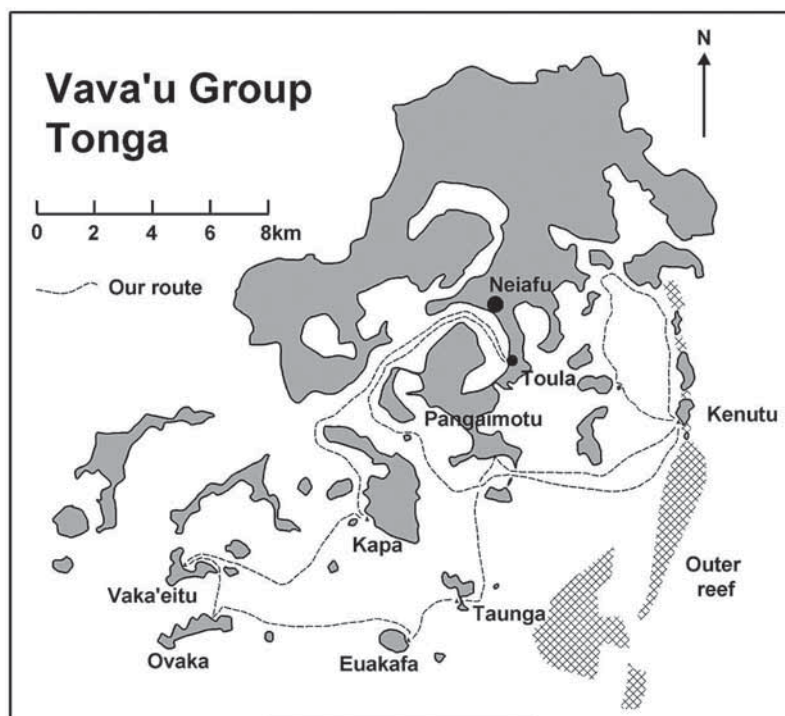
**Trade Winds in our Face by Margot Syms**

see also colour photos on pages 23 & 24

The seed was sown by the Canterbury kayakers' trip to Fiji, then irrigated by a bout of 'last 20 summers' panic, resulting in a spur of the moment decision which had us off to Tonga three weeks later, just ahead of the hurricane season. We signed up for an eight day guided kayak tour (called a 10-day trip) of the Vava'u group with Friendly Islands Kayak Co. The first six days were shared with the group of a shorter trip, and for this we were two Tongan guides and seven clients. The latter being made up of two German (ex East) couples – self named the 'German Fraction', one lady from the UK and us two NZers. We got on well together – thank goodness – and we all more or less seemed to agree how the world should be and is not. We also learned about East Germany and the re-unification.

On Day 1 we learned what the trade winds are; constant, more or less easterly, 15 knots plus or minus, blow day and night, if anything stronger at night. The ocean swell is excluded by the outer reefs and we just had wind generated chop to deal with. We paddled *Necky Tofino* doubles which were very sea worthy beasts, but a bit limited for storage with no middle hatch. Each double had a chillbin or similar strapped on top of the rear hatch cover. Somehow I, who am not very approving of NZ exporting tinned corned beef of 18% fat to the islands, ended up with quite a few tins of this stowed in my cockpit behind the seat. We carried our fresh water in 10 litre jerry cans, also stored in cockpits. All in all, it was best not to capsize. All paddles were the same length, a bit challenging for us shorties, and with optional feather.

I find kayaking without a map very frustrating. I had assumed we could



get maps and have them laminated in Tonga, but as a backstop I took with me from NZ a few maps from assorted guides, which I had laminated. In Nuku'alofa, on the main island, I drew a blank with maps of the other island groups. In Neiafu, in the Vava'u group, there was a café that sold charts and did laminating, but on the day before the tour started it was closed because the owner had gone sailing for the day! So I was glad of my crude maps which were in fact quite adequate.

The other trip clients had had little paddling experience and it was unusual to be a more experienced boat and waiting for the others. I think we got more out of the trip by being kayak fitter and more relaxed in the conditions which were never calm.

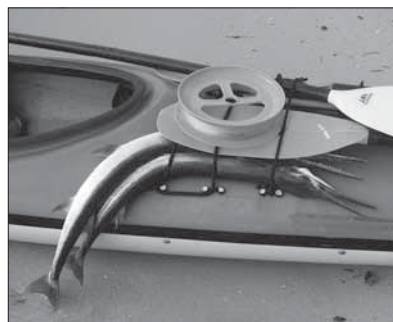
For our route see map. The wind started in the south and moved to the south-east and then the east, so we always seemed to have a headwind of 15 to 20 knots with chop. Progress was generally about 3 km/hr and Peter and I on our own could not have added a lot to this. For the part of the trip with all of us we paddled between 1 and 3 hrs/day, usually in one go.

Day 1 – up to 15 knots from the south (an introduction to the trade winds).

We left base at Toula and enjoyed a rare tail wind as we headed north past Neiafu and out of the Port of Refuge to visit the Swallows Cave – on a high ceiling are swallows' nests, and there is deep crystal clear water. All somewhat spoilt by graffiti on the walls, some dated as recent as 2010. Then we went south to a late lunch on Kapa Is. We were supposed to continue on but the other clients were rather weary and so we camped there. Why such a long first day is planned, I do not know.

That night Peter and I inadvertently pitched our tent on what must have been a minor pig route. At 12:30 am I awoke and heard something coming towards us at speed. It was a pig scared off our kitchen area by one of the guides. Now animals are not stupid, unless in a panic, and this one charged straight up against our tent, continued over a deformed version of it by sheer momentum, and on down the track. It says a lot for modern tent poles that they flexed without breaking. The only damage was a rip in the corner of our tent fly and a trotter print on my hand!

Next humour came the following morning when the 1 kg pack of coffee was opened. It was beans, not grounds as had been ordered. A cell phone call and a small boat delivery saved withdrawal symptom



*The needle fish destined for dinner*

problems all trip. The boot was on the other foot for me, the only pure tea drinker, when water got into one kayak hatch and drenched the box of tea bags. I hastily started drying these out in a frying pan over the fire, until I was told we had another dry packet.

Day 2 – 15 to 20 knots on the port bow. We did what we were supposed to do on the previous afternoon, WSW around a few islands to Vaka'eitu. This left time in the afternoon for snorkeling on the reef near our camp. That night we were treated to the first meal of fish (Needle fish) cooked in freshly made, traditional style coconut cream.

Day 3 – 15 to 20 knot SE head wind (these are the trade winds – get used to them). We nipped over a reef at high tide and headed south for a short stop at Ovaka to pick some fresh basil for tonight's pasta. Then a good paddle over to Euakafa Island where we spent two nights. The reefs just off the beach were the best snorkeling of the whole trip and quite a few man half-hours were spent in the water here.

Day 5 – the wind got quite strong overnight but had eased to the regulation 15 to 20 knots by morning. We had only a short hop to paddle, into the wind of course, to the west side of a narrow isthmus on Taunga Island. That evening we, dressed in our lava lavas, visited a village to be served a "feast" cooked in an umu (like a Maori hangi). Food is wrapped in banana leaves and baked underground. The poor flexibility of our chair dwelling bodies was obvious compared to the Tongans when we sat on the floor around a low table to eat. This meal was

followed by sampling of kava – the traditional social drink – an acquired taste was our verdict.

Day 6 – to avoid low tidal flats on the side we had landed, and to ensure we got a head wind from the start, we carried our kayaks over the isthmus to the east side to launch. We wended our way through islands to land for lunch at a road end on Pangaimotu Island which is linked to the main island by a causeway. After lunch we said goodbye to the others. To mark their departure the wind dropped to 10 – 15 knots and was often on the tail – seemed a bit unfair really. Also paddling increased to 4.5 hrs/day. We headed east with our guide to Kenutu Island on the eastern edge of the group. Climbing to the ridge of the island we looked out on the ocean as it pounded on the rocks. The sea was a confusion of swell and wind chop and the reflections of these off the rocks – no place for our kayak. Nicer to listen to the roar of the surf from the other side of the island and look at the calm water in front of us.

Day 7 – the wind had dropped considerably (trade winds? What trade winds?). We explored this eastern area of the group getting good views of the surf pounding on the outer reefs. The protection provided by these reefs even where there are no islands is amazing. You can admire the likes of Captain Cook who had to negotiate such reefs under wind power alone without the benefit of good charts. Our guide caught an octopus which was served for dinner, rather more than just three of us could eat.

Day 8 – We declined the option to snorkel mid-sea, ‘towing’ our

*The ocean hits the eastern side of Kenutu Island*



*Peter & Margot Syms in lava lavas ready to go to the feast.*

kayaks, over 1 km from the nearest island, in a 15 knot breeze and chop. Instead we opted to paddle home back around into the Port of Refuge instead of the short cut through the culvert under the causeway.

After the tour we spent a couple of days in the Ha’apai island group. At 3 am on the first night we awoke to what sounded like a fire alarm, but later proved to be the smoke alarm playing up. It was a good lesson in how you should be able to grab your torch and valuables quickly and get out of the building.

Here we hired a sea kayak for a day and paddled down the Lifuka and Uoleva islands’ west coast. This time we had a *Necky Manitou II*. While a versatile boat we would class it as a day kayak only. It was Sunday, and as we paddled past the main village of Pangai the sound of singing from the church drifted out to us. We paddled south to the end of Uoleva Island in 1.75 hours with a light tail wind, then had lunch. The afternoon was spent bashing back against a 20 knot head wind with some swell and chop – back to the usual 3 km/hr for 3 hours. Our paddles were unfeathered and too long, which did not help progress. As the occasional wave washed over us, water must have got in around the sprayskirts and we could feel it sloshing in our common joined cockpit space. At least we got back before it got too deep. Never again will I curse a tight sprayskirt!

Back at base we were ready for a well earned rest. Our only regret of the trip was that we did not stay a day longer here and take the sea kayak for a day trip to the north along the coast of Foa Island.

Back in New Zealand after a few days ‘ashore’ we were out for a day paddle on our beloved Waimea Estuary/Rabbit Island. The first couple of strokes we both exclaimed, “What a funny little paddle.” I soon adapted back to the old rhythm but Peter is going to buy himself a slightly longer paddle – feathered of course.

#### References & Recommendations:

**Kayak tour operator in Vava’u:** Friendly Islands Kayak Co, [www.fikco.com](http://www.fikco.com), an NZ company with their kayak base in Vava’u. They also run trips in Ha’apai group, but we think the Vava’u group is more suited to kayak touring.

In Ha’apai we stayed at, and hired the kayak for a day trip from Fins ‘n’ Flukes: [www.finsnflukes.com](http://www.finsnflukes.com). They specialize in whale watching and diving. Great place and friendly people.

**Time of year:** The best time to go in the dry season, June to October, when it is warm and the trade winds blow. The wet season is hot and humid, with less wind, probably uncomfortable for kayaking. It is also the cyclone season.

**Web sites:** Trip Advisor, [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com), is good when searching for accommodation and activities as you see people’s opinions. And of course good old Google.

**Hard copy guides:** *Jasons Kingdom of Tonga Visitors Guide* is free and contains heaps of useful info, see [www.jasons.com/guides/](http://www.jasons.com/guides/). *Lonely Planet guide to Samoa and Tonga*, we borrowed an old 2003 LP guide to Tonga from the library and even that was useful (even if not for prices!)

Margot Syms - photos by Peter Syms Nelson

## Overseas Reports

### Paddling Solo Together

Lessons Learned from a Paddling Dad  
by Brenda M. Zollitsch

My father is a certain well-traveled, hard-paddling man who writes fascinating articles about his canoeing adventures. He writes about trip planning, long paddling expeditions, and nautical history. Well, this year, as I finished a journey of my own at the age of 42, I have realized how many of my Dad's lessons, that he taught me while we were paddling together, have also helped guide me in my life. We have raced together, canoe camped together, and these days usually paddle two solo canoes side-by-side together exploring the Maine coast when our busy lives allow.



*Brenda paddling with her Dad on Casco Bay*

Realizing there was a growing list of these lessons floating around in my head, I started to write them down for myself. And once I wrote them down, they began to seem like really useful lessons, ones to which any paddler might relate or benefit from. So, with great love and respect for my Dad (who has not read this before I submitted it), a shared passion with you for being out on the water, and with the knowledge that good lessons are just that - I humbly share with you a few of the gems I have learned from my Dad:

#### 1. Always start your day with oatmeal.

My Dad always cooks us oatmeal to start the day when we go canoe camping together. As a result, I have become a great believer in the power of oatmeal. It's really about the importance of taking the measured time on your travels to fortify and prepare your body and mind for the day. But some-

how, for me, I think it's also the mystical power of oatmeal itself. It warms, it soothes, it energizes, it POWERS. We need more things like oatmeal in our lives. While the urban jungle may not be as intense as a stormy day paddling against the tide up a mangrove-lined river or paddling a marathon race, surely before an important presentation, before an eighteen hour work day, before defending your research, fortification is a very good thing. Don't start your day on empty. There are great benefits to investing in yourself and your day. Have a bowl of oatmeal power, whether literally or just in spirit, before pushing off on your own adventure!

#### 2. Take the time to plan properly

Growing up, my Dad always talked about preparation. Plan ahead. Think about contingencies. Spend the time to prevent accidents while on the water. Use your head. As I grew older, I began to realize the benefits of this advice - that I truly could plan away a good portion of avoidable issues.

If you program your mind to think about different contingencies and scenarios, you can be ready for them. This means more than knowing how to Eskimo roll a kayak. On the water, it means knowing when the tides work for your trip, looking at the weather and wearing the right clothes, making sure you have your map marked and handy, knowing alternative take out points, having first aid training and equipment, and bringing materials to fix your equipment if you break something.

It also means having a plan you share with others about when to expect you, where and what to do if you don't show up there by an established time, or even miss check-ins on a cell or satellite phone. The lesson is that to avoid grounding out, tipping over, or taking on water, you need to think strategically in life. This doesn't mean there won't be a rogue wave that catches up with you,

but it means that life can be a little less stressful if you plan ahead, take into consideration what could go wrong, and take precautions.



*My Dad planning his next long-distance canoeing adventure*

#### 3. Know where you are going

My Dad is a chart man. In his spare time, when not on the water or working hard (and especially during the winter months), he enjoys exploring intriguing nautical charts. My Dad's chart reading has always taught me that it takes measured steps to get where you want to go. In my mind I see him walking his protractor along charts in 25-27 mile increments to show me how many days he will be gone on a trip. He always taught me:

- make sure you can take out where you want to.
- think about the history along the way and learn about it before you get there so you know what to look for.
- understand that the place you are headed has meant many things to different people throughout history.
- and figure out what YOU want to get out of your trip.

In life, it is possible to stumble upon amazing things, to find things along your path that you had never even



dreamed of. But knowing what you are looking for and being open to what a place or situation has to offer has served me well over time. I have seen firsthand the value of creating a map for yourself or your institution, laying out steps to get there, understanding the history of a situation or institution, and taking the time to understand what it means for those whom it involves and/or affects. By taking big tasks in increments and focusing on one step at a time, you can make big things happen on the water and off.



*Brenda's Dad reviewing nautical charts in front of historic Chatham Lighthouse on Cape Cod*

#### 4. Adjust Your Compass

My Dad has always explained to me that you need to adjust your compass based on where you are in the world. He would share different scenarios about a geographic location and calculations to establish true North, rather than where your compass pointed to North.

I believe that I was guilty of a lot of nodding and less actual comprehension for many years. But this lesson could not have been more critical. Just because you have a compass doesn't mean it automatically tells you correctly where to go. If you are headed across open water and navigating by compass, not making the appropriate adjustment for geography may mean that you simply miss the point of land you were headed for altogether.

This could not be more true for life and work as well! If you don't take into consideration social, economic, political, interpersonal adjustments that reflect where you are, you're destined to arrive off-mark. You have to understand what adjustments you need to make to tools, "standard operating procedures" and advice in

order to use them effectively. What works for one person in their life or organization, surely does not guarantee the same results in yours. Doing the math to adjust your compass properly could make a critical difference about where you arrive and what shape you're in when you do.



*Brenda's compass mounted on a rented two-person canoe*

#### 5. Never pack above the gunwales

My Dad has a pet peeve. It's the overloaded canoe that looks like a rounded hippopotamus above the gunwales. I have been witness to him sharing this sage advice with hapless overloaded paddlers that were past the packing point of no return.

When you're in the wilderness, leave the 10-six-pack plastic cooler, 12 fishing rods, tent the size of Rhode Island and your brother's BBQ pit at home. In wind or waves, you're going to be struggling to keep that boat upright. It's all about physics, but I'll let him explain that to you. Think about what you really need to be safe, warm, and fed on your trip.

Pack light and limited. Invest in polypropylene and proper water gear. Bring compact food and fluids. Pack in waterproof bags and store them tightly below the gunwales. This way you have full use of the entire space in front of and behind you, the weight of your boat is as minimal as possible (you will have tears of gratefulness in rough conditions),



*Brenda's Dad*

and you can handle waves over the side if such a scenario occurs.

The life lesson, however, is about stuff - about baggage. In life, we all collect and bring along so much STUFF - physical and emotional. When I would pack for long trips with my Dad I used to think, how in the world can I survive with so little STUFF? But with the right clothes, equipment and food packed, I have to admit (against my own concerns) that I always had what I needed.

Today, with a family, work and school, I have had to learn to prioritize what I bring where. And while it's good to always be prepared, it's also good to take a look at what we can actually leave behind to lighten the load when things get rough and life's baggage starts to rise above the gunwales.

#### 6. Don't rely on GPS

These days it's all too easy to become overly reliant on technology and quick fixes. My Dad has refused to get on the GPS bandwagon. This may seem antiquated, but his map and compass approach is not about rejecting technology and progress, it's about being able to get yourself out of situations with the least reliance on something that could fail you as possible.

When you're navigating around a big bay in a fog bank and your GPS strap

slips and goes diving with the fishes, your battery charge light betrays you or your screen malfunctions, it's nice to still know where you are and how to get where you planned to go. This is true across the board in life. I have an iPhone5, a GPS, high-end computer software for my work, and social networking identities to connect with friends and family.

However, it is important to know where you are on a map if you're travelling with a volatile car full of tired kids and the GPS gives you bad directions. You should know how your software works so you know if it is doing the math wrong. And surely, you should get together to laugh about your life over a cup of something warm as often as possible, instead of relying on a tweet or an instant message to keep your relationships deep and meaningful. Keep up with the technology and use it, just don't solely rely on it.



*Paddling on a foggy day*

**8. Push off early, arrive by noon**

Once we've had that oatmeal, my Dad always pushes onwards – it's time to pack up and get on the water. It's so easy to lounge around with the morning beverage, looking at the beautiful, still water and enjoying listening to the birds having their morning conversations. As someone who truly enjoys smelling the roses, I can tell you that there is a price to pay for that leisure.

Anyone who is on the water a lot knows that the wind always seems to kick up in the early afternoon and gets downright unpleasant on tired arms the later in the day it gets. That glasslike water will often develop of-fending whitecaps by 2 pm. So, if you want to relax - get up, pack up, push off, paddle, GET THERE, and THEN relax. When paddling with

my Dad, this often means getting up by 6:30 am and off at the very latest by 8 am. But it also means that we're at our destination before the wind builds and lounging in our tent or on a beach for an entire afternoon of fun. This also allows for the most wildlife viewing while you are paddling, as most birds and other creatures feed in the early morning and nap in the afternoon. It also gives one time to troubleshoot before dark, should something go awry. This is true in everyday life too.

When I push myself to get things started early and right, the stress on the other side is often greatly reduced. I may not feel like printing all my documents the day before a meeting or packing lunches and laying out my children's school clothes the night before, but it sure makes things easier the next morning and allows other issues to occur without ruining the day. By pushing hard early, it may be possible to beat some of life's wind to the far shore.



*Brenda enjoying a well-earned early lunch on an island off the coast of Maine*

**9. Given the chance to sit it out or dance, just dance!**

My Dad danced with me to 'It's a Wonderful World,' at my wedding. He can waltz or polka with the best of them. In a canoe or outrigger, we refer to dancing as balancing on sizable waves as we paddle and especially feeling swells come up from behind our boats, rolling under and out to the front, as the canoe seesaws and eventually surfs down wave swells. There is a lot of what I would call "faith" that one has to have when dancing in a boat - faith in your boat, in your knowledge of how water moves and in your own skills. I used to be really afraid of paddling in these kinds of waves.

I could feel my own nerves ripple down the sides of the Kevlar boat. But with age and trust in myself, I have learned to let go a little, to have faith in my own abilities and enjoy that moment when you know you're not in complete control.

With faith in my own skills, I became a Registered Maine Guide and run rafting trips on Maine's Class IV and V rivers. And while my Dad is the master paddler, in back of that raft it's me, my own skills and judgment guiding my crew safely on their whitewater adventure.

Don't get intimidated by others who have more experience. In life, you are often faced with new opportunities and challenges. There is a song that says if you are given a chance to sit it out or dance, just dance. Whether a new job, relationship, trip, skill-building opportunity, or way of thinking, if you know in your heart that you have the ability to do or learn how to do something (but you're nervous) - I have learned from my Dad to take the bull by the horns, the paddle in your hands, and just dance!



*Brenda guiding for North Country Rivers rafting company in Northern Maine*

**10. Be willing to take a wind day**

While taking calculated risks is sometimes okay, my Dad also taught me from a young age about the importance of being prudent. And he doesn't just preach it. He practices it. For all my Dad's intensity, drive and skill, he still knows that sometimes he has to take what we call a "wind day." This is a scheduled trip day that has to be cancelled due to bad weather conditions. Now, this doesn't mean that if there is a chill in the air or some drizzle or a few small waves, that you should freak out and

stay ashore. What it means is that when conditions are truly unsafe, there is no shame in taking a shore day and making up the time on the other end. There are conditions on the water that an open boater should not venture out into. And in life this is deeply true as well. It's hard to cancel or change direction on some of the things we want in life, whether a relationship that's not working, a project that's heading for a cliff, or a job that looks right but that you know in your heart is wrong for you. It's really hard, especially when you feel like you are strong and brave, to have the strength to say, "not me, not today," but it's a good lesson and I am grateful he has shown me so by example.



*Too windy on the water for paddling*

**12. Always pack your polys and pull your boat above the high tide line**

There are a few rules that you learn immediately when paddling with my Dad. These apply to everyone, including him.

They boil down to being prepared and not taking lightly the powers of nature. One of these is: Make sure you have polypropylene long underwear along and rain gear available. No matter what the weather forecast said, it could still rain.

Even a three minute downpour on a relatively warm day with a light breeze can lead to hypothermia on the water. As a Registered Maine Guide, I cannot tell you how often I have to remind paddlers to leave the cotton at home and protect against the draining combination of being wet, wearing the wrong clothes and getting chilled by that seemingly ever-present light breeze.

In the same way nature can be unpredictable, it is also relentlessly predictable in other ways, like tides.

The tide will come in and it will go out. Don't get caught with the tide taking your boat as a party favor as it heads out to sea for the night. Knowing in life that there are certain things you can and can't control is a critical lesson. You can prepare, at least to some extent, for both. Most importantly, perhaps, is being emotionally prepared for both the inevitable and unexpected things in one's personal life. By being prepared, you become more resilient and, consequently, more open to possibility.



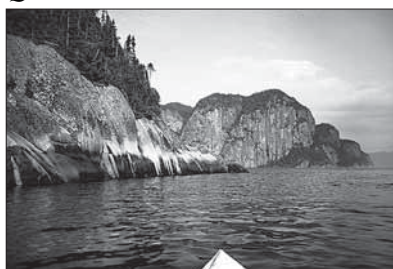
*Our waterproof trip gear was always placed on high ground*

**13. If it was easy, everyone would do it**

My Dad completes wildly long and challenging paddling trips. He goes places that many people would never even consider traveling or paddling. It's not easy, but he does it because it is meaningful to him personally. He loves the challenge, the feeling of being in his boat, of seeing new things, of learning about places, and simply the joy of being on the water.

Whatever one's passion, whether it be paddling in an exciting new location, writing a book, earning a degree, learning a new skill or taking any kind of challenging journey, it applies – if it was easy, everyone would do it. I take away from his example not that everyone should become an expedition paddler, but that everyone should strive to follow their passion. If it was easy, everyone would do it. Find what your "it"

*Cape Trinite -Saguenay Fjord, Quebec Province.*



is, and find your way there, however many paddle strokes it takes to get there. When you do, the view will be magnificent.

**15. Spend time with your Dad**

The final lesson I want to share with you is perhaps the most important one. It's not one he's taught me. It's one that I have realized by spending time with him. I read my Dad's articles and I smile thinking – I saw him there, I can see him doing that, I want to go there with him there next summer.

But I also have a different set of thoughts. I think about his smile when he shared that orange with me hanging onto a mangrove root in the bright sunshine at the end of a weeklong paddle together in the Everglades. I think of the sound that our paddles make dipping into the water in unison as we paddle up the river together to see hundreds of Canada Geese.

In my mind I can feel the surge of power he adds in the stern when we paddle in the same boat together. I have the vision of him surrounded by the steam coming off the pot on a cool morning while he cooks our oatmeal. I think of how we both eat our apple sauce with our granola bar when we take a break. I think of Loons, Orion, and manatee bubbles.

I know that perhaps he thinks about paddling and even the world in slightly different ways by us having paddled, spent that time, together. I take from this that simply being WITH someone, in our case, paddling solo together, is one of life's greatest gifts. While my Dad may share his stories in articles, they can never capture the joy I felt of seeing my first flock of roseate spoonbills with him.

Spend some time with your Dad or whoever it is that you love. It's in that moment of togetherness that you realize how truly precious that time is and how much they have blessed your life. Here's to the next paddle, Dad, and sharing many more pots of oatmeal and adventures side by side.

Reprinted with thanks to *Atlantic Coastal Kayaker* and Brenda.



**Registration Form**  
**KASK MINI-SYMPOSIUM**  
**(NORTHLAND)**  
**15th – 17th NOVEMBER 2013**



Name: .....

Address: .....

Phone: ..... Email: .....

Emergency contact: .....

Level of Experience:

Novice (*Just started sea kayaking, no formal skills training*)

Intermediate (*Some support strokes, can do wet exit and assisted rescue*)

Advanced Intermediate (*Can complete assisted and self-rescue in moderate conditions. Have completed day trips in a variety of conditions*)

Advanced (*Can roll a sea kayak in rough conditions. Have completed several challenging sea kayak trips*)

This is a mini pre season kayaking skills symposium welcoming all interested kayakers. The first speaker will be at 8 pm on Friday. Guest speakers and highly qualified trainers will be covering water skills and there will be special training on Sunday for new kayakers.

The on the water options are the same on both days: Please indicate which you are interested in on Saturday or Sunday as numbers will be limited in each group. The Sunday sessions will start earlier for those who need to travel.

	Saturday	Sunday
Leading your paddling peers	_____	_____
Rolling your Kayak	_____	_____
Surf Training	_____	_____
Rescue Skills	_____	_____
Harbour Paddle	_____	_____

General:

I would like vegetarian meals YES / NO      I have the following medical requirements .....

I require transport to/from airport? YES / NO      I require a kayak (available according to demand) YES / NO

I agree to abide by the rules set down by the FORUM organisers at the trip briefing and enclose my registration fee of \$150. This registration fee includes all meals from Saturday breakfast to Sunday lunch, accommodation, and the chance to learn and paddle with others. Saturday evenings meal is catered and will be followed by a social time with singing and dancing. (You're welcome to invite family/friends along to the Saturday dinner at \$25 per person.)

I acknowledge that kayaking events involve a degree of risk and will not hold the organisers liable for any loss or damage to myself, equipment or third parties as a result of participating in this Northland Canoe Club mini-symposium.

Signed: ..... Dated: .....

## HUMOUR

### Memory

An elephant was drinking out of a river one day, when he spotted a turtle asleep on a log. So, he ambled on over and kicked it clear across the river.

"What did you do that for?" asked a passing giraffe.

"Because I recognized it as the same turtle that took a nip out of my trunk 53 years ago."

"Wow, what a memory," commented the giraffe.

"Yes," said the elephant, "turtle recall."

### Honest Kid

A little boy got on the bus, sat next to a man reading a book, and noticed he had his collar on backwards. The little boy asked why he wore his collar backwards. The man, who was a priest, said, "I am a Father."

The little boy replied, "My daddy doesn't wear his collar like that." The priest looked up from his book and answered, "I am the father of many."

The boy said, "My dad has four boys, four girls and two grandchildren and he doesn't wear his collar that way!" The priest, getting impatient, said, "I am the Father of hundreds," and went back to reading his book. The little boy sat quietly thinking for a while, then leaned over and said, "Maybe you should wear a condom, and put your pants on backwards instead of your collar."

### Widows Dating

Dorothy and Edna, two 'senior' widows, are talking.

Dorothy: "That nice George Johnson asked me out for a date. I know you went out with him last week, and I wanted to talk with you about him before I give him my answer."

Edna: "Well, I'll tell you. He shows up at my apartment punctually at 7pm, dressed like such a gentleman in a fine suit, and he brings me such beautiful flowers! Then he takes me downstairs. And what's there - a limousine, uniformed chauffeur and all. Then he takes me out for dinner; a marvellous dinner, lobster, champagne, dessert, and after-dinner

drinks. Then we go see a show. Let me tell you Dorothy, I enjoyed it so much I could have just died from pleasure! So then we are coming back to my apartment and he turns into an ANIMAL. Completely crazy, he tears off my expensive new dress and has his way with me three times!"

Dorothy: "Goodness gracious! So you are telling me I shouldn't go?"

Edna: "No, no, no, of course not. I'm just saying, wear an old dress."

### Irish Antiques

Paddy took 2 stuffed dogs to the BBC's 'Antiques Roadshow' programme.

"Ooh, I say!" said the presenter, "This is a very rare set, produced by the celebrated Johns Brothers taxidermists who operated in London at the turn of last century. Do you have any idea what they would fetch if they were in good condition?"

"Sticks?" said Paddy.

### Overqualified?

The woman applying for a job in a lemon orchard in Kerikeri seemed to be far too qualified for the job; given her arts and education degrees from Auckland University and her jobs as a social worker and school teacher. The foreman frowned and said, "I have to ask you this. Have you had any actual experience in picking lemons?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I have!"

"I've been divorced three times, owned two Holdens, supported the Warriors, and voted for John Banks."

### Men Are Just Happier People

Nicknames

If Laura, Kate and Sarah go out for lunch, they will call each other Laura, Kate and Sarah.

If Mike, Dave and John go out, they will affectionately refer to each other as Fat Boy, Bubba and Wildman.

Eating Out

When the bill arrives, Mike, Dave and John will each throw in \$20, even though it's only for \$32.50. None of them will have anything smaller and none will actually admit they want change back.

When the girls get their bill, out come the pocket calculators.

Money

A man will pay \$2 for a \$1 item he needs. A woman will pay \$1 for a \$2 item that she doesn't need but it's on sale.

Bathrooms

A man has six items in his bathroom: toothbrush and toothpaste, shaving cream, razor, a bar of soap, and a towel. The average number of items in the typical woman's bathroom is 337.

A man would not be able to identify more than 20 of these items.

Arguments

A woman has the last word in any argument.

Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument.

The Future

A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband.

A man never worries about the future until he gets a wife.

Marriage

A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn't.

A man marries a woman expecting that she won't change, but she does.

Dressing Up

A woman will dress up to go shopping, water the plants, empty the trash, answer the phone, read a book, and get the mail.

A man will dress up for weddings and funerals.

Looking Natural

Men wake up just as good-looking as when they went to bed.

Women somehow deteriorate during the night.

Offspring

Ah, children. A woman knows all about her children. She knows about dentist appointments and romances, best friends, favorite foods, secret fears and hopes and dreams. A man is vaguely aware of some short people living in the house.

Thought for the Day

A married man should forget his mistakes. There's no use in two people remembering the same thing!

## 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, trip reports, book reviews, equipment reviews, new techniques, letters 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.

Send via mail or cybermail to:

**Paul Caffyn,  
1843C, Coast Rd,  
RD 1, Runanga 7873, West Coast  
Ph: 03 731 1806  
Email: kayakpc@xtra.co.nz**

### **KASK Annual Subscription**

\$35 single membership.  
\$40 family membership.  
\$35 overseas (PDF email newsletter)

A subscription form can be downloaded from the KASK website. Cheques should be made out to: Kiwi Assoc. Sea Kayakers & mailed to:

**KASK Administrator  
PO Box 23, Runanga 7841  
West Coast**

### **Correspondence - Queries**

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS to:  
Karen Grant, KASK Administrator  
PO Box 23, Runanga 7841  
West Coast**

**or email Karen at:  
admin@kask.org.nz**

## **4th Ed. KASK HANDBOOK**

### **Sorry but now out of print**

NZ KASK members only, including p&p: \$22.50 Make cheques out to Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers and mail to KASK Administrator: PO Box 23, Runanga, 7841 West Coast The 4th edition of the KASK Handbook, 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

## **SEA KAYAKING NETWORK ADDRESSES**

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email: cathkel@xtra.co.nz

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**HAURAKI Kayak Group**  
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www.hkg.org.nz

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www.sportsground.co.nz/bayseakayak

**RUAHINE Whitewater Club**  
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Ph: 06 326 8667 Fax: 06 326 8472  
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**KASK Website:  
www.kask.org.nz**

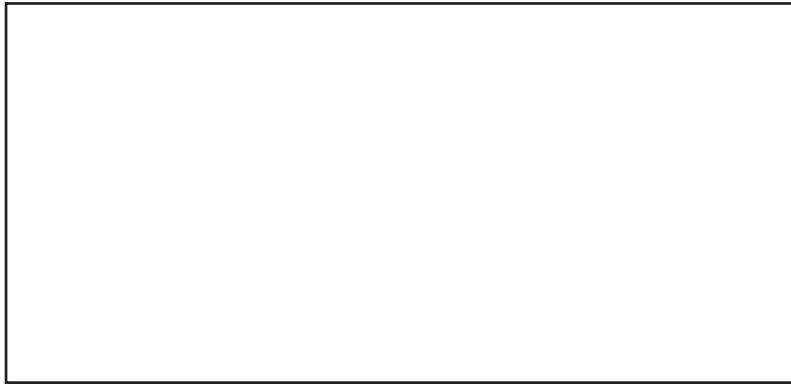


*Justine Curgenven in front of Skellig Micheal, on the west coast of Ireland (see story on p.10)  
Photo: Barry Shaw*



*Deck laden kayaks in Tonga, including a fresh bunch of basil. Photo: Peter Syms  
(See story on page 13)*

MAILED TO



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*Guide Epeli and Peter & Margot Syms having a spell from paddling on a beautiful day in Tonga.  
Photo: Wolfgang Lodge. See story on pages 13-14.*

### **KASK MEMBERSHIP POLICY**

Current membership fees are:

- \$35 for ordinary membership
- for new members \$35
- \$40 for family or joint membership
- \$35 for overseas membership (PDF newsletter only);
- the KASK memberships runs 1 August to 31 July the following year
- a subscription due notice and up to two reminders are sent out with the newsletters between June and October
- if a membership renewal is not received by 30 September, membership lapses
- new members who join between 1 June and 31 July automatically get their membership credited to the following year, receiving a 14 month membership
- the KASK committee puts its emphasis on confirming renewals from existing members from July to October; and promoting new KASK memberships from November to February

