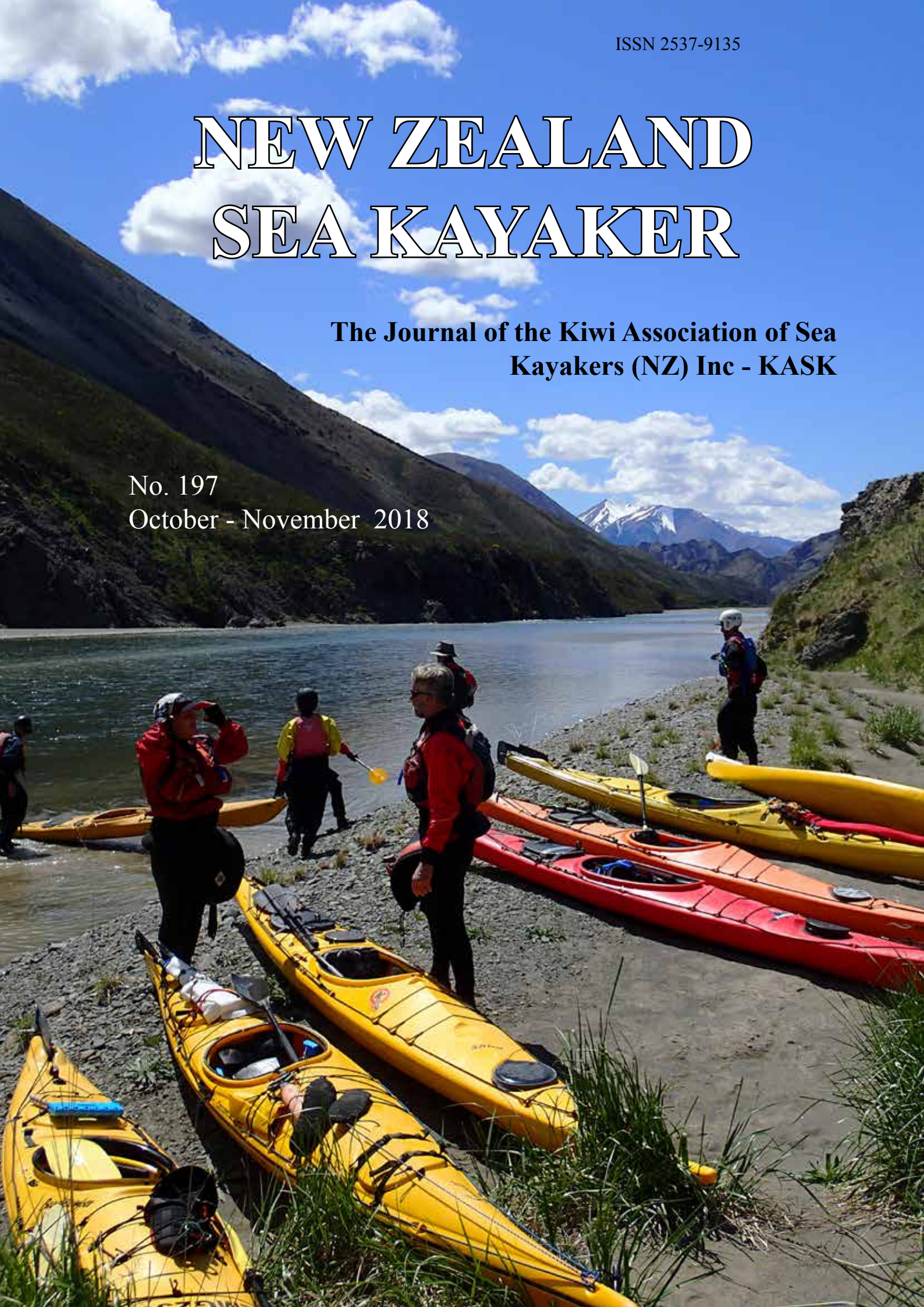


NEW ZEALAND SEA KAYAKER

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

No. 197
October - November 2018





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Thanks to all the marvellous contributors for their photos and stories

Deadline for next magazine: 20 January 2019

*Best wishes for this festive season with calm seas and fair winds
favouring your paddling, not to mention a visit from Santa.*

EDITORIAL

The Clarence River descent in sea kayaks is not sea kayaking as most of us know it, but shows the versatility of the boats we paddle in that they can be used in whitewater, well at least up to grade 2. Dennis Hynes's re-run of the river after first paddling it 42 years ago allows comparison of the difficulty of paddling before and after the 2016 7.5 magnitude Kaikoura earthquake. Kayakers and 16 rafters who were paddling the river at the time were evacuated by helicopter due to a slip blocking the river which caused the river downstream to run out of water and caused a major threat from when the new lake breached the slip and caused a significant flood event downstream.

As with Dennis Hynes, I also graduated from paddling serious whitewater to sea kayaking, but found all those skills learned on fast moving water were of great benefit when dealing with tide races, rips and overfalls, not to mention the bracing and rolling skills. I also liked the paddling biography of Lance Smith whose father bought his three kids a canvas and wood PBK kayak, and this northern summer he has had the opportunity to attend a Tsunami Ranger's Retreat on the western coast of the USA.

John Gumbley writes of a visit by a party of four Kiwis to paddle in the Angmagssalik region of East Greenland, their interest stemming from our Antarctic Peninsula paddle back in 2016. He provides an insight into the appeal of the glacier-choked fjords but also some of the issues that local Greenlanders are currently facing.

Safe paddling this summer
Paul Caffyn

Cover photo:

Sea kayaking, but not as we know it! Another cracker photo from Dennis showing a brief stop on the bank of the Clarence River (South Island), by a team of BASK paddlers.
Photo: Dennis Hynes

Page 2 Top Left:

Contemplating another stunning day on the Clarence River. See page 7 for Sylvia Timm's story.
Photo: Dennis Hynes

Page 2 Bottom Left:

Phil Alley executing a 'seal' launch from a gravel bank of the Clarence River.
Photo: Dennis Hynes

Letters to the Editor

**Deja Vu
from Kevin Dunsford
2 October 2018**

In the editorial of the excellent *New Zealand Sea kayaker* (No. 196 August - September 2018), Paul Caffyn noted he had to resort to an official information request in order to obtain an incident report from Maritime NZ. The incident involved a distracted power boat skipper causing his boat to mount the rear of a double sea kayak on a fine and calm-sea day leading to the injury of a person. The offending skipper of the power boat, and locals, recommended that a flag on the kayak would have made a difference. Paul noted that in the conditions it would not have.

This brings to mind a similar recommendation in 1995 when, what was the ARC (Auckland Regional Council - now Auckland Council), brought in a bylaw requiring, among other draconian measures, sea kayakers to fly a flag at a height of 1 metre. After the introduction of the bylaw, 49 out of the 50 Auckland water sports clubs objected. Mike Lee, the then chair of the ARC, and an experienced sea kayaker himself, managed to get a retrospective hearing to investigate kayaker's objections.

Paul Caffyn flew to Auckland and gave evidence. The Auckland Harbour Master (at the time) and Auckland Canoe Club had performed extensive tests on sizes and shapes of flags for the purpose of making kayakers more visible.

The Harbour Master gave evidence at the hearing that to be effective a kayak flag needed to have a minimum area of 1 square metre (which, for a kayak is a sail). We became aware of this at this later hearing, that the Harbour Master had originally recommended education rather than a bylaw but this had been overruled, the committee recommending the bylaw by the full ARC. The result of the second hearing was that the ARC listened to the 49 clubs and

a compromise was agreed where the bylaw was rescinded in favour of a recommendation.

The events that led to the ARC passing the initial ineffectual bylaw were driven primarily by an incident where a past president of a prominent Auckland yacht club had, after a liquid lunch, taken the club's ginpallace for a spin and run down a kayaker in the harbour at 20 knots, cutting the kayak in half and injuring the kayaker.

As it turned out, the height of the bow of the speeding power boat prevented seeing anything ahead for 200 metres, so a flag of any size would have been ineffective, just as in the incident discussed by Paul. The Harbour Master had been forced to reduce the speed in the harbour to 12 knots which has resulted in a backlash from the power-boat fraternity to the ARA.

We kayakers need to be ever vigilant of non-evidence based bias by authorities who wield power. Sometimes motives, other than the reason they were given their powers, drive their decisions. And their decisions may have a great effect on the safety and enjoyment of our sport and past-time.

Kevin Dunsford

**Canadian Fish Farms
From Mike Sheehan
6 October 2018**

Hola Paul

Really enjoy your KASK journal, which is always a joy to read with its variety of on water trips and the humour section.

I wasn't aware that you were plagued with the horror of fish farms, but they seem to have encroached into just about every country at the behest of politicians who obviously are the recipients of gifts or money. Where I grew up in Maine, New Brunswick border in the Bay of Fundy, the amount of damage to previously healthy stocks of wild salmon has been dev-

astating. This is also true of areas around Vancouver Island particularly in the Broughton Archipelago.

A very good source of information concerning the Norwegian owned fish farms is a blog by DC Reid: <http://fishfarmnews.blogspot.com>

I would certainly recommend you and your friends who are concerned about the Marlborough Sounds check out his research as it is perhaps the most thorough level of reporting on these horror shows. Reading his blog can be depressing as the Norwegian owners seem to have absolute immunity from any prosecution when they introduce viruses and are allowed to have their fish farms dump incredible amounts of waste.

The Native Nations around Vancouver Island along with environmental groups have finally convinced the province and municipal governments to force the fish farms off the water and into land-based operations. DC Reid makes reference to this in a recent blog.

Boy, reading about Peter and Margot's trip around parts of the Broughton Archipelago certainly brought back a flood of memories of our sojourn to that area in 1983.

What is that, almost a lifetime ago – 35 years ago. I can still see you going down Blackney Pass and catching the bow wave of a huge ship moving up Johnstone Strait. You were moving so fast I thought you must have hooked onto a trailing rope. That was a memorable trip with great companions and very accommodating weather.

In the lead on page 3 you mention in the Editorial that after four more magazines you will be retiring. Over many years you have been responsible for consistently producing a high-quality journal. Your talents and the energy required to produce such a publication will be sorely missed. Is there someone to who will emulate your high standards?

Mike Sheehan

President's Report November 2018 by Shaun Maclaren

Hi everyone,

With the warm weather and festive season nearly upon us, I am unable to resist the urge to escape to the East Coast of the North Island, in particular Tolaga Bay and Gisborne to have some fun and play amongst the rocks and surf before the waters get too busy!

I'm really looking forward to it and will let you know how it went in the December KASK e-newsletter.

On another note, David Welch has resigned from KASK Committee. I would like to thank David for his sterling support and advice over the past three years and wish him well with his future endeavours in Nelson.

KASK Magazine

As no doubt, most of you will have read in the editorial of magazine issue # 196, that Paul has decided to retire as editor upon completion of issue 200. The success of the magazine has been due to his continual drive and dedicated commitment to producing a high quality informative yet balanced, amusing, 'bloody good read'. If there is anyone out there who would be interested and who would

like to commit to being editor or an assistant, please contact me at: Shaun@kask.org.nz

For those preparing articles or photographs for the next issue, the cut-off date for submissions will be 20 January 2019.

Water Safety New Zealand – AGM

As KASK is a member of Water Safety NZ, I recently attended their AGM and Forum in Auckland.

It started with the AGM, which was very slick and was all over within nine minutes!

The Forum following the AGM was well organised, balanced with interesting speakers.

With the forum being held in Auckland, the region where most fatalities are Maori / Pacific, the main theme concentrated on the programmes that are currently in place to get the safety message across.

It also touched on the fact that being the largest population base and with high participation rates across a wide range of water-based activities, an accessible harbour and warm climate it's important that there is a strong focus on the northern region and Auckland with its rapid population growth.

Rob Waddell (NZ Olympic Chef de Mission) the key/guest speaker, was charismatic and spoke about 'teamwork and getting things done'. It was an excellent and amusing talk highlighting the need for detail and not leaving a stone unturned in the pursuit of overall success.

2020 KASK Kayak Fest

Preparations are well under way for the 3 day Kayak Fest with an exciting mix of national and international instructors. On-line Registration will be going live on Sunday 20 January 2019. If you would like to volunteer to assist in any way, please email the team at: kayakfest@kask.co.nz

With warmer conditions and the holiday season just around the corner, now is the time to not only check your PFD and paddling gear, but more importantly get out on the water to refresh your skills.

Have Fun and Safe Paddling.
Shaun Maclaren



KASK Kayak Fest 2020 – on Urupukpuka Island in the Bay of Islands

ENVIRONMENT

Sightings of Hector's dolphins by Gemma McGrath

Hector's dolphins are the smallest dolphin species in the world. They are not found anywhere else except Aotearoa. They live in coastal shallow waters, and there used to be a lot more of them around, especially around the top of the South Island and Taranaki. These dolphins used to be seen much more widely, including Kapiti and Palliser Bay (by Wellington) and much of the East Coast! The main cause for their decline has been getting caught in coastal set nets in large numbers since the 1970s. It's mostly the juvenile dolphins that get caught.

They are found around most of the South Island and along part of the North Island west coast - Māui dolphin habitat. Māui are sighted mostly between Manukau Harbour (Auckland) to Raglan (by Hamilton), of which there are less than 60 left. Critically endangered.

Although Māui and Hector's dolphins look exactly the same, there are genetic differences at play; even some of the South Island sub populations could be considered as genetically distinct. Some of these smaller South Island sub populations are just as endangered as Māui dolphins.

These dolphins love surfing, and can be quite interactive. You

might be lucky enough to see some kayaking over this summer? If you do, you could put your sighting to some good conservation use and put it in the app. The Hector's Dolphin Sightings App is a free citizen science tool that records whale and dolphin sightings around Aotearoa. The more sightings information there is, the more evidence to remove threats from the dolphins' habitat.

The app has been set up to be very easy to use. It automatically records date, time and GPS when you experience a dolphin sighting. You can add behaviours, comments, descriptions and see all the dolphin data whenever you like. You can get notifications if you like too, and you only have to enter your details once. It's available free from Google Play and Apple stores and is in partnership with Whale and Dolphin Conservation and the Department of Conservation.

You may have already seen some Hector's dolphins recently or remember seeing them a few years back, maybe even longer ago? If you have seen dolphins in the past, I'd love to hear from you. You can easily put historical sightings on the app. The trick is to scroll to the location before you push the report but-

ton first when entering sightings from a while ago, otherwise the sightings might show up in your living room.

If apps aren't your thing, then feel free to email sightings in to: aotearoa.dolphin@gmail.com or text/call on: (027) 694 3533. You can leave a message here too: (03) 973 6740.

Keen to help our little dolphins out some more? If anyone would like some app fliers to put out in their local community for their local dolphins, please get in touch and I can send you some.

We are trying to get as many sightings as possible during the lead up to the government's Threat Management Plan process. The government is currently reviewing information on this species, and the threats, and will decide how they will improve management of Hector's dolphins next year. Let's hope things change for the better for them, and these special dolphins stop declining and start thriving.

Hope to hear from you,
Gemma McGrath, Manager
Hector's Dolphin Sightings App
aotearoa.dolphin@gmail.com
(027) 694 3533
or (03) 973 6740



Every sighting matters...

→ Add photos



→ Enter past sightings



Photos: Will Rayment (overleaf), Rob Pine & Mike Bossley

HECTOR'S DOLPHIN SIGHTINGS APP

Be part of growing the knowledge & conservation of Hector's dolphins

In collaboration with:





New Zealand Reports

Sea Kayaking - But Not As We Know It!

Clarence River 21 - 26 October 2018 by Sylvia Timm

photos: Dennis Hynes
see also photos on page 2

On October 20 our team met at Ochiltree in the Clarence River valley; Phil Alley, Peter Bennett, Aidan Frew, Mark Self, John Gumbley, John Penman, Sylvia Timm, Dennis Hynes and Sandy Clark.

That afternoon we saw our river exit place not far from Ochiltree. The water looked a swift milky turquoise, surrounded by rocks and snow-tipped mountains in the background.

21 October

We set out just before 9:00 am in a rugged bus towing Aidan's trailer with the kayaks, for a four hour journey to our starting point on the Clarence River just after the Acheron River had joined it, stopping briefly in Waiao and Hamner Springs. It was a rugged ride too with the trailer behaving like a wild horse behind us on some of the gravel road sections in particular.

We arrived and found Sandy and David waiting for us already.

It was a beautiful sunny day. We started on the river about 2:00 pm and had the first swimmers after the first bend, the water was so beautiful, it must have been too tempting. We were told to expect the most difficult rapids on the first day (little did we know).

We stopped to have a look where there was a big rock right in the middle of the river with the current gushing against it - most of the force went left and still some considerable amount to the right.

Most of us, if not all, went right (Mark took the left side). I thought I'd better change into the drysuit Phil



Sylvia turning out of the main river flow into an eddy before the big rock

kindly lent me before attempting this section.

First I frantically paddled to the right to avoid collision with the rock then found myself sitting in the eddy facing upstream. This was a movement that I would encounter numerous times in the days to come. Then at the end of the rapid section was another rock in the road, I passed it a little too close leaning a little too much away from it



Mark taking a clean line well to the left of the big rock



Aidan leaving his move to the right of the big rock a bit too late!

and flopped over - so grateful for the dry suit, even more so because later in camp I found out that I had taken off without my bag of spare clothes.

At about 6:30 pm we arrived at our camp. There were swarms of sandflies that weren't deterred much by the smoke of our little fire.

22 October

Who would have thought we would wake up to ice on the tents and in the pots after such a hot summery day! It was greeting us with blue sky again. Our first stop was in a big bend of the river to check out a campsite the rafters use (Bends Camp?). It had the perfect set up - a group of willows with enough flat space for quite a few tents, and a fireplace in the middle. The eddy had the most beautiful blues and turquoise colours.

Across the river bend on the other shore Aidan was watching a pair of oystercatchers, so I thought, but apparently there was an oystercatcher chick, so perfectly camouflaged that you only saw it or knew that it was there when it moved.

We paddled amongst the dry bare hills only covered with broom, briar rose, the snow-capped mountains were visible in the back row and distant horizon. Still the beautiful Clarence water to drink and enjoy, easy paddle, no rapids worth mentioning. We stopped for lunch about 11.40 am and a cool off in the dry

suit for some. We arrived at Palmers Hut at 1:00 pm where most of us set up tents. The afternoon was a very pleasant lazy one with a walk; along a road then a big stony river flat, a wash in the river and a sleep in the grass because of the very enjoyable absence of the clouds of sandflies who came back as soon as the sun wasn't so hot anymore.

23 October

Another glorious morning with practically no cloud in the sky saw us walking to Palmers Bivvy, also called Brake Back Lodge, as someone had written underneath. It was a very nice walk up the Palmers Stream, involving lots of stream crossings and even walking in it. Some got the message very quickly that there was no point in keeping socks or shoes dry, others like me tried to keep them dry even on the way back until a jump to a tipy and slippery stone shattered that ambition.

By that time I was last and far behind so I went for a swim, which was absolutely fabulous! On the way to the bivvy we came across six deer running quickly up the hill.

After lunch at 1:00 pm we took off down the river again; by that time the day had turned into a scorching hot summer's day, it required serious cooling off on my part, in order not to pass out in the drysuit. It was a very enjoyable paddle meandering past cliff faces. Forbes Hut, where

we were camping for the night, came into view when David pulled up on the road at the same time. This was by a deep swift section of the river in a big paddock. It was possible to walk along the road in both directions along the river. Upstream there was a big impressive 'amphitheatre' where the river curved around in and downstream, willows and a magnificent view to the snow topped Kaikouras.

24 October

My day started with a dip in the river in the 'amphitheatre'. It was going to be another really hot day again. After we left Forbes Hut, formerly known as Seymour Hut, we quickly stopped to inspect the camp at the end of the paddock and a fine one it was, to then continue on to the historic site of Quail Flat Farm from the 1860s. There were old cob buildings with 2 mm thick hydrated lime paint layers. A great big old bread oven and an old shearing barn where all the beams looked like they were native timber, shaved by hand.

The river was quite gentle and some of us ended up in the willows for not paying attention; one rescue ended up with a fence post-sized stick in a shin that needed operating on later that night. We camped at Goose Flat Hut that night. Some had a sleep and others a very enjoyable swim in a swift eddy. The day was so hot that the cooler temperatures of the Clarence River waters were extremely welcome.

Phil safely upright after executing a gravel seal launch



25 October

We were on the water at 8:00 am - the summer had stopped - much cooler and even drizzle during the day and rain in the evening. We were nearing the place where the waterfall formed during the Kaikoura earthquake. It was going to be a long day and the course of the river turned out to be very different and unknown to those who had paddled it before. We encountered bends where the river rushed into rock walls, big wave trains, big rocks in the middle of the river with waves beside and after, very strong current over flat rocky sections. Definitely more challenging than that rapid on the first day. Phil thought some of them would be grade 3.

We had quite a few swimmers, one paddling upside down quite a stretch, every so often, twisting up for air before finally rolling up again, just before I thought that it might be a new style of paddling. One swift rapid section after the other. By 4:00 pm most of us were ready to stop and Sandy conveniently came out on the banks of the most amazing campsite. A big grassy flat surrounded by native trees, matai, manuka, of which we hadn't seen many at all on the trip before. Mark saw deer and goats there and wanted to call it Deer Flat. I'd like to call it Sandy's Call, in gratitude to her fine choice. We put up tents and flies, as it had started to rain. Some of us gathered for dinner and Aidan's scroggin pudding under Mark's big fly.

26 October

We were woken by a fabulous NZ native bird chorus and on the water at 8:00 am in preparation for another wild paddling day on the unknown river that was changed by the earthquake.

We were not sure if it would be a long day again. A few more rocky shallow bumpity rides. Rocks in the path and cliff faces to navigate. Great big wave trains more and more in the braided part of the river. One rocky slope had a big rock in the middle. Again, I came past a bit close and automatically thought, lean towards the rock, so I found myself hugging the



The crack in Dennis's kayak which made steering and paddling difficult

thing and thinking, OK here we go, but no, it stabilized me and I could paddle on. It was quite a chilly day and when we stopped for lunch we even had a fire. We also had to mend Dennis's kayak - duct tape again! He had struck a rock. A crack in his bow allowed the bow compartment to fill with water which made steering and paddling a hard task.

After lunch we had a very heavy swimmer, who had forgotten to do up his fly of the dry suit which had filled the whole thing up. Quite a sight when he walked as he truly had wobbly legs.

At 2:00 pm we arrived at our get-out place, past the broken bridge and just before the road bridge in Clarence, welcome to some but a bit too soon for my liking. I really enjoyed the trip and would love to do it again. Thank you Phil for organizing and thank you everyone for your great company.

Slap Support - by Aidan Frew

I have just recently been on a fantastic trip to the Clarence River with magnificent scenery and wildlife with some pretty technical rapids that have definitely changed since the Kaikoura earthquake.

I was paddling with several experienced whitewater paddlers. They were a joy to watch floating through the rapids. One of the things they taught me was the importance of a brace. The way I was taught the brace was that there are Trolls living in the waves and whitewater who try to capsize you. To stop them, you have to slap them on top of their heads with your paddle. Next time you are out paddling and feel that Troll tipping you out, "Slap that Troll!"

Clarence River Re-Run 42 Years On

by Dennis Hynes

Having just finished our recent trip down the Clarence River, I dug out my diary notes from a South Island kayaking road trip (including the Clarence River) which I did with some of my Auckland University Canoe Club mates over 42 years ago during the summer of 1975/76. I was interested to see how my experience and impressions of the river had changed over the decades.

Back then, I was at the peak of my whitewater prowess (such that it was) and while I was still bullet proof (or so I thought). It was my 3rd South Island summer road trip, paddling any river that we knew people had run before (and some we didn't).

I was paddling a fibreglass *Olymp* whitewater kayak, state of the art at the time, and a quantum leap forward from the canvas and ply kayaks that were the mainstay of the club just a couple of years earlier. Paddling clothes consisted of short sleeve wet suit, woollen bush shirt and long johns and woollen jersey. Dry bags were plastic rubbish bags, with elastic bands around the neck, stuffed into canvas sacks.

The following extracts from my notes describe the river and scale of rapids as I experienced them back then:

Day 1

Bloody cold water, but incredible alpine scenery. Virtually no rapids, just 1 in the gorge with big waves and rock, easily navigated. We missed the hut so camped at an ace camp site further down.

Day 2

Hard slog in the morning, some rapids here and there, just to keep us interested. Another grand camp site.

Day 3

Amazing, stark, alpine scenery. Just before dark I holed my boat and where we stopped (forced to) was a reasonably good camp site.

Day 4

Good day's kayaking with many reasonable rapids (nothing exacting though). Paddled out of the gorge



The Auckland University Canoe Club bus lovingly named Raquel

and then along miles and miles of very flat lowlands with braided channels, (often leading to dead ends). Then a couple of miles of fairly continuous rapids towards the end. Big waves but few hittable rocks. Great fun even when we were all stuffed.

After suffering a series of dislocated shoulders (we were taught the high brace and a similarly high risk Eskimo roll) I drifted away from kayaking.

Then around 12 years ago I discovered the sport of sea kayaking. Initially I steered clear of rough surf and any whitewater, fearing a repeat of shoulder injury. Along the way I learnt how to minimize the risk of shoulder injury by employing the low brace and the C to C roll. This has given me the confidence to return to the surf and low grade whitewater, so I grabbed at the chance to join Phil on his BASK trip down the Clarence River.



Dennis in his Olymp dropping down a weir on the Rangitata irrigation scheme; the summer of 1975-76

This time I was paddling my *Barra-cuda Beachcomber* sea kayak. More manoeuvrable than most plastic sea kayaks but nowhere near as nimble as my old *Olymp* (nor any modern white-water kayaks). I suspect carrying much more gear as well. There wasn't much space in the *Olymp*. Paddling clothing consisted of layers of synthetic thermal fleece and a full dry suit. *Sea to Summit* dry bags and compression dry sacks.

In terms of grading of rapids, I found that the rapids above the earthquake damage, were much as my notes from 42 years back recorded. No major drama for paddlers who can confidently cut out into, and out of fast flowing water, and position their kayak across the stream to put them on the right line to avoid obstacles (in the main the obstacles in this section were pretty obvious).

Some sizable wave trains, but generally well ordered and straight forward. Paddlers should have had

practice at negotiating right angle bends where the main flow piles into a bluff and splits either way, one side following the flow downstream and the other oscillating back upstream. These occur at the bottom of almost every bend in the river - better get used to them! And an effective brace when needed.

The nature of the river has changed dramatically below the earthquake damage. Where before there were 'miles and miles' of braided river channels, the river has cut through the uplifted landscape as one much faster and steeper channel. It now behaves more like a younger mountain stream. The flow is strong, and the river has yet to clean out the channel. We could hear the boulders rolling along under our boats.

The channel is now littered with boulders in the main flow, often just below the surface, not easily distinguishable from the wave trains which are much more disordered and

powerful enough to throw your kayak sideways, soliciting a solid brace (or initiating a lengthy swim, assuming the rocks whizzing past your helmet discourage a successful roll).

The ability to read the river and identify the semi submerged obstacles and then reposition your kayak across the stream to avoid them became much more critical. It certainly helped having Mark as our crash test dummy, cum scout, seeking out the easiest lines.

All in all, a thoroughly rewarding trip, stark alpine scenery, majestic snow-capped mountains, excellent huts and campsites, made somewhat more epic this time due to the unknown and more challenging river conditions. The scale of damage to the landscape from the earthquake has to be seen to be believed. I certainly wouldn't have wanted to be on the river when the earthquake struck.

When is the next trip Phil?

Overseas Reports

Vancouver to San Francisco & Paddling in Between.

by Lance Smith

A direct flight from Auckland to Vancouver then a connecting flight to Victoria B.C. where I met Deb Volturno and Paula Renouf. We immediately embarked on a four hour drive through the thick smoke from raging forest fires.

A quick sleep in a motel, then up at dawn to board the *Frances Barkley* for a four hour chug to the outer coast via stunningly beautiful fjords from Port Alberni to Bamfield. We spent six days camping and paddling in the stunning outer islands of Barclay Sound with everything from humpback whales to Stellar sea lions. Our camp was on a remote uninhabited islet with evidence of wolves that apparently hunt the deer from island to island.

Now fast forward three weeks to Giant Redwoods, legalized cannabis, and Van Morrison's daughter singing live in the colourful and quirky town of Guerneville on the Russian River in Northern California. How did I get here?

It was back in 2006 at the biannual Coastbusters event where this story began for me. Not being one for large crowds of people, I reluctantly signed up for a weekend of sea kayaking activities with a small degree of trepidation. Thankfully it was not as intense as I had imagined and the people were all very friendly and came from varied backgrounds.

One of the presentations that I signed up for was given by a man from California by the name of Marcus Choy. He showed very inspiring pictures and video footage of paddlers in sea caves on the Californian coast, something which at that time had not even occurred to me as something that sea kayakers could/would/should do. I was fascinated to say

the least and resolved then and there to make it my goal to explore sea caves wherever I found them.

Marcus also made mention of a notorious group of paddlers in California who went by the name of the 'Tsunami Rangers'. Honing their skills and having fun doing it, they had discovered that kayaks were a great way to get to places that other surfers couldn't, thus opening a whole coastline to explore and play on, not being limited to just a few crowded surf breaks.

I was somewhat intrigued by the idea that people not only explored caves but surfed specially designed kayaks in rock gardens and remote coastal hangouts.

This was all to be confirmed for me when in 2008, two of these famed wave warriors attended the next Coastbusters event. Obviously I attended with eager anticipation to learn more about these characters that had until now been only in



Sea caves of Cape Flattery

my imagination. The presentation by Jim Kakuk left me with questions that only time would answer and after purchasing the DVDs he had for sale, I dreamed of one day visiting California, seeing those amazing rock formations and caves for myself and maybe even paddling with some of these super heroes of the sea.

Years went by and I became better acquainted with Deb Volturno, Paula Renouf and Jim Kakuk at another kayaking event held in the Bay of Islands (2015) known as IKW (International Kayak week).

A few years later (2018) you could have knocked me over with a feather when Deb and Paula suggested that I fly to the USA, paddle around for a bit and then join with them for the annual Tsunami Rangers retreat. Of course there was no doubt that I was going and what ensued was a month-long adventure beginning in British Columbia and then slowly making our way south via Deb's home in Port Angeles, Washington.

While there we paddled Cape Flattery the most north-western tip of Washington (nine hours of the most sea



A huge sea cave at Cape Flattery



Deb Volturno's big green rocket launch

caving I've ever seen in near perfect conditions). We were blessed with a perfect day and were able to reach deep into some very beautiful caves, some of which had mysterious sea creatures dwelling in the darkness.

Heading south via Oregon, we met up with Brian Shulz of Cape Falcon Kayaks, Brian had kindly offered to loan me a custom built F1 skin-on-frame surf machine to use on the remainder of my tour, then it was back in the truck and south again to Fort Bragg where we were hosted by Jeff and Cate of Liquid Fusion Kayaking for more insanely amazing caves and rock features. Eventually we arrived at an undis-

closed location to begin the Tsunami Ranger annual retreat for the next four days. We portaged our loaded kayaks for what seemed like miles down a windswept cliff, launching on a pristine west coast beach with huge dumping surf, and so began the four day retreat to one of the Tsunami Rangers' favoured campsites.

I would tell you more about this but I have been sworn to secrecy and besides nobody would believe it. We all survived unscathed in spite of the mountain lion tracks that passed by just a few feet from where I slept. The Rangers know how to party on a beach and the food was out of this world. We ate, slept, sipped fine te-



Lance's first pour-over in a skin kayak at Fort Bragg



Lance surfing his F1 kayak at Thunder Cove

quila, threw tomahawks and knives, told tall stories and even paddled some. On the fourth morning we broke camp, returned to the put-in and said our goodbyes.

Finally after a mind blowing three and a half weeks of sea and road miles I got to relax a little with Jim Kakuk and Patti Sinclair at their home in northern California. There we ate lots more, I slept in a big soft bed, walked in the redwoods, hiked the coastal trails and hills and sampled some fine local vineyards.

Then it was a big bus ride over the Golden Gate and onto a plane bound for home in Puhoi, Auckland.

I always welcome travellers when I can, whether they be hikers on the Te Araroa Trail that goes through our village or international kayakers that are holidaying here in NZ. I believe that by opening up our own lives and our homes, welcoming strangers and travellers to a meal or a bed for as long as they need one, we are enriched in ways that are immeasurable.

My trip wouldn't have happened had it not been for the generosity of so many kind people and for that I am eternally grateful. I would like to give special thanks to Deb, Paula, Jim, Patti, Esther, Marty, Kristi, Daniel, Brian, Cate, Jeff and so many more I met and who helped me along the way.

Strangely enough this all started with a small seed planted by Marcus Choy and it turns out that I travelled the entire road trip of several thousand kilometres in Deb's Toyota truck that previously had belonged to Marcus.

Lance Smith Paddling Biography

Born and raised in west Auckland. I was first introduced to kayaking at the age of five. A used canvas kayak my Dad bought us was kept at our family bach on Kawau Island where I spent many hours paddling in North Cove.

Around the turn of the century I joined the Yakity Yak club and completed several of their courses

I have since paddled with some legends in truly remarkable, wonderful locations. For the last four years my focus has been more on rock gardening and kayak surfing and less on big distances but recently kayak sailing has opened up another can of worms.

In 2017, encouraged and inspired by Deb Volturmo, SKISL NZ was formed and a small but enthusiastic group meets every month and practice getting wet. In 2017 I joined a group known as the T.H.C.C.(Te Henga Caving Club).

A small group inspired by huge unexplored caves along Auckland's west coast. I love the dance between the ocean and the land, the place where the energy of the sea is expressed and unleashed, something that can only be understood by putting yourself right there on the dance floor, open and exposed to the power and the rhythm, sometimes gentle



Lance in the middle, aged 4 holding up the new kayak after his father brought it home in the old Mk1 Cortina station wagon, with Tony and big sister Celia.

and at times down right frightening, but always alive.

I currently live in Puhoi, North of Auckland with my partner Brigitte.

My kayaking began in the early 60s when my Dad bought us a used canvas kayak. We kept it at our bach on Kawau island. I used this kayak from the age of five until my early teens when the kayak met with an untimely end. I had paddled around the point to visit a girl but as I launched from the beach to come home I was unceremoniously picked up and dumped (not by the girl) by the sea.



Lance with the paddle and his big brother Tony waving.

Overseas Reports

Angmagssalik An East Greenland Guided Kayak Trip

by John Gumbley

see also John's photos on page 23

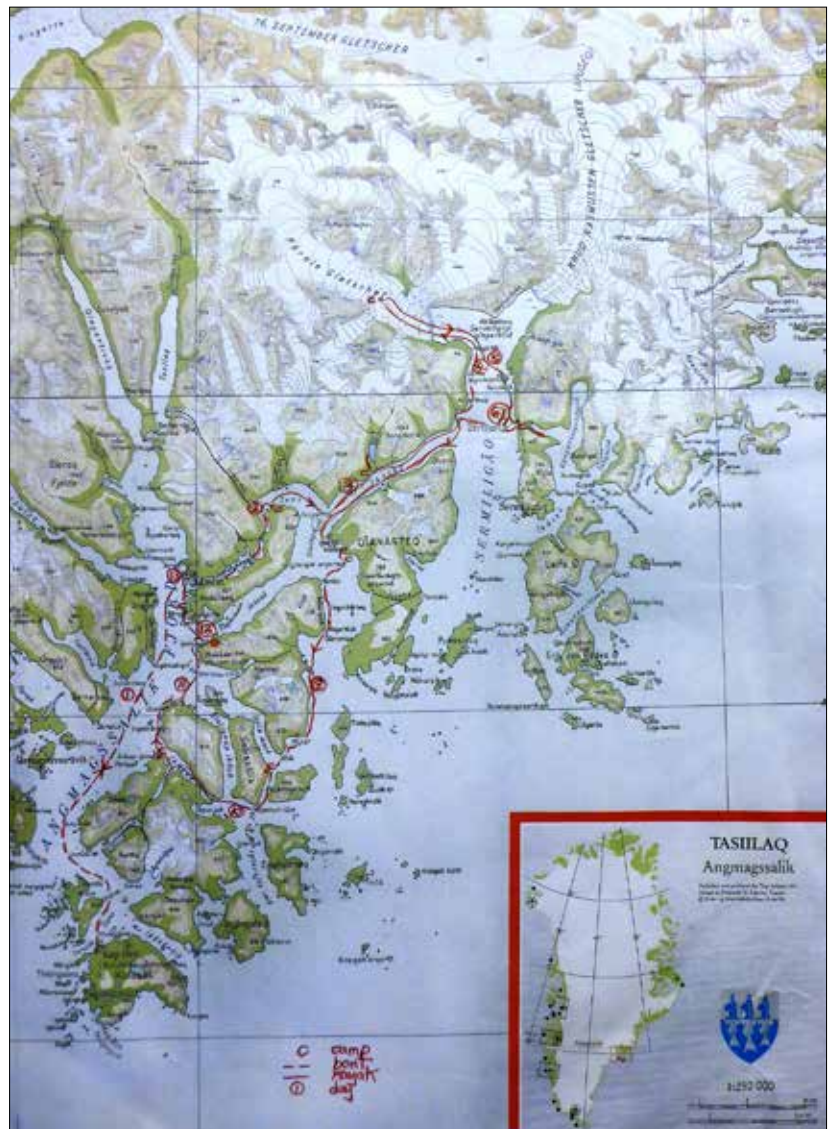
After experiencing kayaking on the Antarctic Peninsula 18 months earlier, Diana, Bevan and I decided we should continue our cold climate experiences and paddle in Greenland. Bevan's partner Nora, also joined us. We had heard from others that paddling in Greenland was a treat. Greenland is eight times bigger than New Zealand with 80% covered by an ice cap. Its coastline exceeds the circumference of the earth with numerous deep fiords. Angmagssalik District (south-east Greenland) where we kayaked is not that much smaller than New Zealand.

None of us had been on a guided trip before but for the time we each had available it was the only viable option. Getting kayaks delivered, even hiring them, plus the issue of permits and obtaining a firearm for protection against polar bears were some of the problems we would have had as first-timers to this part of the world.

We flew to Reykavik in Iceland and thence to Kulusuk airport - a one hour flight. Luggage had to be limited to 20 kg. though our hand luggage and pockets were rather full. The four of us shared an additional 20 kg. bag, which helped accommodate our food supplies. The flight was uneventful with the weather clear but delays are common as it is necessary to see the runway for landing.

Our guide, Martin Rickard from the Shetland Islands, has been running guided trips in Greenland for over 10 years. The 13 day trip was described as not a full-on kayak expedition but rather an opportunity to experience the landscape, natural and historic heritage by kayak.

Originally we thought there would be seven of us and the guide but discovered in Reykavik there were



East Greenland kayaking route showing campsites (C), day(s) travelled and direction.

to be nine 'clients' that included a person from England, a couple from Ireland and a Dutch couple based in Scotland.

In Greenland we met our guide and his assistant guide - 11 of us! We all, throughout the trip, enjoyed each other's company. The guide provided kayaks - skeg fitted plastic or fibreglass craft of various makes and size plus sprayskirt, paddle and PFD.

Shortly before the trip we were advised gas cylinders were not available and petrol cookers should be brought with us. After some last minute purchasing of petrol stoves, it turned out there were some gas

cylinders available in Greenland. The petrol proved to be inefficient contaminated fuel that was only usable in a multifuel stove.

Tent, cooking kit, clothes, first aid kits, food etc. needed to be brought by each of us. We New Zealanders brought almost all our (dehydrated) food with us from NZ. Any other supplies were purchased from Iceland or Greenland, generally at more expense than in New Zealand and all gear had to be stowed in our kayaks. Some of the northern hemisphere contingent amazingly relied on buying all food in Greenland. This proved possible except for dehydrated food and it



The windswept, good-looking otherwise self-effacing New Zealand contingent of John Gumbley, Nora Flight, Diana Galbraith and Bevan Walker on the Karale Glacier. Photo: John Gumbley

influenced the route taken because of the need to re-supply mid trip. Of the 13 days, two were spent getting to and from Greenland including a one hour boat trip to the base at Kuummiut settlement. Mid trip there was a 'rest' day. Otherwise 2-6 hours paddling (average 4 hours, including quite regular breaks) each day - about 150 kms for the whole trip.

For those of us hankering for more paddling time, our energy and curiosity was more than satisfied with the opportunity for hiking along the coast and into the hills behind campsites. We had no inclement weather other than a gale force warning being in place on the rest day. Weather forecasts were available from the local taxi boat skipper and a contact who lived in Tasmania (who linked in with an Israel-based forecaster!). Satellite phone coverage was reliable.

The weather was variable, ranging from sunny and clear, or high

cloud, to foggy, cloudy, drizzly or raining with temperatures never below 0° Celsius and sometimes above 10 to 12°C. I only very occasionally wore gloves but usually wore a down jacket and beanie mainly because of wind chill. On the water a drysuit was necessary and pogies at hand for when the wind picked up.

When we flew in the day was clear and there were few icebergs along the coastline. This past season, it seems, was remarkable due to the lack of ice on both the coast and in fiords which usually were choked by 'bergs, with paddling in brash ice to be expected. Instead we saw icebergs calve off the glaciers at the head of fiords and moving gradually out (and back and forth with the tide) to the open coast. Icebergs often beached at low tide (about a 1.5-2 metre tidal range) where they would become abraded and unstable.

We witnessed their collapse quite regularly - the moral being do not

get too close to a 'berg. On one occasion we watched a large iceberg collapse suddenly (we had paddled past it only a few hours earlier) and found ourselves scrambling to pull our kayaks up the beach and tie them together and watch our beach bonfire get washed away by a mini-tsunami. The map (published in 1993) showing our route is interesting for two reasons; firstly, many fiords are inter-connected, some naturally but one was formed by explosives - at the 'Day 2' location symbol.

The US Airforce wanted small boat access (during WWII) from their airfield (Blue East Two - see discussion later), located near the 'Day 3' campsite, to Kuummiut settlement, for recreation purposes. Secondly, the map shows evidence of climate change at our coastal campsite beside the Karale Glacier. The glacier has receded a distance of 6-8 kms in 25 years! Our guide pointed out where the glacier's snout was when he first visited the area 10 years earlier and it appears Karale has especially receded in that period.

The landscape is stunning - clear skies, distant glaciers or ice cap and steep rocky terrain. The geology is fascinating with a variety of plutonic and metamorphic rocks all along the coast with a range of unusual mineral assemblages exposed and rock (schist) that has been intruded by dykes - once molten rock forced along fractures in pre-existing rock.

Our campsites were often on beach gravel, rock or patches of moss, lichen or herbfield. A variety of fungi and flowers (Arctic poppy, bell heather, Greenland scurvy grass, bladder fern, mountain sorrel etc., were in full show. Amongst the vegetation (woody plants are rare) were several species of colourful moths. Dozy, large, mosquito-like insects would occasionally be a nuisance at camp and some of us resorted to wearing head nets, but they were nothing like the Fiordland sandflies. Some people did react badly to the bites, though.

There were relatively few birds and usually just small flocks of gulls or



Mr Fox on the prowl
Photo: John Gumbley

geese seen at a distance. Friendly pipit and secretive Ptarmigan were seen. No polar bears were evident but our guide was warned to not paddle in some fiords because of bears roaming the shoreline due to the lack of ice. Each night we were on a rotating one hour long bear-watch shift. This was great in that over the course of the trip we viewed the 'night' sky at all hours.

The sun set at around 9:00 pm and rose again at 3:00 am with twilight in between. I never had the need to use my headlight at night though noticed by early August the sky was darkening. Arctic foxes would cast their wily eyes looking for and sometimes successfully snaffling food in kayak hatches or tents. A golden rule was to always tie your boot laces together and to a tent rope. On a previous trip someone 'lost' a boot.

We saw fin and humpback whales at quite close quarters, a glimpse of what we thought was an orca, usually in three of the bays where we camped. Occasionally seals were seen at a distance. Jellyfish and, the spiny tail of bony skates (a type of ray, for which an orca no doubt



Brilliant orange colour of a jellyfish

scooped the rest of the animal) were found. Sometimes clumps of Neptune's necklace algae on the rocky shore platform but not a lot of kelp.

What was very evident was the presence on many beaches of plastic litter - usually fishing boat trash. Our option was to either burn it (and pollute the atmosphere) or leave for marine mammals to ingest - we chose the former. We often lit a bonfire at night using wood that had either been dumped or had drifted down the coast from Canada.

The population of Greenland is 56,000 but only 3,500 live in East Greenland in small settlements. The East Greenland Inuit have their own language but children are taught West Greenland and Danish at school. It seems East Greenland is the *poor cousin* and with few employment opportunities - subsistence hunting and fishing are the main occupations.

Inuit have an annual quota for hunting polar bears (20 or 30), seals and narwhal (tusked) whales. Seals are a staple diet but fish such as capelin are caught and sold to the fish factory or dried. In winter, they go out with sleds drawn by huskies in search of seals and polar bears, but the warming of the Arctic has foreshortened the sledding season by weeks.

Most settlement houses seemed to be tidy dwellings, but on the shoreline there were derelict sunken boats, discarded outboard motors, nets, fuel drums and general plastic litter dumped. There is no ability to bury rubbish or contain it and the rubbish dumps near settlements contain huge amounts of plastic and other refuse. No roads connect settlements. Country-wide there are marked socioeconomic and infrastructure differences between towns and villages.

I learnt of the disturbing social issues created by unemployment, poverty and isolation. The East Greenland Inuit culture was until the 1950s based on hunting and fishing. In recent decades factors such as excessive alcohol consumption, increased obesity (Inuit have a



Stone-and-turf house remains.
Photo: John Gumbley

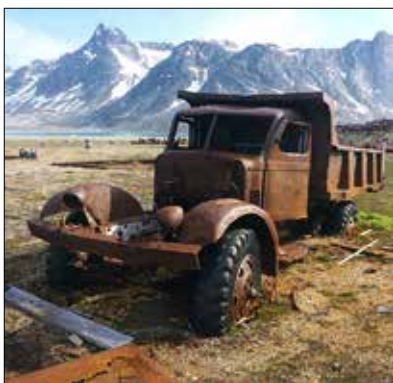
particular genetic risk of becoming obese and developing diabetes) and other dietary issues has affected generations. A local with connection to community health mentioned that of 1,100 children, 500 may be in abusive family situations (NB not independently verified by the author).

It was quite common when kayaking to spot old Inuit stone-and-turf houses. Often the giveaway was the presence of clumps of dandelion flowers around the mounds, which must have been an important food source.

The turf houses are now stone relics of up to one metre height and formed in a circle or rectangle perhaps 6-8 metres in diameter. They were sometimes in two compartments but a single 'tunnel' entrance, the roof being seal skins held up by spars of driftwood. It was not uncommon to find stone crypts, many with skeletal remains in them. The houses would have been only 1.5 m high,



Blue East Two WWII airbase showing rusting fuel drums



Blue East Two WWII airbase with a slow rusting GMC truck.

well insulated and housed perhaps a family of up to 10. Inside, heat would have been generated from blubber lamps, cooking pots - and from people too! As a consequence, people were often practically naked. During winter they would have spent long periods of forced inactivity in their over-crowded houses while snow, cold, gales and darkness engulfed the country outside.

We visited an abandoned US airbase - Blue East Two (During WWII the US referred to Greenland as Blue). The base was developed and used between 1942-47. It was abandoned at short notice to the extent that apparently a safe containing firearms and grenades was inadvertently left unopened.

The site now has thousands of rusting fuel drums, remains of buildings (including asbestos), trucks, cranes and boilers etc. It is an intriguing eyesore but if there is no longer contamination occurring then perhaps it should be left as a historic relic?



Whisky time for the happy campers in East Greenland

The US developed several airbases long before the US formally entered the war. The reasons were that the only economic chryolite (a mineral used to lower the melting point of aluminium in its extraction from bauxite ore) mine occurred in southern Greenland and, the bases were important weather stations to forecast the weather over Germany for bombing operations. Further, had Germany established airbases then cities like New York would have been only five hours flying time away and vulnerable to bombing attacks.

We all found the trip very interesting and the company great. The weather was ideal for us though two of our party were delayed by three days in flying back to Iceland due to fog conditions at the airport. We followed the kayaking by hiking in Iceland, a place equally interesting and fun.

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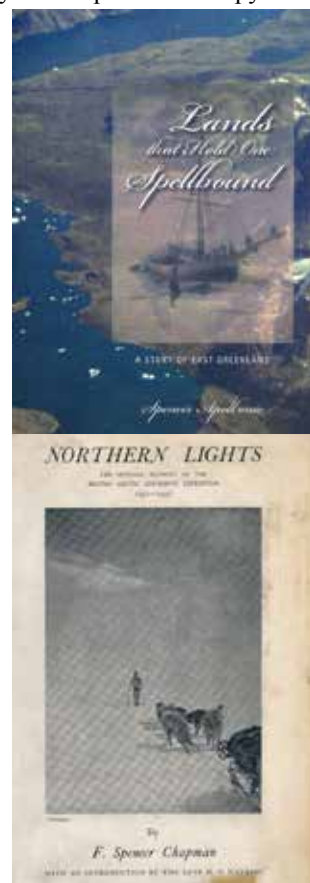
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{email Paul for a reading list of East Greenland books, referred to in the right-hand column}.

More Books on E Greenland

With a column to fill, I thought of including a list of books relating to the maritime exploration of East Greenland, the Inuit history and those referring to the various historical land (ice) explorations.

However with a list of 52 books, I'd need more than just one column. So I'll limit myself to a couple of the classics. The best overall compilation is a 2008 softcover by Spencer Apollonio titled *Lands that Hold One Spellbound*, which was published by the University of Calgary Press. It takes a reader through 4,000 years of indigeneous settlement, then through European exploration from Norse times to recent years. It does include the WWII years as illustrated with the Ikateq photographs in John Gumbley's article. Try Bookdepository or Fishpond for a copy.



Northern Lights is Freddy Spencer Chapman's account of the 1930-31 British Arctic Air Route Expedition which was led by Gino Watkins, first published in 1932. This copy is inscribed by Augustine Courtauld who survived five months alone at the weather station, 120 miles inland on the Greenland icecap.

OVERSEAS REPORTS

West Island Bits November 2018

David Winkworth

Just looking back through my files and I see that I haven't written a 'West Island Bits' since January this year! A long time, and a lot has happened in that period. For me it's been a year of attending annual weekends all around the traps as they say.

Annual Weekends

In February, Paul Caffyn and I were guests of the WA Sea Kayak Club at their annual Sea Kayak Fest held at Busselton on Geographe Bay a couple of hundred kilometres south of Perth. The event was ably coordinated by Sandy Robson (whom we all know) and based at a waterfront caravan park on the bay. Paul and I spent a week touring some fantastic spots in the south west where he landed on his Aussie Circumnavigation.

I've been invited back for their February 2019 event at the same location. This time I'm driving across with my own kayak for some extended touring. Can't wait! There's something really good about being in your own kayak!

Then there was another excellent KASK Weekend near Wellington. Thanks for inviting me! I didn't get

to present much of the material I'd prepared there - maybe in 2020?

The NSWSKC Rock 'n Roll Weekend was held at Currarong on the NSW south coast in March. Perfect east coast summer weather there. So good to catch up there with friends! But not only that - when you walk around the camps and the kayaks, I always find some great innovations and ideas and come home with a head full of plans!

The 5th biennial Keppel Sea Kayak Symposium was held over four days on North Keppel Island 15 kms off Yeppoon in June and what a great event this is! Four glorious days on a north Queensland island in luxurious hut accommodation with all meals! If you ever make it to northern Australia in winter, definitely put this event on your to-do list.

The next event will be in 2020. I did a week's touring through the Keppel Island chain with four friends following the event which was very nice. Not a lot of fish around on the reefs I'd have to say and the cyclone-damaged and defunct Great Keppel Resort was pretty depressing although I hear now that it's been sold for about \$20 million to Asian interests. That's a lot of money to put up against Bali and Thailand resorts!

And earlier this month I made the



Commercial displays at the recent VSKC AGM Weekend

long drive south to Barwon Heads west of Melbourne for the Victorian Sea Kayak Club's AGM and Blue Water Festival. Another event there held in great weather! It doesn't happen all the time in Victoria I can tell you. Anyway, it was a great time there. The after-dinner guest speaker was Les Allen from WA who spoke about his 'home patch' - the SW of Western Australia and presented some great paddling images.

Two members, Pete Costello and Terry Barry, were awarded life memberships. Wow, when they read out their club CVs I felt positively tired! These guys have done so much over 20 years of membership!

David Golightly, the architect of the VSKC 'Caffyn Cove' celebrations some years ago, led a group to the Queenscliffe Maritime Mu-



Sid Mainland paddles the east coast of North Keppel Island Photo: Hooksy



VSKC 'Caffyn Cove' Celebrations architect David Golightly toasts the Around Australia paddles of Paul and Freya.



Mark Sundin with his 'salty' drone.
Photo: Dave Winkworth

seum to see Paul and Freya's kayaks and associated memorabilia. I visited the 'Caffyn Blarney Stone' at nearby Shortland Bluff and gave it a kiss but my desired fortune in gold failed to appear!

At the VSKC AGM, four or five committee positions remained unfilled, including webmaster, *Sea Trek* editor and Training Coordinator. These are core business posts for any sea kayaking club and my cautionary antennae immediately shot up! So, why is this? The club is well funded and well run and damn I can't work it out. Is there a perception perhaps that the positions are too much work and that members would just rather go paddling as they say? Is the work too difficult or time consuming perhaps? We shall see how they go in filling the positions and indeed President Richard Rawling did say that some of the planned work of the committee will have to be curtailed.

It will be a shame for sure if the position of *Sea Trek* editor is not filled. Sea kayak club magazines keep people together. Can you imagine KASK without this magazine? As Sir Humphrey would say: "It's the end of the free world as we know it!"

During the mid 1990s I remember the NSWSKC magazine going to colour production plus a great ramp-up in quality by one of editors at the time. While we all welcomed the 'newsstand' quality of

the magazine I did say at one of our meetings: "Congratulations fellas, you've just locked out 60% of the club members from ever volunteering to be editor because they think they could never match this magazine quality!" I wonder if that's a lesson for us? Would it ever be acceptable to reduce the quality of the magazine? Now there's a question.

Enough of that. Here's a 'Bugger' file from the VSKC Weekend: Mark Sundin and Rob Mercer from Expedition Kayaks in Sydney made the long drive south to do some training and display their products at the event. If you've ever browsed the Expedition Kayaks website, you'd have seen some of Marks's excellent drone camera footage of kayaks racing down swells off Sydney. It's pretty good stuff.

Well, Mark took his drone to the event to film some of the training and paddle trips - he does all this while on the water himself by the way. Unfortunately, Mark's drone struck a glancing blow on the Barwon Heads bridge and ended up in the river. A cool \$2,700 down the drain! He did offer the drone for sale at the gear action but predictably there were no takers!

Sharks

Heard any of the shark news from Australia lately? There have been attacks right along the eastern seaboard from North Queensland to Victoria, one of which was a fatal plus a fatal stingray attack in Tasie. One fellow was knocked off of his sit-on-top by a Tiger shark which continued to attack his boat. Lucky for him it didn't turn on to him. Predictably our commercial media would have you believe it's a war out there and generally unsafe to go



If you're lucky the sharks will leave you the head!

out. There'll be plenty more reports to come this summer too as the water warms and fish become more active.

Some advice if you're fishing from your kayak this summer: If you're bait fishing, keep your hands out of the water! If you're trolling, pull in any caught fish smartly and get paddling again immediately. Use a line strength that enables you to lift fish out of the water rather than you putting your hands into the water to grab them. You can't see what's followed your fish up and it's very hard to paddle with one hand! I came close to that once. It was a good lesson!

Sea Kayaking Week

An annual Sea Kayaking Week! I put this up at a club meeting a couple of years ago as a way of presenting sea kayaking to the public. The rough plan was for members to apply for club funds to run a few paddles and perhaps some paddles with the media over a week in summer. It didn't get very far and died a natural death - lack of interest - but I still think it's an idea that could take off if one club wanted to give it a run. Has anything like this ever been proposed in NZ? I reckon it'd be fun and could be a good way to show the public that sea kayaks are NOT Sit-On-Tops and vice versa. The media conveniently lumps them together don't they!

Have a great paddling Christmas and New Year!



Dave Winkworth at one of the Keppel Island gatherings with his stealth gel-coated Nadgee kayak.

BOOK REVIEW

Title: *One Woman's River*

Subtitle: A Source-to-Sea Paddle on the Mighty Mississippi

Author: McDonah, Ellen Kolbo

Published: 2016

Publisher: Prairie River

Publishing USA

Contents: 421 pp, 100+ paintings & drawings, small scale maps, glossary

Cover: softcover

Size: 217 x 140 mm

Price: NZ\$ 42.36

ISBN: 978-0-9962451-0-4

Availability: Book Depository UK (postage free)

Review: Paul Caffyn

Numerous books have been written about paddling the Mississippi River, from its headwaters at Lake Itasca near the northern border of Minnesota with Canada to its snout in a sprawling delta in the Gulf of Mexico. Many are vanity publications, self-published by the authors, up to 514 pages long (*The First Hundred Miles are the Longest*) without a single photo or map, bar for a rear cover thumbnail author photo.

One of the best is also the shortest at 136 pages - *Down the Mississippi with Stinky*. Reviewed in the KASK magazine, this is the story of two women setting out in 1960 to paddle the 2,348 river miles, and along the way they pick up a kitten which they named Stinky. Lovely cover photo of the two young women with Stinky, along with a central black and white photo plate section and a map.

Although *One Woman's River* has only one rear cover photo of the author, and is a vanity print, the book is a cut above the many other titles in that Ellen McDonah has recorded her 2014 paddle with well over 100 colour paintings and drawings; sights, scenes, people and wildlife met on shore. Nearing retirement at age 59.99 years, Ellen decided she is ready to undertake a big paddling adventure. Based on her research, no woman had ever achieved this river paddle solo. The concept of aiming to 'gift and share her artwork' with those who helped her

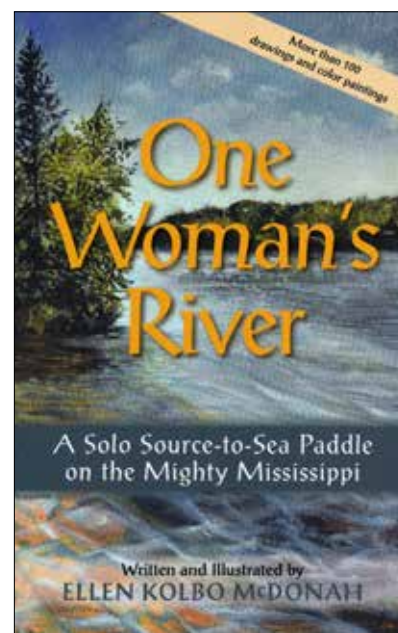
on the river would add an extra dimension to the paddle; Ellen takes quite a mix of acrylic paints and pastels, along with drawing pencils and water-soluble graphite sticks.

Brought up in Wisconsin, Ellen and her sister were introduced to canoe paddling and camping at a tender age, with adventures (and skills) increasing with growing experience when moving on to kayaking. Thus, she was not a novice when she launched from Lake Itasca. Her research, planning and training all seemed top rate.

Each of the 53 chapters, is nice and short, relating to the chapter heading, and begins with a 'pastel' drawing and a line or two of her mantras: 'Slow or fast, if you're lucky you'll get there just the same'. Ellen's writing style is very readable, not too laboured. The repeated small-scale maps which show the full river length are notated with a star showing the location for each chapter.

For Kiwi paddlers, paddling down big rivers like the Whanganui or Waikato, we can picture picturesque gorges, the odd dam, not always too much sign of habitation and plenty of places to land and lunch or camp, and no real issue with bugs. Early days after first launching, Ellen describes dealing with windfalls in the river's headwaters, and having to cover up with protection from ticks and swarms of mosquitoes. Then come the dams, the locks which she radios ahead to pass through, or has to portage. Then come the big towns and holiday resorts on the banks. Her prior research pays off in finding campsites above flood level, which will also ensure a quiet night's sleep with no noisy parties or wombles on ATVs.

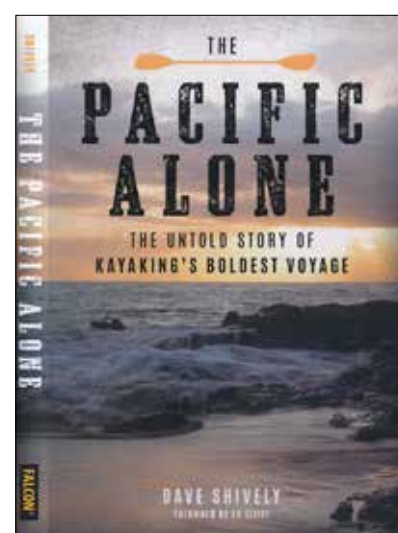
Once the river becomes navigable to bigger boats, Ellen has to deal not only with some horrific storms with lightning and fierce winds, but increasing traffic with tugs and long line of barges. The vignettes of fellow paddlers met and land dwellers (human and wildlife) who she interacts with are nicely described. A seriously wet late spring causes severe flooding to the river with



many tagged campsites underwater or clad in a thick layer of mud. As Ellen passes the last dam (30+), the barge and traffic then changed to really big cargo vessels, with pretty serious propeller wash turbulence, generating rebound (clapotis) from the riprap river bank protection. It must have been quite a nerve-wracking paddle down past New Orleans and finally out to the salt water of the delta river mouth.

I reckon it was a pretty outstanding achievement for a lady in her retirement years. In the brief acknowledgement page, Ellen writes:

'And for women everywhere, I hope I've encouraged you to take some risks to follow your dreams, whatever they may be'.



BOOK REVIEW

Title: *The Pacific Alone*

Subtitle: *The Untold Story of Kayaking's Boldest Voyage*

Author: Dave Shively

Published: 2018

Publisher: Falcon USA

Contents: 165 pp, 8 page central colour plate section, index, no maps

Cover: Hardback with d/j

Size: 236 x 160 mm

Price: NZ\$ 37.78 (from BkDep)

ISBN: 978-1-4930-2681-4

Availability: Book Depository UK (postage free)

Review: Paul Caffyn

In late June 1987, Ed Gillet launched his laden *Tofino* double kayak from Monterey, on the west coast of the USA, a tad south of San Francisco, aiming to take up to a maximum of 60 days to paddle/sail across the eastern Pacific Ocean to Hawaii. For the 2,200 mile voyage, Ed was going to use a paddle and parafoil kite, aiming to harness wind power as much as he could from the NE trades. For stability at night while sleeping, Ed had inflatable sponsons which he would pump up and 'harness' in place on either side of the cockpit. For fresh water, he had a 25 gallon bladder and a desalinator. For navigation, Ed carried a sextant and a pre-programmed calculator to help plot his daily position.

On day 64 of his voyage, out of food, plagued by saltwater sores on his bum and under his arms, Ed paddled into a harbour on the north coast of Maui and ground his kayak bow onto a scrap of sandy beach.

Although numerous articles were published afterwards, Ed didn't write a book on the voyage, as you might expect, largely due to the fact that he had experienced more mental anguish and physical hardship than he had ever expected.

This new 2018 title *The Pacific Alone* by Dave Shively is based on interviews with Ed Gillet and the author viewing Ed's brief diary notes from the voyage. What I expected from this book was

perhaps the way I would have structured this story; Ed's early life and his introduction to kayaking, chapters on his big pre -1987 paddles, like his massive solo paddle up west coast of South America, a historical review of earlier kayak ocean crossings, then Ed's planning and training and concluding with his voyage to Hawaii.

Shively's new book launches into Ed having an issue with local bandits on the coast of Ecuador, not Ed's first encounter but enough for him to value his safety a lot higher than completing the last 400 miles of that 1984 South American paddle to Panama. This, Shively explains, led to Ed's Hawaii crossing plan.

The 2nd chapter introduces a love element, Ed choosing the Mike Necker designed double kayak, and choosing equipment for the voyage. My hackles were raised with an early page discussing Ed's lack of information available on previous kayak ocean crossings. This disappointed me immensely. Shively claims Lindemann's book on his 1956 crossing of the Atlantic was not published till 1993. Bollocks! The hardback edition was published in 1958 while a softcover edition (same format but with colour photos) was published in 1993.

Shively also writes that Ed had no prior knowledge of Captain Romer's Atlantic crossing in 1928. This makes no sense at all, as Ed was a good mate of John Dowd in the early 80s and John had included an appendix 'A Transatlantic Solo' in his 1981 manual *Sea Kayaking* on Romer's last kayak voyage. Only five pages earlier in the book, Shively wrote that the folding kayaks used by Romer and Lindemann for their trans-Atlantic crossings 'were too wide and too slow for Gillet's liking'. I know this is nit-picking, but either Ed's memory is at fault or the author is guilty of over-dramatizing!

The six chapters on Ed's crossing to Hawaii reveal the hardships Ed faced, his body not only seriously losing weight but dealing with saltwater chafing sores, running low of food, having to catch fish trailing his kayak

for fresh tucker, and low morale issues seemingly caused by the Halcion sleeping tablets he was taking.

Ed lost his cooking stove and supply of coffee overboard, but then sighted a floating polystyrene cup. It had a coffee stain ring when he recovered it. He was able to refresh his addiction with a very weak brew of coffee, warmed over an improvised stove that he made by cutting the top off a gaz bottle, using a pair of pliers as a handle.

The next chapter recounts Ed's dealing with media after landing on Maui, his resumption of life as both a kayak guide, husband and kayak shop owner. At that point, the book should have finished, with an update on Ed's life to 2018. However, I get a feeling that the publisher said to the author, "This is not enough for a proper book - you need to add a few more chapters." So, a chapter 'Duplicators' describes subsequent repeat voyages (mostly disastrous failures) made to emulate Ed's 1987 voyage. These no doubt are taken from Shively's time as managing editor of *Canoe&Kayak* magazine. The following chapter 'The Pioneers' seems a ramble about various rowing, paddling and sailing epics.

In the final 'Never Before, Never Since' chapter, Shively tries to address an ocean adventurer's motivation and commitment, bringing in the likes of Sarah Outen and her 2013 mission to achieve a global circumnavigation by human power. He fails to mention that Sarah was rescued twice, lost two expensive row boats, and did a final paddle up the Thames while failing to acknowledge a big gap uncompleted with her heavily sponsored trip! The power of omission!

On a positive side, the book has an index.

On the other side, my niggles are:

- the book has no maps, not a single map, not a hint as to the geography of Ed's remarkable paddling trips

- the book has neither reading list nor bibliography

- the 19 colour photos in a central colour plate section, are subdued in a sea of white page background

- the dustjacket design is pathetic; a wrap-around photo of a slight sea breaking on a sandy beach with nary a hint as to who the book is really about

- the sub-title really annoys me: 'THE UNTOLD STORY OF KAY-
AKING'S BOLDEST VOYAGE'. Ed's trip was indeed made in the era before modern day GPS navigation. He did have to use a sextant for navigation, but so what? The much longer kayak crossings of the Atlantic made by Romer (1928) and Lindemann (1956) are in my view also very bold kayak voyages.

Ed Gillet and his inspirational paddling adventures deserves better than this *Canoe & Kayak* clipped style of biographical writing. Ed is a talented writer – he sent me several chapters from his manuscript on his 'really' bold paddle up the west coast of South America, which included a chapter on that Ecuador encounter with bandits. He writes superbly.

I can sympathize with Ed in not wanting to write a book on his 1987 crossing to Hawaii. With my own two attempts to cross Lake Tasman in the late 80s, the negativity resulting from a first crossing failure due to weather and an officious local harbourmaster, then a 2nd failure due to a 'Jonah' co-paddler who had an issue with a sore ankle, I never wanted to write about those two attempted Tasman crossings. Too much negativity.

I have no end of respect for Ed Gillet and what he has achieved with his paddling adventures. There is a biography or autobiography still waiting to be written about what Ed has achieved with his 'out there' trips. But I would rather read Ed's own words than Dave Shively's over dramatized/over-emotive diary interpretations of Ed's epic eastern Pacific Ocean crossing.

HUMOUR

How Deep is the Tomo?

Two Waikato blokes were out shooting in the back blocks of Waitomo and came upon a deep hole in the ground or tomo (cave entrance).

They approached it and were amazed at its size. The first said, "Wow, that's some tomo. I can't even see the bottom. I wonder how deep it is?"

The second bloke said, "There's an old gear box over there. Let's throw it in and see how long it takes to hit bottom." So, they picked up the gearbox, carried it over to the hole, counted one-two-three, and heaved it in. As they were standing there looking over the edge of the hole, a goat came crashing through the underbrush, ran up to the hole and without hesitation, jumped in head first.

While they were standing there staring at each other in amazement, they peered into the tomo, trying to figure out what that was all about.

Just then an elderly farmer sauntered up. "Say, you blokes didn't happen to see my billy goat?"

The first bloke said, "Funny you should ask. We were just standing here a minute ago, and a goat came running out of the bushes doing about a 100 miles an hour and jumped head first into this here tomo!"

The old farmer said, "Nah mate, that's impossible! I had him chained to a gear box."

Suspicious Wife

A woman, cranky because her husband was late coming home again, decided to leave a note saying, 'I've had enough and left you, don't bother coming after me', and hid under the bed to see his reaction. After a short while, the husband comes home and she could hear him in the kitchen before he comes into the bedroom. She could see him walking towards the dresser and pick up the note. After a few minutes he wrote something on it before picking up the phone and calling someone; "She's finally gone. Yeah I know, about bloody time. I'm coming to pick you

up. Put on the sexy French outfit, the one with the black stockings. I love you." He hung up, grabbed his keys and left.

She heard the car drive off as she came out from under the bed. Seething with rage, and with tears in her eyes she grabbed the note to see what had written.

'I can see your feet. Stop being silly. We're out of bread, throw the kettle on, back in 5'.

Kids in Church

"How many women can a man marry?" "Sixteen," the boy responded.

His cousin was amazed that he had an answer so quickly.

"How do you know that?"

"Easy," the little boy said.

"All you have to do is add it up, like the pastor said, four better, four worse, four richer, four poorer."

The Secret to Getting Old

An elderly, but hardy cattleman from Texas once told a young female neighbour that if she wanted to live a long life, the secret was to sprinkle a pinch of gunpowder on her oatmeal each morning. She did this religiously and lived to the age of 103. She left behind 14 children, 30 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, five great-great-grandchildren and a 15 metre deep hole where the crematorium used to be.

Quick Thinking

A woman and her 12-year-old son were riding in a taxi in Detroit. It was raining and all the prostitutes were standing under awnings. "Mom," said the boy, "what are all those women doing?"

"They're waiting for their husbands to get off work," she replied.

The taxi driver turns around and says, "Geez lady, why don't you tell him the truth? They're hookers, boy! They have sex with men for money." The little boy's eyes get wide and he says, "Is that true Mom?"

His mother, glaring hard at the driver, answers, "Yes."

After a few minutes the kid asks, "Mom, if those women have babies, what happens to them?"

She said, "Most of them become taxi drivers."

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 magazine.

New Zealand Sea Kayaker is published bimonthly as the official magazine of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (NZ) 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 to:

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or email Karen at:
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4th Ed. KASK HANDBOOK OUT OF PRINT

A 5th edition of the KASK Handbook is planned. It is a mammoth compilation on all aspects of sea kayaking in New Zealand, by many of the most experienced paddlers in the Universe.

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Maritime New Zealand

www.maritimenz.govt.nz

KASK Website
kask.org.nz

Photos on opposite page:

Top right:

*Fen and Bevan checking out
an East Greenland iceberg
that a few hours later suddenly
collapsed*

Photo: John Gumbley

Bottom right:

*The stunning scenery of Sermiligaq
Fiord with Bevan Walker in the
middle distance for scale.*

Photo: John Gumbley



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Aaron Dixon's wide angle photo taken during a recent BASK paddle around Waiheke and Ponui islands.

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KASK MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Current membership fees are:

- \$40 for ordinary membership, new members, family or joint membership
- \$40 for overseas membership (PDF newsletter only)
- KASK membership runs from 1 August to 31 July the following year
- membership renewal notices are emailed with two reminders also sent
- 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, thus receiving a 14 month membership

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