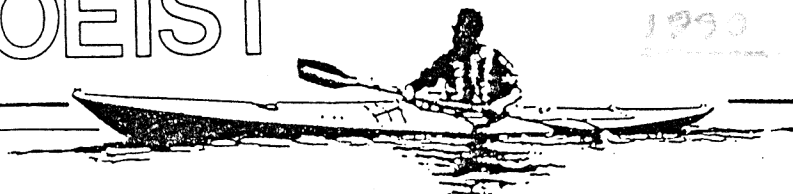


THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

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P O Box 26
NELSON
NEW ZEALAND

1990



SEA KAYAK FORUM

The Sea Kayak Forum has been run with an amazing array of different kayaks and much greater numbers than last year (from as far afield as Auckland and Queenstown). The size of the group got a little away on me this year and a small group of participants put their heads together on the Sunday and came up with a format for next year which will establish the event as a truly national event of some significance, and run by a team of active sea kayakers.

This year we kicked off with a quite lengthy look at boats and equipment, lengthy because there was such a variety of boats;— two folding kayaks, a number of plywood kayaks, doubles, glass-fibre and plastic. Some notable features were that hatch openings are getting bigger, fitted pumps are becoming rare, self-rescue systems are getting very sophisticated, paddlers are moving towards dry-suits (or dry tops) and away from wet-suits, rudders are standard items, and the average age of sea kayakers is getting older! Quite a few paddlers are doing solo trips and the paddle-float methods of self-rescue therefore attracted considerable interest. On the water a great deal of time was spent trying out the multitude of boats and comparing one with another. The very high bow of the Sea Bear family of kayaks built by Ron Augustin was a point of interest and many people were seen pacing these kayaks with Nordkapps to measure their cruising potential — better carrying capacity and speed just as good. Unfortunately we did not get rough or windy conditions to really test boat handling. Quality Kayaks had their double 'Seafarer' and new glass single, the 'Horizon'. An interesting discussion ensued on the virtues and disadvantages of conventional glass lay-up with vacuum bagging. My own newly-hatched plywood replica of a West Greenland kayak (originating from the village of Igdlorssuit) was tried out by some. A number of the Sisson 'Southern Light' doubles were available — in one family group the junior member went walk-about around the deck every so often.

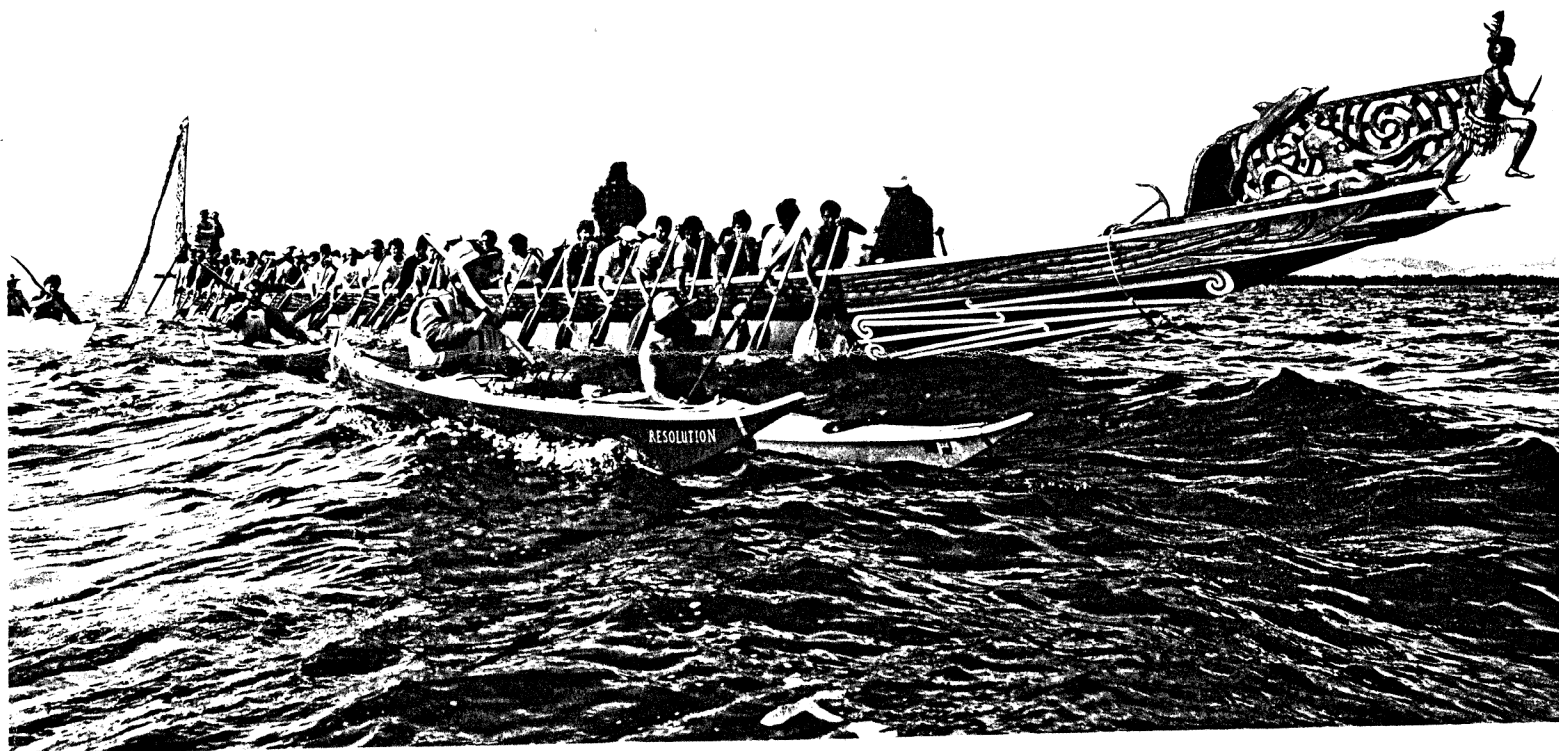
Kayak handling skills centred around rescue techniques, particularly trying out the new paddle-float that Peter Sommerhalder (Auckland Canoe Centre) has developed. Brian Lodge (Topsport) had us trying out a stirrup re-entry method for two kayak rescues and most of us agreed that it is a technique well worth being prepared for on group trips as it would be the easiest way of getting a mildly hypothermic paddler back aboard in trying conditions.

Saturday evening brought a little wind and we opted to view a slide-talk from Bevan Walker and Craig Hornblow of their Fiordland trip, and a brief but informative talk by Peter Allison on aspects of navigation and chart work, rather than an evening paddle.

Sunday saw a small group remain in the estuary to brush up on basic skills while the rest paddled out into Tasman Bay to meet the Waka being paddled across from Nelson to Kaiteriteri. In the afternoon another group paddled through a salt-water wetland area of the Waimea Estuary where, among other wildlife, a White Heron was seen.

* Next year's forum is to be held 13/14 April 1991 *

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TRIP NOTICE

10 - 11 JUNE 1990. Trip from French Pass along the East Coast of D'Urville Island. Campout on one night. Easy trip.

Contact Bevan Walker Phone (054) 23-390

EXPEDITION COMPANION WANTED

JULY - AUGUST 1990. 6 week trip to the Coral Sea - roughly Cooktown to Cape York - Australia. Bevan Walker is taking his folbot, including sailing rig on this expedition and requires a fellow paddler to paddle the other end of his kayak. Costs will involve mainly an air-fare to Cooktown and return, say \$1000 plus food and other expedition expenses, all up shouldn't be more than \$2500. The return from Cape York will be either by flight or boat.

Contact Bevan Walker Phone (054) 23-390

FOR SALE

NORDKAPP: Pod cockpit with bilge pump, three storage compartments, rubber hatches, Caffyn style rudder. \$1500.00

Phone John Langley

(024) 780 860 Home (024) 798 511 Business hours

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WIND AND WAVES

Wind and waves are the main elements which makes sea kayaking what it is, so it is best you know something about these two.

SEAWAVES: Waves created by the direct local action of the wind on the sea are termed sea waves. Waves are measured by length, crest to crest, and by their height. When the wind reaches 2.5km/hr gravity takes over from surface tension as the dominant force on wave form - the crests become more pointed; the troughs rounded. The wind reinforces the wave shape by pressing down on the windward side and eddying over the crest to reduce pressure on the leeward side. As wind speed increases further to around 13km/hr the crests of the waves steepen to the degree that they become unstable and break, producing white-caps.

SWELL: Swell is a generally regular wave motion caused by large meteorological disturbances operating at a distance. Swell persists after the disturbance has disappeared and maintains a constant direction as long as it keeps in deep water. Since swell may have been instigated by a storm, the arrival of on-shore swell can indicate that a storm is approaching.

The following terminology is generally used to describe the length and height of swell.

Length

Short.....	up to 100m
Average.....	100 to 200m
Long.....	over 200m

Height

Low.....	up to 2m
Moderate.....	2 to 4m
Heavy.....	over 4m

SEA WAVES AND SWELL: Sea Waves, caused by the local wind, are often superimposed on swell moving in from a distance. Interaction between the two can cause unpredictably high waves and danger to the paddler.

OTHER FACTORS: It should be remembered that other factors such as currents, tidal streams and geographical features can create dangerously unpredictable conditions. An example of this is when a fast running tide or current is flowing over a rock shelf or sand bar against a contrary wind.

A combination of swell and sea waves provided me with an interesting trip some years ago when I was attempting to paddle a kayak around Pepin Island near Nelson. It lies on the eastern side of Tasman Bay. We had a moderate swell from the Northwest, with a sea running in from the north that built on top of the swell. The afternoon sea-breeze had come away quite strong to add a third set of small waves from the west, but these were very short, steep and frequently broke. I guess you would call these waves a 'chop'. To add to the difficulties, the swell was bouncing against the cliff wall and sending occasional waves back to us from the east. From time to time the swell and the rebounding swell would throw up a pyramid haystack of a wave that would topple over, and with the jobble of other waves from the north and the chop from the west, I had quite a time bracing in all directions. Thankfully the tidal current was sweeping me along in the intended direction or I would have been out there until after dark when the sea breeze dropped and improved conditions sufficiently to make better progress. Of course a rudder fitted to the kayak would have enabled more efficient forward paddling and would have made meeting individual waves at the best angle somewhat easier.

BOOK REVIEW

TITLE: The Coastal Kayaker's Manual
AUTHOR: Randel Washburne
PUBLISHER: The Globe Pequot Press, Connecticut, USA 1989
NZ COST: \$35
AVAILABLE: Topsport. PO Box 24-005 Christchurch.

A New Zealand book publisher once confided to me that in order to publish a book under New Zealand market conditions a publisher would need to be satisfied that he could sell at least 3000 copies in two years. The only time this rule would be varied would be if the publisher was particularly sympathetic to the subject matter, wanted badly to balance out his catalogue with a particular title, or felt that a book had such significance that it ought to be published. Given these conditions it doesn't take a great deal of imagination to work out that it will be some time before a New Zealand book on sea kayaking will see the light of day in bookshops and we will have to put up with American or English titles in the meantime. Until this book came along, we really only had two books; Derek Hutchinson's *Sea Canoeing* and John Dowd's *Sea Kayaking*. Both have aspects that have limitations, Hutchinson's book never gets very deep into any particular subject and is little more than a quick summary of basic skills. Dowd is orientated towards multi-day trips and obviously prefers his readers to use beamy, stable kayaks. Washburne on the other hand, while having extensive sections on very basic paddling skills (an 11 page chapter on paddle braces, a 13 page chapter on forward paddling technique) also gets into considerable depth on some quite technical aspects of paddling. All three books are about the same length although Washburne's book has a more efficient lay-out to give more type per page, the end result being the best coverage of sea kayaking available; in fact it's the only book you will ever need to read to cover all you need to know about modern sea kayaking. If I had to find faults I would question his assertion that under the same conditions whitecaps will appear sooner on salt water than fresh water. I also feel that despite an excellent section on understanding currents, the omission of explaining how to work out tidal streams and directions from the wee diamond current stations found on charts, is a serious omission. Clearly the tidal flows are more complex on the Pacific North West coast of North America than down here in New Zealand, so they have more tidal information available from which to gather information. Overall, a well balanced and fair book. I suspect he prefers glass-fibre boats to polyethylene but he never lets his personal bias colour his advice. He likes high volume boats, but then he also wears gumboots while paddling, let's see you try that in a kayak of the type currently in use here.