



IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL	1
NZCA EXEC NEWS	1
FIRST AID	2
LETTERS	3
AUCKLAND SCENE	5
FRANCE	5
NEWS FROM	
ABROAD	6
STRAIT TALKING	7
ADDRESS LIST	10

The Sea Canoeist Newsletter is published 6 times a year and is the official newsletter of The Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (New Zealand)

Suscriptions are \$8.00 p.a. and should be made payable to K.A.S.K (N.Z.) c/- 39 Marsden Rd. GREYMOUTH.

EDITORS:

Eric van Toor
39 Marsden Rd.
GREYMOUTH

Paul Caffyn
R.D. 1
Coast Rd.
Runanga
WEST COAST.

EDITORIAL

STATUS OF KASK

We have had approval from the registrar of Incorporated Societies for the name of "Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (New Zealand) Incorporated". Paul and I will be circulating a draft constitution to committee members along with an agenda for our first teleconference meeting before the next newsletter.

Other items on the agenda will be:

- conservation policy (refer Helen Clarke's letter in June/July issue)
- Establishing safety guidelines
- Preparing a handbook

If anyone has anything to add or wants to have input into these items please drop us a line.

A list of subscribers to the newsletter / KASK is enclosed, as stated last issue. The list now has 110 names. The few who are not yet financial are requested to send eight dollars as soon as possible. Please advise of any changes or corrections to the list before next issue.

It is planned to hold the next Forum and KASK AGM in Wellington about March 1993. Any Wellington subscribers who could help with arranging a venue etc. are urged to contact us. The objective of this AGM is to formally launch KASK. Your subscription would then become a membership fee, and the newsletter would continue as the official newsletter of KASK.

NZCA EXEC NEWS

The President of the NZCA, Hugh Canard, resigned at the last NZCA executive meeting on 8th August. Hugh reported that he had recently bought the Ocean River Adventure Company (which operates a sea kayak hire and guided trip operation in the Abel Tasman National Park) and he therefore had a conflict of interest which compelled him to resign as president.

Hugh's main interest is in recreational whitewater paddling but as President over the last few years has become increasingly involved with problems within the competitive disciplines. He has instigated the move towards a federation to make each discipline autonomous and responsible for itself. He has been very supportive of KASK.

While we welcome Hugh as a subscriber to the Newsletter and as a sea kayaking commercial operator, his ability as President and his fairness and lack of political motives will be missed on the executive.

Alan Thompson as Vice President will take over the Presidents role in the meantime.

-EvT

BACK ISSUES

Back issues from number 37 are available from the editor at a cost of \$1.00 each.

MEDICATIONS FOR FIRST AID KITS

by Maxine Handford

When planning a sea kayaking trip, it is important to spend some time considering medications required for First Aid kits. The types of medications required may vary depending on the length and type of trip planned, local conditions, and medical histories of individuals in the party.

At the sea kayaking symposium in Christchurch earlier this year, we had an opportunity to discuss some of the more common medical problems that may be encountered on sea kayaking trips. Several participants expressed an interest in obtaining further information about some of the medications that were discussed. Some of the medications that might be included in a First Aid kit for sea kayakers are therefore listed below, with comments about their availability and use.

If anyone would like further details about these or any other medications, I would be happy to provide additional information. Drop a line to Eric providing him with details of your questions.

Sunscreens

All people involved in water sports are at high risk from exposure to UV radiation, which may cause both acute effects such as sunburn, and long-term effects, including photoaging of the skin and skin cancer. It is therefore important that a reliable sunscreen be used on all parts of the skin that are exposed to the sun.

Sunscreens with high SPF

factors (15) and with broad spectrum of activity (blocking the penetration of both UVA and UVB radiation) should be used. In general, sunscreens containing the ingredient para-aminobenzoic acid (PABA) and/or water-resistant, greasier preparations will be most suitable for people participating in water sports, since the active ingredients are less readily removed by water, sweating, or rubbing the skin. However, greasy preparations may be unsuitable for those with oily complexions or acne, since they may exacerbate these problems.

To obtain optimum protection, sunscreens should be applied at least 20 minutes prior to sun exposure and at least every 2 hours thereafter.

Sea Sickness Medications

Sea sickness can be very debilitating and may have very serious consequences, particularly for kayakers travelling solo and undertaking open sea journeys of several hours' duration.

Several medications for prevention and control of sea sickness are available from retail pharmacies. Most of these preparations are tablets containing an antihistamine agent, such as cyclizine (Marzine), meclizine (Sea-Legs), promethazine (Phenergan or Avomine), or dimenhydrinate (Dramamine); or they may contain a combination of an antihistamine with hysocine, an agent which acts to block the effects of the parasympathetic nervous system, e.g. diphenhydramine and hysocine (Benacine). These tablets are all relatively inexpensive. They differ in the degree to which they produce unwanted side effects, such as sedation, dry mouth and blurred vision. Sedation is quite a common side effect of medications containing diphenhydramine and

promethazine, but is uncommon with cyclizine or meclizine.

Most of these tablets need to be taken 30 minutes to 1 hour before travel with repeated doses at 3-8 hourly intervals if required. However, meclizine has a relatively long duration of action and may provide 24-hour protection against motion sickness. This drug therefore needs to be taken only once daily, 1 hour before departure with repeat doses every 24 hours.

Recently, it has also become possible to obtain Scopoderm TTS patches from retail pharmacies after consultation with a pharmacist. These patches contain hysocine (scopolamine) which is probably the most effective agent available for the prevention of motion sickness. For optimum effect, the patch should be applied behind the ear at least 5-6 hours before the trip begins. The patch will provide effective activity for 72 hours, after which it should be replaced. This medication may produce a dry mouth and blurred vision. Occasionally, it may also produce some drowsiness or impair memory or concentration. It is therefore important that individuals trial this medication and any other medications for sea sickness in advance, to determine the nature and severity of any adverse reactions before setting out into the open seas.

Anti-Allergy Medications

Anti-allergy preparations may be carried in a First Aid kit to combat the effects of insect bites or wasp stings. Most often, an allergic reaction will involve a localised response with symptoms of pain, swelling and itching at the affected site. Since one of the main chemicals involved in the mediation of these effects is histamine, symptomatic treatment of a mild allergic response usually involves the administration of an anti-

histamine tablet and an anti-inflammatory cream e.g. hydrocortisone cream, may be applied locally.

A large number of antihistamines are available from retail pharmacies. These vary in cost and side effects. Many of the older medications produce some degree of sedation or cause impaired co-ordination and may also produce other undesirable effects such as a dry mouth. However, there is considerable variation in the effects experienced by different individuals.

Recently, several new non-sedating antihistamine medications have been introduced into the market, including astemizole (Hismanal), loratadine (Claratyne) and terfenadine (Teldane). These medications offer distinct advantages over the older types of preparations and are the preferred medication choices for patients who cannot tolerate the older antihistamines. Unfortunately, they are also more expensive. These medications differ mainly in the time for onset of action and duration of effect. Loratadine (Claratyne) is the drug of choice for inclusion in First Aid kits since it has a very rapid onset of action with a long duration of effect that allows once-daily dosing.

It is important to note that while antihistamines are effective in reducing the symptoms of localised allergic reactions, they are not effective in the treatment of severe generalised allergic (anaphylactic) reactions. These reactions will usually produce a drop in blood pressure and a swelling of the air passages. Symptoms may range from mild to severe, and may include difficulty in breathing, generalised swelling, stomach pain, vomiting and dizziness. Within 10-30 minutes the victim may enter into a shock-like state, then collapse and lapse into unconsciousness. Any person who has previously reacted strongly to insect

bites or wasp stings should always carry appropriate medication in a First Aid kit for management of these reactions and should instruct other members of the party about how to use these medications if required.

For the acute management of generalised allergic reactions, a salbutamol (Ventolin) inhaler may be used to dilate the air passages and assist breathing, if there is any tightness of the chest, onset of hoarseness or rasping of breath. If this produces no relief within 2 or 3 minutes, an injection of adrenaline should then be given under the skin. Medical assistance should be sought as soon as possible. Injections of adrenaline for First Aid kits may be obtained from retail pharmacies. However, a doctor's prescription is necessary for salbutamol inhalers.

NEXT ISSUE: Pain relief and topical anti-inflammatories; anti-diarrhoea, anti-septics and antibiotics.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RUDDER CONTROLS

Dear Sir,

I read with interest the letter from Peter Sullivan and Paul Calfyn's response to his ideas. As a relative newcomer to Sea Kayaking I too was somewhat surprised by the crudity of many of the systems offered commercially. While restoring my very old (#2 out of the N.Z. mould) nordcapp I build a system that I felt was an improvement. At the 1992 Graham Egarr Forum at Sumner Brian Lodge approached me to Ask if I could try and transform my ideas into a commercially realistic form. I submitted several prototypes to Topsport and we now think

we have a system that while not cheap satisfies our requirements. Please note that Brian's initial request to me was driven by the need for a system for rental boats; to some our system may seem to be overbuilt and to offer adjustability not required for "one owner" kayaks.

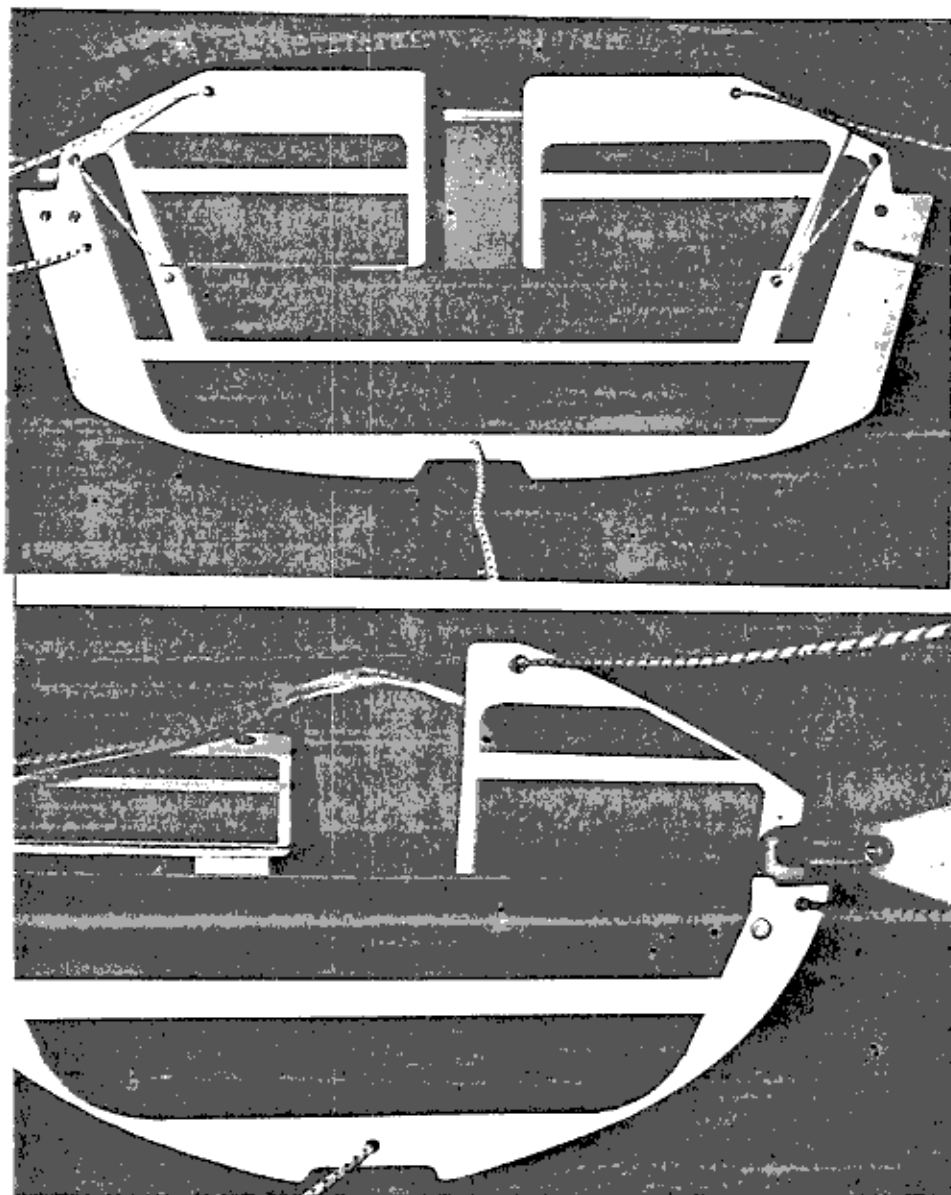
For all the reasons Peter lists we also went for a bulkhead type of footrest that offers support from the ball of the foot to the heel. Both Brian and I were adamant that we wanted a ridged footrest to brace off, quite independent of the rudder pedals. The system is similar to Peters except:

a) adjustment is by pre-stretched rope and "clam" cleats, offering adjustment of reach and footrest angle without nuts and bolts, and from the seated position.

b) the rudder lines are self adjusting so there is no requirement to horse around with webbing and buckles each time the footrest is adjusted. (This is done by running each rudder line through the pedal instead of tying it off, down to an eyelet at the hinge then to the fixed bulkhead where it's tied off -ed.)

c) There is no aluminium used at all. I am not a fan of aluminium's propensity to corrode if not regularly hosed with water, nor the way it "picks up" and jams with the addition of a bit of sand. All components are either 316 (marine grade) stainless steel or Acetol, with no metal to metal sliding parts. Obviously we pay a weight penalty for this; the weight conscious could use a similar system and put up with aluminium's shortcomings. And we've used nylon hinges just to keep Paul happy!

Incidentally Paul, one aspect of many systems that I'm not keen on is that if a hinge, rudder line or even a rudder breaks, you lose your



footrest, with a separate footrest at least in that situation you can retract the footrest and carry on.

As yet I cannot claim to have carried any epic voyages with the new system; the only boat of my own with it is a Sisson Trident. But it certainly is comfortable and easy to adjust. I find that in calm weather I will sometimes ease out the centre (footrest angle) line a bit, or even the whole footrest. If it looks like getting rough it's a simple matter to pop the spraydeck off and tweak the heels back to lock the knees up against the deck. Perhaps even one

owner boats will benefit from being able to move the footrest a bit to ease cramping on a long paddle.

The system has currently been installed in both Arluk 3 singles and Tofino Doubles. Even for one owner doubles the extra cost of this system may be justified for the ease of swapping paddlers front to rear occasionally.

It is the intention of topsport to sell the components to other kayak manufacturers. The components will also be sold to individuals for self installation although the individual would need to make their own foot

rest plate and rudder pedals to suit the cross section of their own boat. Topsport will also custom fit craft with the new system for a standard fee. As yet Topsport have not fixed a price.

And finally least the reader thinks this letter is less than impartial, you are quite right. As well as being quite proud of some aspects of the design I also have a (minor) financial interest in its future!

-Don Currie.

To add my own two-pence worth, I agree with all correspondents so far that the pedal system is the preferred method of control, having used a slider for many years and recently having changed. Paul is the only experienced kayaker I am aware of who is comfortable with the rudder hinge mounted on the floor. Those of us in particular who come from a river running or competitive paddling

background use foot pressure as an integral part of the paddling stroke and require an immovable footrest. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating and Paul's style obviously works for him.

My own system is a bit like Don's and Peter's, with the addition of padded cups as heel rests attached to the bulkhead which I recommend for anyone who paddles in bare feet.

-EvT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Speedblade Paddle

Dear Paul

I have recently spoken with a photographer friend of mine who uses sea kayaks as means to get to his photographic subjects. He has just spent several weeks in Fiordland taking photos and generally having a great time. I believe the true breakthrough of this trip is in his choice of paddle. He used a 'Speedblade' pro-peller paddle and reported he found NO disadvantages. Only advantages. I would like to know if other paddlers have tried this paddle type on similar trips. Personally I think the 'wing' type paddle has got to be the major advance in kayaking this century. I would like to see more paddlers at least try one.

Yours sincerely
Grahame Sisson

THE AUCKLAND SCENE

The latest news from Vincent Maire

It seems strange that in a maritime city like Auckland, it is still possible to undertake a trip that has never been done before. This is what Laurie Bugbee had in mind when he organised an 'Around the Isthmus' trip.

Talking to veteran sea kayakers, Laurie discovered there was still one route waiting to be paddled by sea kayakers. By following old Maori portage routes, making sure tides in two harbours coincided with the paddler's timetable, he devised a route that some

thought couldn't be done.

But this was no ordinary trip. Firstly it was limited to Sea Bears. This was to acknowledge the influence Ron and Nancy Augustin have had on sea kayaking in Auckland. Secondly, Colin Moore joined the trip. Colin writes a regular Outdoors column for the New Zealand Herald and a year or so ago, wrote a story about sea kayaking. Recently he purchased a Puffin from the Auckland Canoe Centre and was invited to join the trip, sharing a double Sea Bear with Damien Milicich.

The group left St Heliers at 6.20am, paddled up the harbour to the Whau River then followed this muddy waterway until it narrowed into the New Lynn industrial estate. The group then portaged their sea bears on trolleys for 3.5 kms to Green Bay where they launched into the Manukau Harbour. The next leg took the group past Onehunga to some of Auckland's worst industrial pollution on the way to Otahuhu for the final portage across the isthmus to the Tamaki River, and the final 18km leg to St Heliers.

The group made it back to the starting point by 6pm and it has been decided to make this an annual event - and even to allow other makes of sea kayaks to take part. The May 20 issue of the New Zealand Herald carried a half page story by Colin Moore on the voyage. It generated a lot of interest

with Laurie, the Augustins and the Auckland Canoe Centre getting many calls from readers wanting to know more about sea kayaking.

Planning for Coastbusters Sea Kayak Symposium is underway. It will be held at MERC at Long Bay on the weekend of November 6, 7 & 8. The theme will be 'Places to go, people to go with.' For information, contact David Robertson (09) 488-0383.

SEA KAYAKING IN FRANCE

Vincent Maire describes a recent visit to France.

Recently, I returned to France to visit an old friend who runs a sea kayak centre in Douarnenez in Brittany. I first met Bernard Moulin while hitch hiking in Wales in 1974. He visited New Zealand in 1983-84 and so it was good to see him again and find out what he was doing at L'Association TARIO.

The organization he runs is best described as a large sea kayak club, although other sports are included. It is based in a disused factory and has over 50 sea kayaks many of which were not in very good condition. I commented on this and Bernard's reply said a lot for human nature. The club owns the boats, not the members, so they do not take great care of them. I also got the impression that club membership fees do not buy the sea kayaks, but the city council does.

And herein lies another interesting story.

Douarnenez is a fishing town but derives much of its income from tourism. It has some magnificent beaches and is great sea kayaking country. While paddling one evening with Bernard, I commented on the fact the beaches look so unspoilt. Fields of wheat went right to the sand and the only houses were those belonging to farmers. Given the massive number of tourists that visit France each year, 53 million at the latest count, how come the land developers hadn't been able to get their sticky fingers on this prime real estate? The answer was simple. The mayor and most of the councillors were communists and wouldn't allow it.

Sea kayaking is a popular sport in France. I saw many different models of craft, all of them with wide cockpits and skeg type rudders. In this part of France there is some great sea kayaking to be done. The coast is relatively unspoilt and deserted beaches can be found. The Atlantic can get dangerously rough and care must be taken at all times. There are many small islands to explore and I was told of islands in the Bay of Biscay that resemble Tahiti.

Bernard has recently co-authored a book on sea kayaking which is selling well. He is planning to visit New Zealand in March with a group of French

outdoor adventurers to experience sea kayaking in the South Pacific. If you are considering visiting France, a stop over in Douarnenez is recommended. The sea kayaking is great and so is the hospitality.

NEWS FROM ABROAD

Melting of the Ice Curtain

Bevan Walker and Nora Flight made it to Siberia, and are due home shortly. Hopefully the next newsletter will have a full report of their experiences. A brief postcard from Bevan, 12th August, notes:

Hi. We are back in Alaska, where the food is good and the streets are clean. We had four days kayaking out of Providenya. The festival went well. The weather went bad on us. The coast that we did was very nice. Today we are going up to Kotzebue, to kayak down a big river, the Noatak. We are at Nome and camped last night next to the airport. We had two weeks kayaking in Prince William Sound, 12 days kayaking out of Homer and went down the Kenai River. The new kayak goes well.

Round Aussie Paddlers

No news from the two paddlers however it would appear Tony and Eric in their double Klepper made it to Darwin. I have heard from a kayak retailer in Sydney that they had pulled out of the trip at Darwin.

1988 North-West Passage Kayak Trip

I have just received a photocopy of the published trip report of John Andersen who with fellow Dane Vidar Sie, made the first recent kayak trip through the North-West Passage from Resolute on Cornwallis Island to Cape Nicholson in Liverpool Bay which is near Tuktoyaktuk in the North West Territories of Canada. John and Vidar used 4.4m long single fibreglass kayaks. On the 9th of June they commenced their journey with a skidoo trip across Barrow Strait. On small sledges, they man-hauled their kayaks nearly all the way to Cambridge Bay before open water allowed them to paddle. If anyone would like to read some more about this amazing trip, please drop a line and I will include a lengthy report in the next newsletter.

STRAIT TALKING

Several KASK newsletter readers wrote and asked for copies of Dave Herrington's trip report on his double Cook Strait crossing. It is an opportune time to print Dave's report in full with some comments on how to plan and accomplish a major strait crossing.

ACROSS COOK STRAIT Double Crossing

5th September 1991
by Dave Herrington
Planning for the trip was relatively straight forward and as it was going to be a one day trip, there were only lunch and safety factors to con-

sider. That is apart from getting the right weather and tidal conditions. As we all know Cook Strait is notorious for bad weather. For two weeks prior to my trip, I would cut out the weather map from the paper daily and match it with the marine forecast at either 3am or the repeat at 5am. I was lucky as what I considered the right conditions came round fairly quickly. The only small problem was as it was coming up to new moon, the tidal effect would be at its strongest. I had done some drift calculations and found with a one knot current and a forward speed of three knots (5.5kms/hour) I would need to allow 20 degrees for drift. At it was at such an angle the forward speed wouldn't be affected too much.

I left home at 2am. Arrived at Titahi Bay and got everything ready to go by 5.30am. It was still quite dark with only a white mini breaker line showing in the reflection of the street lights. Out around the corner I paddled, the Brothers Island light came into view and I could see a black outline of Mana Island. After half an hour the day was breaking and another 15 minutes later, I could see the outline of the South Island. By this time I was south of Mana Island and it was just a case of paddling towards the South Island, seeing the odd log floating in the sea. About 10kms out, I ran out of the tidal current so the next hour or so was very straight

forward. Just over half-way across, I ran into a tidal current again. I could see the difference in the sea when I came to it. This was much stronger than the eastern side and continued to build up into quite a choppy sea to where I passed 2kms north of the Brothers Islands, you could see the white-caps and hear the noise of the moving water closer to the islands. Going through this slowed my progress somewhat. In fact I paid close attention to the land marks to make sure I was actually moving forwards. Clear of the Brothers, I decided to head slightly southwards to a small bay amongst the rocky shoreline. Now this is where things became interesting and the water was really on the move. I didn't realize at the time but I was in the middle of some rather large eddies. The same as a river only on a much bigger scale. It took me over an hour to paddle the 2kms from the Brothers to the South Island shore. I was swept backwards for nearly the same distance as I had to cross. I landed on a steep and stony shore where I had lunch and climbed some rocks to observe the eddies in full motion. My lunch break was one hour before I put the kayak parallel to the sea so it wouldn't slide into the water while I was getting in. Once in and comfortable I turned towards the sea and sort of lunged in with the help of gravity from my position on the shore.

I paddled north staying very close to the shore until I cleared Cape Koamaru. The shoreline here was all very interesting with steep cliffs and holes in the rocks where the sea had pounded them. I had decided to give myself a bit more room to the north of the Brothers. This with the slack at high tide made the start of my return trip quite relaxing. On my way back I saw a seal that was lying with one flipper held up out of the water as if waving to me. When I went over for a closer look it just lifted its head a couple of times for a breath of air and moved about a bit staying 15m from me all the time. After circumnavigating the seal, I headed on towards Titahi Bay in calm pleasant conditions. I was starting to feel a bit weary by this time so I paddled for 25 minutes and stopped for 5 minutes to rest. As I was nearing Mana Island the tidal current became very apparent again, making it slow going at times. The sun went down and I paddled the last part in dusk on a glassy sea, a most pleasant evening to finish a long day.

The whole trip took 12 hours 45 minutes and measured 35.5kms (each way) on the chart in a straight line, but I'm sure I didn't go in a straight line.

David Herrington.

PLANNING FOR A STRAIT CROSSING

notes by Paul Caffyn
Firstly congratulations to Dave for a well planned and executed double crossing.

Strait crossings are much more committing than coastal cruising for three main reasons:

1. straits are generally subject to strong tidal stream flow and some are subject to both strong current and tidal stream flow.
2. crossings take the paddler a long way out from the security of shore
3. straits between high land masses, are subject to strong winds where the air stream is funneled between the two land masses.

The two essential elements of a successful strait crossing are firstly planning and secondly execution. The notes below apply not only to straits but also to channels subject to tidal stream flow.

Planning: The three important sources of information regarding straits are the relevant volume of the 'Pilot' the relevant marine chart and a set of tide tables or Nautical Almanac. In the case of Cook Strait, which is a good example to discuss as it is subject to strong tidal stream and current flow, plus funneling of the wind between the North and South islands, page 86 of the 'New Zealand Pilot' (1971 edition) has a lengthy section on the

strait with information on the tidal streams and current. It describes the worst areas for tidal violence, for example:

'As the tidal streams in the strait are rapid, especially off Cape Terawhiti where they attain a rate of 5 knots and upwards at springs, when the wind opposes the tidal streams a turbulent sea is raised, which with very heavy gales may be dangerous even to large vessels..... High water on the western side of Cook Strait occurs about 5 hours later than on the eastern side, so that when it is high water on one side, it is nearly low water on the other.'

Further reading of the descriptions of the eastern and western sides of the strait allow a full picture to be built up of the tidal stream activity. The important slack water tidal stream times are detailed reference Wellington, and it is important to note that more often than not, they do not correspond to high or low water tide times on shore.

Since tidal stream strength is strongest during spring tides and weakest during neap tides, it is important to consult the Nautical Almanac or set of tide tables to pick a period of neap tides (minimal tidal range).

The marine chart often has more detailed information than is contained in the 'Pilot'. A diamond

symbol, with a alphabet letter, in the strait will be referenced in a tidal stream table on the edge of the chart. Tidal stream direction (in degrees) and strength (in knots) are given at hourly intervals plus the slack water times reference a main port or secondary port.

Start and finish points for a crossing need to be researched. Where a strait is long with relatively straight coastlines, for instance Foveaux Strait or Shelikof Strait between Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula, the choice is the shortest 'land to land' straight line crossing. Where a strait has capes or reefed headlands jutting out seawards into the narrowest part, it is best to look for a longer crossing as these headlands/capes invariably have violent tidal stream activity in the way of overfalls, races and rips. On a calm day, the paddler may be able to fight through such areas, however with any weather tide effect, wind blowing against tidal stream, these areas need treating with great caution and respect.

Two Approaches to a Crossing

There are two different means of executing a crossing.

The first is the **big ferry glide**, where the tidal stream strength is calculated and an angle of drift is allowed during the course steered for

the crossing. Dave Herrington worked out a course correction of 20 degrees for tidal stream drift during his north to south crossing. This enables the paddler to leave shore at slack water and cross while the tidal stream is flowing in one direction.

The second is Caffyn's cunning **slack water mid-strait** method. Ever since my first strait crossing, Cook Strait in 1979, I have used this method with great success. It involves calculating the time it will take me to make the crossing, say three hours for a 12 mile crossing. I subtract 1.5 hours from a daytime tidal stream slack water time, and set this as my start time. Thus I should be mid-strait when the tidal streams turn. Having calculated the course to be steered, I steer that course for the three hours, with no allowance for drift until I have virtually completed the crossing. Maintaining the same course means a dog-leg course is paddled. For instance in Cook Strait, I start with the last 1.5 hours of the north-going tidal stream which by mid-strait drifts me well north of my compass line on the chart. Drift is then minimal for the short period of slack water, after which the south-going tidal stream drifts me back south so that I should arrive at my aiming point. The advantages of this technique are:

a. only one compass course

is necessary with no need for drift allowance; very handy if visibility deteriorates with fog or mist
b. the paddler misses the full mid-tidal stream strength both mid-strait and on both sides of the strait.

c. if the wind lifts during the crossing, then the weather tide effect is minimized.

Optimizing Favourable Conditions

To ensure success, it is important to optimize both favourable weather and tidal conditions. As noted above, the optimum tidal stream conditions are during neap tides, when tidal stream activity is at its weakest. Favourable weather conditions are not as easy to predict and will not always coincide with neap tides. It is necessary to observe the weather maps and wait until there is a very weak pressure gradient across the Cook Strait area. Cold front situations should be avoided like the plague for Cook Strait, as the NWly winds preceding the front funnel through the strait while a abrupt change to southerly winds accompanies the passage of the front across the strait. In 1979, even though I was superbly fit after the 1700 mile North Island trip, I waited seven days for favourable conditions to cross Cook Strait.

COOK STRAIT KAYAKING HISTORY

I have purloined a few snippets of history from Graham Egarr's article in 'New Zealand Canoeing & Rafting', No 30, Spring 1983.

The first successful single kayak Cook Strait Crossing was accomplished on the 23rd of February 1890. George and James Parkes, from Hokitika, used two Rob Roy style planked kayaks - George's 'Sunbeam' was 14 feet long and weighed 75 pounds. They left Mana Island at 2.30am, passed Cape Koamaru at 7pm, and battled headwinds for 8 hours before reaching Picton. Total time in the kayaks was 30.5 hours. The first double canoe crossing was in 1895 by W & G Fitzgerald from Porirua Harbour to Cape Koamaru, and the first solo kayak crossing was by 16 year old H.V. Shearman who crossed in a Rob Roy style kayak fitted with a small lug sail.