

No. 91 February - March 2001

THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER



The granite peaks of Gog and Magog on the skyline, from Port Pegasus, Stewart Island.



Smugglers Cove, Port Pegasus, Stewart Island. Pics by Malcolm Gunn

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

KASK

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

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

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

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

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KASK BADGES

Canterbury paddler Rod Banks produced a badge of a paddler and sea kayak from solid sterling silver, with KASK NZ engraved. The badge can be permanently or temporarily affixed to hats T shirts, ties, evening gowns or dress suits but not dry suits. And the badge is appealing to the eye. Size is 23mm long by 11mm high.

Price is \$15 plus \$1 P+P, and available from the KASK Treasurer, Max Grant.

LRB2 - KASK HANDBOOK

For a copy of this mother of all sea kayaking handbooks, contact KASK Treasurer:

Max Grant,
71 Salisbury St.
Ashhurst, 5451
Ph: (06) 326 8527 home
Fax: (06) 326 8472
email: Q-KAYAKS@xtra.co.nz

COST:

New members: gratis
Existing members: \$10 + \$1 p&p
Non-members: \$18 + \$1 p&p

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

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

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

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

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

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Thanks to all the contributors, and the production team of Sandy Ferguson, Max Grant and David herrington.

EDITORIAL

It is pleasing to see positive publicity of sea kayaking in the media recently. A TV3 20/20 programme featured the Antarctic Peninsula expedition of Graham Charles, Mark Jones and Marcus Waters. The footage was excellent, particularly as the boys gained some excellent shots from the kayaks, not an easy task, particularly in extremely cold conditions. The program implied the boys paddled back to meet their support yacht whereas they were actually picked up by a cruise ship which took them to Palmer Base where they met the support yacht. 'The Press' carried a feature by John Henzell (which is reproduced in the newsletter) with spectacular colour photographs of kayaks in the icy seas.

Clinton Waghorn was interviewed on National Radio prior to his leaving for the last leg of his Alaskan trip, from Chignik to Prince Rupert, where he commenced his circuit of the southern coast of Alaska and the Yukon River three northern summers ago. The interviewer & Clinton left listeners with the impression that this would be a first along the Alaskan coastline. Clinton's river/coast circuit will be a first, however the coast has been paddled before. The Aleut sea otter hunters paddled the Gulf of Alaska coastline in their skin baidarkas for centuries. As I had space to fill, I have begun a serialisation of my wee trip around the coastline of Alaska, from Prince Rupert in British Columbia to Inuvik in the Northwest Territories. The first instalment will allow readers to gain an insight into some of the conditions Clinton will be facing with this trip this year.

A recent Automobile Association magazine carried a general introduction to sea kayaking, written by Vincent Maire, and the April 'North & South' magazine had a snippet on my recent paddling history with a corker Conrad Edwards photo.

Nelsonian, Russell Davidson had regular snippets in the South Island newspapers following his progress down the east coast of the South Island from his start point at Tahunanui

Beach, Nelson. Russell's graphic account of being overwhelmed by a fast moving front of the Catlin's coast cliffs is riveting reading. The photos Russell sent me of the sea conditions, after he reached safety on the cliff top, show sea and wind conditions that I am certain no sea kayaker could stay upright in.

ACCESS

A note from Brian Pickering discussed problems with camping access near Whangamata on the Coromandel Peninsula. Before Christmas, when his group was camped on reserve land, a security guard who was employed by the Thames/Coromandel District Council told them to move on as camping was not allowed in public places. Brian contacted the council and asked about their by-laws. He was sent a photocopy from the NZ Standard Model General Bylaws, Chapter 2, Public Places, which is produced by the Standards Association of NZ. Section 233 was highlighted: '233.1 No person shall -

- (a) Erect, construct, or place any building or other structure or erection whatsoever, on any part thereof, under, over or across any public place or any part thereof without the prior written authority of the local authority so to do; or
- (b) Use any dwelling or any vehicle for the purposes of temporary living accommodation on any portion of any public place without the written permission of the local authority and subject to such conditions as the local authority may impose.

Section 233.1.a must be a worry for courting couples in public places, but on the serious side, can anyone shed any light on the rights of paddlers to camp on the coast. Marginal strips and esplanade reserves apply for 20m inland of the mean high water spring mark, which are crown land. If any paddlers have had problems with being asked to move, drop a line to the editor.

KASK PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2000/2001 from Helen Woodward

The last year has been a particularly busy one for the Committee, dealing with constitution changes, leadership courses, WSNZ funding, submissions on fast ferry wash in the Sounds, and marine farm applications in Akaroa. These issues have been ably and professionally dealt with at our six weekly committee meetings via telephone, and in between by e-mail.

I wish to thank the Committee made up of Max Grant, our treasurer, Sandy Ferguson, Secretary, Cathye Haddock, Safety Officer, John Kirk-Anderson, Education Officer, Rob Tipa, Conservation Officer, Vince Maire, our Publicity Officer, and last but by no means least, Paul Caffyn our illustrious newsletter editor. I extend my thanks to you all for your efforts in the last year, and generally making my position relatively easy.

I would like to emphasise that the time and effort put into running a national organisation such as KASK is substantial (having dabbled in most portfolios myself over the years, I especially appreciate it), and we all give our time voluntarily, so, if things don't quite go to members' expectations, keep in mind we are doing our utmost to fit this time in with family, and work commitments (not to mention paddling time), so please bear with us.

Since last year's AGM, the need to reflect on where and how KASK should evolve, and what we want to achieve, e.g. formalising the network structure, offering courses/qualifications, lobbying Government on behalf of our members, more questions than answers have arisen, but there hasn't been a committee meeting that has not broached some aspect of this, and generated healthy debate.

As we continue on, we must continually ask these questions, so that KASK can continue to evolve into a well organised, significant group who has an effective voice in lobbying to pro-

tect our members' interests in local and central government policy making, and with the ability to link up with other like-minded organisations when the need arises. We must continue to keep in focus our main goal of representing our membership, and continually seeking feedback.

The newsletter is currently our strongest communication tool, which I encourage you to support and contribute to, as without the feedback from our members, the Committee will be working in a vacuum. I must admit to being a culprit and not submitting to the newsletter, but I resolve to change this. I personally would like to see the opportunity for interactive discussion over the web, and hopefully this medium will evolve as our website develops. Thanks to Sandy for developing the website. Perhaps Sandy will outline the website development later.

It is pleasing to see membership remain at over 300 for the second consecutive year. I trust this will remain the norm, and that most if not all members will renew their membership (as you should be aware of subs are now due, and can be paid to Max here at the forum). Early payment of subs is appreciated, as it is frustrating for the treasurer and secretary to still be chasing subs up towards Christmas. Every additional sub notice that goes out costs the Association money that could be spent elsewhere on facilitating courses, or on other positive projects. It is pleasing to see another great turnout to a forum.

I look forward to seeing you out on the water over this weekend, and through the next year.

Happy Paddling

Helen Woodward
President

KASK FORUM AGM

**Minutes summary,
including the Forum
from Helen Woodward**

The AGM was held on 11 March (Sunday morning-at 9.15 am).

There was a relatively good turnout to a generally interesting meeting with some good discussion on the web-site developments. It was suggested that the KASK website should be linked to NZCA. Max Grant said he could put in a link via the Quality Kayaks web site (via the canoe club page). Discussion ensued on the possibility of setting up a "chat-line/bulletin board" through the web-site. This met with good support. More feedback is required on this (contact Sandy Ferguson on mail to:

a.ferguson@chem.canterbury.ac.nz)

Officers reports included Rob Tipa's conservation officer's report, detailing events through the year, including submissions on Banks Peninsula mussel farms, resulting in a hearing involving KASK on around 20 April. Also a submission and questionnaire relating to high speed ferries in the Sounds. All in all a busy year for Rob!

Treasurer, Max Grant, reported on a good year with handbook sales up, and badge sales steady. Additional handbook sales have also resulted from an article in the AA Directions magazine (author Vince Maire).

Election of Officers resulted in the following:

President: Helen Woodward (Blenheim),
e-mail: h.woodward@xtra.xo.nz

Secretary: Maurice Kennedy (Wellington),
e-mail: europaft@xtra.co.nz

Treasurer: Max Grant (Manawatu),
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Safety Officer: Cathye Haddock (Wellington),
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Conservation Officer: Rob Tipa (Southland), robtipa@clear.net.nz

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Instruction/education Officer: John Kirk-Anderson (Christchurch), jka@netaccess.co.nz

Newsletter Editor: P. Caffyn, kayakpc@xtra.co.nz

Thanks were expressed by Dianne Morgan for Sandy's work as Secretary.

One remit, moved by Max Grant, to change the financial year from (currently 1 March to 28 Feb), to August 1 to 31 July, was passed. The reasons for the change include:

1. There not being sufficient time between the end of the financial year and the AGM to do an annual balance and get books audited.

2. It is felt that the end of fin. year should end during the off- season. At present people are joining in early summer and have to pay a second sub after 1 March. It would simplify book work if subs were due when there are fewer members joining.

3. At present the financial year end right in the middle of the annual forum. This means that the balance shows half of one forum and half the one held previously. This also applies to Water Safety NZ grants as the money is used during the summer. Max called for articles for the newsletter on behalf of Paul. Photos can be scanned and e-mailed.

Max extended a vote of thanks to Dave Herrington (and his wife) for work done mailing out the newsletter.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Graham Egarr Memorial Trophy for services to sea kayaking went to Dave Herrington for his tireless work running workshops at forums for many years, mailing out newsletters, and being a respected paddler with more than 17 Cook Strait crossings to his credit.

The 2002 forum is to be organised by the Wellington network. A meeting in April will be held to confirm the venue.

Forum 2001 summary from President's perspective. Having turned up on Saturday morning at 10.45 am just as the last few paddlers were getting in the water at Cable Bay for a paddle around Pepin Island, I hurriedly got my gear together and set off in pursuit. What ensued was a glorious morning's paddling exploring the caves and archways on the western side of the island, and some interesting paddling into the brisk northeasterly wind. The afternoon entailed recovering from the paddle, and (for me setting up camp). Discussion on what workshops people wanted to attend resulted in the trip ideas workshop proceeding in tandem with the women's workshop (a pity because many women were interested in attending).

An interesting and riveting talk from Russell Davidson, on his less than fortunate paddle down the east coast of the South Island (we were all impressed by his strong survival instincts and admire his resourcefulness and courage to have another go!). The evening saw a cooking competition, won by the most colourful (if not most cooked) meal. The photo contest was very questionable, with the organiser taking it out!

Sunday morning saw a session on rescues in cloudy weather with lumpy sea-ideal conditions for a challenging session.

The AGM followed, with a forum debrief-comments on how nice it is to get back to basics, and have a good sociable time-where even the organisers could enjoy themselves. I pointed out though that they had gone to the trouble of printing a programme so there were expectations, particularly from the beginners/new members of at least some instruction. The new members were asked how they felt, and although enjoying the social time, would have liked some structure, and had an expectation from the programme that workshops would be held. All agreed that the venue was

great, including the camp site, helped by the great weather.

All attendees were happy with the relaxed atmosphere, and the great hospitality. It was agreed that having the water close by (walking/carrying distance rather than having to drive) is critical to having things "flow", and keep it relaxed. Nora commented at the debrief that location is critical, keep the forum out of the main centres (atmosphere, relaxation). I look forward to next year's forum from the Wellington network with anticipation.

Helen Woodward
President

KASK 2001
The Back to
Basics Forum
by Marty Clark

This year's KASK forum was always destined to be a laid back affair with a serious social flavour - being organised by a group of socially orientated Nelson-based paddlers. Despite the organisers taking a 'back to basics' approach for the weekend forum they were able to offer a top venue, weather and a great piece of water to paddle - Cable Bay!

It was a very much a BYO forum. Camping was a stone's throw from the ocean with water, showers and toilets provided. The programme though a little thin on formal workshops was designed to get people on the water enjoying what we Nelson locals think of as one of the best kept paddling secrets in the area.

Much of Saturday was spent doing a very close inspection of the Pepin Island coastline looking for 8 hidden lettered buoys. The competition took paddlers literally into every nook and cranny trying to come up with the mystery word and walk away with the cash prize generously provided by the activity organiser and local guide Nick Woods of Cable Bay Sea Kayaks. The nature of the paddle should have been obvious from the start when Nick

suggested torches might have been useful. Scuba gear wouldn't have gone amiss as well. Even some of the local paddlers were surprised at the amount of caving options available.

The afternoon sessions were livened up by some pretty hair-raising tales from Russell Davidson of his recent around the South Island trip. It was full of sobering accounts of getting trapped in sea caves with water spouts, cliff landings and a rather interesting encounter on Banks Peninsula with a sex worker. The evening highlight was the thwarted campfire cooking contest (due to the extreme fire risk) which had to be restricted to the gas cooker. There were a few excellent concoctions particularly John Dobbe's pudding ruled ineligible by its late arrival but proving very edible all the same. (NB we had planned to print some of the recipes in the KASK newsletter but nobody passed them on)

Be sure to spread the word about Cable Bay as a great stopover on the way to Abel Tasman or the Sounds. For those KASK members here for the forum thanks for the support and we'll see you over at the forum hosted by Wellington paddlers in 2002.

Marty Clark

**FORUM
REPORT - 2
What We Did The Other
Weekend
by Hamish Trolove
(reprinted from the
Wellington Network n/1)**

The KASK Forum for 2001 was held at Cable Bay which is located about 15km north of Nelson. It was a fantastic location with clear water, rock outcrops and reefs, a large estuary and great beaches. In many ways it has the same flavour to Makara Beach. The weather was bright, and clear with a light Sou'Easterly blowing to keep the air cool. (Unfortunately for the Nelsonians no sign of rain)

On the Friday Evening (9th March) a group of WRSKN'ers gathered at the Ferry Terminal and compared gear while waiting for the delayed Interislander. The group consisted of Beverley, Dave and Dianne, Eleanor and Hamish. Despite a stiff wind, the crossing was not rough, and saw us arrive in Picton to meet Shelley and Pete, and the Havelock Sea Kayak minibus for transport to Cable Bay. Being about 11:30 by the time we arrived in Cable Bay we fumbled around unloading the Kayaks, and setting up our tents.

With the break of a fresh new day, the KASK Forum began in earnest. Unlike previous forums, this one promised to be a fairly casual affair with a much more informal structure. First off was a circumnavigation of Pepin Island with a treasure hunt included. Twenty or so Kayaks set off from the beach and headed for the rocky outcrops on the North side of the Bay. Sea caves and narrow passages provided hours of interesting paddling as well as great hiding places for the treasure hunt buoys. It is worth noting that the treasure hunt buoys were installed during low tide. We were paddling at high tide.

A large number of the buoys were therefore underwater and so the treasure hunt was challenging but not impossible. The water was exceptionally clear, and it was easy to see the forests of seaweed, the stones and rocks on the sea floor metres below. The sea caves were quite exceptional and with the light coming through the water, they were places of magical beauty. Eventually we meandered around to the North side of the Island and cruised towards the entrance to the estuary behind Pepin Island. Small waves were breaking across a sand bar and so some entertainment was had as we played in the light surf.

When hunger began to override the excitement, the group gradually gathered on the Delaware Bay beach for lunch. Lazing on the sand we watched the current becoming stronger and stronger as the contents of the estuary gurgled out to join the sea. Luckily a 20m portage would avoid the need to

fight the current, although a number did take to the water to fight their way in to the estuary. Crossing the estuary was a leisurely affair that finished adjacent to the camp. The trip was the highlight of the whole weekend and introduced a large number of people to a beautiful bit of coastline.

Back in the camp, the activities turned to talks and informal discussions. The group split into two. The Women's Forum gathered in the Marquee, and those who were not women gathered outside in the sun to discuss trip plans and ideas. Despite the occasional eruption of laughter from the tent, and the associated thought of, "I wonder what they could be possibly discussing in there?"

The Trip Planning group came up with a number of good suggestions for trips. One of the strong messages was that there is a great deal of fresh water paddling around New Zealand that is frequently being overlooked. The suggestions were places like Taupo, Manapouri, Lakes around the Rotorua Area (Rotoma, Rotomahana, etc), Lake Waikaremoana, and the Waikato River to name a few. The Marlborough sounds also received a good word with a suggestion being trips from Havelock to Penzance. Stewart Island was also discussed with people recommending the bays around the Eastern side. Trips to Tropical Islands were also looked at with important points being the need to get permission from the locals before setting up camp.

The following is loosely a whole lot of guesswork as apparently the women were sworn to secrecy. Speculation suggests that the Women's Forum was as most men suspected, about the techniques required to continue looking stunning even while on extended Kayak trips. Some of the specific topics covered were; How to apply make-up while in breaking surf, Ensuring your hairstyle stays in place while executing a roll, and most importantly of all how to make sure your male trip companions are on their toes and doing their fair share of the camping chores. However this may not have been what they discussed at all.

Russell Davidson described the trials and tribulations of his trip to circumnavigate the South Island in a Sea Kayak. A special interest was shown in his stories regarding his encounters in Little Pigeon Bay on the Banks Peninsula, and the residents at that time. As well as his talk he had the Lightweight Penguin Kayak that he took on the trip with him. It was interesting to see the state that it was in after being rammed into a cliff in the Catlins, and then repeatedly pounded against the rocks by the waves until he was able to grab it and drag it up the cliff face. However it will need more than duct tape to fix it.

The evening's activities were a cooking competition, and a photo competition. Many excellent meals were created (some with very high octane ratings it would seem). The competition was stiff and despite attempts at bribes the judges awarded their prizes. We are not sure what their criteria was for judging as Eleanor and I were very surprised to win it doing our standard camping trip 'Pasta with Lots of Things in it' meal. The photo competition was interesting with some amazingly good shots particularly those that would fit the description of 'kayaking in spectacular scenery.'

With full tummies and light heads the numbers of people around slowly dwindled as everyone hit the sack. The night passed uneventfully to the accompanying dull rumble of Beverley's snoring.

The Sunday morning was the KASK AGM. People were elected, changes to the constitution were passed.

Keen to get out onto the water again, Eleanor and I were the first down to the beach where we attempted rolls, and getting in and out of the boats. Getting out was very easy. Getting back in was less so. We were shortly joined by Bevan Walker and a number of others who were also keen to do some drills with rescue type activities. We splashed around for quite a while and were taught a great number of excellent assisted and self rescue techniques. These proved to be very practical and quite easy so we were

well pleased with the session. We also looked at towing one another and the best way of securing the towee to the towed so as to allow the towee freedom to turn and manoeuvre without difficulty.

In camp, the group learned of the history of the Cable Bay area and the Waka. This was a fine finish for the weekend, and provided us with a wealth of information about the area and the original inhabitants.

Back in the minibus again we meandered back through the Queen Charlotte Sound to Picton to board the Lynx to Wellington.

On the whole it was a fantastic weekend away, with great paddling, great company, and plenty of new things to learn. Thanks to the Nelson people for organising such a good event in such a magnificent place.

**THE 'BUGGER!'
FILE**
from John Kirk-Anderson

A day paddle in Lyttelton Harbour ended with one person in hospital and unsure if he would paddle ever again.

Two friends departed Cass Bay in rental kayaks, having taken many safety precautions. They had checked the weather forecast and tides, they had left intentions with their partners, and they were carrying spare clothes, food, water, a first aid kit and a cell phone.

Paddler A had sea kayaked for about four years, off England's south coast. He was a lifesaver, open water diver and regional rep swimmer, but he hadn't paddled for a while.

Paddler B had paddled at high school, mainly white water, but had done some sea kayaking off the West Coast.

When they left the beach for Quail

Island the sea was flat calm, but they were aware of the likely changes.

The marine forecast for the Lyttelton Harbour area, issued at 0850, was as follows:

Situation: A high will move away to the east. A northwesterly airstream will develop over the South Island today, ahead of a weak trough in the Tasman Sea.

Forecast: Morning, Northeasterlies 15 knots, developing. Afternoon, NE 15. Swell, NE 1 metre.

After visiting Quail Island they passed Diamond Harbour, Purau, and Camp Bay, before stopping for lunch at Little Port Cooper. Having been on the water for about three hours they had food and hot drinks while considering their options. If the conditions were too rough they had planned to return to Cass Bay, but as they were both feeling comfortable they decided to cross to Godley Head and continue up the coast to South Shore. Using the cell phone they called home and left a message about their revised plans.

During the two kilometre crossing to Godley Head they were exposed to the beam seas and side winds that had been forecast. We still had the swell, but the wind seemed to have dropped off, as we didn't have any white caps, said Paddler B. It was a bit easier than I had expected.

On approaching the 100 metre high cliffs of Godley Head the sea became rougher as the swell was reflected. They got past this area and could see calmer water on the other side. Paddler B said he was going pretty fast, aiming for this calmer water, when he was hit by a wave on his right side. Unbalanced, he missed a support stroke and capsized. He tried to roll, but he hadn't done one for a long time, and was unsuccessful. Wet exiting, he saw that they were about 100 metres off shore and felt that if he could get back in his kayak he could get ashore and sort himself out.

Paddler A emptied the kayak over his own boat and then tried to get his friend back in. They attempted this

three times, but each time a wave knocked him off and back into the water. Becoming frustrated by the lack of success, Paddler B decided to swim ashore with his kayak. As soon as he started to swim he had difficulty, and stopped to remove his spray skirt. His buoyancy vest, which he had thought was too tight, rode up over his face and his jacket hood wrapped around his head. He swallowed lots of sea water and was having trouble breathing.

Paddler A got him to hold the stern of his boat and towed him ashore. He had been in the water for about a half hour. Paddler B said that if the kayak had been his own, and not a rental, he would probably have abandoned it and swum.

On reaching the rocky beach Paddler B was vomiting and cold. He put on warm clothes from those they carried, which included a full layer of polypro, hat, gloves, and fleece pants and top. He quickly warmed up, but was feeling weak and kept vomiting. He tried some food, but it wouldn't stay down.

They considered their options and decided to call for assistance on the cell phone, but the high cliffs blocked the signal and they were unsuccessful. A yacht was close inshore and they waved clothes in an attempt to raise the alarm. At this point another group of paddlers rounded the point, bound for Lyttelton.

This group, of three doubles, one single, and a surf ski, were training for the upcoming Coast to Coast race and had watched the weather and waited for the winds to get up as they didn't want a flat water paddle. On seeing two paddlers ashore, they returned the friendly waves. The waving from the beach became less friendly and more desperate. Telling the three doubles to stay clear but close, Stephen in a single, and Rob, on a surf ski, paddled closer.

One metre swells were breaking across the whole area, which was a beach of half metre boulders. Voice communication was difficult, but the message from the beach was clear, We need help. Rob left his ski with

Stephen and swam ashore to assess the situation.

On Robs return, Stephen paddled out to the yacht where the sailors had already radioed Canterbury Coastguard. They updated the message after learning of the paddlers condition and an eight metre inflatable rescue craft soon arrived from Lyttelton. After landing a crew woman they took off Paddler B and took him back to Lyttelton. A boat from the Sumner Lifeboat Institution collected the crew woman, Paddler A, and the kayaks and took them to Sumner.

Paddler B was admitted to hospital where his condition was treated as a near drowning. He had cold legs, but no hypothermia. He was kept in overnight, and the next day felt fine, except for sore hands. I was holding that kayak pretty tight, I guess.

He is unsure whether he will go paddling again, but if he does, improving his skill would be an important step. He will also improve his swimming. I wouldn't drown if tossed in the water, but I'm not really a swimmer. He also felt that travelling in a bigger group would have been wiser.

Paddler A also plans to refresh his own skills, and would learn more about other paddlers experience. He would also paddle in larger groups.

In conclusion: These paddlers had planned their journey with safety in mind, and carried a lot of equipment. This paid off when washed ashore at the foot of cliffs, in shadow and exposed to the weather. Their lack of skill and rescue practice was exposed in the moderate conditions.

John Kirk-Anderson

NZ REPORTS

Canterbury Sea Kayaker's Mini-forum Okains Bay from Sandy Ferguson

In Canterbury, we have an annual 'mini-forum' at a bay about an hour's drive from Christchurch. February generally has good weather and allowing for a suitable time between Waitangi Weekend and the KASK national forum plus a mid day high tide; all this set the date for the middle of the month. I'd had to edit the newsletter previous to the event and announced the date so I wasn't overwhelmed by offers to run it. Fortunately we have a very co-operative group of 'senior' (as in experience-wise) paddlers so finding people to give instruction wasn't an onerous task. With good weather, warm water, a sheltered lagoon and easy flat beach, I tend towards maximising time on the water with as few shore sessions as are needed. The one other variance from other 'sporting' events is that ours is free except for normal camping fees - what more incentive can one have for attending?

Friday night found us wandering amongst the pine trees looking for a suitable place to park the van before pouring a cup of coffee, finding the rest of the CSKNet group and sitting back to be entertained by Stephen on guitar - relaxing.

Saturday started with a few short shore sessions including "what birds might be spotted in the area" by Kerry-Jayne Wilson, group paddling ethics by John Kirk-Anderson, Stephen Counsell showed gadgets useful for cluttering decks or campsites, those things lots of people love to buy and play with. A quick, early lunch (lunch then launch) and into the lagoon to practice rescues, solo and assisted while others went off the beach to further their paddling techniques with instruction from Peter Sullivan. As the tide ran out most moved out to the beach and

the group out in the middle of the bay were seen watching Hector's dolphins. The surf was benign with the best (if it could be called that) at the outlet to the channel where the lagoon ran out. Again Stephen entertained during the evening - a singing kayak instructor.

Sunday was more of the same with emphasis on paddling and surf. It was commented to me by one of the instructors that maybe he'd got it wrong and repeated lessons from the previous day - no, any repeats were gratefully received by those wishing to reinforce their previous sessions.

Those who didn't want instruction headed away for the day along the coast for a trip lead by Rod Banks while most of those who stayed in the bay, finished the day with a short trip out to the heads to look at the big cave and find some dolphins.

Some people only come for a day so a head count was arbitrary, however with at least 3 dozen paddlers present plus families, it was as usual, well attended.

Sandy Ferguson
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**NEW ZEALAND
TRIP REPORT
38 DAYS
Nelson to the Catlins.
by Russell Davidson.**

6:00 a.m Dec 11 2000, Tahunanui Beach, Nelson. Bevan Walker and myself set off from the beach. The plan: Bevan would paddle with me to Goat Island where we would part. Bevan would then paddle to Okiwi Bay and I would continue on my solo unassisted paddle of the South Island of New Zealand. Holy Cow. What a way to go! In the first week I learnt a mountain is climbed one step at a time, life is lived one day at a time and the South Island is circumnavigated one paddle stroke at a time.... bay to bay.... point to point... day to day. I had seventy days off work and my objective was to paddle as much of the coastline as possible.

On the day we left there was a 1.5 to 2 metre swell with whitecaps created by a 17 knot wind gusting to over 20 knots. The majority of the weather I was to experience on the trip was to be much like this first day. To counter the effects of the wind I would be on the water around 6 am. The wind would show its head any time after 11 am. That's when I would land and eat and rest. Maybe later in the day I would be able to paddle some more. Sometimes I was able to, sometimes not. 50 km a day was my required paddle rate to get around the island in the 70 days. That was allowing 20 days for being storm bound.

I paddled 22 km the first day. I was behind the eight ball already. Oh well, since when did that change anything. The weather wasn't always against me. I had a few good days:

Pepin Island to Te Akaroa 64 km
Te Akaroa to Tory Channel 56 km
Flaxborne River to Rakautara 62 km
Rakautara to Clavery 55 km
Laverisk Bay to Just South of Birdlings flat 55 km
Kakanui to Karitane 60 km

Whatever problems I was having on the East Coast I was still better off than Puysegur Point, Milford and Foveaux Strait. I was away for 38 days. I listened to the VHF every day and out of the 38 days there were only 9 days where Puysegur, Milford, or Foveaux didn't either have a gale force or storm force warning in place. Close your eyes and picture this. Crystals Beach 5:30 am. No wind. Calm Sea. 0.5 metre swell. Behind you, fair weather cumulus clouds. In front of you, a sandy beach with the sun half way up on the horizon, its warm. Now, you're listening to the VHF and it says storm warning in force for Puysegur Point, 60 knot winds, 5 metre SW swell, high seas. About then is when I choked on my weetbix and museli mix and thought "bloody hell..... I'm going there."

Living off the sea is the way to go. I caught the odd crayfish and Kahawai and Pauas are everywhere. One goal I had was to get Pauas while still in the kayak. I had one promising time, but

alas the pauas were out of the water so I had to get out of the kayak to get them.

My trip was cut short to 38 days instead of the intended 70 days at a cliff face called Wallace head. It is part of a cliff system that runs 8kms from Chaslands Mistake to just North of Long Beach in the Catlins, Southland. The day started later than most. I awoke at 6.30 so had missed the 5.30 maritime radio weather report. The night before I was unable to pick up reception. The sea was smooth with a 5 km/h wind on the horizon, a little bit of stratus cloud. Good paddling conditions. I packed up camp. I was all ready to go, but I waited on the beach for the 7.30 call. Well, I didn't receive it. Too bad, it still looked good. The only place on the island I haven't had reception is here in the Catlins. Off I went.

I left the beach at the base of Chaslands Mistake, and paddled past Kina Kina Island on my left. Out to the Head of Chaslands up on the Headland you can see the remains of a Maori fortified pa, one of many in the area. I came around the Headland with a nice 1 metre swell from the north pushing me. The sky hadn't changed too much, the wind had picked up a little and I was feeling good. "There goes a cave, a big one. Well I had best go have a lookie loo." When I came out of the cave conditions had changed, still well within what I was used to. I paddled along keeping an ever watchful eye on the sky and sea for changing conditions and the land for landing spots. I saw only one possible landing spot just before Wallace Head, but there wasn't shelter from the swell I had coming from the North. The conditions weren't too bad anyway, so around Wallace Head I went. I paddled a third of the way around the head. Over on the horizon the sky was a dark blue. "A front is coming. That's no problem. I've seen it before. It will take 30 to 40 minutes to reach me and I have about 20 minutes paddling to reach the beach." Good. Oh no. Bad. This is how I remember it. The conditions changed so fast that I'm sure it took only 3 to 4 minutes to turn from a 1 + metre NE swell with

15 km/h gusting winds to four metre waves . And the wind, well my guess at the time was 50 km/h from the south. But I've changed my mind since then to 70 km/h winds. The Otago Daily Times reported that at its peak later that day, the winds were gusting to 170 km/h.

I couldn't run with the wind as it would have piled me straight into Wallace Head, a 28 metre high headland. I had to turn and paddle straight into the waves, not easy pushing the paddle against that wind. Going into the waves wasn't too bad but the wind whipping up the spray and driving it hard into my face made it hard to see. There I was; fit, strong and pumping into the wind and waves, constantly checking my position..... I was going backwards at a great rate of knots. I was getting closer to the cliff. "Now what. Try and paddle to that landing spot around the corner. Right. Wham. I'm over. Under the water. Man its calm and quiet under here. Roll boy, roll. Into position and up I come."

When I came up, the kayak had done a 180. Not uncommon in surf waves. "Now I'm surfing toward the cliff. Not good. Wham. Over again. No problem. I've got my roll back. Up I come, see the cliff and wham, over again. Well, when this wave recedes I'm going to be at the base of the cliff... on the rocks in the kayak. Oh no I'm not. It's time to get out and take my chances in the water."

After 20 minutes being washed into the cliff and sucked back out again I was washed into an eddy further along the cliff face. I climbed onto the rocks. My legs were bleeding, but I had no broken bones.

I watched the kayak getting pumelled by waves against the cliff, thinking if that was anything other than a plastic boat , it would be at the bottom of the ocean by now. I was feeling great. I was pumped. I was caught out in that sea. The boat wasn't seaworthy any more, I was bleeding, I was ALIVE! SO WHAT!!!! The big deal was that I ROLLED IN THOSE CONDITIONS! I felt good.

Max Grant of Qkayaks was so good in giving me another liteweight Penguin to replace Spirit of the Dance. I plan to do some more paddling in early May to get around to Te Waewae Bay. Then, I'll be ready to hit Fiordland at a later date.

Russell Davidson

OVERSEAS TRIP REPORTS

FIRST (we reckon) KAYAK CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE ISLE de PINES NEW CALEDONIA by SUE WARE

Arms are cranking - not hard enough though - head bent forward against the 40 knot trade wind - straining to get over the reef break, as we come out of the lagoon, into the open sea and beyond the breakers before they eat me for lunch and then spit me out. The boys are way ahead in their light glass boats, this old puffin (aka The Bus) - if we make it back-is going to be traded in. I promise, before my Ms Atlas arms get any bigger. Thought this was meant to be tropical paradise paddling?

New Caledonia/Kanaky - sounded like a great place to go to get away from work and the gloom of early winter in Queenstown. Hitchhiked a cargo ship from Auckland that looped the Pacific every 6 weeks. "We can drop you on Fiji, New Caledonia, Wallis or Fortuna. Which will it be?" Ever tried to find out how the kayaking would be in Wallis or Fortuna? Whether there is anyone kayaking in those parts to know if it's any good? Damned hard to find out, so New Caledonia it is. At least there are sandy beaches there - I saw the photos in the glossy mags in the New Caledonian consulate in my 2hrs of research before the ship left Auckland- and plenty of fish. Am taking fishing gear and lots of rice as my budget (what budget) doesn't stretch to food. And a tent. Hope women on their own do OK up there.

Email a friend of a friend living there before I leave, asking about the kayaking, and don't hear back, Que sera.

"Hey Sue, there's some guy on the dock come to pick you up!" I drag myself out of my bunk, realise I don't have to be seasick any more and peer over the side to see I missed us coming into Noumea and there is a landcruiser with a large roofrack looking like it needs a kayak to make itself at home there.

Jean-Francis got my email and with excellent initiative figured out the ships arrival and had a plan or two for an adventure. He loaded our gear on a freighter and three of us headed off to Isle de Pines - the other paddler had done 2 trips paddling from the Isle de Pines back to the main island - 70kms in the open ocean solo! Idle thoughts of being left far behind these triathlete-types (a breed that I definitely ain't) drifted round the brain....

Isle de Pines is 70 kms southeast of New Caledonia, 18kms long and 14kms wide, making the trip around the island.....120kms? There were no kayakers in New Caledonia, just a few triathletes who paddled for competition.

The freighter docked at Kuto early morning after a(nother) lumpy ride, the day dawning gorgeous, tropical vistas greeting the eyes. Bummer, paradise again. We load boats and head off out of the bay, around the peninsular with me wondering if the local sharks take nicely to foreign objects in their home territory.

The paddling is something to dream of, clean, crystal blue water, sun, sweaty bottom half growing tropical diseases under a waterproof deck, coral that makes for infected limbs very quickly, fish that you can't eat cos it may have ciguterra (aka La Gracht- The Itch cos it makes your body itch) - and potentially kill. Should have left the fishing gear at home.

We settle into the rhythm of paddling, the two guys cruising in their light glass boats and me bringing up the

rear in the Bus. They are French men and polite though, so I am gracefully waited for while never having it pointed out to me that I am tres slow. We paddle past tropical forests, sandy beaches, over coral, seeing no one. Some farming areas can be seen, but not too much sign of life until we stop to look at some old pirogues lying on the beach at Kurenya. I have a love affair going with old traditional boats, so seeing these ancient vessels is a treat.

Pirogues sail past us as we get near to Kotomo Island. The Raid Gouilloise race has been here a few years earlier and they commissioned around 40 pirogues to be built for the race. Until this time, building them had been a dying tradition. So now they are seen again, used for tourism and sail majestically around the bays.

We scoot between Kotomo Island and Isle de Pines, a narrow channel at high tide and into Baia D'Upi. McGiver raises his sail for the paddle across the bay. We paddle around small coral islands with undercut cliffs, rising straight up from the water 15m. Jean Francis cranks up his triathlete arms, and I tootle along, again contemplating the shark option. They are just getting out of ear range when a huge fin starts wobbling around me... "ARRETE ARRETTE ARRETTE" I yell, hoping that this is the word for STOP, wait for me, help I'm being eyed up by an extremely large shark" they don't recognise this french word, so the adrenaline kicks in and I catch them up. Turns out it was a large sunfish according to local knowledge.

Looking out to sea the tradewinds are strong, so we take the paddle across the Baia D'Upi and portage option, so as to miss going around Presqu'ile D'Oro peninsular. This would have meant going over the protecting reef and into the open sea - big swells and winds are happening.

The portage takes us through forest to a lagoon on the east side of the island, We scoot along using our hands and then are back paddling over corals, golden sands, past small islands to camp on Ile Konubutr.

McGiver (cos my kiwi tongue couldn't get around his french name, and he has every little gadget and thingimy on his boat, though all homemade) pulled out dinner - a tin of savoury baby food for 1st course and then another sweet tin of baby food for dessert. Thought the french were gastronomical genius's?

The day dawned windy - 30 knots again - as we set off over the reef, sussing out where the wave break was as small as possible, and then up the north east side in the open sea. The long ocean swell with it's breaking tops have me shaking in my boots, the boys reckoned they could see my sewing machine legs going from the way The Bus was wobbling.

At Pointe de Tuure we crossed the bar - the breaking waves revved up The Bus's wobble but she managed to keep me upright and save me from being dragged across the coral face first, and into the Lagoon again. Time to relax and cruise.

Numerous islands dot the lagoon, all forested and surrounded by coral. We spend time here walking the beaches, paddling through arches in the coral, looking at weird and wonderful coral formations. A yacht anchors near us, so we paddle out from our camp at Caanawa Island to see if we can get fresh water from it. The guy on board has long dreadlocks, has not spoken for 12 years and lives aboard his yacht.

New Caledonia consists of three very different groups of inhabitants - the indigenous Kanaks, the Caldosh - generally farmers descended from french colonists and French expatriots - mostly government workers, teachers, nurses, admin staff who are here for a few years from France. They are all very different and, as a generalisation, don't exactly see eye to eye. Also it is very expensive to live there, so you need to be paid the astronomical wages that the expats receive to be able to afford to live here, or have land and be pretty self-sufficient/subsistent to survive. So the dreadlocked hippy was very unusual - being none of these categories.

He paddles around on an ancient windsurf board as his dinghy to get to and fro, garbed only in a painted sarong. I tried to bribe him by stealing his rolling tobacco to let me take his photo, but there was no way. The best conversations I had whilst in New Caledonia were with him (not hard given I don't speak French), discussing philosophy framed by the vibrant sunset - all in sign language.

A paddle that dreams are made of, down the west side. We stop at Kooje - a resort - for water. We're smelly and saltswept by now, but are served ice cold beers at the bar with out any sideways glances, before paddling further down the beach for the night stop. McGiver is on the baby food again.

Another gorgeous day dawns and we continue the paddle down the west side. Weaving through small islands, over corals, past palm trees till we get to the bit that says "ditch The Bus and get yourself a decent boat, girl". We head out over the reef again into the open ocean. The wind is up, we're paddling into it at 40 knots, the waves are breaking over the reef. We get through the break, the boys cruising nicely and I'm paddling as hard as these large shoulders can go.... and making no headway... getting pushed back onto the reef break... step it up as much as I can...adrenaline kicks in and The Bus is just moving forward....only 500m and we're out of the lee shore problem...seems to take eternity but I get there and it's a relaxed paddle the last km to Kuto.

Showers and a(nother) gorgeous sunset are waiting and I finally get to eat fish that wont poison me at the local cafe. I bought all my fishing gear so I could catch something to eat to accompany the bags of rice I have along. Did finally get to use it to catch dinner for the ships crew at Wallis and Fortuna on the way back to NZ, and then donate it to the Fijian cook so he could cook something other than taro and cassava for the crews dinners Sue Ware.

ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

Newsletter No.89 carried a background to the expedition team members(p.7).

The following article by John Henzell was first published in 'The Press, Christchurch, and is reproduced with kind permission.

24 March 2001

Three New Zealand kayakers battled collapsing ice cliffs, freezing temperatures, and a fondness for swimming to complete a record-making expedition off the coast of Antarctica.

JOHN HENZELL reports.

When it comes to juxtapositions, they don't come much more striking than the one Graham Charles and his two kayaking companions had at the end of their record-breaking Antarctic expedition.

For a month Charles, Mark Jones, and Marcus Waters went where no kayakers had gone before: an 800km journey along the Antarctic Peninsula culminating in a 90km effort paddling through the night, threading through a maze of ice floes in conditions so cold ice began to form on their kayaks and clothing.

Soon after, they were collected by a luxury cruise ship and found themselves feted as heroes by the millionaire Americans on board for becoming the first kayakers to cross the southern polar circle.

"We were major celebrities! We were ushered aboard, went down to the dinner part of the boat, and all these wealthy people gave us a standing ovation," Charles says with a grin. Even better for a team which had been 'smelling like penguins' for a month, the ship offered the delectable option of hot showers.

The surreal nature of the cruise ship episode belied what was a very serious undertaking, mitigated by the trio's scrupulous preparation, fastidious se-

lection of equipment, and vast outdoors experience.

Beginning the trip at the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula involved jumping in the deep end, with "long, long distances" between sites to land and camp, and persistent heavy rain from which they never had the chance to dry out.

Those hazards were put in perspective soon after by the spectacular collapse of an ice cliff, which plunged thousands of cubic metres of ice into the sea near where Charles, Jones, and Waters had camped for the night. They were on the beach at the time and captured the spectacle on video, for use in a documentary which award-winning Queenstown film-maker James Heyward will make about the expedition.

"We sat there at the water's edge checking it out and then there was a sudden silence - from us - and we had about 20 seconds before we decided that standing where we were wasn't a very bright idea and perhaps we should go," he says.

Running from the approaching tidal wave was made trickier by the knee-deep snow, but added incentive was provided by the scale of the wave, which easily washed over a three-metre berm between the beach and their camp, but luckily stopped short of their tent. What could have been a trip-ending disaster became instead an amusing tale to tell afterwards.

The team had an easier time in the middle part of the peninsula, where shorter distances between campsites and straightforward landings made it 'just a great holiday, although it didn't get much above three or four degrees on a good day,' Charles says.

On one of those balmy, just-above-freezing days, the trio confirmed what many had already suspected about their sense of masochism. They went for a swim. Charles, a veteran of similar dips at Scott Base, said it was a quick affair because immersion resulted in an instant major headache, but they repeated the experience again later in the trip.

That "holiday" section ended at the Ukraine's Vernadsky base, where they were plied with home-made vodka and other post-Soviet hospitality, then headed off into a world a lot more hostile than anything they had encountered to that point.

"The last section was a bit of an unknown (in terms of) what we'd find. It was remote, temperatures were cooling off, and we had no communication with anything because ships don't usually go down that far.

"Once we left the Ukrainian base, that was the last contact. Then there were some really big bay crossings, where we really exposed ourselves to katabatic winds."

Katabatic winds freezing gales which come off the Antarctic Plateau, were capable of blowing the trio far out to sea. They are impossible to paddle into, and have a fearsome reputation that is well justified. As Charles puts it, "If something blew up, you knew you were toast". "It was like a little mouse creeping past a slumbering giant."

In the end, they were fortunate that this summer had relatively few katabatic winds, and those did not coincide with their bay crossings. The trip ended with a massive effort once they heard that the cruise ship could give them a lift back to their support yacht, the Tooluka. Having already had a 10km paddle that day, the trio set off just after 10pm to get to the rendezvous point at Adelaide Island.

"We paddled for an hour and then it got dark, and then got light again at 4am. It was a pretty intimidating place in the dark, and you keep crashing into ice. We had to backtrack four times around some big areas of brash ice, where icebergs are breaking up," he says.

"It was classic polar conditions. We paddled all night and did 90km, which was a record for me. We were hoping to do 100km but a katabatic wind popped up and we had to run with it." The adventure did not end once on board the cruise ship, notwithstand-

HUMOUR

ing their celebrity status. Back on the Tooluka, they suffered first a sail failure, then an engine failure as they made their way back to Chile. They were becalmed near Cape Horn, one of the world's most reliably windy locations ran aground in the Beagle Channel, were temporarily halted by Chilean authorities, and finally limped into Ushuaia hours before their flight left.

Less than two days later, they were back in New Zealand, trying to fight feelings that the trip had been just a dream.

Kayaks for Sale

(The Press' 2 April 2001)
Looking for a cheap kayak? Christchurch kayaker Graham Charles has three for sale, all purpose built and well proven. There is, however, one small catch - they're in Ushuaia, the southernmost city of South America. Charles and two North Island companions used the kevlar reinforced Polar Bear kayaks to complete a record setting 800km trip along the Antarctic Peninsula, then returned to South America and flew home. Arriving home in civilization they discovered the shipping company which was to freight the kayaks back to New Zealand had gone bust. As Charles explains on his website, www.adventurephilosophy.com, "At this moment the Polar Bears are sitting on a beach front in Ushuaia. Anyone want to buy one?"

Letter from my Aunt

Out of the blue, I had a letter from my Aunt in Brisbane, asking, "If I had seen my mate Graham?" Four photographs of what she termed 'the dramatic rescue' showed the kayaks being picked up by two inflatables from luxury cruise ship, and then tucking into real food on the ship. The ship's captain offered a bottle of French champagne for the first passenger who sighted the kayakers. As I understand the situation, the support yacht was not able to pick up the paddlers who radioed a request for a pick-up. The ship then dropped the paddlers at Palmer Base where they were reunited with the support yacht.

BAD TASTE

The scene is a dense, dark jungle in deepest Africa. Two tigers are stalking through the brush alongside a broad river bank, when the one at the rear reaches out with his tongue and licks the posterior of the tiger in front. The startled tiger turns around and says, "Hey! Cut it out, alright!"

The rear tiger says, "sorry," and they continue. After about another five minutes, the rear tiger again reaches out with his tongue and licks the posterior of the tiger in front. The front tiger turns around and cuffs the rear tiger and says, "I said stop it!"

The rear tiger says, "sorry," and they continue. After about another five minutes, the rear tiger once more licks the posterior of the tiger in front. The front tiger turns around and growls at the rear tiger, "What is it with you, anyway?" The rear tiger replies, "Well, I just ate a jet skier and I'm trying to get the taste out of my mouth!"

THE PLANE CRASH

Ireland's worst air disaster occurred today when a small 2-seater Cessna plane crashed into a cemetery this afternoon in central Ireland. Irish search and rescue workers have recovered 826 bodies so far and expect that number to climb as digging continues into the night.

WEATHER FORECASTING

The Indians asked their Chief in autumn if the winter was going to be cold or not. Not really knowing the answer, the chief replied that the winter was going to be cold, and the members of the village were to collect wood so as to be prepared for a long cold winter. Being a wise, astute leader, he then went to the village phone booth and called the National Weather Service. He asked, "Will this winter be cold?" The long range weather forecaster responded, "This winter will be quite cold indeed."

So the Chief went back to speed up his people to collect even more wood for winter warmth. A week later he called the National Weather Service again, "Is it going to be a very cold winter?"

"Yes", the man replied, "it's going to be a very cold winter." So the Chief goes back to his people and ordered them to go and find every scrap of wood they could find.

Two weeks later he called the National Weather Service again "Are you absolutely sure the winter is going to be very cold?"

"Absolutely, we made a study, " the weather man replied. "The Indians are collecting wood like crazy!"

UNBEARABLE

Two paddlers were camping in Prince William Sound, Alaska, when a big, hungry looking brown bear began stalking the camp site. One paddler dashed to his tent and put his running shoes on in a great hurry. The second paddler queried, "Don't you know you can't outrun a brown bear?" The first paddler replied, "I don't have to outrun the bear. I just have to outrun you!"

EUROENGLISH

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the EU rather than German, which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a 5-year phase-in plan that would be known as "EuroEnglish."

In the first year, "s" will replace the soft "c". Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy.

The hard "c" will be dropped in favor of the "k." This should klear up konfusion and keyboards can have one less letter. There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome "ph" will be replased with the "f." This will make words like "fotograf" 20% shorter.

In the 3rd year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling can be expected to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters, which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the

horible mess of the silent “e”s in the language is disgraceful and they should go away. By the 4th year, people will be receptive to steps such as replacing “th” with “z” and “w” with “v”. During the fifth year, the unnecessary “o” can be dropped from words containing “ou” and similar changes and of course be applied to other combinations of letters. After this fifth year, we will have a reliable sensible written style. There will be no more troubles or difficulties and everyone will find it easy to understand each other. ZE DREM VIL FINALI KUM TRU!!!! And then we will take over the world!!!!

REPORT FROM AUCKLAND

by Vincent Maire

Book Update

A number of people have been asking what is happening to the book I am writing on sea kayak destinations in New Zealand. The situation is as follows.

1. It is now two books, a North Island edition and a South Island edition.
2. The North Island edition is almost complete. The target is 45,000 words and I have passed the 30,000 mark and am doing research on areas that I have not previously visited.
3. I have to get the completed manuscript to the publisher by May 31st in order for them to meet a pre-Christmas publication date.

Photographs are needed for the North Island book. If you have some great pics that you would like to see published in a book, please get in touch with me. They have to be action shots or panoramic shots. All must include kayakers and sea kayakers. They must be in colour. Naturally, we also need a really fabulous pic for the front cover. All pics must be of North Island destinations that are covered in the book. If you can help, please get in touch with me.

Vincent Maire

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Lake Taupo Trip Report.

The weather couldn't have been better. The lake was blue and calm and

the Mts Ruapehu, Ngarahoe and Tongariro stood out with a light dusting of snow to add to the colour.

Seven of us joined Bill Hayes and Nancy Reiser to explore the north-western coast of the lake. Like myself, Lindsay and Ryan traveled down to Kinloch on Friday. I arrived at Nancy's place around 5pm and along with Bill, we decided to have dinner at a local restaurant. On the menu was Schnapper Cajun with fried banana. A great meal however I was perplexed to find at the end of the meal, both Nancy and Bill had a banana skin on their plates. Horror of horrors, I had eaten mine. "Don't worry," said Nancy, "it is good roughage!" She wasn't kidding. I felt the effects of the fried banana skin being internally processed all weekend.

On Saturday morning we were joined by Wayne, Pam, Bernie and Ken. By 10am the party was on the water and heading west. Our goal was Boat Harbour for lunch but rather than take a direct route, we dawdled beside forest-covered cliffs and mooched around rocky headlands.

Bill and Nancy know the area well so we had a 'Cooks Tour' of points of interest. There are unlimited camping spots along this coast of Lake Taupo. A few are bona fide sites and managed by DoC or the regional council. Most however, are small, bush-fringed beaches that would provide idyllic stop-over points for any expeditioners.

We made Boat Harbour in time for lunch. This is a delightful horseshoe shaped bay with trees right down to the beach. Bell birds called to each other from across the narrow entrance to the harbour. Behind the trees are a number of well-used camp-sites and there are two longdrops at each end of the bay. Fizz-boats were also making use of Boat Harbour for a lunch break.

The final leg of the day took us past sheer cliffs and two waterfalls tumbling out of the bush into the lake. The occasional trout broke the calm waters with a splash and apart from the occasional fishing boat we had the lake to ourselves.

We arrived at Waihaha at 3pm. A river of the same name enters Lake Taupo at a point that (like much of the part of the lake) is under Māori ownership. The owners operate a private campsite which is adjacent to their marae. The camping area is fringed with recently planted kowhai and flax and we discovered an old apple tree abundantly laden with small, slightly tart fruit.

The marae was under the care of an elderly caretaker who showed us around and told of ambitious plans to develop the site. It is already possible to book a stay at the marae facilities however, by next summer groups of more than 30 will be able to stay and need only bring sleeping bags and food – everything else is supplied.

Apart from midges and the odd mozzie our stay there was a delight. During the evening we looked skywards and wondered at the red hue that brushed the heavens. It was the Southern Lights. If only we had known we were seeing such a rare phenomenon it would have made the experience that much sweeter.

Next morning Nancy and Bill advised that we paddle up the Waihaha River to a waterfall. The river is relatively uncluttered with debris and the lead kayakers saw quite a few trout. It took us an hour to paddle upstream and about five minutes from our destination we heard the falls.

The Waihaha Falls tumble down some 20 or so metres into a wide and shallow lagoon that is ringed by a lovely pumice beach. We stopped there for a while for a snack-attack and took some photographs before heading back to camp.

After packing up we made a direct crossing to Boat Harbour for lunch then back to Kinloch, again by a direct route.

Many thanks to Nancy and Bill for sharing their favourite sea kayaking destination and this trip can be considered a reccie for future adventures.
Vincent Maire

COULD CLUBS AND THEIR MEMBERS BE LIABLE FOR KAYAKING ACTIVITIES?

by Ken France, Christchurch lawyer

Reprinted, with permission, from the summer 2000 issue of 'New Zealand Canoeing.'

This is a general summary of some of the issues involved. The possibility of civil claims for damages in New Zealand is developing all the time and will always depend on the specific situation. A good set of sensible and safe rules of operation, and a willingness to enforce them will go a long way to protecting clubs and their members.

It is important to bear in mind the distinction between a club that is incorporated society which is a legal entity in its own right and a club that is unincorporated. An incorporated society can be sued in its own name. A club that is unincorporated is generally just a group of people who can individually be liable for the activities of the club. For that reason incorporation is an important and sensible step for any organised club to take.

In some circumstances the actions of an individual who is representing a club can be attributed to the club. Claims are therefore possible against a club for actions of its representatives.

The individual can also have a claim made against him or her for their own actions. If the individual expects the club to cover their own potential personal liability, generally agreements need to be reached in advance. That is something that can be dealt with in the Club's rules.

The question of whether a person is actually acting on behalf of a club at the time that a claim arises can be difficult. Clear rules about how club members are to behave when doing activities associated with the club can help. Clubs are entitled to require members to abide by their rules so long as the requirements are legal. The rules can set out what happens if they are broken. For example the club's rules can state that unless nec-

essary safety equipment is used, the member cannot use club facilities or equipment. Clubs can lawfully exclude participants from club activities if they don't follow the club's safety rules. A club's rules can also provide that in extreme situations members can be expelled from the club.

Once a club has rules, the key to their usefulness is enforcing them. This is often the hardest part. From time to time it may require members to confront problems, but if the rules aren't enforced there is no point in having them.

Exemplary Damages Claims

Possibilities do exist for civil damages claims to be brought against individuals and clubs for accidents on club trips or instruction courses. In New Zealand civil claims for exemplary damages is a developing area. These claims are usually brought by a person (or a representative of that person) who has been injured or killed because of the conduct of someone who owed them a legal duty of care. A club instructor, particularly a paid instructor, could owe a duty of this type. Whether a duty of care is owed is a matter that has to be assessed in each individual situation. All the circumstances will be taken into account.

Even if a duty of care is owed, exemplary damages claims in New Zealand are only available if a claim has come about because a person's conduct was so bad that it amounted to an outrageous and flagrant disregard for the claimant's safety, which merited condemnation and punishment.

An exemplary damages claim is essentially a signal from the Courts of society's disapproval of the conduct that is being complained about. Because of that, exemplary damages claims will be rare. That doesn't mean that they never occur. They will usually be associated with accidents involving serious injury or death where a chain of bad decisions were made by

the people who should have been in control of the situation. Claims of this sort have been brought in recent years against commercial rafting operators. When these cases are examined in hindsight, it is often said that if detailed safety rules had been put in place and followed, then the accident may not have occurred. That is another reason for developing good club rules.

It may be possible for clubs to insure themselves, and their members, against these sorts of claims. If a claim is brought, it will almost inevitably involve expensive legal fees, and can lead to significant damages. Clubs should consider talking to insurance brokers about policies that might be available to cover this risk.

Exclusion clauses

A clear exclusion clause for participants on organised club events may also help in limiting the possibility of a civil claim. Exclusion clauses are not fail-safe and need to be very carefully worded. They might not cover conduct that is so poor that it attracts an exemplary damages award, nor will they cover conduct that results in criminal prosecution. They need to be very specific in excluding liability for negligent conduct as well as any potential contractual claims. Often clubs feel that appropriately worded exclusion clauses are so daunting that they might scare participants away from trips. That is a balancing exercise, which needs to be considered along with the potential risks in not having such a clause. It may also be a matter that a potential insurer wants to take into account in setting premiums.

Overall, a good set of enforceable safety rules, which are actively promoted and enforced, will go a long way to avoiding catastrophes in the first place. If a serious accident does occur, civil claims are possible. Insurance is potentially available to clubs to protect the club and their members from those claims. The scope for claims to be brought is increasing and

will always depend on the exact circumstances.

It is worth clubs thinking seriously about their potential liability and making sure that they are informed about the risks involved and ways of limiting them so that the real business of paddling can be gotten on with.

This article is designed to be food for thought. It is not legal advice and if clubs or individuals are interested in taking the matters raised further, they should take specific advice of their own.

Ken France

HISTORY

The Audacious Alaskan Adventures of Kayak Dundee*

* alias Paul Caffyn

This article describes my 4,700 mile tidewater kayak circumnavigation of the coast of Alaska, from Prince Rupert in British Columbia to Inuvik in the North West Territories. My 1989 attempt to kayak around the Alaskan coastline was brought to a premature halt at Elfin Cove after only 420 miles by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. In May 1990 I resumed kayaking from Elfin Cove and knocked up 2,760 miles in 89 days to reach the old goldrush town of Nome. In early June 1991, I set off from Nome and spent the next 73 days dodging ice floes to finally complete the tidewater circumnavigation at Inuvik in Canada.

The Nickname

It was at Unavikshak Island, near Chignik on the south coast of the Alaska Peninsula, that I ended up with the nickname Kayak Dundee. I was 37 days and 1,056 miles into the second season of this tidewater circumnavigation of Alaska's coastline. The morning had gone well, apart from a brief challenge from a pair of brown bears, a sow and her yearling, about who had the right to have lunch on the only beach on an offshore island, and I was looking forward to reaching Chignik where my next food parcel was waiting at the Post Office.

It was my 17th day out of Seward where I'd last stocked up on food. Since I'd planned only 15 paddling days to cover the 500 miles to Chignik, my food now consisted of a couple of dehi meals, a few dry biscuits and barely a spoonful each of sugar and powdered milk. To say that I was lean and mean is a mild understatement.

Off the bold 2,300 foot high headland of Cape Kumlik, I'd jogged into the lee of a small island, to escape from a freshening north-easterly wind. Astern, the sky was ominously black, with all the signs of a full blown north-east gale within an hour or two. The small island, bare-topped and surrounded by low cliffs, offered no hope of a landing so I turned my gaze to the 460 foot high lump of Unavikshak Island, 12 miles to the south-west. There at least the map showed a jutting headland which would offer lee protection from a heavy north-east sea.

I kicked out from the lee of the island onto a eight to ten foot high south-east roll, on top of which the freshening north-easterly was building a breaking chop. During the first hour as the wind lifted from 20 to 25 knots, the deep draft over stern rudder kept me on course for the island. I was almost enjoying the situation with several exhilarating surfing rides, however two hours of paddling remained to the lee of the island.

The second hour was absolutely diabolical. The wind carried on lifting to between 30 and 35 knots sustained. I only looked back once - the dark inky blue sea was splattered white with a myriad of toppling waves. Row upon row of steep capping waves, with stinging spray flying off their crests, were tearing towards me. It was far better just to look over the bow, and hold my wildly bobbing course for the island. A momentary lapse in concentration almost led to a capsize when a ten foot high toppler almost dragged me under as it broke over the cockpit. A frantic, reflex slap support pulled me upright. It was desperate stuff.

When the heavens opened and heavy rain poured down, I fully expected the wind to ease and the chop to die with

the impact of the rain. But it didn't. Ever so slowly I closed on the island, and slowly lost the motion of the swell when I surfed onto the inshore beds of rudder tangling kelp. Rounding the northern tip of the island, a flat-topped headland above a line of sheer 50 foot high cliffs, I sighed with relief and sped in front of the wind onto a flat sea, and began searching shore for a sheltered landing. Although I was now in the lee of the island, the wind was hammering across the flat sea in bullet like gusts and driving williwaws of swirling spray. At least I could see and hear them coming and brace accordingly. I kept looking for a cave or overhanging cliff where I could escape out of the wind and rain.

The best shelter I could find was a towering cliff which overhung the boulder beach at its base by a good three feet. Landing through a low dumping surf onto a steep cobble beach, I dragged the kevlar Nordkapp onto the narrow band of dry cobbles and, with cold fingers, fumbled off the aft hatch cover. I needed a hot brew of tea in a hurry.

As I slurped a steaming bowl of tea, I noticed a salmon purse seiner emerge from the murk to drop anchor 400 yards upwind from me. My grumbling stomach was still hoping to make Chignik by nightfall, however the wind and rain showed no sign of easing. Since I hadn't seen a soul, not a plane or boat, for the past eight days, I decided to paddle out and ask for the latest forecast and/or synoptic situation. If I looked hungry enough, I might even be able to scrounge a little food.

Fighting the bullet-like gusts of wind and williwaws - I could not paddle when they hit but could only adopt a low profile and leave the paddle blade on the sea for support - I plugged slowly across a broad belt of kelp beds towards the seiner. I was pleased that the skipper and crew could not see my approach through the steamed up windows of the seiner's wheelhouse, for I had to make two attempts to close on its stern. The wind gusts were so strong. I had to paddle upwind of *Ms Valerie's* bow and then drift back during one of the gusts.

Don the cook helped me drag the kayak onto the aft deck, then we adjourned below into a different world where it was warm and dry. My nose detected the aromatic smells of a roast dinner. The seiner had a complement of skipper, three deckhands and cook. The afternoon's entertainment was watching either a cops and robbers video or the needle of the anemometer. I didn't feel so bad about the difficulty I experienced in closing on the seiner for the anemometer needle did not drop below 40 miles per hour, and often swung up to 50 and even 60mph during the stronger boat rolling gusts.

One of the deckies, after listening to my accent and story of how I could not get the book on the round Australia kayak trip published said: "You'll have to change the title to 'The Adventures of Kayak Dundee'. It'll be a best seller." The original film hit of 'Crocodile Dundee' and its sequel were both popular video films on the Alaskan fishing boats. The nickname stuck and followed me around for the rest of the summer.

The Challenge

It wasn't long after my 1985 kayak circumnavigation of Japan that I began researching and planning a tide-water circumnavigation of Alaska. The trouble with being addicted to sea kayaking is that the immediate period following the conclusion of a successful trip is not one of elation and satisfaction, as you might expect, but is more akin to post natal depression. Once that elusive goal has been attained, there is nothing really to strive for. I find the best way to cope with post-trip blues is to pull out the world atlas and begin planning another outrageous adventure.

Since the eastern border of Alaska is landlocked against Canada, I decided to have a crack at paddling from Prince Rupert on the northern coast of British Columbia to Inuvik near the Arctic Coast of Canada. Short of lashing the kayak onto a sled and following a dog team south to Prince Rupert, I would have to be satisfied with what I termed a tidewater - in the sea from start to finish - circumnavigation of Alaska. Although the stretched out

length of Alaska's shoreline totals 33,904 miles, my planned route involved 4,600 miles of paddling, give or take a mile or two. At an anticipated all up average of 30 miles a day, I figured by starting in early April I should knock the trip off comfortably inside five months.

This trip appealed to me for two main reasons, firstly no one had paddled the entire route before, and secondly kayaks and the art of kayaking largely evolved in Alaskan waters. Since all my previous trips had been in waters where dugout canoes or rafts were used by the indigenous population, it felt like I was taking my kayak on a nostalgic journey home. Also I'd been talking for years about writing the authoritative manual on sea kayaking but a lack of experience in ice conditions had been a great excuse for not completing the book. I needed to round off my experience with a trip into Arctic waters where kayaks had played such a major role in providing transportation for the Eskimos.

For three years I accumulated information on Alaska's coastline, building up a detailed picture of all the things that would affect me, for instance the prevailing winds and currents, ice pack break-up dates and how best to deal with the bears. By starting in late winter from Prince Rupert, I felt confident of cracking the whole trip in one season, provided the ice pack allowed me an easy passage past Cape Barrow, the northernmost tip of Alaska.

The solution to the problem of food resupply with New Zealand freeze dry meals was simple. I picked out coastal villages from a small scale map of Alaska, then checked the zip code list for those with post offices. Mailing boxes c/o general delivery to coastal village post offices is a widely accepted practice in Alaska.

1989 - Not a Good Year for Kayaking.

Early evening on March 25, I had finished sorting and packing my 17 boxes of food in the basement of a friend's house on Vancouver Island when I was called to watch an item on

the television news. I was dismayed to hear of an oil spill in Prince William Sound. The *Exxon Valdez* had strayed out of its shipping lane and run aground on Bligh Reef, spewing 11 million gallons of oil into the sound. Although the sound was on my projected route, I wasn't too bothered initially and assumed, as most people did, that the spill would quickly be contained. Ever since 1977, a daily flow of two millions barrels of crude oil has been piped from the Arctic coast south across Alaska to the small fishing port of Valdez in Prince William Sound, from where tankers transport the crude south to the Lower 48 {an Alaskan term for the rest of the U.S.A.}.

On schedule, but with my usual pre-trip jitters, I paddled away from Prince Rupert and lost touch with the outside world for the next four weeks as I worked northwards through Clarence and Chatham straits towards my first food dump at Elfin Cove. The spring of '89 was bleak and cold in South East Alaska. Streams tumbling out of the forest were freeze framed as stalagmites of ice while snow banks lay thickly on the cobble beaches. It had been a long hard winter. I didn't talk to a soul for eight days. When I passed two loggers fishing from a dinghy, I called out a cheery, "Great day for it." In reply they just grunted at me. Needless to say, I kept paddling.

As the trip progressed, morale and confidence sadly sagged. The kayak was leaking in two compartments, which necessitated a fire each night to dry out my gear. Sub-zero celsius temperatures morning and night didn't help my attempts to fix the leaks. I located pinprick holes by using my mouth to suck air, then tipped white spirits into each hole and lit the fluid to dry out the kevlar. The only way to harden the fibreglass patches was to use the M.S.R. cooker as a flamethrower.

A pod of killer whales was the highlight of that year. The bull was so old, the top of his massive sail-like dorsal fin, a full eight foot high, had drooped down towards his back. Like a mini submarine, he cruised by my bow only 10 feet away.

When I slipped into Elfin Cove, I was considering abandoning the trip. What with the continuing problems of leaks and cold temperatures, I was definitely not enjoying myself. Salmon fishermen at the cove related horror stories of how the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill was now totally out of control, and spreading down both sides of Kodiak Island. They reckoned I would end up looking like a slime ball if I continued paddling. I could not bear the idea of paddling through a sound littered with the oil slimed carcasses of birds and sea otters, nor did I fancy trying to keep my paddle shaft clean of oil - attempting to roll would be comparable to climbing a greasy pole - so I decided to abandon the trip at Elfin Cove and head home to NZ to lick my wounds.

1990 - A Brilliant Year for Kayaking

At midday on May 14, a floatplane dropped me back into the tiny fishing community of Elfin Cove. Moored to the dock was a salmon boat the *A.B. & G.* lovingly titled 'All Balls and Guts' by its crew, which had brought my new twin skinned kevlar Nordkapp out from Juneau. Psychologically and physically, I was in top condition. I'd spent the past two months training daily on a wave ski in the West Coast surf in front of my cottage, and had just completed a 200 mile training trip in the inside passages of S.E. Alaska.

The next 430 miles to Cordova has an awesome reputation for rotten weather and huge surf breaking onto exposed beaches. There are only two lee landings, at Yakutat and Icy Bay, which is why I'd spent so much time training in the West Coast surf. I knew of only one party of two who'd kayaked this coast since the turn of the century. One paddler had suffered a broken nose when a bumper dumper wave had smashed his paddle shaft back into his face. In two single kayaks, the men had spent two periods of 36 hours at sea to avoid big surf landings.

On the floating dock, I finished loading my gear and equipment for the next four months, and sufficient food to last to my first food dump at the

Yakutat Post Office. Under a leaden sky, three fishermen watched me silently head out into Cross Sound, on a course for Cape Spencer. I had an equally leaden feeling in my gut as I plugged into a low chop, bucking the tidal stream pouring into the sound.

Very few people knew of this trip, and they were all sworn to secrecy. This was partly in response to trauma and stress caused by the maritime authorities in Japan and Tasmania. My sole back up was a hard case kayaker in Ketchikan who I would phone each time I reached a food drop post office. I would give Geoff Grosse my anticipated E.T.A. and he was only to notify the U.S. Coastguard that I was overdue if he hadn't heard anything within seven days of that time. I would be totally reliant on my own resources for the next four months. It was total commitment and that's what I wanted.

Fairweather Coast?

Fishermen term the stretch of coast from Cape Spencer to Yakutat the Fairweather coast. As he sailed northwards in 1778, Captain Cook named Cape Fairweather and Mount Fairweather, a 15,300 foot high snow clad peak only a few miles inland from the cape. The salmon and halibut fishermen reckon Cook must have struck it lucky and maintain that the term Fairweather is a misnomer. When talking to them about weather and sea conditions, they would scratch their heads and say, "Well, we had a calm day off Cape Fairweather back in '83 or was it '82." I could only hope they were exaggerating.

I must have, like Cook, struck it lucky, for although the sky remained sullenly overcast, the wind remained light. I passed the four mile wide snout of the La Perouse Glacier on May 15, and next morning a break in the cloud revealed a magnificent backdrop of the Fairweather Range. Shimmering icy peaks, broad neve fields and crevassed glaciers marching towards the sea, towered over the coastal strip of forest. I wished for an ice axe and crampons and promised myself a trip back one day to climb Mt Fairweather.

Tiredly I rounded Ocean Cape late evening on May 18 to enter the shelter of Monti Bay with Yakutat at its head. That I'd knocked up 59 miles since dawn was a credit to my pre-trip training, not to mention wanting to avoid another big surf landing. That first 176 mile stage was in many ways the crux, physically and mentally. Having overcome it, not with ease but in style, I knew I had the mettle to carry on with the next 3,000 miles.

The next 250 mile leg to Cordova was just as committing but I now had a psychological edge. In a massive dumping surf at Point Manby, I almost looped end over end when the second wave of a set caught me scrambling out of the cockpit onto a steep gravel beach. Catapulted out of the cockpit, I grabbed the bow and struggled clear of the undertow, losing only piece of mind and a water container off the stern.

Arriving in Icy Bay, I was nearly an exposure case within 10 minutes of landing as a icy blast off the snowclad peaks of the St Elias Mountains was funneling out of the bay. The only lee protection on the bare sand spit was a driftlog and I had the devil's own job trying to keep the dome tent in contact with the ground until it was firmly guyed to the log. A big brew of tea re-established circulation to my hands.

Icy Cape lived up to its reputation as I slipped out of Icy Bay, with an ebbing tide and ran into a solid white line of ice. It was not sea ice but hard glacial ice that is fed into the bay by a host of major glaciers which have their snouts in the Pacific Ocean. Because of this, they are termed tidewater glaciers.

Particularly on this initial 430 mile of exposed Gulf of Alaska coast from Elfin Cove to Cordova I would have preferred the company of a co-paddler. In retrospect I know now that I am faster and far more flexible operating on my lonesome. Who in their right mind would paddle 50 miles during the day on the outside of the Copper River delta, stop for a brew and a dehi-dinner, kip for an hour on a sandbank, then paddle all night to

work a big flood tide over The Hump in order to catch the Cordova Post Office before it closed on a Saturday.

Mind you I didn't make it in time. What I had not foreseen was the big 15 foot flood tide was accompanied by what the fishermen call a minus tide. In this case the tide sucked out to a level 4.5 feet below the low water springs mark. As I neared the saddle of The Hump, a short cut used by Copper River salmon fishermen and marked by spruce poles stuck in the sandbanks, the tide was sucking out on both sides. Five minutes later the saddle would have been dry. Water from the drying sand banks was funneling into a steeply dropping channel. On the western side of The Hump, the kayak dropped with a lurch over a gravel bar into a series of rapids. Just like paddling a glacial fed river, I headed for the V at the head of each rapid then over drops of two to three feet and swung through sweeping S bends, punching through big pressure waves. I was swept down-channel, broad mud/sandbanks on each side, for half a mile until the gradient eased.

Exposed mud flats kept heading me away from Cordova. Not a single salmon skiff had sped past me and then my tired brain registered that the channel leading to Cordova had dried out completely with the minus tide.

Patience was the order of the day. I dragged the boat up three feet to the top of the mud flats, laid down on my parka for a wee kip and only woke up when the incoming tide began surging around my ankles.

Prince William Sound

From Cordova I was able to avoid the gulf for a few days by ducking into the sheltered waters of Prince William Sound. I was keen to find out how badly the oil spill had affected the shores of the sound, and how effective the clean-up operation had been.

Crossing courses with a south-bound, laden tanker, I noticed two tenders shadowing its wake, obviously to prevent a repetition of when the skipper of the Exxon Valdez retired below to his cabin and left the third mate to steer the vessel onto Bligh Reef.

Apart from a noticeable absence of sea bird life and otters, I saw little sign of the spill till I landed for the night on the north-eastern end of Evans Island. This gravel beach had been right in the path of the drifting spill. From the high tide mark back to a fringing belt of trees, the beach was coated with oil. An animal, probably a brown bear, had been digging in the beach gravel for shellfish - the pools had filled with water that had a oil sheen on it. I found a camp site under a tree well inland from the beach for the night.

From a count of 36,000 dead birds picked up in Prince William Sound, experts believed this figure represented between 10 and 30% of the total number that perished. One has to wonder about the sanity of the scientists who carried out a study to check the recovery rate of dead birds. They shot 219 perfectly healthy birds and dipped them in crude oil before dropping them into the sound to see what percentage would float and could be recovered.

Amongst sea kayakers, Prince William Sound had a reputation for outstanding scenery and the presence of several pods of killer whales. You couldn't help bumping into at least one pod. However in the summer of 1990, exactly 14 months after the spill, I did not sight a single killer whale. The sea and sky were devoid of life.

Ever since the curtailment of the '89 trip, I'd felt a twinge of guilt that I should have continued paddling through the oil devastated areas, and recorded first hand the damage. But after talking to people who were involved with the clean up crews, they all said I would have probably broken a bone while carrying the kayak up the oil coated rocks. Apparently broken legs and collar bones were common injuries amongst the crews. (to be continued in n/1 92.)

3rd Annual Sea Kayakers Pilgrimage Marlborough Sounds

DATE: June 2nd – 4th 2001

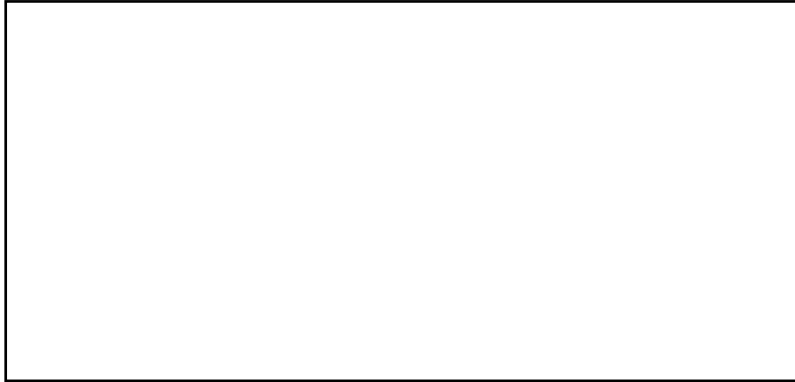
Venue: Woodlands Bay, Tawhitinui Reach, 2km NW of Maud Island. Excellent DoC camp site, with plenty of room under ancient macrocarpa trees. On more recent maps, the bay is called Waiona Bay.

Meet Old and New Paddling Friends; Catch up on New Boats & latest gadgets Listen to tall tales & true; Chill out from the rat race with good company BYO tent, gourmet meals & wine; Explore Tennyson Inlet

When the clan has gathered on the Saturday night, the highlight of the evening will be the sacrificial stoning & burning of an outboard motor. Formal evening wear was worn when the jet-ski was ceremoniously stoned & burnt. However in keeping with stonings, burnings and sacrifices, Viking dress is requested for the Saturday Evening event. Blokes as one of Wotan's warriors, ladies as one of the Valkyries, or a lusty wench. Paddlers unwilling to dress up may be sacrificed.

For further information, re transport from Nelson or the terry fermal at Picton to Elaine Bay, Fax/phone the Phantom's attractive assistant at (03) 544 6322

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