Cathye Haddock

10 March 1957 - 10 September 2022

her kayaking stories

Peter Simpson &
Cathye Haddock
at Pidgeon Island
Dusky Sound
April 2009

Two of Our Own Have Gone
Cathye Haddock and Susan Cade

Sad to report, two of our KASK stalwarts were lost in the Kaikoura boating tragedy on 10 September 2022, Cathye Haddock and Susan Cade.

The Wellington send-offs for both wonderful women were attended by hundreds of mourners, and further afield with live-video streaming. The emotional tributes for both revealed how diverse their work and play interests were and how they were both loved by so many.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

As Cathye's overseas family had not seen Cathye's stories and photos of her sea kayaking trips and expeditions, I thought a cobbling together of those stories would be a lovely tribute to Cathye. What I planned as a 12 pager, has grown to 32 pages. The words are Cathye's, and the photos are mostly taken by myself, Cathye, or her husband Peter Simpson. The two Xena Warrior Woman photos were taken by Max Grant.

Although Cathye wrote serious technical reports for the KASK newsletter, I have chosen her best sea kayaking adventure stories, and a few good photos.

Not long after Cathye bought her first sea kayak in 1990, she was roped into joining KASK and was soon on our committee as safety officer. By 1996 we had a produced what some of us older paddlers called 'The Little Red Book', a manual for sea kayaking in New Zealand, to which Cathye contributed a chapter on Risk Management. This grew in length from edition to edition. Then in 2004, Cathye authored 'Outdoor Safety – risk management for outdoor leaders', which was published by the Mountain Safety Council.

With Cathye's support, to ensure we could all learn from dramatic incidents and rescues where embarrassment was a major factor, we changed the heading for those reports in the KASK magazine to 'The Bugger! File' and always ensured that lessons learned were included. The file heading adopted from those wonderful Toyota advertisements with the huntaway jumping and missing the back of the ute, jaw planted in the mud and muttering 'Bugger!'.

Cathye wrote superb accounts of paddling trips and expeditions. She had a lovely way of melding paddling adventures, history, moods and feeling, and enjoyed a bit of humour. Even a 'Bugger!' Moment or two.

I always had great respect for Cathye's trip and expedition planning ability. Whereas I have always leaned towards the Bill Tilman / Eric Shipton style of planning on the back of an envelope, Cathye's planning was meticulous, never overdone, clear as crystal and for the big trips of 14 or so, everyone was in the same picture in terms of what kit to take, plenty of sandfly repellent for Fiordland and the cellphone contacts for all in the paddling party.

Cathye was as fond of dancing as I was. As I had been teaching a bit of salsa on the West Coast, in deepest darkest Fiordland, on the Wednesday and Friday evenings which were salsa sessions at the Greymouth Workingman's club – Cathye and I got our salsa practice in, mostly on the tidal flats where the ground wasn't too rough, and always in our Buller lace-up gumboots. I have always pondered what a venison hunter or crayboat skipper would have thought seeing a poly-pro and gumboot clad couple tripping the light fantastic on a remote tidal flat in Fiordland. No doubt it was also a jolly good excuse for leaving the evening meal cooking duties to Peter.

Cathye, the photographer

Compiled: Paul Caffyn 30 September 2022

Photos unsourced: Paul Caffyn

A Cathye 'Bugger!' File Story

Wild Wellington on a Calm Day - April 2001

It was a beautiful calm weekend in Wellington so we decided: This is the weekend to explore the Kohanga Lakes (near Pencarrow). We had tried a couple of times before but never made it due to rough conditions. You need minimum wind, calm seas and limited swell to do this trip. The Wellington recreational marine forecast was for slight seas, 5 kph northerly in the morning, changing to light southerly late in the afternoon.

We launched our boats at 10:30 am from Tarakena Bay, near Breaker Bay. We made a beeline across to the Moaning Minnie (buoy), north of Barrett Reef, then straight lined it across the harbour entrance to the Pencarrow Lighthouse as we figured there would be no swell there and a safe landing. We were right. From there we fitted our wheels and portaged along the road about a kilometre to the first lake, Kohangatera. We received a few strange looks from the many mountain bikers out for a ride along the south coast.

After exploring this interesting lake, renowned for its bird life, we refitted our wheels and trundled off to Kohangapiripiri, a further kilometre away and had a pleasant picnic lunch on a little rocky outcrop overlooking the lake and sea. Exploration of this lake was even more interesting as you need to weave your way through high reeds to get into the main lake and there are some interesting channels through the reeds on either side of the lake. We saw paradise ducks, scaup, black swans, various shags and a few unidentifieds over the day. We had paddled up the second lake in a steady northerly (approx. 10 kph), so a tail breeze saw us back to the put in. Out with the wheels again, and back out to the road at 1:30 pm. We decided to have a look at the south coast for launching possibilities.

This is an exposed coastline, steepish gravel beach of the dumpers and sucky surf variety. The waves certainly reared up suddenly a few metres from shore, collapsed straight onto the gravel beach and sucked straight back out. They came in sets of four with time between sets and were four feet in height. The sea beyond the breakers was relatively flat although a slight swell. There was no wind. We decided to give it a bash.

We set Pete up first. Straight after a set came in, we dragged his boat down onto the surge zone, got him in, sprayskirt fastened just as the next set came in. "You're gunna get wet with this set, but stay put and we'll launch you in the slack before the next set!"

Too late, the surge sucked his boat straight out of my hands and into the next dumper. The force was so great, I couldn't do a thing. "Paddle like sh**!!!" I shouted above the roar of the dumper. And he did!

If you can imagine the road runner's legs spinning in mid-air before zooming away from the coyote, well that was Pete paddling in mid-air as boat perched atop the wave momentarily before zooming down the other side and straight into the next one. Hat wiped off and deck cleared of water bottle etc, he was more streamlined into the next two smashers.

Paddling like sh**, keeping a straight line perpendicular to the waves, the *Southern Skua* cut cleanly through the next two with its beautifully shaped bow, although rearing up and down like a bucking bronco.

Then he was in the clear beyond the breakers. I stood on the beach with my mouth open, then dived in and got his hat from the surf. By the time Pete turned his boat around to face the shore, if looks could kill, I'd be a dead girl! I learned a lot from that few minutes.

When it came to launching my own boat, I dragged it down to above the surge zone. The moment the fourth wave in the set crashed, I dragged my boat down into the water and jumped in, fitting my sprayskirt in an instant, then quickly paddled out on a flat lake to join Pete, picking his bobbing water bottle up on the way. When I rafted up next to him, I got a real ear full. "That's the last time I'll listen to you!" I gave him his gear back and promised to cook dinner for the next week.

I knew from the dead calm air, that if we didn't get a move on, we'd be in trouble when the southerly came through. The northerly had completely died, so we were experiencing the calm before the wind change that was forecast for late in the afternoon. It looked like it was coming early, and by the strength of the earlier north-

erly, the southerly would probably be stronger than forecast.

We had a pleasant paddle along the south coast in a two metre swell. Looking both ways at the harbour entrance, we straight-lined it again to the moaning minnie, had a brief rest then hightailed it back towards Tarakena Bay. Ten minutes before we reached the shelter of the small harbour, we felt that breath of wind on our left cheeks.

Uh oh, and next minute the sea was littered with white caps out towards Cook Strait. The caps of the swells were being smoked off by a 15-20 kph southerly. At that point Pete and I could only see paddle tips if we were both in troughs at the same time. Mmm. We kept paddling, making a beeline for a large gap between rocks leading to the entrance of Tarakena Bay, that we had been watching for 15 minutes.

The gap had remained calm in this time but 20 metres before we passed through it, two huge waves came from the seaward side and turned the water straight ahead of us into the gates of hell. Adrenaline pumping, we both back-paddled to stop ourselves getting caught up in this mess.

The mess disappeared as quickly as it had come and we steamed on before any more surprises came through. In minutes we were in sheltered water and dragging our boats up on a calm sandy beach.

Where did these two waves come from? There had been no ferries or ships through to cause wakes. We watched the gap for a while after landing and did not see any more waves come through. Can anyone explain this?

We knew that if we had been a minute or two earlier through the gap, we may have finished up on the rocks. A sobering thought. Our Sunday paddle had turned into an exciting adventure and given us yet another degree of respect for the sea, and a degree less complacency ourselves. It does not hurt to reflect on such things.

And yes, we are still talking.

MAIN LESSONS WE LEARNED OR RE-LEARNED

- Poor judgement in the surf zone has great potential for disaster
- Don't underestimate the power of the sucking surge back
- Do a surf course – practice more in the surf
- Keep alert to the environment, sea and weather conditions – weather forecasts are not always locally accurate, only a guide
- Be prepared for the unexpected
- Don't trust your wife's judgement

Peter and Cathye on Lake Okataina with umberellas stuck in the fishing rod holders on the aft kayak decks

CATHYE'S NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORTS

Cathye wrote rather good accounts of paddling trips and expeditions. She had a lovely way of melding paddling adventures, history, moods and feeling, and enjoyed a bit of humour.
Even a 'Bugger!' Moment or two.

Dusky Sound 2009 - Part I
by Cathye Haddock

31 March 2009

"Are we on holiday yet?" Peter asked as we watched the helicopter lift off and swoop away from Supper Cove, leaving us with a mountain of gear and our kayaks on the beach.

I first set my sights on a Dusky trip on our way home from two weeks sea kayaking in Preservation and Chalky Inlets in February 2005. Four years slipped by before Dusky was back on the radar - as Patagonia had beckoned, then Doubtful Sound and the sandfly-free Far North in the intervening years.

Like any wilderness trip, a lot of planning, research and training went into preparing for the Dusky trip. As we packed our hatches with home-dehydrated meals, camping gear, first aid and emergency gear, mountain and marine radios, warm clothes and wet weather gear, laminated maps and *Buller* gumboots, the careful planning and crumpled checklists had done their jobs.

Our research heightened our excitement and anticipation of retracing the paddle strokes of the Ngati Mamoe, following in Captain Cook's wake, exploring the sealers' camps and the remnants of Richard Henry's 14 years of conservation work.

For Paul, it was also retracing his own paddle strokes of this leg of his South Island trip with Max Reynolds, 32 years before. With the last of the gear stowed in the kayaks, and a bag of helicopter strops and ties stowed in the bush, we carried our creaking boats the last metre to the water and hopped in. Our first strokes broke the mirror of the fiord. Our muscles fretted for the rhythm of the paddle. The weekends of training over preceding months were about to pay off.

"Yes, we are on holiday!" we all agreed.

Our watch barometers were consistent with the Met Service forecast we had seen at the DoC Visitors' Centre in Te Anau that morning. 1041 millibars. A big fat high was situated over the country, and we were rapt to have a great forecast for the next few days. With a slight tail breeze, we cruised the 11 kms in 1.5 hours to our first campsite, watching hundreds of barracuda leaping and jumping out of the water on our way. Our first campsite was one of William Docherty's camps, and within minutes of landing Peter had found the moss-covered remains of his chimney stones in the bush.

We had first come across William Docherty on our trip into Preservation Inlet in 2005. We had visited his grave on Cemetery Island opposite the site of Cromarty township. Doherty had led a solitary life in Dusky Sound for many years, prospecting for minerals in the rugged mountains, with limited success. While he found asbestos, nickel and copper, none were in viable quantities for commercial mining.

He also made an income from skinning native birds such as kapapo, kokako and takahe and selling these to Andreas Reischek a well-known bird collector who sold them to overseas museums. Finally he paddled his dinghy, 'held together by wire and string', down the open coast to Preservation Inlet where he joined the gold rush.

Cathye at Supper Cove in Dusky Sound

We cooked chops and fresh veges from our garden on a fire for tea, followed by custard and apricots for dessert. A search for the celebratory kask of wine revealed that someone had left it in the van! Paul rescued the moment by sharing a tot of his whiskey and we toasted to being here. The forecast on the *Mountain Radio* was for fine, fine and fine weather! We drifted off to sleep listening to kea on the far peaks and sinking comfortably into our sphagnum moss mattress.

1 April:
I awoke with my head in a vice. I searched the portable field hospital I had painstakingly prepared for the trip, and there was everything but panadol! Fortunately Peter had some in his small kit, which I scoffed sitting on a log watching the dusky mauve sunrise over Cooper Island.

I don't get migraines often, but they always come after I take my foot off the pedal. It had been a long haul to get here. Frantic efforts to complete a project before leaving work, two days completing a post-graduate study assignment on the ferry and then finishing it off at midnight at Paul's before the long drive to Te Anau via the West Coast.

Paul, also exhausted from finishing the KASK newsletter before the trip, slept in on the first morning. My headache and nausea subsided while Paul cooked up bacon and eggs (from our chooks) for our first breakfast on the beach. We were finally on the water at 11:00 am!

Paddling along, I reflected on the rush that life can sometimes be. We had arrived in Te Anau at 10:30 pm the previous night and were scheduled to load our boats at 7:00 am, ready to fly into Supper Cove, but that's another story. This seemed all so crazy in the peaceful reflections of Dusky Sound, broken only by the V-shaped wakes of my two paddling mates ahead of me. Simply being here was a brilliant way of getting life back in perspective.

I thought Paul had lost it completely when I saw him stop paddling and start talking to himself ahead of me. As I got closer, I made out the red and black checked swanni of a deer hunter - Paul wasn't losing it after all. The hunter and his mate were off the *Paragon*, a charter boat we had spotted that morning. The hunters radioed their skipper for a pick up to return to the mother ship, and we could already hear the tinny heading our way. We had a yarn with the guys, who were from the Riverton area, and continued along our way.

Within 20 minutes, we were experiencing serious doubts about Paul when we saw him talking to the trees again. Then we heard another voice from the bush, and a third hunter appeared, gun in hand, at the steep edge of the fiord. He also radioed his skipper and Cyril Lawless came and picked him up in the tinny once he had dropped the other two off at the *Paragon*. We had a great yarn with Cyril, who had been bringing hunting charters into Fiordland for over 20 years. It turned out it was Cyril who had taken Bevan Walker and his mate out to Riverton after being weather bound at the Puysegur Point Oil Store for 11 days, 20 years earlier. Cyril then recounted the story of being in Dagg Sound in 2004 when the big earthquake hit Fiordland.

From the charter boat he had watched rocks bouncing down the surrounding mountains and landing in the fiord. Next day they had ventured ashore to find that many of the 'rocks' were the size of houses, and the track from Dagg through to Doubtful Sound was covered in a huge landslide.

Cyril also described how he had been in Chalky Inlet last year when, just on dark, he heard a woman's voice outside. He thought 'there are no women around here,' and carried on with his chores.

On hearing the voice again he went on deck to investigate and was surprised to find Babs Lindman calling out from her sea kayak. They helped her on board and she spent 3-4 days with them after battling stormy weather and big seas around the south-west corner of the South Island. When Babs set off again to continue her South Island circumnavigation, Cyril followed her almost to Dusky Sound to make sure she was okay. What a delight to meet and yarn with Cyril, a real Fiordland character - a small world indeed.

We carried on paddling, heard the odd stag roar along the way, and saw a seal fishing off a point. We called in to Passage Point where Paul and Max had camped for a couple of days waiting out a storm 32 years before. We had lunch on a sunny beach and had a calm crossing of Acheron Passage. We landed at Duck Cove Biv on the southern end of Resolution Island in the late afternoon and settled in. We intended leaving a food drop here, and would return for it later in the trip. After dark, Peter called Paul and me to see a ruru (morepork) in a tree outside the biv. Earlier we had seen a pair of bellbirds chasing each other around, lots of fantails ducking and diving around us, and a kereru (woodpigeon) flying overhead.

As we ate our dinner outside the biv, we marvelled at the distinct lack of tiny biting black flying fauna that were notably absent on this trip. Being late in the season, and cooler, we never even got our sandfly armour out for the whole trip! The mountain radio said more fine weather but gales about the coast were forecast in a few days.

Paul gave me my first salsa lesson on the helipad that night. In keeping with Paul's routine on the West Coast, we were to have gumboot salsa lessons on Wednesdays and Fridays at 7.30 pm. We sorted our food drop and Paul ordered that no one was to be up before 8 am.

2 April:
At 8.15 am Peter gave us tea in bed followed by porridge. From the shore, we saw dolphins off Porpoise Point (named by Captain Cook). We set off at 10.30 am and called into the Basin for lunch. This was a large keyhole bay with a huge granite dome at the head, reflected perfectly in the mirror of the fiord. We saw the most marine life on the trip here, due to the shallow, clear water and the white sandy bottom, which was unusual for Fiordland. We saw big blue cod, spottys, red moki, lots of kina, sea cucumbers, yellow, orange and red spiky starfish and a stingray partially submerged in sand on the bottom with its tail erect. On the granite side of the fiord I saw an octopus smooching along a crack and a single yellow tulip-shaped seaweed suctioned to the granite. We had lunch on a sunny white sand beach and Paul brewed up a cuppa.

From the Basin we paddled around the south side of Pigeon Island where Richard Henry, Fiordland's first ranger, spent just over 14 years (1894 - 1909) transferring kakapo, takahe, kokako and kiwi from the mainland to Resolution Island to protect them from the inevitable arrival of stoats across the Fiordland mountains from Otago. We explored the remnants of Richard Henry's boat ramp, house, and bird enclosures, still visible 100 years after the first stoats arrived and a dejected Richard Henry left to work as a ranger on Kapiti Island.

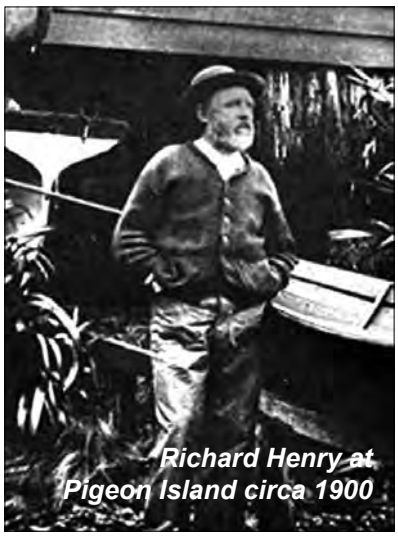
Paddling into a strengthening head wind, we worked hard to get to the Goose Cove Biv on the western shore of Resolution Island. Arriving at 6.30 pm, tired but reflective of the seeds of conservation in NZ. We cooked dinner and settled in for a windy night. The forecast confirmed gales about the Fiordland coast.

3 April:
Peter delivered tea in bed at 8 am followed by pancakes and maple syrup made by Cathye. It was too windy to paddle today so we walked up to the head of Goose Cove, across the low lying dunes that separated Goose Cove from Woodhen Cove to the north. There was a heap of fishing boat rubbish on the shore, blown in by the relentless northerlies. Fish crates, ropes, even a huge glass light bulb littered the shore amongst driftwood, seaweed and other more natural debris. We walked as far as possible along the shore on the Five Fingers Peninsula side and watched a fishing boat bobbing about like a cork checking its craypots.

Using a map given to us by Peter's DoC colleagues, we found a track up to the ridge on Five Fingers Peninsula. Watching the tide draining from the head of Goose Cove, we saw that we would later be able to walk back to the biv across the mudflats. The tracks were well-formed and quick travel for the DoC staff and volunteers that use them to bait and check the thousands of stoat traps all over the peninsula and Resolution Island.

Richard Henry would be proud of DoC's efforts to eradicate predators and restore the bird life of yesteryear to his beloved Resolution Island. The comparative abundance of birds we had seen on the island and the morning chorus that had awoken our slumbers the last few days, was testament to their success so far. The birdy racket reminded us of our time on Secretary Island, a

Cathye by the Goose Cove bivvy; kayaks tethered to trees due to the strength of storm-force northerly winds. Photograph: Peter Simpson



predator free island in Doubtful Sound we had visited two years earlier.

After our mid afternoon return to the biv and a late lunch, we made use of the strengthening wind and did some washing. Our long-johns looked like airstrip windsocks blowing horizontally on the line. After boiling the billy, filling the solar shower and suspending it from a branch in the bush, we all had a luxury scrub and polish followed by a blow dry in the relentless wind. Finally there was nothing to do but retire to the biv for a spot of reading. I won the most boring reading material prize, two policy papers for my university homework!

4 April:
We woke to 65-70 knot winds and I wished Peter a happy anniversary. What a great place to spend it! Peter and Paul proceeded to give me a physics lesson about the venturi effect: when air flows through a tube or pipe with a constriction in it, it must speed up in the restriction. Goose Cove narrowed towards its head and we were right in the constriction, where the wind velocity was fastest. Essentially we were in a wind tunnel. The sea was strewn with whitecaps and regular williwaws, sudden blasts of wind, descended

Cathye standing by old house site remains at Facile Harbour.

from the steep fiords to the sea. Cook's diaries warned of these dangers in Goose Cove as did the Begg Brothers' book *Dusky Bay*.

We spent the day walking across the mudflats to the two islands in the narrow passage of Goose Cove and walking more of the tracks on Resolution Island. We saw a pair of paradise ducks feeding on the mudflats, standing their ground in the strong wind, beaks ahead and literally blown to a standstill. The sea gulls were enjoying stationary flying too.

5 April:
We woke to wind and showers, the Fiordland we know and love. Everyone went back to bed. However, when I ventured out to take the spade for a walk - the rain had stopped and the wind had died down. We decided to move and see how far we could get. We were on the water by 10.20 am, our earliest start yet!

We paddled to Facile Harbour, which was sheltered and calm, so we decided to explore. We soon found old tracks and hut sites where 244 sealers and stowaways (ex convicts and fugitives) had lived from 1792-95. We paddled quietly around in the vicinity of the old *Endeavour* wreck, but as it was high tide, we neither saw the ballast stones visible at low tide, nor the wreck through the deep dark water. This was not Cook's *Endeavour*, but an old barely sea-worthy trade ship that sailed to Dusky Bay from Sydney in 1792. The Captain was charged with scuppering the *Endeavour* and finishing off the Providence, an almost completed ship built by sealers in Luncheon Cove in 1792. The *Endeavour* was duly beached, stripped and sunk in Facile Harbour in October 1795. The Begg Brothers saw the ghostly hulk 14 meters below the surface, lit up by a shaft of sunlight, at low tide in the 1960s.

Leaving the ghosts of this harbour, we paddled off to the Useless Islands, where we had an 'eat and a think'. The weather was holding, but we were nervous to push our luck given the sea conditions that we had witnessed over the last few days. However, our barometers had settled, and the wind had dropped completely, so we decided to paddle to Luncheon Cove on Anchor Island at 12:30 pm. On our way, we saw seals on the many rocks and

Mother and pup seals at the head of Luncheon Cove

islands to the south of Anchor Island.

Paddling into Luncheon Cove, we saw the spot where Captain Cook had eaten his lobster lunch on his first visit. There were seals to greet us on the site of the first house ever built in New Zealand, in 1792. Adjacent to the house site was the site where the *Providence* was built, the first ship ever to be built in New Zealand.

The forest looked unchanged since those early settlers were here. There are not many places where this would be so in New Zealand. Soaking up the history, we wandered around exclaiming whenever we found the remains of a drain or some tar-like substance on the rocks of the shipbuilding site.

On our way out of Luncheon Cove we had a look at the barges, with satellite dishes and helipads atop, used to collect the cray catch ready for export each season. We were back opposite the Useless Islands by 3:00 pm, the weather was still calm and our barometers still stable. We had paddled to Luncheon Cove in 1 hour 10 minutes and returned in 50 minutes. My running friends would be impressed with the negative split!

Weary and happy, we paddled into our cosy little Duck Cove by 4:45 pm. This had been an unexpected bonus day, with interesting exploration and 30 kms under our belts on a day we nearly didn't bother getting up! Smoked chicken cabonara was the order of the day followed by yummy peppermint creams, a fitting anniversary celebration.

Paul provided the evening's entertainment with a recital of Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Ulysses,* an epic poem of the sea. Peter admitted to being an 'uncouth, uncultured yob' at this point, leaving Paul and I to marvel at Tennyson's words while Peter read more of the history of Fiordland under the solar-powered light in our cosy wee biv.

6 April:
Drizzle and rain was forecast for the day and it was delivered aplenty. Paul was keen to have a rest day. I was antsy and keen to go to Indian Island to explore the waka harbour. Peter was happy to rest and go with the flow. We had all shared our goals for the trip a few months before, so I knew Peter and Paul were keen on rest days among the paddling. I respected this and started preparing a bit of gear for my damp exploration. To my delight, Peter made stirring sounds and ended up coming with me.

We paddled a few hundred metres up the river at the head of Duck Cove, dark tannin-stained and slow-moving between towering ancient podocarps. We had several heavy downpours but no wind in the sheltered cove. I followed Peter to a waterfall, starting high on the side of the fiord and cascading in three huge drops into the sea far below. Then we paddled out to the entrance of the cove in light drizzle and dead flat calm. Peter was a bit cold so wanted to return to the biv. I looked longingly at Indian Cove some 3 - 4 kms away and then to Porpoise Point on the opposite side of Duck Cove entrance. Vertical vapour jets were visible in the mirror mist - dolphins! Indian Island would have to wait another day.

We both headed to the other side of the cove where we were surrounded by 30 or so big bottle nosed dolphins, curiously surfacing in front, behind, beside us and swimming under our boats. I turned the camera to video mode and filmed the sleek creatures, dorsal fins and tails breaking the surface in all directions. After an hour with these mammals we went in our separate directions - they beyond Porpoise Point and us back to the Duck Cove biv, where Paul greeted us with a steaming hot cuppa to warm us up.

We spent the rest of the afternoon in our pits, quizzing each other about the history of Fiordland, using the hut copy of Neville Peat's *NZ's Fiord heritage* – A guide to the historic sites of coastal Fiordland as our source of quiz question ideas. With all our reading for this and other trips, we got a surprising number of questions right and it was great fun as the rain pattered. In the quiz I discovered that Captain Cook had met the Ngati Mamoe chief, Maru, and his whanau on Indian Island on 6 April 1773. Today was the anniversary. Could this explain the pull I felt to visit Indian Island today of all days? Madras lamb curry was a warming meal to complete a magic day.

7 April:
The forecast was for more rain and isolated thunderstorms, but as the cove was calm, we decided to move to Cascade Cove via Indian Island and Astronomer Point where Captain Cook had anchored his ship the *Resolution* for

five weeks after sailing through the Southern Ocean to reach Dusky Bay on his second trip to New Zealand in April 1773. We left shore at 10:30 am and paddled across the cove. I was behind, taking photos of Peter and Paul paddling off, with bright sun bursting through clouds beyond a dark backdrop of Long Island and double rainbows arching over all.

As I paddled off to catch the other two, the sky completely darkened and a dark band of water sped towards me. Moments later, hail pelted my boat and drilled holes in the flat sea. Off with the pogies and out with the camera again and onto movie mode - I panned around to see Peter and Paul sprinting for the shelter of the trees overhanging the fiord. When I saw an intense, bright flash, followed momentarily by loud thunder, I stuffed the camera into my PFD and motored for the trees. "I think we should pull the plug," I said to the guys.

Once the squall passed we paddled back to the biv. As we landed ashore, out came the sun, so we decided to leave the boats semi-packed and see what the weather did. Paul and Peter said they would have been quite happy to carry on since they were wet anyway.

However, once ensconced in the dry and cozy hut, the rot set in. We counted six more hail showers, complete with lightning, thunder and heavy rain. I went for a two-hour walk on another track on Resolution Island, and got completely soaked, even with raincoat and overtrou on. Peter and Paul sensibly stayed dry and warm.

That night, our seventh consecutive night in a cozy dry biv, we praised Doc Sutherland of South West Helicopters again, for refusing to take us into Dusky Sound. As mentioned at the beginning of this story, we had arrived in Te Anau at 10.30 pm and were due at South West Helicopters at 7:00 am the following morning ready to load our boats to fly in to Supper Cove. After arriving at the hangar on a frosty dark morning, Doc Sutherland took one look at our fibreglass and kevlar boats and said, "I don't think I can fly you in." We were shocked.

I had booked the flights months before and given the company all the boat details, including length, weight, and what they were made of. The guy was as grumpy as, but began tying the boats on anyway. Any advice offered, was definitely not welcome. Finally, once Paul heard his kevlar boat crack - he lost it and swore at the guy. At this point it was all on with a full-blown altercation and the pilot started untying the boats.

We loaded the boats back on the cars in stunned silence. Just as we were leaving, the pilot approached me, apologised, and said to come back later in the day when he would have more time, or we were welcome to make other arrangements.

We ate a more leisurely second breakfast in town and came up with a plan B, which was to drive out to Southern Lakes Helicopters. The legendary Hannibal Hayes said, "no worries, guys, come back in two hours and we can fly you in at midday." Chuffed and relieved, we went to change our intentions at the DoC visitor centre.

While there, we called in to see our old mate the Area Manager, who gave us a key to the DoC bivs on Resolution Island and a DoC map showing all the tracks and bivs.

This more than made up for our earlier encounter with the grumpy old bugger from SW Helicopters. So each night we were ensconced in a warm and dry biv, we praised the grumpy old bugger from SWH!

Cathye passing a waterfall on the northern shore of Dusky Sound

DUSKY SOUND PART II

by Cathye Haddock

8 April 2009:
"I'm sure I left my kayak somewhere around here!" I said to myself as I came out of the bush and walked the few steps to the steep edge of Long Island.

"Bugger!" Peter and Paul had already left the small cove to give me some privacy, so it was going to be a long swim or an indefinite wait if I didn't figure something out fast. Then I saw it, a black rudder and minute bit of a turquoise blue stern disappearing behind some rocks to my far right. I pulled up my longjohns and waded up to my knees into the clear cold water (gasp!), edged along the rocks, and grabbed the kayak.

A few more metres and I would have been swimming, so deep was the drop off into the fiord. In my haste into the bush, I had not leashed my kayak, and with an incoming tide the boat had soon floated off the marginal landing. Safely back in the boat, I counted my blessings and thought I'd keep this bugger to myself.

It was lovely and sunny, with hardly a ripple on the water. I paddled between some lovely islands and couldn't see the other two through the long passage ahead of me. I saw something coloured bright orange floating in the water to my left. I paddled over and pulled up Peter's fluoro-orange brimmed hat - and still not a sign of Peter and Paul.

Gosh, maybe they've been vaporised by aliens. I searched for singe marks on the hat. Nothing. Funny what goes through your mind on the big trips! I passed a few more islands and then spotted them. Peter was just emerging from a cleft in the steep side of the island, invisible until you're right on it, and Paul was disappearing around the western end of Long Island. "Lost anything?" I said to Pete, with wifely smugness. He was wearing a warm hat underneath the sunhat so had not yet noticed. I held the hat up. Peter reached for his head. "Bugger!" and he knew just the spot where low branches must have swept it off as he poked his nose into the cleft.

We soon caught up with Paul. We rounded the point just in time to see a pod of dolphins departing. Paul had been treated to some leaping and jumping and his grin said it all. Magic. Paul wanted to explore some sites on the tip of Long Island. I said I'd join him while Pete would have a munch-up while he waited for us.

Then it came. Black water encroaching, wind full of hail. With no time to communicate, Peter and I went between the Two Sisters Islands to shelter from the sudden squall while Paul ducked behind the point. Once it calmed, Peter and I ate our pre-packed lunch (handy in situations like this) while we waited for Paul. Reunited, the three of us crossed over to Indian Island.

Part way across, we were hit by another squall full of hail. Heads down and bracing into the wind, we sought shelter in the waka harbour at the North East end of Indian Island. This hidden harbour must have been a haven for

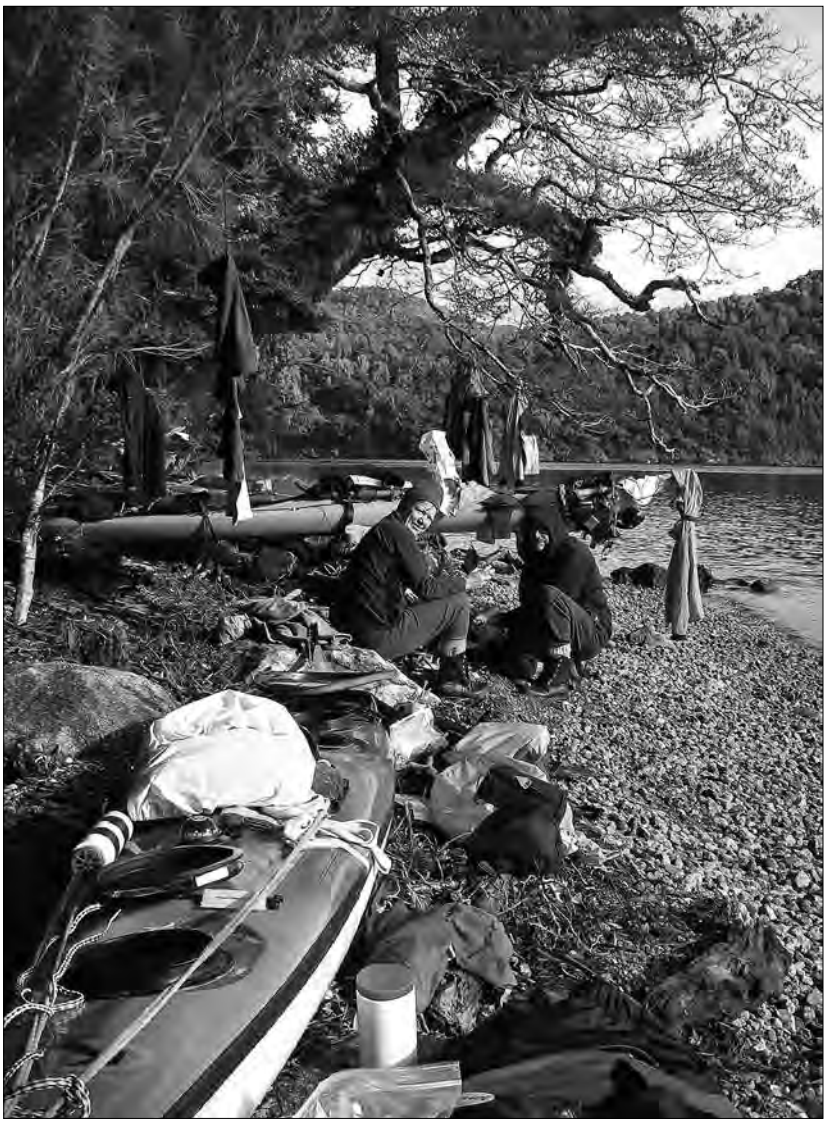
View north from 'Astronymers Point' across 'Pickersgills' Harbour to 'The Narrows' through which Cook's *Resolution* was warped on 27 March 1773. Crayfish Island on the right. Photo: P. Caffyn

the Ngati Mamoe family who lived on this island at the time of Cook's visit. Warming our freezing hands, we sheltered until the hail stopped and the squall passed. Imagining the hardship those earlier explorers must have endured, we praised our merino and Goretex.

We paddled out of the hidden haven into the sun and glanced back at the rock promontory on Indian Island where Captain Cook first met the Ngati Mamoe chief Maru and his whanau, on 6 April 1773. That was 236 years ago almost to the day! In bright sunshine now, we marvelled at the surrounding peaks covered in fresh snow from this morning and the day before.

In Cook's wake, we paddled between Crayfish Island and Astronomer's Point. This was the narrow passage Cook brought the *Resolution* through. We explored Astronomer's Point, a small peninsula which Cook's men cleared to set up instruments for an observatory to estimate the geographical position of Dusky Sound. William Wales, an officer of the Board of Longitude, was entrusted to do this work. His instructions from the English Parliament were to '…settle the position of the Headands, Islands, and Harbours in Latitude and Longitude.' He was also directed to observe the height of the tides.

We walked along the DoC boardwalk to a viewing platform overlooking the narrow passage we had just paddled through. The 263-year-old tree stumps were still visible among the regrown forest. Soaking up more history, we walked up Cook Stream to Lake Forster. The ship's naturalists (George and Johann Forster) had found kokopu (native trout) in the stream, as had the Begg brothers in the 1960s. We didn't see any kokopu but we had a nice leg stretch through the bush on a rough route, enjoying being out of the boats.



Cathye and Peter shrouded like ninjas for sandyfly protection while cooking the evening meal at Cascade Cove, while kit dries out during a brief burst of sunshine

Our final leg on this interesting day was to paddle the last five kms to Cascade Cove, checking out the cascade on our way. We had to work hard through another hail squall for the last few kms. Crawling along the shore, Paul landed us right onto the campsite that he and Max had camped at 35 years earlier. I was first out of my boat and Paul directed me up a barely discernable track to look for a large campsite under the beech trees. Amazed at Paul's memory, I popped out of the bush and announced we were right onto it! It took us three hours to set up camp, cook dinner, listen to the radio sched and get into bed. What a great day. As I drifted off to sleep, comforted by a good forecast, I suspected we would not be moving far the next day.

9 April:

The morning was fine, sunny and cool with snow to 400m on the surrounding peaks. We had a leisurely pancake breakfast on the beach and strung all our damp gear out to dry. Cascade Cove looked like a flea market on a Sunday morning. We even did some washing. Paul and Peter, having only brought one pair

of socks each (to Fiordland!) were torn between washing the week-old odorous pair, or brewing them for another week. I bartered morning cups of tea in bed to give them a pair each from my stash of five pairs, which still left me with more socks than them!

It would have been a good paddling day but we had exploring to do. First Paul showed us the 'dog box' site where an old deerstalker's biv had stood 32 years ago when he and Max had camped there. Then a walk along the beach northwards to find the Maori cave dwelling we had read about in Begg and Begg's book *Dusky Bay*.

It was more of a rock overhang than a cave but we could see the blackened rock where two fireplaces once were. Some huge rocks had fallen from the roof and landed on the only flat area forming the floor of the overhang. This is where the Begg brothers had found human bones. There was a ledge above this – on which one of the Begg party had climbed and found more human bones.

I found a way around the back where I could scramble up and carefully climb down onto a dry flat ledge large enough to sleep on. You would not wish to turn over in the night due to a three metre drop. The Begg brothers speculated that the family, that Cook met here may have been killed here by maurading Kai Tahu from Preservation Inlet.

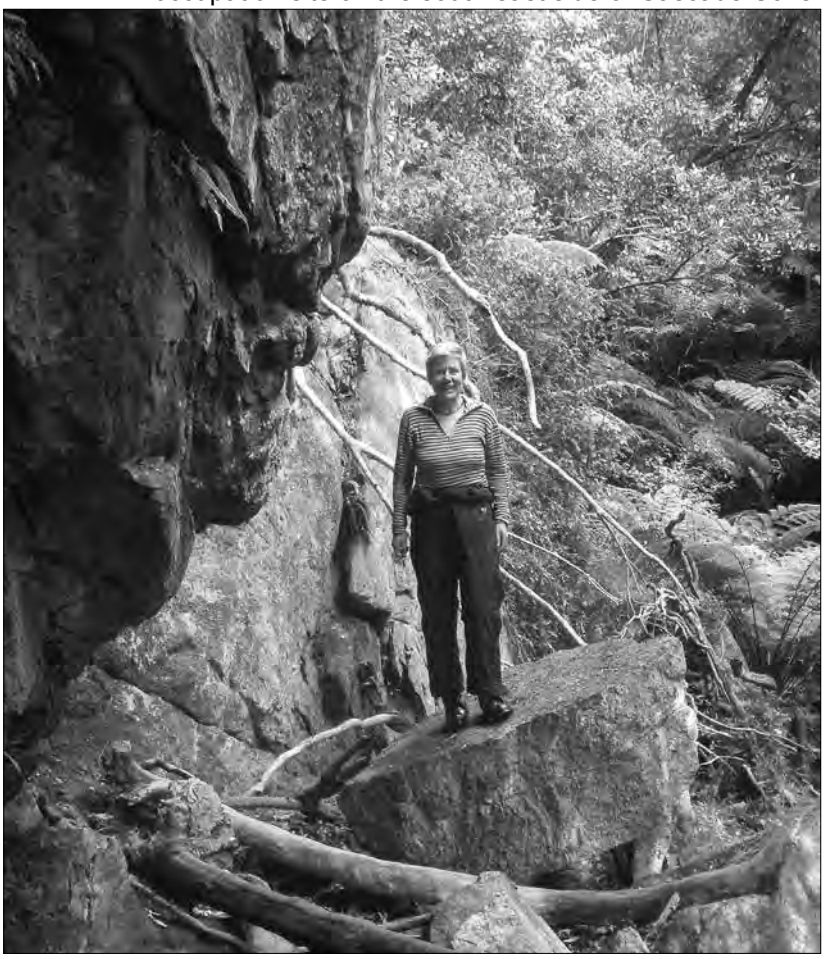
Cook had recorded that the family mysteriously disappeared after he met them. A rusty scrap of iron was found in a crevice at the back of the dwelling, by the Beggs, suggesting it may have been the remains of the knife given to the family by Cook's men. Scientists had also analysed the bones and even found a few in the midden, suggesting some of the family may have been subject to a feast.

After leaving the rock overhang we returned for lunch in the sun, before wandering south of our campsite to explore the old sealers' campsite. Several boat runs were visible at low tide. We found some flat areas where the sealers' huts might have been in the bush, and I found a lovely 'bath' site in the river-bed. It was a nice relaxing day exploring. We all hunted for the source of a very strange noise we heard every time we sat on the beach. I though it was a penguin, Paul thought is was a possum. We saw adult kereru flying in and out of the bush in their ungainly way, every now and then. Finally, we located the tree the kereru were flying to - to feed their noisy young! We had identified the noise.

The tent flys we brought were great. We pitched them over our tents so we could de-robe before entering. It was also handy to cook under a fly and store gear out of the rain. We had a lovely fire to sit around for a yarn while Pete cooked. After dinner on the beach in the dusky sunset, we had a drink in memory of Max Reynolds. Watching the colours intensify and fade with the light, Paul recited Tolkeins' poem *Bilbo's Last Song*, which he had recited at Max's funeral a few short years after they had camped right here:

Day is ended, dim my eyes,
But journey long before me lies.
Farewell, friends! I hear the call.
The ship's beside the stony wall.
Foam is white and waves are grey;
beyond the sunset leads my way.
Foam is salt, the wind is free;
I hear the rising of the sea.

Cathye standing on part of the rockfall that fell onto a Maori occupation site on the south-east side of Cascade Cove.



Farewell, friends! The sails are set,
the wind is east, the moorings fret.
Shadows long before me lie,
beneath the ever-bending sky,
but islands lie behind the Sun
that I shall raise ere all is done;
lands there are to west of West,
where night is quiet and sleep is rest.

Guided by the Lonely Star,
beyond the utmost harbour-bar,
I'll find the heavens fair and free,
and beaches of the Starlit Sea.
Ship my ship! I seek the West,
and fields and mountains ever blest.
Farewell to Middle-earth at last.
I see the star above my mast!

A moving moment passed and misty-eyed, we wended our way back to the tents for an early night. A stag roared close by.

10 April:
Up early and packed in no time, we breakfasted in the sun by our loaded boats, which were getting lighter by the day as we chewed through our provisions. We paddled off to the north side of Long Island, retracing our steps of two days before. Snow clad peaks marched north and south before us.

We pulled into Detention Cove for a look around before crossing to Acheron Passage, and hugging the west side of the fiord to shelter from a slight northerly breeze.

As we crossed from the west to the east side of Acheron Passage at the narrows, Peter spied the unmistakable vapour spouts of dolphins at the entrance to Wet Jacket Arm, a few kilometres to the north. A tad desperate to let the morning cuppa out, Peter and I landed on a tricky bouldery beach. Ten minutes further on, we came to a small sandy beach with an easy landing. Typical!

Cathye and Peter at the head of a seal slaughtering crew boat run on the south-east side of Cascade Cove in Dusky Sound.

The final crossing to the campsite at Wet Jacket Arm was dead flat calm. We were out of the notorious Acheron Passage, which Max and Paul had taken two days to negotiate on their South Island trip in 1977. A stag roared his welcome as we pulled into camp. We spent an hour levelling our beach-front tent site with fine sand ready for a flat sleep as this would be a two night stopover.

The forecast for the next day was awful. Paul recited *The cremation of Sam McGee*, a Robert Service poem, for our amusement as we huddled around the fire while he cooked us Lamb Madras for tea.

11 April:
The rain pissed down during the night and got heavier as dawn broke. It was not difficult to imagine what Cook's men might have experienced up Wet Jacket Arm. A PIT DAY was declared. Taking the trowel for a walk was not fun. When I returned I emptied 16 big billies of water from an impressive lake in the fly Paul had pitched over his tent.

Our fly was taut and flat and the water was running off fine so I placed billies under to collect water. Peter got us tea and breakfast in bed. It was going to be a long day. No more tea as we did not want to exit the tent unnecessarily. So a combo of sleeping and reading was the sum of the day's activities. Easter bunny came a day early and that was lunch. What luxury, sleeping, reading, and eating chocolate! Pity about the ensuite.

By evening the rain had stopped and I cooked spaghetti bolognaise and delivered it to the boys in their tents. They finally got up to a clear starry night for the radio sched. It sounded like we would be able to move the next day but a series of fronts were coming after that. So exploring the 'moose man's' camp up Wet Jacket Arm and discovering Breaksea Sound's secrets would have to wait for another trip. This was day 13 of our trip and time was almost up. We made the decision to make a run for Supper Cove in this small weather window and see if we could request a day early pick up using the mountain radio.

12 April:
A clear dawn and we were up at 7am for a quick breakfast and packing. On this trip we had muesli for quick getaways, and pancakes, porridge or bacon and eggs for more leisurely days. The tide was out. In pairs we carried the loaded boats a few metres to the water from where we had packed them. It was a trick to estimate the pozzy to put the empty boat to pack, allowing enough time for the tide and the completed packing to coincide, so we could just get in and paddle off when we were done. We got very good at this – a ploy to save our ageing backs from carrying loaded boats too far. We made our lunches and had snacks handy so we could eat on the water if we needed to – landings in Fiordland do not always coincide with when you need to eat!

We were on the water by 9am. It was calm where we set off, but stormy up Wet Jacket Arm. Shafts of light slanted down to the water like silver arms reaching down

from the dark sky. Silver paths fanned out on the water, painting a dramatic canvas before us.

It was a good run down Acheron Passage to Passage Point with the tide against us but no wind. Paul wanted to make a beeline for Supper Cove. We were keen to explore Sportsman Cove so we parted on opposite routes around Cooper Island. Being a mostly solo paddler, Paul loves to 'slip the leash' at times, so we were all happy and would reunite at Supper Cove.

We watched Paul become a sleek silhouette as he glided along the distant shore. Peter and I crossed open water to the Shag Islands and on to Sportsman's Cove, a keyhole inlet on the western end of Cooper Island. It had a narrow crooked entrance, so you paddle though a steepish gorge before it suddenly opens out into a lake-like jewel surrounded by steep deep-green forest.

Morning mist veiled the scene. The water was dark and still with perfect reflections on the sides of the fiord. Pleased to have visited this magic wee glen, we paddled back out of the gorge and along Cook Channel on the south side of Cooper Island. Cook's coopers had used trees from this island for some of the ship's repairs.

With the wind behind us, and the tide with us, we made good progress for the first few kilometres. It was calm in the middle third, then the wind picked up behind us for the final third. Celmisia daisies were still in flower on the sides of the fiord. Three curious young seals stopped gang-fishing to follow us like so many puppy dogs. They stuck their sleek heads out of the water for a good look, then slithered under and around our boats to check everything out. Their curiosity satisfied, they went back to fishing!

A large waterfall opposite the end of Cooper Island marked the end of Nine Fathoms Passage, and it was here that we spotted Paul crossing to Girlies Island at the entrance to Supper Cove. "You made good time," he said, when we caught him up. Paul had experienced dead calm conditions with no wind on his side of Cooper Island, while our windy sections with waves to push us along had helped reunite us to paddle the last stretch together. In our exchange of stories, we found out Paul had paddled within metres of a young 'two pointer' stag.

Peter spotted a straight row of birds out in the middle of the fiord - they continuously alighted and landed on the water in a line, so he paddled over to investigate. He got really close to the 20 or 30 terns, perched on a floating log, competing for space on the crowded real estate. He got some great movies and photos.

We arrived at Supper Cove at 2:00 pm, to a welcome of smoke coming out the hut chimney. We immediately strung out the Mountain Radio aerial on the beach and I dialled up Southern Lakes Helicopters (SLH). Our mountain radio had a phone key-pad on the back so you could make phone calls on the radio signal. No mobile phone reception here.

However, I had no luck as I could hear SLH answer the call, but they could not hear me! Disappointed, we contemplated spending the next few days in the Supper Cove hut while waiting out the pending storm along with seven trampers and hunters who had arrived at

Cathye cooking pancakes at Cascade Cove.

the hut that day. The thought was enough to spur me into radioing IB Base in Dunedin. I asked them to call SLH for us, which they did while we stood by. The message came back: "Can you be ready in two hours?" that was by 5:00 pm.

Paul and I danced a jig on the beach and we all started unpacking our boats like mad. IB base asked us if a certain party was at the hut, as they had been trying to get a message to them for days. Pete walked the 10 minutes to the hut and found the party who walked down to the beach to take the call on our radio. Wilderness technology.

We enjoyed exchanging stories with the young Auckland lads who had been hunting in the wilds of Fiordland during 'the roar'. The radio message was from their mates who were to fly in to join them in the next weather break.

We retrieved our $2 shop stripey gear bags and helicopter strops and ties we had hidden in the bush two weeks earlier and we were ready by 5:00 pm. We sat on a log on the beach and fed the few sandflies that appeared, while the clouds closed in and the drizzle set in.

We never said anything, but we were all thinking the helicopter may not make it in time and we may be here for days. At 5:40 pm we heard a distant thub thub thub and watched as a tiny sandfly turned into a dragonfly, then into a helicopter and landed on the helipad at Supper Cove. Yes!

The pilot leapt out of the cockpit and above the rotor blade noise instructed us to load the gear up to him first, followed by the kayaks. We passed all the gear to him, then the four of us strapped the kayaks to the skids using only sign language as the rotor and downwash noise blotted out any voice comms. Paul and I tied our two kayaks bum-to-bum on one skid while Peter and the pilot strapped his kayak to the other. This all took 20 minutes and we were into the chopper and away with rain splattering the windscreen and the hills darkening by the minute.

I asked the pilot through the headset "have you flown much with kayaks?" He replied "this is my first time." We all hummed a mantra for our knots and strop tying to hold on until Te Anau.

The main divide was clear of cloud and the 60 minute ride back to Te Anau base was much moodier than our clear, calm and sunny flight in, two weeks before.

We touched down at SLH base just on dark at 7:00 pm. We loaded our gear and boats straight into and onto the vehicles and hugged our goodbyes. It had been another great Fiordland adventure and we couldn't wait for the next.

Most useful piece of kit:
Peter: Small broadcast band radio – to listen to the marine forecast on national Radio at 5:00 am. There was no VHF marine radio reception in Dusky and the mountain radio forecast gave the situation and mountain forecast but no marine forecast.

Cathye: *Buller* lace-up gumboots – the luxury of dry warm feet in Fiordland.

Paul: My new huge light-weight rain fly. A must for the sodden fjords.

Favourite day or experience:
Peter: The first day - actually getting in there and knowing we had two weeks of exploring ahead of us.

Cathye: The wet day paddling when we were surrounded by dolphins for an hour in a calm drizzly misty fiord. The poetry recitals were pretty special too.

Paul: Landing and camping at two of the coves where Max Reynolds and I had over-nighted 32 years earlier.

The most elegant Ashley Gumboot dancing troupe, posing for a 'groupie' pic before the helo arrives to return them to real life.

GEORGE SOUND TRIP
Easter 2013
Wind, White-caps & Wapiti

by Cathye Haddock

"Do you think it's a goer?" Pete said, looking at the whitecaps on the Lake as we drove to Te Anau Downs. It was midday, and this was the last stretch of our 997 km road trip from Wellington to Lake Te Anau. It certainly was a big effort to get to the starting point for these Fiordland trips. But excitement was in the air and we were hoping this trip would prove to be second-time-lucky.

We had attempted a kayak/tramp to George Sound nearly 20 years ago, but were thwarted by the weather. When it rains in Fiordland, it really rains! We had naively allowed a week for the trip. After a lovely paddle across the Lake Te Anau, we spent a nice night camped on one of the islands in Middle Fiord. But by morning, ominous clouds were brewing in the mountains and wind had begun to whip up the lake.

We made a beeline to Junction Burn Hut in South West Arm to wait out the storm. I remember paddling into a strong head wind, horizontal rain, with muddy brown water spilling way out into the fiord from the Junction and Woodrow Burns. It bucketed down for the next three days. The creeks and rivers turned into torrents and the lake lapped at the hut steps.

We were entertained by the mouse Olympics - it was a beech mast year, so there had been a mouse population explosion. So the critters had come from far and near to avail themselves of the shelter, as we had. The mice also tried hard to avail themselves of our food. But we made a sport out of triple-wrapping our food in plastic and packs before suspending them from the ceiling. I woke one night to find Pete shining a spotlight on a gold medalist climbing 'hand over hand' along the rafter, down a number 8 wire hook and string to the pack, over and under the pack lid, into the pack to have a good go at penetrating the plastic liner. One off-duty park ranger evicted the rodent without ceremony!

When the rain finally stopped, we shot off, lamenting and cursing we would not make it to George Sound on this trip. So a 'recce' it was and off we paddled to Prospectors Bay at the head of North West Arm. From there we walked the 15 minutes through to Lake Hankinson, and tried to console ourselves that this looked like a tough portage, which we would not need to do that day. We looked longingly up Lake Hankinson, and silently resolved, 'we'll be back'.

And here we were! Back at Te Anau Downs, with unfinished business. We had 12 days' food this time and two weeks' leave. We had time to sit out a bit of bad weather - but as we well knew - it could rain and blow for weeks in Fiordland. Tawhirimatea would have the last say.

We were re-inspired to do the George Sound trip by Susan Cade and Sandy Winterton's Christmas trip a few months earlier. We had seen Sue and Sandy's slides of the mirror glass lake and wonderful weather over Henry Pass to George Sound. To Sandy's surprise, his wonderful article in the *New Zealand Sea Canoeist*, which had rated the trip as a '1 out of 5' for enjoyment, had fired us up and added to our motivation.

The whitecaps on the lake looked vicious, but we packed the kayaks anyway, and would make our decision once we'd finished. We could always leave the packed kayaks in the scrub and return at dawn for an early start. At 3 pm we finished packing and the wind had dropped a tad. We decided to paddle out of Boat Harbour beyond the point to test the wind and waves.

Peter map reading on Lake Te Anau with a fresh dusting of snow on the tops

Once we got out there it was a steady 15 knot headwind with waves up to a metre, some breaking over the bow. We knew it would be hard work, but it felt predictable and manageable. So we headed for Rocky Point at the entrance of Middle Fiord. We paddled the six kilometres side-by-side so we could keep track of each other without having to stop paddling or risk tipping out if we turned to see where the other one was. We were grateful for our training paddles in strong winds and waves on Wellington Harbour.

We camped the night on a sheltered beach another 6 kms beyond Rocky Point. The wind and waves didn't let up the whole way, and we were pleased to stop. The 12 kilometres had taken us three hours. It got dark soon after pitching the tent and eating dinner. The

mountain radio forecast was for more headwinds the next day.

An early rise got us on the water at 7:40 am. As we paddled out on calm water in the lee of a small point, we enjoyed an orange and purple sunrise to our left, and the bright silver full moon against an indigo sky to our right. Wow! I kept looking from side to side, smiling and enjoying the magic. As soon as we rounded the point we were back in the wind and waves.

It was helicopter and fizz-boat rush-hour all morning as we paddled up Middle Fiord. Wilderness experience – yeah right! After a few hours of this, we saw a boat drop two people off on a point ahead of us. We stopped to have a yarn with a Tauranga man and his teen-aged son. They had been dropped in to their 'wapiti block' for 10 days hunting.

The sandflies were having a feast and they were having a map study before heading up a spur to the tops to try their luck. This was steep and rough country. We wished each other well and continued up the fiord. As we paddled past the entrance to South West Arm, Pete and I reminisced about our three days being hut bound on our last trip.

Peter on the grunty portage from Lake Te Anau to Lake Hankinson

A hooded man on the slipway at Lake Hankinson after the portage from Lake Te Anau. The hood for sandfly protection.

It took three hours to paddle the 13 kms up North West Arm to the head of the lake. The strong headwind and waves never let up until the last 200 or 300 metres. This was in the wind shadow of the small peninsula of bush that separated Lake Te Anau from Lake Hankinson.

We jumped out of the kayaks and looked back at the 25 km we had paddled and it looked as flat as! Looking at the backs of waves always belies the head wind and waves you have just battled. Hmmm! We envied the perfect reflections Sue and Sandy had captured on the slides of their trip up the Lake.

Some hunters had also just arrived at the head of the fiord in their boats. They explained the 'traffic' we had seen and heard all morning. It was changeover day for the wapiti-hunting season. Hunters went into a ballot every year, to 'win' a permit to hunt in a wapiti block for 10 days. Only a third of the hunters that go into the ballot actually win a block. There are 25 wapiti blocks; and three 10 day hunting periods. Today was changeover day and the helicopters and boats were picking up the first lot of hunters and dropping the second lot in.

That meant the huts that Sue and Sandy had to themselves were going to be full of wapiti hunters for us. This was going to be an interesting trip.

We unpacked our gear from the kayaks, packed it into one backpack and a $2-shop big stripy carry bag each, and carried them through the 15 minute portage to Lake Hankinson. On return, we washed our kayaks and paddling gear with detergent from the DoC Didymo station, then carried them through the portage one at a time. The portage took three trips and three hours - including the didymo wash. We ate lunch by the boatshed skids on the shores of Lake Hankinson.

After another 1.5 hours paddling into a head wind up the steep-sided Lake Hankinson, we turned into the Wapiti River-mouth, and padded the last 10 minutes up the river to Hankinson Hut. We walked the boats up the first rapid to protect the gel coat. I had a slight mishap when the

Cathye on a three-wire bridge over the Wapiti River

river current grabbed my kayak and sent it sideways, giving me a humungous bruise on my shin and an undignified dunking. It took another half hour to unpack the boats, pack our packs, stow some gear and food in the hut, and stow the boats outside the hut well above the river. The resident hunters made us a lovely brew before we tramped off up the track at 5pm. We had been 'on the go' for nearly 10 hours. I was annoyed I had left my gaiters in the van at Te Anau Downs.

The sign said 2.5 hours to Thompson Hut. We knew we would be pushing it to get there by dark. Five minutes up the track, we came to the first 3-wire bridge, great fun! The track was pretty rough, but dry-ish. However, I started feeling dizzy an hour into it, just before the second 3-wire bridge. I sat for a while, had a munch up and a drink. I had experienced this before on a 36 km trail running event, and knew that after 9 hours of strenuous activity, and only a few brief stops, I had run outa fuel. After the 3-wire bridge crossing, we came to a rare campsite, and called it a day. The mountain radio forecast was for heavy rain for the next few days. Dinner tasted good and sleep was deep.

With an early start, we tramped through mixed beech and podocarp forest on the true left of the river until we reached Lake Thompson. We heard kaka screeching in the canopy high above us. At the head of the lake was a lovely green clearing with plenty of deer sign. Reaching Thompson Hut at 10am, an hour and a half after leaving our campsite, we were surprised there were no hunters in residence. But there were two large plastic crates of food and a note in the hut book that two hunters were camped up the Wapiti River near Lake Sutherland for five days.

The rain started after we had collected about a weeks worth of firewood from the bush, filling the empty woodshed. We enjoyed the day resting, reading, and sorting our gear for the tramp to George Sound. I improvised a pair of bandage-style gaiters from my pack towel and some munty safety pins I had carried in my first aid kit for years. Then I found a neoprene gaiter in the woodshed. Score! Even though it made an odd pair! We stowed some spare clothes and two days food under one of the bunks.

Two sopping wet wapiti hunters staggered into the hut from Lake Hankinson just after we lit the fire at about 4:30 pm. It had taken them 7.5 hours! And we thought we were slow at 3.5 hours. When we saw the beer and RTDs come out of their packs, we understood why. Just before dark, they went out for a 'look' in the pouring rain - to the lakeshore where we saw the deer sign earlier. They were nice lads from farms near Invercargill and we had a great night of yarning. The forecast was for rain and more rain for the next four days. I wrote the forecast on a yellow post-it-note to take with us.

We all slept soundly to the heavy rain on the corrugated iron roof. I got up for a leak about 3 am and it had stopped raining. I could see a few stars. At 6 am it was still not raining and our barometers had stabilized and risen a bit, so Pete and I decided to give it a go. We could always turn back.

The sign said 10 hours to George Sound Hut. It took us 11 hours.

Cathye about to launch onto the 'Planks of Death'


Cathye's improvized gaiters - for passage of the Planks of Death

We never had a drop of rain. It was a magic day.

Below the hut, we crossed a bridge over a deep gorge above the confluence of the Rugged Burn and the upper Wapiti River, which was absolutely pumping. The route (not track) followed the Rugged Burn up to Deadwood Lagoon before climbing steeply up to Henry Pass. Even though the route was well marked with orange DoC triangles, we managed to lose it at one stage and did a circle in the mossy understory before getting back on route with the help of the GPS. Route finding was going to take some concentration.

We had a few giggles when we got to the swampy section that Sandy had nick-named 'The Planks of Death'. However, the giggles soon turned to shrieks as we slipped and slid off the greasy corduroy logs, laid down in the wetland decades ago, to trick unsuspecting trampers that this was the 'way forward'. At one point I slipped forward into the swamp and just as I got up I overbalanced and slipped backwards – landing in the mud again - cast. I had to undo my pack to get up, as Pete laughed and took photos. I got him back later when he slipped off a death plank and landed knee-deep in mud.

We sampled the bright red coprosma berries and snow berries along the way, yum! We took photos of weird fungi and late earinia orchids. Tomtits, fantails and bellbirds kept us company. We also heard riflemen but never saw one. Climbing up to Henry Pass was a relief after the muddy, swampy route over the last few hours. The stunted alpine forest gave way to sweeping views back down the valley with layers and layers of mountains ad infinitum. This was Fiordland.

A kea's cry welcomed us to the top, 4.5 hours after leaving the hut. We ate lunch among alpine tarns fringed with snow grass. Pete heard, then spotted, a rare rock wren hopping and bobbing through the dracaphylum (turpentine) scrub. The 360˚ views were just stunning. Before us lay the classic U-shaped valley, carved by deep glaciers in the Ice Ages, with Katherine Creek now running through. Bare peaks, hanging valleys, high basins filled with tarns complete the picture. With only a breath of wind on the pass, and no rain, we felt very lucky.

The pass was named after Richard Henry, Fiordland's first ranger, who lived at the southern end of Lake Te Anau for many years and often explored the area. Richard Henry first traversed the route in 1889 and later cleared a track. For us, crossing this amazing man's path again was a privilege. Knowing that the view before us was practically unchanged from the view he would have seen over a hundred years ago was inspiring. The birdlife however, had been much diminished since Henry walked this route.

While it was the shortest route to the West Coast fiords, the George Sound track never became popular. A lack of accommodation and transport did not help. Track maintenance ceased in 1906. The area has some of the most historic huts in Fiordland, with Hankinson and George Sound Huts being built in 1923 and Thompson Hut in the 1950s.

The route off the pass was down a rock crevice with a creek roaring though it, and rata in flower clinging to the rock. Once below the crevice, the route dropped steeply through mixed podocarp and beech forest to Katherine Creek, where we passed a couple of picturesque waterfalls. We crossed a 100 metre wide old slip at one point, where the rocks had been thickly colonized by all sorts of different lichens. We came across a hunter's camp beside the slip, and heard a weird trumpeting sound across the valley. We later learned this was the roar of the wapiti stag.

Lake Katherine was perfectly still, reflecting its steep sides when we got there. Traversing the steep sides was hard work as we had to cross three big slips. The first was an unstable tangle of trees, criss-crossed like giant pick-up-sticks. The others just rock fall. Pleased to reach the head of Lake Katherine, we sat on the beach for 20 minutes to rest. Over the last hour tramping, we dropped to sea level through giant podocarps and got to the final 3-wire bridge just on dark. Pete said it was 220 metres to the hut according to the GPS. The smell of smoke through the bush welcomed us at the end of our 11 hour tramp.

We surprised four hunters in the hut, and they moved over for us. We cooked continental mushroom pasta with bacon and capsicum from Susan Cade's garden. Comfortable and warm, eating dinner by the fire was hugely satisfying. We celebrated our arrival at George Sound exchanging stories of our adventures with the

Peter and Cathye on top of Henry Pass, the high point between George Sound and Lake Te Anau

hunters. The forecast was for rain and more rain. It started as we lay down and drifted into a dreamless sleep.

The wapiti hunters, from Rotorua and Whakatane, had helicoptered in with all their gear. This included dozens of beer and an inflatable boat with a small outboard motor. They used the boat to access their block, the steep country bordering George Sound.

By dawn the rain had stopped and mist was hanging in horizontal veils across the steep-sided fiord. George Sound was mirror calm. We wished we had our sea kayaks. We watched with envy as the hunters went out on the boat to drop two hunters off and pick another two up. It was low tide so I collected mussels for lunch and worked out how to use the panorama function on my new camera. What amazing land and seascapes to practice on!

George Sound was visited by Māori as part of seasonal food and resource gathering. Known as Te Houhou by Māori, it was a stopping off point for waka journeys along the Fiordland coast.

The weather was nice all morning, then drizzled and rained all afternoon. We read the hut book and found we knew a few people, including old friends Shona McKee and Neil Sloan, who had done the same trip just over a year ago. The forecast was for drizzle in the morning and rain late the next day. We prepared for an early start to get over Henry Pass before the weather turned. Then were into our sleeping bags early. Thunder, lightning, windblasts and heavy rain blasted the 80 year old hut all night. Lightning lit up the hut through our closed eyelids. We worried about crossing upper Katherine Creek the next day.

There was no rain when we rose at 6 am, our barometers were stable and had risen over night. On the track by 7.20 am, it was still dark when we crossed the 3 wire bridge. The track was as wet as. We waded knee to thigh deep around the lake edge where we had rested on the beach two days earlier.

We were stoked when a long finned eel (tuna), over a metre long, investigated us then gracefully slid out into the crystal clear lake. This was the first of several tuna sightings this day. Although it was not raining, our parkas were soaked from brushing through the soaking bush. The Lake Katherine slips were no trouble on the return trip, and the waterfalls in Katherine Creek were pumping. Thankfully, the crossings were fine. I saw another tuna slithering up a rapid next to me during one crossing.

The climb up to Henry Pass was enjoyable and the crevice much easier to negotiate going up. There was still no rain and little wind as we ate our lunch on the pass 6.5 hours after leaving the hut. Three kea cried ke-aaaaaaaa as they flew over us. Pete called back to his kindred spirits. The descent from the pass was firm and dryish. But the route from Deadwood Lagoon and down through the Rugged Burn valley was either a creek, lake or swamp most of the way.

And we thought it was wet coming up! The planks of death were even more fun and much more slippery than a few days earlier. Somehow, we skillfully negoti-

Cathye negotiating the rock fall by Lake Katherine

ated them with fewer 'stuck in the mud' episodes. On our descent to the confluence of the Rugged Burn and Wapiti Rivers, we heard the trumpet call of a wapiti stag bellow out from the other side of the valley. We wondered if this was a hunter's call or the real thing. Pete and I started talking loudly to each other to make sure any hunters knew humans were afoot.

We made it to Thompson Hut 10.5 hours after leaving George Sound. Without a drop of rain, we were grateful to the weather gods. The two Southland hunters were in the hut along with two Wellington hunters. The latter had camped up the Wapiti River by Lake Sutherland and seen a group of eight wapiti, hinds, fawns and yearlings but no trophy stags. So they had shot the animals with their cameras instead. Sounded magic. None of the hunters had been trumpeting in the last half hour, so they were most interested in our report. We had a good night yarning with the hunters.

Cathye smiling still despite the mud

The Southland boys had tramped up to Henry Pass and camped the same day we had left Thompson Hut. They found my yellow post it note with the weather forecast written on it on the pass the next day. I must have dropped it when we stopped for lunch. As their satellite phone didn't work and they didn't have a mountain radio, this weather information had helped them make their decision to retreat to the Thompson Hut. Spooky. They made it back to the hut in record time with heavy rain and wind squalls on their tails the whole way. They also had thunder and lightning that night in the Thompson Hut, the same night we had it in George Sound. All four hunters prepared for an early start the next day, back up to Lake Sutherland for wapiti watching. The weather forecast was awful.

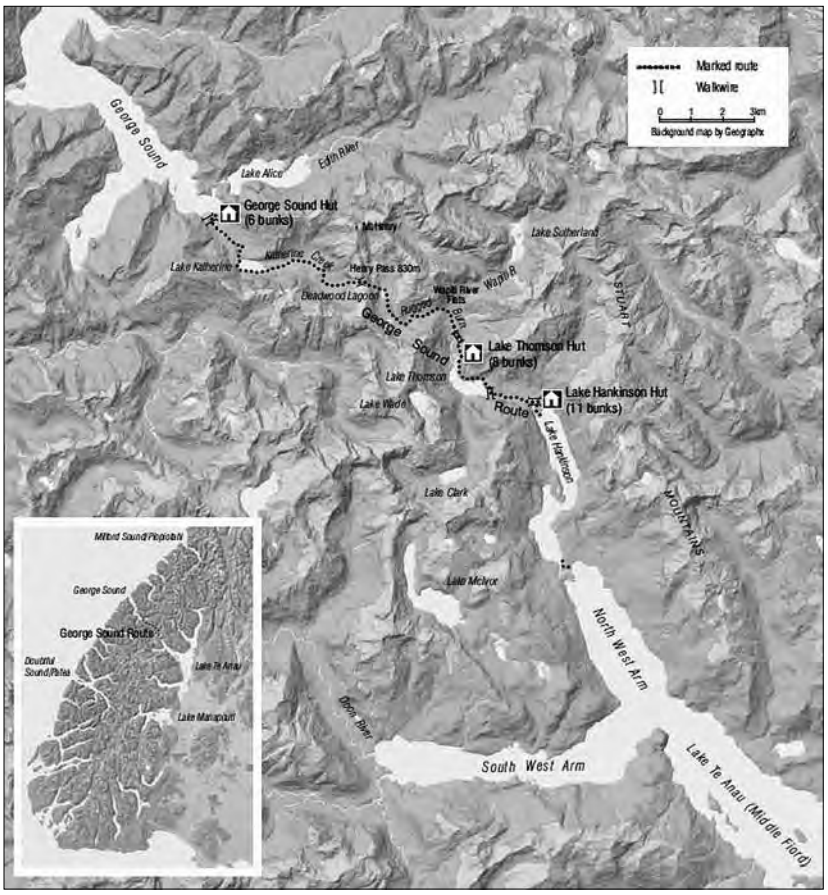
After the hunters left, we had the hut to ourselves for a rest day. It rained all day. Poor hunters. We washed and cleaned our clothes and selves, and had the fire going for most of the afternoon to dry our gear. I cooked frajitas for quick, ready-made lunches for the next two days. The forecast was clearing tomorrow, with a southerly and snow the following day.

When the alarm went off at 6 am, it was still raining so we went back to sleep till 7 am. We were on the track by 8.30 am in light drizzle with fine breaks. The route was wet, wet, wet. We waded through some sections that were up to my waist. The Wapiti River rapids were raging! Thank goodness for the 3-wire bridges high above, which made for exciting crossings. Our campsite from our previous trip was well above the water level, which was good to see.

We arrived back at Hankinson Hut at 11.30 am, a three hour trip. The river level was much higher than it was a few days earlier, so we carried our kayaks to the river's edge below the rapid, which was now deep and swift. We got into our kayaking gear and had lunch and a brew in the hut. The resident hunters were camped up the valley somewhere. It was freezing, so without mucking around, we jumped into our kayaks and paddled off down the river and into Lake Hankinson. It was a quick 45 minute trip back to the portage with a brisk tailwind. This was half the time it took us to paddle against the strong head wind on our way in.

Pete found his water bottle where he left it on the lakeshore the previous week. We quickly unpacked the kayaks and carried our gear back through the portage. Here we met the Tauranga man and his teenaged son we met on our paddle up Middle Fiord. They had spent the week camped and hunting on the tops overlooking Lake Te Anau. They had just returned to their base camp with some other hunters at the head of North West Arm. The son was particularly buzzing about the adventure, especially when his Dad was out of earshot!

We raced back through the portage and carried my boat back, using climbing slings through the



end loops and over our shoulders. This worked well and saved the aging backs. During a brief rest on the way, we were overtaken by the hunter and son. They were carrying Pete's boat effortlessly on their shoulders and motoring along the track. Wow. Once we recovered from this random act of kindness, we followed and thanked them profusely. The portage was completed in an hour. It had taken us three hours on the way in.

We decided to capitalize on the time saved, and set off down North West Arm at 4 pm. The strong tailwind, whitecaps, and a following sea were a bit disconcerting. However, we kept abreast of one another and rode the rollercoaster down the true right of the fiord to give us more shelter and campsite options. After a wild ride crossing the mouth of South West Arm, we worked our way down the fiord, seeking shelter from the islands. We tucked in to a sheltered beach in the lee of the wind opposite Bute Island. This was also level with our first night's campsite on the opposite side of the fiord.

It was freezing as we pitched camp. I cooked dinner while Pete set up the mountain radio for the 7.30 pm sched. Eating our dinner on a log, and looking out to the darkening water, we listened to the forecast. A southerly front was coming, with snow to 500 m the next day. We managed to get into our tent just as the freezing drizzle started. It was a cosy night in our little Minaret cocoon, listening to moreporks and kiwi, yes kiwi, calling to one another near our campsite. Paradise.

We woke up on day 9 of our trip and wished one another a happy anniversary. What a wonderful way to celebrate. It was drizzling when the alarm went off at 6 am, so we lay in for another hour. Steaming hot porridge went down a treat before packing our kayaks in a dry interlude between showers. The temperature dropped like a stone, the opposite side of the fiord disappeared in an opaque cloud, and we packed up the tent in freezing rain.

Once it cleared, we could see fresh snow on the tops, azure sky beyond, and an icy wind whipping down the fiord. The boats launched easily down the driftwood railway sleepers we had laid to pull the boats up on the night before.

On the water at 8.15 am, we ferry-glided across to the other side of the fiord in 0.5 to 1 metre breaking swell beam on, before the wind and whitecaps got too strong and big to cross safely. Once on the other side, it was an exciting ride in a following sea, which thankfully eased as we crossed from Rocky Point to Te Anau Downs. Finally able to take our hands off our paddles, we enjoyed taking photos of the spectacular backdrop of snowy peaks. Stunning. This is Fiordland!

As we pulled our kayaks onto the grassy clearing below the Guest Hotel Motel at Te Anau Downs, it was 11.15 am, warm, sunny, with a light breeze and no sandflies! We ate lunch with our gear drying all around us, before packing the van and hitting the road. A few hours later it was snowing heavily as we drove over the Crown Range Summit.

We made it to Arrowtown where we booked into a room with a spa bath, and celebrated our 21st Anniversary with lamb shanks and pear cider at the Arrowtown pub. Most content with our amazing trip - we started plotting the next one - all the way up the West Coast to the 12 Mile.

Peter Simpson paddling beneath the towering Waihaha rhyolite cliffs during a circuit of Lake Taupo. Photo: Cathye

Taupō-nui-a-Tia
The great cloak of Tia
A Paddle Around Lake Taupo
by Cathye Haddock

It was a few days before Christmas and we had no plans for the holiday yet. "How about a trip 'round Taupo?" Pete said.
"Perfect," I replied. When I got home from work the next day, the dehydrator was going flat out and the place looked like expedition base camp.

From my Turangi school days I knew the lake's full name was Taupō-nui-a-Tia, the great cloak of Tia. Its discovery was preserved in oral tradition dating back six centuries. Tia, a Polynesian chief who came to Aotearoa in Te Arawa waka, explored the interior of the North Island. On the eastern coast of the great lake, Tia saw a lava cliff opposite Motutaiko Island that reminded him of the rough flax rain cape he wore, a 'taupo' (word now obsolete). Taupō-nui-a-Tia was later applied to the whole lake, and more latterly abbreviated to Taupō moana (Lake Taupō).

We hadn't been paddling for over two years, since Pete broke his femur on a cycle trip across Tibet. He wasn't sure he could sit in a boat for long periods, so Taupō sounded like the perfect test trip with plenty of camping and get out options. After reading Evan and Linda Pugh's articles on three-day solo circumnavigations, we planned our 6 - 7 day re-laxing and exploratory trip.

With van packed, we headed north on Christmas Day, arriving at Motutere motor camp by 2:00 pm. After arranging to leave our van in the camp's secure parking for the next week, we settled in for a relaxed afternoon in the sun, just three metres from the lakeshore. Christmas dinner of stuffed chicken breasts and roast veggies was cooked in the BabyQ, followed by Xmas pud and strawberries washed down with wine. My transition from work to holiday mode was complete.

Boxing Day dawned calm and clear and off we paddled in an anti-clockwise direction around NZ's largest lake of 616 sq km. Pete entertained me with geological history of the lake remembered from his eight years as a Tongariro National Park ranger in the 1970s-80s.

The largest freshwater lake in Oceania, Taupō is a caldera or collapsed volcano that began erupting 300,000 years ago. The most frequently active supervolcano in the world, 26 smaller eruptions have rocked its shores between the Oruanui eruption (27,000 years ago) and the Taupō eruption (1800 years ago). The latter, being the most violent eruption known in the world in the last 5,000 years, fired ash 50 kms into the atmosphere and all of NZ was covered in at least 1 cm of ash! This may have been the cause of red sunsets recorded by the Romans and Chinese at the time.

Pumice on the beaches and floating on the lake was evidence of violent past eruptions. Steaming vents on nearby mountains and shores reminded us we were in active volcanic country.

Having grown up in the area and gone to school in Turangi, this was a trip down memory lane for me. Paddling past Bulli Point we watched kids trembling, as I had often done, before jumping seven metres into the lake. Jellicoe Point, another favourite family picnic spot, slipped by. The white cliffs of Hatepe were impressive, as I had previously only seen them from a distance. With the map on my deck, I noticed Lake Rotongaio just past the Hatepe cliffs. We had never noticed this lake before and were keen to explore it.

I did a recce, portaging my boat over a two metre hump of sand from Taupō moana into a waterway covered with so much floating pumice, you couldn't see any water. The pumice soon gave way to a raupō avenue, which suddenly opened out into a secluded gem fringed by native bush. A basic corrugated iron bach on the opposite shore had two red tents pitched in front of it. The map showed a track to the bach.

I found an inconspicuous grassy campsite, accessible through the raupō, with sunshine coming through a light canopy of roosting trees for shags. I raced back to tell Pete.

We circumnavigated the small lake, enjoying perfect reflections in the still, tannin-stained water. Bird song resonated from the flowering harakeke and water birds were in abundance, nesting and feeding among the raupō and cruising on the lake.

Finally, we made camp and enjoyed a delicious meal of smoked chicken, risoni and mushrooms held together with basil pesto, and toasted pine nuts on top. Yummm - this was the first of the gourmet meals Pete had prepared from the *New Zealand Backcountry Cooking* book he had recently bought. We were pleased the resident shags found other accommodation for the night but wished the mozzies had done the same.

An early start found us paddling back along the small lake, the raupō and pumice pathway, then a quick portage over driftwood

Cathye's photo of Peter paddling late evening on Lake Taupo

slats back onto Lake Taupō. We were straight into side waves and a westerly wind for the next three hours. Along the way, we passed a 'picket fence' of fishermen at Waitahanui Stream, and saw a waka-ama paddler capsize in the rough chop and swim ashore to safety. We checked she was OK and got the thumbs-up. Later we saw her mate at a nearby picnic spot ready with the ute for a pick-up.

We decided to give Taupō town a miss and straight-lined it from Wharewaka Point to Totara Bay. We had to wait for a few charter yachts before crossing the boat channel, then pulled up for a rest in a sunny sheltered lunch spot next to the walking track from Acacia Bay.

Around Rangatira Point we were back in half to one metre waves and it was interesting taking photos of each other in front of the rock carvings in a wind swell criss-crossing with reflective waves creating a confused mess.

We punched our way into a 15 knot SW headwind and one metre waves across Raeotepapa Bay. We went from one metre waves paddling around Mine Point to clapotis maximus around Waiaruha Point. Keeping in talking distance, we had a discussion on what next. Pete was happy to push on to Whakaipo Bay, but I was worried that if the wind increased another 5-10 knots we might be toast. With that fetch, it could mean clapotis gigantis going around Tahunatara Point and blimmin big side waves going into the Bay.

So we paddled into Kaiako Bay watching out for the bigger sets of side waves and finished the day with a surf landing. I went first, letting a few sets of three go under my boat before paddling in, running my bow up on the gravel beach, and leaping out lickety split. The next wave broached my boat against my legs nearly knocking me off my feet. I dragged the boat up on the narrow beach and quickly signaled Pete to come in between sets of waves. Pete landed well but with his tricky leg, didn't get out of the boat quickly enough.

The next wave broadsided his boat, which took his legs out from under him and he fell backwards on his bum with legs over the cockpit. Two more waves finished off the pummeling. I held my breath for a moment, flashback of the fall off his bike and fractured femur. Next minute - Pete's on his feet laughing and I'm dragging his boat up on the beach before the next battering. Relief! This bugger moment reminded us to respect water, whether lake or sea!

We cleared a space to pitch the tent just inside the bush edge, literally a few metres from the water. The lake level was the highest for many years, leaving just enough beach to park the kayaks. We set up our camp kitchen, using the kayaks as a windbreak. When the sun dropped below the dark skies, it struck a star spangled pathway to our campsite. Magic.

While strong, the on-shore wind was warm and at least the sandflies couldn't land. The wind thrust waves onto the beach a few metres from our tent. The whooshing rhythm sent us into a deep sleep until we woke to a calm lake.

We wondered if the seiche effect was responsible for the 'high tide' mark that was evident a few centimetres from our boats in the morning. A seiche is a standing wave in an enclosed or partially enclosed body of water, such as a lake. Wind pushes water to one end, raising the water level, which then equalizes with gravitational pull.

We were on the water early as the forecast was for 15 knot winds again in the afternoon. Hugging the shore, we paddled around the point, across Whakaipo Bay and Whangamata Bay (Kinloch), arriving at Kawakawa point in flat-

Cathye's photo of the picturesque village of Waihi.

tish conditions about 2:00 pm. The natural boat harbour was chocka with 14 launches, yachts and gin palaces anchored for the night. We nipped into a campsite at the far left of the beach, and felt like paupers in extravagant company.

We sought different riches in life - aching arms from travelling under our own steam and simple camping. We wandered around the network of tracks along the little peninsula and through to the next bay. The bush was alive with the screech of koekoea (long-tailed cuckoo) and the melodious calls of tui and korimako (bellbird). Black swans swam around the pleasure boats hoping for a feed and fish rose in the water. Kids screamed and laughed as they swam and rowed around the sheltered nook and swung through the trees on a rope. The jet skier's music wove though the cacophony.

We were out of boat city early and really enjoyed our solitary paddle along the massive cliffs to Waihaha and arrived before midday. We paddled the 5 km return trip up the peaceful Waihaha River to Tieke Falls, which were pumping. Well worth the effort.

We worked out where the new Waihaha mountain bike trail that looked over the falls was, having ridden the trail to Waihora Bay earlier in the year.

Waihaha marae and camp ground are located in Waihaha Bay, Lake Taupō, 200 m from the Waihaha River, only accessible by boat. The primary hapū is Ngāti Tarakaiahi, one of several hapū of Ngāti Tūwharetoa with marae on the shores of the lake.

I had contacted the Waihaha Māori Lands Trust to book a campsite prior. We were warmly welcomed by Marilyn Khan who gave us the Trust Board's bank account details to pay when we got home.

The campground is next to the beautiful Waihaha Marae, and both are sheltered behind native trees along the lake shore. This was a colleague's Mum's marae, so I took some photos for him. The wharenui is called Haukapuanui (built in 2002), the wharekai is Hineone and the wharepuni is called Puarata.

The Waihaha campground is ideal for kayakers. All sites are beach front with plenty of space for kayaks and several tents. There are fairly new composting toilets near by. There is no Queen's Chain here so you cannot freedom camp.

Our tent neighbours camped here every year, bringing all their gear over in the family boat. The kids galloped up and down the track astride their toitoi horses, manes a-flying! So great to see kids making their own fun without a screen device in sight!

Cathye living the dream in a wild camp near Motuoapa Peninsula.

We enjoyed a lovely sunny afternoon around camp and got talking to Mario from Auckland, who keeps connected with his Marae by coming every summer. Mario caught three large trout in the evening, fishing off the Waihaha River bar in front of the campsite. He was excited to take his catch up to the wharekai for that night's dinner.

We heard strong winds in the night, with waves crashing and tents flapping. Pete got up and saw torches flashing all over the show as boaties checked and secured their moorings but it was calm and sunny by morning. The mountains were clear as we paddled off, waving to Marilyn and the other nannies having their morning cuppa tea on the beach in the sun. Idyllic!

Our sleek kayaks were again dwarfed by the massive pillars and cliffs along the way to Te Awaroa and Whanganui Bays. We explored the open roofed 'Escape Cave' on Te Tiroa Point, which had a wide opening to paddle into and the collapsed roof open to the sky. Ngāti Te Maunga's marae has a commanding view over Whanganui Bay from its elevated site.

Two fizz-boat families arrived at the nano beach at Cherry Bay just ahead of us, so we squeezed in among rocks for a sunny morning tea stop and leg stretch. The toilet is munted, but there is a sizeable campsite beneath the native bush.

We really enjoyed the next stretch to Kuratau, with more dramatic rhyolite cliffs plunging deep into the lake. It was like a one-sided freshwater version of Fiordland, without the sandflies! We saw lots of mummy ducks followed by up to ten ducklings along the foot of the gigantic and isolated cliffs. Closer to civilization, these ducky whānau would be much reduced by vicious predators by now.

We explored more caves along the cliffs, including an obscured through trip - in one end and out the other, just before Poukura marae (Ngāti Parakaawa).

Our friends met us in their boat *AJay*, just before arriving in Kuratau. They transported our loaded kayaks one-by-one to their bach on their boat trailer. We enjoyed a luxury night with BBQ, hot shower, comfy bed and great company.

Deposited back on the water in the morning, we paddled past Omori and Pukawa's flash and expensive holiday homes. A far cry from my uncle's fishing 'hut' at Pukawa Bay in the 1960s.

A highlight for me was paddling along the steaming shore of Waihi Village, with Waihi Falls, the church, Marae (Ngāti Turumakina) and old bathhouse along the shore. Back from the shore, the old convent was visible in the bush above the village. My father used to attend the ANZAC dawn service at Waihi Marae and my sister and I would camp on the

Wild camp on Lake Taupo. It is amazing how much camping kit emerges from the kayak compartments and can clutter up a beach so quickly.

convent grounds with our Girl Guide company the night before ANZAC Day. We'd invariably wake up late and run down the track in the dark to the wharekai, just in time to make and serve morning tea to the returned soldiers.

The road is closed to the public nowadays, to keep the rubbernecking tourists out I guess. The Waihi picnic area where my mother used to bring us for a swim and picnic tea after school has also disappeared.

We stopped for lunch on the Tokaanu Wharf, one of my favourite running routes when I lived in Tokaanu in the 70s. I loved looking across the reeds to the picturesque Waihi village. One of the oldest structures in New Zealand, the wharf was recently upgraded by DoC. A century ago there were flax mills around Tokaanu and a regular steam service crossed the lake, the main supply route before roads connected Taupō and Tokaanu.

We explored the Tongariro River delta, nudging our kayaks through raupō and reeds to find hidden water ways rich with aquatic birdlife: black swans and their ugly grey downy cygnets, mallards, scaup, dab chicks, white faced herons, various shags and black backed gulls. We passed a local family on sit-on-top kayaks, enjoying a picnic on the delta.

Along Stump Bay we saw hundreds of Canada geese. They must've been in their annual wing moult as we saw not one of them fly. Instead, they swam in tight groups close to shore, then as the kayaks came along they would bolt for shore and march along the narrow beach in a long line.

A thick-horned black billy goat stood on the shore looking at us. Next, a couple of smaller nannies appeared out of the gorse and finally, some cute black and white kids. More goats popped out of the gorse further along the shore. This section of the lake was positively feral.

We camped the night beside native bush near an old pa site just before the Motuoapa Peninsula. How gorgeous looking across the lake to my childhood backdrop of Mounts Pihanga, Tihia, and Kakaramea, with Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngaruahoe beyond.

Pete made date scones on the beach, using the 'pot parka' camp oven given to us by our friend Peter Williamson. An unexpected gift for organizing a trip into Preservation Inlet in 2005, we had cooked chocolate cake and other treats in this on various trips over the years. Silently, we thought of our friend over tea and hot scones in this beautiful wild camp, having attended his funeral the week before. We knew he would have loved this.

Dawn bled across the lake to our campsite, and we were on the water early. Rounding the peninsula, we saw Motutaiko Island to our left. A burial place for Tūwharetoa rangatira, the island is tapu. The distinctive red of flowering pohutakawa was visible on the island, but did not grow anywhere else in the vicinity.

Finally paddling past another ancient pa site on the Northern shore of Motuoapa Peninsula, we paddled the last stretch of our journey, to land on Motutere beach in breaking waves. We had paddled 150 kms on our round trip according to the GPS. Apart from a little discomfort getting in and out the kayak, Pete's leg was absolutely fine, and the trip a perfect conclusion of his rehabilitation.

"Do you think you have another Fiordland trip in you?" I asked Pete.
"… Maybe…" was the wary response. "Where?"
"Breaksea Sound." I ventured as we snapped the final trip selfie.

Dress up Pilgrimages and Forum Fotos

The Haddock / Turner dancing troupe warming up at an KASK Anakiwa gathering

A Marlborough Sounds paddling pilgrimage to Ratimera Bay in late 2004.
Back row: Conrad Edwards, Susan Cade, AJ, Nettie, Alison Turner and Cathye Haddock
Front row: Mike Wilkins, Paul Caffyn, Peter Simpson

Cathye as Xena the Warrior princess

The Super Heroes gathering; from Left, Melz Grant at Catwoman, Cathye as Xena, Peter as a horned Viking and Max Grant as an Egyptian king

At a post Anakiwa Forum salsa session, Peter, Cathye and Paul

17 January 2003 - the 25th anniversary of the finish of the 1977/78 Fiordland Kayak Expedition (by Paul Caffyn & Max Reynolds.
Peter and Cathye on the right.

Cathye's last text to Peter on the morning of 10 September with her superb sunset photo of Susan Cade nearing Picton before embarking on the Kaikoura boat photography trip with Susan next morning:

'Bit wishy-washy in the sea yesterday with strong gusty winds and big waves at times. Six hours non-stop before the winds got up to 30 knots! Paddling against a stunning amber sky for the last stretch into Picton.'
Photo: Cathye Haddock

The big smile says it all. Cathye's selfie late afternoon of 9 September looking back down Queen Charlotte Sound towards Blumine Island. I'm out here living the dream and loving it.