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THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

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





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NEXT NEWSLETTER

DEADLINE

18 March 2008

Coming up in Newsletter No.133

**The Solomons
Mackenzie Rver
Okains Bay weekend
Whangarei to Bay of Islands**

PHOTOS:

Cover: Freya Hoffmeister paddling into the finish of her trip at Okiwi Bay. Photo: John Kirk-Anderson

Top: Freya arriving at Blaketown Lagoon, Greymouth, on her paddle up the West Coast of the South Island. Photo: Murry Cave

Bottom: On Okiwi Bay, as Freya paddled in, fox terrier Shandy was maintaining a proper lookout for his family. Photo: Paul Caffyn

EDITORIAL

Newsletter

Thanks to Barbara Leslie, Sarah Wilson and Kerry-Jayne Wilson for your positive feedback on the KASK newsletter. Kerry has requested more colour photos of East Greenland – not a problem.

Almost 12 months ago, Wellington paddler David Blake put a lean on me to trial the printing company he worked for at Petone. Massey Printery had been printing the newsletters for over a decade, but from the time I mailed off a CD and hardcopy to Palmerston North, and the folded newsletters were couriered back to me for stamping and mailing, it was taking up to three weeks.

There was a very steep but necessary learning curve for me to change from the outdated Pagemaker layout software to the current universal standard of Indesign. David was patient with my numerous queries, and newsletter No.127 with colour cover and satin finish paper certainly lifted the quality. The costs of printing the cover in colour, meant the inside covers and rear cover could also be colour for no difference in cost. Number 129 with Max Grant's beautiful Fiordland photos then set the standard for future newsletters.

The advent of broadband on the Coast Road now allows transmission of the newsletter to Format in five separate PDF file attachments via email. The old days of applying labels and stamps at the 12 Mile are over, as Format also undertakes the newsletter labelling and posting in ziplock bags. KASK Administrator Linda Ingram emails Format an Excel spreadsheet file with the addresses, and the turn-around time from when I now send the newsletter to the Format can be as little as four days. My thanks to Mark Allen and especially David Blake at Format for their patience and help with this new system.

When taking photos of trips, please keep in mind a portrait format picture for the newsletter cover and high resolution, landscape format pics for the inside covers and rear.

South Island Circumnavigators

Freya Hoffmeister finished the first solo circuit by a woman on 2 January 2008. Freya's two diary days, her equipment list and a profile give some insight into the planning, drive and determination that allowed Freya to complete this trip solo and unsupported.

Swedish paddler Babs Lindman set off solo from Picton before Xmas and rounded Puysegur Point on 5 February. Justine and Barry Shaw left Sumner on 26 January, and have reached Dunedin by 6 February. The respective blog sites for Babs, Justine and Barry:

www.barbrolindman.blogspot.com

www.cackletv.com/blog

Does anyone have thoughts on why the South Island has become such a popular destination this summer for overseas expedition paddlers?

I lay the blame on Justine Curgenvven with the inclusion of two segments on New Zealand paddlers in her *This is the Sea 3* DVD.

A veritable procession of visiting overseas paddlers has been passed through the 12 Mile this summer, seeking advice on the South Island coastline. My former reclusive lifestyle seems to be a thing of the past.

KASK Handbook

The first print run 750 is almost gone. A second print run of 750 is being printed in mid-February. Spelling and grammar errors spotted by Sandy Ferguson and Waveney Inch have been corrected, along with a little tweeking of diagrams and photographs. As with the newsletter I had to change all the handbook files to the new software, reformat pages and relink all the images. Sounds easy but it took nigh on three weeks to complete.

KASK is funding the reprint - the first run of the fourth editions was helped with a \$6,000 grant from Water Safety New Zealand. My thanks to Waveney and Sandy, also Kay Costley for proof reading.

Paul Caffyn

KASK

PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Susan Cade

What a busy, exciting time for sea kayaking. The Australian team of James Castrission and Justin Jones made a successful Trans-Tasman paddle - what an amazing feat. Freya Hoffmeister (from Germany) was the first woman to paddle around the South Island. Babs Lindman (Sweden) is currently underway on the same challenge ahead of another pair Justine Curgenven and Barry Shaw (from the UK) - may they all be successful.

In March we have Coastbusters in Auckland (February 29th - March 2nd) followed by the 1st NZ International Kayak Festival during the following week and then the NZ Kayak Builders' forum in Rotorua (March 7th - 9th). The KASK forum and AGM at Ohope is from noon Friday 25th to Sunday 27th April and is receiving a lot of interest. I will be stepping down with sadness after four years as KASK president as my work commitments make it too difficult to put in the time that the role deserves.

On the local scene I have had a Netherlands sea kayaker Albert-jan Zijlstra visiting who gave some surf, stroke and rolling training to WSKN club members. He also gave a presentation on paddling from Cuxhaven to Lauwersoog in the Waddensea, which he described as a typical Dutch trip. He was very surprised to hear that some experienced New Zealand sea kayakers paddle solo - his Dutch club requires members to paddle in groups of at least three people.

I attended the Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) funding meeting in December 2007. A major project in which WSNZ is involved is gathering data on drownings. WSNZ attended The World Congress on drowning where it was indicated that there is a great need to obtain more accurate records. The World Health Organization has also noted the need to identify vulnerable groups and address their needs. The 2007 World Drowning Report identifies that the collection

Susan Cade arriving at Ratimera Bay for the Annual Sounds Pilgrimage



of data is a formidable challenge, as there is currently no data from many countries (including developed ones) and concludes that there needs to be more understanding of the significance of the problem. The recommendation is that all member countries provide drowning data including non-fatal incidents.

Since 2004 WSNZ has been committed to the development of its drowning records known as 'Drown Base'. It has identified a need to research increased understanding of behavior associated with drownings. Some of the current goals are the inclusion of injury data and an annual aquatic risk profile report. Drown Base is admired as one of the world's foremost drowning data bases. Sadly NZ has the 3rd highest rate of the countries that do provide data on drownings

WSNZ also has a target to develop a research fund over the next five years to provide ongoing research that compliments what is already being done. One of the key areas is to expand Drown Base to include behaviour, knowledge, perception, attitude and other conditions associated with drowning.

I agree with the need for comprehensive reporting of incidents in sea kayaking that result in loss of life or injury and also near misses. From this, the distribution of knowledge and skill development will improve sea kayaking safety.

WSNZ's Education Strategy goals include the need for a national framework to co-ordinate, monitor and provide consistency. It will also provide ongoing evaluation for all drowning prevention strategies and review

current water safety programmes, resources and drowning statistics.

WSNZ asked KASK to be involved in this project, to provide resources, initiatives and a contact person, to participate and complete surveys and provide consultation. We may also be involved in focus groups.

In funding applications WSNZ will be looking for projects that have a good research foundation, sound logic and which are transparent. They will be looking for maximum benefits from the funding available. Ways of supporting long term projects are being looked into.

We had a KASK Committee meeting in late January and I wish to

mention in particular the great work that Paul Caffyn has been doing by re-formatting and organising a new print run of the KASK handbook and his sterling work in producing the regular KASK newsletter. Also Evan Pugh has been busy organizing the KASK Forum at Ohope. I gather Evan already has lots of prizes and volunteers to share skills and knowledge. And I must thank Linda Ingram our administrator who continues to keep our books in good order and maintain our membership database. Thanks also to Beverley Burnett and Julie Reynolds who have been doing a lot of behind-the-scenes work. Happy paddling.

Susan Cade

PHOTO COMPETITION KASK Forum Ohope 2008

Bring along your best photo prints for a forum photo competition. Entries must have a sea kayaking connection of some sort.

Entry Guidelines

Photos may be entered in the following categories:

- Open
- Action (Sea Kayaking)
- Seascape (kayaks or people do not dominate the picture)
- Coastal/marine flora or fauna

First, Second and Third places awarded per category, and a paddler's choice for the best overall photo. Limit of three photos per photographer per category

Format/Techniques:

Colour or b&w prints to a maximum size of A3, preferably mounted. Note on the back of each photo: category, caption or locale, name, mail address, email address. No slides please; only digital or colour/b&w negative prints. Images can only be edited with, cropping and resizing.

Submission:

Entries can be submitted on arrival at the forum, up to 8.30pm on Friday 25 April.

Otherwise mail entries (no later than 20 April 2008) to:

**KASK Photo Competition
Evan & Linda Pugh
RD2**

Putaruru 3842

Waikato

Photos can be submitted by all who attend the forum and KASK members not attending the forum. While every care is taken, KASK will not accept liability for damage to entries

Usage of Photos

Winning photos may be published in the KASK Newsletter. Photo competition entrants agree to allow their entries to appear in the KASK newsletter, and agree to enter in discussion with KASK re their use in either KASK safety promotional material or the handbook.

Display of Photos

The photos will be displayed throughout the weekend and the winners announced at the dinner on Saturday night.

Judging of the photos

The judge for this competition is Paul Hayward who won far too many photographic prizes at the 2007 Anakiwa KASK Forum.

KASK AGM & Graham Eggar Paddle Trophy Awards

FIRST CALL FOR NOMINATIONS/ MOTIONS

AGM Motions

Saturday 26 April 2008, prior to the evening nosh, the KASK AGM will be held at the Ohope Beach forum.

If you have a motion(s) to be put before the AGM, this (these) need to be submitted to the KASK administrator, a minimum of 30 days ahead of the date of the AGM. Send any motions, with mover, seconder etc. to Linda Ingram at either:

KASK.admin@xtra.co.nz

or mail to

KASK Administrator

PO Box 23

Runanga 7841

West Coast

KASK Committee Positions

If you are willing to stand for nomination on the 2007/08 KASK committee, or willing to do someone in, who is a good team player and not just full of words of what they promise they will do, please have a nomination in 30 days before the AGM to Linda Ingram. President Susan Cade is stepping down after almost four years in the role of president.

The Graham Eggar Annual Paddle Trophy Awards

One of these superb trophies, which feature wooden paddle blades on wood plinths, is for the paddler(s) who has (have) made a better than average contribution to New Zealand sea kayaking in the past 12 months. Sandy Ferguson is the current holder of this trophy. The second award is made for the best contribution(s) to *The Sea Canoeist Newsletter* in the past 12 months. Current joint trophy holders are Cathye Haddock and John Kirk-Anderson.

Nominations also to Linda Ingram.

OPINION

SEA KAYAKING COMES IN FROM THE COLD

by David Winkworth

Right about now the Crossing the Ditch paddlers are feasting on thick juicy steaks after their long in-time and distance paddle across the Tasman. And right about this time last year our friend Andrew McAuley was battling the elements south of 40 degrees south in his attempt to be the first to paddle across the Tasman.

In a few weeks it will be the first anniversary of Andrew's disappearance and I think it's about the right time to consider some safety issues and sea kayaking's position in the spectrum of outdoor pursuits.

Andrew's attempt to be the first to cross the Tasman by sea kayak captured the attention of the mainstream media all around the world. His failure so close to his goal was grist to the copywriter's mill. There was the first attempt, the website, the regular updates and postings and the very public search effort. And Andrew's body was not found further adding to the mystery. I suppose I'm a little cynical about the media but I don't think that's an altogether unhealthy attitude in 2008.

So if the general public a year or two ago didn't know what sea kayakers do then Andrew's expedition certainly fixed that. Callers to talkback radio and letters to newspapers here in Australia exposed a range of views re the irresponsibility or otherwise of his trip and sea kayaking received real public exposure. "Whaddaya think of that McAuley fellow eh?" is a comment I received many times as I fuelled up the car with the kayak on the racks or pulled the boat out of the water at the end of a paddle. Everyone had...and still does have... an opinion about Andrew and they want me to know it.

Around the same time as Andrew disappeared, Justine Curgenven released the third DVD in her excellent series

This is the Sea. Accompanied by a modern soundtrack we see people having great fun and paddling in stunning locations around the world. It's a veritable sea kayaking travelogue and it can't fail to have mass appeal. "Sea kayaking is for everyone," it screams. And why not? Isn't it better to see lots of people paddling around in kayaks and less in gas guzzling stink boats? An environmentally responsible outdoor pursuit for sure.

Sea kayaking seems to be booming in lots of places. There are more sea kayaks around on my piece of coastline than I've ever seen. It used to be that if I saw a sea kayak on a car between Melbourne and Sydney then I generally knew the driver! That's certainly not the case today. And new boat sales in the USA were up 10% last year with kayaks accounting for the increase as power boat sales dropped by a similar percentage.

The internet has had a great influence on sea kayaking's presence. It's de rigueur these days that sea kayaking expeditioners run a blog site and woe betide them if they're 2 days late in updating details of their trip! If you kept up with the "Crossing the Ditch" expedition, you'd know that they went one better than text messages and kept a regular stream of podcasts coming for the news-hungry media. The laptops and sat phones and wires and battery charging systems must add a lot of weight to the kayaks of these modern expeditioners! The sea kayak has become a veritable office for some, as the world follows them around and waits impatiently for a blog update.

For the rest of us who paddle in club groups and with friends or choose to load up the kayak and disappear into coastal anonymity for a couple of months there is this feeling that the world is following us around too!

And so it is. It seems only a few short years ago there were no EPIRBS, no GPS, no mobile phones, no sat. phones, no VHF radio networks and relatively unreliable weather forecasts!

All that has changed forever and now there are fantastic satellite and

other systems to keep us safe and in contact with the world. Some of us used to say that this technological juggernaut was ruining our wilderness experiences! That was more or less a joke I suppose, because, as my mate Arunas Pilka said after being attacked by a crocodile in '99, you get a whole different perspective when you're the one on the ground bleeding!

So all this technology is there for us and the world, which now certainly knows what a sea kayak is, will label us irresponsible if we fail to use it.

I recall an Australian sea kayak club once having a policy of not carrying EPIRBS on their trips. It may still be in force - I don't know. Their reasoning was that they didn't want people risking their lives to come looking for them if they were overdue on a sea kayaking trip. A pretty poorly reasoned policy in my opinion because whether you want rescuers to come or not, they ARE going to come and poor contact and positioning just makes it more difficult for them to find you...and really rotten publicity for sea kayakers.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) which co-ordinates all sea rescues in Australian waters makes good sense in their advice to sea kayakers: Carry an EPIRB always at sea and activate it when you have a life threatening or other serious problem. Don't wait until the last minute to activate the EPIRB. They would rather go out and pick up a live person than a body. Performing rescues is their job. They are paid to do it and practice it constantly.

Makes good sense doesn't it! I'm sure the quality of the rescue services are the same in New Zealand.

Having said this I can tell you that switching on an EPIRB takes commitment because it will bring the cavalry! When Arunas was nipped by the croc (we were on the far north Qld coast) it brought spectacular results. He was choppered out to hospital within five hours and an hour later the Navy arrived on our little coral island to tell us that three warships were standing by in the Coral Sea ready to assist!

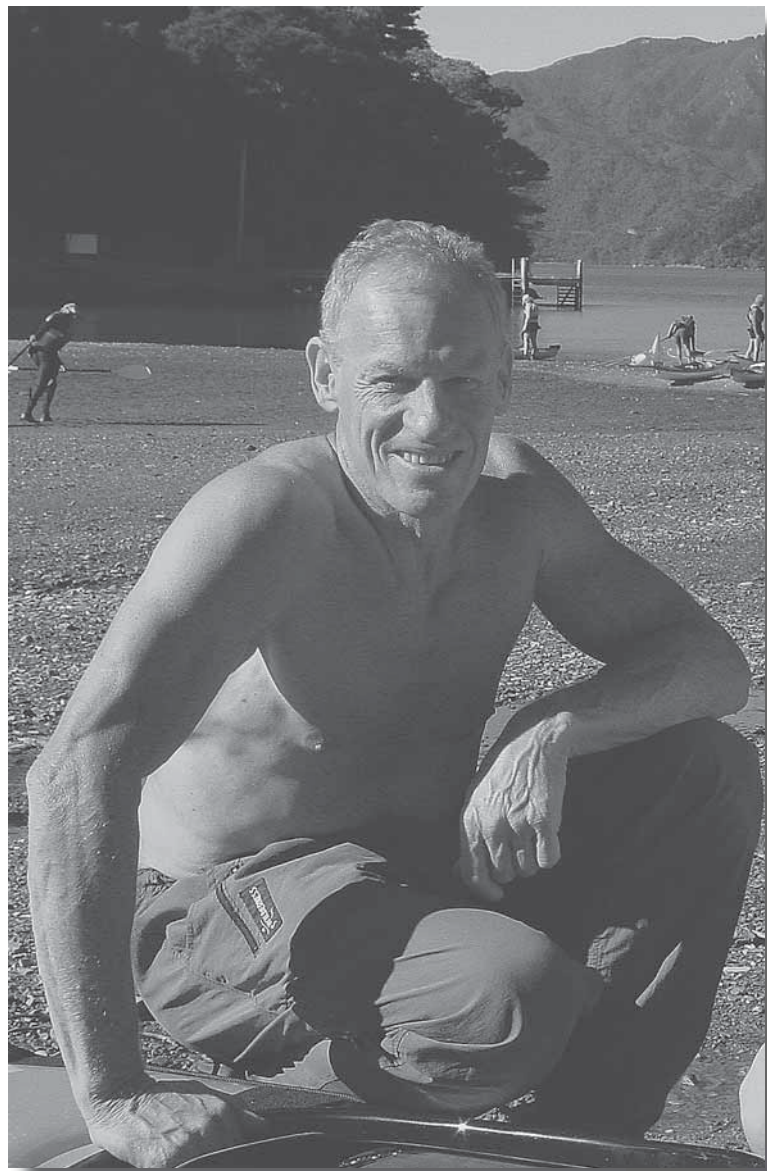
Every time I look at my EPIRB now I think of Andrew. His unit was in the cockpit of his kayak just so close to him. His was one of the new 406 strobe-equipped EPIRBs which give a quick positive location unlike the soon-to-be-phased-out 121 units which show a duplicate "ghost position." Rescuers have to wait for a number of satellites to pass to determine which position is the real one with these units. I wonder if Andrew had time to consider getting the EPIRB out and switching it on but deferred instead to his VHF radio to make a MAYDAY call? I can't help thinking that the outcome may have been different had he done so.

Before I finish on EPIRBs....if you carry one and haven't yet updated to the new 406 units, you'll have to do so by early 2009 when the 121 frequency monitoring will be switched off. Why not do it now? Did you know that for your EPIRB to work it must have a clear look at the sky...and if you're in the water with an activated unit, how are you going to keep it out of the water and signalling effectively? Hold it up in your hand for an hour or more?

Something to consider. Also, the new 406 unit signals are identifiable to individual owners and they are required to lodge personal and watercraft details with the rescue authorities. Makes good sense – they'll know they're looking for a sea kayak rather than a gin palace. However, if you travel overseas with your EPIRB you should let the rescue authority in that country know you're there, otherwise valuable time may be wasted as they seek your details from your home country.

A valuable supplement to the EPIRB is a handheld VHF radio. Their range, while not great, is acceptable and with one of these units you can talk to coast patrols, ships and planes. Try that with a mobile phone!

Their value was really brought home to me a few years ago when, here in Australia we had a couple of "EPIRB" rescues of sea kayakers. In both cases the paddlers were in the water. In one of the rescues, a chopper was directly above the paddlers but, due to the



Dave (Crocodile Winky) Winkworth at the 2006 Anakiwa KASK Forum

pretty horrible sea state, the pilot couldn't see them. They were able to use their VHF radio to guide the chopper right down to them. In the other rescue the paddler had been in the water for four hours and it was dark. Boats were around him but couldn't locate him. He used his radio bring a rescue boat right to him.

You may remember the VHF radio call that Andrew McAuley made off the coast of Fiordland. He used the call sign "Kayak One." It was quite OK to use this call sign except that no-one, his supporters included, could identify him through his call sign!

Would it have made a difference if he could've been immediately identified through his call sign? We'll never know the answer to that question but

it seems to me a good idea for us to have some sort of uniform voluntary call sign system. It may make a difference for someone one day. When you register a 406 EPIRB, "What is your call sign?" is one of the questions. What are you going to say?

Here's a thought: The call sign I use is the phonetic alphabet words for my christian and surname initials with KILO for "kayak" stuck on the end. It comes out DELTA WHISKY KILO. Our editor's call sign would come out PAPA CHARLIE KILO. Pretty simple.

'Might be something worth considering at the April KASK Forum. See you there?

NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORTS

A Monumental Paddle by Jacqui Anderson photos: Belinda Mulvany

Note to self- when Belinda asks us on an excursion, ask more questions.

We had a couple of days spare. Belinda Mulvany had an idea - the Mulvanys are known for their ideas. "What about a paddle on Lake Manapouri and bivvy overnight on the Monument?"

Paddle? No problem.

Bivvy? Did that mean sleeping under a rock? I packed the pup tent.

"Tent?" Said Belinda when she heard. "But there won't be room."

I tried to imagine the circumstances where there wouldn't be room for a tent as small as ours, but couldn't.

"What about footwear?" I asked. "Oh you could do it in jandals," she said airily.

I packed my boots.

Complete with gear for any change in plans or weather, we launched at lunchtime on a warm January Thursday.

There was Belinda, Tim, Jacqui and Noel (who joined us for the daytime but went home to sleep).

We'd been paddling for a full 40 minutes before Jacqui needed to eat. A gentle grumbling was heard from Noel who felt we'd only just started. After basking on a glacier polished rock and nibbling on summer fruit, off we went again, passing a group of tiny islands and meandering around Stockyard Cove, a sheltered harbour with a high waterfall and good fishing. We disembarked to check out a short portage to another bay, for future reference.

Noel peeled off late in the afternoon, heading for a safe mattress and the three of us circumnavigated Hope Arm, hugging the shore, rocky and bushclad. Rata trees flowered out of cracks in the cliffs and kowhai dangled long seed pods towards the water.

The Monument loomed conspicuously out of the bush with what looked like sheer cliffs at the summit.

We visited the Hope Arm Hut and thrashed our way up a shallow side creek just for fun, finally landing at the base of yon hillock at about teatime. After stowing boats, we scrambled into packs and started up. The climb initially gentle enough through open beech, narrowed to a steep rocky ridge where footing became crumbly and treacherous to all but mountain goats (which it appeared Belinda and Tim both were).

I threw a wobbly and continued without the pack. The final challenge was a rocky chimney with a fixed chain in which the sheer drops were mercifully obscured.

Sidling around the last craggy bit, the stunted trees were festooned with lichen beards.

Reaching the summit, I backed up against the trig for support and took in the view. The last sun of the afternoon warmed the peaks, the shallow deltas of streams glowed golden and several dark lakes revealed themselves.

After tea, we settled down into the three flattest bits of the area. Me jammed into a prickly mingimingi to prevent the sleepwalking I am known for, while Tim fell asleep in a mossy hollow and did the snoring he is known for. Belinda and I lay awake for a long time watching the big saucepan move from one side of the sky to the other.

It was a special moment waking in the morning, partly because I was waking (which meant I must have actually been asleep), partly because I was still there (not at the bottom of the cliff) but mostly because the view was still fabulous.

Descending after breakfast, I wondered which bit had caused me so much trouble the day before, as we loped along all relaxed and unhurried. After a swim, we continued coast crawling in our boats, spotting crested grebes, families of scaup and hearing long-tailed cuckoo throw their voices from tall trees. There were other tiny treasures to discover, like the little mauve flowers we had been trampling on some soggy beach which turned out to be sandfly-catching bladderwort, an un-pretty name for a very pretty and clever wee plant.

The water changed from luminous lime to black in a short distance as the lake floor dropped steeply and invited several swims as the day got hotter and hotter.

These two perfect paddling days changed our thoughts on Lake Manapouri completely - not such a dark and forboding place, in such gorgeous weather. You'd be hard-pressed to find more beautiful scenery, so unspoiled but still accessible. We are already thinking of other occasions to go back.

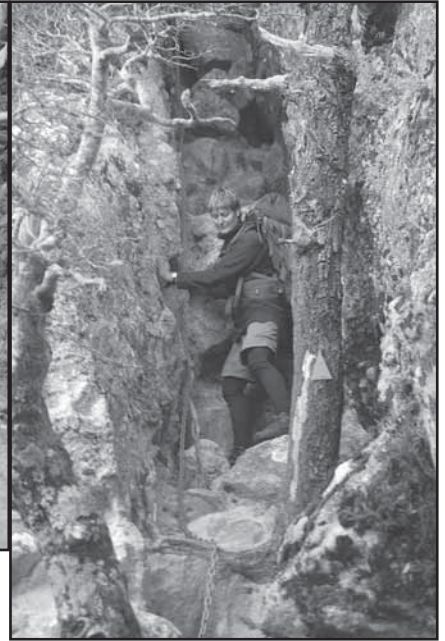
Good idea Belinda!

Writer: Jacqui Anderson

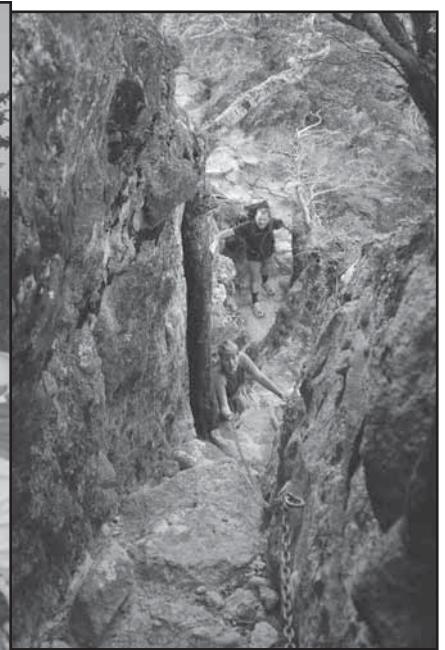
Photographer: Belinda Mulvany



Jacqui on Lake Manapouri

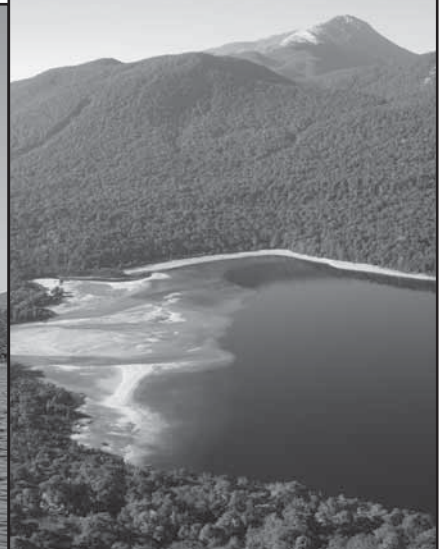


Above and right: views of Jacqui and Tim on the ascent and descent of the Monument, Lake Manapouri



*Above: From left, Belinda, Tim and Jacqui on top of the Monument
Below: Jacqui and Tim Anderson paddling; the Monument on the skyline*

View from the Monument across Hope Arm to Mt Titiroa in the distance



SOUTH ISLAND CIRCUM- NAVIGATION

by Paul Caffyn

On 2 January 2008, German paddler Freya Hoffmeister became the first woman to paddle solo and unsupported around the South Island. Commencing from Okiwi Bay on 24 October 2007, Freya took 70 days for the 2,386km recorded by her GPS unit. Her paddling days numbered 48, with 22 days off for weather or big surf. Her daily averages:

- all up average per day: 34.09 km/day (21.3 mpd)
- paddling day average: 49.71 km/day (31.1 mpd)

As I believe this is one of the most significant solo kayak trips undertaken by a woman in the southern hemisphere, I have included a brief profile of Freya, her kit list, and her own accounts of two standout days, the first a tumultuous day on the West Coast when the stern of her kayak was broken off and she lost her paddle in a surf thrashing, the second her final 32 hour stint from Big River to Okiwi Bay.

Even though Australian Sandy Robson paddled a far greater distance in 2007 along the coast of eastern Australia, and since the crocodile attack near Cape Direction, she has paddled from Broome to Exmouth and is now paddling from Esperance to Perth in Western Australia, I believe the skills, planning, commitment and determination required to complete a solo South Island trip may give Freya a slight edge over Sandy's achievement.

PROFILE

Freya was born at Kiel, on the northern tip of Germany in 1964. Her sister was three years older but very different to Freya. Her father, who worked as a fishing administrator, was a hunter and Freya feels she probably got some outdoor skills from hunting with her father. She gained a hunting licence after attending school twice a week for

half a year, with shooting practice at weekends, both clay pigeon and target, and also an airgun in the backyard. To qualify for the licence was a tough exam with only about a third passing. A hunting/weapons licence was the only way you could have a gun in Germany. Freya's mother was a teacher,

From the age of six to 16, Freya attended gymnastics training four times a week, with competitions almost every weekend, but she was too tall for inclusion in the national competitions. She was taught flexibility, good body movement, and reacting to falling.

Freya took up body building from 18 to 23, training up to four times a week in a studio, with regional competitions, while working as a government education administrator for three years. Her parents were supportive but not pushy and even then, Freya had no interest in kayaking.

Across the fjord from Kiel, when she was growing up, Freya could see skydivers and in her early 20s she went to the local airport and went up in a plane full of skydivers. This was the start of 10 years skydiving, the highlight a sky dive out of a Russian jet, over the North Pole with 40 others. Freya jumped with a Russian lady passenger in the first tandem jump over the North Pole. After landing at 2 am, they were picked up by Russian helicopters – of three expected, only two arrived, and the flight out on an overloaded chopper was scary; as was landing on an ice strip which was melting before being picked up in a fixed wing.

Freya completed 500 tandem jumps and met her future husband who was a skydiving instructor. Her husband Werner is 18 years older and lives next door to Freya, two people living together, and both really strong individuals. Werner looks after their son Helge while Freya is away paddling; a very supportive relationship.

Freya worked as an ice cream shop manager for a year then used some inheritance money from a grandfather to buy the shop she was managing. From her first shop, bought at the age of 22, she built up a chain of seven ice cream shops. While pregnant, the

driving from shop to shop became too much for her and Freya reduced the shop number to three.

The pregnancy also caused a cessation of skydiving. Freya had only been paddling twice in a double Klepper with husband Werner, who was a SEAL with the German navy. Looking for a sport she could take her son with her, she bought a red Feathercraft K1 – brand new and very expensive at 5,000 marks. She began paddling easy rivers and sections of the Baltic Sea coastline – no real whitewater at that stage.

With her son Helge, in a back hatch of her kayak, Freya met a group of touring paddlers on a lake. One of the guys did a bit of white water and had a real sea kayak, a plastic boat. Freya joined the group and was taught to roll in the Baltic Sea.

Freya mastered rolling and joined two men in rough conditions in the Baltic Sea. She felt comfortable bracing into the waves. Her next paddle was a real sea kayaking trip on the North Sea, he in a fibreglass sea kayak, Freya in her Feathercraft.

Freya joined local trips and sought all the instruction she could get. At the end of that year she attended a German sea kayak symposium and met a chap who had attended overseas symposiums.

In 2003 Freya bought a Kajaksport kayak, which Helge enjoyed for the next two years sitting in a back hatch again. This time he was better equipped with a dry suit, a cute little spray skirt and rolling skills (not really himself, but tough enough to stay seated, just in case).

Freya and a German instructor went to the annual Anglesey (Wales) symposium in 2004, after which she was hooked. Justine Curgenvan was there showing slides of trips at night, and she had only one VHF copy of *This is the Sea 1*, which Freya was very lucky to be given. She really enjoyed the symposium socializing with good evenings at the 'Paddler's Return' hotel. Freya started to travel to international sea kayak symposiums in

Wales, Jersey, Scotland and Norway, to learn more about what she really loved. In October 2004 Freya discovered Greenland style rolling at the Georgia/ USA symposium in October 2004. Having been an ex-gymnast she decided, "That's it! That's for me."

Greenland 2006

Freya attended the annual traditional Greenland kayaking championships which were held at Sisimuit in West Greenland. It was a different world of paddling skin kayaks, and Freya admits she is not a traditionalist by any means. She is happy with her carbon fibre kayak and Greenland paddle, and a tulilik made of fuzzy rubber.

She has taken Greenland style paddling to different dimensions, especially by adding the on kayak movements, such as the headstand and paddle on head balancing. Freya entered eight competitions - races, rolling, team rolling and marathon - and competing with Greenlandic women, she won eight gold medals.

Iceland 2007

At her first Anglesey symposium in 2004, Freya heard a talk by Shawna Franklin and Leon Somme about a month paddle they did around Iceland with Chris Duff. Freya was fascinated, and had trouble sleeping that night when thinking about a bigish trip.

In May 2007, she was back at Anglesey with Grey Stamer as Greenland style rolling teachers. Freya listened to Rotem Ron talking about her solo 53 days trip around Iceland, which was the first by a solo paddler. Freya was certain if Rotem could do it, she thought she could do it herself. On the drive back to Germany from Anglesey, Freya told Greg she was going to do the Iceland trip.

After two days at home, then she and Greg flew out to Newfoundland for a sea kayak symposium after which they paddled eight days from St Johns to Cape St Marie, which was pretty much a dry run to check if Greg's paddling and expedition skills matched Freya's. This trip was cold, bad weather along with a few icebergs, in challenging conditions, but as a dry run, it worked fine.



12 Mile, West Coast, South Island

Freya in the middle bit of her three piece kayak, endeavouring to settle a fight between Gordon and Morag Brown's kids as to who could hold on to the sword

They already had kayaks for Iceland; two Nigel Dennis Explorers used. Back in Germany, they had five days to finish preparation and planning for Iceland, then fly to Keflavik, which is the international airport for the country. Freya told Greg she wanted to do a fast trip, but had no idea of how fast.

They arrived at 11.30pm, and began the trip next day at 2.30pm with a 90 km crossing. They were both still in good shape from paddling in Newfoundland.

The longest stretch was 22 hours – 100 km – but it was 24 hour daylight. They saw lots of whale and dolphins, but the south coast was scary with dumping surf beaches. Along this stretch, they just landed once a day to minimize surf landings. A highlight of the trip was ending up in hot pools at night which were a feature of all the coastal villages. Their 1,620 km circuit took 33 days, paddling on 25 days and weatherbound or resting for the other eight days.

Rotem, also Freya and Greg, were able to get daily SMS text messages with forecasts for sea and weather conditions from Karel Vissel, a Dutch paddler who was living on a kibbutz in Israel. When Freya's website announced the trip on her blog site, Karel

had emailed to say he would be willing to do text daily forecasts, the same as he had done same for Rotem.

New Zealand

In 2000 Freya spent two and a half months as a normal tourist with her four year old son Helge. She had planned to pushbike but there was too much traffic on the roads. They hiked the Routeburn and Kepler tracks, and paddled twice, once in Abel Tasman and once Marlborough Sounds, with Helge in back hatch. Freya had no thoughts then re more sea kayaking. She fell in love with the country, moving from one nature hideout after another – without much contact with the locals - just mother and son in a van.

Freya was already thinking about the next trip during last two weeks of Iceland trip. New Zealand had been discussed by Justine and Rotem at the Anglesey symposium when they talked about what trips they could do next. Freya began looking at either Tasmania or South island.

What did Freya learn from her trip?

With no serious experience of surf, she found the best practice in the east coast bumper dumpers or West Coast lines of surf was minimize the number of surf landings each day.

FREYA'S EXPEDITION KIT LIST

Kayak:

Nigel Dennis Explorer; three piece

Paddle:

- Epic Wing blade, mid size, 205 cm carbon fibre, with spare of large blade size, 210 cm, both take apart

On the PFD:

- (a black Kokatat Ronin Pro):
- 406 EPIRB, with built in GPS
- VHF Icom radio (needs a waterproof bag, as switch broke)
- needs washing in fresh water each night after use in salt water
- Olympus waterproof camera
- strobe light
- diver's knife (moved to inside cockpit)

Sprayskirt:

- Snapdragon Ocean Explorer, neoprene

In her Cockpit:

- flares, one parachute and one smoke
- water bladders, two behind seat back rest; third between her legs with a hose through a hole in the deck for sucking while at sea
- manual pump on top of a water bladder
- one under deck bag, and two side bags; fastex clips hold in place, one with knife, two spare hatch covers (one big and one little) and one repair tape which can be used on wet surfaces; and the female urinal device and ziploc plastic pee bag
- binoculars in a waterproof bag in one of side bags plus night light
- a Petzl headtorch
- spare battery for waterproof camera
- spare battery for the GPS
- in Middle bag; lunch, warm fleece balaclava, and fuzzy rubber balaclava

On deck:

- Northwater small deck bag: open palm neoprene gloves, sunscreen, skeg launching device, sometimes the cellphone
- cellphone in waterproof Aquapack
- GPS Garmin 76CX in a waterproof Aquapack – disposable batteries, loaded with Blue Chart (marine charts)
- maps; 1:250:000 topo maps in a waterproof Aquapack mapcase
- North Water paddle leash
- helmet, aft of cockpit (Sweet Struter) carbon fibre kevlar (under a net on the back deck, and always worn for launching and landing)
- spare paddle in a paddle bag, clipped to the aft deck
- bungee on top of forward compartment hatch for placing paddle when resting

Bow Compartment:

- sleeping bag, down; in a waterproof bag
- bag with camp clothes; T shirt, rainjacket, hooded fleece shirt, bike pants, and fleece leggings, one normal set of black pants; swimming costume
- bag with Thermarest; thinnest smallest one: camp towel;
- Teva sandals, copy of *Obscured by Waves*, bottles of stove fuel

Day Hatch Compartment:

- bag with valuables such as wallet, satphone, office including diary, Canon camera, passport, cables for all the charging equipment; first aid kit; repair kit; on top a grey over cag, doubled as a sprayskirt as well, but also good onshore when raining or to keep sandflies away; some food; solar panel charger

Aft Compartment:

Tent, tent poles, tent pegs, both for sand and solid; Kitchen bag with billy with Whisperlite stove, small fuel bottle and second big one; three bags of food

Carry Bags:

Each compartment had one carry bag, big, wide foldable bags, to be able to unload kit from the compartments.

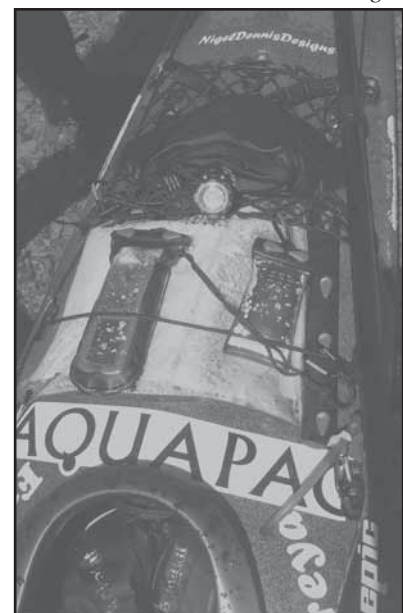
The secret to Freya being able to spend long days at sea was her ability to pee easily at sea. I have never seen a member of the opposite pee standing up, but with her female urinal device Freya was able to do this while in her drysuit with a conventional male pee zip. At sea she used a tube into a plastic bag. In the drysuit she was able to keep her underwear dry, but while wearing fuzzy rubber leggings she pulled the front of the pants down with approximately 10% spill into her underwear. Freya had a bad case of nappy rash after her final 32 hour stint to Okiwi Bay.

Freya's Diary Days

Following are two significant days from her trip, which I hope will allow insight into what drives this remarkable paddler. The first details the worst day of the trip when the stern of the kayak was broken off during a reverse loop during the morning launch, and loss of her favourite paddle when landing that evening. The day was from near Galway Point (east of Gillespies Beach) to the mouth of the Wanganui River (out from Harihari).

The second diary day recounts the final 32 hour stint from Big River (West coast) to the finish at Okiwi Bay.

View of deck layout in front of cockpit; chart case with GPS(left) and cellphone (right). Tube for drinking on bottom right



Just a Normal Day on the West Coast

by Freya Hoffmeister

Suddenly I held my whole kayak in my hand. I took my shirt off, ready to jump into my sleeping bag, and it just fell off. It was tied to my neck with a black leather string ever since I began sea kayaking. It was my talisman - my good omen pendant. The cord had never broken before, but now I could just rip the whole leather string into small pieces. It was just plain worn out.

But I didn't lose the kayak pendant. I still held it in my hand!

I was too tired to go outside to my real kayak, through the hundreds of sandflies occupying the exit, ready to enter the tent and suck my blood. I didn't search in the repair kit for a new string. I just stuffed the pendant into my pocket, and forgot about it the next morning.

I should have checked the leather string regularly for still being strong enough, and I should have checked the clips and screws of my three-piece *Nigel Dennis Explorer* kayak regularly for still being strong enough. Both obviously not frequent enough.

The kayak pendant talisman



I would have to punch out through some big lines of surf this morning. The dress code would be helmet and bug net, but I skipped the latter. I swallowed several sandflies, spat them out and tried to blow them off my face. One of the beasts felt happy flying right into my eye. It was irritating when I was trying to concentrate on the best launching time and place.

I got washed up the beach again several times, and eventually broached high up on dry sand. I jumped out to straighten the kayak, only to get several breakers full of sand water into the cockpit. I emptied it out with some effort, including falling over some times by the force of new breakers - good nobody was there to watch.

Eventually I made it straight through the first breaker, braced into the second, but the third one got me! It surfed me backwards to the beach, dugged my stern into the sand. Rolled up the beach, no chance to fight against the violent force of the sea. No idea how I ended up sitting upright on the dry land again, sideways for sure.

Yuppp, OK, sh^#* happens, jumping out again, straightening the kayak, jumping in again for another launch. Don't give up! That was the plan - so far so good.

Jumping out was no problem. I grabbed the bow toggle to turn the kayak around, wondering why it felt so easy. Bugger! The stern section was bent at a very unusual angle from the cockpit section.

This is what I never wanted! "Du bloede Kuh! Wie kann man nur so doof sein?" And some more serious loud German cursing to myself for my stupid actions

An ugly big chunk of fibreglass was missing from the deck. Both hooks of the hull clips were bent almost straight.

Maybe if I had checked the stainless steel connections more often, it might not have happened. But maybe if I had tightened the clips more often, the hooks may have deformed even earlier. Maybe, if I had received my

brand new kayak in time, instead of taking the old one it wouldn't have happened? This one already did a great job around Iceland this summer, but - it was too late now for regrets. There were two pieces of kayak on the beach now, instead of one. And I was on a wild West Coast beach with no road access or houses.

My mind searched for solutions; no way to call for help. I need to fix it myself, and keep on going!

I checked the hooks on the hull, but to see clearly, I had to wash the sand off first. One looked more bent open than the other. I could try to bend it back into shape again, with a big rock as a hammer. I could even swap it to another hook from maybe the front deck. I could duct tape or even glass the whole stern section to the cockpit section, to make it more solid with the bad hook. I should have taken a spare set of hooks for that case! But I hadn't.

The chunk of fibreglass missing on the deck didn't affect the watertightness of the boat, so good luck for that - so just the rock hammer solution was the first thing to try.

Hundreds of sandflies around my head again - they love black as much as I do. I took my helmet off, but left the hood on. The bug net would have been a better choice, but I wanted to get going, not to bother with those little details of comfort. My bare hands were also targeted by those blood-sucking beasts. Blowing them away, whilst working on the boat, was another part of the multi-tasking morning. In bright sunshine I got nicely hot in my black gear, sweating from stress and mental strain.

The hook was solid massive stainless steel, but still bent open from the force of the impact. Not an easy job for a tool out of the stone age. I was worried to hammer too much, either to break the hook or to hammer the screws loose, which were holding them.

Eventually it looked like it might hold enough to give it a try. I tightened the clips and screws with my multi tool as best as possible, but no overdoing

it! For sure the multi tool got full of saltwater and sand, too.

The bent back hooks felt soft on tightening the clips, but it looked like they would hold enough for me to continue. That night I hoped to land sound and safe in the Wanganui River mouth anyway, where there might be people around to help. This is what I figured.

A more attentive look around that beach, through the sandfly clouds, would have shown me a nearby little river mouth before the first launching try, only about 100 m away. It would be a slog to get the fully laden boat there, but no more risks!

Option one: Unloading again, carrying two or three heavy bags of gear to the river, dragging or carrying the light boat easier then to the mouth. It would take three return trips.

Option two: Dragging the fully loaded kayak 20-30 m to the surf sloop, and dragging it in more or less floating manner to the river mouth, cockpit covered to keep the dumpers out.

I decided on option two. There were still enough layers of fibreglass on the bottom to get worn off in this way. I dragged the heavy boat downhill, metre by metre, straddling the cockpit and pulling on the rim. In the sloop I used my towline to haul the kayak, which was rolled up the beach several times

by the surge. Eventually it floated sufficiently to drag it more or less easy to where I wanted to start again.

Jumping in the cockpit, ready to start, I noticed I had forgotten to attach the spare paddle bag properly. Jumping out again, I clipped it back on.

Jumping in again I noticed my skeg launching line was hanging loose instead of going straight back to the skeg. Since sand pebbles jammed the skeg blade in the skeg box quite often, I ran a long cord loop from the skeg blade to the cockpit, so I could ensure I could pull the skeg into position after launching. But the small loop on the skeg broke from the dragging force over the ground, just before the second launching try.

Again I jumped out, fished for the spare string sitting in my map case, attached a new loop on the skeg, and threaded the launching cord through the loop again.

Then the map case couldn't be closed again with all the sand, I needed to undo the four carabiners holding it, take it off the deck and wash the clips out in the river.

I attached it to the deck again, and was ready to start again eventually! Two hours lost! I had a late morning anyway. 10am now - be patient, Freya! - only 60 km to go to the Wanganui River mouth.

Turning around for a last look, revealed an obvious wooden cross with something long looking like a grave further up the beach. What happened here years ago? It was quite a spooky place. Not only did I nearly lose my kayak pendant, but I also came ever so close to losing the stern section of my kayak.

Launching from the little river mouth was easy then after all. Why didn't I see that option earlier? The boat was more or less afloat already, then my timing for punching through the lowest possible breaker was good, and I was off. My stern came with me.

On the open sea, time to relax. Releasing the skeg with the cord loop, stuffing that away, taking my helmet off, sliding it under the back deck net, taking the fuzzy rubber hood and PFD off, but where was the carabiner clipped to the loop of my sprayskirt? Gone, probably stuck open by sand and slipped off. At sea I used this carabiner to clip onto my PFD when I was not wearing it in calm conditions.

Finally opening the velcro neck of my paddle jacket for ventilation, put some sunscreen on, and ready to go!

The GPS stuffed under the deck net survived the whole launching drama, the kiwifruit and apples in the little deck bag were squeezed - fruit salad with salt water is good nutrition anyway.

Repairs almost completed after the disastrous morning launch



The Waiho River mouth came up after 15 km, the outflow of the white glacier water was clearly to be seen from the distance. Green warmer sea water and white glacier river water don't just mix gradually. The border is sharp - suddenly you are paddling a river instead on the sea!

After entering the sea, the West Coast rivers all swung to the north, with positive benefit of a speed increase about 1-2 km/h - just like entering a glacier highway. But everything looks more three dimensional, all swell, breakers and normal waves appear higher and just somehow scary in bright sunlight. Floating pieces of wood scared the hell out of me, it might be a shark - but just plenty of playful dolphins

were visible, the great white thankfully stayed camouflaged in the milky white glacier waters.

I followed my GPS, with my speed increasing all day, satisfying at least, not too bad after that eventful morning!

Whataroa River mouth flew out just before Abut Head, but less milky, less scary, less added speed. About 15 km left to the destination.

The Oneone River mouth had a small hut site, civilisation was close again! The triangular shape of Mt. Oneone was a clear landmark. Behind there should be Wanganui River mouth, my safe harbour for the night.

But where was it exactly? The swell and waves were pretty high that late afternoon. What I could figure out sitting high on a wave crest was not too much - just endless white lines of breakers everywhere - not too inviting to land at all!

Maybe it is behind the next bluff? It must be, as there are no huts to be seen here? No interruption in the beach line, just white breakers and endless sand. Another look on my GPS showed it must be right **here**, just behind the triangle mountain! I could see a darker zone right in the mountain's shadow. I need to get closer and have a look!

Somehow I was able to avoid three huge offshore breakers, just shouting at them, "You don't get me, you bloody bastard!" ending up highest on top of the first one, bracing into the second one, and punching forward again through the third one. Then there I was, halfway closer, in a quietish zone of water. "Get closer, Freya, eventually you'll see where the river mouth might be!"

Some more careful approaching, and the last dumper looked temporarily like I could handle it. A sandy beach anyway, so why keep on searching for that hidden river mouth, when I could just land here? Time it right, and I'll be OK.

I had a 1:250.000 map, plus my GPS with the Blue Chart map, which was generally precise enough for the whole



The string system Freya used to pull the skeg down after launching from a sand or gravel beach

trip. But even on maps with a bigger scale, river mouths are not always where they should be, as they are changing over the time. And this time the Blue Chart GPS was just wrong. Maybe a loaded topo map might have been more precise.

But the most precise guiding would have been using my brain! I was successfully approaching and entering already some other river mouth on the West Coast, means don't get irritated about the endless line of breakers, just keep on paddling to the north, still way out, clear of all breakers.

Eventually from the northern side there will be showing up a zone with less breakers on the more flat north beach of the river mouth, and maybe you can even enter the river over the bar without catching too many breakers.

What irritated me this time was the GPS map position, the shadow zone behind the triangle Mt. Oneone which I thought my have been the river mouth, also the lack of huts to be seen, as I was sitting way out there on up and down going waves without any precise vision of the shoreline. Unfortunately I just dangerously underestimated the final shore dumpers, once through the first breaker zone.

I waited carefully for the final beach landing through what I estimated was a 'normal size' dumper, and eventually paddled in past a big one.

It was a bad run, either wrong timing or not fast enough. I started to sprint from too far off the beach. The surge went way up and down a long way, which should have indicated to me a violent dumper size, too!

I had successfully cleared the offshore breaker zone, and had a few moments to rest on quieter water, and assess how should I not be able to handle that last barrier.

I was almost safe up the beach, when the next dumper came. Later I saw they made their way at a 45° angle northwards along the beach. That final mighty dumper just developed where I didn't expect it, to the right of me instead of from behind.

It trashed me violently. A high brace was useless. During the capsize my paddle was wrenched from my hands. No chance to hold on to it. I probably tumbled sideways up the beach two or three times, lying flat on the back deck until I managed with an already well practised 'beach hand roll' to sit upright high on shore, where the surge of the dumper spit me out. I was luckily in one piece, and my kayak was, too! Good to be flexible!

But my paddle was gone! My loved 'special edition' black *Epic* wingblade had disappeared! Swallowed by the dumping sea, like the sea was laughing at me, "If you are that foolish to dare to land here, I have to take your favourite toy away!"

Where was it? I immediately jumped out of the kayak, realizing I had to be quick to find it. The seas swept northwards at 45°, so it might be washed in that direction! But although walking up and down the beach several times, saying (in German), "Little sweet paddle, please come back to me! I am naked and helpless without you!" – but not a single glimpse of my paddle again.

The trip had good and bad days. This was the blackest day of my trip. But I'm unhurt, my repairs to the clips were successful, I had spare wing paddle, nothing really to stop me to continue.

Victurus Vicero!
(Keep on Fighting!)



Freya checking GPS positions for landings from Greymouth to Farewell Spit

The Final Leg - I'm done! **by Freya Hoffmeister** **(Big River to Okiwi Bay)**

Well, what shall I write - too much going on again! So many people wishing me well in person, via e-mail, on blog comments or on the phone - busy times! I would like to thank everybody again for mental and practical support, and will answer all your lovely e-mails shortly!

I finished my trip on Wednesday 2 January 2008, 3.15 pm, after a last day and night's leg of 165 km, just to make it a bit harder. Actually, the forecast for the next two days sounded like stronger winds again, and I didn't want to wait any more days to be done!

I had already planned to finish off with an 85 km crossing of Tasman Bay before I started the trip, therefore I decided to launch from Okiwi Bay.

French Pass would have been even better and would have saved another day, but it would have been just such a looooooong drive to get out there... and I was just happy about Bevan Walker driving me spontaneously out to Okiwi Bay that night before starting, after his own long hard day's work. Thanks again to Bevan!

To add even a bit more icing on the trip cake, the final crossing started at

10pm after I had paddled 80 km in 15 hours – the night paddle would add another 17.5 hours to a challenging 165 km leg.

Just some key figures here:
2386 km total, 70 overall days, 48 paddling days averaging about 50 km per paddling day. First woman to circumnavigate the South Island, 30 years after Paul Caffyn's brilliant first trip, the third solo, unsupported and continuous journey, fifth person to complete the whole circle. Fastest circumnavigation ever.

What an amazing experience and finish! The previous day's scenery was the best of my whole trip, one lovely remote sandy beach besides the next, between rocks shaped in an endless row of caves and arches. I was able to paddle through three of the biggest arches on New Years day, which I suppose brings luck to me! The swell was low that day, and I could have landed anywhere without much trouble in the surf.

I knew especially this last stretch of coastline could be very difficult and would have proved to be the last challenge of the trip with no sheltered landing since Little Wanganui River (Karamea), but I felt lucky to paddle on a sunny day with quiet waters to fully enjoy this last leg of the trip.

Just some moderate headwinds to deal with on the start - nothing to complain much about!

Fighting tiredness was the downside of a long push. In Iceland, Greg Stamer and I had paddled through one night for 22 hours. I was interested to see how my body could cope with a longer session without landing in New Zealand.

From dusk, I paddled without my headlight switched on until about 1am, navigating for 1.5 hours along the breaking surf off Farewell Spit by sound only. Mostly between 1am and 5am, I regularly had to collapse on to the front deck, taking 30 second power naps.

Or I stretched out on the rear deck, using my helmet stuck under a net on the deck as a pillow and closed my eyes for some seconds. For some minutes, I just paddled like that, lying on the rear deck and having my favourite star combination in the sky for navigating, perfectly in view! And it was good to occasionally lift my backside off the seat sometimes, as it started to feel quite sore after so many hours paddling. I would always then take care to slowly raise my body back into the paddling position, to avoid damage to my spine.

Occasionally I drew too close to the surf zone, got caught by breakers, and I had to brace into them. Most breakers washed my PFD off the front deck but it remained clipped with a carabiner to my sprayskirt loop. The waves were sensual to move with, up, down and sideways. Nothing seriously breaking or being violent that night! Warm waters anyway, a flat beach with no obstacles threatening. Just in case I would have been washed up and stranded on the beach, I would not have cared!

What helped me paddling through the night was I really enjoy paddling with closed eyes for long distances, being able to dance blind with the waves, and if necessary navigate by sound despite any wave conditions! One hour after I passed the Farewell Spit lighthouse, I could no longer hear the sound of waves breaking on the sand, and heard only silence. I knew I had reached the end of that very long spit. Now the open waters of Tasman Bay lay ahead and the start of a long 85km crossing.

It was the best decision I could have made, just to keep going through the night! It was such a lovely tranquil night after an already calm day without much swell - millpond seas, a clear sky with attractive new southern star pictures for me to look at and to navigate with, and some fascinating bioluminescence effects in the water!

This natural phenomena of bioluminescence while paddling through the night was like a one day delayed personal New Year's eve fireworks, endless entertainment almost all night.

On each paddle stroke, tiny waves created by the kayak bow stirred lines of glowing sparkles. Droplets splashed over my kayak, sticking to my paddle and gear, and glowing for some seconds until the next splash of glowing water.

And then the dolphins - three times for about 10 minutes, four to six dolphins played with my boat, leaving glowing traces of water behind them! I could always follow exactly where they were, by their glowing white trails in the sea beneath the sparkling starlight.



Freya during a gripping run over the Grey River bar. The swell that is about to break behind her was well over 3m high

Once I felt I had to fight tiredness more than being distracted and kept alert by the bioluminescent entertainment, I switched my headlight on, trying to keep my body and mind awake- more or less successfully.

The rising sun at 5am gave my body some relief as it marked my usual waking up time. I was able to paddle temporarily a bit more strongly after a few breakfast cereal bars.

I was successfully fighting my usually early morning need for a 'big' toilet walk. In case I had to go, I had planned to jump into the warmish water and strip off my pants. Peeing was no problem anyway with my funnel and hose female urinating device.

I began noticing sore rub spots on my backside after sitting in the cockpit seat for so long. I was wearing a warm combination of fuzzy rubber pants over fleece pants, which gave me a kind of a slight nappy rash.

While approaching my final destination, I entertained myself with cell phone calls to family and friends, and was very happy to be in range and touch again.

I had called Paul at 9pm the previous night to let him know my estimated arrival time and to inform him about my planned night paddling. It took him a while, and about three times, asking, "So, where are you staying tonight?"

to realize I would keep paddling after reaching the tip of Farewell Spit.

I would arrive in a decent time, by doing a night crossing, rather than sleeping for some hours and ending the crossing at 11pm or even midnight. Paul was happy to organize a 'welcome party' with plenty of friends paddling with me for the last kilometre. Thanks to all of you coming out to greet me!

Fiona and Martin Fraser prepared a Pavlova, with sliced kiwifruit, chocolate flakes and lashings of whipped cream on top. Luckily it was decided not to throw it in my face, but rather to allow me to eat it and share it around - the champagne sprayed by Paul was messy enough already! Thanks for the hot shower at David Oldham's house; he also provided the launch for the press and TV reporters, too!

The TV3 crew flew in by helicopter at 2pm, but couldn't spot me on the water. They landed and joined the motorboat crew to film me on my last kilometre, together with the press reporters. JKA from the Christchurch Press was not kayaking but was in the boat with cameras. So good to have a paddling photo reporter amongst the kayaking friends!

But a big thanks to Paul Caffyn organizing the welcome party! He was my great public relations manager and local trip organizer throughout the

whole trip, driving me around, supporting me with local knowledge and hosting me for quite a while!

A big thanks to Karel Vissel, who supported me with reliable, regular weather text messages on my Sat-phone and provided some blog updates.

A big thanks again to all people I've met on my trip, who supported me mentally and practically with offering their homes and hospitality to me, encouraging me with supportive e-mails and comments!

And a big thanks to all people following this blog and supporting me with lovely comments! I still owe you a trip report of the days from Riverton on the south coast to the finish! So much writing in one rush can't be done that fast, sorry. Actually I always felt pretty impolite when I got into people's houses, being hosted for a night or two, and I 'urgently' had to jump on the computer, to update this blog rather than talking to my hosts - sorry about that!



Fiona Fraser with the scrumptious pavlova which is part of the formal welcoming tradition for paddlers who complete a circumnavigation of the South Island. No one present was brave enough to wallop Freya in the face with the pavlova, the unexpected fate that was suffered by Bevan Walker and Paul Caffyn in the past.



Freya Hoffmeister feeding photographer John Kirk-Anderson spoonfuls of a tasty pavlova, complete with sliced kiwifruit and whipped cream, after she had completed the first successful solo paddle by a woman around the South Island, at Okiwi Bay, on 2 January 2008. Fiona Fraser is lurking in the background with a very sharp pointed implement to ensure the pavlova is evenly distributed amongst the welcoming paddlers

Freya Hoffmeister arriving in Okiwi Bay by Martin Fraser

Freya was expected to arrive at 3.30 pm so at 2.30 we, along with about four or five other kayaks, headed out from Okiwi Bay to see if we could spot her after a 32 hour non stop paddle. It was a fine day but it wasn't until she was quite close that we saw her still going strong. She seemed quite surprised and pleased to see our small flotilla which we hurriedly turned around to escort her into the beach.

Meanwhile a local chap - David Oldham - had offered the news media a ride on his boat, which turned up and motored along in front of us allowing the cameramen to take photos while we paddled to shore.

Once there she showed off a roll to the media then was surrounded by them wanting interviews and pictures. Paul let rip with a bottle of bubbly that sort of exploded everywhere and Fiona presented her with a pavlova which she really does love eating huge spoonfuls as fast as she could.

Four of us carried her kayak, which must have weighed 100kg full of gear,

up the beach and started unloading it. Someone, who shall remain nameless, started sponging out the water in the cockpit until AJ mentioned that it is never a good idea to sponge out a competitors kayak on the coast to coast as they have been in there so long that they pee into the boat, the sponger put two and two together, dropped the sponge and went running for the sea with hands outstretched.

Once all the media stuff was over Freya came over to see us and help with the final demolition of the pav. She was in remarkably good nick for someone who has just paddled 165 km chatting away about paddling at night with photoluminescence trailing out behind dolphins that kept her company. She had some short sleeps leaning on the front deck and had devised a technique that allowed her to paddle with her backside held off the seat for short periods.

It was great to see her in and all there were very pleased she had done so well getting around as fast as she had.

The welcoming party: Chris Hinkley, Harold Lonie and AJ from the Nelson Canoe Club and KASK, Martin and Fiona Fraser, also JKA from Christchurch, and Paul from the West Coast.

KAYAK KALENDAR

COASTBUSTERS SEA KAYAK SYMPOSIUM 2008

website: www.coastbuster.org.nz

When: 1 – 2 March 2008

Where: Auckland

The registration form can be downloaded from the above website, with information on how to pay the registration fee. Mail enquires to Coastbusters, PO Box 101-257, NSMC, Auckland.

The busy weekend programme is now on the website plus details of speakers and activities. Speakers include Sandy (kayak attacked by a crocodile) Robson, on her Australian paddle.

In the weekdays between these two events, we have planned for a number of activities and will promote this as a week full of kayaking opportunity. Some of the activities include: local and regional kayak trails & camping trips, on-the-water training, workshops, a sea-kayak race, etc.

As part of a week-long International Kayaking Festival, the core CB event will be followed on 8 – 9 March (the next weekend) by the Rotorua/Blue Lake NZKBGT (New Zealand Kayak Builders' Get-Together). And a link from the website has a information page on this 7 - 9 March gathering, with details of the program, accommodation and (no fees) registration page link.

KASK FORUM 2008

www.kask.co.nz

When: 25 - 27 April 2008, Anzac Day weekend

Where: Ohope Beach, near Whakatane, in the Bay of Plenty

A registration form was included in KASK newsletter No. 130, but a form is also available via the KASK website, and go to the events page.

Venue: Ohope Beach Christian youth camp 6kms east of Whakatane, perfect for surf training, a nice flat shallow beach with nice waves rolling in. Paddle destinations include Whale Island day paddle, leave from Whakatane, around rocks at Whakatane, Ohiwa Harbour and down to end of Ohope Spit for on-the-water sessions. The camp has a total of 80 bunks and 70 camp spots, a large hall and caterers on site.

Evan Pugh notes a strong emphasis will be on training, with David Winkworth from Australia as one of the instructors. If Justine Curgenvin and Barry Shaw have finished their South Island circumnavigation in time, Paul Caffyn will ensure that they attend and speak at the Ohope KASK Forum, before they fly out of Auckland on 29 April.

Along with kayak manufacturers attending, Evan notes an excellent response from retailers and equipment manufacturers for weekend prizes and a quiz for kayaking knowledge. As a fair number have already booked in so far, so please do not leave registering too late as you may miss out.

For more information, email Evan Pugh at: sheepskinsstuff@xtra.co.nz

BUGGER OF THE YEAR AWARD

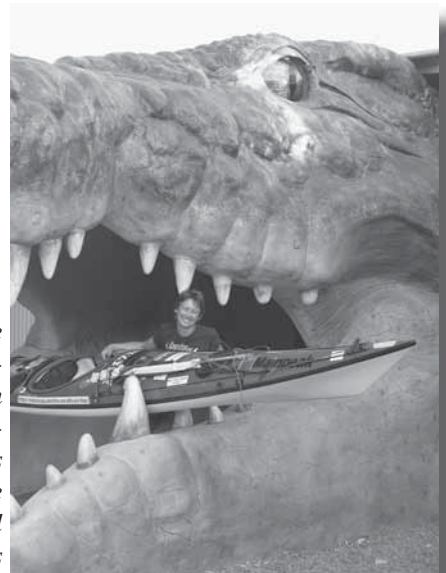
New annual award for silliest paddling effort during the past 12 months. Nominations in writing to Evan Pugh please by mid-April.

BOOKS & MAGAZINES

Anyone with surplus pre-loved sea kayaking books or magazines, email the editor. Second-hand and new book cattle dog available from the editor. I am keen to locate early copies of 'White Water', a canoeing journal first printed in 1953.

Back copies of KASK newsletters available from the editor. Trade for stamps.

Sandy Robson, one of the keynote speakers at Coastbusters 2008, at Broome in Western Australia, undergoing intensive training as to appropriate behaviour with territorial male crocodiles



Crossing the Ditch by Paul Caffyn

Why is there no glowing report in the newsletter on James Castrission and Justin Jones after they completed a 62-day paddle/drift across the Tasman Sea to New Plymouth? In my view, their nine metre long vessel with a pointy bow and a caravan (podule) on the stern was a boat – not a kayak. Weighing nigh on 1,000 kg, paddles would have been such an ineffective mean of propulsion – two sets of oars with sliding seats would have been far more efficient in terms of forward propulsion. Heading from east to west – the direction Colin Quincy took in early 1977 in his rowing boat crossing from Hokianga Harbour to Marcus Beach, south of Noosa Heads - would have considerably reduced their time at sea.

Julie Reynolds and her partner Scott drove down to New Plymouth to join the large crowd waiting for the two to finish, missed it by 15 minutes but took a few photographs of the vessel called Lot 41, which I understand was the same lot number that Phar Lap was first auctioned before becoming a very famous race horse.

What are the precedents and on what basis do I make my judgement call re this boat. The Atlantic Ocean was crossed solo, twice by Germans in kayaks, both with sail assistance, but nevertheless both kayaks had a single cockpit and sprayskirt for the paddler, no watertight podule on the stern.

On 17 April 1928 Franz Romer set off from Cape Saint Vincent in Spain in a 19.5 foot long kayak, beam of 39 inches, wooden frame covered with canvas that was built by Klepper. Although publicity photos of Deutscher Sport show Romer in the cockpit with a double bladed paddle, the kayak was ketch-rigged using sails that could be handled from the cockpit and steered with a pedal controlled shoal-draft rudder. The weight of kayak and load was about three quarters of a ton, excluding Romer.

Unique features introduced with the kayak were internal inflatable gasbags

and external inflatable sponsons, also a foot operated bilge pump. On 30 July Romer arrived at Saint Thomas in the Virgin Islands, after 58 days at seas from the Canaries.

His legs had atrophied. At night in big seas, Romer trained himself to catch moments of sleep in the troughs between waves, but wake up for dropping over the swell crests. Sadly, when Romer set off on September 8 to complete an Atlantic Ocean crossing at New York, he had added an outboard motor and fuel tank. He missed a hurricane warning and no sign of him or his boat was ever found.

In 1955 Hannes Lindemann sailed a dugout canoe, with weighted keel and rudder, across the Atlantic from the Canaries to the Caribbean. The following year he decided to try again in a standard off-the-shelf Klepper Aerius double kayak. An outrigger for stability, an extra sprayskirt and a mainmast for sails were the only modifications he made. Lindemann left Las Palmas in the Canaries on 20 October 1956, and despite capsizes, losing the rudder, bad weather and hallucinations, he arrived at Saint Martin after 72 days at sea. The first true sail assisted ocean crossing in a standard folding kayak.

In 1987 Californian Ed Gillet made a crossing from Monterey to Hawaii in a Necky Kayaks *Tofino* double kayak. With inflatable external sponsons, Ed used a parafoil kite for progress when the trade winds blew, and paddled during the lulls. Like Romer and Lindemann and Romer, he had only a sextant, time piece and charts for navigation. He landed in Hawaii on his 63rd day at sea, an amazing piece of seamanship.

*Top right: bow of Lot 41
Bottom right; interior of the podule
Below: stern view of Lot 41*



My two attempts at crossing the Tasman in 1987 and 1989 were made in a fibreglass double kayak; sextant, compass, chart and time piece for navigation; no sails, just paddle propulsion. No podule on the stern, just sprayskirts over the cockpit coamings at night, with a face mask and tube for breathing through the sprayskirt at night.

In 2000 British paddler Peter Bray crossed the Atlantic from Newfoundland to Ireland in 76 days, but his kayak looks remarkably like Lot 41, a podule on the stern for sleeping and riding out big seas, and kitted with modern satellite navigation and communication equipment.

Andrew McAuley's trans-Tasman attempt in 2007 used a fibreglass bubble (Casper) pulled over the single cockpit of his Mirage kayak for sleeping. Andrew had used a sail for several of his big kilometre days, but still the primary means of propulsion was his paddle. Andrew did not have a large podule on his kayak stern, where he could climb into and ride out big seas and headwinds as did the 'crossing the ditch' blokes, he slid down into the cockpit to sleep and pulled the bubble over the cockpit. He came so close to completing his crossing.

James and Justin, a jolly good adventure, but in a boat and not a kayak.



Photos: Julie Reynolds

HUMOUR

Damned Spot

A group of country neighbours wanted to get together on a regular basis and socialize. As a result, about 10 couples formed a dinner club and agreed to meet for dinner at a different neighbour's house each month.

Of course, the lady of the house was to prepare the meal. When it came time for Chris and Susie Brown to have the dinner at their house, like most women, Susie wanted to outdo all the others and prepare a meal that was the best that any of them had ever lapped a lip over.

A few days before the big event, Susie got out her cookbook and decided to have mushroom smothered steak. When she went to the store to buy some mushrooms, she found the price for a small can was more than she wanted to pay. She then told her husband, "We aren't going to have mushrooms because they are too expensive." He said, "Why don't you go down in the pasture and pick some of those mushrooms? There are plenty of them right in the creek bed."

She said, "No, I don't want to do that, because I have heard that wild mushrooms are poisonous." He then said, "I don't think so. I see the varmints eating them all the time and it never has affected them."

After thinking about this, Susie decided to give this a try and got in the pickup and went down in the pasture and picked some. She brought the wild mushrooms back home and washed them, sliced and diced them to get them ready to go over her smothered steak. Then she went out on the back porch and got Ol' Spot's (the yard dog) bowl and gave him a double handful. She even put some bacon grease on them to make them tasty. Ol' Spot didn't slow down until he had eaten every bite.

All morning long, Susie watched him and the wild mushrooms didn't seem to affect him, so she decided to use them.

The meal was a great success, and Susie even hired a lady from town to come out and help her serve. She had on a white apron and a little cap on her head. It was first class.

After everyone had finished, they all began to kick back and relax and socialize. The men were visiting and the women started to gossip a bit.

About this time, the lady from town came in from the kitchen and whispered in Susie's ear. She said, "Mrs. Brown, Spot just died."

With this news, Susie went into hysterics. After she finally calmed down, she called the doctor and told him what had happened. The doctor said, "It's bad, but I think we can take care of it. I will call for an ambulance and I will be there as quickly as I can get there. We'll give everyone enemas and we will pump out everyone's stomach. Everything will be fine. Just keep them all there and keep them calm."

It wasn't long until they could hear the wail of the siren as the ambulance was coming down the road. When they got there, the EMTs got out with their suitcases, syringes, and a stomach pump. The doctor arrived shortly thereafter. One by one, they took each person into the master bathroom, gave them an enema and pumped out their stomach.

After the last one was finished, the doctor came out and said, "I think everything will be fine now, and he left."

They were all looking pretty peaked sitting around the living room, and about this time, the town lady came in and said, "You know, that fellow that ran over Ol' Spot never even stopped!"

Fight Starter

Defendant to the Judge:

"Just so you know, this is how the fight started. I rear-ended a car this morning on the way to town. I knew right then and there that it was going to be a REALLY bad day.

The driver got out of the other car and wouldn't you know it, he was a dwarf.

He stormed over to my car, looked up at me and said, "I'm NOT f*#%ing happy!"

So I said, "Well, which f*#%ing one are you then?"

And that's how the fight started.

Food for Thought

A Doctor was addressing a large audience of Senior Citizens. "The material we put into our stomachs is enough to have killed most of us sitting here, years ago. Red meat is awful. Soft drinks corrode your stomach lining. Chinese food is loaded with MSG.

High fat diets can be disastrous, and none of us realizes the long-term harm caused by the germs in our drinking water. But there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all and we all have, or will, eat it at some time or other. Can anyone here tell me what food it is that causes the most grief and suffering for years after eating it?"

After several seconds of total silence, a 75-year-old man in the front row raised his hand, and softly said, "Wedding Cake."

Little Johnny strikes again!

A grade school teacher asked her students to use the word 'fascinate' in a sentence.

Molly put up her hand and said, "My family went to my granddad's farm, and we all saw his pet sheep, it was fascinating."

The teacher said, "That was good, but I wanted you to use the word fascinate, not fascinating."

Sally raised her hand. She said, "My family went to see Rock City and I was fascinated."

The teacher said, "Well, that was good Sally, but I wanted you to use the word fascinate."

Little Johnny raised his hand. The teacher hesitated because she had been burned by Little Johnny before.

She finally decided there was no way he could damage the word 'fascinate', so she called on him.

Little Johnny said, "My Aunt Margaret has a sweater with ten buttons, but her tits are so big she can only fasten eight."

The teacher sat down and cried.

KASK

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

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

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

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

Send in a plain brown envelope, or via cybermail to:

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West Coast .N.Z.
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KASK Annual Subscription

\$35 single membership
(\$105 for 3 years; \$175 for 5 years)
\$40 family membership.
\$35 overseas

A subscription form can be downloaded from the KASK website.

Cheques should be made out to:

K.A.S.K. (NZ) Inc. & mailed to:

**KASK Administrator
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Send address changes for receiving the newsletter via email to Linda at: KASK.admin@xtra.co.nz

4th. Ed. KASK HANDBOOK Updated to January 2008

For a copy (or trade orders) of this mother of all sea kayaking handbooks, contact Paul Caffyn, RD 1, Runanga, 7873, West Coast.

e-mail: kayakpc@xtra.co.nz
RRP: \$ 34.90 including p&p
New members: gratis
Make cheques out to KASK (NZ) Inc.

The fourth edition of the KASK Handbook, is a mammoth compilation on all aspects of sea kayaking in New Zealand, by many of the most experienced paddlers in the Universe. Following a brief introduction, the handbook is divided into six sections:

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

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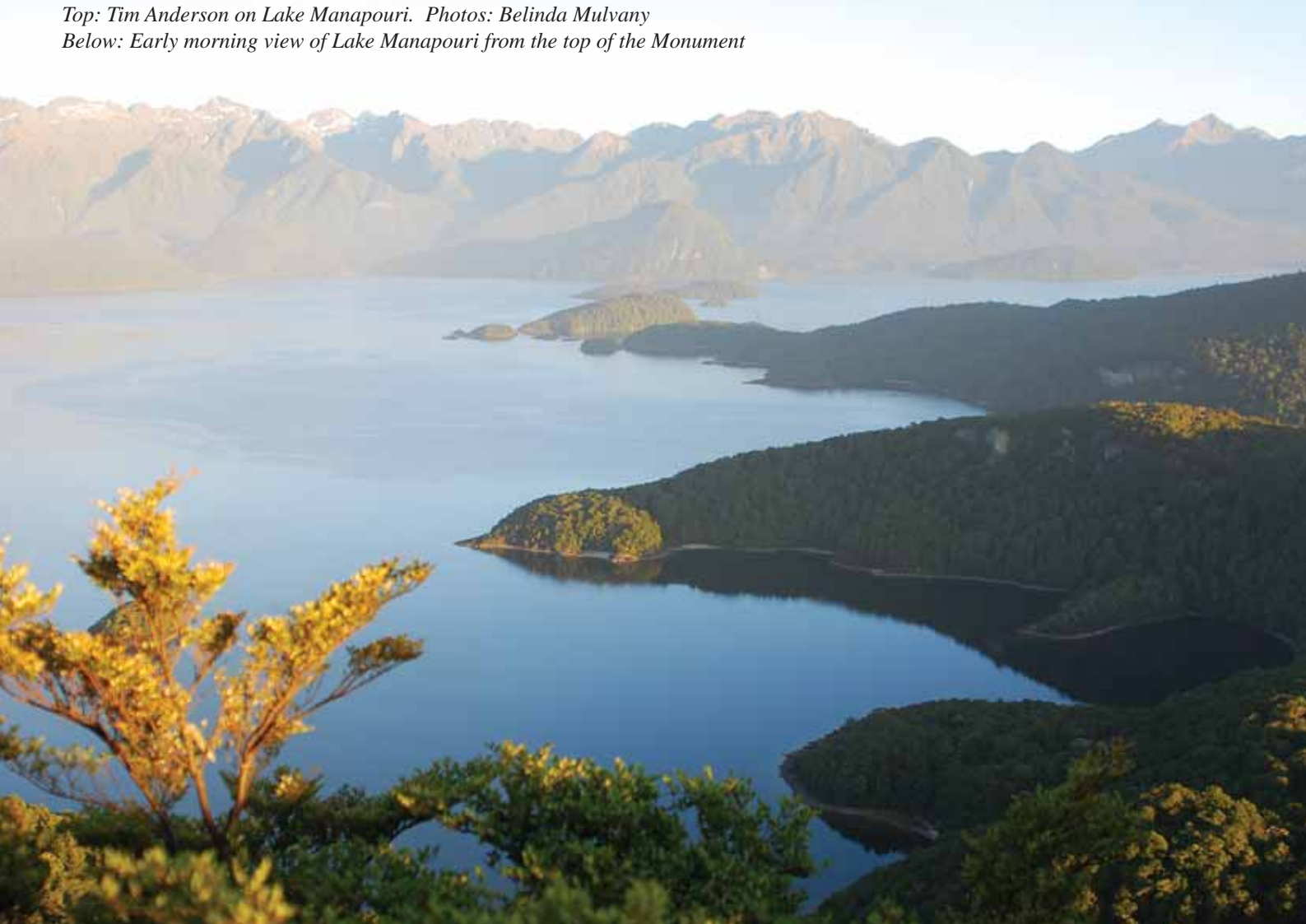
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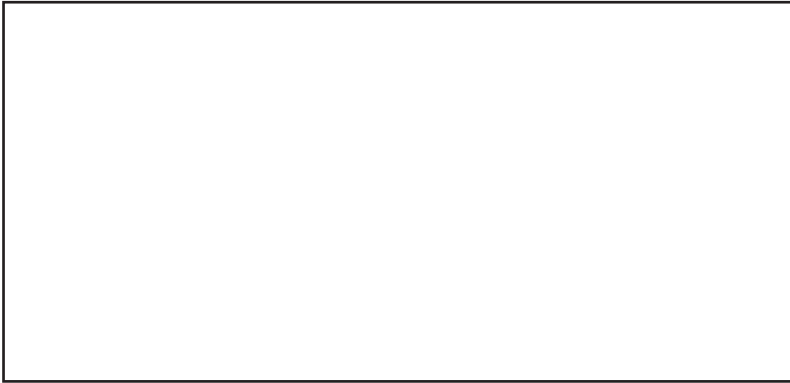
**KASK Website:
www.kask.co.nz**



*Top: Tim Anderson on Lake Manapouri. Photos: Belinda Mulvany
Below: Early morning view of Lake Manapouri from the top of the Monument*



MAILED TO



**If undelivered, please return to:
KASK , PO Box 23, Runanga, West Coast. 7841**



*Okiwi Bay, 2 January 2008. Freya at the finish of her South Island circumnavigation.
Bubbly from Paul Caffyn.*

Photo: John Kirk-Anderson

KASK MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Current membership fees are:

- \$35 for ordinary membership
- \$40 for family or joint membership
- \$35 for overseas membership
- new members receive a free copy of the handbook
- members should endeavour to renew by 1 August
- the KASK financial year runs 1 August to 31 July the following year
- a subscription due notice and up to two reminders are sent out with the newsletters between June and October
- if a membership renewal is not received by 30 September, membership lapses
- new members who join between 1 June and 31 July automatically get their membership credited to the following year, receiving a 14 month membership
- the KASK committee puts its emphasis confirming renewals from existing members from July to October; and promoting new KASK memberships from November to February.

