

THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

Issue 55

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The Sea Canoeist Newsletter is published 6 times a year as the official newsletter of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc.

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KASK FORUM 1995

A final reminder for the 1995 KASK Forum which is being held at the Titahi Bay Suf Club at Easter, from Friday April 14 to Monday April 17. Registration will commence at 1pm on Friday with the formal programme commencing at 7pm.

Please drop me a line if you are attending. Numbers are necessary to confirm catering arrangements. If anyone wants more copies of the registration form, drop a line or fax me.

Several paddlers have requested sessions on surf landings and take offs. Titahi Bay will be an ideal venue for this topic. Mark Hutson will be running both on shore and on the water sessions on surf landings.

A new session this year will be a guide to sea kayaking photography. Famed Christchurch Press photographer, John Kayak Anderson will be judging the photographic competition and lecturing on this topic.

Notice of the 3rd Annual General Meeting of KASK(NZ)Inc. was sent out with Newsletter 54. If you cannot attend the AGM, but wish to bring something up at the AGM, please drop a line to the secretary, Peter Sullivan.

KASK LOGO

Peter Sullivan has completed fine tuning of the KASK logo. The circular lettering was filled in and the final product looks impressive. Peter then had 200 printed as adhesive stickers. Costs were kept minimal by printing in two colours, black on white, and on a car window or a kayak, I am most impressed with Peter's effort.

The stickers will be included as part of the KASK Easter forum registration fee, and those left over will be on sale from Peter Sullivan at \$2.00 each. At a later stage, T shirts could be produced with the logo.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

A belated thanks to Peter and Diane Sullivan for undertaking the printing, collation and distribution of the newsletter. For the past year, their help has taken a great load off the editor and my apologies for not acknowledging their efforts earlier.

CONSERVATION NEWS

At a recent KASK meeting in Christchurch, convened by Ray Forsyth, concern was raised over the gradual use/abuse of camp sites in various areas of the New Zealand coastline, particularly the Marlborough sounds.

What was suggested was that KASK representatives be nominated from several areas of New Zealand who would act as liaison persons between local KASK members and the local or national DOC officers, to discuss any problems concerning the coastline and associated environs.

To that end, letters have been sent out to key area paddlers and Peter Sullivan has prepared letters which will be sent to the regional DOC offices which

have coastal responsibilities. At this stage DOC is apparently unaware of KASK's existence. Your local area rep. need not be on their own. As in Christchurch, a local group was formed and ideas can be formulated and actioned.

Any ideas or suggestions, write to Peter Sullivan and the newsletter will keep local developments up to date.

NEWSLETTER EXCHANGES

Newsletter exchanges now occur with the following overseas club newsletters and magazines:

1. NSW Sea Kayak Club N/L
Sydney, Australia
2. MASK N/L, Metropolitan Area Sea Kayakers, New York, USA
3. Sea Kayaker Magazine, Seattle
4. Paddlers International, England
5. Victorian Sea Kayakers N/L,
Melbourne, Australia
6. International Sea Kayaking Assoc N/L John Ramwell, England.

Such exchanges are useful for keeping up to date with sea kayaking developments overseas. Readers will already be aware of informative articles that have been plucked from such newsletters.

From 1972 to the end of 1994, the Advanced Sea Kayak Club put out a long running newsletter under the editorship of John Ramwell. At the start of 1995, the club changed its name to International Sea Kayaking Association. John produces a bi-monthly newsletter, and the aims of the association are very similar to that of KASK, that is promotion of sea canoeing, communication, organization of events and conferences, and safety and coaching.

NEW ZEALAND KAYAK CIRCUMNAVIGATION ATTEMPT BY KAZUTOMI YOSHIDA

On November 26 1994, Kazutomi Yoshida set off from Tahunanui Beach at Nelson to circumnavigate New Zealand by kayak. Paddling solo and without a support crew, Kazu headed around the Marlborough Sounds to initially tackle the South Island in a clockwise direction. He expected this stage to take 50 days and anticipated arriving back in Nelson on February 1, 1995.

On February 4, 1995 Kazu turned back off Coal River, between Breaksea and Dagg sounds in Fiordland, for a crayfishing barge in Breaksea Sound. Faced with strong winds from a cold front and a long committed stretch of coast ahead to Jacksons Bay, Kazu decided it was too dangerous to continue on his own. In Fiordland without a VHF or Mountain Radio set, Kazu had no means of contact with the outside world and when a small newspaper item announced that he was safe and had decided to abandon the trip, both Japanese and New Zealand friends were quite relieved. It was a bold attempt and Kazu did extremely well solo and unsupported to reach Breaksea Sound - to date he is the first solo kayaker to round Puysegur Point.

A week later Kazu called in to the 12 Mile and I jotted down a few notes of his experiences and the equipment he used. Twenty six years old, Kazu is a sea kayaking instructor salesperson for the Kleentex company in Tokyo. I asked Kazu if there was anything that he would change with his kayak and equipment and apart from problems with take-apart paddles and tent poles breaking, he was happy with all this gear. I have summarized the equipment Kazu used below:

Kayak:

20 kilogram kevlar Arctic Raider

Sprayskirt:

neoprene, Day 2.

Safety Equipment:

two flares, strobe light, chemical light sticks, AM/FM radio for weather forecasts, waterproof binoculars & portable hand bilge pump, lifejacket.

Clothes:

farmer john wetsuit, polypro synthetic

clothing, sandals worn with fleece socks, and a helmet.

Sleeping:

thinsulate sleeping bag (very light & compact) and goretex sleeping bag cover.

Cooking:

MSR whisperlite stove; breakfast of bread, lunch of chocolate & apples, dinner of dehi food & potatoes. Enough food for a 7 day period.

Cameras:

Pentax weatherproof 38>90mm zoom lens, and a Canon EOS 100 with two lenses, 28>80mm and 80>200mm. The Pentax camera was carried in a pouch on Kazu's lifejacket, the SLR camera in the middle compartment.

Paddles:

a Nimbus carbon fibre 'Wave walker' take apart - the inside tube over which the second section slides over came loose and had to be taped up to stop the two sections rotating and also one blade cracked below the end of the paddle shaft spline. His second take-apart paddle was a Canoe Sports 'Circumnavigator', and the joint cracked in a large bumper dumper surf landing north of Kaikoura. Kazu had the joint repaired and continued to use this paddle.

Maps:

1:250,000 scale DOSLI topographic maps used in a waterproof map case and 1: 63, 360 scale (1"=1 mile) maps of Fiordland (waterproof maps loaned by Bevan Walker).

Knee Rests:

The cockpit was a trifle large for Kazu and he took a novel approach to forming a snug fit for his knees. Kazu made two 'V' shaped knee rests out of black foam rubber, glued these onto a 2.5cm thick sheet of the same rubber and then glued this under the kayak foredeck. This very effectively lowered the height of the knee rests above the cockpit floor.

Paddling Statistics:

32 paddling days for a total distance covered of 1400kms; an paddling day average of 43.7kms.

Total days of 71, with 39 spent weather bound and including a long 18 day break spent at Karitane while waiting for replacement tent poles to come from Japan.

I was particularly interested to see how Kazu tackled the crux of the

South Island trip, that is from Te Waewae Bay around Puysegur Point into Preservation Inlet. At Port Craig, on the western side of Te Waewae Bay, Kazu waited for seven days to make his break. On two days, Kazu went out 20kms but turned back when faced with headwinds and big seas. He then had to walk and hitchhike out to Tuatapere to re-supply with food. On February 1, Kazu made his break and knocked up 84kms without landing to round Puysegur Point and arrived to a great reception at the new lodge at Kisbee Bay in Preservation Inlet. After a rest day, Kazu paddled around West Cape and into Dusky Sound where he camped at Passage Point, the southern entrance to Acheron Passage. On February 4, he paddled up Acheron Passage and turned back off Coal River. After three days at the crayfishermen's barge in Breaksea Sound, Kazu hitched a ride on a fishing boat up to Deep Cove at the head of Doubtful Sound and thence out to Te Anau.

The newspaper item (Feb.9) noted Kazu was found in a distressed condition by a fishing boat near Breaksea Island, off the entrance to Breaksea Sound, and had to be lifted from his kayak on to the fishing boat by crew members. Kazu however maintains that he paddled back to the crayfishermen's barge in Breaksea Sound.

Nevertheless it was a brave attempt to circumnavigate the South Island, and Kazu should not be disappointed at achieving as much as he did. Kazu was impressed with the hospitality of the coastal dwellers. Two Timaru policemen offered Kazu a bed for the night and he went out fishing with the Karitane fishermen. His two favourite camping spots were Brighton (south of Dunedin) and Port Craig although the sandlies were terrible.

Kazu's plan for the rest of the summer is to paddle from Cape Reinga down the east coast of the North Island to Wellington.

Paul Caffyn.

BOOK REVIEWS

Title: The Complete Book of Sea Kayaking

Author: Derek Hutchinson

Published: A & C Black, London. 1994, 4th Edition.

Subject Headings: Sea Kayaking manual, Arctic origins of sea kayaks

ISBN No: 0 7136 3835 4

Contents: 180 pages, colour photos, coloured diagrams, index

Size: 19 x 23cms

Cover: laminated soft cover

Retail Price: \$59.95 GST inclusive

Distributor: Capricorn Books.155 Jackson St., Petone.

Ph/Fax: 04 5682 004

Reviewed by: P.Caffyn

First published in 1976, Derek Hutchinson's 'Sea Canoeing' remains the most comprehensive sea kayaking manual available worldwide. This reprint has a revised and enlarged chapter on basic strokes and techniques, and information on equipment has been updated, for example to include the GPS satellite navigation system. The most impressive improvement on earlier editions is a change to colour illustrations with coloured photographs now included in the text instead of a central colour plate section.

Although the term lavishly illustrated is often used in advertising material for books, in this instance the description is apt. Derek has a flair for self-explanatory diagrams and the book has few pages without illustrations and diagrams. The final chapter, 'Arctic origins of the sea kayak' has some excellent reproductions of archival photographs and diagrams of traditional Eskimo kayaks.

The listing of chapters is:

1. Equipment
2. Basic strokes and techniques
3. Advanced strokes and techniques
4. Surfing
5. Rescues
6. Waves
7. Winds and weather
8. Tides and tidal streams
9. Navigation
10. Arctic origins of the sea kayak

My niggles with this book are few. The chapter on 'Winds and weather' is far too brief and concentrates on Great Britain, with no information on the basics of understanding weather

maps or which way winds blow around high or low pressure systems. As wind is the prime factor affecting sea conditions, a thorough understanding of weather map interpretation and the ability to make your own assessment of future weather plays a vital role in safety when planning and during trips.

The 'Navigation' chapter is also too brief with insufficient detail on tools and techniques. Nigel Foster's 'Sea Kayaking' has a much more informative section on navigation.

Derek calls skegs and rudders expendable items and lists five problems with rudders relating to breakage, towing, rescues, seal landings and capsizing in surf. Whether this reflects a British purist tradition of not paddling with rudders or not trying a New Zealand real bloke's aluminium overstern rudder, Derek fails to note the benefit to safety of steerage in strong winds and the boost to paddling speed in beam or quartering wind conditions.

Expedition sea kayaking is not covered in this manual as Derek has another book titled 'Derek C.Hutchinson's Guide to Sea Kayaking', however I will save that one for another review.

Derek has been on sea kayaking scene for over 30 years now. In 1976 he was part of a team paddling for 31 hours from Felixstowe in England across the southern end of the North Sea to Ostend in Belgium. His longest trip was in 1978 in the Aleutian Island chain, 250 miles from Dutch Harbour on Unalaska Island to Nikolski on Umnak Island. A British Canoeing Union coach, he is a skilled instructor and a great teller of tall tales and true.

Apart from the niggles noted, the rest of the book is superb and the first five chapters have no equal in terms of good descriptive writing and readily understandable illustrations and diagrams.

In conclusion, Derek's 'The Complete Book of Sea Kayaking' remains the best book to purchase for learning all the basic paddling, bracing, rolling and rescue skills and it is rounded out with good historical background on the development of both the Eskimo and European kayaks.

To my knowledge this book is only available in New Zealand from Capri-

corn Books. The price is expensive but justified for the content. For orders, add \$3 postage for North Island and \$4 for South Island.

P.Caffyn

THE DREAMTIME VOYAGE. Around Australia Kayak Odyssey.

Author: Paul Caffyn

Published: May 1994, Kayak Dundee Press, P.Caffyn RD 1, Runanga, West Coast.

Subject Headings: Sea Kayaking, First Kayak Circumnavigation of Australia

ISBN No. 0-473-02349-0

Contents: 244 pages, including 79 colour plates, 85 black and white photographs, one map

Size: A4

Cover: both hardback & laminated soft cover

RRP: \$39.95 GST inclusive - limpbound

\$44.95 GST inclusive - hardback

Reviewed by: Glyn Dickson

When Paul appeared to launch this book at the KASK forum last year, a number of us were taken by surprise. No it wasn't the suit and tie, which were impressive enough(!), but by the fact that 11 years after completing the first kayak circumnavigation of Australia, the book had arrived.

When I first looked at the book, my interest was captured by the black and white photo of Paul taken after paddling for 31.5 hours non stop along the Nullarbor Cliffs (one of the three long cliff sections paddled) in the Great Australian Bight. Every picture tells a story and this one spoke of adventure, pushing the limits of human achievement, sheer bloody minded slog, mental focus on the goal, mind over matter (particularly over tired and sore muscles, lack of sleep etc) and ultimately success. Funnily enough this is what the book is about.

The make or break moment of the expedition was reached at the Zuytdorp Cliffs in Western Australia. These cliffs run for 126 miles unbroken along the coast. When Paul's original plan of paddling with another kayaker and rafting up to sleep was no longer a reality, he was faced with paddling solo, or packing up and going home.

I had anticipated being at my wits end

during the final few hours to Kalbarri, mind frazzled by lack of sleep, body drained by lack of energy. Despite the snail's pace the contrary was the case. Now 32 hours from launching, I was literally going for broke with all the stops out. Drenched with spray as the bow plunged into the chop, I experienced a strange but marvellous, overwhelming feeling of being unstoppable. That goal, the Murchison River mouth, was so firmly entrenched in my mind, I felt nothing on earth could stop me now. I seemed to be tapping some hitherto untapped reserve of energy.

Having felt as though I was personally accompanying Paul through the highs and lows of the cliff paddle, willing him on despite the headwinds and choppy waters, I shared in the relief and celebrations at the successful completion of the section.

As Lalaguli's bow sliced onto the flat calm river, I felt a gush of emotional relief such as I have never experienced before. My eyes misted over. I choked back a stream of tears. The bubble of pent-up nervous energy, which had kept my batteries charged and my motor running for two days and a night, burst. Yet it was not so much a feeling of accomplishment or achievement, as simply intense relief at having gone beyond that unimaginable edge of darkness for such a long, long time and I was still alive and kicking. Now I was re-entering the real world again. I had exceeded the bounds of what I had previously considered humanly possible in a single kayak, into an area where only my imagination applied. And apart from the sore arms and shoulders, I was pleased with what I found, in particular that my blinkered vision of winning through against all odds had not faltered.

Perhaps the hardest thing to appreciate is the sheer scale of the expedition and just how impressive the achievement really was. Paul writes with a modest, down to earth style portraying himself as just your 'average bloke' taking on a personal challenge. At the back of the book is a table of each days mileage. 257 paddling days, 103 rest of weather-bound days. Average paddling day 36.7 miles, or 26.2 miles for every single day of the expedition. From my experience, most recrea-

tional sea kayakers average 12 to 15 miles per day over a trip. I recently went and paddled 28 miles virtually non stop which took me 7 hours in near perfect conditions. To think that Paul averaged 36.7 miles for each paddling day no matter what the conditions, and that he knocked off five daily runs over over 50 miles in the last two weeks provides me with a sense of perspective (and awe) on this circumnavigation.

Along the journey, there is a great collection of pieces of history, amusing anecdotes and incidents, a description of the coastal landscapes, geology, and descriptions of the great variety of people met. The photographs are excellent with a mixture of black and white and colour, and overall I'd highly recommend it to anyone as a ripping good yarn and a must for every sea kayaker's library. Additionally this book is an inspiration to dream of great things and to push your limits because... 'if a scrawny 10 stone stripline can paddle around Aussie, just imagine what you can do.'

Glyn Dickson.

TRIP REPORTS

ASKNET Skills Weekend

by Eddie van den Hurk

The following is a personal observation and summary of a fun and training weekend.

Waitangi Day, a long weekend of action was dedicated by ASKNET, the Auckland Sea Kayakers network, to improve and test sea kayaking skills. Vince and Gerry Maire from ASKNET and the North Shore Canoe Club, prepared the program and it really worked. Kayakers from various Auckland clubs, from the far north and Whangarei, shared in the event. Prior to the trip participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire giving the organizers an idea of the experience and skill level of the paddlers.

Saturday morning at 9am, 21 kayakers assembled at Martens Bay, east of Warkworth. The group was divided into three smaller groups of mixed skill levels. Leaders were appointed, briefed about the objectives, and given 'highly secretive and sealed instructions'. The day's objective was Kawau Island, a total distance of 15kms, via Moturekareka and

Motuketekete islands, some of the prettiest places in the Hauraki Gulf. After arranging a 'buddy' system, our group took off.

It did not take long before the difference in paddling skills became apparent and a mutually agreeable pace was found. As there was a nice breeze of 10 to 15 knots, the 5km to Moturekareka was used to get the feel of the boats and to instruct newer paddlers in the art of paddling, arm positions, body twist etc. From time to time leadership of the group changed hands; which for my part made me think hard. It was lunch time and high tide. The place where I expected to have lunch was unavailable. The next beach was a steep pebbly beach.

Question: Do I send someone (unknown) out to investigate the landing area? Inspect it myself, leaving the party and buddy to their own devices, during the time that it took to run ashore?

After lunch we took off around Moturekareka Island investigating rocks and caves, requiring more judgement of personal skills and confidence. On the way to Kawau Island, compass courses were set to assess current and drift. Quite easy when paddling uninterrupted in a straight line. But then someone 'lost' a paddle and it took about three runs before that was located and handed back to its owner whose boat was supported by his buddy in the meantime. By then it was blowing a good 15 knots from the south-west, gusting to 20, upsetting the drift factors somewhat. Worse was to come when one of the 'oldies' could not stand the strain and 'suffered' a heart attack. What to do? Tow him in? Mouth to mouth resuscitation? Heart Massage? Is there a VHF radio? What is our position. Are any other boats near? A smoke flare?

When the oldboy 'came around' he suggested to have him boxed in and disposed of. Plenty of helpful advice.

Doube tow lines were jacked up to keep the boats headed to wind. So that the position would not change much and the Westpac helicopter or rescue boat could find the patient. After that some towing was required. Again have we got tow lines? Nylon rope, polypro or bungy cord? Do we tie the towline around the waist or to the boat? Some

paddlers had lifejackets with tow lines fitted.

This led to a discussion of sea anchors. Slow the boat down. May be a drink bottle tied to the boat, dragging behind on two or three metres of rope? Is there a knife handy? By that time we had about 12 kms behind us and some of the muscles had started to protest.

A break at Mansion House and a drink was most welcome. When the other groups had started to show, we all went to Moores Bay, a fishing lodge, which has some cabins and tentsites, plus all the mod cons. After placing the tents, showers and dinner, we assembled in the social hall to recap our experiences. An interesting exercise was to find an answer to the question, 'What should we always carry with us in the kayak, every trip, even short ones.' Answers came back thick and fast. Three litres of water, a knife, matches, small tarp, plastic survival bag, dry polypro, food, torch etc.

We did a session on compass and chart work. Thankfully the latter was kept simple. A kayak is not a place to lay out a course with compass, dividers and rulers.

Day two was set aside to go around Kawau Island. A marvellous place to explore. It has literally everything, cliffs, caves, rocks, beaches, clean warm water to swim, excellent walks, a bit of history with a coppermine. Equal to anything I have seen.

For those who could still feel the strain of the previous day, a short course to Sandy Bay was offered, under experienced guidance. Others went around Kawau Island enjoying the caves etc. It took about three to four hours to get around.

That evening, after dinner and a few drinks at the bar, a training social was held. We had a truly hilarious time with a game designed for group leader training. It was bedtime before any one realized it. The game is too good to describe. It has something to do with blindfolded sheep in a pen. For details contact the organizers.

The following morning, again every one was woken by a bunch of kookaburras. High in the trees, loud and noisy, these birds do not give up until one is fully awake.

The day for going home. some took off at 7am, others including myself at 9am, and others later. Out of habit I counted the number of boats. I may just as well not have, because a good half hour later, one part of that group was out of sight. The six remaining boats kept together for a while and then three pointed north and two drifted south. I stayed back, pondering why it always seems to be the same, that when they can smell their stable, the horses bolt.

People who trail behind do so usually because of lesser fitness, lesser strength, injury or lack of skill. Surely a good reason to stay with them. In this case one kayaker had never made a re-entry, assisted or otherwise. The other had a painful wrist injury, making it doubtful whether that person had the ability to get back in the boat, if needed. The question is: Do people who have been accepted by a group, any group, have the right of protection by that group? Whose responsibility is it to make certain that everyone gets home safely?

Leadership can change, in this case there was no appointed leader for the trip back. Fortunately the weather forecast of 20 gusty 30 knots was wrong. It was a beautiful day with about 6 knots. Should that make a difference to the risk management technique?

It seems to be the rule rather than the exception that organized groups fall apart on their way home. The strong paddlers take off to leave the weaker ones to fend for themselves. That last hour seems to be the hour of danger. Why? Is it a lack of self discipline which permits the 'she'll be right mate' or 'I'm all right Jack' attitude prevail? Or may be our faith in the ability of others had increased during the trip? The article by Jackie Fenton was a classic case - 'Sea Canoeist Newsletter' No. 53 Oct/Nov 1994.

Question: Should sea kayaking be treated purely as a sport for individuals: eg., are you on your own and responsible for yourself only? Should selfhelp rescue equipment be further developed so that self rescue can be guaranteed? And compulsory. (Extractable outriggers etc.) Should sea kayaking be more regimented and controlled, like water skiing, where

there must be two people in the boat, while a third one can ski? — a kayaker at sea must always be accompanied by another with a minimum experience of?

My own thoughts are, there must be room for the hardened individualists, but that clubs and groups give the opportunity to learn and experience conditions in the safety and protection of a group.

On top of that, it was a hell of a lot of fun and that was what was the weekend was all about. Thank you ASKNET.

Eddie van den Hurk

LEADERSHIP

In response to Eddie's questions raised in his trip report, I thought I would jot down some of my thoughts on leadership when paddling in groups. Any one else with thoughts and ideas on the subject, please drop a line for inclusion in the next newsletter.

Shared Leadership

When a team is small and levels of skill and experience are on a par, then decisions can be made through amicable discussion without a delegated leader. The 1977 British Cape Horn Kayak Expedition used this method as Frank Goodman noted:

'The expedition proved to me that it was perfectly possible to conduct an expedition without a leader, and that sensible discussion of each problem was the best way to proceed. Of course this means that individual members must be on a par in terms of experience, and that they must be reasonably competent in the first place. One of the joys of this expedition was that all four of us remained friends throughout and that our friendship was reinforced rather than torn apart, as so often happens.'

Single or Joint Leadership

When there is an imbalance in levels of skill, experience and judgemental decision making, there is a paramount need for a designated leader or joint leadership. And naturally the leader should have the broadest background of skills and experience. At the outset of a trip, paddlers within a group must be willing to accept the decisions of the leader.

Leadership of a group involves the safety of that group from start to finish

of a trip. Major factors involved with leadership are knowledge of the strength, stamina and skill levels of individual paddlers and sound judgemental decision making skills. The distance set for a group trip and the group's speed have to be targetted for the slowest paddler in the party, which is an inherent problem with sea kayaking in that some boats and some paddlers are faster than others.

There is a need for sound group discipline, in that the kayakers are kept together as a group and do not drift out of hearing distance. This should be instilled in the group by the leader from the outset, that the group stays together for the duration of the trip.

Sandy Ferguson discussed leadership in a short article titled 'The Pod' in the Canterbury Sea Kayak Newsletter No.4. He noted that when conditions get rough, boats spread out simply to avoid running into each other. A pod in 'millpond conditions' just can't hang together as closely when there are two metre seas with breaking tops, but that it is usually possible for two paddlers to stay together in the worst situations.

The buddy or pair system is also very worthwhile in a group, as noted by Eddy in his article.

Frank Goodman, during his Baffin Island expedition, had a mixed group of paddlers ranging from a young Liverpool lad with no expedition experience, two Inuit paddlers from Frobisher Bay, his daughter who was an experienced slalom paddler and a Canadian journalist. After a two day wait for galeforce offshore winds to abate, the journalist tried to entice the two Inuits and Liverpool lad to resume paddling. Strong offshore winds can be deceptive to the unexperienced eye; calm under the lee of coastal cliffs, but impossible to survive staying upright only 100m out. Frank had to threaten the journalist with physical violence before he backed off from launching.

Readers will be aware my favoured expedition number is one - no one can abuse the leader or criticize their decisions - however one of my training trips in Alaska was a five day 200 mile journey with two other paddlers. All three of us had similar levels of skills and fitness, although I had a tad more

overall expedition experience, but we travelled as a close trio, with two of us wake riding the lead paddler all the time. Sea conditions were not challenging, it was in the inside passages of South-East Alaska, but I enjoyed being able to yarn and learn about the local area whilst on the water.

Styles of Leadership

Styles of leadership range from autocratic to shared decision making within the group. To build up judgemental decision making ability, paddlers in a group should be including in the decision making process; the leader will describe for example the change in conditions requiring turning back and ask the group for their input. This is fine in reasonable conditions but situations can develop where the leader will have to make a snap decision with no input from the team, the decision making process being explained later when the group is back on dry land.

Good communication skills are important. Each person in the group should know what the route of the paddle is, probable stops, and if necessary, escape routes into shelter.

Eddie noted that, 'organized groups tend to fall apart on the way home.' A group that starts together should finish together. The leader, or the second most experienced paddler in the group should drop back to act as sweep or tail end charlie if a group is straggling on the way home. I appreciate the frustration of having to wait for a slower paddler, but that is part of a group's responsibility, starting together and finishing together.

Regulation of Numbers

Regarding the regulation of numbers for safety raised by Eddie, I feel there are two points of view.

A solo paddler must be self reliant with a bombproof roll and backup self rescue techniques.

Without a bombproof roll, then equipment for self rescue, even during a group paddle, is mandatory for paddlers. Paddle floats, the inflatable bags that are pulled over a paddle blade and then inflated to form an outrigger, are commercially available from kayak retailers. They are also easy to make using the foil bag from a four litre chateau collapse wine cask - a rip stop nylon bag with a draw string

to go around the paddle shaft, and a hole for the tap, is what I have used on my recent trips.

The last thing we need is regulation of numbers in a group. What we need is budding paddlers to be shown self and group rescue techniques, and for these paddlers to practise these techniques until they are second nature. And for building up the skills of judgemental decision making, the weekend run by ASKNET and described by Eddie sounds like a great way to go about it.

Paul Caffyn

ARTICLES REQUIRED

Readers are requested to contribute ideas, stories of trips, humorous incidents at sea and places to paddle.

The newsletter is a meeting place for all sea kayakers to share their pleasures, experiences, love of the outdoors and their knowledge, so that we all can gain from the collective wisdom of all.

The above quote is from an early flier for the newsletter, penned by Graham Egarr.

Please keep the stories or letters to the editor coming, or requests for information. We have a great pool of resourceful paddlers in New Zealand. The knowledge is there just waiting to be tapped into.

NEW RELEASES

Amaruk Plastic Double

The Topsport newsletter, Feb '95, notes the release of a new double, the Amaruk, which is currently the only plastic double sea kayak available in New Zealand. Rotomoulded shells, imported from Necky Kayaks in Canada, are outfitted in Christchurch. At 5.8m in length, the Amaruk is a short double with a high volume bow. Price tag is \$2,550.

FOR SALE

Southern Lite Double with two split paddles, sprayskirts and stainless trolley.

Available for inspection & try out at the forum, Saturday morning Show & Tell, or contact:

Stu Jeffs, 19 Totara St,
Wainuiomata, Wellington.
Ph: 04 564 4990 W 04 564 5809 H

SEA KAYAKING IN WELLINGTON

by Dave Abbott

Much as I love reading about epic paddle trips to Fiordland and idyllic cruises in the Bay of Islands, the reality for me is that most of my paddling is done around where I live, that well known hot spot for sea kayaking - Wellington.

Although it rarely rates a mention, actually it's not such a bad place for sea kayakers. It may not have majestic fiords, the sea isn't always calm, and we get more than our share of windy days, but it does have its own character and is a great place to get fit and develop your skills.

Maybe I'm a masochist, but I enjoy paddling in shitty weather when there's no other boats out, and a hard effort into the wind and waves is rewarded by an exhilarating ride home.

Sure Wellington doesn't have the marine life of some of the prime kayaking areas but I have seen dolphins in the harbour, the odd seal and one shark, and it is rare not to see little blue penguins.

We have a couple of small islands in the harbour which have some interesting little channels, caves and arches, something new to discover if you keep your eyes open, each time you go out.

Once out through the heads there is good paddling around both the east and south coasts, with rocky reefs and often big southerly swells. We have had some exciting paddle trips and some scary moments surfing in close to the rocks, and I have been glad of my plastic boat when misjudging waves.

On a calm day it can be beautiful around the Wellington coast, with views of the Kaikouras to the south and the Tararua ranges to the north. Night paddles are also nice in the inner harbour with the city lights reflected off the water.

Just over the hills, on the west coast, a half hour's drive away, there are some good paddling spots. Titahi Bay and Plimmerton, which can have good surf in a northerly; Pukerua Bay, Paikok, and Paraparamu which is the kick off point for Kapiti Island. This island is a bird reserve and land-

ing is not permitted, but it is a great paddle anyway; on the front side there is native bush to the water's edge and lots of birds flying around, kakas, tuis, pigeons etc., while the backside of the island is rugged sea cliffs with a couple of good sea caves to paddle into. The whole trip takes about three to four hours. Mana Island further south, opposite Titahi Bay, is also a nice paddle with seals and stingrays often seen. So if you do happen to be visiting Wellington, don't leave your kayak at home; it's actually a great place for sea kayaking.... just remember a paddle jacket.

Dave Abbott

Coming in Newsletter No. 56

A trip report from Dave Herrington on a long day into the night crossing of Hawke Bay from Clifton Beach to Mahia Peninsula.

Also the latest Victorian Sea Kayak Club newsletter 'Sea Trek' has a long report on a team of Australian Army paddlers retracing the route followed by the operation Rimau raiders. I will include a summary of this report.

Dave Abbott sent a cartoon for readers to select an apt caption. How about two of the absolutely fabulous KASK adhesive stickers for the most humorous caption. Deadline for the next newsletter and captions is mid-May.

If undelivered, please return to Sandy Ferguson, 12 Dunn St., Christchurch 2.