

# THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

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## EDITORIAL

Joining the list of contra newsletter exchanges is Ralph Diaz's 'Folding Kayaker'. Ralph has sent the last five issues for 1995, an index for articles in previous years, and an article on Joe Weight's 1990 crossing of the Caribbean from Grenada to Puerto Rico in a Klepper Aeriis II. This article is a classic tale of solid planning, preparation and training, plus many of the techniques that Joe evolved during the course of his expedition. I will reproduce this article in full in the next newsletter. If anyone wishes to read the 1995 'Folding Kayaker' newsletters, drop me a line and I will post them on. They contain meaty information on new products and a trial of Feathercraft's new single Greenland style folding kayak.

The 1995 Coastbusters Sea Kayak Forum in Auckland was a great success with over 160 paddlers attending. As this was my first time at Coastbusters, I have included a report on the weekend for those folk who have not had the chance to attend.

In September I spent two busy weeks in Japan, with a combination of coal mine visits and instructing at four sea kayak clinics. The photographs and story, will add a little insight to the nature of sea kayaking in Japan.

Conrad Edwards is for the first time gracing the pages of the newsletter with well written accounts of two of his trips. I was mystified by the name of Conrad's kayak, 'Lady Lycanthrope', but at the Coastbusters weekend, I managed to learn the meaning. Lycanthrope, is a werewolf, or a sufferer of lycanthropy which is the supposed power of changing from a human being into a werewolf.

The article from the 'The Drift' is a humorous insight to night paddling in the waters around New York. From the International Sea Kayaking Association Newsletter, edited by John Ramwell, I have included two articles, the first is an informative one on how an English paddler coped with a creaky wrist problem, while the second is a 'bad taste' letter to the editor on how an English visitor to New Zealand views the Auckland sea kayaking scene.

## KASK UPDATE

Peter Sullivan sent out requests for the various sections for the KASK handbook, with a deadline of October for completion. Many sections have already been sent back to Peter, and the material is looking good.

DOC has completed a review of campsites and service areas in the Marlborough Sounds. A press release noted the increasing popularity of sea kayaking is beginning to affect DOC facilities. Ray Forsyth and Helen Woodward are preparing a KASK submission.

## Wellington Kayakers to explore Tierra del Fuego

A group of four sea kayakers from Wellington are to spend late summer at the southern extremity of the South American continent. The group plans to explore the fiords at the southern extremity of the Magellan Strait, an area known as Seno Almirantazgo and bordering the Cordilla Darwin. The area has spectacular glaciers to sea level and is seldom visited. The second part of the trip starting from Ushuaia, is to be spent in the historic Beagle Channel, not far from Cape Horn, well known for its less than ideal weather.

Part of the appeal of the area for the group is its wildlife and rich history of exploration. The area has borne witness to some of the most appalling human suffering and tragedy in the history of maritime exploration. At the same time it is one of the last unspoiled places on the planet and is home to a potpourri of wildlife with some species similar to those found in New Zealand (beech forests) and others unique to the South American continent.

A winter trip to Doubtful Sound and others to Dusky Sound and Stewart Island and several Cook Strait crossings have given the group a taste of life in the roaring forties, however they are taking a pragmatic approach to the conditions of the furious fifties, with on-shore activities (mainly tramping) planned for the inevitable days when the willi waws (chubascos) and gales prevent paddling.

The group is: Malcolm Gunn, Peter Gates, Brent Harrison and Paul Lenihan.

## COASTBUSTERS 1995

The annual Auckland Coastbusters was held over the weekend October 13 to 15 at the Marine Education and Recreation Centre at Long Bay, on Auckland's north shore. The organization for the weekend was superb, with a 10 person management team who were nicely conspicuous in red caps and red T shirts. Unfortunately the weather refused to co-operate; rain and strong wind all weekend, which was unfortunate for the first time paddlers who were unable to take advantage of trialing the manufacturer's models.

The MERC centre consists of a two storey accommodation block, a cafe or eatery area and kitchen block, and a large, spacious lecture room and office with grand views out to sea. The catering was excellent.

Between 160 and 170 paddlers attended, and the Friday evening kicked off with Kevin Jose and Gerry Maire showing slides on their Alaskan trips to Prince William Sound and Glacier Bay. The first session on Saturday morning was with Colin Quilter, a skilled speaker with a strong sailing background and six years experience of sea kayaking. His topic, Unsolved problems in Sea Kayaking, I felt was a difficult one to kick off a symposium particularly as Colin read stories from magazines of capsizes and drownings. But this led onto a good discussion on recovery from capsizes, communication systems and a close encounter with a large catamaran. Colin felt that a major problem was the difficulty of re-entering a kayak after a capsize. He discussed cold water survival times for both lean and fat paddlers, and showed a marked difference in body cooling time for a lean paddler between swimming and remaining stationary in the water. The loss of energy through swimming led to a marked decrease in survival time. The difference was not as great for the fat paddler, although there was a bummer of a comment from the floor about swimming with a rectal thermometer. Graphs of survival time showed clearly that for an average paddler of slim build, staying with the kayak and not swimming maximized survival time in the water.

Colin considered that the paddle float rescue was not all that successful, despite popular opinion to the contrary.

Colin briefly then described a late evening paddle on Auckland's north shore when a large, high speed catamaran ferry was returning in a westerly direction to Auckland. The vessel was heading directly in to the glare of the setting sun, and Colin was nearly run down. On shore Colin contacted the vessel's skipper to berate him for not keeping proper watch. But for paddlers in areas with dense coastal traffic, it is a serious problem for kayakers, at dawn or at sunset when a speeding vessel is heading directly into the sun. The kayaker must take avoidance action and assume the vessel's skipper will not see the kayak.

The day continued with a panel session on expedition planning, then workshops on paddling technique and

kayaking with confidence, first aid kits and gizmos and gadgets. These workshops were repeated in the afternoon but strong winds killed the manufacturer's show and tell try outs and on the water workshops.

Saturday evening, Ingrid Visser of Project Jonah gave an entertaining presentation on her research of Orca sightings around the New Zealand coastline. I learnt a new term for when the tip of the tall dorsal fin of an old bull killer whale begins to droop to one side. Ingrid thought this problem was due to confinement of captured Orca in small swimming enclosures, the free Willy type situation, but I have photo of a huge Orca in South East Alaska with the tip of his dorsal fin drooped down 12 inches towards his back - and the term Ingrid used, 'flacid fin syndrome'. Ingrid is keen to track down any sightings or photographs of Orca by sea kayakers.

Photographs provide identification of individuals.

Sunday morning commenced with Mark Waldwin, an RNZAF physical training instructor discussing survival. This was followed by a session on Creative Visualization, and then three workshops on Risk Management, Expedition Navigation, and Places to Go and people to go with.

The wind was blowing even harder in the afternoon, and the morning workshops were repeated while only a few hardy soles took to the water.

My only criticism of the weekend was the lack of a final debriefing session for all the participants. Paddlers gradually drifted away during the afternoon without a chance to discuss the weekend and what should be planned next time.

Apart from that minor niggle, the weekend was a great success, and my congratulations to Vincent Maire and the management team on their superb planning and organization.

Paul Caffyn

### *Japan 1995*

In September I spent two weeks in Japan, hosting sea kayak clinics in four areas. I flew into Narita, the international airport for Tokyo at 7.30pm on a Friday, and we drove most of the night to a magic cove on the western side of Izu Peninsula, some 100 miles south-west of Tokyo. This section of cliffed coastline has more tunnels, archways and caves than I've seen anywhere in the world. For a kayaker who enjoys paddling through archways and tunnels, must be something to do with a 'back to the womb' fixation, this place is just sheer magic. Bush clad, cliffed islands dot offshore, and between short sections of sheer cliffed coastline, small fishing harbours afford superb sheltered landings and a chance to see the real Japan.

Unfortunately my clinic coincided with the unwanted visit of Typhoon Number 12, the most intense or lowest pressure taifu to hit Japan since World War II; a mere 925mbs or hectopascals. The taifu provided a great opportunity to discuss weather but I was unable to persuade anyone to venture onto the sea. No huge seas, as the wind was blowing offshore, with spray ripping off waves and bul-

lets of violent wind gusts. I did manage to move the 32 paddlers out onto an exposed headland to experience the full force of the wind. One chap was wearing an orange parka more suitable for push-biking, a hood with two long flaps front and back. While he was crossing a saddle on a knife edge ridge, with big drops to the sea on both sides, both parka flaps blew up over his head during a strong gust and intertwined quite nicely, like a demented candle flame. Everyone was hanging on for grim death and unable to help untangle his flapping monster, until the wind eased a whisker. The wind blew over a power pole early morning, cutting power to the small village, but repair crews were quick on the job. From the window of a hostel we applauded when the lights flicked on again. Despite the appalling weather, and not a single kayak hitting the water, it was a successful

weekend.

My next clinic mid week was at Sasebo, an hour's drive north of Nagasaki, and home to a huge American Navy base. The Sasebo area has some 300 sea kayakers whose favourite patch is the Kujuku Shima or Ninety Nine Islands. Small cliff-fringed islands dot the western coast of Kyushu, orange, brown and ochre toned sandstone cliffs topped with low forest and pockets of bamboo. Narrow sinuous deep water channels allow sheltered kayaking out to the local's favourite picnic beaches. In the summer the only worry to kayakers is the Dragon boat, a red imitation Spanish galleon which takes tourists on a fast cruise though the islands.

My host Victor Madamba and Roly Innes Taylor took me to on a tour of the local Maritime Museum, where one of the exhibits shocked and stunned me - a double kayak stimula-

tor. A red plastic boat was mounted on a platform a metre above floor level, surrounded by simulated water of black plastic rollers on some sort of conveyor belt. Directly above the bow, a huge video screen provided a range of trips with increasing degrees of difficulty. Two attractive, uniformed museum guides supervised 'launching' and 'landing', and provided the final score or degree of kayak mastery. Speechless, I watched a young Japanese couple in the kayak face desperate situations quickly developing on the screen, a speeding fishing boat, a reef in the surf and a 'jaws' encounter. Severe arm twisting, cajoling and threats led to Victor and myself sitting in the kayak. Roly requested the top degree of difficulty from the guides, and the video commenced. The only control on avoiding the desperate situations unfolding on screen seemed to be pushing the black plastic rollers harder on one side. Back paddling did not work. Well we hit the reef, got eaten by the shark and capsized as the fishing boat sped past. And woe upon woe, our score was a mere 40 out of a possible 100.

Roly Innes Taylor, a hard case former Canadian, is a fluent Japanese speaker. Over the past few years he and a co-paddler have been steadily paddling their way around the coast of Japan; two week stints at a time, in a folding double. On four occasions now he has bumped into fishermen into remote fishing villages who remember the gaijin (foreign) kayaker who was paddling around Japan in 1985. The occasion that particularly tickled me, was on the south-east coast of Kyushu. Roly paddled into a small fishing harbour and began chatting to an elderly fisherman who recalled a visit from the gaijin kayaker. He asked Roly to wait while he went to his house. When he returned he showed Roly our 1985 meishi card (business card) which had been pinned to the wall of his house for 10 years.

From Nagasaki I flew to Sapporo where one day of the weekend clinic was spent paddling along a section of coast near the large port of Otaru, on the west coast of Hokkaido. From a busy small fishing port, we paddled out to a cliffed section of a volcanic

rock coastline with some of the best archways, tunnels and caves I have seen. One low cave was over 100m long, and dark enough at the end for a bat colony to take up residence in the cave roof, and just enough room to turn the kayaks. Another superb tunnel allowed us to paddled in a 180 degree arc, in through one entrance and out through another. And the highlight of the trip was paddling through a 30m high archway on crystal clear blue ocean. Here we stopped and swam in a remarkably warm sea. Above our lunch stop on a boulder beach, the local kayakers have their own rockclimbing cliffs, which are only accessible by sea.

My last clinic was at Kobe, but because the coastline around the Osaka area is so developed with port facilities and heavy manufacturing industries, and naturally a high density of shipping traffic, the clinic was held

three hours drive north-east of Osaka at Lake Biwa, the largest lake in Japan.

Japanese paddlers now use a mixture of New Zealand and North American kayaks, with both fibreglass Sisson and Quality kayaks very popular. The major difficulty with hardshell kayaks is transportation from the large towns to the sea. The sheer density of vehicle traffic and cost of using the toll roads are horrific. Many paddlers use folding kayaks and the very efficient rail system to reach their favourite paddling haunts.

As yet there are no guided sea kayaking tours for overseas paddlers, but Japanese immersion coastal kayak tours would provide a great experience; the coastline of Izu Peninsula has a myriad of small fishing ports, spaced between short stretches of magic inaccessible coastline, and paddling into the small traditional ports is

like stepping back in time. The fisherfolk are friendly and hospitable.

For anyone considering planning a trip, I would suggest using a folding kayak for the sheer ease of transportation from airports to the coastline, and learning the basics of the language before arriving, as once away from the major town, the English language is not understood. Camping is accepted on the beaches, and although food is moderately expensive it is possible to live frugally.

Paul Caffyn

### *Japan - NZ Guide Exchange*

In Fukuoka, on the island of Kyushu, the local sea kayak retailer and rental/instruction operator asked me about the possibility of a New Zealand guide/instructor exchange, whereby a Kiwi would work at Fukuoka from June to August, and a Japanese guide would join a Kiwi outfit from January to April. With the future possibility of more Japanese paddlers visiting New Zealand, such an exchange could be quite beneficial. If any one is interested, drop me a line and I will provide the contact address.

## TRIP REPORTS

### *The Dark Side of the Mana*

by Conrad Edwards

Titahi Bay, on a cold Thursday morning in June. I lie in bed wondering if the 4:15 alarm has been and gone. It is pitch dark but feels late. Forcing myself out of the warmth of bed, I check the clock - 4:13. A light wind whistles past the house, and a gentle surf surges onto the rocks below. I snuggle back and 'phone for the Cook Strait forecast: southerlies dying out and a twenty knot nor'wester developing. Twenty knots is my self-imposed cut-off, so I lie warm in bed convincing myself to believe the weatherman, but can't. I get up, pull clothes on quickly, and check outside. A light southerly chills me, but feels set for the three hours needed.

A strong coffee, a shave (only one nick), grab the briefcase, wallet and

watch, and a short drive to the Onepoto boat shed. Practice allied with laziness has preparation off pat, and the sea kayak is soon on the jetty, loaded and ready.

By five past five I am paddling in the cold dark, hands first numb then throbbing then warm as I glide along the line of pole-moored boats, through a scattering of swing moorings, and on past the lights of Paremata and the Marina, the reflections in the black seemingly brighter than the lights themselves. Out of the channel I head left, leaving the lights of civilisation behind.

The hills of Whitireia Park loom dark to my left, but I know from their shape where to head. I wonder what could be causing the white flashes ahead, until I am close enough to hear the roar, and veer past surf crashing onto the point.

Mana Island stands out this morning, just, a squat monolith blacker still than the sea and sky. I aim to paddle around Mana every full moon by night: my kayak is named the Lady Lycanthrope after her habit of accompanying me on these lunatic excursions. But last full moon the weather prevented it, and with the Mana Island sea kayak race imminent, here I am, training and touring on an unusually dark sea, the nascent moon not due up before dawn.

I make course for Mana's north end. An unseen nor'westerly swell quarters in off the starboard bow. Three days previously I had attempted the same, and the swell was the same, but then Mana, the sea and sky were all equally black, and I had to turn back nauseous. Today, there is just enough of a horizon to give me reference, so I carry on, knowing it can only get lighter. The paddles swing rhythmically, almost soporific.

The occasional swell rises high enough to be seen above the horizon, but other than that I paddle by feel, and by fear of the occasional ghost of a white cap. I would be safe enough come dawn, and I could sit out waiting for that if necessary. The kayak glides through the dark, beads of phosphorescence streaming past, and occasionally landing on deck, glow worms of the sea.

I show no lights. Fizz boats are a

concern, and I carry a strobe to ward them off, but the unlit pirates that are a worry at dusk seem to be late starters. As for other kayaks, who would be out here at this hour?

It is a thirty minute crossing to Mana. As always, the seas rise somewhat on the last third, the effect of the tidal stream channelling around Mana and the wind tunnel between there and the Titahi Bay isthmus. It is still dark, and the ghostly white horses, raised by wind against the swell, gallop more frequently past, under or over.

As on all crossings, the approaching land gets no larger, while over one's shoulder the land one left gets ever smaller, until suddenly, in front, shades of black become distinct and one's target looms large, like parachutist's ground rush. I'm alongside Mana and steer to seaward of the noisy, but barely visible, surf. I play tag with rock and swell up to the seal colony at the nor'west corner. Too early in the year for residents, probably, but too dark to tell, certainly. The pinnacle rocks - my favourite place - are back lit periodically by the Brothers' light. I head for the gap between them, the usual and picturesque short-cut, when a giant swell rises high above me, breaking through the gap and pushing the good Lady back into the dark on a sea of foam. I take the long route around.

The far, dark side of Mana is a wonderful place. Occasionally, ships or fishing boats are to be seen, but not this morning. Apart from the Brothers' light beckoning from the other side of the Strait, there is no sign of man. The distinctive outline of Kapiti Island behind, Mana looming to the left, the expansive coastline and hills of the Marlborough Sounds a jagged black band off the starboard bow. No lights, no voices, no engines. Only the sound of the raucous gulls and the surging sea, the splash of paddles and the surge of the bow through the water. The kevlar kayak with its carbon blades, the latest product of an age old pedigree, has become a time machine, transporting me back to pre-history.

But I'm paddling fast with a following sea, and the time trip doesn't last long. As the Lady Lycanthrope and I near the south end, we see in

succession increasing evidence of man: the light of Ohau Point, the clouds shining over unseen Wellington, and all of a sudden the rows of lights of Titahi Bay and Plimmerton, and of the radio masts towering high above them, marking the course home.

The twilight before dawn is here, the black sea lightening through the shades of gray around me. There is light enough to negotiate the rock garden at Mana's south end, accelerated and exhilarated - if not helped - by the sea that continues to follow us around. No sign of the chop that so often dwells here, thankfully, and the sea dies down to a beautiful gun-metal gray, reflecting the lights of home. Neither is the tidal stream racing yet over Mana bridge, as we glide across the smoothly rippled sea, past the scattering of lights and the hum of a generator that mark Mana homestead, and leave the shores of the island to cross the gap again.

The sea changes in a boat's length back to the one metre swell, breaking occasionally, now from the port beam. The same seas as before, but seeming much gentler, and certainly less nauseous, in the light of dawn. Another half hour crossing. A single petrel flits across the bow, then three more.

Eventually I pass my house, silhouetted dark above me, now obscured by the cliffs around Mount Cooper as I approach Plimmerton harbour. Towards the harbour mouth the eastern sky lightens to a silvery yellow, and my black Lady gradually reverts to a vibrant red.

Back into the calm of the inlets. The boats that can have swung around to face me again, reassuring me that I have timed the tides right. The dark outline of a fizz boat follows the deep channel seaward, while I slink in close through the shadows. Perhaps they think they are the first crew out.

Dawn proper is arriving now, and over my shoulder I catch glimpses of clouds rimmed a bright orange. If a warning, it is a beautiful one. I race against myself down the west side of Porirua inlet towards the boat shed, just as the trains, cars and trucks race each other down the east side towards the city. Two hours thirty five, a whole ten minutes faster than my previous best, pleasing but not half as

pleasing as the paddle itself.

I put away the boat, pull on the luxury of dry clothes, wolf down toast and coffee, and join the commuters driving to Wellington. Looking out from the car I see a sea of glum faces: if any of them care to look back, they will see one dishevelled, salt encrusted, and grinning foolishly. A shower at work, and by nine I'm at the desk in white shirt and tie, going through the motions of office, and dreaming of the dark side of Mana.

## D'URVILLE SOUNDS CIRCULAR

by Conrad Edwards

In early 1995, Rob Patience and I planned a two week sea kayak trip down the east coast of Northland. By our start time in late February, the plan had been shrunk by work commitments and travel difficulties to a one week trip around D'Urville Island. I was happy - D'Urville beckoned me from my bedroom window, and being less reptilian than some, I'd rather tackle Northland by winter.

D'Urville Island lies just north west of the Marlborough Sounds, its exposed side open to the prevailing nor' westerly swell. The sensible start and finish point for a D'Urville circuit is the road end at Elmslie Bay by French Pass, from which a week gives a reasonable chance of obtaining four or five days' good weather.

Having more money than sense, and being broke, we decided to paddle from, and back to, Picton ferry terminal. There are essentially two kayak routes from Picton to D'Urville. The inland route is to portage over to Kenepuru Sound, and then to paddle the length of Pelorus Sound. The alternative is along Queen Charlotte Sound to Cape Jackson, and then along the edge of Cook Strait - the heads - to the mouth of Pelorus Sound. Either route would take two or three days.

Rob had not paddled a sea kayak before, but had leagues of experience on surf skis and in K1s. He took two days off to prepare his hired Nordkapp. Being miserly with my leave, I prepared my beloved Slingshot by night. Early on Saturday morning, we wheeled our craft into the hold of the

Lynx, and took our "wanted on voyage" items up to the cabin: for Rob, a cordage bag to continue rigging; for me, a pillow to continue sleeping.

We wheeled the boats to launch by the Edwin Fox, disassembled the trolleys, and headed off across Queen Charlotte Sound towards the Te Mahia portage. Glorious conditions, smooth blue sea and hardly a breath of wind, as we retraced the familiar route of the Picton Portage Race. Just behind the first point, a tiny, exhausted but happy shag was struggling with an orange scarpie twice its size, dragging it in jerks to shore.

At Mistletoe Bay we reassembled the wheels and started the long drag up and over the saddle to Te Mahia. A beautiful track through the sunlit bush, along which we were fortunate enough to meet the owner of a key to the gate. My home made wooden undercarriage - a recent improvement of mine on Russell Ginn's design - creaked and groaned ominously, and slopped to whichever side was downhill, so I tweaked the rig and steered carefully. It just made the Te Mahia coast before collapsing, with a final groan, into a contorted heap, unfortunately at the pier rather than beach. I borrowed Russell's trusty device back from Rob to lead my horse to water. The day was baking hot, and we slumped on the beach, sticky with sweat and ice cream.

A light wind followed us down Kenepuru Sound, making the paddling unbearably hot, and I was almost falling asleep from lack of it. The water was a filthy brown from the recent storm. We turned into Pelorus Sound and the relief of a cooling head wind, and lunched on Pipi Beach with a German couple and the even more ubiquitous Weka. I had developed blisters from not wearing gloves on the portage, which were to plague me for days of paddling. That night, tucked into the native bush at Jacob's Bay, we dined by the light of burning undercarriage.

We had arranged to share the purchase and carriage of food. Each obviously mistrusted the other's judgement in this regard, for we ended up double catering. My camping habit of popcorn for breakfast having been commented on before, I experimented

with pancakes on this trip, and became responsible for the morning fare of bacon pancakes and strong coffee. Lunch tended to be cheese, salami, dried fruit and bread, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that Rob wouldn't partake of my bagels. As for dinner, Rob had cunningly taken tasty fresh pasta and sauces to my dried, so his boat got lighter faster than mine.

Our second day was an easy one, a cruise down the remainder of Pelorus Sound, helped initially by the ebb tide. More glorious weather, though with something of a sea breeze developing in the afternoon. We decided to camp in Port Ligar, for final boat preparation before leaving the Sounds. There we beheld a most wondrous sight, a huge pod of Bottlenose dolphins, spread out across the bay in small groups, circling, arcing and jumping. We spent an hour amongst them, before they drifted south, and we ashore. We camped at Maori Bay, where Rob collected some fine blue mussels and, casting a jig at swirling water, a plump Kahawai. Garlic did the rest.

An early start had us out of the Sound and off Clay Point, the northern-most tip of the Marlborough Sounds, in a calm, silvery gray sea: a stark contrast to my previous kayaking experience there, of huge seas and whirling spray. Decision time. Usually anti-clockwise would be the best direction for circling D'Urville, tackling the exposed northern points of Cape Stephens and Nile Head early. But a strong southerly change was forecast for later that day, so we headed for French Pass and a clockwise circuit, hoping to round the south end of the island before the front came through, and be sheltered or pushed up the west side. French Pass shares with the Cook Strait alone the honour of special mention in the "Tidal Streams - Caution" section of the Nautical Almanac. Apparently, powered vessels of moderate size can, with prudence, pass through at slack water.

Racing for the pass, we arrived at Elmslie Bay at 12:50 for a 1:09 end of slack. We had time to race to the shop for ice cream and fruit, but not to wait until it opened. Dead on 1:09, we took the pass on the nor'west side with

barely a ripple, a relief if an anticlimax.

A patch of seething water sped towards us - a dozen Hectors dolphins in line abreast, arcing in unison across our bows. I gave chase and for ten minutes we played tag, too close to the gathering momentum of the tide race for comfort. Intelligent beings get bored quicker, so they left me and continued north. Magnificent creatures.

Conditions stayed perfect as we headed around the south-west tip of D'Urville, with no menacing front apparent. A brief lunch on the sandy spit of Sauvage Point, only possible because the tide was so low, gave us our first taste of the fantastic rock formations on the west of the island. The land itself was less inspiring, the relatively low lying south end of the island being heavily farmed.

We passed through Paddock Rocks, an extraordinary chain of pillars curving out to sea, and headed across the mouths of several rural bays, keeping a watchful eye behind us for rogue fronts. A solitary dolphin joined us briefly. The sky darkened and a breeze started up, so we pulled into Sandy Bay to weather out the southerly, a false alarm as it turned out, but probably a wise precaution, and certainly a good excuse. Sandy Bay is a bleak expanse of rocky shale, driftwood and weeds, but with water and good camping inland. The southerly hit that night.

The next day we awoke to twenty knots of gray southerly, but our route was largely sheltered from it: only across the mouths of Greville Harbour and Otu Bay, where the southerly could reign free, did the sea become technically interesting. The whole west coast of D'Urville is spectacularly cliffed, awesome rock formations dotted with sea caves, the whole rising too steeply to see inland. Two kayaks, one yellow, one red, insignificant against this impressive backdrop, headed north. Seal Point was appropriately named. A couple of snorkellers caught some Paua for us, and I soon had a clump of them writhing in the cockpit. We rounded Nile Head, the first seriously exposed point, through a slight tide race into the huge indented inlet of Port Hardy,

with its blatantly anti-French English names: Trafalgar Point, Nelson's Monument, Victory Island. Terns were feeding, and our Paua were soon joined by a couple of Kahawai.

Although the evening had fined up beautifully, we decided to camp that side of Cape Stephens, to leave some D'Urville for the morrow. Cape Stephens is the major challenge of the route, the end of a narrow, rock-fronted peninsula separating Tasman Bay from the Cook Strait. Two miles off it lies Stephens Island, now a Tuatara haven. The New Zealand Pilot cautions that the passage between "should not be used, as the tidal streams are very strong", and that from a book not given to superlatives. The waters immediately off Cape Stephens are charmingly named the Bishops Cauldron and Hells Gate. In our direction, we would have to take counsel with God's representative before His Nemesis.

We chose the nearest beach to the Cape that, from Fleet Rocks in the middle of Port Hardy, looked habitable. Rob's boat floated away while we checked the beach, and he swam after it, to my camera's delight. A small cove, but with just enough flat grass for two tents. Balanced with calves strained on a slimy cliff face, I slowly collected cupfuls of brown water. We retired early, after enjoying a glorious red sunset, planning on a fresh start to catch the 10:20 opening of the gate to hell.

The morning brought strong nor'westers, a sea of white caps, and surf that lasted until evening, stranding us. Having missed the previous day's schedule, we climbed the hill to consult Rob's cellular secretary. We learnt that there was a Police alert out for us, and of a family crisis about which we could do little. Such are the mixed blessings of this remarkable technology.

Since becoming a founding member of the Wellington Ridgerunners, through being in the wrong pub at the wrong time, I have developed the unfortunate habit of running up hills, and did so that evening, carrying a backpack with camera to Cape Stephens. I obtained for my efforts some awesome if demoralising vistas of the effect of spring tides on Stephens

Passage (at which point I gave up all ideas of suggesting a circuit of Stephens Island), and of the Cook Strait in the soft light of dusk. My log from that evening reads:

As I write this, I have the dying embers of a fire to my left, a slight surf pounding to the front, a candle flickering to my right, and the first cold breath of the southerly behind me. My back is still sore from paddling, my legs from running, but my hands that I could only close with a grimace this morning have healed with the rest. A bellyful of rice, a smoking pipe, and a mug with still a little red wine in.

We woke to a brisk southerly that had flattened the sea to our front, and were on the water in good time for our eleven o'clock appointment with the Bishop. Nearing the Cape, we could see a furious swell running, the Styx, perchance, and the inauspicious sight of two large launches towing a fizz boat to shelter. The swell out there was apparently "bloody awful". We waited nervously in a small bay just short of the Cape, wearing jackets, life jackets and pale faces. We headed out together 20 minutes before HHour, passing easily through into the Bishops Cauldron. Hells Gate was aflame with spray. We circled around there for a while, like penguins waiting for another to take the plunge, out of the cauldron and into the fire.

Once in the maelstrom and paddling furiously, we didn't have time to regret it, or at least to voice our regrets loud enough for the other to hear. A 25 knot sou'easterly, gusting around the Cape, threw the water around, but our steeds rode beautifully and reassuringly through it. Billhook Bay offered shelter, but adrenaline carried us on south, abeam to a metre and half of swell, breaking occasionally. The water around the outcrop of Hapuka Rocks was, I recall, particularly thought provoking. The Rangitoto Islands came into line to windward, but gave no discernible shelter until we reached Kidnap Point, where we pulled out to rest. A couple of leagues south we could see huge white caps racing. We waited until the wind dropped, about four hours, most of it slept through. When the wind did drop, it did so completely,

and we had a wonderful evening crossing from D'Urville Island back to Clay Point, about twelve kilometres of silvery sea, and on to the mouth of Pelorus Sound.

I have learned - and keep re-learning - to make the most of good weather, and so was keen to press on, but Rob had hardly eaten all day and was burnt out. Besides, as Rob said, did we really want to do the whole Sounds in a day? So back to Port Ligar, this time to Fishers Bay, for a roaring fire and some serious eating.

We decided to return to Picton via the exposed heads. We had lost only one day so far, and could afford to lose two more; neither of us had been there (except in dive boats, which don't count); and it saved the anguish of another portage, this time with only one trolley. Anyway, why restrict the circuit to D'Urville?

To attain Queen Charlotte Sound from Pelorus, one has to negotiate the northern extremities of the Sounds, characterised by a series of increasingly long peninsulas, the three last and most inspiring being Alligator Head, Cape Lambert and, finally, the dreaded Cape Jackson. This whole coastline, from Cape Stephens at the top of D'Urville Island to Cape Jackson, is for the most part barren, windswept and inhospitable, a rugged backdrop to the western Cook Strait, beautiful in its starkness.

The weather did deteriorate next morning, to a brisk gray sou'easterly, and we fought across to the Alligator's nostrils, point by point and bay by bay: Te Akaroa, Waitata Reach, Kaitiri, Forsyth Bay, Allen Strait, Anakoha Bay, Tawaroa Point, where there were some amazing bush-clad rock formations, and Guards Bay. Across each bay there was a tiresome side-on chop, especially in Anakoha, which the wind found particularly to its liking.

It wasn't clear how best to proceed from Alligator Head. A sea of whitecaps lay between us and Cape Lambert. The southerly had risen to about 20 knots and was forecast to increase to 25 then 30 knots that afternoon. Should we tackle both Lambert and Jackson, heading for Cannibal Cove, the first campsite in Queen Charlotte Sound? Or should we aim to shelter in

Port Gore, the bay that separates Lambert and Jackson? A decision was made for me when Rob, who was ahead and out of hail, plunged off into the bay that separated us from Lambert, Waitui Bay, staying close to the cliffs to fool the head wind. I guessed he was heading for a blue line on the map that he had reckoned would make a camp site. I could do nothing but follow and, seeing that Waitui Bay was surrounded by precipitous cliffs, curse him for leading me on this wild goose chase. Eventually we rounded one last wind blown cornice, and there lay an idyllic little cove. A steep shingle frontage, a mountain stream tumbling down from the heights, and enough grass to stand a good chance of a restful night. A classic enough spot to soothe my anger in an instant.

Rob and I had similar thoughts on paddling routes, so we took the days as they came. No point unnecessarily suffering the foregone opportunities of rigid route planning. This approach can lead to misunderstandings, such as Waitui Bay, but nothing that couldn't be remedied with a whistle blast, if need be.

We decided not to venture out until the sou'easterly front had passed over. With nil reception of radio or phone forecasts, we peered through Rob's binoculars at the violent sea, and gazed up at the clouds racing over the ridge ahead. I took my camera for another magnificent run, again previewing the next stage of our route. Watching the sun set over D'Urville cost me a precarious twilight descent to the beach, where I found Rob in rapt contemplation of a splendid little fire he had built into the bank. We ate, and talked about our respective relationships, but what was said, will not be written here.

It was Saturday, and Rob was hoping to catch the late ferry from Picton that evening to allow a recovery day. I would rather enjoy a last night in the bush, and recover in the office. We headed off into a light easterly, gusting enough to test one's hat cord, with the aim of catching the late morning slack at Cape Jackson. There were some particularly awesome rock formations along the east side of Waitui Bay, and we had a pleasant run to Cape Lambert at its eastern end. There, we



confronted a strong southerly whistling past the other side, and a sea of breakers from there to Jackson. Jacket on for the crossing, and off again as we opted for discretion, a tour of Port Gore, and the evening slack at Jackson. Fine by me - another day on the job.

Furthermore, Port Gore turned out to be a lovely bay, ringed by the highest hills of the Sounds and with a predominance of native bush, a pleasant contrast to the stark headlands that had been our lot since D'Urville. The wind was gusting strongly, and we paddled Port Gore's perimeter close to shore, only cutting off Melville Cove. We stopped for lunch at the penultimate mapped stream, a delightful retreat, although without any camp spot. The right decision, it turned out, for that cove was the last before Jackson, excepting a miniature haven that we found in the bleak tussock a mile south of the Cape, and which might make a passable refuge. Even within Port Gore the wind and chop were tiresome, so we had been wise not to cross its mouth.

I'd noticed throughout the trip that, on any length of crossing, Rob and I would drift apart, not only lengthwise but invariably also sideways, and always in the same direction: from my perspective, Rob would drift further and further off to the right. Did we operate on different geometries: the engineer on Euclidean, the mathematician on spherical, perhaps? Or maybe, as our course tended to keep land to starboard, I didn't have the sense to use its lee. Or perhaps again, after days under canvas, Rob just preferred to stay upwind of me.

We hit Jackson right on slack, and played with the seals in translucent blue water, before donning jackets and life jackets and plunging into the dread sou'easter and the wall to wall breakers of Queen Charlotte Sound. The evening was getting prematurely gray, and we were side on to a metre and a half of breaking sea, the slop between chop and swell. We progressed in our usual formation, Rob in close and myself out to sea, keeping an eye on each other but otherwise grim faced, mechanically chewing through the water, eyes to seaward, always ready for the support stroke: or so I was, and imagined Rob to be.

The Cape Jackson peninsula was magnificent, vertiginous rock crowned with native bush, swirling mists above and crashing seas below. I mapped our course cove by cove, in one bay expecting to see the flat pasture of the marked farmstead, and being amazed to see only a cluster of buildings tucked into the base of cliff and bush. Eventually we rounded the last point, but even then had to fight the final mile into Cannibal Cove. Despite maximum effort, we only managed half our normal cruising speed along the peninsula, such was the wind and sea. Over dinner that night - our first at a table - phrases like "hardest paddle ever" slipped into the conversation.

The front passed over that night, and on our last day we were paddling by dawn to the promise of a glorious still day, and of a flood tide to help us along. Hats pulled down, shades on, bellies full of pancakes, and we were on a mission from God - to enjoy the pubs of Picton on a Sunday. Straight down the centre of Queen Charlotte Sound, taking in the glorious scenery only in passing, a marathon race against ourselves. It took three hours and three quarters to cover most of the length of Queen Charlotte Sound, from the furthest campsite at Cannibal Cove to Picton. Rob, handicapped by his appropriately named boat, took a little longer, but overtook me soon enough in the Guinness drinking.

Over our recuperative ales, we recounted our adventures, and mused over the next. Memories of discomfort, desolation, fear and frustration still fresh, Rob talked of sticking to short sojourns on his surf ski. For myself, this was just a reconnaissance of the Sounds' main thoroughfares and coastlines. Plenty more to explore there, and further afield: Northland by winter? I'm sure that, once the bad memories wear off, Rob will become as hooked as I am on the good parts - the discomfort, desolation, fear and frustration!

Conrad Edwards

Titahi Bay

14 June 1995

See Page 12 for Maps showing routes followed in Conrad's trips.

### *For Sale*

Kayak Trailer; holds 12 single or 6 double sea kayaks; sturdy; tows well  
Phone: (04) 577 3733

From the Summer 1995 issue of 'The Drift', the newsletter of the New York based Metropolitan Association of Sea Kayakers, a delightful article of kayaks to the rescue by Corporal Kayak (slightly abridged):

### **RESCUE ON JAMAICA BAY**

'As an ocean kayaker you can be considered more than just a sportsman once you become competent. With advanced skills and good equipment, you are a highly trained operative who has the facility to offer help and relief to many people in different ways.

Your kayak can assist in rescues impossible for other craft because it can pick its way through drifting ice or floating logs. Its shallow draft also allows it to navigate close inshore over kelp beds where no other vessel would be able to go...' Derek C. Hutchinson's Guide to Sea Kayaking, p.116.

On August 1, 1994, at about 6.30pm four highly trained operatives launched from the Sebago Canoe Club in Jamaica Bay's Paerdegat Basin. Jane Ahlquist, Laurie Bleich, Gerry David, and Captain Al, as befits members of MASK, had an all-consuming mission before them; paddle across the bay and eat dinner at The Wharf in Rockaway. They were delayed about one half hour when one of the highly trained operatives (who, as is our custom in matters of this sort, shall remain nameless) snagged his rudder in attempted seal launch from the club's dock and, unable to go anywhere, remained tooting on his whistle until Captain Al came to his rescue.

Shortly after sunset, the Manhattan skyline glimmering through the haze in the west, the four paddlers landed at The Wharf, where their arrival attracted attention among the employees.

Their boats hauled out upon the dock and their gear secured, the operatives got to the heart of the mission: dinner - which they consumed on the deck overlooking the bay. In the midst of the beer, frenchfries, cheeseburgers, and grilled whatever, the Captain noted a flare out in the darkness, "Look there's a flare".

"Maybe somebody in trouble out there," one of the operatives replied between mouthfuls of onion rings,

without even bothering to look up.

Later the kayakers bravely paddled off into the darkness. Actually it wasn't very dark even though there were no stars and no moon. The ambient light from the city gave considerable illumination. Nevertheless, Jane and Laurie had their boats well lit - Laurie with a light fastened to her head and Jane with two lights, fore and aft, stowed in plastic bags.

"Where's your light, Gerry?"

"Right here, but the rules say I have to display it only if collision is imminent."

"That's a dumb rule," said the illegally illuminated but safely visible Ms Bleich.

The Captain advised the paddlers to steer a course 330 degrees. "That's the back angle of the course we took coming out here. I just added 180 degrees."

"Aye, aye, sir," Mr David replied, switching on his light to check his deck-mounted Silva compass. (A highly trained operative has good equipment, remember.)

From the darkness came a feminine laugh of derision. "Why don't we just paddle for Ruffle Bay, right in front of us?" laughed Jan. "It's easier. Then all we have to do is head for Canarsie Pol."

So they paddle for Ruffle Bar.

As they approached the quaintly named island, they heard the shriek of sea birds, whose sleep they had disturbed, and they saw the dark shadow of a boat apparently an anchor. Its bow light was very dim. There seemed to be strange sounds coming from it, bird-like sounds, hard to distinguish from the sounds of real birds. Curious they were reluctant to paddle closer however as there is no telling what sort of strange goings-on one may encounter in an anchored boat in New York City waters on a moonless and starless night.

They struck up a kind of nonsense conversation with the darkened boat, something like, "Having a good time? It's a great night for a party. Got room for four more?" But as the four kayakers glided by, about to leave the anchored boat behind them, a voice from the darkness asked plaintively for help. "Can you help us? We're aground."

"Are you serious?" asked the wary

kayakers. After all it could be a trap. MASK has its enemies and the Captain himself was with them. "It's not hard to imagine the headline: 'Kayak Captain Kidnapped.' And there go the dues for ... hell, maybe a month.

"We were out on the island, and the tide went out," said a woman's voice.

"How much water do you draw?" called one of the kayakers.

"I don't know," came a man's voice with a Slavic accent. "All I know is I don't have enough water to float the goddamn boat."

They paddled closer. It was an inboard-outboard cruiser about 22 feet long. There were two men, a woman and a little child on board. The water was half a Greenland paddle blade deep.

"Did you call the Coast Guard?"

"We called the Coast Guard and Sea Tow two hours ago," said the woman. "Fired a flare. Our phone battery's dying and the Coast Guard don't see us. They just keep goin' up and down the channel right past us." Sure enough a boat's running lights were visible where she pointed.

"Hey over here buddy!" bellowed Captain Al, and the rest of the kayakers began to wave their flashlights and blow their whistles. But then it dawned on the operatives that since, in all likelihood, the Coast Guard patrol boat was larger than the grounded cruiser, there was no way to get in to rescue them. If these people were not to spend a wretched night in the mud of Ruffle Bar, being eaten by mosquitoes, the men and women of MASK would have to do their part. The need for action was immediate and the kayakers sprang into it.

"Laurie, you and Gerry stay here, and wave your flashlights while Jane and I go get the Coast Guard".

The two kayakers assigned to stay were enterprising indeed.

"Have you tried to kedge her off?" they asked.

"I've been trying that, throwing the anchor out and pulling in, but haven't gotten anywhere." The mud-splattered bow affirmed this statement.

"How much line do you have?"

"Three hundred feet."

"Put your anchor on my back deck and I'll see if I can get it out in deeper

water."

So they put the anchor on one of the kayakers and paddled out for what they hoped would be deeper water, but everywhere that night the bay seemed to be the same 14 inches deep.

Presently Al and Jane returned. "The Coast Guard can't get in here," they said. "You'll float off about 3.30 in the morning, but if you want to get off, they'll evacuate you."

The woman wanted off. "Every time we come out in this damn boat something happens. But this is the worst."

How would the Coast Guard get in? Would they use a helicopter, a lifeboat, a Zodiac? "Look," cried one of the men on the boat. "Here comes Jesus walking on water. Or is it Moses?" Only he wasn't walking on it. The coastguardsman was wading through it, shin deep, right up to the stranded vessel. There they discussed their options, and the men and women of MASK, seeing that the situation was well in hand, bade adieu and paddled off into the dark in search of new adventure - and also for Paerdegat Basin.

"Kayak Patrol at work," said Laurie. "Another job well done by the MASKed paddlers of the night," said Captain Al.

"We should have left a silver bullet," said Gerry.

Check the classifieds, folks. You may be able to pick up a 22 foot cruiser very cheap.

**From ISKA September 1995  
Newsletter:  
WRIST RISK**

One man's problems and solutions.

Having heard so many moans about IT, read about IT, suffered from IT and (hopefully) beaten IT, I thought that I might pass on my experience in a simple manner. I hope it helps.

When I started canoeing I heard about tennis-something. It was to be avoided, but everyone knew somebody who had it! It was a creaky, sore wrist and death to paddling aspirations.

After a while symptoms uncomfortably familiar began to appear. I persevered - so did the symptoms. I

changed to unfeathered blades - great for rivers and following or beam winds - murder in a headwind. Eventually sense intervened and I decided to get proper help - but what kind?

I questioned three things:  
Me the machine - did I need repairs?  
My technique - was I paddling efficiently?  
My equipment - was it right for the job?

My physiotherapist checked my wrist. Yes it was suffering but the problem really started with a mountaineering accident when the bones 'popped apart' after a fall. Nevertheless, treatment was needed. I was given that plus instructions not to use my wrist at all! Absolutely no paddling!

Months later I was allowed gentle paddling until I tried it out and got some strength back. Results? It felt much better; a few twinges but worth the months of sulking.

My coach then undertook to improve my technique and correct faults. A proper upright posture, small of the back supported; reach forward to place the blade with some trunk rotation; pull the shaft back - I was habitually pushing. Bingo! This key shift in emphasis made a big change. Now, instead of having to grip tightly to hold my wrist straight, it straightened of its own accord. And, because I was pulling the bones apart as opposed to pushing them together, the pressure on the joints and subsequent grating virtually vanished. (Grab your own thumb now. Push then pull to see what I mean). It was so obvious, but as I had been taught to push, I never questioned it!

He also advised a shorter paddle shaft. Again I had equated length with lower paddling rates and greater efficiency. True, but it also meant greater stress as more power was required for each of the strokes.

This led me to Lendal to discuss paddles. In due course we decided on a mid weight carbon shaft with some 'give' in it - very strong but without the shock as one blade stalls in the water. It is eight cms. shorter than the last one and it has a variable feather joint. I was able to experiment with feather to reduce windage and minimize wrist twist on my control side (the one with the problem). The com-

ination of the pull versus push action and the modified crank was great. The modified crank virtually means that you don't need a control hand - the blades set themselves as they start to bight. (I have had to convince some modified crank paddlers of this as they were so used to their control hand).

The grip is so much more relaxed as the shaft does not have to be held tightly. The crank 'leads' the blade which has to follow (as it is behind the pulling force) and up and down as well as side to side wrist movement is reduced.

I had used modified crank paddles before and thought that the cranks were too wide for sea paddling. Lendal supplied a width tailor for me and that made a worthwhile contribution also. (PS having the shaft oval at both sides simplifies the paddle for rolling on your 'non control' side). So? I paddle with the big boys again. I'm not fast (never was anyway but my fear of having to give up is gone.)

I think that the questions I asked were the right ones. Certainly the advice given was good even though the 'no paddling' regime was a bit hard. The effort in getting the equipment right was well rewarded.

I have avoided long, detailed descriptions. The three basic questions remain the same but the real benefits come from finding the answers to your specific problem. I hope your sources turn out as good as mine.

Dave Ross, SCA Touring Committee.

**Also from the same ISKA Newsletter**

Here comes a letter from a good friend (I'm holding his name to spare his blushes) who had recently gone to live in New Zealand:

Dear John,...Every weekend I've been off paddling for one day, even if it's only a few hours. There are several islands just off the coast of Auckland (the Hauraki Gulf on the east), which provide refuge from the stresses of city living. They are very beautiful with limited inhabitants - with some protected reserves. The tides are weak and the prevailing westerly winds have only a small fetch, so the seas are not rough.

The result is that one million

Aucklanders have all decided to try sea kayaking. There is a 'family' approach to it out here. No one bothers too much about compass bearings and the effect of tides. Open crossings aren't really planned, more sort of 'arranged'. Using parallel rules, vectors and tidal calculations are not the done thing.

Touring doubles and big volume, ruddered boats are popular. Typical boats are Puffins, and Sea Bears with the Skerray (plastic) and Nordkapp being the specialized boat. I lent my Vyneck to a paddler - he lasted two minutes before hastily coming ashore with very wobbly abdominals.

Then there are the 'multisport' enthusiasts. Now here is a different breed altogether. These insane people do everything to the max. The brighter the colours of their gear and the more ridiculous the gear, the more they love it. Certainly the more they love to train and talk about it.

Now we're talking about running over alpine scenery, paddling down Alpine rivers, cycling up the other side again - and that's just before breakfast. These guys and girls paddle multisport boats which are very light hybrids of racing K1s and white-water boats. Long and thin with rudders and built up decks - they are fast and furious. Now some train on the sea and are trying to encourage sea kayak races. I'm not in favour of encouraging a competitive attitude to the sea, especially if it encourages people to use boats only suitable for moderate conditions. But being open minded I can see that I'll have to start training - just so that some jumped up multisporter doesn't think that he can thrash us sea kayakers.

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Well it would seem that Auckland waterways have seen a phenomenal growth in sea kayaking. One million sea kayakers! Strange that they kept away from the recent Auckland Coastbusters symposium in droves.

Pity John Ramwell kept the letter anonymous. Makes it difficult to take out a Blackpower contract on this chap. Such a disparaging view of Auckland kayaking makes you wonder about this wally. The Vyneck boat should be easy to identify in the Hauraki Gulf. However I would suggest a plastic bag to keep salt spray off your bazooka. Editor.

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