

THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

Issue 73

February - March 1998

Editor: P Caffyn, RD 1, Runanga. West Coast .N.Z. Ph/Fax: (03) 7311806

E Mail address: kayakpc@xtra.co.nz

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

Subscriptions are \$20.00 per annum & should be made out to

K.A.S.K. (NZ) Inc. & sent to the Treasurer: Phil Handford,

104 Lake Rd, Hamilton. Ph: (07) 834 3395 home

Correspondence to the Secretary: Peter Sullivan, 7 Monowai Cres,

North New Brighton, Christchurch. Ph.(03) 388 3380.



INDEX

Kask Forum Update

p.1

KASK Handbook 2nd. Ed. p.1

King Island Kayak Survey p.1

FEATURE STORIES

7th Anglesey Sea Symposium

by Roy Dumble

p.2

Marovo Kayaks

by Rob Tipa

p.3

BOOK REVIEWS

'Sea Kayaking Basics'

'Kayaking Made Easy'

reviewed by J. Kirk-Anderson p.6

'Ragged Islands'

reviewed by Jan Wickham

& Graeme Muir

p.6

TRIP REPORTS

A Visit to Doubtful

by Martin Unwin

p.7

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rotorua Kayaking

p.9

Baidarkas

p.9

NOTICES

SKOANZ Guides Assessment p.10

HEALTH

UPDATE

1998 KASK FORUM MAPUA

Some 50 registration of interest forums have been received to date, and a full and varied programme has been finalized for the Easter Forum. The final organizing meeting is scheduled for 26 March. A programme and map of Mapua will be then mailed out to all those who have registered by mail or fax.

LATE REGISTRATION

Numbers of paddlers attending are imperative for catering. If you haven't sent a form already, but plan to attend the forum, please fax or phone AJ (Alvin Johnston) at 03 544 6322. AJ has a phone/fax answerphone so please leave a message with numbers attending, names and contact address - **BY 31 MARCH AT THE LATEST!**

TRANSPORT TO & FROM PICTON

For paddlers attending from the North Island, there will be one bus only travelling to Picton on Monday in time for the 10.30am sailing to Wellington. The bus for paddlers and kayaks will leave Mapua at 7am on Monday. The bus pick up on the Thursday (9 April) will be for the 8.30pm ferry arriving at Picton (departs Wellington 5.30pm). Return cost is \$40.

If you busing from Picton and bringing a kayak from the North Island, bring advise AJ by phone, mail or fax.

FORUM COST

Cost is set at \$90 for Friday night dinner and Sunday BBQ, plus lunches.

Send cheques made out to **KASK NZ**

Inc. to:

Alvin Johnston

112 Whites Rd.,

Hope

Nelson.

PLEASE BRING

Camping, paddling equipment, food, cookers etc., for the overnight camp on the Saturday night.

KASK HANDBOOK (LRB) 2nd Ed.

The 2nd Edition of the KASK Handbook is on track for an auspicious launching at the Forum. Peter Sullivan is currently shepherding the LRB (Little Red Book) through the printing process. The second edition has a new layout, double column format, more photos and diagrams. Pertinent information has been updated, and chapter have been added on Navigation, Fishing from a Kayak, Stewart Island, Paddling Literature and has a final chapter with a listing of kayak guiding and rental outfits, kayaks available and suppliers and the network addresses.

KING ISLAND KAYAK SURVEY

Peter Sullivan has completed the CAD drawings of the Canterbury Museum King Island kayak, and a KASK paper on the kayak survey and background information on King Island should also be ready for launching at the forum.

7th Anglesey Sea Symposium - Observation From a Couple of Kiwis

by Roy Dumble

Just what does it take to get to sea kayak symposiums? Well, O.K. the fact that they were in Wales and Scotland meant a bit of travel, but bomb scares? Buried in the London A-Z we had just got onto the A40 and heard on the radio that it had been closed courtesy of the IRA! 10 hours of sweltering in an atypical May heat wave later we were crossing the Menai Straits and heading into Anglesey, north-west Wales. Two years of planning suddenly coming to fruition.

Typical of a bank holiday weekend, the sun soon gave way to rain, then hail, then snow. The prospect of getting wet here was not inviting - and most of the kayaks here were short, round bottomed and tippy. We had fun trying them all out but were more than pleased that we had gone to the trouble of shipping our own Southern Skua and Blue Marlin across from New Zealand.

WORKSHOPS

The symposium was held at the Anglesey Sea and Surf Centre - just out from Holyhead. It had its beginnings as a Nordkapp reunion weekend but has developed into a broad sea kayak symposium. We got the feeling of expectations of knowledge through assumed previous attendance and although communication and some on water management was not great, there were some interesting workshops and presentations. Kayak trim, glass and plastic repair demonstrations and some interesting day trip destinations were well balanced with theoretical workshops. Although there was little in the way of new concepts, they gave us the opportunity to catch up on important local considerations such as weather, sea states and Coastguard operations. In fact our Coastguard workshop was cut short because of the nature of the weather in our area. Winds approaching Force 8 were keeping the officers on their toes, with 10 call outs by mid-

day alone. It made us feel glad we had chosen a shore based option! The most spectacular workshop / demo was a helicopter rescue using a Wessex from the navy. Simulating a lost kayak, and a medical emergency, various bods were winched up into the chopper, whilst many others took the opportunity to test their stability under the downdraft of the huge machine. The ironic part was that 100 meters away from the exercise, another lone paddler had been capsized by the chopper and was unable to get back into his kayak. Luckily the wind was onshore because it was 20 minutes before he made it to shallow water! The keynote speaker, Sam Cook, was part of the first sea kayak expedition to Greenland. He gave an interesting slide presentation on both the trip and the development of the Nordkapp which was used for the first time

SKEGS

One of the key reasons we had travelled over to the U.K. was to network with the sea kayak fraternity and discover first hand the differences in their sea kayak culture. The most obvious difference is in kayak design. Many kayaks are short with a minimal flat section in the hull. Rudders were non existent, although about half the boats had skegs, some of which were adjustable. We had interesting discussions, comparing our kayaks with theirs. I suppose you like what you are used to but, I don't know..... there was just something aesthetically pleasing about our kayaks which were missing from any other boat there. We had ample opportunity to try their boats out and came away wondering why they persist with skegs or even worse, with nothing. To adjust the skeg, you have to take one hand off the paddle and they seemed intent on finding a design that would minimise this - but not eliminate it. Railing the kayak was a necessary skill to assist turning but also in maintaining straight line paddling. Every change in course and wind shift would require adjustment of kayak and skeg trim. Many people we spoke with had a begrudging acceptance of this whenever they went paddling, but would happily pronounce it was only a problem when the wind was not from directly astern or on the nose. I don't know about you, but I find this

to be quite a large percentage of my paddling time!

"Why not use a rudder", we asked? "It would certainly make the kayaking much less wearisome." Many would look at us quizzically and shrug or say simply, "We don't use rudders here." One learned kayaker with BCU qualifications dripping from his drysuit made the most profound reply..... "If we had rudders, people would use them to steer with!" Hilary and I looked at each other then slowly nodded, confessing that, yes, that's what we did with them. I had to sneak a look at the Oxford dictionary to confirm the definition of a rudder, and breathed a sigh of relief that we had got it right during all these years of paddling!

CULTURE

But their outlook on rudders is a key concept in coming to understand their sea kayaking culture. With restricted access to rivers, let alone wild water like New Zealand can offer, kayakers take to the sea. Surf kayaking was a big sport in the 60's and 70's (and is only just recovering its numbers today). It didn't take long for some paddlers to take these surf boats along the coast in search of adventure and what they found were stretches of coast that were more like white water conditions. And what's more, it was free access! The large tidal range in some areas created overfalls and races that enabled these paddlers to strut their stuff - the only difference it being a marine environment. Gradually, kayak design changed to suit this environment. Today, sea kayaks in the U.K. fall into one of two design ranges - traditional touring and shorter play boats. Both have bulkheads and many other deck layouts that assist with sea paddling. The shorter boats enable comfortable paddling to get to the technical water they seek, while allowing a performance edge over the longer touring kayak. Rudders however, remain heresy! The purist will not even use a skeg!

BCU & NVQ's

Commercial operations are nonexistent in England and Wales. The club scene is very strong and has a long tradition. The BCU reigns supreme,

although we heard numerous rumbling of discontent with the push to change their training and assessment scheme over to the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ's) system. They have about one year left to requalify into the NVQ awards and there is no recognition of prior learning. Some assessors have the system tied up and are making money but the majority are having to commit money and time, and are questioning their future involvement (does this sound familiar?).

Alongside the tradition of the BCU there is a long standing fascination with 'cold climate paddling'. Greenland and Scandinavia are on most paddler's destination lists. Added to a historical interest with traditional Greenlandic kayaking, there is the draw of isolation that these destinations offer the intrepid English paddler. Any combination of good weather, weekends and holidays draws crowds of people to the local coast, so Greenland becomes an attractive place - even if it is covered with ice and snow.

Perhaps the most interesting distinction with the U.K. sea kayaking culture is their attitude to the physical nature of it all. Club instructors/leaders have an expectation of taking new members and visitors on long paddles to find either wildlife, isolation or races and overfalls. Little consideration is made on route planning to suit the beginner, which is compensated for by an expectation of leaders to be towing paddlers home. And beginners go out with an expectation of being towed! Mind you, out of this situation they have developed great towing hardware and systems!

I think the whole English macho relationship to sea kayaking was best summed up for us by the editor of Paddlers International, Peter Clark. As he stooped looking into the mechanics of our rudder systems he said, "There's something about the English. Everything in life has got to have a goal and be a challenge. If it scares them shitless - so much the better. They're very arrogant about it."

Roy Dumble

MAROVO KAYAKS Solomon Islands

By Rob Tupa

For a bunch of Dunedin kayakers, there was only one hitch with the idea of paddling the largest enclosed saltwater lagoon in the world — first we had to build our own boats.

Novelist James Michener reckoned Marovo Lagoon in the wild west of the Solomon Islands, was the eighth wonder of the world. That phrase is a bit trite, but the lagoon is a magnificent waterway within a loose chain of islands and reefs stretching 110 kilometres along the northeastern coast of New Georgia Island

I flew over the lagoon when I was working as a volunteer in the Solomons in 1995 and have been looking for a good excuse to return to explore its intricate waterways. The chance came when two friends I met in the Solomons, Dr. Elspeth Wingham and John Preece from Nelson, asked me to run a workshop in the lagoon to teach local craftsmen how to build strip-plank sea kayaks.

The project was funded under the New Zealand bilateral aid programme through the World Heritage Project, which is seeking to have the lagoon listed as a World Heritage site. Elspeth and John have been working on this project for the last three years and could see the commercial potential for locals to run a sea kayaking business as an ecotourism venture compatible with World Heritage status and their own lifestyle and experience.

In the space of a couple of weeks, the project gathered momentum as we collected tools, materials and timber to build six kayaks - four singles and two doubles — as well as all the paddles, lifejackets, sprayskirts and safety gear to set up the first commercial sea kayaking operation in the Solomon Islands. We packed everything in a crate and shipped it from Dunedin in mid-August

We opted for the well proven Ron Augustin designed single and double

Sea Bears as the basis of the kayak fleet because of their all round performance and stability in the hands of inexperienced paddlers. The plywood kits from Paddling Perfection in Auckland were easy to transport, could be easily assembled and maintained by the islanders with basic hand tools and would stand up better to the constant wear and tear of landings on coral beaches.

We also sent all the materials needed to build two single cedar kayaks of my own design based on 2,000 year-old Greenland lines, to demonstrate the strip-planking technique to a group of master carvers from Teggomo Island, where we had the use of a large airy workshop.

Although kayaks evolved as a survival tool half a world away in the Arctic, it was a thrill to discover the fine, sleek Marovo dugouts - still felled and hollowed out with an adze - had almost identical underwater lines to modern sea kayaks. Obviously, the sea is the best teacher of seaworthiness and good design.

The Teggomo carvers had been paddling canoes almost since they could walk. They were experienced boat-builders with an instinctive understanding of hull design and an eye for fair lines.

In the good old days before outboard motors, the Teggomo men told us the only way to catch the fast bonito schools was to build light fast narrow canoes capable of sprint speeds. And that was exactly the recipe for the famous Inuit kayaks of Greenland.

As soon as we had built a strongback, mounted the six plywood formers or stations on it, and run the keel and sheer strips, they could visualize the boat. "This is a very fast boat," they told me repeatedly. With its 22 inch beam, deepish V-section (about 12° of deadrise) soft chines and flared topsides, it was almost identical in its lines to their own dugouts.

For the next two weeks it was heads down and hard work from dawn to dark to complete the boats in the time

available. The first hull was planked up with 4mm cedar strips in about three days. We fibreglassed it to strengthen it, then lifted it off the former so the Teggomo crew could start work on the second hull while Pete Williams and I steamed and fitted deck beams, fitted bulkheads and foot pedals, and trademark cedar strip deck.

Meanwhile, the rest of our crew - Russ Barnett, Gordon Douglas, Gavin Duthie and Yvonne Cook - were in full flight putting together the four Sea Bears. The hulls were stitched up and taped and fibreglassed to protect them from coral scratches.

After a few coats of paint and varnish we had five kayaks ready to launch an October 7, three weeks after arriving in the Solomon. The whole island of about 20 people turned out for the launch and the local chief christened each boat in the Marovo language after seabirds of the lagoon. The first strip planker was christened 'Viruviru' after the beautiful, sleek sailfish.

We had an hour or so to try out the boats, then packed our bags, loaded up the four Sea Bears and headed east to Mbili Passage on the start of a six-day paddle north-west along the protective ring of islands enclosing the lagoon.

The World Heritage Project has established a network of lodges, mostly traditional leaf huts, through the lagoon and these are ideally placed for sea kayakers to leisurely meander from one lodge to the next. The standard charges (October 1997) were \$SI 65 a night or about \$NZ30 a night with three meals provided.

A lot of Westerners have trouble with the concept of communal land ownership common in Melanesia. Kiwis used to their precious 'Queens Chain' back home regard it as an international right to land anywhere they like, particularly on idyllic tropical beaches. In Solomons custom law, whole islands, beaches and even offshore reefs are owned by extended families. Landing or camping on their beaches without asking permission is a bit like hitchhikers pitching their tent on your front lawn in Remuera, Cashmere or

Maori Hill.

However, it is possible to camp, especially on the uninhabited outer islands, provided you ask permission of the appropriate chief and offer to pay a modest custom fee for the privilege.

So what's so special about Marovo Lagoon? Perhaps the greatest reward of visiting any remote part of the Solomon Islands is the cultural experience itself. It is the people you will remember for their friendliness and simple uncomplicated lifestyle that has changed little in Melanesia in hundreds of years. They still live in leaf huts, tend gardens in the jungle and catch fish from their dugouts on the reef.

Sea kayaks offer a wonderful low key, low impact way of visiting isolated villages well off the beaten tracks without all the hoopla and hype of tourism. There are no vehicles and no roads. The main transport on the lagoon is by motor canoe and the main islands are serviced by light aircraft landing on grass strips.

As for the natural attractions, the entertainment is better than a David Attenborough wildlife documentary. At night you may hear manta rays broaching the surface like gunshots, in the morning watch sea eagles dive for a kipper for breakfast, listen to noisy hornbills fly over like Jumbo jets with the flaps down, watch frigate soar effortlessly out to sea for a day's fishing and chase reef sharks over the white sand beaches. You're bound to see turtles, dolphins, rays and schools of trevally or mamola chasing baitfish into the shallows.

If you're really lucky, you can stalk crocodiles up a narrow winding mangrove-lined river along the main islands of New Georgia, Vangunu or Nggatokae — if they don't see you first. Apparently they are easier to see after dark, but then you have to wonder who is stalking who.

Uepi Island is an international resort with some of the best diving in the Solomon Island. If you are not a Cousteau type, the snorkelling alone is breathtaking. The coral wall off the resort's wharf drops away 30 metres

and the scenery and piscine life is all in vivid technicolour that would send a signwriter searching for superlatives. Seasoned divers come here to dive with white tip, black tip and the short-sighted and inquisitive hammerhead sharks. I wasn't upset when the resident shark had a day off.

On land there are all sorts of nasties, like coconut crabs, scorpions, snakes and the much feared centipede that grows up to 20cms long and has a sting that is a guarantee of 24 hours of hell. On Teggomo the centipedes instilled greater fear than the crocodiles, which we are told grow as long as a six-metre kayak.

Realistically, you may not see any of the above. The one creature to watch out for in the Solomons is the tiny anopheles mosquito, which is responsible for the islands' greatest health problem - malaria. See your doctor before you go for the best prophylactics and you want have any worries.

The lagoon itself is a huge expanse of water. This season has been one of the windiest the locals can remember, possibly connected to the unusual El Nino weather pattern developing this summer. We struck weeks of constant south-east to south-west trades up to 20 to 25 knots. It was never too rough to paddle, but the lagoon does develop a steep, sharp lake-like chop of half to one metre that produces a wet ride if you have to punch into it.

On one day we headed out to the open sea beyond the barrier islands, we had flat calm conditions. On another open sea stretch, we had a good following sea of about a metre with a light 10 to 15 knots of breeze. The lagoon itself is not difficult water and relatively easy to find a sheltered shore if the wind or sea builds up. However, despite advice in all the best guide books, good landing beaches are few and far between, especially on the outer islands. We often had to negotiate a way on foot through coral reefs just to stretch the legs after several hours paddling. It's worth hiring a local guide for this reason alone.

A Nelson sea kayak guide Nathan

Fa'avae spent three weeks in the lagoon in September training local guides, so from early next year it will be possible for visitors to paddle one of the lagoons on guided tours or trips.

In six days, we paddled perhaps 70 to 80 kilometres from the southern island of Nggatokae to the main airfield at Seghe, yet only covered half the lagoon's length. It is possible to paddle for another week or two without crossing your tracks or staying in the same place.

The real experience in Marovo though, is not necessarily trying to paddle from one end to the other, but to slow down long enough to get to know and appreciate the wonderful friendly people of the wild west. It is also a rare privilege to see glimpses of a remarkable culture that has held the western world at arm's length for 400 years and has survived virtually intact from the stone age.

Rob Tipa.



Gordon Douglas and Russ Barnett putting the finishing touches on the Sea Bears on Teggomo Island.



Five kayaks built in three weeks on Teggomo Island, Maroro Lagoon, and launched on October 7. From the front, they are: Husky strip planker (design Rob Tipa), two single Sea Bears and two double Sea Bears supplied by Glyn Dickson.



Peter Williams and Yvonne Cook wriggle in to a landing on the coral reef on the outer barrier reef of Maroro Lagoon, Western Solomons.

BOOK REVIEWS

Title: Sea Kayaking Basics

Author: David Harrison
Publisher: Hearst Marine Books
Published: 1993
ISBN: 0-688-12243-4
Contents: 125 pages, monochrome photos and drawings.
Cover: Limpbound
Price: US\$15
Reviewer: John Kirk-Anderson

This book makes a bold claim, and that is to be *the* complete book on sea kayaking. That is a difficult role to fill.

A conventional design and layout makes the book easy to read. Many line drawings and several black & white photographs break up the text, and each page is divided into two columns. This book has no surprises in its content with chapters following the usual progression from kayak design, through equipment, paddle strokes and on to seamanship and trip planning.

The author, who is editor of *Canoe* magazine, writes in a chatty style and he often drops personal experiences in to explain the "whys" behind the "hows".

In general, I found this book short on solid information. In trying to cover everything about sea kayaking it touches only briefly on most subjects. The chapters on navigation and tides had a lot of information, but I found them difficult to follow. Many of the diagrams could have done with better captions and some had me referring back to the main text, attempting to understand them.

I did like the authors advice on visiting places recommended in paddle magazines. He suggests reading back issues, to avoid other paddlers with the same idea.

Title: Kayaking made easy

Author: Dennis Stuhaug
Publisher: The Globe Pequot Press
Published: 1995
ISBN: 1-56440-638-5
Contents: 208 pages, monochrome photos and drawings
Cover: Limpbound
Price: US\$17.95
Reviewer: John Kirk-Anderson

Again, a standard progression from kayaking history to trip planning with a very good index and six pages of glossary. A chapter on kayaking with children has some interesting ideas to ensure everybody enjoys the trip.

The diagrams are computer generated, easily readable and generally useful. The photographs give the feeling of being fillers and the captions had me closely searching for the points they were trying to explain.

The author would like to be alongside you when you are reading this book, and uses a "now I'm holding your boat steady for you" style throughout. This technique may work for some, but I found it annoying and it distracted from the point being put across.

Several chapters of this book could have been merged with no loss. The worst case would be the two (short) pages dedicated to first aid. It starts "This is going to be a short chapter. To learn about first aid and paddling, look up the telephone number of your local Red Cross chapter and sign up for a class." Good point, but not worth a chapter.

If I was asked to choose between these books I would struggle. Both books are "user friendly", in the way they explain their subjects but I could not recommend either. These books are catering to very different readers than most of the earlier "Instruction Manuals", and their goals on trips are very different. I just feel these other "hard" books would help produce more knowledgeable, safer paddlers.

Title : Ragged Islands

Sub title: Paddling the Inside Passage
Author : Michael Poole
Publisher : Douglas and McIntyre, Vancouver/Toronto
First published: 1995
Price: Can\$18.96
Reviewers : Jane Wickham and Graeme Muir

We purchased this book after we spent a week paddling in the Johnstone Strait area and found it a mine of information, answering many of the questions that we asked ourselves along the way.

Michael Poole, a television documentary director, had a dream of doing a voyage along the coast of British Columbia. In turning his dream into a reality, he realised that the coast was too vast for his time scale so decided to paddle the coast from Queen Charlotte Sound to Georgia Strait. He designed and built a 17ft fibreglass, ocean going, Canadian canoe. It had flotation tanks fore and aft fitted with screw top hatches for storage. His gear was stored in water proof boxes which fitted snugly fore and aft of the centre thwart.

The expedition took two months and in this time, Poole was to meet a variety of characters eking out an existence in the isolated bays and inlets of this coastline. Loggers using traditional A-frame methods to log trees close to the waterline; native people who although now settled in the North Vancouver Island town of Port Hardy, still regard the abandoned villages as their home; shrimp fishermen; entrepreneurs setting up commercial marinas; the last of a family of farmers who first settled the land in 1893 - they are all there and Poole's writing is such that we felt that we had met them too.

As well as describing the people, Poole also gives an excellent account of the wildlife in the area and explains why some of the species have been virtually wiped out. The salmon fishermen perceived the seals, sea lions and otters as competition for dwindling stocks so for many years there was an open season on these creatures. He also

details the Orca research in progress, the initiation of which he credits to a New Zealander.

Poole carried a 1.5HP Seagull out-board motor, which he described as 'a gross violation of every canoeing canon about sweat and ecology. But without it, I wouldn't see much in one summer on this coast of daunting distances.' He was to be very thankful he carried it as it was to get him out of some tight spots in tidal races. Strong tidal currents are a feature of this area and Poole provided valuable information about these.

Although maps are included in each chapter, these lacked detail. Photographs would have been a welcome addition, especially as Poole is a keen photographer.

Poole has a style that makes this book very easy to read and, in fact, hard to put down. His love and knowledge of the history and ecology of the area shine through. For anyone contemplating paddling in this area, this book is recommended reading.

We purchased this book while on holiday in Vancouver from Ecomarine Kayak, 1668 Duranleau St, Granville Island, Vancouver, BC, Canada. email- cladner@direct.ca. Website <http://www.ecomarine.com/kayak>. They had a good selection of books relating to the area.

Jane Wickham and Graeme Muir

TRIP REPORTS

A Visit to Doubtful by Martin Unwin

It is said that, when the land was young, the mountains of what we now call Fiordland fell sheer into the western sea, forming an unbroken wall from north to south. Dissatisfied with this, the demigod Tu te Rakiwhanoa decided to leave his mark on the land by chopping out a succession of deep valleys. Starting in the south, his first efforts were clumsy and undisciplined, leaving ragged coastlines and many fragmented islands. As he worked northwards, however, his technique became more refined, culminating in the clean-cut and steep-sided walls of Milford Sound. So mighty were his exertions that the land on which he stood, his feet spaced wide apart as he hewed, became detached from the coast to form the two fragments we call Resolution and Secretary Islands.

By the time he created Doubtful Sound, roughly the halfway point in his labours, Tu te Rakiwhanoa had clearly learned a thing or two. Although not yet skilled enough to avoid leaving a few splintered fragments - there are about 10 named islands, and perhaps another 30 smaller ones - there are many places where in scale, steepness, and purity of line, his walls rival those of Milford.

The combination of steep walls, islands, and a highly convoluted shoreline makes Doubtful Sound one of the more interesting and attractive fiords. Together with Bradshaw and Thomson Sounds, Doubtful comprises some 133 km of inter-connected waterways, directly west of Lake Manapouri in the heart of Fiordland National Park. Imagine a lower-case 'k' as seen in a mirror, standing on a line formed by the west coast. The main stem of the reflected ikî forms Doubtful Sound itself, while the upper and lower branches form Bradshaw and Thomson Sounds, respectively. Secretary Island lies between the two feet of the 'k'. Finally, draw three equally spaced lines branching out from the back of the 'k' - the top and bottom ones

short and straight, the middle one long and sinuous - to represent Hall Arm, Crooked Arm, and First Arm.

In January 1998, our group of four arrived in Te Anau - on a particularly windy afternoon - where we made contact with Bill Gibson and Daphne Taylor who run Fiordland Wilderness Experiences. Two years previously, my wife and I had spent a magic three days on Manapouri after hiring one of their doubles, paddling the length of the lake after Daphne shuttled us into West Arm. On the strength of this trip, our little group - comprising three white water paddlers of varying degrees of ability, plus Doug's 14 year old son Matthew - had booked two doubles for a five day trip on Doubtful Sound. Our only real concern at this stage was the weather, which - after a summer dominated by an apparently endless series of nor-westers associated with El Nino - had been anything but stable. But the forecast for the coming week was as good as we could hope for, and after a vicious little southerly blew through later that evening we kept our fingers crossed for a few days of settled weather. In the event, we could not have had better luck: our trip coincided with the first decent spell of fine weather for at least three months.

For paddlers who do not own their own gear, Bill and Daphne's service is comprehensive. In addition to our boats (a Tofino for Doug and Matthew and a Sea Bear for Jan and me), they also provide split paddles, a sea anchor, paddle float, and flares, as well as wet suits, paddle jackets, life jackets, pogies, and a map identifying all recognised campsites. For trips into Doubtful Sound they also supply a mountain radio, maintaining a daily sched at 7:30 pm. And a sandfly shelter - roughly a 6 metre by 2 metre tent-like assemblage of mosquito netting that you simply sling between two trees - provided a nice touch of comfort around the campsite. (We also carried home-made veils which fitted over our hats. These sometimes made our party look like a beekeepers picnic, but will be the first thing I'll pack on the next trip.)

We approached our trip in a leisurely frame of mind, with the aim of pad-

dling no more than about five hours per day. In five days a more determined party, prepared to paddle up to eight hours a day, could reasonably aim to cover all of Bradshaw and Doubtful, including Hall and Crooked Arms. We contented ourselves with paddling most of the way down Doubtful, spending one night camped by a small creek directly opposite Crooked Arm, the next night at Gut Hut on Secretary Island, and two nights in Crooked Arm where we spent our fourth day making a gentle excursion towards the head of the arm in unladen boats. So in the spirit of always leaving something undone for the next trip, we left Bradshaw Sound and the Camelot River (up to 5 kilometres of which is negotiable at high tide) for next time.

The highlights? I found Pendulo Reach - the point where Doubtful, Thomson and Bradshaw meet at the middle of the ikî - impressive: a broad expanse of open water with Secretary Island rising to seaward and inviting looking channels branching off in four directions. On our third morning, after leaving Secretary, we paddled down through the Gut - a narrow channel between Secretary and Bauza Islands, through which the tide fairly races. With around two hours until the turn of the tide the currents and back eddies were impressive, and we had to paddle somewhat harder than usual to make any headway on the return journey. Crooked Arm was a gem, especially under the conditions we experienced, with glassy reflections, secluded beaches, and constantly changing views. And fleeting glimpses of the open water of the Tasman Sea beyond Bauza Island - first on one side, then the other, as we made our way down the sound - evoked memories of the feeling one gets when, tramping down river after making a long and difficult east to west crossing of the Main Divide, the open plains of the West Coast gradually come into view.

More than any particular view, however, it is the ambience that makes Doubtful Sound special. Jagged walls, abrupt hanging valleys, and high waterfalls are always in view, and one is inevitably led to wonder what the scene might have looked like 20 000 years ago, when glaciers

of the last ice age filled the valleys to the bushline and beyond. The steeper walls are patterned with long scars where tree avalanches, triggered when sections of sodden bush give up the unequal struggle with gravity during one of Fiordland's regular downpours, peel off every scrap of vegetation and topsoil in a chaotic tumble to the waterline. And the famous freshwater layer, a well-defined surface layer of low salinity water maintained equally by the high rate of runoff from the surrounding mountains and the lack of wave-induced mixing, results in some novel effects. Seaweed does not grow in fresh water, so the top few metres are devoid of kelp and other plants, permitting unobstructed glimpses through clear brown water to at least ten metres - although in many places the shoreline is so steep that even when parked hard against a cliff the eye can find nothing to rest on. But in shallower water the lower boundary of the freshwater layer becomes clearly visible, appearing as an almost oily film which swirls gently in response to each paddle stroke before the heavier salt water again sinks to the bottom.

Our two fishermen had a field day. Doug and Matthew frequently dropped a line over the side whenever the lie of the land suggested that the sea bed might be no more than 10 or 20 metres down, and - using only simple artificial lures - were usually quickly rewarded. Although they mostly caught spotties, 'Jock Stewarts', and barracouta (thin, bony, and wormy), they also landed several blue cod (filletable and good eating), and chunky red perch (also filletable, and exceptional eating). Bill and Daphne had expressed mild disapproval of our intention to fish, cautioning us that stocks in the fiords had become noticeably depleted as a result of over fishing - although they were prepared to concede that groups such as ours, interested merely in catching enough for a feed or two, made only a minor contribution to the total catch. And with the fish seemingly happy to take a lure more or less as soon as it was put into the water, we could only wonder what it must have been like before stocks went into their current decline.

With a substantial high squatting over New Zealand for most of our trip, the paddling conditions we encountered were often benign, and never difficult. The day breeze - a sea breeze blowing directly up the fiord - usually kicked in about midday, creating choppy swells of up to a metre. We carried umbrellas for use as makeshift sails on our downwind runs, and on one occasion, paddling into a 20 knot head wind in Crooked Arm, met another party in two rafted up kayaks making a fine turn of speed with a jury rigged sail slung between two paddles. Our last day was wet but completely calm, and we paddled the long return journey from Crooked Arm to Deep Cove with threads of mist and monochrome mountains reflected in glassy waters. But only a few days previously, according to Daphne, williwaws gusting to 60 knots or more had been racing down the valleys and careering erratically as they deflected off the next bluff. One party we spoke to had been forced to spend a day tent-bound in Crooked Arm, watching and listening as waterspouts collided just across the bay.

One of the most striking features of Doubtful is the lack of beaches and campsites. Taking the islands into account there must be well over 300 km of shoreline, but no more than nine or ten good campsites. Many of the river mouths look inviting, but on closer inspection are invariably swampy, rocky, flood prone, or simply lacking in flat ground. Some sites are small, with room for only two or three tents. Most offer sheltered landings, although several are very exposed to the north-west. Even landing places were scarce - only once did we encounter a gently sloping beach of fine gravel onto which we could gently glide our kayaks, and on several occasions paddled for three hours or more with no hint of anything that could be used even in an emergency. With a head wind, three hours could easily become four or five.

At the start of our trip, Daphne pointed out that the days when one could paddle Doubtful Sound and have the place to oneself were gone, and that we could not expect to be the sole occupiers of our chosen campsite. This proved to be true, as we had company

on two of our four nights out. But the scale of the Sound is sufficiently large that, once on the water, other paddlers quickly disappear from sight. On one occasion, when we met another two kayakers paddling in the opposite direction, neither group saw the other until we were within about 400 metres of each other. And - while pockets of scattered rubbish around the hut on Secretary Island were a forceful reminder that wilderness is a fragile resource - Fiordland's natural defences of unpredictable weather, high rainfall, and Te Namu, should help to ensure that at least some of these areas remain more or less as Tu te Rakiwhanoa left them. Go and see for yourself - but leave the place as you found it.

Party: Doug Rankin, Matthew Rankin, Jan Egarr, Martin Unwin

FOR SALE

Single Kevlar Sea Bear
Very tidy condition
Colour: black and white
Two years old
Comes with sprayskirt
Price: \$2,600
Contact: Mike Garner
(03) 574 2765

LETTERS TO THE THE EDITOR

A note from Graeme Muir to advise part of his 'letter to the editor' re Rotorua kayaking in newsletter No. 72 was omitted. The missing section plus contacts are printed in full below:

ROTORUA KAYAKING

I am writing to inform readers of events happening locally in the Rotorua area.

Recently, there has been considerable publicity about kayakers paddling at night on our lakes without displaying any form of light. The Ratepayers Association has been urging our council to introduce a bylaw for compulsory lighting on kayaks, however the council is reluctant to do this and has instead opted to publicise and educate the public on this matter. I believe this issue is a 'storm in a tea cup' created by a few power boaters who use the lakes at night and are now having to alter their driving habits to accommodate the increasing usage of the lakes by kayakers. A recent collision between a power boat and a double kayak on Lake Tarawera may also be a contributing factor, but as we all know, this happened in perfect visibility. I know of no local paddlers who would go onto the lake at night without displaying a light. And there have been no specific cases reported of this happening.

So kayakers, display a light if you are going paddling on the the lakes at night.

The Rotorua District Council requires kayaks (or any other type of boat for that matter) hired from a commercial operation for use on the Rotorua lakes to be licensed with them. This is to ensure the boats are suitably equipped for local conditions and, presumably, appropriate advice and instructions given. There have been a few incidents where kayaks have been hired from backyard operators with the paddlers then getting into life threatening situations and, in some cases having to be rescued.

Those requiring further information on this matter please contact :-
David Pilkington
Lakes Inspector
Rotorua district Council
Private Bag 3029
Rotorua
Ph 07 3484199
Fax 07 3463143

I have to add that David Pilkington has himself been a keen sea kayaker in past years and is favourably disposed towards our needs.

SUBJECT BAIKARKA'S from Simon Bridger

Further to our conversation at the Coastbusters, could you put the following information in your newsletter

We are presently gearing up to make some Aleutian skin Baikarkas and would like to hear from anyone who has constructed a skin boat or is interested in doing so.

We are arranging to have aluminium extruded, and obtain skins, jigs, tools, and other materials, for building baikarkas in the style of George Dyson.

We have plans for 3 different boats which we will construct, a 6.6m double, a moderate width single and a very narrow single.

Anyone who is interested in buying a skin boat should also contact us as there may be one or two for sale.

We are also planning to have a skin boat play day to try and get as many different types out on the water. So if you have any of various folding types be in touch.

Anyone who is interested can contact myself: (021) 623-402
or Tim Longson (09) 8496374.

**From SKOANZ
(Sea Kayak Operators Association
of NZ Inc.)**

**1998
LEVEL 1
GUIDES ASSESSMENT**

To All Interested Parties

The dates for the next South Island assessment are May 15/16/17, and the assessment will again take place in Christchurch.

To all operators and staff, if you have not completed an assessment it is now time to start working towards it in the interest of the safety of all concerned with your operation. It should be noted that in order to comply with the new SKOANZ Code of Practise, every kayak operation shall have at least one person filling the position of operations manager. All operations managers must, as a minimum, hold the SKOANZ Level One Guides Qualification. This qualification must be completed prior to 30 June 1998.

For those not involved in commercial operations, don't be deterred, this is a chance to benchmark yourself with others and ensure you have all the skills necessary to lead that weekend trip with a club or just with a group of friends.

If you or anyone you know, is interested in attending an assessment, please contact:
Dave Watson for a course syllabus at:
Ph: 03 573 6078
Fax: 03 573 8827

Candidates need to submit the relevant details outlining their experience no later than March 15 1998.

Dave Watson

HEALTH

**GINGER
(Zingiber officinale)
from Janine Sprague**

Documented use of Ginger for treating gastrointestinal distress goes back to at least the 1500's. According to Chinese medical literature, Ginger relieves stomach upsets, stimulates the appetite and improves circulation. Ginger is also believed beneficial in the treatment of chilblains, burns, coughs and colds.

Recently, researchers in America compared 940mg Ginger Root Powder with 100gm Dramamine in a fairly severe motion sickness simulation test. According to the British Medical Journal "Lancet", Ginger was found to be far superior to the drug Dramamine. Ginger is a natural alternative for travellers and sufferers of nausea or digestive discomfort.

Ginger has many advantages over synthetic motion sickness treatments. It acts locally, not systemically, so side effects like drowsiness or a dry mouth, are eliminated.

Chamomile can be used in conjunction with Ginger. It has a soothing and calming effect on the stomach and digestive tract. A natural remedy called 'Travel Well' can be purchased from Health Shops. It contains a mixture of Ginger and Chamomile. Ginger and Chamomile can also be purchased on their own in capsule form and/or powder form.

Approximately eight years ago when I was employed on the Great Barrier Reef Catamarans (North Queensland Coast) a lot of people suffered from motion sickness. We always had a ready supply of Ginger on board and felt that it helped a lot better than any other remedies. When the boats arrived at the Pontoon on the reef, we would try and get all the people who were feeling unwell into the water as soon as possible, as this also had a calming effect on people because you have a feeling of weightlessness in the water. This is not always pos-

sible when you are out kayaking, but I thought I would mention it for good measure.

Personally, I have found a product on the market which is a mixture of Ginger & Echinacea. It is tablet form, and you put it into a cup of hot water and drink it. I found this recently when I picked up a bug that made me feel nauseous and also had flu like symptoms. Within 20 minutes, the nausea had almost disappeared and my head started to clear.

This is just a personal opinion, but I feel that Ginger is extremely useful and well worth a try for those people who suffer from motion sickness. Of course, you should use the usual precautions and make sure that you don't have allergies to Ginger, etc. Literature on Ginger and other natural remedies can be found at your local Library or purchased from Book Stores and Health Shops.

Janine Sprague.

Editorial Note: At the recent Auckland Coastbusters sea kayak symposium, I was hosting a discussion on paddling extreme conditions when the subject of sea sickness surfaced. Janine's comments re the use of ginger to alleviate the symptoms of sea sickness were news to me and I felt warranted mention in the newsletter. Janine promptly responded with an article on disc.

There were also positive comments on the use of the wrist bands to alleviate or prevent symptoms of sea sickness. These bands or straps have a stud that press against the relevant acupressure point.

KASK SUBS DUE

Subscriptions for the 1998/99 financial year are due on 31 March 1998. Treasurer Phil Handford notes that only one further newsletter (April/May '98) will be sent out to current KASK members after 31 March 1998. Subscription invoice is enclosed with the newsletter.

Please send \$20 cheque made out to KASK (NZ) Inc. or folding stuff **with subscription invoice** to: Phil Handford, 104 Lake Rd., Hamilton.

Subs can also be paid directly to Phil at the Mapua Forum where subscription forms will be available.

From the newspapers:

Christchurch Press 7/11/97 Specially Named?

Christchurch's resident naval officer, Colin Quincey, recounted to a club his adventures when he rowed single-handed across the Tasman 10 years ago. At the end he was thanked for his talk and told that he had a town named after him. Mr Quincey was puzzled by this but the club's wag told him that it was the West Coast's Whataroa.

Sunday Star-Times 8/3/98

El Nino's been taking the blame for a lot of ugly weather. So has Al Nino, of California. Alfonso Nino, who's listed in the phone book as Al Nino, has fielded calls from people who for some reason think a weather phenomenon would have a telephone. Mr Nino (74) was awakened at 2am recently by a foul-mouthed woman complaining about the weather. Mr Nino, a retired navy man, replied in suitable nautical language and hung up. "It's happened at least half a dozen times," said Mr Nino. "It's always something like, 'Why are you doing this?' And I say 'Well, I didn't really have nothing else to do. I thought maybe it would be kind of fun.' I usually joke with them a bit."

From Laurie's Column in the 'Auckland Canoe Club Newsletter March 1998'

Bruce and I in the Waitemata IRB helped set up the racing lanes on Lake Pupuke for the National Sprint Championships. An afternoon I shall long remember.

We were to attach buoys to eight lines of rope each 1400m long from the North Shore Canoe Club HQ to Henderson Park. These buoys would mark the racing lanes, allowing the ropes to sink about one metre below the surface of the lake. Six lanes were completed in the pre lunch session and we started on the seventh.

By this time there was a fair breeze blowing on the far side of the lake and a number of board sailors (windsurfers) were streaking across our sunken lines. A sailing club started a series of races at the Sylvan Park ramp. Half way across the lake on the seventh run, the rope layers ran out of woven rope and we had to use spun rope to complete the lane. We went on blissfully attaching our buoys. When we chanced to look back we noted that the board sailors were coming to a sudden stop as they crossed our line. It was so predictable that before long the four of us in the IRB were aching with laughter and tears streamed from our eyes. The sail boarder would come hooting across the lake then bang! His or her tail fin would encounter the barely submerged rope. The board would stop dead and nose dive and the unfortunate sailor would be catapulted into the water.

What made it all the more hilarious was that these guys would set off again and do the same trick on the way back.

SEA KAYAKING NETWORK CONTACT ADDRESSES

Auckland Sea Kayak Network
Vincent Maire
7 Motuora Rd, Manly
Whangaparaoa, 1463
Ph: (09)424 2293
Fax: (09) 424 0385

Canterbury Sea Kayak Network
Andy & Deirdre Sheppard
Ph: (03) 342 7929

Sea Kayak Operators Assoc. of NZ
PO Box 56 500
Dominion Rd,
Auckland.
Ph: (09) 630 7768
Fax: (09) 630 7768

Bay of Plenty Sea Kayak Network
Dusty Waddell
Ph: (07) 572 4419
Jean Kirkham
Ph: (07) 552 5982

Wellington Sea Kayak Network
Gill Johnston
Fax: (04) 471 0333
email: gill.johnston@ecnz.co.nz
Meetings: First Thursday of every
second month at Bivouac,
The Terrace, Wellington

Auckland Canoe Club
PO Box 3523, Auckland.
Newsletter Editor: Julia Thorn
Ph: 09 575 3099

Ruahine Whitewater Club
71 Salisbury St.,
Ashurst.
Ph: 06 326 8667
Fax: 06 326 8472



If undelivered, please return to: Peter Sullivan, 7 Monowai Cresc. North New Brighton, Christchurch..