

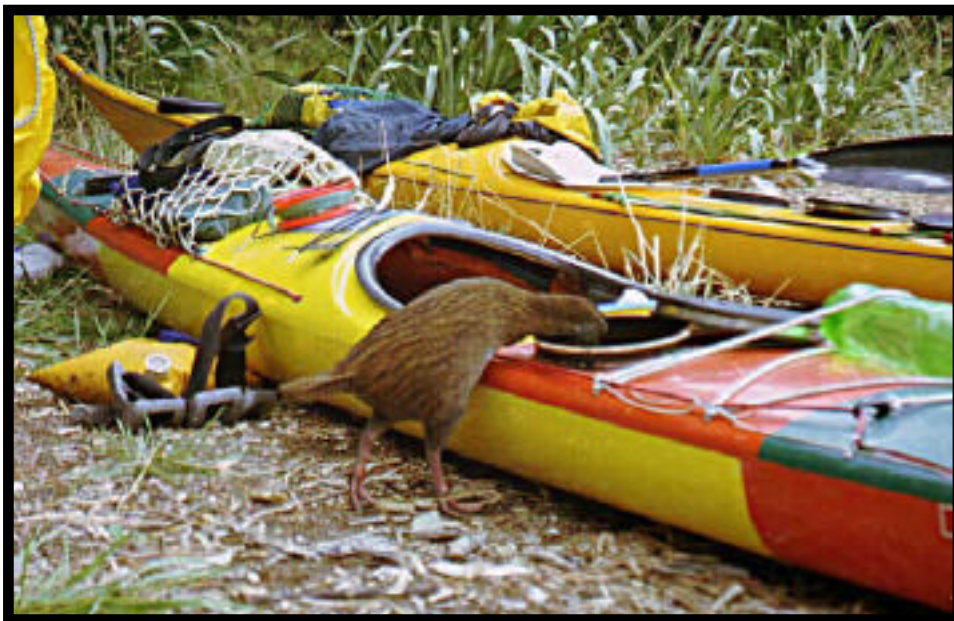
No. 92 April - May 2001

THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

Pics: Paul Caffyn



Bevan Walker chatting up a fancy bird in the Marlborough Sounds



A weka, used to visiting kayakers, searches Bevan's kayak for tasty morsels.

**The Journal of the Kiwi Association
of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc. - KASK**

KASK

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

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

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

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

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KASK BADGES

Canterbury paddler Rod Banks produced a badge of a paddler and sea kayak from solid sterling silver, with KASK NZ engraved. The badge can be permanently or temporarily affixed to hats T shirts, ties, evening gowns or dress suits but not dry suits. And the badge is appealing to the eye. Size is 23mm long by 11mm high.

Price is \$15 plus \$1 P+P, and available from the KASK Treasurer, Max Grant.

LRB2 - KASK HANDBOOK

For a copy of this mother of all sea kayaking handbooks, contact KASK Treasurer:

Max Grant,
71 Salisbury St.
Ashhurst, 5451
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COST:

New members: gratis
Existing members: \$10 + \$1 p&p
Non-members: \$18 + \$1 p&p

Make cheques out to KASK (NZ)Inc
Trade enquiries also to Max Grant.

THE LRB2, or the Little Red Book 2nd. Edition, is a mammoth compilation on all aspects of sea kayaking in New Zealand, by many of the most experienced paddlers in the Universe. Following a brief introduction, the handbook is divided into six sections:

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

Each section contains up to nine separate chapters. The Resources section, for example has chapters on:

- guide to managing a sea kayak symposium
- Paddling Literature
- Author profiles
- Guides and Rental Operators
- Network Addresses
- Sea Kayaks in NZ listing

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Thanks to all the contributors and the production team of Max Grant, Maurice Kennedy and David Herrington.

EDITORIAL

Antarctic Slide Show

Graham Charles's slide show of kayaking 800km along the Antarctic Peninsula, with Marcus Waters and Mark Jones is a corker. He brought his travelling road show to Greymouth, where a good turn out at the Australasian Hotel shared two spellbinding hours of magic photographs. Graham spoke well of the planning, training and preparation, and kept the laughs and oohs and aahs coming to the end. In Christchurch Graham was gob smacked by an attendance of over 800 people and his slide shows in the deep south also brought in big numbers. If you have the opportunity, don't miss this slide show.

Viking Burning & Stoning

The annual pilgrimage to the Marlborough Sounds had to be postponed at the last moment. The Phantom has proposed moving the mid-winter time slot to mid summer, in order that nude sea kayak races can be held. He is a bit of a worry, the Phantom!

Newsletter Material

Please keep material flowing in for the newsletter. A review of a favourite sea kayaking book, a trip report, a handy hint or your latest gadget. Trip reports do not have to be of arduous undertakings. No matter where or how short, as long as the report is descriptive and readable without too much emphasis on times of launching and problems with traffic, they can be included in the newsletter.

Resoling Wetsuit Booties

My favourite wetsuit booties had lost all their tread, a liability when carrying the kayak over slippery intertidal zone rocks. The zips were still working, and I was loathe to chuck the booties out. Then on the back of the advertising blurb for Aquaseal, a urethane adhesive for repairing neoprene, I noticed a hint for added traction on footwear: 'For added traction on footwear, sprinkle sand on uncured Aquaseal half an hour after applying.' I spread a thin film of the glue on the wetsuit bootie soles, let them dry for half an hour, then placed on fine sand on the beach. The resultant improvement in traction is brilliant.

CONSERVATION REPORT

from Rob Tipa

Akaroa marine farms:

The commissioners have again deferred a decision until June 21 and warn that deadline may be extended further. They blame complex legal arguments (7 pages) for the delay.

Essentially, the Canterbury Regional Council was due to release its decisions on its long-awaited coastal plan on June 9 and the commissioners believe they are legally obliged to take that into consideration in their ruling on Akaroa. Classic case of the cart before the horse, I reckon.

Their options are:

A - to reconvene the hearing (oh no) with written submissions from legal counsel only, or B- to issue an interim decision by June 21 and invite further submissions on the changes.

The next step for KASK is to chase the decisions on the CRC plan to see how well it deals with the latest rash of marine farm applications for another 120 odd hectares of new farms in Port Levy and Pigeon Bay.

We have also received the Akaroa applicant's right of reply to our submissions, which includes several concessions. Ngai Tahu have dropped their applications for 2 sites in the outer harbour and will move all their other farms to a minimum of 100 metres offshore to allow a navigation channel for kayakers, fishermen and tourist operators. We are still hopeful the commissioners will not grant consent for all of the remaining 9 applications still in the pipeline. At least they have heard our objections, and appear to have taken them seriously, which is an encouraging sign.

Banks Peninsula Recreational Survey

Finally, we've also received a copy of the above survey, which KASK contributed to in November, 2000. Again its encouraging to see CRC recognising Banks Peninsula's unique recreational values in Canterbury and acknowledging the cumulative effects of marine farming on reducing or displacing sea kayakers. Let's just hope its not too late to shut the gate after the horse has bolted.

TECHNICAL

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE by David Winkworth

Reprinted with permission from the Autumn 2001 issue of 'NSW Sea Kayaker.'

This Repairs & Maintenance article is specifically for glass fibre boats (and possible glass-sheathed wooden kayaks too).

I need to start with a word of warning: If you have never mucked around with glass fibre/resin repairs, I strongly suggest that you get some experience with the system before tackling a repair on your kayak or setting off on a major expedition with a repair kit in your hatch. There is nothing difficult about it but doing the wrong thing could affect the integrity of your repair job.

So, getting experience? You could find a friend who has done glass fibre repairs and ask them to show you what to do... maybe get into their shed and do a few test patches on a piece of cardboard. You could buy one of the inexpensive Selleys glass fibre repair kits and have fun with that. Also, there are plenty of club members with experience with the stuff... so, use the 'phone-a-friend' option. Whatever you do, if you have a glass fibre boat, you should make it your business to know how to do minor repairs.

Nearly forgot... another word of warning... polyester, vinyl ester and epoxy resins are toxic and inflammable as is acetone, the solvent we use. Read the safety directions on the cans and avoid breathing the vapours by doing repairs in the open air or wearing the correct breathing mask. Wear glasses when pouring and handling catalyst. Wear old clothes and latex disposable gloves too (Andrew Eddy has a good supply of these... and probably shares in Ansell).

GLASS FIBRE KAYAK CONSTRUCTION

Your kayak hull and deck is made up of the following: An exterior surface coat called gelcoat and a laminate behind that. The gelcoat is a protective and waterproof layer for the laminate, and it is important that we maintain this layer in good condition by the occasional polish and repair of deep gouges through to the laminate. Gelcoat has no strength - all its strength comes from the quality and integrity of the laminate bonded to it. Gelcoat is also relatively brittle - extreme, repeated flexing and impacts of the gelcoat will cause 'spider-web' cracking and possible water intrusion into the laminate.

The laminate is usually made up of multiple bonded layers of resin-impregnated reinforcement material such as glass mat, cloth or rovings. 'Higher-end' boats may also have reinforcements of Kevlar, carbon or hybrids of both. The laminate may also contain 'sandwich' materials used to space reinforcement layers for greater flexural strength. The most common resin used is polyester. More expensive and higher performing vinyl ester and epoxy resins are also used. You should find out which resin your kayak is made from and use a similar resin in repairs for best results.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Sun, sand, water and salt are the enemies of your kayak. Just as your car has duco to protect the steel, your kayak has gelcoat to protect the laminate and naturally it is the gelcoat that will show the wear and tear first.

UV damage to the gelcoat will show up as a faded or dull surface. In more extreme cases it may be chalky - some of the gelcoat colour will come off with a finger wipe. You can easily restore gelcoat lustre with polish. I use an ordinary silicone car polish such as Kitten Cream Polish. It's cheap at Coles or Woolies and works well. All the guff you read about special fibreglass polishes is just an attempt by the manufacturers to get you to buy 5 cans of their product instead of one or two! Silicone polishes (most avail-

able polishes are silicone) will give a deeper lustre than carnauba waxes. A word on silicone polishes: they don't mix with glass fibre moulds and gelcoat spraying. Keep them away from your moulds at all times.

If you have light scratches to remove, the cream polish is unlikely to do much. You need an Extra Cut polish. It's available in the same cheap brands and it will move more material than the cream polish. Use this for badly faded decks first and follow up with the cream polish. Apply both these polishes with a small cloth in the shade and polish off promptly. Rotate cloth often - you'll see the colour the polish is removing on the cloth. Don't worry, your gelcoat should be thick enough to spare a few microns!

Deeper scratches in the gelcoat may need the use of 'wet and dry' paper prior to using the above polishes. Usually dark grey in colour, they are designed to be used with plenty of water to 'float off' the spoil. Mask up the area to be sanded first and then start with perhaps a 320 grit paper, working in small circles with EVEN pressure. Stop often, wash off the spoil and look at your work. Then go to 600 grit and repeat. You can then go to the polishes to complete the job. With wet and dry, the higher the number, the finer the grit. You can get 1200 and even 2000 if you want to but you'll be there for quite a while - they are very fine papers. If you don't have an 'even' finish and you can still see scratches after you've finished, go back a step or two and sand or polish some more. Piece of cake.

THE KEEL LINE

The keel line cops the most abuse. Over time you may have to put some material back instead of sanding it off. No problem. Mask up the area to be covered. Sand well with a coarser grit DRY sandpaper. Keying the surface is vitally important. This will give grip for your covering and also remove any polish residue - nothing will stick to the polish!

You should now wipe the sanded area with acetone solvent. It will dry in a few seconds. Here we need to explain

the difference between gelcoat and flowcoat which is what we're going to use here. Gelcoat is designed to cure in the absence of air such as in a mould beneath layers of a laminate. Exposed to the air, it will remain tacky and unsandable for days. To exclude the air, we can cover the repair with nonstick kitchen cling wrap or, more simply, add a solution of wax-in-styrene. The gelcoat (now called flowcoat) can be applied as you would a thick paint and it will cure fully for sanding in an hour or two. If you apply it too thickly, you'll have quite a sanding job to do to sand it smooth.

Deep gouges in the deck or hull can be repaired easily with flowcoat. Get the repair area level - sand the repair area, wipe with solvent to remove all traces of wax, etc, maybe feather the edges of the hole slightly. Overfill with flowcoat, working it in well with a toothpick or similar. Sand and polish when cured - that is, when your fingernail doesn't mark the flowcoat! For repairs in coloured gelcoats other than white, you should try to use gelcoat from the same batch as the boat was made from for a perfect colour match.

WHY POLISH AND REPAIR EVERY LITTLE NICK?

I do this for two reasons:

Firstly, smooth boats are faster than scratched boats. You probably won't notice a drop-off in speed as your boat gets scratched over time but the difference is there. Over a full day's paddle or a long expedition, there will be a real difference in effort.

There is a formula for the relationship between hull 'roughness' and speed. Basically, it says that the faster you want to go, the smaller the surface defect. Secondly, when doing this sort of maintenance, you look closely at your boat and find things like star cracks from that last gauntlet, etc that you might otherwise miss.

Gelcoats, wax-in styrene, pre-mixed flowcoats and all resins are all available from the major suppliers. You may have to buy a few kilos though. Check the Yellow Pages.

HOLES RIGHT THROUGH!

You may be able to patch these temporarily with duct tape - the sea kayaker's 'repair-kit-on-a-roll', but you will have to repair the hole before the next paddle. How you do this will depend on access to the inside of the hole.

Firstly, you need to clean up the hole using really coarse grit paper and maybe a knife. Roughen the inside of the laminate and the gelcoat edges of the hole too, and wipe with solvent. You should plan on the patch being half as big again as the hole. If you can get at the inside of the hole: tape up the outside and apply the patch of layers of reinforcement wetted out with resin from the inside. You could also apply gelcoat before the patch - this might save some work later. Using brush and preferably a small roller, work the air bubbles out of the patch. Remove the tape when cured, sand and apply flowcoat. Sand and polish.

If you can't get to the inside of the hole to apply a patch, you will have to work from the outside. Prepare the edges in the usual way. Cut a piece of cardboard bigger than the hole. Fix a piece of string or fine wire to the middle of the cardboard, thread on the required pieces of glass mat the same size as the cardboard. Wet them all out with resin on the cardboard, then bend the cardboard piece through the hole and pull back into position with the string. Fix somehow until cured. You may need to use three or four pieces of string if the patch is in an area of concave shape. Gosh this is fun and games isn't it! Plan your work before you start or you can end up in a real mess with this! Fill the outside with flowcoat, sand and polish and you're done.

That's about it. Some great little aids to all of these steps are:

masking tape
stiff cardboard (sometimes called pasteboard)

hot glue

Glad Wrap (use the good stuff only)
plasticine

Good luck and happy repairing!

David Winkworth

Harbour Navigation

by Sandy Ferguson.

(reprinted from the Canterbury Network Newsletter.)

Lyttelton Harbour

Lyttelton Harbour would be the most used place by Canterbury paddlers, a short morning or afternoon paddle or the whole day including out to the heads. The most important thing to remember is that half of the harbour is a working port and that everything from the port to the heads within the sea lane is "ruled" by everything bigger than you. Not just that, but they have the law on their side; if they are in a restricted channel, you are required to give them right of way. The second point is that they may be moving faster than you think. That means if there is any doubt, wait until they have passed before crossing the channel. It also means you need to be aware of what is behind you if you are paddling down the channel. Has the pilot boat gone out? How many ships were at anchor outside the harbour? Were any of the ships at the wharves flying a Blue Peter flag?

As well as shipping there are other "interesting" things connected with large ships and confined waterways. Lights, ever noticed the lights on the east facing hill in Purua or Governors Bay that change colour as you cross the harbour? These show incoming shipping when they are in the channel, changing from red, white, green, white, red. The two lights relate to different parts of the channel and the green shines down a "lane". The white parts are simply part of the optics as you cross from one main colour (red or green) to the next. Around the area of the reef there are posts with triangles on them. With these in line, one pointing up, one down, again give guidance to the incoming shipping. Such markings are handy to look for if approaching a port like Mapua which has a long spit which dries at low tide.

The final important message is, don't paddle in shipping lanes if it is not

necessary. This applies equally to Queen Charlotte Sound, approaching Havelock, Otago Harbour and Lyttelton. For those who live in the wet isle i.e. north of the writer, there even more extensive restricted sea lanes in major ports.

Sandy Ferguson.

BUGGER!' FILE

WILD WELLINGTON ON A CALM DAY by Cathye Haddock

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

We launched our boats at 10.30am from Tarakena Bay, near Breaker Bay. We made a beeline across to the moaning minnie, north of Barrett's Reef, then straight lined it across the harbour entrance to the Pencarrow Lighthouse as we figured there would be no swell there and a safe landing. We were right. From there we fitted our wheels and portaged along the road about a kilometre to the first lake, Kohangatera. We received a few strange looks from the many mountain bikers out for a ride along the south coast.

After exploring this interesting lake renown for its bird life, we refitted our wheels and trundled off to Kohangapiripiri, a further kilometre away and had a pleasant picnic lunch on a little rocky outcrop overlooking the lake and sea. Exploration of this lake was even more interesting as you need to weave your way through high reeds to get into the main lake and there are some interesting channels through the reeds on either side of the lake. We saw paradise ducks, scaup, black swans, various shags and a few unidentifieds over the day. We had paddled up the second lake in a steady Northerly (approx. 10 kph), so a tail breeze saw us back to the put in. Out with the wheels again, and back out to the road at 1.30pm.

We decided to have a look at the South Coast for launching possibilities. This is an exposed coastline, steepish gravel beach of the dumpers and sucky surf variety. The waves certainly reared up suddenly a few metres from shore, collapsed straight onto the gravel beach and sucked straight back out. They came in sets of four with time between sets and were 4 feet in height. The sea beyond the breakers was relatively flat although a slight swell. There was no wind. We decided to give it a bash.

We set Pete up first. Straight after a set came in, we dragged his boat down onto the surge zone, got him in, spraydeck fastened just as the next set came in. *"You're gunna get wet with this set, but stay put and we'll launch you in the slack before the next set!"* Too late, the surge sucked his boat straight out of my hands and into the next dumper. The force was so great, I couldn't do a thing. *"Paddle like sh**!!!"* I shouted above the roar of the dumper. And he did! If you can imagine the road runner's legs spinning in mid air before zooming away from the coyote, well that was Pete paddling in mid air as boat perched atop the wave momentarily before zooming down the other side and straight into the next one. Hat wiped off and deck cleared of waterbottle etc, he was more streamlined into the next two smashers. Paddling like sh**, keeping a straight line perpendicular to the waves, the southern skua cut cleanly through the next two with its beautifully shaped bow, although rearing up and down like a bucking bronco. Then he was in the clear beyond the breakers. I stood on the beach with my mouth open, then dived in and got his hat from the surf. By the time Pete turned his boat around to face the shore, if looks could kill, I'd be a dead girl!

I learned a lot from that few minutes. When it came to launching my own boat, I dragged it down to *above* the surge zone. The moment the fourth wave in the set crashed, I dragged my boat down into the water and jumped in, fitting my spraydeck in an instant, then quickly paddled out on a flat lake to join Pete, picking his bobbing wa-

A BIT OF HISTORY by Cathye Haddock

Recently I got out a suitcase full of letters and journals I had kept from a two year cycle journey I'd done from Aussie to India in 1982-3. People sent me newspaper clippings from home from time to time. This one was in a bunch of clippings I received in Sri Lanka in March 1983. I didn't even know Paul Caffyn then. But I do remember thinking, "Gee, there's someone out there that's even madder than I am!"

EPIC CANOE VOYAGE NEARS END

NZ Herald, 23/12/82
Press Assn, Sydney

After a year of paddling against savage seas, battling weariness and exhaustion, New Zealand solo canoeist Paul Caffyn expects his momentous journey to end this week.

Mr. Caffyn, from Greymouth will be the first man to complete the circumnavigation of Australia by canoe when his epic voyage finishes at Melbourne.

He was at Pt. Campbell, about 110 miles west of Melbourne, on Tuesday night, celebrating his 35th birthday and preparing for one last hurdle, a 48 mile stretch to Apollo Bay.

If he arrives tomorrow as expected, Mr. Caffyn will have completed the gruelling 9400 mile journey in just under a year, having set out from Queenscliff in Port Phillip Bay, Melbourne, on December 28 last year.

ter bottle up on the way. When I rafted up next to him I got a real ear full "That's the last time I'll listen to you!!". I gave him his gear back and promised to cook dinner for the next week.

I knew from the dead calm air, that if we didn't get a move on, we'd be in trouble when the southerly came through. The northerly had completely died, so we were experiencing the calm before the wind change that was forecast for late in the pm. Looked like it was coming early, and by the strength of the earlier northerly, the southerly would probably be stronger than forecast. We had a pleasant paddle along the south coast in a two metre swell. Looking both ways at the harbour entrance, we straight-lined it again to the moaning minnie, had a brief rest then hightailed it back towards Tarakena Bay.

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

The gap had remained calm in this time but twenty metres before we passed through it, two huge waves came from the sea ward side and turned the water straight ahead of us into the gates of hell. Adrenaline pumping, we both back-paddled to stop ourselves getting caught up in this mess. The mess disappeared as quickly as it had come and we steamed on before any more surprises came through. In minutes we were in sheltered water and dragging our boats up on a calm sandy beach.

Where did these two waves come from? There had been no ferries or ships through to cause wakes. We watched the gap for a while after

landing and did not see any more waves come through. Can anyone explain this?

We knew that if we had been a minute or two earlier through the gap, we may have finished up on the rocks. A sobering thought.

Our Sunday paddle had turned into an exciting adventure and given us yet another degree of respect for the sea, and a degree less complacency ourselves. It does not hurt to reflect on such things. And yes, we are still talking.

MAIN LESSONS WE LEARNED OR RE-LEARNED

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

Cold on the Wanganui. from Mike Peers

Some years ago, I took a group of youngsters down the Wanganui River. Some hot days then a change to thunder and very heavy rain for 10 to 20 minutes, then hot sun again. This occurred three or four times, good fun for all of us lightly clad to see the steam rising off clothing and sprayskirts. It took a little time to realize that the last shower was here to stay; very heavy rain. Some of the younger people had very little body fat or resistance to the cold and were already shivering. We were on this occasion able to land and put on extra clothing, and light a cooker for hot food. The fact that the sun had appeared on the earlier occasions caused us to be too relaxed about the weather situation.

This is a lesson I learned the hard way, luckily, with no serious outcome. But I will never forget how quickly these young people lost vitality and motivation.

OVERSEAS REPORTS

Kayaking Legends by Rob Gardner

I was over in Australia for a couple of weeks around Easter and managed to get in some paddling and catch up time with a few old kayaking buddies. I'd also arranged to go to a seminar up north of Sydney titled 'Kayaking Legends'. A local operator, Ocean Planet, organised it and it was well publicised by the NSW Sea Kayak Club - about 120 people turned up. The speakers were our very own Paul Caffyn and an Australian, Larry Gray who some will know as another 'Kayaking Legend' and designer of the Pittarak sea kayak.

Prior to the seminar starting, several of us went out for an early morning paddle to sample the local delights. We were paddling Pittaraks and Mirages which are very popular sea kayaks over there. We were out for about three hours and went over to a pretty spot called Lion Island, circled that then came back in to muck around in the surf for a bit. The area, Brisbane Waters, has a notorious sand bar which was working well while we were there. It drains a big inland coastal basin and the combined effects of tide and wind on the bar were giving us great rides of about 500m over it. More than once I managed to bounce my bow off the bottom, go end over and roll up only to get trashed again by the next wave - great fun but glad it wasn't my boat!!

We then had a browse around the Ocean Planet shop (better give them a plug - www.oceanplanet.com.au) to drool at all the essential things we kayakers must have. I forced myself to only buy those items I could readily give a name to and potentially find a use for.

The seminar kicked off at the local RSL (RSA here) with Paul Caffyn taking the floor. For those who don't know him, he has circumnavigated about everything including Australia, NZ, Britain, Japan, Alaska, large chunks of Greenland and I think he

might have even done Rangitoto. He showed a video of his clockwise 'round Alaska expedition which was done over a three year period. He then showed slides of a southbound trip he did along Greenland's West Coast. I decided I don't like either Coastal Brown Bears or Polar Bears after hearing some of his stories.

During the discussion he gave us heaps of useful information. He attributes a lot of his kayaking skill and feel for the sea to playing in the surf on wave skis. He believes a bomb-proof roll is one of, if not the, most essential element for venturing out into the open ocean - you get yourself into the mess, you get yourself out (funny, I've heard that somewhere before). His example of self-reliance was that he gave up telling fishermen in Alaska where he was going because they would often be hostile assuming they'd be the ones that would have to risk their lives rescuing him later on.

His motivation to keep going on his marathon trips was something he felt internally and often became the goal of getting to the finish line by a certain date. He believes a lot of people who attempt arduous 'adventures' motivated by external causes, noble though they might be, will very often fail.

When asked how he's avoided injury such as RSI he said paddlers should make sure an expedition isn't the first time they paddle a fully loaded kayak. People planning extended trips away should always paddle fully loaded as part of their regular training plan. He added that he gets annoyed with age that he can't do the 80km days he used to but now has to settle for a mere 55km (remember that this is day after day for weeks on end)!!

Someone was foolish enough to ask him his opinion on kayak sails. Sufice to say he believes that kayaks are for paddling and yachts are for sailing.

Larry Gray who comes from the NSW South Coast then took over. His exploits include the Australian East Coast, Tasmania, part of New Guinea and a fair bit of Greenland. His fasci-

nation was as much with the people in the places he paddled and has spent a lot of time with the Inuits, Aborigines, and New Guinea natives. He carries a didgeridoo in his kayak and is a very accomplished player. He finds music creates an instant bond with people, particularly children, wherever he goes.

Most of his discussion was on two trips he's done to the east coast of Greenland. The Pittarak sea kayak which he designed was modeled directly from a Greenland Inuit hunting kayak that he showed us the photos of. The Pittarak is a big seller in Oz and looks a damn site better than the rotting driftwood and Seal skin boat it was modelled from. (The following week I hired a Pittarak myself for a trip along the NSW south coast. The Inuit people must be little fellas because my size 10 feet were uncomfortably jammed in around the pedals.) The actual word Pittarak is the Inuit name for an extremely dangerous warm wind that comes down the glaciers without warning and is funneled into the fiords at tremendous speed. Sea conditions go from dead calm to nil visibility with driven spray in a matter of minutes.

His video footage of times he'd spent out on the water with traditional Inuit paddlers was fascinating. Their rolling, surfing and hunting skills were effortless. I loved the way they jammed themselves into their boats and spent ages getting their gloves, hood and the seal around the coaming 100% watertight. It bought home to me the incredible lifestyle the Inuits lived. Only 50 years ago their sole source of lighting and heat was Seal oil lamps and whole families would starve to death or suicide if a husband's kayak didn't return from an end of season hunting expedition.

Larry had bought along his kayak and showed us how he loads it to get the best combination of accessibility to necessary items and trim. He makes his own bread each night and keeps a few punetts of bean sprouts up front. The sprouts grow well in the dark and provide great additional nutrition.

Interestingly he, like the Inuits, doesn't wear a lifejacket in Arctic waters. If he can't get up by rolling, the extreme cold will kill very quickly. Even a re-entrant and roll may not work as the body instantly loses co-ordination from the cold-shock of full immersion. His preference to a PFD, even in warmer water, is a pair of flippers. They can be quickly accessed while upside down to assist a hand roll if a paddle is lost and may get him to shore if things really turn to poo. (Closer to home, they are also good to have strapped to the back of your PFD when playing in the surf.)

When asked about his paddling style he said he uses a number of techniques in varying degrees. These include:

- A Greenland technique: push a third, pull a third and twist a third varying the hand spacing from wide apart to close together depending on conditions.
- A leaning well forward stroke (stretches the back).
- Pushing forward with the upper arm then momentarily pausing before starting the next stroke.
- Racing strokes with the blade kept close to the hull or a wide sweeping technique with little movement in the elbows and shoulders and maximum torso twist.

He keeps his hands loose on the shaft and is constantly doing different types of correction and stern rudder strokes. Although the Pittarak normally comes with a drop-down rudder, he doesn't have one on his boat as it's one more thing to break in the ice and big seas. He's also a bit of a purist and likes to feel the waves and be as much a part of his surrounding environment as possible. His kayak does have a hand operated bilge pump with the deck-mounted handle just behind his hip. This is somewhat different to the Inuit boats that don't let water in in the first place!

Then after eating, drinking and talking too much we headed down the South Coast and I hired one of his kayaks for a coastal paddle - but that's another story.

Rob Gardner

NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORTS

Port Pegasus
by Malcolm Gunn.

It is 11pm in a motel room in Milton, Southland and we have a crisis. It has been a very long day by ferry and car from Wellington and we have just learned that two of our party of six will not be joining us for our charter from Bluff to Port Pegasus at the south of Stewart Island. Grim discussions follow and a phone call or two to arrange funds transfers and we have the extra \$800 we need. Still, sleep is what we need most and when we pull away from the motel a few hours later in the cold grey Southland pre-dawn, we're feeling a bit more positive.

As it happens, things just get better and better for the next 8 days, starting with a hearty cooked breakfast in Invercargill, then a calm crossing of Foveaux Strait during which we consume enough hot cross buns and bacon and egg pie to sustain a small African nation. After six hours at sea, we stop just short of Port Pegasus to catch some fish for dinner and in no time have a good haul of big blue cod which the skipper fillets for us. Then we are dropped off in a gathering cumulus of sandflies to pitch our tents on the concrete floor of what was once a boat builders shed and later a fish freezer.

The forecast is for a southwesterly blow, and for once they get it right. Figuring that we'd best use bad weather days ashore, we head next morning up Cook Inlet and camp rough at high tide as far up the inlet as we can paddle. We finish yesterday's blue cod in a chowder choked with fresh oysters. After dinner we sip port and a kiwi calls in the distance. Life is indeed good.

Overnight the wind increases and in the morning we set our sights on the dioritic Fraser Peaks of Gog, Magog and Heinelmann. The wind moderates and the passing squalls that denied us sleep the previous night give

us a reprieve as we approach Gog and scramble up its smooth grey northern flanks in brilliant sunshine. From the summit, we enjoy sublime views from Codfish Island in the northwest to South Cape and then up the East coast to the Tin Range. To the north Magog is a monstrous blister rising from the forest. Another squall hits as we bush bash back to camp, but the weather is looking brighter by the hour.

Next day is leisurely as we follow the shoreline to the southernmost extremity of Port Pegasus and camp at Fright Cove, where we disturb a whitetail deer on the beach. In the dead of the calm night, a bellowing sea lion comes ashore and lumbers past our tents on its way to the scrub that these animals favour when hauling out. The sea lion returns in the morning as we are setting off to explore Ernest Island just outside the southern entrance to Port Pegasus. On the island a couple of very aggressive bull sea lions made a good show of denying us landing rights on their beach. We got ashore eventually for a look around. Nearby on another beach, about 20 sea lions were engaged in what sea lions do - jostling, scrapping and generally lying about. That night a couple of sea lions visit our camp while we eat dinner, one of them coming right up to our fire and lying down no more than two metres from it.

The water in Port Pegasus is as clear as it gets. We cruise along for hours in dead calm conditions watching the long *Macrocystis* kelp fronds curving away far below into the deep blue water. In shallower water there is an algal riot of colour and form. Golden *Lessonia*, dark *Carpophyllum*, bright green sea lettuce and red *Gigartina* which has always reminded me of tubercular lung tissue. Our paddle strokes disturb the surface so we use them sparingly - a few purposeful paddle strokes followed by a long glide over the undersea garden. Occasionally we pass a huge pink jellyfish. Butterfish, moki, trumpeter and smaller wrasses are everywhere. A day of this and we're back in the North Arm. The old tram line that was used to bring tin ore down from the mines on the Tin Range is being

cleared by DOC and makes a very pleasant diversion. There are still sleepers along the track and a few wooden rails in places. Later we take another track to the Tin Range in perfect weather and are rewarded with great views of the Kakapo study area.

Our return trip across Foveaux Strait is, amazingly, even calmer than the outward journey and the albatrosses and mollymawks are unwilling to fly for lack of wind. On deck we are grinning like Cheshire cats, knowing that in the sea kayakers' meteorological Lotto, we have just won first division. Malcolm Gunn
malcolmg@nz-lawsoc.org.nz

Great Barrier Island Trip by Ryan Whittle

Wally Gilmer in a Storm, Steve Davy in a Sea Bear, Ryan Whittle in an Albatross and Graeme Bruce in a Barracuda Expedition met at Okahu Bay on a Saturday morning to start a paddle and circumnavigation of Great Barrier Island.

Two weeks had been allowed for the trip and provisions for this time had been packed away. Some supplies would be available from the few shops on Great Barrier and we each carried enough water to last about three days. Seen off by partners and a few stoic club members, we departed around 9 am and passed by the shores of Browns Island before making a brief stop at Motuihe before stopping for lunch at Ostend on Waiheke Island.

The forecast for the day had been for 35 knot winds but the weather man was true to form and it was calm and still. Steve picked up the first kahawai of what we hoped was a steady supply for the trip, but it was the last until the penultimate day and the smoker strapped to the back of Steve's Sea Bear didn't see a lot of use. We made camp at the Coromandel end of Ponui Island, with the kind permission of the Chamberlains, owners of that part of the island. Thanks to Justin Sanson-Beattie for arranging it for us.

On the water at 8 am, we had a brief wander around Tarahiki Island, a fascinating place honeycombed with passageways and tunnels best rockgardened at high tide. The tide was dropping and we had to settle for a couple of dozen mussels gathered from the rocks before heading out for the crossing to Happy Jacks, an island favoured by boaties because of the natural sheltered harbour created by its horseshoe shape. We had also been told that if you didn't mind the rats, you could camp there, but on arrival we found a rocky landing and you would not want to camp there if you didn't have to. Not a lot of space and it wasn't flat or sheltered.

The crossing had started without any breeze but it built gradually through the morning into a tail wind which Wally made good use of with his sail. Our only visitors on the crossing were a few penguins, gannets and shearwaters. The shearwaters seem to be the masters of the air in the Hauraki Gulf, with the control they show as they map the sea surface in flight. After lunch on Happy Jacks the wind had built the seas to uncomfortable levels and the final 10 km to the Coromandel coast was less than ideal.

We were concerned about making a surf landing onto the stony Waiaro Beach but the entrance to an estuary at the end of the beach meant we didn't have to. A very tidy flat piece of grassed land on the estuary edge provided a sheltered campsite for the night. Looking back across the Firth of Thames, our starting point that morning is just a blur on the horizon. It's always surprising how far you can travel in a kayak.

On Monday morning we have about 15 km to cover to reach Port Jackson at the tip of the Coromandel, our intended departure point for the crossing of the Colville channel to Great Barrier Island. The wind is running at 15 knots when we start and is forecast to double. The weatherman has nailed it again, the winds drop and the whitecaps disappear. The sea around Cape Colville is still very confused, I think it would be a rare event to see it calm, and if anyone was dropping off to

sleep they were awakened by a drenching from breaking waves every 10 minutes or so. Wally makes a stop at the Granite wharf for old times sake, as it acted as a campsite the previous year, and gets a boat full of water for his trouble.

We pull into Jacksons Bay and flat water around 11 am and the weatherman's warning of rising winds is realised. And they continue to rise through the afternoon. The sun is still shining and we use the afternoon to dry any wet gear and perform a little boat maintenance.

The forecast for tomorrow is more wind and rain, so a day off may be called for.

The previous day's predictions were correct and although dry, the wind is strong. We walk the road across to Fletchers Bay and pause at the highest point on the way to view our destination. A stoat is active chasing a rabbit on the roadside. I think the rabbit escaped to flee another day. Observing the sea conditions from above is a great help and we can see the best route to take from Jacksons Bay to avoid the turbulent water before Channel Island.

On the water at 7:15 Wednesday morning at high tide and its calm and flat. Taking the route we saw from the hilltop the day before, the crossing is uneventful. The Barrier comes into greater relief as we approach and the headland at Tryphena Harbour is visible from early on. We cruise gently into Tryphena in a little over three hours. It's the first time I've been here and I was expecting a small suburban town.

It's nothing like that, with houses still spread apart and many of the beaches in the harbour having only one or two homes there. Great Barrier Island is assumed to be an extension of the Coromandel Peninsula and is 10-18 million years old. It is the fourth largest island in New Zealand and the largest off the North Island. The population on the Barrier is about 1200 and they are spread out all over the island, with the 'big' centres not having large

numbers. Whangaparapara has a sign proudly proclaiming its population as 45. You don't go to Great Barrier for shopping, the one shop in Tryphena like a small corner grocery (combined with takeaway and pub!). The shops in the other centres we saw were similar but the licensing laws must be stricter outside of Tryphena as we didn't see another pub. We had arranged to meet with Wayne Anderson in Tryphena, the owner/operator of the local kayaking tour company, and asked for directions to Wayne's place at the shop. 100m back from the beach on an elevated site looking out over the harbour was not a bad place to work from. His visiting cousin directed us to the beach where Wayne was due to return from a harbour cruise and we had lunch on the beach as he approached.

After a thorough briefing on what to expect we decided to head up the East Coast that afternoon while the weather held. Exploring each beach as it came and went revealed only one kayak friendly sandy beach before Cape Barrier, a spot with a reputation. The sea there was similar to what we experienced around Cape Colville, except more confused. An easterly had sprung up in the last few hours and there was already a 1.5 m building swell with the tidal flows and clapotis combining to make a messy sea. Graeme found himself a whirlpool and then broke his rudder cable so it was stuck down and hard to port. He paddled round and round in circles for a while before attracting our attention for some help. I think that the paddling in circles probably created the whirlpool!

The first beach after Cape Barrier was Rosalie Bay, home to friends of El presidente Trevor, who had informed us that this was a site to camp. It was another non kayak friendly beach with a steep shoreline made up of small rocks and dumping surf. We sneaked in to shore at one end in relative calm and Wally wandered off to find our hosts while we scouted for a campsite. There was a lot of deep wet grass everywhere and moving one of the dinghy's lying around for a better spot was abandoned in a hurry when the rats under the dingy let us know it was

already taken. We got a good view of the beach at the height of our leaps though. At this stage smoke had started coming from the chimney of the only house in sight, and various theories regarding Wally's whereabouts and the length of his absence were put forward. He later confirmed our suspicions with claims of hot drinks and fresh cheesecake. We didn't let Wally reconnoitre unattended again. A short walk to a farm field with five or six elderly Pohutakawas next to a stream was our campsite for the night and our host Eric provided some fresh eggs delivered by the chickens we shared the field with.

Thursday's forecast was for rising north easterlies so we backtracked in the calm of the morning. Cape Barrier was not as tricky as the previous day but was still messy. Past Tryphena Harbour with a sense of de ja vue and a lunch stop at Schooner Bay. The water is still and quiet but the sky is grey and overcast. All along the coast the pohutakawas are the predominant species closest to the water, with only flax bushes able to foot it in the same environment. Above them is native bush, occasionally interrupted by homes.

There is no reticulated power on the Barrier so its BYO. There are plenty of solar panels around and the sound of generators is common, but surprisingly I've seen only one windmill so far. There is a plethora of TV aerials and many homes have sky with a couple of digital dishes spotted.

Into Blind Bay Graeme performs the obvious acting job to tell us where we are but we act even more stupid than usual and deliberately fail to guess his charade. There is a settlement here and the sandy beaches make it an attractive spot. Around Beacon Point and into Whangaparapara Harbour the water continues to be deep and clear but becomes more tidal further in. Rain has started to fall and the DOC campground doesn't appeal so we book into the Great Barrier Lodge (sounds flash eh?), for a hot shower and drier surroundings. Our decision is endorsed as it rains harder.

Friday morning we head out of Whangaparapara in clear and calm conditions. There are some nice bays just past the harbour, especially Mangati Bay which has a small settlement. The coast runs straight for the next few kilometres with just deep clear water next to a shoreline of rock faces. We make a stop in Bowling Alley Bay, another of the many rocky beaches. On the way out of the Bay we find an excellent tunnel that passes through the end of the peninsula and the kayaks fit through with space to spare. The tunnel is a doorway to another world, with the rather monotonous scenery left behind and islands in abundance appearing.

The map is dotted with a number of islands but there are many too small to have been included. The patchwork of land and sea would provide several days entertainment for kayakers in less than 10 km of coastline. Into Port Fitzroy through the narrow Man of War Passage and we stop at Smokehouse Bay for lunch. This Bay is public land that has had a smokehouse, a bathhouse, and a toilet added. It is available for use on a casual basis and all you need to find is the firewood. The sand on the beach has been manually added and it would be a welcome stop for boaties after a stint at sea.

Port Fitzroy is a large Harbour and we see boats moored all over. Even in the high season it doesn't get close to full. The tide is low when we get to the DOC campsite so to avoid a long carry across the mud we make a visit to Port Fitzroy shops. There is more of a laid back country feel here than at Tryphena or Whangaparapara. Back to the campground there are a few other tents already there but we have no trouble finding good spots. A cold shower before a dinner of the cockles gathered at low tide ends a picturesque day nicely.

Yahoo, its the weekend! The tide is high as we leave so no mud between the toes. A stop at Port Fitzroy wharf to drop off our rubbish, before heading out of Port Fitzroy Harbour into Port Abercrombie. Both are in the same stretch of water, separated only

by imaginary lines between Kaikoura Island and Great Barrier. Entering Port Abercrombie from Port Fitzroy lends a spectacular view. The North Island is too far away to see, so the outlook is of ocean framed on the left by islands and on the right by more small islands and the Great Barrier mainland.

Cruising along the coastline into Karaka Bay we come across the Orama Christian Community. It was labelled on the map and I had been expecting some sort of alternate lifestyle Centerpoint type community setup. Got that wrong. This was by far the most manicured place we saw. An open, mown, grassy area with a children's playground surrounded by a variety of buildings connected by laid pathways. In adjoining bays, other areas including a tennis court were in a similar tidy state. A sign on the foreshore advertised accommodation and a local shop.

Around into Katherine Bay we are into a head wind and we have been warned that the locals aren't keen on visitors so we cut across the bay before reaching the township. Except for Katherine Bay, the northern Barrier was sold by the Maoris in 1838 and subsequently (1984) gifted to the Department of Lands and Survey as a reserve. The head wind becomes a tail wind, and my Albatross must really like the gentle following sea the way it left Katherine Bay. Just out of Katherine Bay is Ahuriri Point and this marks the start of a wealth of caves, tunnels and rock gardens. From the point to Miners Head is a huge playground and the flat sea lets us get in close. Miners Head has a pebbled beach with a good size stream. Views with Little Barrier on the left in much greater relief than we see from Auckland, and the Mokohinau Islands a haze on the right, along with blue skies, warm sunshine and a gentle breeze to dry the washing made this a great place to stop. It's times and locations like this that make you glad to be a kayaker. We hope for a wind shift back to south west to flatten out the swells on the east coast.

The following morning really feels like a weekend. The wind is howling

and it's raining torrents. We stayed put and shared some custard creme biscuits in honour of what the weather had turned to. Steve suggested chocolate biscuits for a similar reason. The good size clear stream has transformed into a raging muddy torrent, and a large waterfall has materialised at the other end of the beach. Wally's tent is doing a Venice impression, mine is being blown flat, and we erect a fly on the beach for some shelter. It also acts to collect rainwater and using saucepans on one corner we fill 11 litres into water bottles in about an hour. We can state that watching the tide falling is far more exciting than watching grass grow or paint dry. Graeme provided a few lessons on pitching tents in stormy conditions, which saw mine transformed into a pillar of strength, and Steve's larger abode provided a dry spot for Wally to spend the night.

Monday morning brought grey skies and drizzle. We kept our heads down until late morning when the sun put in an appearance and allowed us to dry some gear. The northeasterly is blowing and doesn't bode well for travel down the east coast. Steve and Wally set off on foot to find the nearby coppermine and I try a spot of kayak fishing away from the muddy outflow, and return with a small snapper to get Steve's smoker into action. We are all keen to move on and resolve to move the next morning if we can.

Tuesday brings grey skies, drizzle and a 10 knot easterly forecast to drop further so we set off out of Miners Head. Just around the corner are cliffs stained green from the copper oxide leeching from them and mineshafts emerge from many places on the face. More than 2000 tons of copper ore were extracted from here between 1857 and 1867.

At the top of Great Barrier are a number of islands, the closest separated from the mainland by only a few meters and the sea surging through the gap provides a thrilling passage. This island is not labelled on our maps, but I've seen it referred to as 'Unknown Island.' Past the islands we are onto the east coast and the swells mean we

need to keep offshore. The rocky coast doesn't provide the opportunity to land and it's a few hours before we find some protection at the head of Whangapoua Beach, the first of the long sandy beaches on the east coast.

After lunch Rakitu (Arid) Island passes by on our left. It is reputed to be a great place to paddle to but you would need better conditions that day. We see the first group of birds working since we arrived and make a slight detour to investigate. On the second pass my boat slows dramatically as something takes the lure. It feels bigger than your average kawahai and takes line back as fast as I bring it in. It tires eventually and I have my first kingfish. Steve meanwhile has also hooked up and needs some help as the kawahai he has won't fit in his net. We stow them in an onion sack on my back deck and the fish trail in the water on both sides of the boat. While catching up to Wally and Graeme a four foot shark cruises on the surface between us in the opposite direction. Seeing a shark at sea is another first for me.

All this area of coast we were told was fantastic, but the swells keep us well offshore and we don't get to look at it. The DOC campground at Harataonga was our intended destination, but low tide meant that we couldn't get in the estuary and it would have meant a long walk with all our gear. The campground was a nice one, with many flat grassy spots, toilets and water on tap. The next likely campground was another DOC site up another estuary at Awana Beach a few kilometres south. The tide provided the same problem with the estuary being gone and the heavy dumping surf stopped us attempting a landing.

The map showed a possible sheltered spot at the head of Kaitoke Beach behind Palmers Island and so it proved, with the dumping surf absent from the 20m at the top of the beach. From the signs onshore, this was a defence area and the presence of submarine cables meant fishing was prohibited. There were the standard Great Barrier dinghies strewn about - we didn't check them for rats - but the beach was

otherwise deserted. My only worry was that we would be used as target practice overnight. We found a suitable area for our tents above the sand dunes and Steve prepared the fish for the smoker at the waters edge. After Steve's return, I went down to the sea intending a swim and a rinse but stopped short at the site of four or five Brown Whaler sharks up to five feet in length splashing in 6" of water after the fish remains. Standing on rocks on the waters edge only feet from a good feed, the black backed gulls and seagulls kept out of the water and I followed their example. Graeme came down threateningly brandishing a fork but his yellow poncho kept him from chasing after them. As the clouds dropped to beach level reducing visibility to 100 meters and the fish cooked, we watched the sharks, resolving to be careful not to capsize when launching in the morning.

Wednesday morning saw the fog and the sharks gone and we hit the water at 8am to enable us to pass Cape Barrier on the ebb tide and to get back to Tryphena in time for the ferry back to Auckland. The easterly had dropped to a zephyr as predicted but the swells continued to restrict us to an offshore route. Kaitoke Beach passes by with Claris visible on the hills behind it and a plane using the airfield.

Medlands Beach was the last of the long sandy beaches on this coast before the rugged coastline returned. This sort of seascape always impresses me, a calm day with swells rolling onto shore and exploding on the rocks with the water levels rising and falling by meters with each swell. These conditions produce masses of foam which congregates and is streamed for miles in the currents. The gods were doing the dishes.

Rosalie Bay marks the completion of our circumnavigation due to the false start but we are not home yet. Cape Barrier still waits. The combination of the ebb tide and soft breeze mean that the conditions are considerably gentler than our previous passages, but full concentration is still required along with the odd brace stroke. Once around the corner and out of the swell

the water flattens out. We make a short stop at Sandy Beach before the dash back to Tryphena by midday. The ferry is due to arrive at 1pm and leave at 2 pm so we have plenty of time to dry off and change before organising the tickets. The Fullers ferry is not designed for carrying kayaks and the boats just rest on some unused seats. Trying the same method with fully loaded boats may have caused some damage and would have been difficult to load aboard. The Subritsky's car ferry, while slower, would provide better for a heavy kayak.

Racing back in clear, calm conditions, we see the landmarks from significant points of our journey to Great Barrier. Tryphena recedes in the distance as Port Jackson comes into view, and is clear as we pass Channel Island. Waiheke is a distant mass. The Coromandel quickly fades and the islands of the inner gulf welcome us home. We pull into downtown Auckland 2hrs after leaving Great Barrier, a journey that took us five days to complete.

RECENT BOOK RELEASES

(from Sandy, the Boat Books newsletter and the May 2001 'Canoe & Kayak' magazine.)

'Sea Kayak Rescue: The Definitive Guide to Modern Reentry and Recovery Techniques'

by Roger Schumann, Jan Shriner

Publication date: May 2001

Publisher: Globe Pequot Press

Binding: Paperback

Subjects: Sea kayaking; Safety measures; Rescues

[Click here for more information](#)

Our Price: \$11.96 | You Save: \$2.99 (20%)

This was from Amazon.com, Sandy Ferguson

'Northland Coast Boaties Atlas'

by David Thatcher.

Softcover 145pp, \$59.95

Available from Boat Books, Auckland.

(email contact: crew@boatbooks.co.nz)

When the Hauraki Gulf Boaties Atlas was launched in 1999, it was a very innovative concept, being a combination of hydrographic chart reproductions, coupled with cruising notes for the area and numerous GPS waypoints. During December 1999, the author himself set off with his own copy of the guide for a ten day 'test cruise' of the Hauraki Gulf. He came back with a smile on his face having found the book to be a very handy cruising resource for the area. Now we have the new 'Northland Coast Boaties Atlas.' The Northland guide builds on the success of the Hauraki Gulf atlas with the addition of numerous photographs and page plans to supplement the full colour chart reproductions.

Once again there are 24 A4 size colour reproductions of the official hydrographic charts for the area, beginning at Bream Tail, just south of Whangarei, and working up the whole of the Northland Coast to North Cape and Cape Reinga, and including the Three Kings Islands. The Bay of Islands receive extensive coverage as does the Cavalli Islands area. There are full cruising notes detailing anchorages, aids to navigation and navigational aids. Included in the numerous photographs throughout the guide are special panorama photographs aimed at helping in the identification of hard to find harbour entrances, such as Whangamumu and Whangaroa. The beginning sections of the guide contain up to date VHF radio station information and weather forecast information. A spiral binding adds to the user friendly format of the book.

'Field Guide to New Zealand Birds'

by Brain Parkinson. Soft cover, 136pp, 100 colour pics; \$29.95

Available from Boat Books, Auckland.

This book provides ready identification and up to date information on the many species of birds you are likely to see in New Zealand waters. Each species is illustrated with a colour photograph and described in terms of key identification and behavioural characteristics, similar species, distribution and breeding areas, population

status, plus advice on the best places to view the birds.

'A Shimmer on the Horizon'

by Phillip Teece

Hard cover, 169pp, \$39.95

Available from Boat Books, Auckland.

A beautifully written account of coastal cruising, this book follows in the tradition of his American West Coast sea kayaking classic, 'A Dream of Islands.' It is Teece's account of the journey he and his partner made in their tiny pocket cruisers (yachts) up the Strait of Georgia in search of quiet waters beyond Desolation Sound (Vancouver Island, B.C.). The author's keen eye for detail and his appreciation of the area make compelling reading for seasoned cruisers and armchair adventurers alike.

'Keep Australia on The Left'

by Mark Stewart Darby.

Soft cover, 225pp, colour pics, \$49.95.

Available from Boat Books, Auckland.

An almost identical title to the Eric Stiller folboat voyage from Bondi to Darwin!

Mark and his companion Sue spent two years sailing anti-clockwise around Australia in a 16' catamaran 'Tom Thumb.' This is a spectacular journey, a tale of natural beauties and the story of two people caught up in their own challenges, battling with the elements and each other, yet sharing a common goal. Their vision was to be sailing across the blue sea with beautiful cliffs above - the reality was very different. This is a precarious adventure that unfolds among the desolate seaports and extraordinary characters that few would ever know or appreciate.

'Birthplace of the Winds; Storming Alaska's Islands of Fire and Ice.'

by Jon Bowermaster, published by National Geographic Society, 2001. US\$26.50. Should be available from Amazon books.

Bowermaster writes of an epic adventure, a month long kayaking and climbing journey to one of the most remote places on earth, the islands of Four Mountains group, just west of Umnak Island in the Aleutian Island chain.

HUMOUR

Modern Medicine

The workers are hard at it in the bush when one of them slips and his chainsaw cuts off the arm of the guy next to him. Panic. They grab the severed arm, put into a plastic bag, call in a chopper and send him to hospital. A week later the workers decide to visit their mate in hospital only to find he had been discharged. When they get to his home he is playing table tennis. "Completely cured," the victim assures his friends, "by the wonders of modern medicine!"

Next week out in the forest a similar incident occurs only this time a leg is severed. Panic. The leg is placed in a plastic bag, the chopper flies in and the leg and its owner are rushed to hospital. A week later the workers decide to visit their mate in hospital only to find he has been sent home. On arriving there they are totally amazed to find him in the backyard playing soccer. "It's the wonders of modern medicine," he cries as he lands the ball in the net.

A week later in the forest the same thing happens only this time a head is cut off. Pandemonium. The head is put into a bag the chopper flies in, picks up the forest worker and rushes him to hospital. This is serious and rather than wait a week before visiting their friend and co-worker, the forestry workers decide to visit him that very evening. Shock horror. When they arrive the surgeon says the poor chap had died. "What about the wonders of modern medicine?" asked the bewildered forestry workers. "Too late for that," replied the surgeon. "Some idiot put his head into a plastic bag and he suffocated."

HOW TO AVOID A SPEEDING TICKET

On the Wellington motorway a police officer, who is one of those jet ski finks, pulls over a paddler with a kayak on the roofrack, for speeding and has the following verbal exchange:

Officer: "May I see your driver's license?"

Driver: "I don't have one. I had it suspended when I got my fifth drink

driving charge."

Officer: "May I see the registration for this vehicle?"

Driver: "It's not my car. I stole it."

Officer: "The car is stolen?"

Driver: "That's right. But come to think of it, I think I saw the owner's card in the glove box when I was putting my gun in there."

Officer: "There's a gun in the glove box?"

Driver: "Yes sir. That's where I put it after I shot and killed the woman who owns this car and stuffed her in the trunk."

Officer: "There's a BODY in the TRUNK?!?!?"

Driver: "Yes, sir."

Hearing this, the officer immediately phones Wellington Police Station and calls in the armed offender's squad. The car was quickly surrounded by mobs of armed police, and the captain approached the driver to handle the tense situation:

Captain: "Sir, can I see your license?"

Driver: "Sure. Here it is."

It was valid.

Captain: "Who's car is this?"

Driver: "It's mine, officer. Here's the registration."

The driver owned the car.

Captain: "Could you slowly open your glove box so I can see if there's a gun in it?"

Driver: "Yes, sir, but there's no gun in it."

Sure enough, there was nothing in the glove box.

Captain: "Would you mind opening your trunk? I was told you said there's a body in it."

Driver: "No problem."

Trunk is opened; no body.

Captain: "I don't understand it. The officer who stopped you said you told him you didn't have a license, stole the car, had a gun in the glove box, and that there was a dead body in the trunk."

Driver: "Yeah, I'll bet the lying s.o.b. told you I was speeding too!"

BAD 'HABITS'

A jet skier bloke is driving down a deserted stretch of highway, when he notices a sign out of the corner of his eye. It reads SISTERS OF MERCY HOUSE OF PROSTITUTION - 10

'Arctic Crossing: A Journey Through the Northwest Passage and Inuit Culture.'

by Johnathan Waterman; published by Alfred A. Knopf, 2001.

US\$29.95. Should be available from Amazon books.

In his solo journey through the Arctic, Waterman draws profound lessons from the harsh physical environment and a people whose traditional way of life is vanishing.

'Wild Shore: Exploring Lake Superior by Kayak'

by Grey Breining; published by University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

\$US24.95. Should be available from Amazon books.

Over two years, Breining circled the greatest lake by kayak, seeking out its hidden wonders and exploring the historic trails of the Ojibwas and voyageurs.

'An Introduction to Sea Kayaking in Queensland.'

by Gerrard Effeney

(from NSW Sea Kayaker)

ISBN 0-646-37476-1

Aust.\$21.95 from Boat Books, Brisbane.

Not kayaking because it's too cold? Well now there is no excuse, for inside this gem of a book you will find details of nine fabulous paddling spots in Queensland, from Moreton Bay to the Whitsundays, to Cape York Peninsula. The book contains pretty standard information on kayaking in the first few chapters, but more importantly it contains useful tips on clothing requirements for tropical paddling and contact details for emergency services in each paddling area, where to get camping permits and numbers for obtaining weather reports. A very useful section provides first aid advice on marine hazards often unique to the northern Australian climate, including box jellyfish, stonefish and sea snakes. Contact details for Boat Books, Australia website: www.boatbook-aust.com.au email: enquiry@boatbooks-aust.com.au

MILES. He thinks it was just a figment of his imagination and drives on without a second thought. Soon, he sees another sign which says SISTERS OF MERCY HOUSE OF PROSTITUTION - 5 MILES and realizes that these signs are for real. When he drives past a third sign saying SISTERS OF MERCY HOUSE OF PROSTITUTION NEXT RIGHT, his curiosity gets the best of him and he pulls into the drive.

On the far side of the parking lot is a sombre stone building with a small sign next to the door reading SISTERS OF MERCY. He climbs the steps and rings the bell. The door is answered by a nun in a long black habit who asks, "What may we do for you, my son?" He answers, "I saw your signs along the highway, and was interested in possibly doing business."

"Very well, my son. Please follow me." He is led through many winding passages and is soon quite disoriented. The nun stops at a closed door, and tells the man, "Please knock on this door". He does as he is told and this door is answered by another nun in a long habit and holding a tin cup. This nun instructs, "Please place \$50 in the cup, then go through the large wooden door at the end of this hallway." He gets \$50 out of his wallet and places it in the second nun's cup. He trots eagerly down the hall and slips through the door, pulling it shut behind him. As the door locks behind him, he finds himself back in the parking lot, facing another small sign: GO IN PEACE, YOU HAVE JUST BEEN SCREWED BY THE SISTERS OF MERCY.

New Zealand Wooden Kayak Builders Mailing List.

Recently I built a wooden kayak and in the process of doing so discovered that there many other people through out New Zealand who have either built or were building wooden kayaks. Many of these people have access to the Internet and log onto kayak discussion groups and mailing lists overseas.

After talking to some of the wooden kayak builders in Christchurch I suggested that I could set up our own mailing list, which I have done via egroups .com. After setting it up I sent out e-mails inviting the builders that Sandy Ferguson and I knew to join the mailing list. Currently there are fourteen people on it.

Anything to do with the building of wooden kayaks can be discussed on the mailing list. Recently one of the members described the building of his Chasapeake 16 as he progressed through the process. Photos and other files can also be posted on the egroups.com server which members can access. In the near future I hope to have a list of suppliers on file, that members have found helpful when they have been building their kayaks.

At present there are no restrictions to joining the mailing list and it is unmoderated. However I do have the ability to restrict people who use the mailing list inappropriately i.e. sending spam.

There is no cost in joining the mailing list. If you wish to join the list send a blank e-mail to this address:

N Z k a y a k b u i l d e r s -
subscribe@egroups.com

Or if you would like further information regarding the list I can be contacted at this address:
kayak@fallstop.co.nz
James Thompson.

HISTORY

The Audacious Alaskan Adventures of Kayak Dundee*

***alias Paul Caffyn
(continued from n/l No.91)**

A Whale of a Time

On June 1, I left the shelter of the sound for the open waters of the gulf en route to my next food drop at the port of Seward. I was apprehensive as I headed offshore but the day was made by a magical experience, one of the highlights of the summer. I heard the sound of a whale spouting and swivelled my head until I saw a thin spout of misty spume, intermittently shooting out of the sea. During past trips I'd been literally scared out of my wits by whales suddenly surfacing alongside the kayak but I'd never had the presence of mind to take a photograph.

This large humpback whale was regularly spouting three times before sounding and diving to the sea bed for several minutes. I stopped paddling and retrieved the two cameras from my middle compartment. Slingshotting them round my neck, I resumed my course.

I knew I was in the approximate position where the humpback would surface again but wasn't quite prepared for the massive, grey submarine like body surfacing less than 30 feet away, so close in fact that I was drenched by a fine spray when the whale spouted. Its exhaled breath smelt like the stale inside of fish factory with a tinge of cod liver oil. Twice more the whale spouted, while I clicked the camera shutters. Then the huge tail lifted 15 feet majestically into the air, almost directly over the bow. Click. I hoped trembling hands had not spoilt one of the greatest shots I'd ever taken at sea.

Fogged In

From the end of the Kenai Peninsula, I was faced with the next big crux, a long exposed 55 mile crossing out to

Kodiak Island. Swift tide races, a reputation for rapid weather changes and strong winds, left me gripped as I kicked out for the Barrens, a small group of islands midway across. It took me two days to complete the crossing, with an overnight stop on the Barren Islands. On both days, I was enveloped in thick, damp fog banks. In visibility less than 200 feet, I was absolutely reliant on my deck mounted binnacle compass, and had to juggle both wind and tidal stream drift to ensure a landfall.

The second leg of the crossing had all the makings of a major epic. I'd waited until 5.30pm for a series of big tide races and overfalls to settle down before launching. Initially I had a visual sight onto a hazy snow topped range on Kodiak Island and was able to correct for tidal drift by checking transits over my shoulder on the Barren Islands. Then from seawards, I noticed the swirling tendrils of a dank fog bank sweeping towards me. I scarcely had time to recheck the compass course to Kodiak Island before I was engulfed in the chilling gloom of a dense fog bank.

For the next three hours I struggled against a choppy beam sea to stay on my compass heading. It was a weather tide situation, a 15 knot south-easterly wind blowing against the tide ebbing out of Cook Inlet. When the short, five foot chop began breaking, I felt totally gripped. By 10.30pm, I should have made contact with land according to the elapsed timer on my watch. The sea had eased when the tide began flooding but I was still totally immersed in a grey-out. I could neither sight land nor hear the sound of surf on shore. Re-checking the distance for the umpteenth time, I could only hold my compass heading and try to keep mounting anxiety under control. I wasn't prepared for a full night at sea, no food handy and the red navigation torch buried deep in the middle compartment.

Fifteen minutes later, I was desperately trying to work out why I'd overshoot the island when I noticed a slight increase in the visibility. Glimpses of the sun sinking golden in the west

lifted my sagging morale. I kept sweeping my gaze on a 180 degree arc over the bow. Then a few minutes before 11pm I glimpsed a faint smear of rock through the fog to my left. It was Dark Island, my aiming point. That wretched wind and flood tidal stream had pushed me off course by just on a mile. Needless to say I was pleased to reach terra firma again. I didn't quite kiss the ground, but that was one hellofa crossing to have left astern.

During the following three days as I headed down through Shelikof Strait, the few fisherfolk I met shook their heads when I told them where I'd come from. The skipper of the salmon seiner Lady Beth said, "I won't even take my boat across via the Barren Islands, and its a 35 footer!" A lass at the old Port William cannery, now turned into a fishing and hunting lodge, would not fly across that stretch of water. It was too turbulent for her in a floatplane. I was so pleased that I only heard these stories after the crossing lay astern.

The Alaska Peninsula - Aleut Country

From Kodiak Island, I made a swift and enjoyable 23 mile crossing of Shelikof Strait to the Alaska Peninsula and that's when my lucky break with reasonable weather came to an end. Each night at 6.30pm, after the television news, a 20 minute program on the Alaskan weather is broadcast. Mark Evangelista, the hard case presenter, turns the mundane details about pressure gradients and synoptic situations into a humorous, enjoyable session watched Alaska wide by aircraft pilots and fishermen. The night I'd spent at Port William cannery, Mark pointed to a small high pressure cell and said, "Remember this for nostalgia's sake. It's the last one we are going to see for a long time."

For the two weeks it took me to struggle down to my next food dump at Chignik, cold front followed cold front in a seemingly endless succession with ever so short lulls in between, when I would fight a few miles to the southwest from lee landing to lee landing. Survival became dependent on my

ability to read the wind shifts by direction changes in the cloud movement.

When I finally limped into Chignik, 19 days out of Seward, I was shattered physically. All that remained of my food supplies was a couple of dry crackers, a spoonful each of sugar and powdered milk and one freeze dry meal. Pete Nolan, a jovial Australian fishing boat skipper, plied me with pizzas and tins of meat in an attempt to put some condition back onto my lean frame.

False Pass was my next objective, a narrow channel at the western tip of the Alaska Peninsula, where the waters of the Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea rush through at great speed. Whether it was the pizzas and tins of meat or a moderate run with semi-settled weather, I averaged 44 miles per day for the next 265 miles to False Pass.

The Russian Influence

One of my lunch stops en-route to False Pass was a gravel beach below the abandoned village of Belkofski. On a bare grassy slope overlooking the beach, the most ornate and grandiose building was a Russian Orthodox church. All the other buildings apart from the school were ramshackle cottages.

Originally established as a Russian trading settlement, Belkofski was a centre for the rich sea otter hunting grounds. Although Russia sold Alaska to the U.S.A. in 1867, the village remained under the tyrannical dictatorship of a priest. This pontifical pirate charged the Aleut natives a fee of sea otter pelts for marriage ceremonies, births, christenings and funerals. He had such a hold over the Aleuts that when he rang the church bell, no matter what the time of the day, they would all have to attend a service. Belkofski was a favourite stopping place for whaling ships, partly because the vessels could stock up on fresh food, but also because the priest always had a considerable stock of rum and whisky. He was also a avid poker player. One evening, during a game with the captain and crew of a whaling ship, the priest had a bad run of cards and ran out of money. Al-

though it was long after midnight, he rang the church bell and donned his vestments. The locals took some time to wander bleary-eyed into the church. The priest chanted a few prayers, took up a collection and then disappeared back to the poker game.

The Aleut sea otter hunters had developed the skills of kayaking and hunting to a state of perfection. Captain Cook was amazed to find that the Aleuts experienced no trouble in keeping pace with his Resolution while it was sailing at a steady seven knots. Their kayaks, called baidarkas, were works of technological achievement, the only kayaks in the world to have shims of polished ivory or bone inserted between the lashed pieces of the wooden frameworks. These shims prevented wear, and added flexibility to the kayak's framework. Four or five sea lion skins were cut to shape by the men and sewn by the women over the frame to form a completely waterproof skin.

It was a great tragedy that the Russians first discovered Alaska in 1741. Reports of seas teeming with sea otters led to a stampede by Russian hunters to make their fortunes with what became known as the golden fleeces - the Chinese were insatiable buyers of the short-haired pelts. These Siberian hunters who became known as the Promyshlenniki were the low life of Russia. Bone and ivory tipped spears and arrows were no match for Russian firearms and poison. Localized efforts by the Aleut villages to repel the hunters led to bloody massacres and razing to ground level of the villages. One of the worst recorded incidents was perpetrated by Ivan Soloviev, the commander of two trading vessels. At the village of Kashega, he tied 12 Aleuts front-to-back in single file and then fired a musket into the first native. The bullet lodged in the ninth Aleut - nine skilled baidarka men killed with a single shot.

By the time Captain Cook visited the Aleutian Islands in 1778, the Aleuts had been completely subjugated by the Russian hunters. Of an original population of 16,000 less than a half remained. They never recovered.

On several occasions in the old Aleut hunting grounds, I had an eerie, spine tingling feeling of not being alone at sea. I felt a distinct presence around me, which I could only assume was the spirits of the old baidarka men.

False Pass

By late afternoon on June 28, I was 'racing in the streets' for the shelter of False Pass. It was the stuff that epics are made from. I'd rounded up into the lee of Egg Island for lunch and a brief respite from a breaking south-easterly swell. I disturbed a mob of sea otters resting on a rock shelf and had to grin when the mothers grabbed their wee pups in their teeth and dived into the sea.

Twenty five miles of exposed weather shore remained to the entrance of False Pass. Since Egg Island had no fresh water and no level areas to camp, I had to either shoot the gap for False Pass or paddle across to a sandy beach on the mainland. Several times I climbed up onto a high point to gauge the density of whitecaps and feel the wind strength. Deciding it was absolutely marginal, I kicked out for 10 minutes to see if I could cope with the conditions. On a five foot chop, buffeted by williwaws and a showery 25 knot south-easterly, I crossed a deep bay and commenced a four hour struggle to keep a little distance between me and the surf breaking on a jagged rocky shoreline.

Apart from my arms steadily grinding in 38 paddling strokes a minute, the only thing that kept me from being driven against the rocks and cliffs was the deep draft oversterm rudder. Of all the 89 days of the 1990 trip, this was the one when the rudder was absolutely magical. The wind, gusting to 30 knots with hard driving rain showers, was square on my beam. To correct for wind and chop drift, I had to maintain a course well to the south of the coast. Although I was mostly within a mile of shore, the rain showers were so heavy at times that I was forced onto a compass heading.

More and more cockpit curlers began breaking over the decks. I tried a little bit of forced singing for a while, but

then as the wind strength kept increasing and my body began chilling down, I had to pull the drawstring of the parka hood into a tight circle with only my nose and eyes peeking out. No more singing.

My first glimpse of the Palisade Cliffs, a vertical tier of sheer rock that guards the entrance to False Pass, brought a shadow of relief. I took note of the compass heading before the viz socked in again and gritted my teeth for the last four miles. The wind was raging at a steady 35 knots, driving before it a seven foot high breaking chop. Rain was pelting down. My concentration was riveted on making the shelter of the pass. Closing on the cliffs, their tops hidden in cloud, I cast fleeting glimpses at waterfalls toppling out of the cloud base. Now with the wind and chop on my stern quarter, I was flying along but holding back on the surfing runs as the chop was too short and too steep. No time for an end over.

Bouncing into the shallows, and at last clear of the breakers, I took note of which way the long brown streamers of kelp were lying. The flood tidal stream sets north through False Pass at speeds up to eight knots and it was almost high water. I bounced through a big rapid with a series of standing pressure waves and was chuffed to find the tide with me. Five miles to the village of False Pass. On a flat sea, broken only by tide races, huge bubbling boils and the odd small overfall, I flew through those five miles at about 12 knots, with a little help from the tide and wind. I'd been warned to steer well clear of Whirl Point. The whirlpool was so big and swift, it would suck the kayak down or so the fisherman had reckoned.

The rain was still belting down but the wind had eased to about 20 knots. Keeping out in mid-channel with just enough viz to sight the shore on either side, I shot past Whirl Point almost before noticing it. Two miles to go, but the village should have been in sight. Bounced from side to side by big boiling eddies, at last I glimpsed a light though the clag and began a long ferry glide towards shore. Still steaming along at 10 knots, I shot under a

long wooden jetty and could see the buildings and houses of the village. Totally shagged but wearing a whisker of a smile at the corner of my mouth, I ground the bow onto a gravel beach and staggered ashore. I had just passed the half way mark to Nome; 1,354 miles down and about the same number to go.

Bering Sea - The Sea of Bears

I found the Bering Sea a total contrast to the heaving grey seas of the Gulf of Alaska. For the next few weeks, as I headed north-east along the top side of the Alaska Peninsula, the sea was often choppy but there was never a serious swell. I bumped into big mobs of both fishermen and brown bears during those weeks. Early to mid-July was prime time for the Bristol Bay salmon fishery, and also prime time for the big brown bears fishing the river mouths for salmon that had escaped the fishermen's nets.

For five years, during the planning of the Alaska trip, I did a lot of research and corresponding with Alaskans to find out how best to protect myself from black and brown bears. Not long ago, a black bear attacked, killed and ate a solo paddler in the Glacier Bay area near Juneau. All that remained of the poor chap was, 'an intact skull, shoulder blade, long bones and 4-inch section of spinal cord.'

In dealing with bears, there are two polarized schools of thought which I have termed the Rambo offensive and common sense approaches. The Rambo offensive school involves being equipped with a small arsenal which stops short of heavy artillery. Heavy gauge rifles, pump action shotguns or powerful handguns are carried as bear protection. Kayak tour operators working out of Ketchikan and Juneau in S.E. Alaska carry pump action shotguns on every trip as the ultimate deterrent to black and brown bear attacks. However I foresaw a few minor problems if I carried a heavy gauge weapon: firstly shaking fingers could discharge the weapon as I pulled it out of the cockpit blasting a humongous hole in the hull, and secondly a poorly aimed wounding shot

{shaking fingers again} would just really piss a bear right off. In my case, the overriding factor was the Caffyn weight factor - a weapon and projectiles were far too heavy to carry in the kayak.

The common sense school of thought involves applying many of principles that I'd used when camping in the saltwater crocodile country of tropical Australia. For the bears it involved not camping either at the mouth of a salmon stream or alongside a bear trail, keeping food well away from the tent, and keeping well away from a sow and her cubs. My game plan, for dealing with a charging bear, was to turn around, drop my survival suit, bare my posterior and the charging grizzly would find the sight unbearable. This plan changed dramatically when I saw how fast the brown bears could move.

In 1989, I did in fact carry a can of a new product called Counter Assault. An aerosol spray, it contains capsi-cum which affects the respiratory system, mucous membranes and eyes. Tests in a laboratory environment and a few outside tests on rogue dump bears were very effective. Prior to this year's trip, a chap approached me after a slide show in Bellingham and asked what I was taking to deal with bears. When I told him Counter Assault, he offered to lend me a can of Cap Stun which is the military/police version with a higher concentration of capsi-cum. He only had one can left, as the Bellingham police had used up all their stock to quell a riot at the local gaol. I took up his offer with alacrity as I reckoned rioting prisoners were probably far more dangerous than brown bears.

Each night when I camped on a beach with heaps of bear sign, tracks and/or scat {dung}, I made sure the can of Cap Stun was beside me. I heard two stories about the misuse of Counter Assault. All the field workers employed by Exxon during the oil spill clean-up were issued with a can. One lass was playing with her can in a large Bell helicopter that was dropping her crew into a remote beach. She triggered a very short burst which

debilitated not only all the passengers but also the pilot and came ever so close to causing a fatal crash. The second story was about a chap who thought the spray was not to be used to directly spray charging bears but as a deterrent when used like a personal underarm deodorant spray. A vivid imagination can picture his response.

During the 89 days of the 1990 trip, I saw a total of 40 brown bears, one black bear, and had two brown bears bump into my tent during the hours of darkness. Alaska is still considered the frontier state of the U.S.A. and as such it is still attracting what I call the 'red neck' element from the lower 48. A maximum bag limit of 2,000 brown bears was in operation this year, that is up to 2,000 can be killed by trophy head and skin hunters. Larger bears don't stand much of a chance with the guides and red neck trophy hunters searching for them by float plane. Thus most of the bears I saw only needed to smell the slightest whiff of my scent and they were off over the dune ridges.

One morning in the Bering Sea, three big brown bears were slowly plodding along the beach, with a spacing of about 50 feet between them. An onshore breeze was blowing and when my scent carried to the first bear, he immediately stood on his hind legs and scanned the upwind horizon until he spotted my paddling motion. Then he dropped to four legs and galloped out of sight over the dune ridge. The two bears following behind repeated his action and I wished I'd had a video camera to record their reaction. And I'm sure I didn't smell too badly.

All the literature about camping in bear country describes climbing trees to escape from charging bears and hanging all food suspended in bags from a line between two trees. I'm positive the writers had never visited the Alaska Peninsula or the Bering Sea coast. For, as a Bristol Bay salmon fisherman told me, "Women are as scarce as trees up here". In this area, the topography consists of rolling tundra flats, with the nearest tree hundreds of miles away.

All I could do in the treeless tundra country was cook outside the tent and keep the food in the airtight Nordkapp compartments. Unfortunately the night at Middle Bluff in Bristol Bay when a brown bear clawed its way into my tent, a near gale force southerly wind was blowing. This particular evening, I'd backed the tent hard against the base of a big dune ridge. There was plenty of bear sign on the beach, the huge plate-like tracks and scat or piles of dung, so I built my usual Caffyn's patent pending 'bearicade' around the tent. This was whatever I could fabricate from driftwood, the kayak and paddle, so I would know if a bear was approaching too close to the tent. Unfortunately because of the wind, I had to move the MSR cooker and billy into the tent so they wouldn't be blown away and lash the paddle to the kayak decklines.

Two hours after midnight, I was dead to the world, sound asleep with the alarm set for 3am I woke suddenly with the horrendous sound of ripping tent fabric. Realizing instantly it was a bloody great brown bear, I yelled, "Get out of it," with just a tad of tremolo in the voice. Quickly I groped around in the dark to find my glasses and the torch. There was no need to unzip the tent door, since there was now a gaping hole through which I exited the tent. When I yelled out, the bear had fallen backwards over the kayak before galloping up over the dune ridge. It was only shining the torch beam at the flapping streamers of nylon that I realized its claws had missed my face by inches. The wind shield of the cooker had been flattened by the bear's paw.

Next morning I wasn't quite sure of what to do next. I didn't have enough tape to effect repairs. My needle and dental floss could keep some of the weather out but I still had over 1,000 miles to paddle to reach Nome. Caching the Nordkapp in long grass, I set off with the rolled up tent to walk 15 miles back towards a fish camp in the hope of finding some duct tape or a sewing machine. I'd only covered 100 yards when a Piper Cub dropped out of the sky and landed on the beach

beside me. The previous day I'd chatted to Brad Heile on a beach where he'd landed for a break from salmon spotting. Brad had offered to drop in some fresh water to me at Middle Bluff but the wind had been too strong to land the previous evening. After I explained my predicament with the shredded tent, Brad said, "Jump in, we'll have breakfast in town and see what we can do about the tent."

It was the start of a magic day. Brad worked on charter as a salmon spotter to a small fleet of drift net salmon boats. As we flew up Bristol Bay we passed over a horde of small but fast boats, all jockeying for position to set their nets. It looked like the start of the Whitbread yacht race in Auckland except that ramming and towing of other boat's nets are accepted practices. A maximum of 1,500 vessels are allowed to work this lucrative fishery. Some 30 million fish return to these waters to spawn each summer, and 50 to 60% of these are caught within a three to four day period. Average catch per boat is 100,000 pounds according to Brad, for an average initial cash return of \$1.25 per pound. It is no wonder that permits go for a top price of \$275,000. In a six week period, fishermen make enough money to live comfortably for the rest of the year.

Brad shouted me a non-dehi breakfast at the Red Dog Inn in Naknek and we found both duct tape and a sewing machine at one of the large canneries. With the tent patched, we went salmon spotting for a few hours and then Brad flew inland to a huge lake where we watched salmon looking for sites to lay their eggs. Late evening, Brad dropped me back to Middle Bluff and I made sure a large bearicade was in place before I crashed for the night.

Walrus

On July 5, I had seen six brown bears in the morning and as I neared the vertical grey cliffs of Cape Seniavin, I was puzzled by the sight of a reddish band at the cliff base. Paddling closer there appeared to be a cloud of steam above the reddish band. Only when long white, curving tusks became visible did I realize I was looking at a

large mob of walrus. They were all clustered together, lying side by side, for warmth and company. These were all bull or male walrus. They have an immense bodyweight of a ton and can weigh up to 1.5 tons. The long ivory tusks, which grew up to three feet long, weigh up to 12 pounds apiece. They are used for hauling out on ice, digging up the sea-bed for shellfish, fighting, keeping breathing holes in the ice open and for defence against polar bears, killer whales and man.

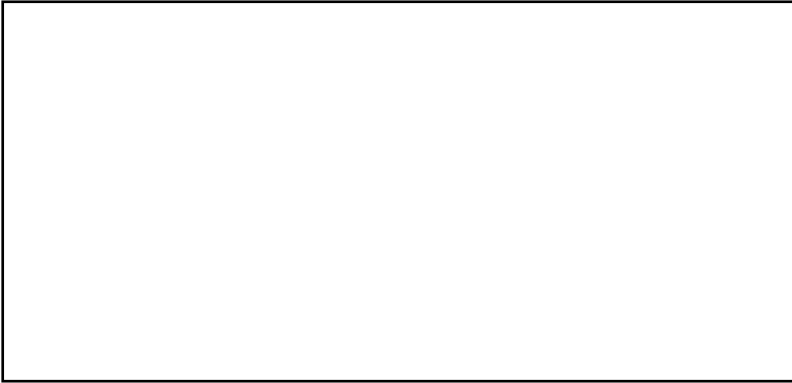
Wary at first of how the walrus would react to the kayak, I drifted past with the wind taking photographs. When I paddled close to the beach, the whole mob lumbered into the sea and I was surrounded by their whiskery faces as they swam near the kayak.

Wounded walrus or cows protecting their young have been known to attack umiaks and kayaks. Fridtjof Nansen and Hjalmar Johansen in their frail kayaks were attacked several times by walrus in 1895 and 1896 as they paddled through the Arctic Ice to Franz Joseph Land.

In former years when walrus were hunted by the Eskimos, nearly every part of the walrus was used. The skin was used for umiaks and floor coverings, the meat was eaten, blubber was burnt for heating, light and cooking, the intestines were used for parkas and window panes, and the tusks for hunting implements and carving. Sadly, today, the tourist dollar has changed the hunting of the walrus into taking only of the ivory tusks for carving. Heads are chainsawed off while the rest of the body is left to float distended on to shore. In 1990, I was saddened by the sight of so many smelly, rotten walrus carcasses washed up on the beaches.

(to be continued in n/l No.93)

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