

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB  
ISSUE 109 | NOV 2018

# Salt



**In this issue**

**Overseas and local trip reports**

**Kayak snorkelling revisited**

**Get ready for Rock 'n' Roll 2019**

**Hawkesbury Canoe Classic**



Cover: Greenland expeditioners (Pic. Campbell Tiley)  
 Inside Cover: Martin Vanderpoel with Cape Hauy in the distance (Pic. Adrian Clayton)

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The NSWSKC is a voluntary organisation run by members who give their time freely to the club. Membership is offered yearly. Please see the website for details and application.  
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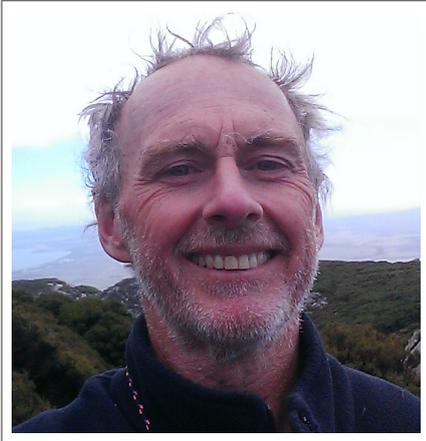
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**IMPORTANT:** Please review the Paddler Safety, Required Equipment, Grading System and Club Calendar sections of the club website.



## From the President's Deck

CAMPBELL TILEY

Welcome to Adrian's first issue of *Salt* as Editor and thanks to Ruby who stepped down at the last AGM after two years in the role. We want our magazine to showcase the breadth of kayaking trips and related topics within the Club and not just the exotic or extreme. If you have an idea for a product review, a local trip report, a poem, a recipe or whatever floats your kayak, get in touch with Adrian.

I also want to echo my previous gratitude to Tony for his contribution as President and, most recently, for the discussions with Paddle NSW about the question of re-affiliating with them. PNSW are the lead body in kayaking in NSW for liaison with policy makers and although their focus is competitive kayaking this places them as an important potential partner for us. These discussions did not lead to a decision to re-affiliate as the

additional cost to our members appeared to outweigh the benefits, but this is an issue that may well be revisited by this or future Committees as circumstances and opportunities evolve.

We all owe more than a beer or two to Selim for the many hours that he has put in on the layout of the new website which went live very successfully in early November. While he and I have both worked on the site and the migration of data from the old site, he has carried most of the load. We anticipate further refinements over time and still have work to do to optimise access to the entire magazine archive. Given the ubiquity of smartphones, the availability of phone apps for the new site to access trips, registration, messaging to other members and some other key functions is a major plus. Load the app and give it a go! The old site

will remain accessible in suspended animation if there is material on it that needs to be referenced in the future.

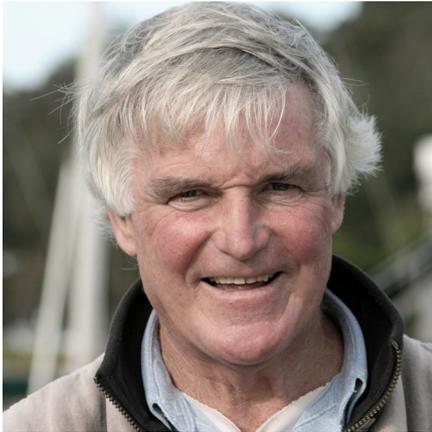
I recently indicated my interest in reformatting our SOP document as a readable Club handbook and am grateful for the couple of offers of help that I received in response to get this moving – which I plan to do now the website has reached gestation.

With the weather warming up as I write this, and undoubtedly warmer as you read this issue, it is great to see the calendar filling with paddling and training options. Thanks to those leaders for their support and, of course, to Rob, Sharon and Owen for their very popular and long-running weekly trips. The dates for the 2019 Rock n Roll are on the Calendar so you can keep that weekend clear with registration expected to open well before the end of January. I hope to catch up with as many members as possible at what is always a fantastic social and kayaking weekend.

The Committee is here to help the Club to serve the membership so if you have suggestions for me or any of the other Committee members to improve the Club from your paddling perspective, please get in touch

Happy paddling





## From the Editor's Desk

ADRIAN CLAYTON

Apologies for the delayed arrival of this edition of *Salt*. Your new editor is very much on his L plates, particularly coming to terms with the very complicated layout software. Also, the preceding editors of four or five years past have been continually lifting the bar with the quality of *Salt* and they are proving to be a very, very hard act to follow.

A six-week absence from Australia since taking on the editor's role has also been a contributing factor for the delay in publication. The upside is that it's left the purse empty so overseas travel will not be a bona fide reason for delays in publishing future issues for some time.

Sea kayaking provides a platform with the potential to support so many different interests – from the mild to the wild. I think you'll find that the contents of this edition of *Salt* reflect this view.

Thank you to all of those who submitted the articles for this issue. A special note of appreciation to my predecessor, Ruby Gamble and local hero Phil Silvers for getting me started with inDesign. Without their help, you'd still be waiting to get this issue.

Distribution of the next issue of *Salt* is due to coincide with R'n'R2019 (see notice on page 23). The copy deadline will be the middle of February 2019.

We look forward to receiving

your feedback and contributions. Articles covering trip reports, training, gear review, letters are most welcome. Likewise letters and your best photos, etc.

### Editor's In-tray

Dear Editor,

The article on paddle floats by your correspondent, in the July 2018 issue of *Salt* omits from 'Other Uses' consideration of the combined paddle float/practice violin (pictured below) and paddle float/bagpipes. Both of these devices are discussed in 'Kayak Innovations' (NSW Sea Kayaker No. 80, September 2010). Musical instruments and paddle floats are a high priority on any kayak camping trip but finding space for them is difficult. Hence the combined musical instrument/paddle float.

The practice violin version is of course a solid float and nothing on that need be added here. However in 'Kayak Innovations' the bagpipes version is 'downplayed'; I even go so far as to quote the old adage that the definition of a gentleman or lady is one who can play the bagpipes but doesn't.

But that was 2010. In the intervening eight years I have changed my view. First, I have learned that kayakers are always discreet and indeed considerate of others. To play or not to play? You can rely on them.

Second, bagpipes have three features that make them very suitable as paddle floats. One, the bag is inflated

by the player by blowing into a tube which has a 'no return' valve. No complicated twisting of caps and things. Two, once inflated the sound is made by squeezing the bag and forcing air through the 'chanter' - a rigid tube with finger holes like a flute, with a reed in it. However a two-position tap can easily be fitted to the chanter to silence it and keep the air in the bag – so a paddle float.

And thirdly, once the paddler has effected a rescue (say a reentry and roll) he/she can turn the tap on the chanter and announce his/her success with a rousing tune. What's not to like?

Norman Carter



Dear Mr Carter,

Your letter has been forwarded to the author of the paddle float article to which you refer. We have had the following response which we quote verbatim.

*"I did consider mentioning the violin paddle float combination but decided not to despite its pure genius. My reason for doing so is that sea kayakers are generally free spirited individuals and would probably balk at using a product that comes with strings attached".*

*We have referred your idea of bagpipes doubling as paddle floats to Nick Blacklock, the only instructor of Scottish origin within the Club. Nick has inherited a swag of bagpipes which he is keen to sell. Co-incidentally, he is also currently conducting rolling lessons within the Club. We expect him to support your idea with some enthusiasm regardless of its efficacy.*

Yours, etc



# Training Coordinator's Update

MEGAN PRYKE

The top priority for training is getting more people into sea kayaking. The Club is well placed to achieve this with a good number of active leaders in our volunteer pool.

A survey in May identified that around ten members want to work towards Paddle Australia's Sea Skill awards. Bill Raffle is our latest member to qualify for the award. He was assessed by Owen Kimberly. Congratulations Bill

Congratulations to Paul Edwards and Bill Raffle (again) for attaining their Sea Guide awards. They both were assessed by Rob Mercer and have been ratified to lead sea trips. Mark Fuller (Flat Water Guide) has been ratified as a Club Trip Leader for flat water trips. There are now twenty nine leaders in our pool.

Most leaders can lead trips for novice paddlers. An unexpected change in Paddle Australia's Safety Guidelines has changed the Sea Leader's scope. Sea Leader's qualification has been limited to Sea Skill certificate holders. This has affected one club leader and there are steps in place to address this.

Every three years Paddle Australia leaders refresh their qualifications. This is done by providing proof of skills currency. Changes to our trip leader availability pool are normal. Flat Water Instructors Dee Ratcliffe, Stephan Meyn and Peter Osman, and Sea Instructor Nick Gill have decided not to maintain their respective qualifications.

Our top contributors for training

and trips for 2017-18 were, in a rough order of contribution: Owen Kimberly, Rob Mercer and Sharon Betteridge. Then, conducting over ten event days or trips, Megan Pryke and Tony Murphy. Contributing five to ten event days were Campbell Tiley, Caoimhin Arden, Adrian Clayton, Fernando Charnis, Nick Blacklock, Raewyn Duffy and Stuart Trueman. Stuart's contribution included a one-week expedition in Tasmania. Raewyn conducted two club weekend events. Other contributors were David Fisher, Dee Ratcliffe, John Friedman and Les Allen. Matt Bezzina has had a few bites of the cherry for his early Saturday morning long distance dash. Adrian coordinated another Navigation training weekend harnessing Russ Swinnerton's knowledge. Russ also conducted an Astro Navigation course which generated some keen participation. I hope he will repeat it in 2019.

A Trip Leaders' weekend was conducted in June 2018. Conditions were not that great, however the weekend was successful. It is intended to have the next Trip Leader weekend in Spring 2019.

Paddle Australia, formerly Australian Canoeing, introduced "Enclosed Sea" qualifications a few years back. Compared to Flat Water qualifications, the Enclosed Sea qualifications allow distances further from shore and with greater fetch or tidal current. Enclosed

Sea qualifications are more relevant to the Club's activities. Encouraging current active Flat Water leaders to upgrade to Enclosed Sea qualifications continues to be one of the irons in the fire.

Paddle Australia, in August, published a revised Qualification Evidence guidelines. This should produce greater qualification consistency. An updated NSW Sea Kayak Sea Skills Study Guide, which complements Paddle Australia's training material, has been completed. There is further need to update the Club's Sea Skills assessment standards document.

Instructors who have been actively instructing can assess for skills awards. Many club instructors do not have any experience as a formal assessor. Adrian Clayton has actively encouraged Sea Instructors to be involved with recent assessments.

Sea kayaking can be a wonderful activity that can form part of a healthy lifestyle. Paddling with a group of like-minded individuals has a wonderful social dimension. Thus, I hope to see you on the water with perhaps the greatest trainer, the sea!



# East Greenland 2018

*Coming to terms with bergs, bears  
and the blunderbuss...*



*Campbell Tiley reflects on a  
challenging three-week expedition  
undertaken by a team of five Club  
members midsummer in Greenland*

FROM MY EARLIEST memories, Greenland has seemed a remote and primitively exotic place that adventurers travelled to and where kayaks came from, a place that I have long wanted to touch and experience.

After chatting to Paul Caffyn about Greenland several years ago he directed me to *Northern Lights*, an account of the Gino Watkins expedition in 1930 to the Angmagssalik region and up the coast. They were exploring, mapping and recording the weather to investigate a possible air route from London to Winnipeg, which necessitated fuelling stops in Greenland. The book provides a brilliant account of the Inuit in the region at that time and is also an epic story. It includes observations of typical seasonal travel of family groups in umiaks, open skin-on-frame boats, from overwintering villages to summer hunting camps. They led a harsh self-sufficient way of life dating back thousands of years now replaced by urban consolidation in larger towns

When I heard that Caomhin was doing some preliminary research with Ruby on options for a small group unguided and unsupported paddle in East Greenland I enthusiastically joined the team. We soon had Rae and Neil Duffy on board. It did not take too long to come up with a long list of pretty basic issues that we needed to come to grips with including: weather, ice, how cold is it, availability of food and boats and the habits of the top predator of the region, Nanuq, the polar bear.

Caomhin had already contacted Martin Rickard, a Pom who has published tempting trip reports on the area and who has run guided trips from Tasiilaq for at least a decade. Martin provided some initial background information and, importantly, confirmed that he could rent

us a gaggle of sea kayaks and associated gear, shotgun included – SHOTGUN included, you may well remark, but more on that later. The objective dangers associated with the trip had already increased several-fold with the inclusion of the last mentioned item of PPE (personal protective equipment). We were fortunate that one of our Tasmanian paddling mates, Geoff Murray, had done several trips with Martin, spoke highly of him and his gear, and was an invaluable resource for more detailed background on the Angmagssalik region that we were interested in.

We all brought different aspects to the planning process. While not limited to the following, Ruby did a lot of food dehydrating, Caomhin looked at a lot of Google Earth images, I continued to worry about the OHS issues relating to carting around a pump action shotgun and Rae identified and sourced a new and flexible source of lightweight protein with the capacity to revolutionise expedition catering. We all developed an obsessional interest in the rather excellent DMI (Danish Meteorological Institute) Ice Charts and related satellite photos. We also wondered how we could have come so far in life without being aware of the ‘Egg Code’, a convention used to describe ice conditions (another

essential component to add to our Sea Skills training?).

Martin and Geoff also gave us the invaluable advice to get in touch with Lars Anker Moller, who seemed to have a finger in a number of essential pies locally including boat transport from the airport on Kulusuk, our arrival point in Greenland, to Tasiilaq, the main town in the region from where our kayak journey would begin. His local knowledge covered other relevant topics such as accommodation, fuel availability, experienced advice on weather, ice, bears and the local football competition. He was an insightful source of commentary on the social challenges of integrating an indigenous hunter-gatherer population that previously lived in very small seasonal villages into a westernised urban environment.

Tasiilaq is a town of around 2,000 and the largest town in East Greenland with several much smaller communities in the area we expected to visit. Seeing the place in good weather, in daylight and with a daytime temperature

*Preceding spread: Campbell approaching Rasmussen Glacier (Pic. Ruby Ardren)  
Below: Ruby, Caoimhin and Neil making their way from Kulusuk “International” airport to the boat taking them to Tasiilaq (Pic. Campbell Tiley)*

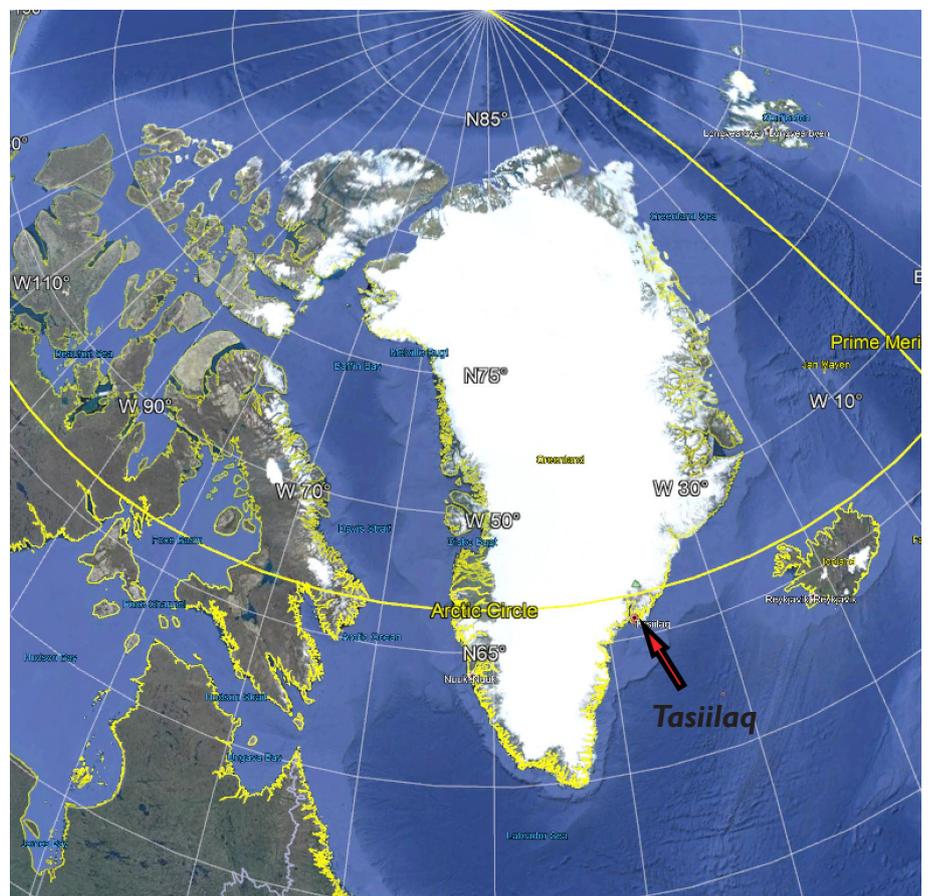


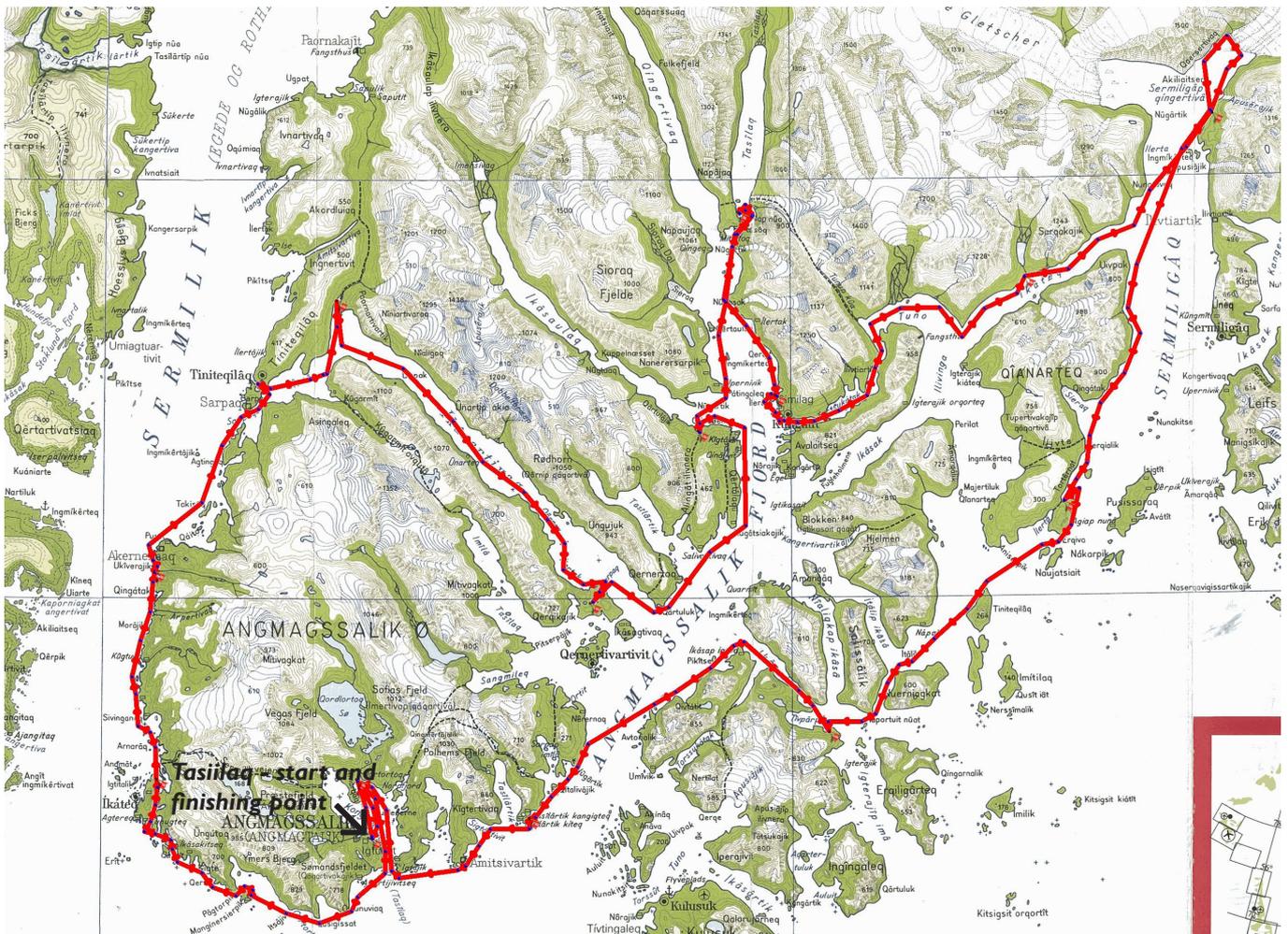


Tasiilaq, largest town on the eastern coast of Greenland (Pic Campbell Tiley)

above zero, it was challenging to even contemplate what these communities would be like in winter with no boat access, with no direct air access, with no sunlight and with several metres of snow as well as bitter cold. While there we were witness to a small slice of Arctic exploration history when we saw the refloated hulk of the *Maud* on a raft being towed by tug to Norway, a journey that would take over 12 months. She was built for Roald Amundsen for his second expedition to the Arctic and designed for his intended voyage through the Northeast Passage to the North Pole, eventually returning although taking years longer than planned and not having reached the pole.

I really knew we were in Greenland when we had drawn straws for the 'bear watches' and I was leaving Neil armed with the aforementioned pump action blunderbuss, looking less than warm





in the late evening twilight as he scanned the passing icebergs in the Sermilik Fjord and immediate coast for passing Nanuq. My watch was not till early morning, when it was foggy but still eerily light. Happily, we saw no bears and our anxiety about them gradually lessened. Although it was difficult to obtain direct advice about this local hazard, we eventually realised that while precautions appeared to be universal and firearms were standard for anyone wandering out of town, the riskiest area in the region was felt to be along the coast and its extension up the Sermilik Fjord. Once we diverted east away from this area we rationalised that the risk was low and abandoned the overnight watches. We all slept soundly despite the best efforts of our imaginations and some of the more terrifying but real accounts of polar

bear attacks on tent campers.

As is often the case, the journey to the start of the trip was unexpectedly challenging. My son was driving me to the airport when the old car we had bequeathed to him died on the M1 near Calga. It was probably a cry for help from the car as the young man was more interested in English Literature than understanding the desirability of a full radiator and cooling system. After a frantic rescue call to my wife I just made the plane. I was later to find that my baggage had not transferred in Heathrow and had therefore not accompanied me to Reykjavik. As there was a fair bit of essential gear in the baggage, I was more than a little concerned. Fortunately plans B, C or D were not necessary as the bags turned up the next day. Thankfully, the trip ran like clockwork from that point.

We all met in Reykjavik with a day to do some food shopping, ammunition shopping (bear-stopping 12 gauge slugs are not available in Tasiilaq) and repack our gear for the strict baggage weight limits that we had been warned about for the flight out of Reykjavik. As we descended into Kulusuk we were all excited to see our first Greenland icebergs through breaks in the cloud. The airport shuttle then consisted of a quad bike for the bags down to the water and a 1 km walk followed by a dinghy shuttle out to a boat for the 1 hr trip to Tasiilaq, on a neighbouring island.

Having set up camp between town and the rubbish dump, sensitively placed at the waters' edge, we set about finding the container which held all our hired gear. At this point we made one of our few seriously wrong decisions when

we accepted the assurances of a never-to-be-identified member of the group that he/she was up to the complex task of walking along a row of containers and finding the right one. We did not realise that this companion had already worked out that some padlocks securing the containers did not need to be checked as they were obviously not compatible with the style of key we had. This added several hours of pleasure to the container search but we eventually cottoned on, sacked him, and found our boats -- an eclectic mix of gear that seemed to just accommodate our various sizes and shapes.

The kayaks were all composite, predominantly skeg boats, one with a rudder and one with neither. Most, but not all, hatches were dry and we had no significant failures of the hired gear on the trip.

We had given ourselves two nights to get our bearings, purchase fuel and finalise our food. The highlight of our stay here was seeing Caomhin and Ruby test fly their drone. As they were experts they left out all of the prescribed

*Top left: Route taken in a clockwise direction starting and finishing in Tasiilaq, King Olafs Harbour. Kulusuk can be seen in bottom centre of map (Image: Sagamap)  
Below: Arctic fox visiting us on our first night out from Tasiilaq (Pic. Campbell Tiley)*



pre-flight calibration of the GPS, compass, etc. Thus, after a few moments of deep thought, the drone took off laterally at maximum speed towards somewhere over the hill behind them in the direction of the rather busy helicopter base (presumably heading for its last accurate position in Narrabeen). It refused to respond to commands (both electronic and very animated verbal) so the pilots then sprinted out of sight after it and eventually convinced it to land, sadly with no captured video.

Our first planned day on the water, July 15, was windier than we wanted – less than 15kn but we had been warned that the outside waters exposed to North Atlantic swells and coastal currents could be rough in these conditions. We managed the unfamiliar task of launching from a steep rocky beach in choppy slop, further complicated by 20-30cm chunks of ice from a nearby iceberg coming in on the waves. Because of the outside conditions we paddled up to the head of King Olafs Harbour and camped away from town. It was a relief to finally feel that the trip was under way. The weather was clear and sunny, we had really made it to Greenland. We had the first of our afternoon walks – various group members walking various distances, starting to appreciate

the variety of alpine flora on show and also the scale and ruggedness of the predominantly granite hinterland. We were even visited by a rather beautiful arctic fox.

The real trip started on day 2, launching in sun and little wind but with an expected build up to 10kn from the SW. This would be one of our most exposed days, being open to the North Atlantic, and we later found out that the band of sea ice that typically extends some 30km out from the coast and substantially reduces swell was not there this year, possibly a new normal in a warming world. We headed out of the harbour past several magnificent icebergs and followed the massive granite cliffs of the coastline SE, S, SW into the wind, past Ortunuviaq (the Vikings Nose), as we started our circumnavigation of Angmagssalik. Despite the limited seasonal ice there were still many massive bergs out to the horizon, all with amazingly varied and complex shapes reflecting their origin and weathering both above and below water.

We had a bumpy and cold paddle with a slowly increasing headwind and had to negotiate an occasional grounded berg prompting discussion regarding how close is too close, particularly if sneaking through on the inside was both shorter and scenic. The concern is the potential for the berg to topple and also to throw off building-sized chunks of ice as it disintegrates against the shore.

We realised just how cold hands and fingers could get with the cold water and just a little wind and all started to experiment with our various glove, mitt and pogie combinations.

We lunched off water having paddled into a deep slot on Manginersierpik, a small island just off the coast, and warmed up against a granite shelf out of the wind.

After lunch we continued inside



Top left Lunch Day 2, Manginniersierpik; from left, Ruby, Caoimhin, Rae and Neil. (Pic. Campbell Tiley)

Below left: a local's dwelling, Tinit, overlooking Sermilik Fjord (Pic. Ruby Ardren)

Top right: detritus at abandoned US WW2 airbase near Kummiut (Pic. Campbell Tiley)

sized chunks near the shore to monsters further out. The roar and crash as bergs shifted and shed massive chunks of ice was one of the constant sounds of the trip although we only occasionally saw the action. We found a great camp site on Ukiverajik, a small island just off the shore with remains of ancient stone and turf huts which provided a wind break for our overnight watch. Landing was a bit substandard as we had to lift the boats up and over a rock shelf to get above the 2.5-3m tide. There was heavy fog through the morning bear watches, adding to the atmosphere of this remote and magnificent place. We paddled on the next day to Tinit (Tiniteqilaq), a community of less than 200 members, permanently occupied through the winter.

The view north over the Sermilik was a window into another world, with densely packed bergs as far as we could see. The supermarket rewarded us with freshly baked bread, and a replacement stove for Rae and Neil. We then paddled on to camp at the mouth of the Ikasartivak Fjord that runs to the east across the top of Ammasalik Island.

Day 5 was overcast with a light variable headwind. We paddled south-east along the Ikasartivak Fjord between high granite walls with hanging glaciers and cloud-shrouded peaks up to 1,400m above us and a few whales in the distance. We had a challenging paddle up a tidal stream, accelerating with the falling tide, to reach one of our best campsites at the head of a tidal basin. Ruby coined the term 'soft gravel' to emphasise just how good the tent sites were. After dinner we headed off early into our tents to shelter from forecast overnight rain.



and around coastal islets and eventually turned north up the channel between Ikatek and the larger island that we were rounding. Abandoned settlements are marked on the local maps and are potential landing and camping spots. As we passed by one that afternoon we had the inverted cultural experience of a group of local Inuit landing there in two motor boats waving and photographing us tourists as we paddled past in our kayaks. Late afternoon we located a fine campsite with a typically rocky landing that Caoimhin had earlier spied on Google Earth.

By drawing straws, we had allocated shifts for our 'bear watch' and had talked through what we would do if a polar bear turned up including practicing a safe handling

routine for the blunderbuss. As this campsite and the next were along the Sermilik Fjord, we maintained a watch all night as well as setting up an alarm attached to a trip-line. This was tiring due to the sleep disruption but at least there was sufficient light all night to see wandering wildlife. Sadly, it was too early in the season to be dark enough to see the Aurora Borealis. From the hill behind our camp we had our first view of the magnificent Greenland ice cap – up to 3,000m thick and extending some 2,400km by 1,200km.

Day 3 saw us paddling further up the mouth of the Sermilik, also known as the ice fjord due to the volume of glacial ice it produces. The density of the bergs steadily increased, from smaller building-



Over the next two days we paddled through connecting fjords, essentially drowned glacial valleys, to Tasilaq Fjord, a beautiful spot with views up into jagged glaciated peaks. One night we picked up a billy full of mussels, perfectly cooked by Rae, making a nice start to our dinner. Our diet was further enriched by Ruby's magnificent chocolate ganache topped off with a variety of pancakes, notably Rae's rosemary and parmesan masterpieces. The weather was more overcast with occasional breaks and more windy afternoons.

The views were so good that we had a late start on day 8 which meant an afternoon slog into the wind in order to make camp close to the settlement of Kummiut. We had to time our visit so that the next morning we could paddle on to Ilivartik and the tight passage beyond it which we needed to traverse at the top of the tide. US soldiers based at the airstrip and weather station at Bluie East Two

during WW2 blasted a channel through the shortest route to town that is just passable at high tide.

Kummiut was a classic Arctic town with colourful wooden prefab houses beside a small harbour. The sun was out, children were playing in a small park and the locals were friendly. Day 9 seemed a good time to take advantage of the communal hot showers, at least for Rae and me.

While in Kummiut we came across Martin Rickard who had rented us the kayaks. He was waiting for a group to come in by boat from the airport for his next guided trip. It was great to meet him in person and to pick his brain for advice given his extensive local experience.

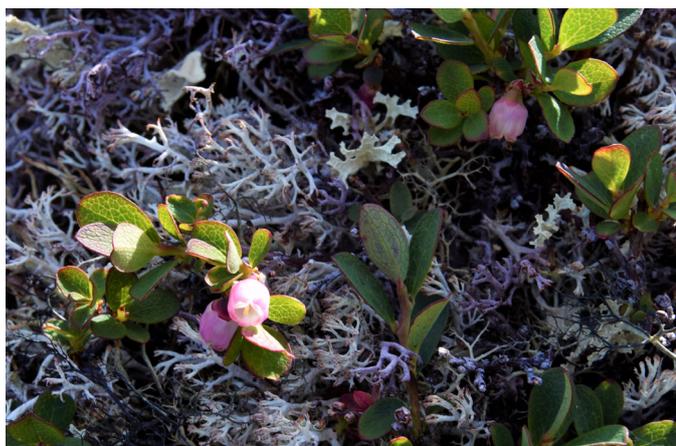
We paddled on and lunched on a mid-stream rock waiting for the tide to come in sufficiently to give us enough water to pass over the jagged rocks blocking the confluence of two fjords. We were a bit impatient, lead by Rae,

scraping and bumping more than expected, but we eventually got through and paddled on to camp at the old US airbase site. The mess they left behind when they vacated after the war is inexcusable with piles of rusting fuel and ration containers as well as shards of broken glass, mainly Coke bottles, making much of the site unsafe. The Danish government have apparently recently allocated funds to clean up this absolute travesty of a hitherto pristine environment.

Day 10 was a longer paddle to the dual glaciers at the head of the Sermiligaq Fjord. We saw occasional passing speedboats with either local hunters or walkers being dropped or collected as we did on most days and very occasional huts but the country we were paddling through was largely untouched and wild. We camped above a rocky landing several kilometres south of the Rasmussen Glacier and with an amazing view of the massive Karale Glacier.

We were able to paddle through





Top left: Caoimhin and Ruby getting up close to Rasmussen Glacier (Pic. Campbell Tiley)

Below left: Caoimhin, Ruby and Campbell hunkered down behind turf house,, Tasilartik (Pic. Campbell Tiley)

Above: collage of mid summer wild flowers (Pics. Campbell Tiley)

a maze of ice blocks towards the active tidal glacier face and appreciate the massive size and fractured complexity of the ice face. There was also a handy source of ice to flavour the whisky. Once again, the towering granite rock faces with amazing bands of different coloured rock, worn smooth by ancient glaciers, reinforced our insignificance in this dramatic landscape. We celebrated an extra day in this spectacular place by scrambling Ruby's powdered egg accompanied by some bacon from our last village stop and more of Rae's excellent pan bread.

Our weather forecasts were coming

in like clockwork on the inReach units, sent by Adrian Clayton each evening and updated next morning if necessary. We had to speed up our return leg to ensure that we would not get pinned down by the forecast deterioration several days hence and therefore headed south along the west side of the fjord with distant views of islands with names reflecting the earliest European explorers – Leifs Island and Eric the Red Island. We camped in a north facing bay on the SE of Qianarteq with a well weathered whale skeleton. An early fog layer evolved to broken low cloud with an accompanying cold light wind but a sunny afternoon.

As usual, there was time in the afternoon for a walk and the wildflowers were becoming more varied as the summer progressed, the scattered points of colour contrasting with the rugged rock-strewn landscape.

We pressed on the next day, day 13,

through a series of islands exposed to the North Atlantic to the East of our destination at Tasiilaq. It was a great day, warm, sunny and with almost no wind. The best flattish spot we could find to camp was more exposed than usual, although the ideal combination of a flat site and shelter was pretty rare. On our afternoon scramble, Caoimhin and I saw a massive berg rollover – something we had heard but not seen and certainly better seen from land than from a kayak. The wind that evening, combined with a sea fog, drove us early into our tents to warm up. Unfortunately the evolving forecast had the bad weather coming in earlier. At least the overnight rain had stopped next morning and I was glad I could easily remove my tent inner and pack it dry. We headed on SW towards our start point and for the first time were very conscious of opposing tidal currents enforcing slow progress although in the deep waters of the fjords we had



Made it! From left: Rae, Neil, Campbell, Caoimhin and Ruby (Pic. Campbell Tiley)

probably struck them before. We were rewarded with a close up tail-slapping whale and after a long slog we approached the coast at Tasilartik where Rasmussen's expedition apparently overwintered a century before. The foreshore was complicated, with multiple interconnecting channels. These were interesting to explore but it took some time to find a viable landing point. The clouds rolled in through the afternoon and the temperature dropped with the wind. At least the rain held off until we had our tents up.

Tasilartik would be our longest stop, with three nights hunkered down with wind and rain. We did have breaks in the weather allowing a walk up the hill and our last pancake session, doing our best to get through our excess flour. However, for most of the time here we were stuck in our tents. We had several large beached icebergs nearby crashing and spewing out broken ice to entertain us as well as a number of turf house remains and an exposed grave of an earlier resident.

On day 17, the last day of July, we launched for a short paddle back into King Olafs Harbour. The launch was awkward, needing to lift the boats down over boulders and load them floating in surge from the recent storm. We saw our most amazing giant berg just short of the harbour. It had a horizontal band of clear deep blue ice running across its upper reaches looking like a ship's bridge and representing a frozen river in the glacier that the berg had calved from.

We paddled up the familiar sound past Tasiilaq and on to the campsite we had left over two weeks earlier. The rain started as we got our tents up and the dry inner made for a much more comfortable stay. After the last few days we realised how lucky we had been with most of our weather. Even in the three weeks we had been in Greenland the sun was starting to dip a bit lower below the horizon at night with a noticeable period of semidarkness now that was not evident at the start of the trip.

On our last paddling day, day 18, we woke to a dense fog. Packing was certainly easier with our shrinking drybags and we had a peaceful paddle through lifting fog over glassy water back to Tasiilaq. Then came the task of lugging the boats back up the hill to Martin's container and drying out our gear. We had returned to the noise and hustle of civilisation after around 320km of paddling. The need to recalibrate our senses was magnified the next morning by the shock of seeing a large cruise ship docked at the harbour and disgorging hundreds of passengers to wander the small town. We had organised rooms for the final night in one of Lars' hostels which made sorting our gear and cleaning a lot easier – and provided my second shower of the trip!

So that was that, our three weeks in Greenland was about to end with the boat shuttle and flight back to Iceland. It is a wild amazing place, largely untouched and so geologically young compared with the flat weathered landscape of Australia. Soaring peaks, glaciers and moss, snow melt creeks, tarns and alpine wildflowers that look as if they belong 3,000m up in the Alps but are all incongruously and conveniently admired from sea level.

The sun did just dip below the horizon, but without darkness we saw no stars and had no sunsets. Any wind dropped the apparent temperature dramatically and the harsh cold and dark of winter must be so tough. At least there would be no mosquitoes, which during our trip reliably made the most of any exposed skin whenever the wind dropped. I was lucky to be able to experience all this with four great companions and friends and would go back in a flash.



## **Caoimhin Ardren gives you the low down here on the planning and logistics that you'll need to consider.**

**Flights:** Getting to east Greenland is the usual Hop (Sydney to London/Europe) Skip (Europe to Iceland) and a Jump (from Reykjavik to Kulusuk) over a distance of 19,886km. It is also possible to fly to Nuuk, the capital, on the west coast of Greenland and then get a flight to Kulusuk.

From the airport it is a 1km walk to the wharf, followed a short (1hr) boat ride to Tasiilaq if you had remembered to book the boat. Otherwise you can get a 10min helicopter flight, but expect to pay a lot for your excess baggage. Fortunately, we had booked a boat

with Arctic Dream (<https://arctic-dream.com/>) run by Lars Anker Moller. Lars was a fantastic contact to have in Tasiilaq. He helped us in many ways. When booking the boat trip, it is a good idea to also ask that an ATV is booked in to transport your baggage to the wharf.

The most critical part of the flights is to book the flight to Kulusuk at least six months in advance. The runway in Kulusuk is too short for a fully loaded plane (not much flat ground in this part of Greenland) so the one flight a day is booked out well in advance.

The airport in Kulusuk has no instrumentation for low visibility landings. We were fortunate and had clear weather, but a Welsh friend of ours was flying in a few days after us and got stuck in Reykjavik for four days as Kulusuk was closed in with fog and there were no flights in or out for that time. The people stuck in Kulusuk probably had a worse time of it.

*Above: Hilleberg tents pitched at Tasiilaq Fjord (Pic. Campbell Tiley)*

**Kayaks:** This is the other piece of logistics that needs to be sorted early on. There are a few guided kayak tour operators. We made contact with Martin Rickard of Sea Kayak Adventures UK (<http://www.seakayakadventures.co.uk/>) who keeps a container of sea kayaks (a selection of composite and plastic sea kayaks) in Tasiilaq and runs guided trips each summer. We were able to “dry hire” the sea kayaks from him with the inclusion of paddles, spare paddles, spray skirts, PFDs, northern hemisphere compasses, hand pumps, laminated charts and a shot gun. Because Martin runs his own guided trips, you need to get in early to secure kayaks for your party in a timeslot that suits his availability. We started the booking process seven months prior. Kayak hire price was very similar to the price you would pay for a sea kayak for a day at a



Left: ATV carrying luggage from Kulusuk International Airport to the boat for the crossing to Tasiilaq  
Right: Mozzie net model, Rae Duffy (Pics. Campbell Tiley)

Sydney based kayak hire shop – approximately \$90-\$100/day. So a very reasonable cost when you consider just how convenient it is to pick up a quality sea kayak “in the middle of nowhere”.

**Accommodation:** there are four options for accommodation in Tasiilaq. Camping down on the foreshore, not too far from the town dump and heli pad. It is cheap, very basic and OK for a night or two, at most. *Arctic Dream* has some cabins in town which we found to be very comfortable on our last night there. The Red House has a number of cabins around town and there is also the Hotel Angmagssalik. There was no evidence of any accommodation available in any of the other small villages we visited.

Once you are out of Tasiilaq, you can camp anywhere you wish. There are no grassy campsites, so find some “soft gravel” and you will be right. No trees either, so if you want a drying line, best to bring your own. Fresh water from streams and rivers outside of the towns is good to drink without any need of purification.

Luckily, we had fantastic weather for most of the trip, so never really needed to test our four-season tents. The Piteraqs (strong katabatic winds) do occur in this part of Greenland, so you definitely need a four-season tent. By pure chance, we all purchased the exact same model Hilleberg tent (Nano GT) with an oversized vestibule. Not the lightest tent, but really great to have all that space available when you have three weeks of gear to shuffle through and the rain is keeping you indoors.

**Stoves and Fuel:** While the temperatures are not bitterly cold in July and August, you are basically living in a refrigerator and need to keep up your food intake to stay warm. Hot food and drinks help a lot in this regard. Rae and Neil took a butane gas stove. Gas cannisters were available in Tasiilaq, but in limited supply and they initially had to buy lots of small cannisters as other earlier groups had bought out the larger cannisters. (Note: they get six or seven supply ships arriving each summer. All supplies for the town come in on those ships, not just gas cannisters). Their gas burner stopped working on about day 3 of the trip and by a stroke of luck, there was a small gas burner for sale in the shop at Tinit (Tiniteqilaq) – a town of less than 150 people!



Campbell, Ruby and Caoimhin used unsociable (noisy) MSR DragonFly stoves with two repair kits that never saw the light of day (or night). Similar to Rae and Neil, we initially were not able to find enough Shellite/Benzin on the shelves in the main store in Tasiilaq, but they found another box out the back and Lars had a jerrycan of about three litres that made all the difference. You can also buy large quantities from the fuel station on the wharf... BUT only Monday to Friday, and we were searching on a Saturday!

**Maps and navigation:** We managed to get some 1:250,000 maps from Stanfords in London. The map that covered the whole area we traversed was a Sagamap of Tasiilaq – Angmagssalik. We scanned these, marked on them points of interest and likely campsites, then printed and laminated them for deck use. Martin Rickard also provided a few maps that had some other information available which proved useful. Martin also provided us with a hard copy guide to the area, which had a lot of good detail about campsites and some local history. The InReach device we took had maps/GPS built in should the need arise to use them. Since we had clear weather the whole time, we were able to hand rail our way from point to point and never had the need to rely on a compass

bearing or GPS track. In fog these would be essential devices.

In terms of trip planning, there are now a few “standard” trips that kayakers do in the Tasiilaq area. The “Standard” includes a circumnavigation of the Angmagassalik island (approximately 150kms) and a trip to the Rasmussen Glacier. Other “standard” trips include a side trip to Johan Petersen Fjord on the western side of the Sermilik Fjord. Geoff Murray from Hobart provided some insightful advice which helped a lot in planning which areas to visit.

**Unusual gear:** So what gear do you need to consider for a location like east Greenland, that you would not consider on a NSW coastal paddle? With temperatures ranging from 2- 8° C (there is no night in summer...) you need to be

prepared for the cold, and a dry suit is highly recommended. These were not available for hire in Greenland, so we needed to take our own. We found gumboots to be brilliant too, makes life a lot easier to unload kayaks while they are afloat (too heavy to lift up rocky beaches), ablutions below the tide line and fabulous to keep mozzies off your ankles.

Speaking of mozzies, the advice we received was to take two mozzie head nets, because if you lose one, the mozzies will drive you crazy. For the time we were there, we had no flies, but plenty of mozzies while on land. Make sure it fits over a broad brimmed hat and has enough stretch in the bottom of net so you can sneak in your cup of tea or spoon when eating.

We used a Garmin InReach device (see article in *Salt* 107, April 2017)

and were able to communicate with anybody we wished around the world using text messages and emails. We were fortunate to have Adrian reliably sending us “short hand” daily weather forecasts, which allowed us to alter route planning accordingly. Thanks Adrian!

Polar bears have been known to be a problem in some areas and once out of town you need to be aware and take appropriate action. We took two electronic trip wire alarms, each with a 40m trip line. Given Greenland has no trees, we dug around the tip at Tasiilaq to find some timber stakes about 1m long, which we were then able to prop up with rocks when required. As mentioned earlier, we hired a shot gun, which lived on the front deck of Campbell’s kayak in a waterproof bag.

## Saltiest submission WINNER

**“... Stephen Walker’s phenomenal article on tides should be the winner of the award.” (Mark Sundin, Exhibition Kayaks.)**

I’d like to thank Josh, Louise and Ruby for inviting me to write the Ocean Tides article, and the team at Expedition Kayaks for choosing it as the saltiest submission in Issue #108. A lot of people ask me about tides, and although tides seem simple, the devil is in the detail - they aren’t all that simple at all.

Jenny and I do a lot of long distance road trips with our

boats, and I really needed a new cockpit cover, so this prize is most welcome. I’d like to thank EK for their generous support, not only for myself and Jenny, but also for their strong commitment to the entire paddling community. (Stephen Walker)

**Don’t forget, another winner will be selected by the EK team from this edition. May the saltiest submission succeed.**

## EXPEDITION KAYAKS



EXPEDITION KAYAKS

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# Balance for Kayakers



Balance and stability are important skills not only in sea kayaking but in everyday life. In sea kayaking, poor balance and stability may mean you end up in the water a little more frequently than you would like to. In everyday life, poor balance and stability can lead to an increased risk of falls and associated negative consequences such as sprains, strains and bone fractures. Like all skills, balance and stability require ongoing training to keep them responsive and to keep you moving efficiently on or off the water.

## Definitions

Let's start with some definitions and how these apply to sea kayaking:

**Balance** – Also known as postural control, is the ability to control your equilibrium in relation to gravity. It requires good neuromuscular control.

Balance can be further subdivided into:

- **Static balance** - Is balancing the body in one plane, that is, the body's centre of gravity is within your base of support. Sitting in your kayak on flat water is an example of static balance.
- **Dynamic balance** - Is balancing the body during motion, that is, when the body's centre of gravity is outside your base of support. Edging a kayak is a good example.

**Stability** – Is the ability to return to a desired position following a disturbance to your equilibrium. It requires motion. Bracing your kayak in the surf or on a following sea is a good example.

**Centre of Gravity** – Is the point in your body where the weight around your body is evenly distributed. It is around 55% of your height (although this can differ if you also have a little extra anterior weight). In sea kayaking the Centre of Gravity is roughly around your abdomen.

**Base of Support** - Is the area beneath a person that includes every point of contact with the supporting surface. In everyday life the base of support is your feet on the ground. In sea kayaking your base of support is primarily your sit bones on the seat. Using your knees to make contact with the side of the cockpit also acts to widen your base of support and provide more stability.

So you can see from the above definitions, sea kayaking requires both static and dynamic balance as well as stability to move through the water efficiently and effectively.

## How well can you balance?

There are a variety of validated tests that can determine how effective your balance is on land.

The simplest is the One Legged Stance Test. This is a good measure of your static balance.

Instructions:

Stand, unassisted, on one leg. You must not be supporting your upper body or have your unweighted leg bracing against the stance leg. Time how long you can stand unassisted. The timing stops when either the foot touches the floor or the supporting leg, hopping occurs or your arms touch something for support. Repeat twice and take the average result to test your score below.

Then see how you go with eyes closed. This assesses how much of your balance relies on your visual input versus other internal balance mechanisms.

## Star Excursion Balance Test

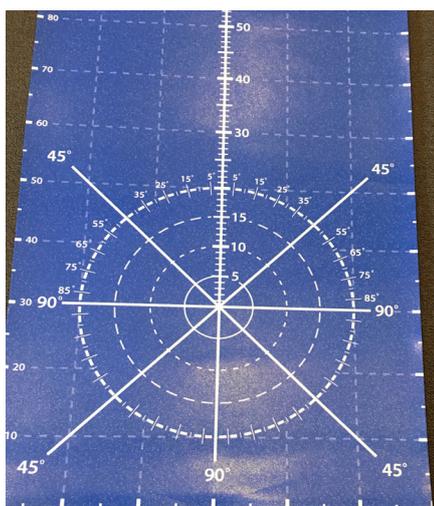
This test measures your dynamic balance and is a little more challenging than the previous one.

Instructions:

You will need four pieces of tape, each 1.2 metres in length. Use two pieces to form a cross, then

### Scoring for One Legged Stance test

Age	Normative Data – Eyes Open	Normative Data – Eyes Closed
18-39	43 sec	9.4 sec
40-49	40 sec	7.3 sec
50-59	37 sec	4.8 sec
60-69	27 sec	2.8 sec
70-79	15 sec	2.0 sec
80-99	6.2 sec	1.3 sec



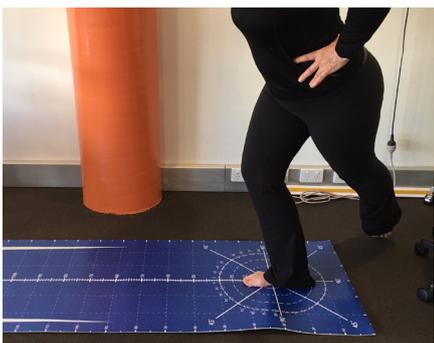
Pic 1. A customised mat for the Star Excursion Balance test. You can simulate by using tape as described in the article.



Pic 2. Starting position for the Star Excursion Balance test



Pic 3. Leg forward for the Star Excursion Balance test



Pic 4. Leg back and across for Star Excursion Balance Test

place the last two pieces at a 45 degree angle to the cross, to form a star shape. (Pic 1; I am using a customised mat, however it shows you the star form). The tape will need to be secured down.

In your bare feet, stand in the middle of the star. When you are ready, place your hands on your hips and stand on one leg (single leg balance – see pic 2) while you move

the other leg as far as you can out to the front (pic 3), then bring it back to the start in single leg stance without touching the ground. Move around each point of the star until you finish with your leg behind and across (pic 4). Only use your toe to touch each time, do not remove your hands from your hips or touch your foot down. Then try the other side. If you can make it all around,

### Scoring

1. Calculate your average distance in each direction for each repeat. Reach 1 + reach 2 + reach 3/3.

2. Calculate the normalised distance in each direction by taking the average distance in each direction and divide by your leg length x 100 to give a percentage.

### Normative Data expressed as a percentage of leg length

	Male	Female
Forward	79+/- 7	77+/- 6
Forward 45	74 +/- 8	75 +/- 7.0
Sideward	81+/- 18	80 +/- 14
Backward 45	90 +/-14	86+/- 14
Backward	94 +/- 11	85/- 13
Backward & Across	90+/-14	86 +/- 13

The above figures are based on verified data but have been rounded off to simplify (e.g. Female forward verified as 76.9+/-6.2 appears above as 77+/-6).

well done, you have good dynamic balance.

If you want to score your results, have someone measure the distance you can reach with your toe at each point in the star. Repeat the whole test on each leg three times. Remember you fail the test if you touch your foot down on the floor before returning back to the starting position or hold on to anything for balance or remove your hands from your hips.

### Tandem Balance Test

The last test assesses what happens to your balance when your base of support is reduced. It is a measure of postural steadiness and stability.

Roll up a beach towel and place on the floor. Make sure you are close

to a wall if you need to stabilise yourself. Then stand on the towel in a tandem stance (i.e. one foot immediately in front of the other – heel to toe) and use a timer to see how long you can stay in this position. Keep your eyes open for this one until you can maintain balance, then try the test again with eyes closed for more of a challenge.

### Scoring

You should be able to hold this position for 30 seconds with eyes open. Interestingly in this test the first 5-10 seconds are the hardest as your dynamic balance is tested, then as your body and balance mechanisms get used to the movement you begin to rely more on static balance to maintain your position.

## Interpretation of Results

These are just a few basic tests to get an understanding of how well your static and dynamic balance and/or stability are on land relative to normal data. If you score lower than normal for your age, there a variety of reasons that can cause this. Previous lower limb injuries, surgeries or joint osteoarthritis can affect your ability to balance well or a lack of muscular (including core) strength. More rarely there may be an underlying neurological condition contributing to poorer balance, particularly if it doesn't improve with balance training. If you have any concerns or questions, then see your health professional for further assessment and advice.

## Training Balance

Like the muscular and skeletal system, the balance system of the human body requires practice to stay responsive and in tip top shape. In sea kayaking, skills training (edging, bracing, rolling) are all great ways to improve your balance at sea, as is challenging yourself by trying different sea conditions. Sitting on top of the kayak (i.e. on the back deck just behind the cockpit with feet remaining in the cockpit) in flat water can be a great way to test your stability or even while sitting in the cockpit and stationary with your eyes closed, seeing how long you can balance for.

Off water, here are some other drills you can try to help with both static and dynamic balance.

Practice the One Legged Stance and Tandem Stance test both with eyes open and closed, aiming to achieve the desired number of seconds or above for your age against normative data.

Practice sitting balance on a Swiss ball with either a rolled up towel or a balance disc under your feet and hold for 10 seconds (See pic 5).

Once you can master static balancing on the Swiss ball, then start to bring in some dynamic movement with your arms forward, hold for four seconds, and bring back (pic 6).

Next start to bring in some rotational movements and once you master this, either use your paddle or dowel to simulate a forward

stroke (pic 7). Continue this exercise for one to two minutes.

Another great way to assess and challenge sitting balance is sit on the Swiss ball with your hands on your hips. Keep your torso long as you slowly raise your right leg up and down (pic 8). Then repeat the drill raising your left leg up and down. Once you can master this, lift your right leg and left arm slowly at the same time (pic 9), lower, then raise your left leg, right arm.

I hope you have survived the balance assessments and found the information about balance and suggested training both useful and fun.

Happy paddling!



Pic 5. Swiss ball starting position



Pic 6 Swiss ball progression 1



Pic 7. Swiss ball progression 2



Pic 8. Swill ball progression 3



Pic 9. Swiss ball progression 4

# Rock'n'Roll 2019

## Port Stephens

The Club's next Rock 'n' Roll will be held at Jimmy's Beach (Hawks Nest, on the northern side of Port Stephens) over Friday 29 March – Monday 1 April, 2019. It will be based at Reflections Jimmy's Beach Holiday Park, (Ph (02) 4997 0466-email: jimmysbeach@reflections-holiday.com.au) which offers a variety of powered and unpowered camping sites, cabins and studios. The holiday park will give NSW Sea Kayak Club members a 10% discount when booking (you will need to indicate that you are attending R'n'R when you make your booking in order to qualify for the discount).

The Holiday Park is adjacent to Jimmy's Beach giving easy access to paddling on Port Stephens, the Myall River and the open sea. It's also a great place to bring the family – they'll find lots to do while you're immersed in the hubbub of R'n'R.

Club members need to book their own accommodation or camp site and we recommend booking earlier rather than later to ensure you don't miss out.

Depending on conditions there will be trips to Broughton Island (a stunning destination) or to the islands just outside Port Stephens,

trips to Fingal Bay or more sedate trips within Port Stephens, and its tributaries, most likely to involve a café break. A wide range of on-water and off-water training sessions will also be on offer.

R'n'R is a great opportunity to improve your paddling skills, discover new paddling destinations, meet like-minded people and catch up with old friends

Registration for the event will open on the Club's on-line calendar in January 2019 and will be \$50 with the optional Saturday night dinner at the Hawks Nest Golf Club an additional \$45 per head. The speakers for the Saturday night function are yet to be finalised.

The registration section on our web site also has a facility to purchase raffle tickets for a number of kayaking related prizes kindly donated by our sponsors. The raffle tickets are:

2 tickets for \$5.00

5 tickets for \$10.00

10 tickets for \$18.00

Please note that you need to be a financial member of the NSW Sea

Kayak Club when you register for Rock 'n' Roll.

This event is run by volunteers who give their time to organise, manage the registration, run the beach marshalling, cook the BBQ, etc.-A few volunteer positions have already been filled but we still need a lot more.-If you are interested in helping with these tasks, please call Simon on 0412 022792.

### **The schedule of events will be similar to previous years:**

Friday: Arrival and registration from 5:00pm.-informal trips - (no organised trips or training)

Friday evening: Welcome and light dinner hosted by Expedition Kayaks (around 6pm)

Saturday morning: Registration, briefing, trips or training sessions

Saturday afternoon:-BBQ lunch and off water training sessions

Saturday night: Dinner and speakers at Hawks Nest Golf Club

Sunday morning: Briefing, trips or training sessions

Sunday afternoon: Off-water training sessions and Rolling Competition

Sunday evening: Annual Pogies Award (paddlers showing videos of their trips – with a prize for the best video)

Monday: Informal trips (no organised trips or training)



*From the vault: R'n'R 2005, Jimmys Beach*

# The Best of Both

... a case of some rough with the smooth



*Paul Thomas paddles past an isolated beach on Booti Booti Head (Pic. Nick Blacklock)*

**This trip, combining a coastal and lake paddle over two days, has appeared regularly on the Club's calendar over the last 15 years or so. Deb Cunneen has participated in most of them and the following is her account from its most recent running.**

As someone who has done this two-day Club trip numerous times I can recommend it as well worth doing. It is only a three hours' drive north from the start of the M1 at Wahroonga to the put-in and there is no car shuffle involved.

Participating in the latest offering of the trip, conducted mid-August this year, we were a group of five made up of Cath Nolan, Nick Blacklock, Paul Thomas, Adrian Clayton and myself.

The first day's paddle was on Saturday – starting at Elizabeth Beach, heading past rugged Booti Booti headland, all but Nick resisting the lure of a couple of iffy sea caves, and then along Seven Mile Beach to Cape Hawke. Cape Hawke is an imposing green-swathed land mark rising high out of the sea. Its five-kilometre coastline is dotted with rocky outcrops, gauntlets and

bommies. We stopped for lunch at pretty McBrides Beach which is nestled in to the northern corner of the cape. The landing and launching through the surf went without incident thanks to Paul volunteering (or was his arm twisted?) to be first in and last off so that he could be available should assistance be needed.

After lunch we set off to complete the remainder of the coastal leg before entering the channel that connects the ocean with Wallis Lake. From our launch at Elizabeth Beach to our lunch stop we had paddled a coastline providing a great sense of remoteness – no houses or cars had been spotted along the way. However, soon after leaving McBrides Beach the urban spread from Forster came into view.

We entered Wallis Lake with the remnants of an incoming tide before paddling under the bridge that links the twin towns of Forster and Tuncurry. After picking our way through some oyster leases we arrived at our camp site on Tonys Island – about five kilometres from the lakes entrance.

We had paddled around 30 kilometres for the day – 25 of which were

along the coast -- in mostly pleasant conditions. While on the ocean we experienced a gentle one-metre swell with mostly light and variable wind conditions. It was only after lunch that we needed to put in a bit more effort due to a moderate NE'y kicking in. Marine life encountered along the way included a seal, dolphins, a shark and a turtle.

We enjoyed a restful night in mild conditions. Tonys Island has some great camp sites. Our concerns of being disturbed late in to the night by the carousings from a nearby bucks' party did not materialise. Paul again demonstrated what an asset he is to have along by setting up and managing our camp fire – on both Saturday evening and Sunday morning.

The Sunday started with re-packing the kayaks of which mine seemed to have less space than the previous day. A stretching session from Cathy followed for those who already had kayaks packed.

Day 2 of this trip is normally a gentle flatwater paddle around 16 kilometres down Wallis Lake to Pacific Palms. Today it was to be different. There was a fresh SW wind forecast so there was a suggestion



Paul sees Debbie safely on her way breaking out from McBrides Beach (Pic. Nick Blacklock)



Cathy conducting prepaddle exercises (Pic. Adrian Clayton)

spot behind the centre in order to escape the wind.

Soon after we were settled people started streaming out of the building. Our presence had coincided with the annual national convention of the Community of Christ. They were very friendly folk from all parts of the country and were interested to find out what we were doing – we did present as a windswept, bedraggled mob in our paddling paraphernalia. It was here we learnt that the “unfounded” coffee shop had recently burnt down. We were offered a cup of tea and were told on our departure that a prayer would be said for our safe arrival at Pacific Palms.

During this break some of the group took the opportunity to take a stroll to the nearby Green Cathedral – an open-air church (wired for sound) under a canopy of cabbage tree palm leaves.

From lunch to the lee of Booti Island to the south-west was another into-the-wind slog made worse part way by the drag created from very shallow water. We were hard pressed to maintain a speed of 4kph. Another sea eagle greeted the first arrivals at Booti Island.

The final stretch between the island and our pull-out point at the shores in front of the Pacific Palms Recreation Club was wind assisted. There were runners aplenty for us to catch and at times we were achieving speeds around the 10kph mark. It was a nice way to finish the trip.

We had a ten-minute walk from the pull-out to collect our cars which we had parked the day before in front of the Pacific Palms Surf Club. It wasn't long after and we were saying our goodbyes and heading home.

Thank you Nick, Cathy, Paul and Adrian for your company on another very pleasant Best of Both. I hope to do another Best of Both trip in the future.

that we hug the western side of the lake and add about five kilometres to the paddle home. The other option was to stay with the original plan and slog into a quatering wind but indulge in a coffee shop stop on the eastern side along the way. The coffee shop option won.

We departed our camp site with the wind starting to build however we had the protection of Wallis and Yahoo islands to shield us from it. We encountered a couple of sea eagles and an osprey as we paddled past Yahoo Island. It was here that Adrian revealed the secret of the weed that when plucked from the lake bed invariably has a cockle attached to the end of it. This initiated a cockle collecting competition.

Frivolities over, we passed Yahoo Island and no longer had

protection from the wind. For the next hour or so it was hard going into a 20-knot SWly which, due to the shallowness of the lake, was generating a wave nudging a metre in height. It was a wet ride. Adrian pointed out the location of the coffee shop and we headed for it. All I could see were four white posts but decided I would probably see the promised coffee shop when I got closer. When we neared the posts there was no coffee shop in sight so we headed for a nearby lakeside grassy verge in front of the Community of Christ Convention Centre. A beautifully-marked brahminy kite greeted us on arrival.

It was a reasonable time to consider making this a full-blown lunch break so we parked ourselves with our various accoutrements in a nice sunny

# Kayak Snorkelling revisited



(Pic: Cathy Miller)

## Long-time devotee John Atkins builds on an earlier article by Ruby Ardren in Salt 104 on an increasingly popular pastime

I'll get to how I snorkel out of a kayak shortly, but you might first ask the question, why do I do it?

In my view snorkelling from your boat adds another great use to a kayak, one that gives access to a bunch of marine places which would otherwise be inaccessible. It allows you to reach places quickly with minimum effort and gives you an easy exit if you need it.

By way of introducing 30 plus years of kayak snorkelling let me give a little background to both my snorkelling and kayaking life.

I first snorkelled in the sea before kayaks were used anywhere south of Greenland. In 1961 my dad took me across the mouth of the Minnamurra River, about fifty metres total distance, but we saw a Wobbegong and glimpsed a whole new world,

one that hooked me then and hasn't released me since!

In 1986 after paddling a backyard built kayak with no skirt or pump or floatation, I worked out my life would be short if I didn't get a proper boat. I bit the bullet and trekked from Lilli Pilli to Beecroft and bought a lovely Greenlander II, which I paddled for 27 years before it met an ignominious end in the Mitta Mitta River, and in whose memory I should write a few hundred words on the topic of dumb things to do in a sea kayak.

I now paddle a Nadgee Expedition.

Both these boats were built with the old style small cockpit, boats you need to slide into from behind the cockpit rather than those in which you can get bum down first in the seat then fold your legs in. If I outlast my Nadgee I'll get the bigger cockpit next time.

Most of my kayak snorkelling has been in the cold clear water south of Bass Point and within a half hour paddle of Minnamurra. Rangoon Island (only non-locals call it Stack Island) just off the river mouth is my most frequent snorkel spot and one I'll unpack to consider safe site selection.

The following information is based on what I've found works for me. I also spearfish about half the times I go out. I won't complicate things by going into that specifically, but if this is a strong interest I'd recommend getting a gun that you can slide into the cockpit (pointy end down!) Things secured under deck lines are easily lost if you have to get through surf to access your site.

To make this easier to follow I'll break kayak snorkelling down into sections: 1 Equipment; 2 Technique; 3 Safety

### 1 Equipment

A seaworthy kayak, preferably one with a large fold-in rather than slide-in cockpit. Equipped with a bilge pump or at least a hand pump, deck lines and tow points, sealed forward and rear compartments. In other words, a boat which meets the NSW Sea Kayak Club's trip standards.

**A mooring line:** I use 15 metres of light braided cord, a small (old 3 lb – approximately 1.5 kgs) dive weight and snap-on carabiner to clip onto the front tow point.

**Standard snorkelling gear:** I used to use metre-long Mares



Left: mooring line with weight attached  
Right: standard gear: flippers, snorkel, face mask and weight belt (Plcs. John Atkins)



flippers but they are awkward to stow in a kayak and if you're just snorkelling not necessary.

I always wear a wetsuit, either a shorty or a long john, hence need a weight belt (this one in the picture is 6 lb – a tad under 3 kgs). If you don't need a wetsuit or don't want to dive you won't need one.

I have also started to use a second length of cord (three metres long) attached to the mooring line approximately three metres from the carabiner... this is optional but will be explained in the Technique section.

**PFD which I clip to the deck lines while snorkelling.** Snorkelling in a PFD is possible but pretty limiting.

**Spray deck** which I take off in the water and put in cockpit (more under the Safety and Technique headings).

**Paddle and paddle leash...** the last thing you want is to lose a paddle. I usually just slide the paddle into the cockpit though sometimes I slide it under the deck lines. If the sea is kind I might just let it float on the leash next to the kayak.

## 2 Technique

### Pre-departure!

I wear my wetsuit rolled down to the waist with a rashie on top. I also wear a clip-on hat because I have no hair, I've found you can actually wear a facemask with the hat and snorkel quite happily.

I wear my weight belt with the weight slid to the stomach and adjust it to the back when in the water.

I clip the mooring line carabiner to the front tow point... bring the dive weight/anchor to the cockpit with the tangle free (hah!) bundle of cord and on entry secure the spray deck over the cord.

Depending on conditions I will either put mask and flippers in the cockpit or secure them under the deck lines.

### Mooring and exiting the boat

At the site (see Safety section) pull back the spray deck, drop the weight and feed out the tangle free (hah) line. I recommend in about 4-5 metres of water, make sure the anchor holds, I find the small weight is fine as it usually nestles in weed or settles into a crack or hole.

Clip PFD to deck line.

Slip gracefully from the kayak after making sure mask and flippers are accessible.

Either reach in to cockpit and get flippers or, if you can, put these on before slipping over as you are then ready to combat current and kick up to access other gear, but either way works once you're used to getting out. Reach in for the facemask, put it on. Slip off the spray deck and stow that in the cockpit.

Now with facemask on, inspect the mooring line and weight... I will often lift the weight and reposition it to ensure the kayak stays put!

### Re-entry

**Before getting in...**check that the weight/ anchor is not stuck, reposition it if necessary to make pulling it up is easy.

If using a weight belt take it off and drop it in the cockpit...getting in will be much easier without it.

**NOW** my evolving retrieval technique. I used to get in the boat and paddle over the line and hook it up with the paddle, grab the chord and pull it in. If conditions are choppy or windy this can be hard and could result in capsizing.

I now either unclip the line from the bow and clip it back close to the cockpit where I can reach it **or** take the running end of the shorter length of line tied to the mooring line and tie it on a deck line close to the cockpit. I've never had a problem unclipping the mooring line and moving it but there is

potential to lose contact with the kayak and have it drift away from you hence my experiments with the second line!

I always 'cowboy' back in using the flippers to help me. Get my bum down for stability and then take off flippers and mask and stow them.

**Spray deck**...I've used two methods, **one** put it **on in the water** and then 'cowboy' in, a little hard but the flippers really help, **two** when in the boat slip the skirt on over your head...practice this on land to see if you can...some skirts are tight and some people big, so can be tricky and you might get a wobble up using this method.

Pull up the mooring line as described, put on your **PFD** and paddle home!

**NOTE** 'cowboying' in is the main skill in all this, practising this in still conditions near shore is an obvious prerequisite to any kayak snorkelling. I was getting back into kayaks this way years before I learnt to re-enter and roll up (if you do re-enter and roll, chances are some gear is going to spill out unless you're better at securing it than I am).

### 3 Safety

Since the point of kayak snorkelling is to enjoy the experience, then picking the appropriate weather conditions and site-specific conditions are critical.

Light winds on the Beaufort scale (<10 knots) swell < 1.5 m and seas < 1 metre will mean mooring up and snorkelling most rocky shores will be both safe and enjoyable.

Even at a familiar site spend some minutes watching what the wind, sea and current are doing...what worked safely yesterday might not today!

#### **My safety considerations are:**

Even in benign conditions look for a site sheltered from the wind, waves

and swell. Obviously be sure you moor up where waves don't break.

If you go out in stiffer winds or higher seas be very sure your site will provide sufficient shelter for safe mooring and re-entry. Re-entry is the part when capsize is most possible, I've re-entered in choppy windy conditions successfully but really those sorts of days should be avoided. AND if you're doing this with others, having someone hold the boat makes it a lot easier to avoid pulling it over as you re-enter.

If you do capsize pump out the boat and try again.

On this point keeping most of your gear on until you're secure in the boat means you'll still have it if you tip over. Note... of course a bigger 'fold-in' cockpit makes this all a lot easier than my slide-in one!

Select a site on a worst case scenario... if I lose my boat will wind, waves, current, and distance allow me to comfortably swim to a shore with a safe exit point, even if I lose my flippers?

**A kayak snorkelling site case study:** Rangoon [Stack] Island off Minnamurra fits the bill in regards to shelter from sea, swell and on-shore winds, a sandy beach for safe exit is less than 200 metres away should a swim in be necessary.

Every site has some local idiosyncrasies; the main considerations at this site are tides which are accelerated by the narrow river mouth and a surf zone which needs to be crossed to access the snorkelling site.

If the conditions are light the surf zone is more a ripple zone and very safe to cross.

Tidal currents between the island and the river mouth can be powerful. So I always time a trip to ensure I am coming back in with the tide. See lessons below!

Strong westerlies, while generally flattening the seas, make this site

very choppy... the worst sea type for safe 'cowboy' re-entry'.

These are safety considerations, but if you want to see stuff the best snorkelling spots are ones with extensive rocky reefs and varied underwater habitats, ledges, drop offs, boulders, weed beds. Rangoon Island has this in spades, hence it's my model for picking spots.

**Lessons learnt off Rangoon Island:** Included in my projected article on dumb things to do in a kayak I would mention the day I went kayak spearfishing with no spray deck and no rear hatch cover... when a surf was running. Luckily I'd stuck to my tide times and the run in tide eventually washed a very heavy kayak in to shore.

I could also mention the day I tied the mooring line on to the carabiner with a granny knot. A bit of chop and a westerly meant, firstly I didn't notice immediately that the kayak had become a free agent, and secondly that chasing down a kayak moving briskly towards New Zealand is a strong motivator for learning to tie a bowline.

Or I could mention the beautiful day across at The Farm (Killalea) when for the first time in 30 years I tipped the boat over getting out, and in the ensuing confusion failed to notice my new face mask drift into the Tasman's lost and never found section.

In conclusion kayak snorkelling is really pretty easy and quite safe if you're sensible. You'll see lots of things, some with quite big teeth, and you'll have adventures in places most people don't get to.

And of course 'always kayak snorkel with a friend' is a very solid safety maxim and one which I endorse even when I don't adhere to it.

*Opposite page  
Left: getting ready to go over the side at  
Ningaloo*

*Right: A few of Cathy's Ningaloo  
underwater encounters (Pics: Cathy Miller)*

## ... and Cathy Miller takes some mates to one of her favourite kayak snorkelling haunts

**Julie is re-entering her kayak after snorkelling one of the fantastic marine reserve sites at Ningaloo Reef. The kayaks are tied to a mooring, and we've just completed a beautiful snorkel in turquoise water with clear visibility. Easy enough to launch yourself into the water from a kayak -- getting back in is the tricky bit. "That's it, just kick your legs, like Superman. Lunge your body till you at 90 degrees over the boat." Julie did it perfectly -- got herself at 90 degrees to the kayak, lunged over the cockpit -- then kept on going. Right over the boat like a seal and straight back into the water on the other side.**

I've been fortunate enough to have had two sea kayak trips to Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia, which is a snorkelling haven. Ningaloo Marine Park stretches for about 300 kilometres along the coast of the Cape Range Peninsular. The reef runs parallel and close to the shore, creating a perfect paddling corridor in turquoise warm water. The whole area is unspoiled and unpolluted. There's

500 species of brightly coloured fish and 300 species of coral so the snorkelling is varied and plentiful. The pictures here, taken by me at Ningaloo, will give you a taste of the encounters I've had with some of the underwater locals.

The Sanctuary Zone kayaks sites are an outstanding feature for kayakers. Mooring buoys for the exclusive use of kayakers have been provided at several sites including:

- In the north of the marine park, Bundegi, Tantabiddi and Osprey sanctuary zones
- In the south of the marine park – Maud Sanctuary Zone in Coral bay.

These sites are approximately 400 metres from shore, making kayaks a perfect means to get to the gorgeous snorkelling on offer.

There's various ways to get in and out of the kayak with snorkelling gear on, some of which are more dignified than others. Once the kayaks are secured to the mooring buoys by tow ropes, we put our snorkels, mask and fins on while still in the boat. Getting in is simply a matter of swinging your legs over the side then dropping in with the aid of gravity.

We used a number of methods to get back in to our boats after the

snorkel. As we had double kayaks, one person (usually at the back) would hold the kayak steady while the other re-entered. Paddlers would position themselves alongside their cockpit and perpendicular to the boat; then they would kick their fins, generating enormous thrust, and end up with their torso lying over the cockpit. They could then roll over and drop their bottom into the seat with legs still dangling over the side from which they re-entered. Apart from the fins, all this quite similar to remounting a surf ski. To remove their fins they could do so while still in the "side-saddle" position or swivel straight on with feet protruding in front of the cockpit.

I found it easier to take the fins off first and use the Club's heel-hook re-entry instead. That way I wasn't having to deal with trying to get my fins off while perched in the kayak.

Kayak snorkelling in Ningaloo is definitely worth putting on your bucket list.



# HAWKESBURY CANOE CLASSC 2018



This year's Hawkesbury Classic was probably one of the most testing in the 42 years the race has been run. Conditions were tough; at times a moderate wind was blowing against a healthy flood tide. Reports were coming through that there were over half-metre high standing waves along the three-kilometre straight leading in to the check-point at Wisemans Ferry. Okay if you're in a sea kayak but not much fun in a tippy KI. Late in the race the conditions deteriorated to the point that officials, after multiple capsizes with paddlers ending up in the water in the dark of night, took the decision to halt proceedings. Paddlers still on the water were told to pull out at Spencer – approximately 12kms from the finish. Those who had passed Spencer were instructed to return there – a frustrating position for them. The paddlers forced to pull out at Spencer have been credited with finishing the race.

Unfortunately, there was another major disruption resulting from the breakdown of the car ferry at Webbs Creek earlier in the day. The decision was taken by someone, presumably at RMS,

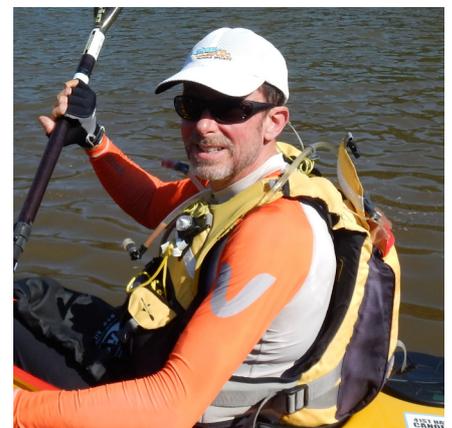
to repair the ferry slap bang in the middle of the race. An open-ended “no-go” period, was established while the ferry was slowly towed from one side of the river to the other. This must have been frustrating as many paddlers affected by the delay were chasing class records. Some of the early arrivals in to Wisemans Ferry, including the Alison/Rae combo and Ruby Ardren, were able to get past the ferry before the no-go restriction started.

Despite the enormous trials of the night, Ruby was able to establish a new class record – a remarkable achievement given that she was probably paddling the tippiest kayak in the event! Anne Moore and her paddling partner also established a new record for their class.

The results below are preliminary at the stage of writing. The event organisers have received a fair few protests regarding finishing time adjustments arising from the delays caused by the Webbs Creek ferry situation.

Following are the accounts of some of the NSW Sea Kayak Club members who participated in the event.

*Above: Alison and Rae steaming towards Sackville (Pic. Ian Wrenford, LCRK)  
Below: Graham looking cool at the start (Pic. Adrian Clayton)*



**Graham Brown**

This year I finished predawn and in good shape, having had the outgoing tide with me for the last 20 km. It had been fine most of the night with a dusting of stars and a near full moon visible in between patches of increasingly leaden cloud. A gentle to moderate head wind was the paddler's constant companion and no doubt blunted otherwise strong performances.

The race started with a carnival atmosphere on a pleasant afternoon at Windsor. After a 40km mix of toil and chatting with fellow paddlers it seemed as though it would be an

uneventful night. However, the turning tide put paid to that and I soon found myself working for a living! The near full moon meant strong tidal flows and the journey became a battle against wind and tide and the forces of darkness...

After six-and-a-half hours racing I was fighting tide and tiredness in the dark. It was quiet and I was a solitary figure on the inky water. I rounded a bend in the river, drawing close to the apex when suddenly there was a flash, a splash and a roar! Before I could process events I was swimming. The creature had been waiting like a coiled spring under the water for a hapless kayaker to pass nearby and then launched itself into the air with sound and fury. I had fallen victim to the giant leaping bogan of Walkers Beach! I cursed him as he slunk back into the underworld.

My thanks to Nick and Mick from Newcastle for helping recover my gear and my dignity!

I arrived to a chaotic ramp at Wisemans Ferry, wet and wind blown, hoping for warm clothes and an efficient stop, but fortunes took a further hit as the river was closed due to a broken-down ferry. It turned into a 45-minute wait before the battle against the tide could be resumed and won.

Overall it was a good night and well worthwhile. Cranking out a 100km has a real feel good factor to it - eventually. But it's the Hawkesbury, so do expect the unexpected!

### Ruby Ardren

If you'd told me a few years ago I'd be enjoying a spot of night surfing in a K1 during a 100km kayak race, I would have told you that you were dreaming. Enjoying might be a stretch, but I handled it and didn't fall out, so that's something.

I bagged a wash ride from the start with the girls from Lane Cove River

Kayakers paddling a K4. They were in great spirits and paddling well. We had bogan children throwing rocks at us between Cattai and Sackville, with one rock hitting the K4 and fortunately none of us. I was happy to get a wash ride, but they were intent on enjoying their race, so I left them at Sackville and spent the rest of the race on my own. The bends of the "Big W" were fairly uneventful, but they spat me out onto a long windy stretch into Wisemans for some night surfing that got my heart beating. I didn't swear (unusual for me) so I must have felt in control despite the nose of the K1 diving into the waves and broaching constantly.

I was still wound up when I arrived at Wisemans but had a quick stop and was back on the water to tackle the waves again. The ferry was playing up and light signals were a bit confusing, causing me to decide to turn a circle at the last minute. I could have done without having to go side on to the waves but by the time I had finished my circle, the lights were off, the ferry wasn't moving and I set off down-river.

The long slog against the tide lasted until Checkpoint N, where I picked up speed again and decided I could still get back in time to get the record. I hit more waves on several sections between Checkpoint O and the finish, but nothing more than what I had experienced in an earlier familiarisation paddle. I knew I could handle it. I finished with a higher time than I had hoped for, but still beat the Women's 40+ K1 record by ten minutes, one that's been around for about ten years.

Thanks to Lane Cove River Kayakers for the familiarisation paddle from Wisemans to the finish, and the amazing service at the checkpoints. My husband excelled as land crew this year, keeping my stops to the planned five and ten minutes. I was happy when I finished, and that's all you can hope for!



Above: Ruby all smiles at the start  
Below: Cathy carbo loading at Windsor  
(Pics. Adrian Clayton)



### Cathy Miller

This was my 11<sup>th</sup> HCC, and as usual I was under-prepped. I had been encouraged to enter by Richard Barnes as preparation for the Murray Marathon coming up in November. Good call! I chose the Mirage 580 as the most stable and comfortable for the event. I was not expecting to break any records. I achieved my goals which were to finish the distance, manage my skin reaction called urticaria and smile at Sam, ground crew at the end. Actually Ian Vaile and I were some of the first boats turned around at Checkpoint P (7km from the finish) and told to paddle back 5kms to Spencer against the tide. Despite this I regard myself as having finished (GPS read 97.8km at the end). So even though I got the usual skin reaction, I had no blisters, so count that as a success.

So why do I keep doing these

events? It's such a feeling of achievement, there's the comradery of seeing all your friends on the river; the familiarity of the river; the beauty of watching the landscape through the night to anticipate the bends in the river; and the feeling that this is where you belong.

### Anne Moore

After missing last year's HCC due to carpal tunnel surgery, I decided to give it another crack this year for my seventh race. I was tossing up whether to do it in my "stable" K1 or my ocean ski, when my good friend (and Newy Paddlers' President) Charly Wellard suggest we team up and paddle her Sladecraft SLR2. For Charly it would be her second "Hawkesbury" having completed it two years ago in a Mirage 730. We did some practice paddles together and all seemed to be okay, so we entered as a team – the "Old Chooks".

For the race our land crew was my hubby Owen Walton, (a role he has undertaken seven times previously) and Marty Vanderpoel (who had completed 12 HCCs as a competitor, but this was his first go at land-crewing). Both Marty and Owen are NSWSKC members.

We entered the Ladies Long Rec Double Open Division and set our goal to eclipse the existing record, aiming with a time of 10 hours 30 minutes, similar to what I've done previously. Our plan was to make a 5-10 minute "pit stop" at Wisemans, for a clothing change, a quick bite and toilet break while the boys serviced the boat, topped up our water and "fuel", then paddle directly to the finish. We carried no solid food, relying on gels and "rocket fuel" (Charly: "Tailwind", me: "Endura").

On the day we found that we were competing with two other Ladies Teams in similar SLR2 boats; Alison and Raewyn (NSWSKC) and Robyn and Deb (Sutherland). All are friends of mine, so there was a bit of friendly banter and rivalry to make things in-



Annie on a caffeine kick prior to the start at Windsor (Pic. Adrian Clayton)

teresting. From the start, Alison/Rae jumped ahead, followed by us then Robyn/Deb – this was to continue this way for the next 100km through the night.

We passed through Sackville (30km), 15 minutes ahead of our objective with the tide helping us along, feeling great and relaxed. As darkness came and the tide changed we started to have a few little issues with us both feeling a bit nauseous and Charly having a small problem with one hand. We eventually made it into Wisemans (65km), still in front of schedule by 5 minutes, but we needed much more than our planned quick break. I had a coffee and half a peanut butter roll while Charly called into the First Aid tent to have her hand taping redone. By the time we were underway about 30-35 minutes had elapsed and we were into the full flooding tide. The wind also was growing stronger.

By the time we got to Spencer the tide had eased, however the wind was even stronger with waves making headway tricky. We had by then fallen well behind our scheduled time (but still ahead of the existing class record). From Spencer to the finish, the tidal flow was back with us but the wind and waves were creating problems for all.

We eventually crossed the line at approximately 0311, giving us an (unofficial) elapsed time of 10 hours 56 minutes. This was a bit slower

than we planned. The adverse conditions in the second half of the race, along with our extended stoppage at Wisemans, meant that our race time objective was not met. However, our finishing time still placed us inside the class record time so we were very satisfied.

The following day I had no real adverse issues; some very minor rubbing and a bit of pain in the right hand (arthritis?). Our success can be attributed to: a great boat, comfortable fitout, a couple of solid 50km training paddles to ensure everything worked, a simple/efficient feeding and hydration setup, lots of Gurney Goo and a great motor in the back seat (Charly).

### Mark Sundin

*Editor's note: The following has been extracted from Mark's blog entry which can be found on the Expedition Kayaks website (<http://www.expeditionkayaks.com/>). While esoteric to some extent his full account is, not surprisingly, a very entertaining read. Mark's words here encapsulate the spirit of the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic and why many paddlers are repeatedly drawn to it. They also convey just how tough this year's event was.*

My first attempt at the Hawkesbury Classic was waaay back in 2001, in the 25th race, in a diabolical recreational sea kayak known as the Old Town Nantucket. 14'8", 67cm wide, 32kg and sold to me by a very convincing kayak shop salesman as 'a great fast sea kayak

*Team Sundin (Mark and his mum) looking fresh at the finish*



for the Hawkesbury Classic'. And you wonder why I am so careful to ask questions and steer people the right way when they ask me which boat might suit them these days! I positively laboured over the course, coming home in 17 hours, 53 minutes, proud as punch to have finished and was thereafter hooked.

Back then my crew was Mum, Nicole and Mum's late husband, ex footy legend Brian Chicka Moore. I finished with my t-shirt wrapped around my head, in blazing sunshine, and if my memory serves me correctly 475th out of 480 finishers.

Fast forward seventeen years and I managed to complete my tenth Classic on Saturday night, in a fast flat water race kayak, with a carbon paddle, all the gear, a targeted training program (kinda), but no less an inner glow of positive energy at having made it once again down this serpentine 111km [?] route. This year there were even a couple of boats in the race that I had helped to design, in the pair of Audax's being paddled by Nick [Blacklock] and The Don [Bob Turner, one of Mark's paddling partners across Bass Strait]. Who wouldda thunk that could have been possible from the rank beginner, hopelessly arm paddling his Nantucket over the line back in 2001!

For me this race is always a reminder that I was a beginner once, and also of course of where that paddling path has led me since and what it's added to my life.

And in a nutshell, that's the great thing about the Classic, it's one of the few extraordinary things an ordinary person can achieve, and I bet there are literally thousands of satisfied smiles being smiled by the myriad collection of masochists who have made the journey from Windsor to Brooklyn, when they stop and reflect on their own experience....

...Now I'm on the record saying that this race is really all about get-

ting to Wiseman's, and that the leg home, whilst still 40km, is general pretty cruisy. Not so this year, as the wind continued to gust across various exposed stretches of river, providing chop and mess that you would eat alive in a ski or sea kayak, but in the dark, in an unstable racing kayak, provided a whole world of pain....

...I rounded the final turn, 3km to go, with the wind really starting to crank and running straight over the fast ebbing tide. I was well and truly bugged from all of the extra stabilising my core had been doing for the past four hours, and realised that I couldn't risk paddling a quartering line to the finish and the very high chance of being capsized. So, I beat down the channel into the teeth of the wind until I was adjacent to the finish, then had to turn towards the line with about 1km to go across the chop to get home. To say it wasn't fun would be an understatement. That might sound odd coming from someone who paddles in waves of all shapes and sizes most days of the week, but it was genuinely challenging, especially with nothing left in the tank.

I crossed the line in 10.32 by my GPS, but at the time of writing we're still unsure of how the race committee will deal with the ferry stoppage. I commend them for stopping the race shortly after I finished, as it was getting dangerous at the very most dangerous spot for weary paddlers. A crappy outcome for the hordes who had slogged it as far as Spencer for sure, but definitely the right call. A nightmare of a night for the poor buggers in charge really, ferry breakdown, wind and waves, handled as always with aplomb.

So, ten of these things done and that 'pleasantly weary' feeling of achievement once again. Probably the toughest one in many respects; the rough stretches, the ferocity of the spring flood tide; but a week out they all feel like the 'toughest' one!

## Nick Blacklock



Nick all smiles at Wisemans Ferry (Pic. Adrian Clayton)

"Never again in a single" was the writing along the side of a Mirage 730 on the start line at Windsor. I could relate to that statement although I had never paddled the HCC but was about to do so with my wife in our own 730. That was five years ago and we had a great time, enjoying the stops, taking in the sights and keeping each other company.

Fast forward to 2018 and here I am again on the start line, in a single kayak and no wife to keep me company. This time would be different, very different. Having said that not everything was different, it was very hot at Windsor, it's a 100km paddle and Caoimhin Ardren our land crew from five years ago was back again, more experienced and wiser having now land crewed for five events. The plan this time was to stick to my plan; to finish, in a good time (for a sea kayak), stop as few times as possible and keep the breaks short, stick to my pace and not get caught up with all the hype of the day and to rush out too fast.

The last part of this plan was out the window in two minutes, just after the Windsor bridge, as I found myself wash riding a bunch of three other guys, including Mark Sundin, in faster boats. It seemed too good an opportunity to miss. We stuck in formation for three hours and I did surprise myself by managing to

keep with these guys all the way to Sackville where I had my first stop (unplanned and enforced) by the ferry crossing. The upside was that we were able to catch up with all the waiting double skis which had earlier blasted past. My second (planned) stop was at Sackville just around the corner and it all went well: fed and watered, in and out in five to six minutes, thanks to Caoimhin.

From there on things settled down and I was able to follow my race plan and started to enjoy the lovely evening giving way to night. I had no issues other than the normal ones you would get paddling down a river in pitch black in the middle of the night. Things did get a bit more interesting coming into Wisemans as the wind against current was creating some surfable waves which I used to my advantage and keep my speed up in the current. Just as well I was in a sea kayak.

Wisemans was my next stop (planned and unplanned) as when I arrived I was told there would be a delay before I was allowed to leave due to a ferry issue. However, I got a pleasant surprise as I was met on the shore by Rhys Ward as part of my land crew who promptly jumped into the water to empty my kayak of all the yellow water that I'd collected. Meantime, while I waited, Caoimhin brought me some hot pumpkin soup and a pastry. What a land crew!

Within seconds of the go signal I was off again. From here I was pretty much on my own for the rest of the paddle. The moon came out, the tide turned and the wind picked up. The conditions got more interesting after Spencer but sea kayakers eat this stuff up and I had a good fast run from there into Mooney Mooney to the finish for my final (planned) stop.

I had finished! I felt much better than last time and was really pleased with my performance. The worst bits of the event for me were

waiting around beforehand and having a sore bum for days afterwards. The best bits were the start, middle and end of the paddle!

Notable highlights for me were: great wash riding session at start, fantastic evening sun for first leg, paddling in total darkness at some points and having to turn my GPS light off so I could see, hitting a tree branch and slowly being stopped before being catapulted backwards between the two kayakers I had just overtaken, surfing the waves mid channel into Wisemans, getting up to 14kph (very briefly) on the closing leg, paddling pretty much alone on the river for 30km on a moonlit night (*Moon River* sprung to mind). Fantastic stuff, enough to make you come back for more!

A big thanks to both Caoimhin and Rhys for coming out in the middle of the night to land crew and helping me get safely home. I owe them for this.

So that's the HCC over until next time, if there is to be a next time, Perhaps with "never again in a sea kayak on the side of my boat". Never say never!

### Alison Curtin and Rae Duffy

Alison and I had mumbled about doing the Hawkesbury together ever since teaming up for the 2014 NSWSK Club Navigation Challenge. Just five weeks before the Hawkesbury Alison grumbled that she wasn't paddle fit and would like a challenge ...how about the Hawkesbury? I leapt at the opportunity and we started training the following week. In singles that is because we live 150km apart and don't have a double but we were confident we'd figure something out. We eventually tracked down a beautiful SLR2 Sladecraft kayak, which Greg Smith kindly lent us. The kayak was in Port Macquarie, but isn't that what land crew are for? Greg was able to get the kayak to Gosford and



*Above: Alison relaxed and comfortable at the start at Windsor.*

*Below: Rae taking on the magic rice at Sackville (Pics. Adrian Clayton)*

Neil drove from Ulladulla to collect it in time for us to compete in the Burrill Lake marathon the weekend before the Hawkesbury.

It was a scorching hot day at Windsor and it was good to finally get onto the water. We had a plan and it was all about F: Finish, Fast, Fun and Friendship. We also had our eye on the 10.30 record even though we didn't know how fast we could paddle and this was Al's first Hawkesbury. So with way more confidence than preparation we lined up for the start gun and decided to try for first under the bridge - the Windsor bridge, a mere 300 metres away.

The gun fired and we're off at full speed. First to the bridge and thankfully Al slows the cadence so we settle into a more realistic pace. Five minutes into the race we pass the tail enders from the start fifteen minutes ahead of us; they're in for a

long night. There's at least one boat on our wash and around checkpoint A. Sophie and Naomi of Lane Cove River Kayakers pull alongside. We paddle with them much of the night and it was wonderful to have the company and distraction. We also worked out that paddling fairly close, side by side, provided good wash to both boats.

By Sackville we were the lead boats on the river and stayed that way until Wisemans where a double ski joined us. The tide was with us for the first 40km during the daylight but as it got dark the tide turned and we headed for the river bank to stay out of the worst of the flow. We were grateful for the GPS as there were no boats to follow and it was very dark. Buoys, trees and jetties appeared suddenly. Al managed to avoid them. On top of the adverse current we had wind against us much of the time so we were thankful when Wisemans finally came into view.

At the Wisemans checkpoint, Alison leapt out of the kayak for a stretch, drugs and food. I didn't dare get out, so ordered room service and while Alex from Lane Cove massaged my shoulders, Neil stood knee deep in the river with my bag of goodies.

Back out on the river for the 40km run to the finish, the wind was still blowing and the tide still against us but the moon was up so avoiding obstacles as we hugged the bank was far easier. At Low Tide Pit stop the tide should have turned so we paddled in the middle of the river but it still seemed to be against us. We were getting pretty ragged and it wasn't getting easier. We had music playing and had talked about singing but didn't have the energy, still the music was a distraction.

The final 10km saw the tide with us but the wind and chop slowed us down. There was some mad

bracing when a couple of speed boats passed in front of us but the SLR kept us safe and we headed for home.

What an amazing feeling to finish. We struggled up the ramp as Neil and Shannon looked after our kayak. As it was being carried the water level was almost to the coaming. We were surprised when they tipped it over and about 40 litres of water poured out. Maybe the drag wasn't all tide and exhaustion.

It's a fabulous event, tough, but the sense of achieving is hard to beat. Our land crew were amazing and we enjoyed the support and comradery of other paddlers, checkpoint volunteers, Lane Cove River Kayakers, organisers and other crew. The event needs supporting. If you haven't had a go don't put it off or you might find you miss out. And don't leave it until you're unfit – although don't let that stop you either :-)

### Preliminary results



THE  
HAWKESBURY  
CANOE CLASSIC  
111 km

NSWSK Club member	Class	Boat	Time
Graham Brown	Brooklyn or Bust	Mirage 530	13:21:00
Alan Booth	Brooklyn or Bust		13:48:55
Ruby Ardren	Ladies Veteran 40+ K1	Vajda Voyageur	11:08:15*
Cathy Miller	Ladies Veteran 50+ Long Rec 1	Mirage 580	12:47:00 (98.5km)
Anne Moore (with Charly Wellard)	Ladies Open Long Rec 2	Sladecraft SLR2	10:53:10*
Alison Curtin Rae Duffy	Ladies Veteran 40+ Long Rec 2	Sladecraft SLR2	10:33:39
Mark Sundin	Mens Veteran Long Rec 1 40+	Sladecraft SLR	10:44:55
Nick Blacklock	Mens Veteran 50+ Long Rec 1	Audax	10:30:45
Ian Vaile	Mens Veteran 50+ Long Rec 1	Mirage 580	12:02:00 (98.5km)

\*Class record

# JOHNSTONE STRAITS DELIGHTS



## Russ Swinnerton recounts a recent cruisy 4-day paddle in British Columbia

Imagine a camp site where you can't sleep for the sound of killer whales breathing. Two nights out of three we suffered. OK, they might have been humpbacks – it was too dark to tell, and we'd seen both during the day: Johnstone Strait at the northern end of Vancouver Island is a cetacean highway.

Given the quirks of Canadian paddling at 50+ degrees north latitude – big tidal streams, and bears – Meg and I had decided that this paddle needed local knowledge, so we left our Feathercraft Wispers at home, and signed up for a four-day guided paddle with North Island Kayaks, a very well-reviewed Canadian kayak tour company. We were two of eight customers, all in double kayaks, with two guides to look after us.

The package included all our gear, and use of prepared campsites – two-person tents already pitched on wooden platforms, a camp kitchen, pit toilet – and all meals provided (one of the guides was a former restaurant chef). So glamping really. The four-day trip was advertised for paddlers of all skill levels – so it was a series of very gentle 10--15 km days.

Environmental conditions were more like a Sydney winter than summer: air temperature maximums around 16--18 degrees, minimums overnight around seven or eight, and water temp around 14 degrees. We wore Adrenalin 2P tops for the whole time on the water, and sometimes we added paddle jackets. And Adrenalin legs for the last couple of days, as being cold became less appealing...

The tidal range is just under six metres, and we were at springs. That made for strong streams, and long carries on shelving beaches. At every pull-out, there were banks of logs at the high water mark, pushed up onto beaches by wind and tide

*Above: A pod of orcas cruises by a pair of interested paddlers. Bull kelp line in the foreground. (Plc. Russ Swinnerton)*

– providing a secure storage bench for the boats.

Our two guides were very good, and they'd done their homework -- notebooks with tide calculations, and an itinerary that kept us away from gale force winds and maximum rate streams. Still a few tide races and overfalls to negotiate, but nothing too daunting.

Our first day was a relaxed paddle south along the Vancouver island shore. Only one bear sighting, a black bear eating a seafood takeaway on a beach. But we saw harbour seals, grumpy sea lions, and dolphins aplenty. We had a lunchtime pull-out, and with a favourable tidal stream reached our camp by mid-afternoon.

As we were setting off for a forest walk, a pod of killer whales passed by our beach – followed by a dozen or so more small pods, all passing

within a couple of hundred metres of our vantage point. We gave up on the forest walk, and just watched the whales.

The next day we made our first crossing of Johnstone Strait, at close to slack water. We lunched on a small island, and then had a mid-afternoon walk on West Cracroft Island to a whale watching lookout, to chat with the scientists. We were strolling along at the end of the group, unaware that the lead walkers had disturbed a wasps' nest. Meg was stung twice on the leg, which wasn't much fun. There were two grizzly bears in the vicinity too, with fresh bear poo on the trail.

We camped on a different island, but bears can swim... so all the bear attractors – toothpaste, muesli bars – had to be stored in either the camp site's bear-proof locker or the kayaks.

Our third day was spent in humpback country, paddling in the islands bounding Blackfish Sound and Blackney Passage, to the east of Vancouver Island. Dolphin, porpoises, seals, sea lions, bald eagles, mink, deer... plenty to see. And we traversed Blackney Passage with only gentle streams – the area is known for rips, eddies and whirlpools when the stream gets over four or five knots.

That night we did a night paddle to check out the bioluminescence – there was plenty – and the Perseid meteor shower – also plenty of them. Highlight was probably a rock wall with barnacles feeding – lighting up the wall as they waved their filters.

A night paddle after a longish day

*Top: Scientists watching the resident killer whale community in Robson Bight nature reserve*

*Centre: Overnight kayakpark, Hanson Island*

*Bottom: Typical campsite – this one on the northern side of Hanson Island. (Pics. Russ Swinnerton)*





GE track. Camp sites at wps 055, 056, 058, Put-in/Pull-out Telegraph Pt 059

on the water did remind us how cold the water was. I climbed into my sleeping bag around midnight without bothering to put woolly socks on -- my feet were still cold the next morning.

On our final day, we crossed back to the Vancouver Island shore. At springs, the streams were strong, but we went through the narrows at close to slack water. Then we just went with the flow when crossing the overfalls and races in Johnstone Strait, as the water ran from 50m depths to over 400m. Kind of fun -- by that stage, bored with paddling at the gentle pace of the group, we were dashing around trying to surf boat wakes, and checking out distant rock walls to spot the starfish (the water was very clear).

Around us all the while, the fantastic British Columbia scenery. Distant snow-capped mountains on the mainland to the east, and Kosciuszko-high mountains (to 7,000 feet) on Vancouver island, close at hand -- all tree covered. A lot of it has been logged, but the regrowth is well established. Johnstone Strait is part of the inner route to Alaska, so we had cruise ships passing a couple of times a day too.

Those mountains, the cold water and the warm air make fog pretty common, and on the last day we had a thick fog bank to the north, and forest fire haze above everything at about 700 feet. As we closed in on the bank, we could see how close to 100% humidity we were: our exhaled breath -- slightly warmer and moister than the surrounding air -- was condensing in clouds, as if it were a Canberra sub-zero morning.

What could we have done better? Well, I got the boots wrong. 'Beach' means something different on the east side of Vancouver Island -- grains of sand about the size of half-house bricks. And logs everywhere. I wore neoprene boots, with rubber soles perfect for sandy Australian beaches, and absolute rubbish in Canada. They weren't warm enough for 14 degrees water, and weren't stiff enough to look after your feet when you were carrying kayaks. They went into the bin at the end of the trip.

Overall? A very cruisey, very comfortable four day paddle, with lots to see and do (and eat). It was good to get some local knowledge under our belts -- we'd have few qualms about going off on our own on our next trip. The company does eight-day wilderness paddles in the Broughton Islands (no relation...) either out and back with a midway food drop, or all the way to the mainland with a water taxi return. We'd probably sign up for one of those next time -- if we didn't go to Tofino on the west coast for whales, bears and ocean swells.

### Kayaks and equipment:

The kayaks were Seaward Kayaks Passat G3s -- 6.7 metre expedition-strength doubles, with three large plastic-over-neoprene hatches, and no day hatch. ([http://www.seawardkayaks.com/products\\_fibre\\_passatg3.php](http://www.seawardkayaks.com/products_fibre_passatg3.php)). Even for those of us used to Mirage 730s, these doubles were stable but easy to push along, and carried a large load. They had smallish cockpits with thigh braces, with footpegs adjustable from a sitting position using webbing straps. The middle hatches of the four doubles

belonged to the guides to store the provisions, with us tourists using the bow and stern hatches. The two guides paddled singles.

The rudder controls were a sliding foot-peg arrangement, so you could get only limited foot bracing if you pressed both pedals at once. Still, with our slow cruising pace, leg drive wasn't much in demand... On the plus side, the rudder was huge, giving good steering.

The company supplied two-piece Aqua-bound Stingray paddles in fibreglass -- with either zero feather or 60 degrees. We took our own carbon four-piece paddles, that usually travel with our folders.

And North Island Kayaks provide pretty much everything else except your clothes, gloves, hats and boots. Paddle jackets were more like yachting tops, with a loose bottom and a hood -- we used our own. Sleeping bags were also available. And two dry bags -- a 20-litre for camping clothes in the big hatch, and a 10 litre to sit between your legs for your on-water stuff, in lieu of a day hatch. We each carried one or two 10-litre dromedary water bags in our cockpits too, a burden which got lighter as we drank the water. PFDs have to meet the Canadian standard, and the supplied jackets didn't have bladder pockets -- which was a bit of a pain.

### How to get there:

Air Canada flies direct Sydney to Vancouver, with a checked baggage allowance of two 23kg bags each enough for your paddling gear and your party clothes. We hired a car at the airport in Vancouver, took the ferry to Nanaimo, and then drove north on Vancouver Island's east coast to Telegraph Cove. The further north we went, the more kayaks we passed on car roofs and trailers. No surprise -- this place deserves to be popular.



# Learning by Logging

Megan Pryke

I am a big fan of logbooks, maybe because I have a terrible memory. I also enjoy the meditative benefits of handwriting and the feel of the pen in my hand. I am a doodler.

My first club activity was in February 2009 when I started logging my paddling trips in the NSW Sea Kayak Club paper log books. The Club did always say that spreadsheets were an option but I preferred the hard copy as I could fill it in immediately after the trip.

My log book is not just data. It is a tool that facilitates my self-learning, my diary. It is lovely to look back on my logs. Some made joyous through encounters with wildlife, and others were a process of learning by reflection. A capsized, sometimes my own, is a healthy reminder of the progression I have made and helps to have genuine empathy for others who find themselves having a swim.

Some of my early entries have pictures of my hand, crudely drawn; I am no artist. These entries were when I started noticing pain in my wrist. I was in emotional denial that it was paddling as I loved getting out on the water, but knew I should seek more proof. The knowledge that it could be lousy paddling form was a reminder of my first forward stroke skills lesson with Henry, Dee and Stephan that the development of technique is an ongoing process. My logbook was a reminder to test if my wrist was sore after paddling. A few pokes, a bit more testing, and then I was seeking instruction with

Rob Mercer. With a few pointers, I cut back on the urge for distance statistics to focus on technique and time on the water and overcame what could have developed in to a nasty repetitive strain injury in the carpal tunnel area.

To assist in completing a log entry while the trip was fresh in my mind, I stuck in copies of the Beaufort scale and description of sea state in my current log book.

I moved to a spreadsheet log book, and sea kayaking was one tab, on another tab was other activity. When home I would check the wind observations. (Around Sydney there are lots of observation towers, some more relevant than others due to altitude, proximity to the sea or cliffs.) I checked the period forecast, the wave observation buoy records at Manly Hydraulics and surf forecast from Swell Net. The BoM Meteye has become a go-to for it includes storm risk and rain probability. I would note down the estimates and compare it to what I experienced.

I entered supplemental notes for trips which had had a significant impact in a personal diary.

Now I use Paddle Log as a log book for sea kayaking. If I write a more extensive or personal diary entry about the trip I will put it in the notes field. As a trip leader, my diary log is often an evaluation of how I thought the trip went, how it could be improved, the feedback I received.

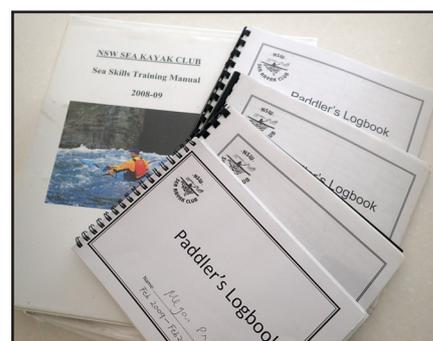
As the Club's Training Coordinator, I know that there are a lot of members who have only kept a log to a minimum of what is needed to gain recognition. We all prefer to be out there paddling versus completing paperwork. I have also seen other members' handwritten logs, and I can understand why having a consistent format is beneficial to streamline the validation process for processing registrations and re-registration of Paddle Australia Awards.

Keeping a diary or a log is a great learning tool. Mine is a personal tale of my journey from the clueless, or the unconsciously incompetent, to an experienced sea kayaker. However, I say "experienced" with a note of caution, because, at times, I find myself still a student. The four stages of competence are more like the technical grid that I cycle around rather than a climb up a pyramid. If I ever reach the pinnacle of expertise for more than an ephemeral moment, perhaps then I will stop logging my experience.

*Above: Performing an assisted rescue during my Sea Skills assessment, 2010 (Pic. Adrian Clayton)*

*Below: my Club logbooks – nearly 200 activities logged*

*Bottom: my first capsized!*



Trip Route Shellharbour → Geroa		<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Day Trip	Trip in Grade: 9
Date: 14/11/09	Weather / Sea State: Moderate - Rough	Wind: 10-15	Wave: 1-2m	Swell: 1-2m
Trip Details: Pier 6am at Shellharbour. Car shuffle. Departed @ 7:40am. 11-12km wind at Kiama. Winds strengthened in afternoon. Seas became rougher. I capsized in choppy. First real wet-suit. Had to be rescued again. 2nd time Keith guided me out to sea to calm waters.				
Emergency Equipment:		Kayak Type: Montauk		
Start Time: 7:45am	Finish Time: 3:30	Total Time:	Trip Leader: Keith Oakford	
Trip Distance: 35km	Cumulative Distance: 350k	Paddler's Signature: <i>[Signature]</i>		

# NORTH WEST TASMANIA 2018

*...or the trip that never was!*



***Following is Nick Blacklock's account of when things didn't go according to plan and how the trip that never was turned in to the trip that it became: a trip of two halves***

## **Plan A: The Hunter Group, NW Tasmania**

Having extensively reconnoitred the Hunter Group of islands of Tasmania's NW coast in 2016, Stuart Trueman planned to run a club trip a year or so later to this fascinating area. This trip would benefit from his extensive learnings and take some intrepid club members to one of the more challenging areas for sea kayaking. Stuart posted the trip on the Club's calendar and it didn't take long

before he had 10 Club members signing up and keen to join him.

Preparation weekends were held at Port Stephens in May and October 2017 to prepare and brief his crew. At these weekends Stuart was able to impart his knowledge of the area and the challenges we would face: remoteness, tides, swell, etc. Some suitable long training paddles and poor weather leading to changes of plans were all par for the course and we all had fun on these weekends.

Finally six months later, all the planning and preparation had been done and arrangements finalised for us all to meet up at Montagu, NW Tasmania in mid-February 2018, ready, willing and able, with all our gear and plans. Some super keen members of the team formed three sub-groups and chose to spend a week or so in Tassie before the full team assembled at the planned put-in. Shaan, Campbell and Adrian headed for Maria Island, Lisa and Mark explored the Tasman Peninsula and Megan and John spent time exploring the eastern coast

of Tasmania, both in kayaks and on foot. I'll lump these sub-groups together and refer to them as the Advance Party.

With their respective wanderings of the previous week over, the members of the Advance Party plus Marty and myself gathered in the north west the evening before we were due to start the main event. Stuart and Michael Taylor, with their kit and kayaks, were arriving on the overnight Melbourne to Devonport ferry very early the next day and were expected to join the rest of the group for a launch around midday. All looked as if it was going to plan.

Unfortunately, as often happens with sea kayaking, Mother Nature had other plans in the form of 20+knots westerly winds followed by 20+knots easterly winds, with the promise of more to come, especially for the Hunter Group area. Faced with this members of the Advance Party, plus Marty and myself, discussed other options and after a telephone conversation with Stuart, still on the ferry, Plan

A Hunter Group was cancelled and Plan B -- 'Where else can we paddle?' -- was hatched. The forecasts suggested that we go to the opposite side of Tassie (involving the Advance Party members retracing their steps) if we wished to go paddling --i.e. head from the NW to the SE. So early the next day a loose convoy started the long trek with the plan that we assemble as a group in a cafe in Campbell Town, a village on the Launceston to Hobart highway, waiting for Stuart and Michael to join us.

When all team members were finally together the options were tabled. The Freycinet Peninsula was favoured by some, the Bay of Fires by others. Perhaps sensing some indecision, Stuart exerted his authority and told us what Plan B was to be.

### **Plan B : Part I Maria Island Circumnavigation**

Day 1: Rheban to Darlington Bay. This was a short affair with a quick two-hour jaunt across calm seas with minimal wind from Rheban to Darlington on Maria Island. Darlington is a magical place to visit with a convict history, abundant wildlife and excellent camping facilities (including hot showers!). A great introductory day.

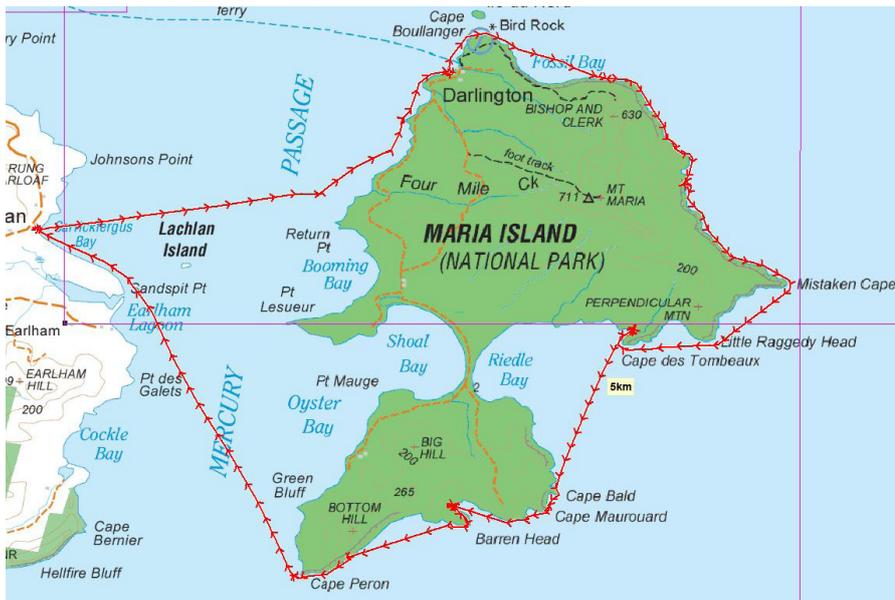
Day 2: Darlington to Whalers Cove. The group was slow to get going and to counter this and prevent further malaise on the rest of the trip, Stuart instituted the Rock of Shame; the idea being that whoever was not ready at the agreed departure time would carry this hefty rock. As this was the first day and we had not been warned about

*Opposite: Lisa heading south along the Tasman Peninsula*

*Top: Stuart supervising preparation for launch from Whalers Cove*

*Middle: Michael exiting Haunted Bay*  
*Bottom: Mark emerging from the gauntlet at Cape Peron (Pics. Adrian Clayton)*





Track starting from and finishing at Rheban (far left), clockwise around Maria Island

this, Stuart agreed to carry the rock until a recalcitrant surfaced. Such was the effectiveness of his ploy, he was to carry it for the rest of the trip barring the last day!

Eventually the intrepid group headed off and quickly found a blowhole at the bottom of the cliff which allowed people to get completely soaked and get some great pictures of Adrian and John hidden in spray. Some of the spray blasts were so strong they nearly blew Adrian's helmet off!

The wind picked up considerably as we progressed south down the eastern side of the island. A 20+knot headwind was making for tough paddling conditions. They got harder after rounding Mistaken Cape where our heading changed to SW, and deteriorated further after passing Little Raggedy Head where we started heading west. We were now taking the full force of the wind and sea, combined with a moderate swell, on our beam. This was to be the toughest paddling we would encounter on the entire trip and meant a final one-hour plus slog, and a wet ride, to get to our camp site at Whalers Cove. The cove, tucked in to the northern shores of Riedle Bay, gave

us shelter from the wind and had sufficient space to accommodate the group's tents. A small team of National Parks researchers had arrived in the cove shortly before us and had bagged the best tent sites. They were there to study and track Tassie Devils and were in the process installing cameras to track them.

Day 3: Whalers Cove to Rheban. The last leg of the circumnavigation with all manner of features to look at on a spectacular coastline. Departure was eased by our King Canute mastery of the tides which mean that you just needed to sit in

your boat and wait a minute to be floated off.

The wind of the previous day had dropped considerably and we enjoyed pleasant paddling in overcast conditions around the southern portion of the island.

A short lunch was had at Haunted Bay before we completed our travels down the exposed coast. Our passage through the gauntlet formed between Caper Peron and Perons Pyramid in the south west is where we said our goodbyes to Maria Island and started heading up Mercury Passage for the 12km paddle to our cars at Rheban. The conditions changed immediately. We now had smooth waters with no current, swell or rebound to contend with. We also enjoyed a light following breeze. This leg seemed to develop into a gentlemanly race between Adrian and Campbell with neither wanting to openly race but each trying subtly to gain advantage. Following closely behind them was interesting as the pace slowly picked up to a fast finish as we got closer to the end. The conclusion was that Campbell was first back to the bay with the cars but Adrian was first to land on the beach so hence an honourable draw could be declared.





Opposite below: John outside Tasman Arch (Pic. Adrian Clayton)

Above left: Camp site, Bivouac Bay

Above right: Megan looking back towards The Sisters, Tasman Peninsula (Pics. Nick Blacklock)



As is often the case when paddling, the weather then cleared up and the sun came out just as we landed, which made for a great finish to this part of the trip. That night was to see the Tassie crew take to the distant hills for a 'free' camp site in preparation for Plan B Part 2.

In summary Maria Island is a fantastic gem of a location that should be on every sea kayaker's list of places to visit. There are plenty of non-kayaking options and it is a world away from 'civilisation' and offers excellent walking and cycling activities too.

### Plan B – Part 2: Paddling the Tasman Peninsular

Day 1: Pirates Bay to Bivouac Bay. We were up and off early on the first day of our next adventure. Our put-in was Pirates Bay from where we set out on our next Tasman Sea adventure. First, we had the tedious job of getting all the cars to the other side of the peninsular. While this was in process, those who remained with the kayaks had an hour's worth of entertainment watching the swells coming in and working out if one could make it in and out alive in a kayak. Although we had a relatively calm day with

a 1m SE swell it had a 14+ second period which meant that ventures into any features needed to be treated with care.

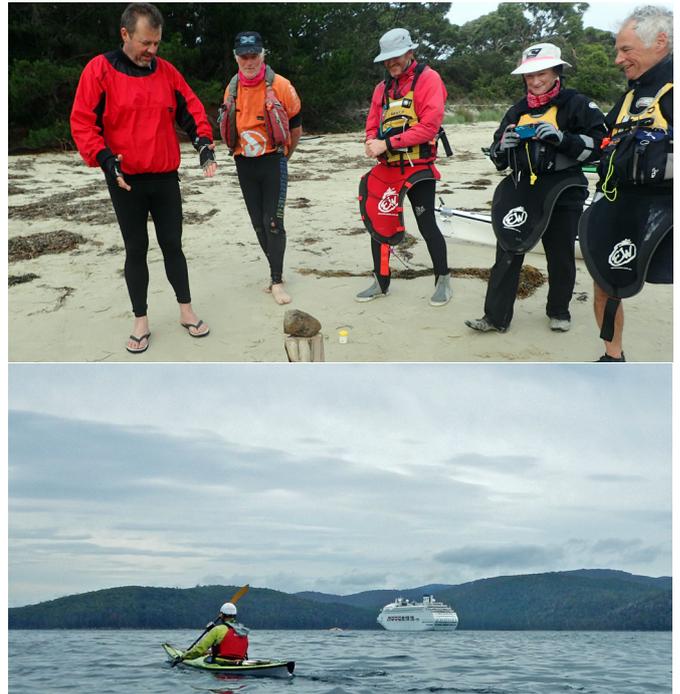
From Pirates Bay you just need to paddle out and turn South and you immediately get to the fantastic caves and features of this coastline with well-known Tasman Arch being the first. Other caves were spectacular too, one in particular was huge and could be paddled right through which most of the group did. The most notable event of the day was Campbell and Shaan 'almost' getting trashed from behind by a huge wave while in this cave. Some accounts have Campbell side-surfing with a high brace in a huge wall of white water while Shaan almost smashed her new kayak against the rocks. I can only repeat these accounts in good faith, having witnessed the whole episode from some distance outside the cave, and it looked like it was going to be a mess with some breakages. Luckily the wave dissipated and there was much excitement but no injuries to paddlers or kayaks. Needless to say with all the excitement there are no pictures of this incident. A couple of weeks later that we learned of another kayaking group that had two or three boats badly damaged and one sunk in this same vicinity which put paid to some of their party's paddling!

After this incident, which was a

topic of conversation for much of the rest of the day, rock gardening and cave exploration was a bit more reserved with no further incidents. That night we stayed in pretty Bivouac Bay and a few hardy bushwalkers within the group clambered up the cliff path for an aerial view of where we had paddled earlier in the day.

Day 2: Bivouac Bay to Safety Cove. The next day we awoke to a totally calm, sunny and warm day with the Lanterns in the distance. It looked like the weather gods giving were giving us a gift of a day. We were not disappointed and this turned into one of those days of truly sublime paddling.

Conditions at the iconic Lanterns and Candlestick were ideal and we spent some time there marvelling at the magnificent geological structures, watching the seals (while they were watching us), taking pictures and going around as many times as we wanted. With an occasional surge coming through, the passage inside the Totem Pole caused an adrenalin rush for some of the group. We then had a cruisy paddle across the totally calm Monro Bight to the northern side of Cape Pillar where there were a couple of tour boats and a thriving colony of fur seals. The seals were quite happy to swim around the boat and we got some great shots of them.



Above: Tasman Peninsula track  
 Top right: Rock of Shame handover ceremony at Safety Cove. Marty, at left, is about to become the recipient (Pic. Nick Blacklock)  
 Bottom right: Michael eyeing off our "support" ship entering Port Arthur (Pic. Adrian Clayton)

After an amazing 'in the boat lunch' at the southern end of Tasman Island we headed onwards to towards Port Arthur with the wind picking up from the north and allowing some sails to be raised.

Adrian reckoned that this was the best paddling location that he had been to bar none. Stuart was even seen to enjoy himself and was impressed, which is saying something! I think it would be safe to say that for most people, this day was the highlight of the trip. I'll let some of the pictures speak for themselves.

Day 3: Safety Cove to Port Arthur. Although with a picturesque and generally sheltered north-facing beach on the western shores of Port Arthur, Safety Cove turned out to be not so safe at all. After a nice afternoon and evening settling down and relaxing we were visited by a vocal local who told us that the beach was private and that we

would have to leave or he would call the police.

Nothing further happened at this point but at about two a.m. I awoke to shouting and emerged from my tent to find three kayaks had been dragged down the beach and pushed into the bay. Fortunately an onshore wind meant that they were not going far. I quickly retrieved them and went to see what was happening. It turned out that further along the beach the now angry local had returned and had been shouting at the others, shaking their tents and telling them to move. No one argued but simply moved their tents nearer to the rest of us. We did report this incident to the police who were sympathetic and said that they would look into it. As a result we would not recommend this location as a stopover.

Because of the previous night's incident we were all a bit rattled, so we did not hang around and planned to leave the beach as soon as we could. Perhaps because of the overnight disruptions Marty ended up being late for departure... so a short ceremony was held on the beach and Rock of Shame finally passed from Stuart to Marty (who

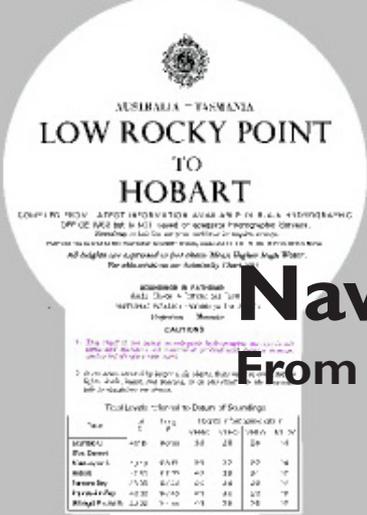
still has it to this day!).

This was to be our final day paddling and we were now handed a not-so-good weather forecast with 15-20knts northerlies. We decided it would not be prudent to continue our planned trip, which would have taken us via Cape Raoul and then some 20km northwards into the wind to White Beach in Wedge Bay where we had left the cars a couple of day earlier.

Instead we cruised the last easy, relatively sheltered, 10km to Port Arthur. As it turned out, this last leg had some attractions too, including some great caves in the cliffs just opposite Safety Cove. We ventured past Dead Island and into the historic settlement in Port Arthur where we got our tourist pictures before finishing the trip, very fittingly, at Stewarts Bay.

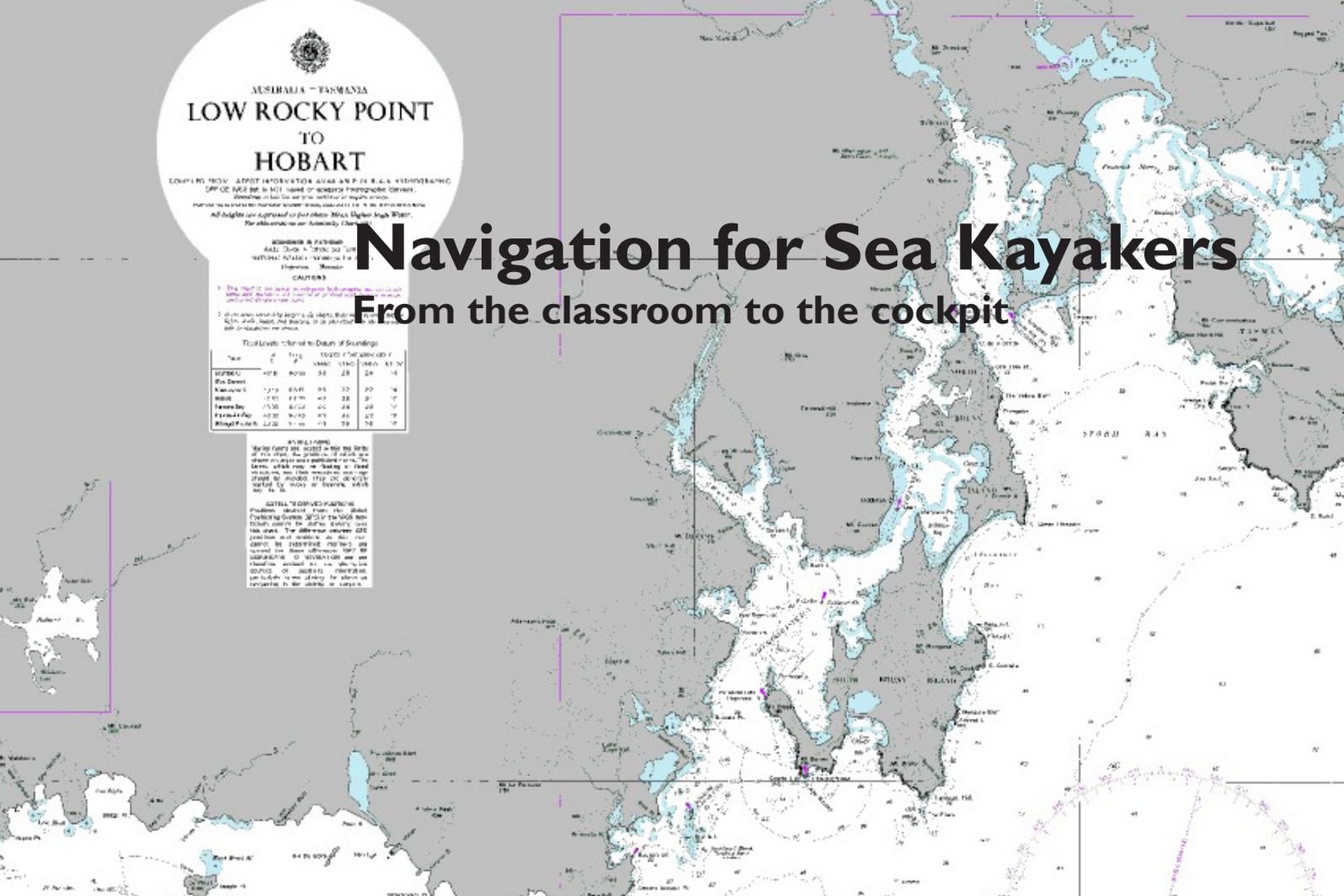
And so the trip that never was, was now over and the moral of this story is that if at first you can't paddle somewhere try, try and try again and you're likely to find somewhere else.

Thanks to: Stuart for organising; Adrian, Marty and John for additional pictures.



# Navigation for Sea Kayakers

## From the classroom to the cockpit



### **Paul Monaro, with a little bit of input from Adrian Clayton, reports on the kayak navigation training weekend conducted by the Club last July**

Three hours from Sydney to Hawk's Nest on a Friday afternoon. Could have done a lot worse. I arrived at Reflections Caravan Park a little after 5pm, and checked into my cabin. Being July, I was reckoning on it being too cold to camp. But the weekend turned out to be quite mild, and those of the group who did camp didn't make too many complaints.

It was an 8.30 start the next morning. We met our instructors for the weekend – Russ Swinnerton, Karen Darby, Tony Murphy and Adrian Clayton. We were divided into three teams (Cook, Bligh and Cottee),

which paired novice (and an absolute novice - aka me) with a more experienced navigator. My partner was Mark Dabbs (who turned out to be a dab hand at navigating). The schedule for the weekend was outlined then we set off to nearby Bennets Beach for some practice using our compasses. This involved taking bearings and using them to plot our position. I had purchased a cheap Lensatic compass which I quickly found was not suitable for the weekend's exercises. And I soon lost any attachment I had

for it when I saw the range of very impressive compasses amongst the group – particularly in the keeping of Russ and Adrian.

We took our bearings from three landmarks (this was my introduction to the concept of the "cocked hat"), and plotted our position... Hmmm. We were nudging on 1.5km

*Karen, Russ and Tony guiding their charges through some of the classroom exercises on Day 1 of the course (Pic. Adrian Clayton)*





Land-based plotting exercise, Bennets Beach with Team Cook (Pic. Karen Darby)

south of where we actually were. Mark had the smarts to figure out that the all-metal observation tower we were standing next to probably had a fairly telling effect on our magnetic compasses. That was just one of many variables we were to learn we needed to take into account for this navigation gig.

Next, we found our way to the old Hawks Nest library for our day of theory. Karen started off the day. She explained working with compasses, particularly the (new for me) concepts of magnetic variation and compass error (aka deviation). We used bushwalking compasses (gotta get me one of these!) to “lay off” courses on our charts, and we plotted “waypoints” which we would use on the following day’s paddle.

Tony took us through the complex topic of winds and tides, the cycles of Springs and Neaps, the rules for calculating tide height and speed through the tide cycle, and use of the Beaufort Scale to estimate wind speed from observing conditions on the water (this I was familiar with. Thanks Sharon). All of this being

highly relevant to the weekend’s major message of kayak navigation: knowing where you are and how to get to your destination in a safe and timely manner.

Adrian explained the differences between maps and charts, and the benefits of both types in helping with trip planning. He covered the essentials of scale, latitude and longitude, and degrees and decimalised minutes in reference to map bearings. He gave us an exercise of plotting a position (our put-in for the next day) on a topographical map using eastings and northings references. And he went over identification of chart symbols, and how they help us stay safe on the water. He finished by having us identify various waypoints to further plot the next day’s paddle on Port Stephens. The session also included an exercise matching map and chart contours with the profiles of land forms as viewed from the water.

Russ covered “Navigation from the Cockpit”. This included piloting and dead reckoning techniques, and the consideration of time, speed and distance. He stressed the value of using transits to establish an accurate line of position, and how they help us maintain an accurate course, despite currents and

winds. He introduced “aiming off” – a technique that safeguards you from having to paddle against the forces of wind and tide in the event of minor course miscalculations. “Handrailing” (ticking off features as you paddle past to confirm your location) was another tip Russ gave us. And he went over the radian rule to establish a heading, taking drift and leeway into account. He also gave a brief description of GPS and electronic charts, (instruments that weren’t relevant to us for this course). We weren’t given any class exercises during this session but Russ did provide some take-home exercises that encompassed the lessons of the whole day.

The group adjourned to the local golf club for a few refreshments, a meal, and some interesting conversation. For those of you who, like myself, think of all the little projects you keep putting off, or the larger ones that take a decade (or never) to get around to, every now and then you get to meet a guy like Russ. He’s an impressive individual. He joined the Royal Australian Navy when he was not long out of school, and was trained to be an aeroplane pilot. Unfortunately, a subsequent (incorrect) medical diagnosis had him ruled unable to sit in the cockpit, so he set his sights on becoming a pilot of ships. This he did, rising to the rank of captain. He commanded, amongst other vessels, HMAS Torrens – a destroyer escort with a crew of 250 personnel. On leaving the Australian navy, he was employed to teach navigation to the British Navy. These days, instead of enjoying a well-earned rest, he is the Director of Professional Intelligence Analysis and Development with the Office of National Assessments. And because that doesn’t keep him busy enough, he flies light planes, builds road cycles, does scuba diving, and builds electric guitars. Not all of this came out during our dinner conversation, but with the snippet Russ did give us, Adrian made the comment “I feel pretty inadequate talking to you Russ!”



*Russ giving the good oil in a “distance off” exercise with Team Bligh (Pic. Karen Derby)*

We were up early on the Sunday, checked out of our caravan park, and headed down to our put-in at the local boat ramp just below the Singing Bridge on the Myall River. The three teams set off five minutes apart. Each was given a range of exercises to do between launch and lunch. These included counting paddle-strokes and then measuring time taken when paddling a known distance between navigational markers. We then had to navigate our way along our pre-plotted waypoints across Port Stephens, sometimes using instruments, sometimes more by mental estimation. The big lesson here was the benefit of using transits to maintain an efficient course when confronted with wind and tidal flow. With the aid of a special chart and Russ’s kamal, we had a go at estimating our “distance off” from various features we could see from our cockpits. Our final task on the outward journey was to apply some of the training of the previous day to paddle across a strong ebb current along a course to a featureless position 750 metres away. We nailed it, arriving within a few metres of the phantom mark. During this outward leg the brain got as

much of a workout as the body.

At lunch, in a park at Nelson Bay, we were given our tasks for the homeward journey. After ferry gliding across a continuing ebb tide to another marked point, we had the challenge to paddle an estimated kilometre. I used time, and Mark used paddle strokes and a compromise between the two had us overshooting by nearly 200 metres. The lesson here is that there are many variables to take into account when estimating paddling speed. Tidal flow, water depths, wind speeds and fatigue (we were closing on 20km for this exercise) need to be factored in. Our last task was to fix our position on the water. With a moderate wind and moving water present, this proved particularly difficult. Mark and I used three bearings (mine taken with my dodgy compass) with the centre of our cocked hat about 250m off our actual position. Team Cook with its snazzy sighting compasses and the pin-point line of position provided by the sector light on Corrie Island was only 40 metres out with its plot!

Back at the put-in, we did the usual pack up, summed up the day, and

discussed our individual experiences. For me, a major lesson was that there are more efficient ways to get from point A to B than to point your nose there and just go for it. I’ll at least use my observations to estimate which way the current is taking me relative to where I want to go and adjust as needed.

With all the variables to take into account, many that are constantly changing, I couldn’t help but form the impression that for many of us, sea navigation must be a matter of guesswork. And that better navigators make better guesses. A bit like “the harder you work the luckier you get”. Then there are the elite. The gurus, like Russ, who have devoted tens of thousands of hours over almost a lifetime, to the mastery of their art. For them maybe it does become science, and the mind-boggling becomes intuitive. What a fascinating study it is!

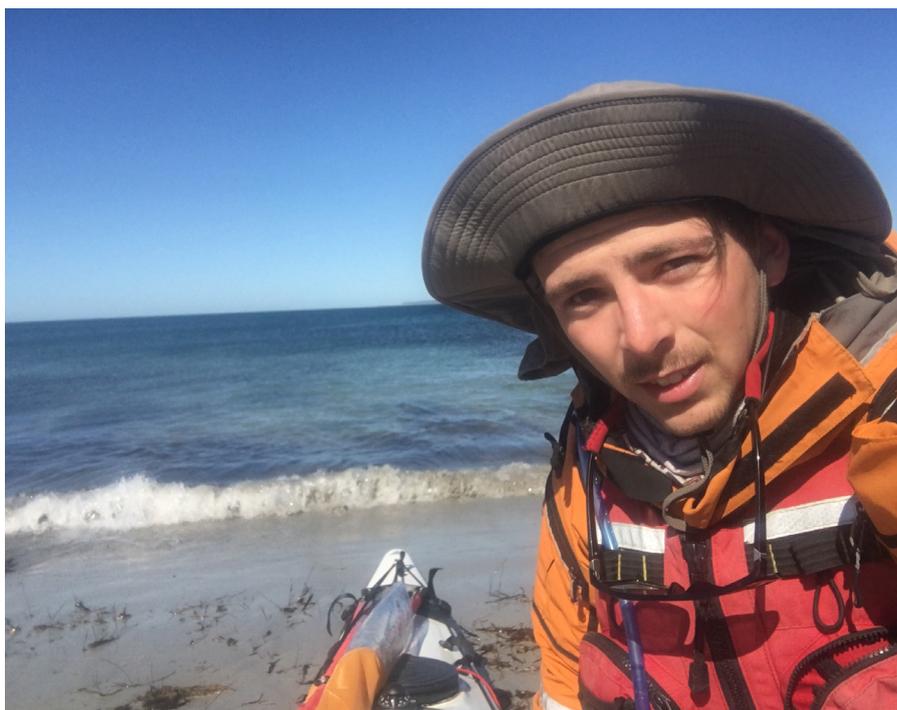
Thanks Russ, Karen, Tony and Adrian for jogging my memory on the technical aspects of the training, and to everyone involved for an enjoyable and enlightening weekend. Highly recommended and great value for the \$75 course fee!

## CROSSING BACKSTAIRS PASSAGE – a case study of applied ferry gliding and aiming off

Some background: Backstairs Passage is the channel that separates the South Australian mainland and Kangaroo Island a minimum of 15kms off to the South west. The passage has a reputation for fast flowing tidal flows – around Cape Jervis said to reach five knots. In 2005 two kayakers died while attempting to cross the passage. It is a waterway that commands the greatest respect.

Following is an extract from an account by James Fishers, a South Australian Sea Kayak Instructor, of a solo 80-kilometre round trip he completed between the mainland and Kangaroo Island over three days in late August this year. The trip involved two crossings of Backstairs Passage. The extract covers the last day's paddle from Antechamber Bay on Kangaroo Island to Fishery Beach on the South Australian mainland coast – a distance of just under 19 kilometres.

*As I pushed out from Antechamber Bay it wasn't long before my stern no longer pointed to where I had launched, but rather further west. Even though it was only a predicted 60cm tidal range that had just began to flood there was already movement. I suspect the main driver behind the movement was the previous 2 days of easterly winds. A constant wind can create a surface current.*



Backstairs Passage 2-way expeditioner  
James Fishers (selfie)

*When I'm doing a crossing I like to be regimented in my approach. It helps you move faster and also makes time pass quicker. It's one of my favourite quotes in action; "How do you eat an elephant? Piece by piece". The structure is as follows: Paddle for twenty minutes, then a one minute drink break. Paddle for nineteen minutes, then a one minute drink break. Paddle for nineteen minutes and then on the hour have a five minute break in which you have a snack, pee, and check the GPS to see how the currents and winds are affecting you. Then repeat.*

*I also have a rule when I'm crossing on a ferry glide regarding headings. Judging distance can be very hard on water and when you can see where you want to finish up it can be very tempting to aim straight at it! To start with establish a heading off a bit further than you'd expect to for the ferry glide [i.e. aim off]. Let's say if wind and current want to push you west while you're trying to travel north, I over compensate the angle to the east. The second part of the rule is this: Hold that heading for an hour or so, so that you can actually measure*

*its effect. (Unless of course you really do need to change it sooner!) This gives you the luxury of adjusting your heading later to run more with the wind and current. Also wind and current may have pushed you further than expected, but because you have over compensated it's not as much of an issue as it could have been.*

*Getting a ferry glide wrong can result in a difficult battle against tide and or wind.*

*I began the first hour heading between 15-20 degrees M and I tracked at 13 degrees M. During the second hour the flooding tide had increased in strength and so had the wind. To counter this, I paddled a heading of 25 degrees M for the next hour but tracked 0 degrees M. The last thirty minutes was the strongest. The tide was racing around from Deep Creek. I had planned to finally aim at Fishery, but found I was going sideways at 4kph. As a result I was aiming at 15 degrees M, but tracking at 347 degrees M! Had I left Antechamber on a bearing*



Above: James's track for his 3-day (clockwise) trip. Progressive adjustments in ferry glide angle and the benefit of arriving at his destination at Fishery Beach with tide and wind assistance as result of aiming off can be clearly seen. Paddling against tides around Cape Jervis can sometimes be a futile task

Left: North Pages viewed from the west (Pic. James Fishers)

straight for Fishery I would have ended up being swept up past Cape Jervis and entered a very hard slog against wind and tide. More likely I probably would have phoned my mate Malcolm to request he pick me up from Cape Jervis instead.

But to understand wind, tide and ferry gliding is at the very core of

being a sea kayaker, and it does make you proud when you calculate and complete a ferry glide with the least amount of effort.

A full account of James trip can be read on his blog (<https://jamesfishers.food.blog/2018/08/27/a-solo-expedition-to-the-pages-islands->

sa-22-24-august-2018/).

James has kindly indicated that he would be very happy to assist any NSWSK Club member contemplating a Backstairs Passage crossing with their planning. His email address is [jamespfishers@gmail.com](mailto:jamespfishers@gmail.com).

## North Keppel Island Sea Kayak Symposium 2018



### Neil Gow reports on one of his favourite events

Paddle Capricornia, assisted by the Queensland Sea Kayak Club, delivered another great NKISKS in June 2018. The event has been held in the winter months on North Keppel Island, about 12 kilometres off the coast of Yeppoon, Queensland, since 2013. It offers a great mix of attractions: there is a well-organised and busy program; visitors can enjoy the break from the winter weather down south; locals get to show off their playground; a great team of trip

*Below left: Assembling on the beach at NKISK Symposium*

*Below right: Ian Tomlinson, Sid and Hooksey.*

leaders and instructors is always assembled and the accommodation with cabins and excellent food at the Environmental Education Centre is fantastic. This combination has become an addiction for some and they keep returning year after year.

On Day one, the program starts with a paddle to the island in supervised pods, arriving in time for lunch. Luggage is transported on the Centre's own boat, the *Gundoo Spirit*, although some hard cases load up their kayaks for an extra challenge. The 2-hour paddle is a chance to catch up with old friends and meet some new ones. This social opportunity is extended over lunch as the event is limited to only 50 people. You can get to interact with everyone else, if you wish. On the

afternoon of the first day informal activities occur with instructors making themselves available at the nearby beach where kayaks are stored during the event. Others take off for short paddles to Conical or Corroboree islands. No time is lost on loading and transporting kayaks at NKI! The action is just a short stroll away from the cabins and kitchen and dining area. This year Day one finished with an evening session of presentations by Clayton Anderson and Rob Mercer outlining challenging rescue situations sometimes involving smashed kayaks. Beware cliffs and caves! Gary Forrest also enthusiastically shared his Bass Strait crossing experiences.

Days two and three were filled with activities, including the (almost mandatory) paddle around North Keppel island; a night paddle with Les and Gary; snorkelling from the *Gundoo Spirit* with Camp Principal, Roger; "A Little Bit on the Side" (low brace workshop) and tow line and spectra loop making with Dave Winkworth; pump switch construction with Ian Tomlinson; navigation with Gary, and stroke, rolling and rescue activities with Rob Mercer, Les Allen, Clayton Anderson and Brian "Macca" Mc Carthy. And more paddles and eating!

A crowd assembled on the beach on Saturday afternoon for Rob Mercer's cunningly conceived Rescue Olympics. There were



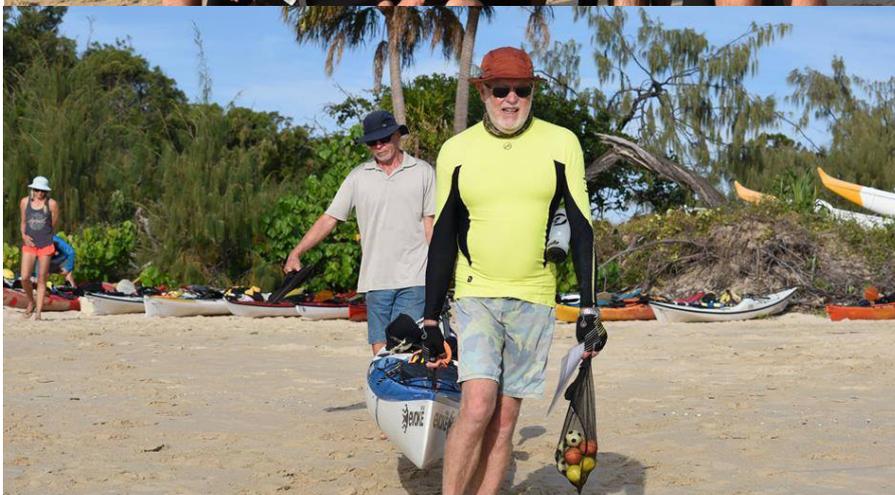
smouldering grudges to be sorted out by team captains Syd and Hooksey after a hotly contested result at a prior symposium. A third team was captained by Marjan de Boer. Confusion reigned as boats and paddles were confiscated, rolls were attempted with split paddles, or without paddles and some seemed to buckle and lose their way under the pressure. Hooksey's team got to the beach first but everyone was a winner! That evening we enjoyed the event again by watching George Vartabedian's drone footage, and Marjan's team was awarded the prize, kindly donated by George.

After dinner on Saturday night it was time to relax and listen to Tony Hirst's excellent music performance around the camp fire. We all promised that we would be back in the future to enjoy NKI and listen to the bush curlew's haunting calls in the middle of the night. Tony had also enthusiastically acted as facilitator during the event to keep us on track.

Next morning pods were organized for the paddle back to Yeppoon. The strong, westerly head wind deterred some paddlers and they chose to travel back on the *Gundoo Spirit*. Others who had arrived at NKI on the *Gundoo Spirit* had developed sufficient skills and confidence at the event to undertake, successfully, the paddle back to Yeppoon. Actually, the wind eased towards the end and the timekeepers announced that the headwind had added only 30 minutes to the crossing time when compared with the earlier outward journey.

Some of the attendees at NKI chose to stay behind on the island to spend some more days exploring the Keppels, as you do!

Back in Yeppoon we gathered for refreshments, farewells and thank-yous at the Marina, adjacent to the landing place. Tim Morris, the hardworking event organiser made another cameo appearance to paddle back with us, after paddling



to the island twice during the event (once at night!) to see how things were going!

We congratulate the indefatigable organisers from Paddle Capricornia for another great event, and hope that they are willing to do it all again one day!

Above top: Rescue Olympics competitors  
Above middle: Rob Mercer, Rescue Olympics mastermind  
Above bottom: Returning pod  
(all pics. this spread: George Vartabedian)

Back Cover: Nick Blacklock, the Candlestick/Totem Pole complex, Cape Hauy, Tasmania (Pic. Adrian Clayton)

