

Salt

THE MAGAZINE OF NSW SEA KAYAK CLUB
ISSUE 93 | **MAY 2014**



SUCCESS!

ROCK 'N' ROLL 2014

SURFING LESSONS

GOING SOLO

MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER

TASSIE BOOT CAMP

ALSO INSIDE: Basic skills | The twist | Nutrition | Croatia

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Shawn Armitage, in the Rock n Roll Spirit

Front Cover: David Brown at Tollgates by Matt Bezzina

NSW Sea Kayak Club Inc

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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

I write this still on a paddling 'high' after being fortunate enough to have been included on the successful club trip lead by Stu Trueman to SW Tasmania. It highlights some of the great strengths of the club which include the chance to meet and share a favourite activity with like-minded paddlers and the opportunity to learn from experts. The willingness of our leaders and instructors to donate their time to developing and practicing our paddling skills is, arguably, the club's greatest attribute as an enduring and successful organisation.

The club magazine, Salt, is another highly valued privilege of membership. The editor's job is always a tough but rewarding one and Steve Hitchcock has grasped the nettle with energy and enthusiasm and I have been keenly awaiting this, his first edition. I know that you have heard it all before, but the magazine cannot exist without your contributions and all of you have a story, a gear tip, a near disaster that others could learn from or perhaps just a great photo. Take a few moments to type up a draft and shoot it off to Steve.

Rock n Roll was a great success once again and reflects the inclusive and friendly nature of our club. The roughly half of our membership who made it to Batemans Bay know how well it went off and how well the weather turned out despite the early forecast of rain. It was great to welcome some 30 interstate paddlers to the event and to see many of our new members.

For the other half of our club who could not make it – think about next year. Thanks to everyone who contributed to a wonderful weekend – see David Linco's report in this issue for all the detail. Our working dates for RnR 2015 are March 20-23, venue still under discussion.

We have a wide spectrum of paddlers in the club and also see significant 'churn' of new members, some of whom join for a year or two, presumably do not find what they are looking for, and do not renew. The club has very clear objectives in relation to sea kayaking as expressed in our constitution, available on the website for your reading pleasure. The first objective is to 'conduct, encourage, promote and advance sea kayaking...'. How we best achieve this is a frequent item of discussion for the committee. If you have suggestions as to how the club could better support you in your paddling or function better, please drop me an email. To address one increasingly frequent request we are in the process of implementing a trial of a simple blog that will hopefully allow members to briefly communicate what they have been up to and to post some photos.

And now for some bureaucracy. We want to know who you are, where to send your magazine and who to ring on your behalf if we need to. Could you please check, complete and correct your User Profile on the login section of the club website.

Members with Australian Canoeing certifications and relevant First Aid certificates should also check the expiry dates which have been added to the user profile and contact the training coordinator with the correct dates if the listed information is incomplete or incorrect. This information forms our membership register and the club has a responsibility to ensure that it is correct.

The club AGM will be held at Bundeena over the weekend of August 2-3 with the meeting on the Saturday night as well as a presentation by an invited speaker. Mark your diaries and come along for a weekend of paddling as well as the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions to your committee on the running of your club.

Finally, brush up your skills by checking out the fantastic video training library for basic skills now live on the website. Cathy Miller has done a remarkable job coordinating such a professional product.

Keep paddling,
Campbell Tiley



From the **EDITOR'S DESK**

Steve Hitchcock

We all go a little mad sometimes. My moment of madness occurred when I put up my hand for this desk job, when the main purpose of joining NSWSKC was to get away from my desk job. Was it then an omen when after 13 years of pleasant paddling, I was circled by a shark off Blue Fish Point? Safety in numbers I thought, stick with the group and I'm only a 10% mortality risk. The link between my life insurance career and weekend activities has become disturbingly close.

My first task as Editor is to thank Mark Schroeder for his wonderful editions of SALT. He lifted the quality of our club magazine to a professional level envied by organisations much larger than ours. Through the continued contributions and constructive criticism from you, our members, I hope to maintain the standard going forwards.

I'm happy to say, this role has already opened my eyes to a world of wonderful kayaking stories. To meet and receive submissions from our fascinating members is reward enough for the hours at the desk. The pages that follow are clear evidence that not only do we have adventurous members, but you're an articulate bunch too.

Following Campbell's lead, I too must thank David Linco for running a successful Rock 'n' Roll weekend in Bateman's Bay. My highlight was witnessing David Williamson and Ben Woodcock present their extraordinary expedition highlights at the presentation evening, and then reliving it all again in the car on the way back to the airport the next day. We wish them well with their New Zealand to Australia trip later this year.

I would also like to use this opportunity to thank our sponsors; Expedition Kayaks, Coral Sea Kayaking and Currawong Beach Cottages for their support of our club and this magazine.

And lastly, I wish to thank my daughter Vanessa who through faster fingers than me, converted your articles and photos into the artwork you see before you. No matter how short or long, how local or afar, please continue to send me your letters and submissions by email or by seemail.

editor@nswseakayaker.asn.au



SURFING LESSONS

Fer

"I wrote this recount almost 2 years ago. A lot of water has gone under my bridge since then. This is a part extract from an old story written on the Hunter Kayak Klan site. It tells about an interesting experience that still today marks me every time I read the forecast with a long period swell and I am launching from a surf beach....Enjoy the story and the comments left at the time, some of them funny others very informative."

The forecast said wind E-SE 10-15kn, seas below 1m and swell 1m SE. I thought that was pretty quiet so I grabbed the kayak and went to the beach.

From the beach carpark the picture wasn't so quiet. The wind was for sure closer to 15kn than to 10 and the breaking waves were of a good size, probably 2-3m. The place where I launch from is a small bay. It is somewhat protected by rocks to the north and reef to the south. So the waves generally don't break on the beach but some 100m out where the reef is. On this day there were small waves ½ to 1 metre breaking on the beach as well.

I got to the water and went through the beach soap with no problem and started to look at, what looked to me, huge waves breaking over the reef. I tried to time it. I managed my timing so well that I got to the breaking zone just when a big set was there to meet me.

The foam after the waves broke was probably 1m high, because I was completely covered by it. The first foam hit me and took the water bottle from the front deck and my nose plugs from my nose. I saw the second wave

coming so I pushed the gas and was airborne just before it broke. However the third one had broken already behind the one I used as a ramp to jump and its foam hit me hard, really hard. I just know that the blow took some air from my lungs and tipped me over. I set up to roll and before attempting it, I was already up just from the rolling action of the wave. Just as soon as I realised I was up again the wave pulled me down once more. I tried to set up for the roll again, and again the wave toyed with me and put me right down again. I felt something around me and freaked out, I was running out of air and wet exited.

When I was out of the wave I realised that what was around me was my towing rope that had been clipped and secured under the bungees behind me. It was now floating and unclipped, though still attached to the boat by the towing point. The helmet that I also keep under a net attached to the bungees behind me was floating. I had thought of putting the helmet on before launching but the place where the waves break is deep so I hadn't bothered. Now I grabbed it and attached it firmly to my head.

I stayed there floating a while taking my air back and thinking what to do next. I was a bit concerned that the towing rope would entangle me if I tried a reentry and roll. I was also watching if the rip was taking me in, out or toward the rocks. Unfortunately I was heading towards the rocks, and I was forced to take the risk of entanglement by doing the reentry and roll. I didn't get entangled and paddled away from the rocks. When most of the water had been pumped out I turned the pump off, put on the skirt and went in by surfing a wave side ways until it put me on the sand not very kindly.

I was a bit shocked by the whole experience, so I packed away and went back home with my body still harbouring some adrenaline and my tail between my legs.

Comments by Owen

We all think that our "stuff" under our bungees is secure; then one day we get hit by a big one and lose it all. I lost half of a good, 2 piece, Prijon, carbon fibre paddle, "securely" tucked under the front deck bungees on my Avocet in the surf at Umina last year - never found it. Expensive lesson! I now use a paddle bag, securely attached to the rear of my deck with 3 separate ties plus my rear deck extra bungee.)

Comment by Carolyn

Yikes!! Should I be scared about this kayaking??

Comment from John to Carolyn

No, nothing to worry about. Like any sport there are a range of skills to build over time. Some of which you may never bother with. With experience, you will pick up which bits of the forecast are significant and what effect they are likely to have on the sea state.

Surfing is usually fun, and learning to catch waves in a kayak can make paddling a following sea a joy and let you cover some really impressive distances in short times. We can usually pick our launch and landing spots to avoid surf when we have new paddlers along anyway.

It's just another learning curve and the period of the swell gives you a very good idea of how powerful it is. If the waves today had been a bit bigger, BOM would have put out an advisory for dangerous surf.

Comment by Selim

Glad you came out of it without any injuries Fer. You got my adrenalin running just reading about it.

Comments by John

Your timing sounds nearly as bad as mine, Fer. But since you're still here you can label it "experiential learning" and carve a notch on your cockpit coaming.

Looking at Seabreeze, the wind and wave forecast was as you describe. But looking further down the page to the wave direction and period, the period kicked up from 7 seconds to a very solid and powerful 16 second ground swell between 11am and 2pm that day and continued into the evening. Even though the waves weren't any higher than before in open water, these would have been big, fat, long wavelength, waves containing a much larger tonnage of water to thump you with and travelling fast. As you just discovered, these are pretty powerful waves and will kick up far higher when they feel the bottom due to the volume of water in the wave.

Sounds like a pretty solid thrashing and you have just discovered the joys of being "window shaded". An American simile that draws on the behaviour of roller blinds when you let go of the string and the free end keeps rolling round and round the roller after the blind reaches the top of the window.

Another American surf phrase that tickled my funny bone is "Maytagged", referring to a popular brand of washing machine, I suspect you may have got a first hand taste of that one too. Good effort and glad it all worked out with your reenter and roll saving the day.

Swell waves are generally travelling too fast to catch unless you can surf onto them on a wind wave. In fact the speed of these waves probably also helps to explain what you felt was your poor timing. The waves were just travelling far faster than you expected and caught you by surprise.

Another thing about long period swell that often takes people by surprise is that having much more energy and inertia it refracts much more than short period waves. Refraction just describes the way that waves bend when they hit water of different depth.

The shallow water slows the wave but increases it's height so the wave picks up and bends round to face the beach for example. This means that the nice sheltered northern side of the headland that you planned to land on may in fact be being hammered by a long period southerly swell that is bending right around the corner and hitting the beach hard. River bars and bays will also tend to close out too. So not only is it harder to get off the beach in long period swell but it's harder to get back in too.

Comment by Shawn to Carolyn

As for John and Fer, you shouldn't be worried but there are a couple of things we can all take away from Fer's little adventure:

1. Keep gear on the deck to a minimum - the more gear on the deck, the more likely you will get entangled if you fall in. Tow ropes need to be quickly accessible so are generally kept on the deck. The last thing you want to have happen in the surf though is a self-deployed tow rope. You could shove it in a "glove-box" so it's accessible but out of the way. In surf many kayakers will also unleash their paddle and stow the paddle leash due to concerns with entanglement.



This is also the reason many of us carry a small knife (preferably with a blunt end) on our PFD's. I do wonder though whether I'd have the presence of mind to use it when placed in a situation that required me to use it to release myself.

2. The swell forecast alone is not sufficient. You need to understand the effects of the tide, the wind, the wave period, the swell and the sea on the conditions of the day. It'll come with experience and reviewing the conditions assessed the hazards and risks based on his skills and made a choice to go paddling. He has a good boat and recovery skills, and no doubt will take something away from his adventure that he can use in the future. Many of us, given the choice, would not have paddled in those conditions, as our skill sets are not sufficient to deal with consequences.

Knowing where your personal line is only comes with experience and pushing the personal boundary a little every paddle. You should always be self assessing - "if I put myself in that position - can I get myself out of that position" - you cannot always rely on a rescue.

Concluding Comments by Fer on the Day

I hadn't paid too much attention to the wave period, and the truth is that I knew they were more powerful with more water but I hadn't made the connection with breaking as bigger waves. Learn and live or don't learn and get trashed. Or get "window shaded" and "maytagged".

I also learned that I need to remain calm for longer under the water even if inside a wave. If I had waited another few seconds in the kayak I would have been able to roll up without a wet exit.

The only gear I keep on deck is:

1. The extra paddle inside its paddle bag attached to 3 points to the deck lines which didn't suffer anything probably because it low profile.
2. The towing-throw rope with 3 points of anchor (tow point, bungees and carabiner), which lost 2 of its 3 points that day. I admit I need a better system for the rope.
3. The water bottle that got lost but since it was an old Sprite bottle the only thing that annoys me is littering the sea.

4. The GPS home-made-hold attached with a cord to the deck lines, which remained in place.
5. The GPS on the holder was thrown out of the holder, however it remained attached to the kayak through an extra cord attached to the bungees.
6. My helmet being under the net, came away because one of the bungees became untied and the net worked loose. In any case I should have the helmet on my head when going through the surf.

And finally, I checked my GPS afterwards and it recorded me travelling at a maximum speed of 14.8km/h. I guess that was the speed the wave took me backwards and spinning.



GOING SOLO

Bronwyn Davies



A few years ago when paddling in our double kayak with Rob Mercer's Tuesday night group, Matt Bezzina asked me "Why don't you paddle a single kayak?"

He planted the seed and ever since I had been thinking about how I would do it. For a totally blind person paddling a single kayak definitely offers a challenge. Both Roy and I are up to the challenge, Roy with confidence always encouraging, me with very shaky legs.

In early May 2013 Roy bought himself a Valley Gemini ST to play in and I thought I'd try it out. If Matt had confidence that I could do it, I guess I could. Here goes.

My first time in a single kayak was a cool May morning 2013. Roy took the Horizon Double out to support me. The double performed terribly with one person. It was awkward to say the least. There was a bit of a wind blowing and I must have turned the Valley turtle six times. I was frozen but Roy encouraged me to continue. I hardly got a dozen paddle strokes in and over she went again.

Next we went to Watsons Bay and borrowed a boat from Rob. With Roy in a single it was much easier to stay together but the jolly Valley preferred to float upside down. By now I had become discouraged.

Winter came and a busy workload and paddling the single remained a dream.

As soon as the weather warmed up Roy took his Valley and I hired a Mirage 530 from the Spit. This boat didn't have a tendency to want to turn turtle.

I was amazed how easy it was to move and I was off! We took the boats to Grotto point and coming back we had a tremendous head wind but I paddled hard and kept it upright.

The next week I bought my own 530 and the adventure started.

We use a submersible VHF marine radio each for communication and took the kayaks to Clontarf. We paddled to Castle Rock and landed and then the dreaded wind rose. It was easy to keep the nose into the wind and paddle my little heart out to get around to Grotto Light. Roy thought he'd try for us to be adventurous and we poked our nose around the corner into the wind swept seas. Over she went and I lost my hatch cover. An assisted rescue and a hard paddle back to Clontarf ended the most successful day in my new boat.

Since then we've practiced mostly up at Brooklyn and out to Pearl beach a few times. If the wind didn't blow so hard it would be easier.

I thoroughly enjoy the freedom of paddling my own kayak. I love playing with turns and learning new skills. It's a different learning curve for both of us. Thanks Matt for the idea.

Roy is very patient chasing me and giving me direction. When I'm over he's at my side almost instantly tipping the water out and wow can I do the boat re-entry quickly.

Recently at Batemans Bay Rock n Roll we borrowed five different single kayaks from Rob and had an adventure of our own.

Sunday afternoon the bay became choppy and a bit of a wind blew so we stayed close to home.

Monday morning with idealism and flat water we paddled to Snapper Island then to Square Head and Long Beach for a surf landing. In the double I always get huge butterflies when we do a surf landing so you can imagine the creatures flying inside me in the single.

One major thing was I forgot to paddle hard with the surf into the beach. It was only about 60cms but big enough for my first landing. Over she went and I followed the boat into shore. Roy and I swapped boats and the next scary thing was launching into the small surf, which with good timing ended up a non-event. We landed back at Batehaven Beach and then took a dream come true boat out to try.

As soon as I got into the Tide Race Evoke I fell in love. It fitted me like a glove and paddled perfectly. I left the rudder up and used paddle strokes to control her.

I even tried a stunt. Poor Roy was paddling a Taren 15 with the rudder up that is meant to go in a straight line and he was trying to turn it to catch up to my little speedy Evoke. Alas he was too slow to warn me and my Evoke ran over the back of David Linco's kayak and we were in a bit of a tangle. No problem he rolled and I paddled backward.

I think I'll make the Hawkesbury classic yet – the dark won't worry me!



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ROCK N ROLL

2014 Wrap Up

David Linco

RnR returned to Batemans Bay for the 5th time in 2014. The combination of a wide range of paddling options from sheltered beaches, rock gardening, sea caves to offshore islands to explore means this location will continue to be a favourite for many more years to come.

The weather was picture perfect with blue skies, sunshine and only light northerly winds picking up from mid-morning each day. Thunderstorms threatened but in the end only provided a wonderful light show to end with each evening.

Many paddlers arrived on Friday and got in an afternoon paddle before the Hawaiian themed Beer & Pizza that evening sponsored by Expedition Kayaks. Congratulations to our RnR King (Shawn) and Queen (Nerissa) who won the Hawaiian Best Dressed Award with their colourful outfits.

In order to attract newbie members to RnR this year, we had a "Getting Connected" theme. The weekend was structured to make it easier for newbies to meet other paddlers and easily navigate this very busy weekend to get the most from the 3 days. From easily identifiable hot pink t-shirts worn by the team of "hot" volunteers, regular member interviews, introductions during trip briefings, name tags and tea/coffee hospitality area in the marquee, we hope newbie members had a great time and fully enjoyed the weekend activities.

Let me mention a few of my personal highlights;

- Raffy N - completed his first cowboy self-rescue on Monday morning after stepping into a kayak for the first time on Friday.
- Kenn C - demonstrated a new skill "rock gardening in times of drought" on Friday afternoon.
- Todd T - fantastic solo rolling demo on the beach when the stunt paddling session was being run in the lagoon.
- Fernando, Mark & David (me) - new segment on stunt (or possibly novelty) paddling where the Woodcock Manoeuvre and Latin Kayak Dancing were attempted.
- David & Ben - convinced us that a sinking boat is no reason to end an expedition.
- Kayak Pogies - A talented pool of directors kept us engaged with a wide range of content styles ranging from Hope Springs, Driving Miss Daisy to Mad Max, Pulp Fiction and Die Hard. Don't miss Sunday night next year.

We wish David & Ben safe paddling on their next expedition in Dec 2014 from NZ to Aust. You can follow their preparation and journey for this next trip at their Facebook site "Adventure Expeditions - Sea Kayak New Zealand to Australia".

We are still looking for content from those who took photographs and video footage in order to have a club content database to create a RnR



Wrap up video as well as quality photos for use in the magazine and website. Could you please upload content to <http://goo.gl/mqT5Lk> or contact the Editor or me for help. All content is appreciated, other than budgie smuggler shots for which certain paddlers will be provided a disincentive prize next year.

Lastly thank you to the wonderful team of volunteers who made RnR run smoothly in particular Neil Gow and Nerissa Worwood. Well done team. I'm almost ready to start recruiting for the hot pink shirted RnR volunteers again. Email me at rnr@nswseakayaker.asn.au if you have any ideas re location, events or simply want to get involved in our great kayaking club.

I look forward to catching up with you on the water and or at RnR 2015.



FIRST KAYAKING EXPERIENCE

Raffy Njeim



My first ever introduction to kayaking was at Batemans Bay at Rock n Roll. When my mate (David Linco) first told me (the week before) we were going for a trip to Bateman's bay to spend a weekend kayaking, I was excited to participate in this new outdoor activity. Being on a 3 month internship from Lebanon, I was keen to get out and enjoy the wonderful Australian outdoors.

After arriving late Thursday evening and getting settled in, I launched the following day ready to conquer the ocean. However some good advice from Mark suggested I paddle along the shore to better get a feel for the kayak. I quickly understood and appreciated the challenge of boat stability, even in sheltered waters within a hundred meters from shore. A few hours later and having mastered the wet exit, my challenge was to crack the cowboy self-rescue over the course of the weekend.

On Saturday and Sunday morning I attended Basic Skill sessions. Very much appreciated the patient nature of the instructors Harry and Neil who really helped me gain confidence in bracing and relentlessly trying the cowboy self-rescue.

My last paddle day was Monday and I felt ready to paddle out to Tollgate. My balance was much improved and although I could see the island it was a long hot paddle (compounded by Mark, David and Kenn rolling around every 10 minutes). When we reached the island, I was exhausted and very hot so what better way to cool down than for my paddling buddies to push me over.

Cowboy time. The first two times ended the same way with me straddling the boat but at the last move into the cockpit getting the shakes and heading back into the water. On my third attempt, I not only straddled but also used the paddle for some bracing and amazed myself by ending up in the cockpit.

I cracked my first cowboy! Thanks Harry and Neil for your tips and advice. I'm wondering how long it will take to crack my first roll and thinking with the benefit of hindsight, it will take much more than a weekend. When I first arrived at Batemans Bay, I only knew David and Mark. However it didn't take long for me to get connected. Everyone at Rock n Roll was so friendly and easy going despite the age differences and despite my lack of kayaking skills, everyone made me feel very welcome. Thanks everyone for introducing me to this wonderful sport.

A QUEENSLANDER'S perspective

Eddie Safarik

It didn't seem at all unnatural to be moving my bits while standing in a circle with other sea kayakers who were doing the same. John Evertze from Victoria joined us late in the session but soon got the hang of it. There we were in the sacred Rock and Roll marquee, all from varying far-flung corners of Australia pulsing our southern sections in unison. Most of us had only met that night after the Pogies. Andrew Eddy started it. It, was an impromptu off-water sea kayak instruction program about lower back health and the importance of activating your pelvic floor and core muscles. I wondered, was this moment that the essence of R&R's magic and the "get connected" theme took hold?

Fernando Charnis invited me to team up with him to add a last minute advanced rescues instruction session to Sunday's program. I've been following his paddling and filming progress since we first met bashing around the lively features of Cook Island near the NSW/QLD border. Fer shared his passion for paddling and rescuing in dynamic rock garden environments. There was some serious learning to be had amongst the laughs and jokes too.

Respect to David Linco whose very presence set the mood for a fun and relaxed weekend. The R&R team produced a program that engaged participants and also cleverly gave us the right opportunities to create some of our own unexpected R&R moments of note like the ones above.

For me the Toll Gate Islands were the jewels in the Bateman's Bay crown and to get the opportunity to paddle there with Stuart Trueman and our crew was brilliant. Wade Carberry showed us what thrills could be had when you add the right mix of courage, timing and a tough little boat. Gary Davie and I paddled back out there on Monday, marveled at the beauty of Blue Cave and the narrow and cunning 90-degree entry. The clear, pool-like water between the islands was irresistible for two keen free divers so we donned our masks and greeted the fish with our unfamiliar northern faces.

The food and entertainment on Saturday night was spot-on! If there was just one learning point that I could take away from Ben and David's presentation it would probably be, freeboard's your friend.

We were comforted and encouraged by being amongst others who shared the perma-grin and glazed love-eyes that come from a seriously deep affair with the sea and sea kayaking. Thank you to the NSWSKC for the smiles, laughter, entertainment, learning and beer. Thank you also to Wade, Ken, Ron and Rhys who generously offered and loaned me their beloved sea kayaks.

See you in Queensland for some island time NSWSKC!



RIPPLE EFFECTS

from a visiting Southerner

Bob Fergie (VSKC President)

For some years now I have wanted to attend a Rock n Roll weekend given the terrific reports I'd heard from various sea kayaking friends. As a Canberra boy (at least until my early 20s) the NSW South Coast (particularly Rosedale) was a very regular base for school holidays as well.

In more recent years, and since my parents moved from Canberra to Broulee, I have taken every opportunity to drive up from Melbourne to visit and paddle. So, when it was decided that the second Australian Sea Kayak Clubs Summit (ASKCS) was to be held immediately following the NSWSKC's RnR weekend at Bateman's Bay my latent hopes were all-but realized.

Being the VSKC President this year, and together with Robin Boundy our VSKC Training Coordinator, we were to represent the VSKC at the ASKC Summit, and by implication the RnR as well. I should add that we were not the only foreigners from Victoria attending the RnR. Five other VSKC mates (John and Tina Evertze, Gerard O'Reily, Mick and Lynn MacRobb) enjoyed the many offerings of the weekend as well.

My expectations with the dual Friday to Monday experience were all and more than met. As with other State sea kayak club representatives I'm sure, Robin and I enjoyed a very generous and warm welcome to the RnR weekend. It was terrific to be able to meet new and old friends with a similar obsession for paddling long skinny boats along our fabulous Australian coastline.



Mark Sundin with Aleut stick in hand
- Bob Fergie

Robin and I especially appreciated the opportunity to relax as ordinary participants rather than organisers (our annual VSKC gathering is similar in many ways to the RnR program and is always a busy experience for the organizing committee). My hats off to David Linco and his team of helpers and to Campbell Tiley and his NSWSKC committee for the huge effort put into planning and running this event.

Brilliant! Robin and I enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in a level 3 surf training session on Saturday morning with Fernando Chanis and Nick Gill around at Tomakin. As VSKC instructors we really valued the chance to see NSWSKC instructors in action and to learn much from the experience. On Sunday morning Robin and I enjoyed a leisurely bit of rock gardening around Snapper Island followed by some surfing fun on the Clyde River Bar with Mark Sundin, Mick MacRobb and Claus Bessler.

Needless to say, we all enjoyed the various afternoon and evening offerings too. The meal at the Catalina Club 300m down the road (or was it a 3000m walk in the rain) was very enjoyable with a most interesting after-dinner talk as well, although I'm not sure about the espoused 'submarine' paddling technique, except that it probably negates weathercocking tendencies! The video competition on Sunday evening was not only a lot of fun (at the serious expense of small birds and smugglers), it showcased an impressive quality and breadth across the various entries. Wouldn't it be great to produce an Australian version of a Justine Curgenven-type DVD series with the collation of similar quality material from other sea kayak clubs as well, me thinks! Overall, the RnR program was great with plenty of space between activities and an atmosphere that was very friendly and inclusive throughout. There were lots of opportunities for good-humored fun and laughs with two standouts for me personally.

The first was an on-land ‘moment’ during the video competition screening, and no, it wasn’t Mark Sundin’s ‘Budgie Smugglers’ entry (although it was hilarious). No, it was what Turner Wilson (of Kayak Ways fame) would describe as a ‘not-so-optimal-body-shape’ moment. Being a little larger than the average 60 year old sea kayaker, I have often been used to ‘test’ the strength of paddles under poor-rolling technique duress. If it doesn’t break, then the said item is deemed to have passed the ‘Bob-test’ (a highly sought after qualification I hasten to add). Well, some unsuspecting ‘do-gooder’ sitting behind me during the screening of the videos saw me standing to the side and in need of a good lounge chair to rest my weary frame. He (perhaps foolishly) offered me one of his chairs—one of those you-beaut, super light fold-up ‘Helinox’ things. With some apprehension I applied the ‘Bob-test’... in fact over a prolonged period of an hour or so. Remarkably the seat held its form (or should I say, my form) and I was very comfortable indeed, unlike the ‘good Samaritan’ owner.

I can well imagine that he was justifiably anxious and distracted as my body vibrated and lurched in response to the many video funny bits. He must have been greatly relieved when I finally extracted my self and handed this amazing piece of expedition furniture back...in one piece. Clearly, ‘not-so optimal body shapes’ and really good chairs can co-exist!

The second incident took place on the water. I was paddling my West Greenland skin-on-frame kayak using my Aleut wooden blade (specially hand-crafted by my son-in-law to mark my 60th birthday). Together with Mark Sundin and a few others, I was chancing my arm on a few easy waves on the Clyde River Bar and enjoying a number of long runs, powered-on very efficiently by my 230cm trusty ‘stick’. Mark, who had earlier accused me of being stuck in an out-of-date ‘stick’ fad (his words) had noticed the effortless power of the stick and asked for a try.

Being a ‘man of the cloth’, I had no choice but to accede to his request, reluctantly swapping my tried and tested traditional instrument for one of his latest ‘fad-fetish’, super light, 210cm imported Celtic carbon fiber blades. Who knows, it was probably mass-manufactured leaving a huge carbon footprint in contrast to my hand carved WR Cedar/Spruce laminated ‘stick’. Actually I confess, I rather liked his new fad, Celtic blade if the truth be known.

Anyway, Mark seemed to be having just a little trouble getting onto a wave with my stick and like a ‘dummy-spitting’ toddler in a sandpit, wanted his familiar ‘spade’ back pronto! All very sad of course, but then again I have noticed in life that there are occasionally those special moments of pure, unadulterated bliss that one can revisit in one’s minds on into eternity. This for me this was one of them, as Mark, with some degree of humility, admitted that maybe the problem was not the stick but the stickler! [Now, settle down Mark, you know I love you and as a paddling pastor have a deep concern for all things ‘character building’ for you and the broader sea kayaking flock, or should that be pod. With this I rest my case].

Actually, and in conclusion, the one thing that sticks in my mind about my 2014 RnR experience was that it was lots of fun, enjoyed with many new and old friends. Paddling these long skinny boats of ours is fantastic for sure, but the thing I value most is the opportunity these boats spawn through events like the RnR to mutually build and enjoy friendships. Long live the ‘rock n roll’ in all of it inter-state variations I say! I expect that I’ll be back for more of the same in the years ahead. While I’m on that point, and on behalf of the VSKC, let me extend an invitation to members of the NSW SKC to join us down on the Gippsland Lakes for our annual Paddle Fest gathering from the 7-9th November 2014. You would be most welcome and this would, for me, represent a terrific RnR ripple-effect-consequence.



Robin Boundy surfing on the Clyde River Bar
- Bob Fergie



A shot of me taken by Mark Sundin

TOLL GATE ISLANDS: How the Blue Cave Turned Red

Selim Tezcan

Tollgate Islands have been an attraction for me since I first went there at R&R 2010. Back then I didn't have the skills to get close to the backwash from the rocks or go through the middle of the islands. I stayed far back and watched other skilled paddlers with envy who could go in and out of caves, come close to rocks or climb over them. This time, when David Linco announced R&R 2014 was going to Batemans Bay I got excited. I knew that with more skills under my belt, I could explore this beautiful area to my heart's content, or at least a bit more than last time.

Last day of R&R 2014, Mon 10 March, was a quiet day, which is typical of R&R weekends. Most people return on Sunday. I woke up early, knowing that I wanted to have a last paddle before I return to the Central Coast. As I was packing up my car I saw Shaan Gresser walk into the marquee with Monday's trips. I stopped packing and rushed to get my name onto a trip (as if there were too many people and I was going to miss out). I had a quick look and I saw "Toll gate Islands: come if you are willing to scratch your boat" Trip Leader: Fernando. I went 'yes' Toll Gate Islands, rock gardening, that's where I wanted to go and signed in as the first person on the sheet and went back to finishing my packing.

When I returned, ready and dressed for the trip, I asked Fernando who else is coming. Fernando looked at me and said "Just you and me and Vincent". Somehow that caused an echo in my head. You and me and Vincent? I asked in disbelief. Yes said Fernando with a smile, "just you and me and Vincent".

I haven't paddled with Vincent Weafer before but I have watched his videos and he seemed to have good skills. That was the moment of realisation for me. There were only 3 of us. It was led by a guy who climbs up to rocks with his boat, another guy with good skills and then there was me. I had no one for support or to hide behind. Plus there was a little tiredness from drinking and partying late and not quite enough sleep. I knew this was going to be a big day. Yes Fernando I thought, "Just you and me and Vincent" and possibly some "trouble" coming along too.

The trip was off to a bad start when I realised my bilge pump battery was flat. I was in my Nordkapp RM. I brought it down as a spare for one of the guest paddlers from interstate. It had been used on Sunday, though I wasn't sure what happened to cause the dead battery. I informed Fer about the state of my battery. He wasn't impressed but we continued to Tollgate islands.

We approached the South side of the islands first and the seas were head on. Fer went around a wash channel between the island and a big rock. Water was rebounding and swell sets were creating turbulent water. When Fer completed the circle around the rock with his usual smile on his face he asked Vincent if he wanted to go. Vincent went in. Then I went in. Full circle. This was great. This was my first time. It wasn't that scary. Next big thing was going around the blowhole. First Fer then Vincent and then I, all had a great time getting washes from the blowhole. This was turning into one of the best days of my paddling at R&Rs.



I was overcoming my fears being close to rocks, enjoying all that rebounding water and white wash. This was wonderful. That's where I wanted to be. My dream was becoming a reality.

We continued our day around the islands, going in or around rocks. I was getting used to and enjoying getting up and down with the swell on the side of the rock platforms. The day turned into a fun training day for rock gardening. Fer was doing it first and then asking Vincent and me if we wanted to do the same.

When I noticed Vincent was turning down some of the offers from Fer, I developed a defensive tactic of staying away from Fer so that he asked the question to Vincent first. If Vincent went in, I kind of felt I could try it as well or I could just skip. That is what happened when Fer showed us skilfully how you get onto a rock platform and get off it using the swell and wave sets.

When Fer has come down of that beautiful small rock pool, I stayed away from him so that he asked the question to Vincent first. I didn't think I could go on that platform. Then Vincent accepted the offer and did the platform. I was now in two thoughts, shall I or shall I not. I never climbed to a rock platform before. Both pair of eyes looking at me, Fer asked the question: "Do you want to try?" During the course of the day I was gaining confidence, I felt good. I watched the water go up and down. It felt I could and I did. Like a pro. Without a problem. It felt easy. I was feeling on top of the world.

As we were playing around the rocks and circling the islands we ran into a large group of paddlers with Adrian Clayton. They seemed to be waiting or resting, stationary. We stopped too. Fer said the small opening in the island led to a cave called Blue Cave. I had never heard of it before. Together with Adrian, Fer went to investigate to see if we could go in. I sat there in bouncing water, and then after Adrian and Fer came out of the cave, Fer asked me the question: "Do you want to go in?" Damn! I got caught. The question had been asked to me first! I said yes, I wanted to go in.

Then Fer asked the question to Vincent, who had stayed back behind me, Vincent declined. Declined? Shit! Why? How come Vincent declined? Does he know something I don't? What is happening inside the cave? What have I done? Can I handle this? One of Adrian's paddlers went in next and with Fer asked him to keep an eye on me when I was in there. A few minutes later I followed him into the cave.

I wished I was following Fer. I didn't know the other paddler. I wanted to be in there with Fer. I would feel safer. I know Fer. As I come closer to the mouth of the cave my heart was beating fast with anticipation. When I committed to go, my heart settled, I went through the narrow opening. It was uneventful. What I saw was amazing. It was calmer inside. The cave had an opening to the sky at the entrance. Sunlight hit the water almost vertically creating tube of rays and soft blue patches of water. I slowly paddled into the cave. The other paddler was in there stationary enjoying the moment. I went in and positioned myself next to him, looking out from the darkness of the cave into this blindingly bright light beaming into the water. Then my buddy left - I was on my own.

For the following few moments in the dark side of the cave, I watched the bright sun rays lightening up the blue water like God beaming down from sky. I gazed my eyes over the hues of the light reflected softly on the rock walls. Some waves ushered inside and rocked me gently deep inside the cave. For few moments, I forgot where I was. I was immersed into this untouched wilderness completely. Soon I found myself thinking this is what sea kayaking is all about. This is what I trained for. This is the reason I took the risk to get in here. Hell yeah! Who the hell are those guys in their skinny skis and Speedos to tell me ski paddling is better than Sea kayaking! There is nothing like being here! These thoughts and the images of Bob Hawke in his speedos shook me out of my dissolved state and made me come back to reality; it was time to get out. I paddled slowly to the opening of the cave. I started to watch the waves come through the S shaped narrow exit. I made the move and committed to exit. The water was restless and had an uncomfortable power to move me around. It was unpredictable, and as I tried to paddle forward, I was pushed back and sideways.





As the water was swelling through the narrow opening of the cave, it had much more force than I had experienced elsewhere. I tried to pull forward and control the boat but I made little progress. I was stuck in the narrow opening of the cave and losing time. I knew what that meant, the next set was about to come and I was still stuck in this tight gap. At the push and the pull of the first big wave, I tried to paddle forward hard but I could only stay where I was. When the wave pulled back, it took me hard against the left side of the rock wall. I found myself wobbling with my left side against the rock while trying to keep my balance, and then the next wave came and swiped me against the side of the wall and lifted me higher.

I had no room on my left side and my right side was now looking more like a cliff. There was no place for a support stroke. I went sideways in. I tried to get my blade on the surface of the water twice but slushing water terminated my efforts, it happened so quickly and I wet exited.

Feeling surprisingly calm, I was trying to figure out which way I should swim. Some thoughts came to my mind like will it be OK to pull my boat back into the cave and re-enter in calmer water? Or will this be risky given the chance I could be thrown inside the cave by a freak wave? It was narrow and the water was restless for trying to re-entry and roll where I was. While having these thoughts I heard Fer calling me if I am OK and then I heard him telling me to swim back into the cave.

Within moments, Fer was inside the cave, alongside me and aiding my rescue. My recent memory of soft blue waters seen from above, was quickly erased by the sudden reliance on those red kayaks seen from below. Despite my waterlogged boat, and disheartened spirits, I was quickly back on-board and following Fer out the narrow channel between sets into the bright sunshine and reassuring seas. Little did I know until we emerged, the cave rescue and exit was happily recorded for posterity by the travelling FerCam.



Click on the link below to watch it for yourself. As they say, a (moving) picture paints a thousand words.

So you may be wondering how I feel about it now. Will I go into the Blue cave again? Or even come close to rocks? I learned a few things;

1. In narrow areas water is very forceful. When you commit to paddle out you must commit with all your strength and speed without worrying about your balance.
2. If you are forced against the rock wall, it is OK to gently push yourself away from it with your paddle; do not wait for the next wave to take you away.

3. If you fall in, calm down. Tension sinks you under your boat, you can't set up and your roll fails. Relax, float and set up.

4. Shit happens. You fall in. It is not a big deal. (Of course; be safe, assess your ability first, wear a helmet and travel with a reliable guide.)

In conclusion, yes I will do it again. It wasn't a failure. I fell in probably in one of the worse areas. I didn't get smashed against the rocks, nor did any shark take my legs. In contrary, I see it as a success. It helped me overcome my fear of falling into water near rocks. I feel much more confident around Box Head now (my favourite local spot).

I go up close and enjoy watching the back wash. I am hooked and looking forward to more rock gardening. If you are like me and just starting with rock gardens, I recommend you just go for it. You will fall, you will swim, you will learn. All you have to do is make sure it is "just you, Fernando and Vincent" in that trip.

You can watch the masterful rescue and the breathtaking video of it at Fernando's Blog here: <http://rockyspray.blogspot.com.au/2014/03/fishing-in-blue-cave.html>

Or on Fer's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-ZbJd6krNY>

Saltiest submission **WINNER**



For those members who didn't attend this year's Rock 'n' Roll in Bateman's Bay, the winner of the best submission in the last edition of SALT was Michael Steinfeld. You may recall that Mike recently joined the elite sub-branch of the NSW SKC, called the Helicopter Club, by so eloquently describing his version of the Assisted Rescue Technique.

Only a privileged few have earned a spot in this club, and we certainly owe it to the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter Service, to help keep this membership as low as possible.

Our thanks go to Mark Sundin of Expedition Kayaks for the Wasabi 650 Touring Paddle prize that was donated to Mike at the presentation night at Rock 'n' Roll.

I'm pleased to announce that Expedition Kayaks have pledged their support for this segment for the rest of 2014. The prize to aim for is a NRS short-sleeved endurance jacket. So please keep your submissions flowing in and may the saltiest stories keep winning!

It's not all about **THE TOLLGATES...**

Ian Vaile

One of the joys of Batemans Bay is that it has challenges to offer for a wide range of skills. Over the two days of RnR I had the privilege to take two trips that explored the inside of the bay, with grade ones and twos, and there was a lot to see. On Saturday Neil Duffy and I led a group who paddled across to Long Beach, an uneventful crossing, and then along the punctuated coast out to the end of the seaward point. There were plenty of rock gardens to poke around in, with such a gentle swell coming through that cutting through a gap was a peaceful rather than stressful act. Beach after beach we played in the rocky headlands and then scooted along just in from the breaks to the next. Eventually we sat off the final point, watching distant blades flashing from a party headed over from the tollgates, and planned our crossing.

Rather than hug the coast back to the return point, we elected to cross directly back to the southern shore and head east back to the beach.

The group was strong and in good spirits, and we were rewarded with some spectacular cloud castles over the tollgates. After a spirited run back along the beach we landed just before the noble strandmeister, tired but happy, you know the drill.

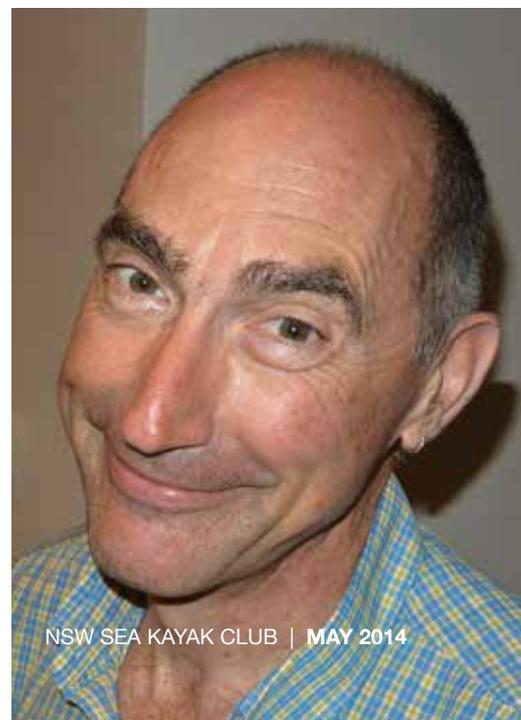
Sunday was a different excursion: I decided for variety's sake I'd lead a group up the Cullendulla Creek. We paddled across the bay under calm skies and in a mild sea, and after grouping off the head we entered the tranquility of the creek. Cunningly I had timed our arrival for almost exactly low tide, so we had the joy of running a mighty bar almost five centimetres deep and then hunting out the shifting channels in the creek.

Hands were as useful as paddles as we pushed our craft gracefully along the sandy bottoms.

When eventually it all got too much, we sensibly turned our sterns to the hills and set to work against the rushing inbound tide to exit to the bay ("rushing" if you were extraordinarily easily excited). Back out round the head to the eastern end of long beach, where some of us practiced a simple beach landing in the low surf while the others enjoyed the sun behind the breaks. Back home via the islands, beachmaster and so forth as before, rinse and repeat.

Two relatively gentle trips, but as is so often the case, they had a charm and appeal and we all got wet. Really, what more could you ask?





The Making of the **BASIC SKILLS WEBSITE**

Cathy Miller



It's Day 2 of filming and it's 4:30am on a Saturday morning at the car park at Palm Beach. 8 paddlers from the NSW Sea Kayak Club are running around in the dark preparing to launch before dawn. There's Matt Bezzina (also taking photographs), Steve Bell, Stuart Trueman, Owen Kimberley, Claudia Schremmer, myself and Ian Vaile who have put up our hands to be 'dawn paddlers'.



Specialist outdoor cinematographer Mel MacPherson is putting on her wetsuit, and taping a Go-Pro HD camera to Stuart Trueman's kayak. She also readies her digital Sony XDCam PMW-EX1 camcorder into its specialised underwater housing. Brett Beswick, jetski driver from the Surf Life Saving Association prepares the jetski for filming.



We're on track for a 5.00 am start, with first light at 5.23am. There's just one more detail I need to make sure of. After the group shots, Steve Bell, Owen and Stuart are all going to paddle around the headland to the surf at Palm Beach. Here they will demonstrate landing and launching in small waves, and how the basic strokes are used in dynamic water.



When I ask Stuart Trueman if he has brought his helmet, he shakes his head. "I don't have one". This is the man with such a high level of expertise and skills that he paddled around Australia without one. Who was I to tell him otherwise?

I pull a red helmet out from behind my back. "It's OK, you can use mine." Without a second word he put on my (very uncomfortable) red helmet.

It must be the only footage ever taken of Stu with a helmet on! Great dedication – and that's the story of this website.

Where it started

The idea for this came after the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation advertised a sports participation grant. The maximum grant was \$10,000.

With the support of then president Michael Steinfeld and John Piotrowski Training Co-ordinator I wrote up a proposal for an online resource and we submitted it.

It took the Department 6 months to tell anyone about the success or otherwise of the applications. In fact advising all the applicants of the outcome 2 weeks before Christmas was completely daft! But the news for us was great – we were granted the maximum of \$10,000. As we celebrated, we had no idea how inadequate this grant was for the amount of volunteer work we would all do.

Outline and scripting phase

The first phase was to outline the content and develop a prototype for the web-pages.

The content outline was based on training material developed by NSWSKC instructors to hold a Basic Skills weekend. This content has done the rounds and been passed around different instructors. Each instructor might then add their own flavour to it, but the core content was tried and true.

I used this content to develop a rather ambitious outline (sense has prevailed and what you see today has been scaled back). Peter Kappelmann was the webmaster and with input from Ken Day and Ian Vaile both of whom had website expertise, he put together a lovely design for the website.

While the design has changed due to migrating the website over to a content management system, the core design has remained - with the introductory text up the top, the video player, and additional text content in 'tabs'.

Scripting phase

In the meantime I issued a call to instructors to write first draft content for the web pages. Adrian Clayton was one of our key content writers, generously sharing his knowledge and years of instructing experience.

I also picked Rob Mercer and Steve Bell's brains and used existing resources such as books and other websites. Ken Day also contributed some of the first drafts, as did John Jakimyszyn. There is still content in the pipeline for a later release. Other content came from the Basic Skills weekend training notes used by the club. Rae Duffy also contributed scripts, text and shared her instructing knowledge.

Once I had a first draft of the text or 'key points', I began pre-production for the shoot.

The film crew

I have seen a lot of kayak footage that is either filmed from a boat (wobble-cam, that gives you sea-sickness just watching it), or from the shore (static and boring). Sequences filmed from height (wharfs) had potential but were not dynamic. So I was looking for something more inspiring.

Through my production contacts I came across Mel MacPherson, specialist outdoor cinematographer. Mel has filmed ironman events, snow sports and other televised sports – and she paddles surf skis!

She films water sequences with Brett Beswick, from the Surf Life Saving Association. Mel and Brett operate as a well-oiled team, with Mel riding on the back of the ski and filming both in and out of the water. Some of her loveliest shots are when she is dropped off in the water and she films both above and below the waterline.

The shoot

After meeting Mel and discussing options, we organised a two-day shoot at Pittwater. This was a perfect location because jet skis are allowed there and there's a boat ramp, it has picturesque scenery, sheltered waters and surf.

On Day one of filming, we used the quiet waters around Pittwater to film sequences such as carrying kayaks, launching and landing in flat water, forward stroke, steering strokes around buoys, capsize, edging, assisted rescues and self-rescue. I had a team of volunteer paddlers who came and went. Once I got them all wet and exhausted a new lot turned up!



On Day 2 we scheduled the dawn shoot, surf shoot and remaining skills such as paddle float rescue, low brace, and more strokes. Matt Bezzina took photographs as well.

Mel boosted our output by taping Go Pro cameras to the deck of our kayakers. For example, Mel taped a Go Pro HD camera to Claudia Schremmer's deck. While Mel and I filmed other sequences, we sent Claudia off with a long list of strokes to run through. Talk about efficient.

Why the surf?

We are a sea kayak club. The surf provided scope for dynamic footage. Strokes such as low brace and stern rudder really come to life in moving water. And what better way to convince paddlers of the need for a good forward stroke than showing a paddler break out through surf? The footage of our experienced paddlers handling waves is inspirational – and something for us all to aspire to.

The unicorn hat

One idea I came up with was that it's sometimes useful to demonstrate common mistakes, but to signal very clearly that this wasn't correct practice.

The answer came from my daughter who had a unicorn hat, as you do when you're 16. It pretty much says d***head. So we bravely put on the unicorn hat when we wanted to show a stroke done incorrectly, for example, no body rotation when paddling.

Andrew Eddy wore the unicorn hat to demonstrate incorrect practice. This was really foreign to him. He had to really concentrate to make it look bad, because he's such an elegant and accomplished paddler. He still looked good.

The rushes

After the first 2 days' filming with Mel and Brett, myself and a team of volunteer paddlers logged the rushes into excel spreadsheets. This became the master list of all the shots.

The edit and review

Initially Ian Vaile assembled some of our shots and edited 3 pieces as a demonstration.

Then I found Brian Stone, who at the time was a full-time editor with 'The Wiggles'. Brian happened to have a high-end professional Avid edit suite in his lounge-room at home, and charged us a very generous low rate to cut the clips, so long as he could do it at nights and weekends.

We would not have been able to afford to edit 14 video clips any other way, and I am grateful to Brian for his dedication. The warm, friendly narrator's voice you hear on the clips by the way is Brian's.

Review of the clips

Once Brian had edited, I showed the first cuts to Rob Mercer, Steve Bell, Adrian Clayton and Rae Duffy - our 'SME's, subject matter experts, all of whom are working instructors.

They put an enormous amount of time and effort into viewing the footage. After the first screening, it was obvious that while we had nailed some of the skills, many needed pick-up shots.



What we couldn't show you

As always a lot of footage ends up on the cutting room floor. I don't mean that literally, we filmed digitally! But many shots had to be scrapped.

One sequence we had to lose entirely was an assisted rescue I did with Dave Fisher, who was then president of the club. He'd forgotten his wetsuit booties that day – some story about running late!

It would have been fine if we didn't see his feet. Unfortunately when we viewed the rushes it clearly showed the bare feet as Dave did the 'koala bear' hug of my kayak as the swimmer being rescued, and the 'heel hook'. There were other issues too in the rescue we did, so we decided to drop the whole sequence. The Club policy is to always wear shoes.

The up-side was that we re-filmed the entire sequence at Clifton Gardens with Steve Bell and Adrian Clayton. They demonstrated a much tighter rescue than the original one, and were able to concentrate on key points such as good paddle management, and good communication.

Re-shoots

As we had some gaps to fill, we needed a re-shoot. There was not enough budget left for another jetski shoot, and Mel was away overseas at the time. I borrowed a Sony NX5 camera from Tony Hystek at Paddle NSW (thanks Tony!), and brought in Kevin Scott, a cinematographer for a 1-day reshoot at Clifton Gardens.

This is a great location for filming sequences in the water and provided some of my favourite shots. In particular filming from height allows you to see the whole kayak and it is framed entirely by water.

The other reason this is a great location is that the wharf is L-shaped, allowing us to change our filming angle to follow the sun during the day's shoot.

Location clearances

Normally film crews pay a licence fee for filming on location. I applied in advance to both Pittwater Council and Manly Councils for location filming. I even requested permission from Maritime NSW – after the council pointed out to me that the filming on water was not their responsibility. Maritime were fine with it, and both Councils granted us free access due to the educational content, and because the film crew was less than 10 crew.

Chris James

Instructor Chris James was one of our key demonstrators on the first day of filming. When I asked around for instructors to volunteer for the re-shoot, he again put up his hand and took time off work to do so.

At Clifton Gardens, he patiently repeated the strokes time after time with Rob Mercer watching on. He launched, he landed, he did sweep strokes, reverse strokes, draw strokes, rolls, re-enter rolls – anything we asked. We owe Chris a great debt for his deep commitment to this project. Like other instructors, he saw this as his way of passing on his skills and knowledge to other paddlers.

Chris passed away before these videos were launched. I trust that these videos remain a tribute to his achievements and a celebration.

Finalising the video

We had one more final re-shoot too! I filmed some pick-up shots of an assisted capsized and Rae's forward stroke technique using a common digital waterproof camera. The difference in resolution doesn't seem to be an issue – as always, content is king. Brian then re-cut and we went through a sequence of re-edits until all clips were 'signed off' by our SMEs.

The website

By the time the video content was complete, Stephan Meyn had taken over as webmaster from the Club site and the website was moved to a content management system.

The pages you see today on the site use the 'tabs' for content that came from Peter's original design.

I hired graphic designer Glenn Harvey to adjust the design to sit within the new web design. We then concentrated on finalising the website text. Again we relied on our SMEs to review the content before publishing.

The launch

It was a great pleasure to launch these pages at Rock N Roll 2014 and bring this content to the rest of the Club.

The grant allocation

The grant budget of \$10,000 was used entirely on professional services for the cinematographer, jetski hire, editor, music licences and sundry expenses such as the parking tickets.

Any work done by myself, content writer, instructors and paddlers was on a volunteer basis. The project represents enormous value for money given the amount of voluntary contribution.

Thanks

Thanks to all our paddlers. In alphabetical order, Matt Bezzina, Rae Duffy, Andrew Eddy, Dave Fisher, Chris James, Owen Kimberley, Rob Mercer, Cathy Miller, Claudia Schremmer, Mark Schroeder, Stuart Trueman, Ian Vaile and Trevor Waters.

I am also deeply grateful to Tom Cox who acted as proof-reader/copy editor for the web pages, and Michael Steinfeld for the disclaimer.

Particular thanks go to Adrian Clayton, Rae Duffy, Rob Mercer and Steve Bell for the huge amount of volunteer time they've put into this resource.

So please enjoy our joint efforts. Go to <http://www.nswseakayaker.asn.au/basic-skills> and check it out.

It's all about **THE TWIST**

Cathy Nolan, Physiotherapist



Firstly, a big thank you to the Committee and all who helped host an excellent 2014 Rock n Roll. As a 'newbie' to the club, I was made to feel really welcome by all and the wide range of trips, training, workshops and social events was superb. I'll be back!

While at Rock n Roll, I was fortunate enough to complete two excellent training sessions. The first was on sea rescue with Dee and Harry and the second on Boating Skills with Neil.

After first-rate instruction and practice on wet exits, rescues and the infamous cowboy entry on Saturday, the session on Sunday focused on manoeuvring the boat using a myriad of well taught stroke techniques. Included was the key aspects of a good forward stroke.

After breaking the stroke into the various phases and optimum position of the body for each of these, I was amazed on the amount of rotation required in the upper back to successfully complete the 'drive' phase. As a physiotherapist, I couldn't help putting my 'day job' cap on and thinking that the amount of rotation required may be difficult for a lot of people to achieve, particularly when starting out kayaking.

So why is it hard to rotate through the upper back? Well it shouldn't be as the upper back or (thoracic spine) is designed to rotate and also to bend forwards and backwards.



Unfortunately modern day living such as increased prolonged sitting at desks, computers and/or driving leads to stiffening of the thoracic spine in the forward position, making the other often more desirable movements of rotation and extension difficult. In addition, the thoracic spine is often a neglected part of the body for regular stretching.

Interestingly for most sports, good rotation and extension of the upper back is important, especially for producing power. This is certainly true in kayaking. The drive phase of the forward stroke requires a combination of thoracic rotation and extension (twist). The excellent video on forward stroke in the training skills section on the website highlights this. For many of us this twisting action can be difficult and often is easier in one direction than the other as we are never quite symmetrical.

Good twist also reduces unwanted load on other parts of the body, namely the shoulders and lower back. It certainly seems that back pain, stiffness and shoulder pain is a relevant issue for some members, especially after longer paddles. So as a fellow kayaker I thought I would share with you some exercises that may help you identify how well you twist and some stretches that will help you 'loosen' up after a few hours of paddling and improve your thoracic flexibility.

Check your rotation

Sit on a chair and hold a stick (or paddle) behind the base of the neck with the arms stretched out into a 90/90 position (upper arms at shoulder height, elbows bent to 90 degrees). Slowly turn your trunk to the right keeping the pelvis pointing forward and then repeat to the left. Ideally you should be able to rotate your upper back to around 30-45 degrees. If not you may want to try this as an exercise, slowly rotating to each side 5-10 times. Make sure you keep your core muscles switched on!



Improving thoracic rotation

After a long day kayaking or sitting I find the lying rotation exercise better as it allows you to relax the upper back muscles at the same time.

Lie on your side on the floor with the knees bent to 90 degrees. Place the arms out in front of you with the palms facing each other. Slowly slide the top hand over the bottom arm toward your chest and across to the shoulder. Allow the trunk to rotate and slowly extend the arm from the shoulder and then the elbow, reaching out with the fingertips and turning the head to look down the line of the arm. Make sure the pelvis and hips are still pointing forward. Reverse this sequence and finish by sliding the palm of the top hand beyond the bottom hand. Repeat slowly and continuously six times and then roll over and repeat on the other side.

The Roll

This stretch is a great way to rebalance the spine either after a paddle or a long day at work or after driving. It also helps put the thoracic spine into a more extended position. Place a rolled up towel or foam roller lengthwise down the spine and lie on it with the knees bent. Make sure the head is well supported. Take a few deep breaths into the lower ribs and allow your upper back to relax and stretch over the roll. Hold this position for 5 minutes.

I hope this information is helpful in improving your upper back flexibility and at least relieve some stiffness after paddling or work! Just remember, as with any stretches they are always best performed after prolonged activity or exercise and should not be painful. If they are stop! Also, just to be clear, these exercises are not the full solution for maximum upper back rotation while kayaking. Core strength to sit upright and leg power to help drive the rotation is also key, but a decent twist is a good start! Happy paddling!



EXPEDITION PADDLING & NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

Sharon Trueman, Dietitian

FOODS

FLUIDS

DAYS BEFORE LEAVING ON A TRIP

Very high carbohydrate diet (CHO) ie, 7-10gm CHO/kg most of the time (500-750gm CHO per day) plus 1.2 – 1.6gm protein/kg/day.

Examples include: wholegrain cereals & grains, fruit, dairy, rice & pasta dishes with lentils, egg or meat, cordial fruit juice, corn, potato, sweet potato, baked beans, breakfast cereals.

Well hydrated at all times – clear urine is a good indicator of hydration status except for the first thing in the morning. Do not rely on thirst as a valid indicator of dehydration.

2- 4 HOURS BEFORE LEAVING

Low GI meal to help prevent fatigue, ie pasta & lentil dish, basmati rice stir fry, beef & noodles, grainy bread sandwich, wholegrain breakfast cereal & fruit, fruit smoothie, low fat dairy

1-2 glasses of fluid, 10-15 mins before exercise to provide a fluid reserve and prevent dehydration.

DURING THE DAYS PADDLE

30-60gm CHO per hour of moderate-high GI foods with a little protein & fat, ie ½ cup rice cream, mars/snickers/ chocolate bar, muesli bar, 6 saos or rice cakes with cheese, banana sandwich, handful of trail mix.

150-250mls of fluid every 15 – 20 mins. Alternate between water and sports drinks.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER FINISHING FOR THE DAY

1gm CHO per kg in first 30 mins plus protein ie flavoured low fat milk/ yoghurt/custard with fruits esp banana/ watermelon, raisins/nuts/seeds, plain biscuits and milk, sports drink, muesli bar, jam /honey/cheese sandwich.

1L of sports drink if restocking CHO over 1-2 hours or plenty of water until urine runs clear over the next couple of hours. Do this before indulging in alcohol/ caffeine as they will interfere with hydration & other recovery processes.

OVER NEXT 24 HOURS

7gm to 10gm/kg CHO, approx. 500 to 700gm.

Well hydrated with plenty of water.

RACING PADDLING & NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

| | FOODS | FLUIDS |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| DAYS BEFORE EXERCISE | High carbohydrate (CHO) diet at all times, ie 5-8gm CHO/kg/day. For a 75kg person this equates to 375-600gm CHO per day. Examples of high CHO foods include: pasta dishes, lentils, basmati rice, potato, sweet potato, risotto's, baked beans, fruit and low fat dairy desserts. | Well hydrated at all times. Clear urine is a good indicator of adequate hydration, except for first thing in the morning. Do not rely on thirst as a valid indicator of dehydration. |
| 2-4 HOURS BEFORE EXERCISE | Low GI meal to help prevent fatigue, ie baked beans on multigrain toast & fruit salad, pasta with napolitana sauce, porridge with low fat milk & fruit, basmati rice and lentils, banana/mango/berry smoothie, Special K/Sustain with low fat milk, yoghurt & fruit. | 1-2 glasses of fluid (water/fruit juice/sports drink/cordial), 10-15mins before exercise to provide fluid reserve and to prevent dehydration. |
| DURING EXERCISE | Not necessary to eat solid food for events lasting less than 90mins. A sports drink is adequate or just water if glycogen stores are maximised. | 150-250ml of water or sports drinks every 15-20mins. Sports drink 700-1000ml per hour if events are over 90 mins. |
| IMMEDIATELY AFTER EXERCISE | .High CHO/high GI/high protein snack in the first 30mins, aim for 1gm CHO per kg, ie milo on low fat milk, banana/honey/jam sandwich with milk, chocolate bar/mars bar(1-2), power bar protein plus, Greek yoghurt and banana. | Rehydrate quickly, aim for an extra 50% fluid over the next couple of hours if you know how much your sweat losses are in a session by weighing yourself before and after the event, ie 1.5L if you lost 1kg or 1L. |
| OVER NEXT 24 HOURS | 5-8gm CHO per kg body weight, ie chicken stir fry & basmati rice, jacket potato, risotto's, low fat pasta dishes, pizza with low fat toppings, fruit & yoghurt, fruit smoothies, custard, rice creams etc. | Well hydrated at all times with plenty of water especially if drinking coffee, tea & alcohol – hydrate well first before indulging! |

MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER: February 2014

Philip Rose

Planning

Forty years ago I paddled part of the Darling River with a group of university colleagues.

In the last few years I have reconnected with my friend, Peter Hatherly and we were looking for a modest kayaking adventure. We chose a 4-day paddle on the Murrumbidgee River and thought it would be fun to have a few OANDORANS to accompany us. I sent an email and received confirmations from Mark Fuller and Deborah Cuneen.

Fellow Paddlers

I am arranging a paddle down the Murrumbidgee from Gundagai to Wagga on the 3rd to 6th February. It's still in the planning stages but I hope to have at least two starters (including me!) Owen and a group of OANDORANS did it last year and Michelle reckoned it was one of her best trips. I have prepared a Float Plan and have some good trip reports and Dept of Lands Kayak Trail if anybody is interested. A great chance to experience one of our iconic inland rivers with scintillating companions!

Yours in kayaking.....PHIL

Emails were exchanged about the weather, bushfire likelihood, meals, access to fresh water, water consumption (and wine consumption), air and river temperatures, beaches for landing (thank you Google Earth), comparisons with Stu Trueman's around Australia Trip and river flow.

The river flow turned out to be quite relevant. How much water was being released from Burrinjuck in to the Murrumbidgee? How do you convert the flow in megalitres per day to kilometres / hour? Using the data in the table, we calculated:

**Assume river = 50m wide x 2m deep
= 100 square metres**

Flow is 8,681,000,000 litres = a volume of 8,681,000 cubic metres, which translates to a length of 86,810m assuming our 100 square metre cross-section. i.e. river flows 86km per day = 4km/hour.

Murrumbidgee River at Gundagai (41004)

| | | |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Level (m) | 2.4 | Tue 28 Jan 2014 14:00 |
| Flow (ML/ day) | 8,681 | Tue 28 Jan 2014 14:00 |
| Water Temp (°C) | 18 | Tue 28 Jan 2014 14:00 |

<http://waterinfo.nsw.gov.au/drr/murrumbidgee.shtml>

Deborah had some concerns with the Float Plan for Day One. As well as the car shuffle, it included a 26km paddle, fairly late in the day. The Department of Lands "Murrumbidgee Kayak Trail" indicated a time of 5 hours to reach the first official camp site, which we thought was generous. As it turned out, Deborah was right.

DAY ONE: Monday 3rd February

Peter and I left Sydney at 7:00am and got stuck in heavy traffic for hours. Arrived at South Gundagai at 12:30pm with no time to pack the kayaks. Met Mark and Deborah who had travelled independently. Nice sandy beach downstream from the old bridge on the South Gundagai side of the river. River flowing beautifully. Drove 3 cars to Wagga with the intention of leaving them at the Wagga Beach Caravan Park. The lady at reception told us her husband didn't want his park full of kayaker's cars so we parked in the street opposite the church. (Hoping divine intervention would stop our cars being stolen.) Due to the intense heat (around 38°C) we caught a taxi to the bus stop at Wagga Railway Station. We had time to grab a quick Subway (still in imperial – six inch or foot long) then on to the 2:15pm bus to Gundagai for a cost of \$10 each. Nice big coach with 3 kayakers, 2 locals and the driver. Wagga locals shocked to see people in kayak kit waiting at the train station.

Arrived at Gundagai and due to the heat we caught a taxi (\$10), rather than walking the 2kms, to South Gundagai.

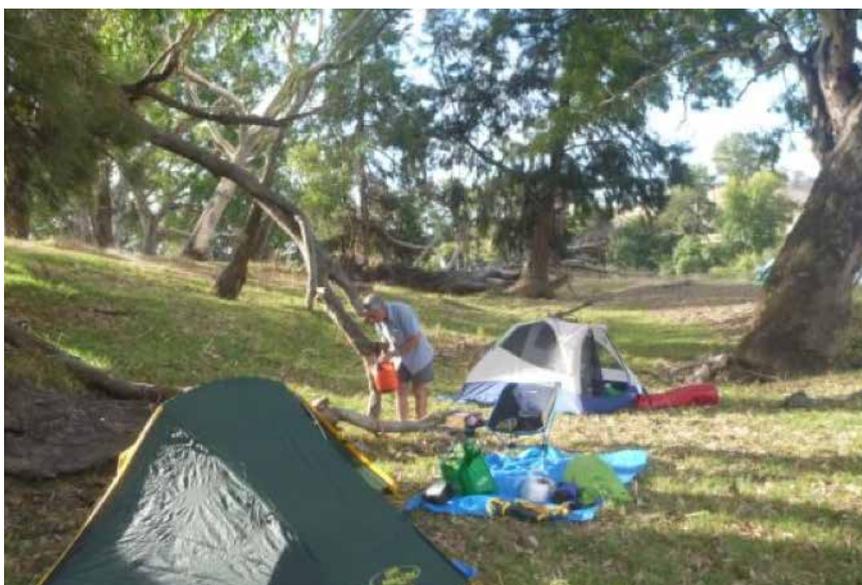
Peter was waiting patiently with the 4 kayaks packed and ready to go. Finally got on the water around 4:00pm and paddled for 1.5 hours (about 14 kms) to a great campsite. Woken in the night by an intense electrical storm with a few drops of rain and massive bolts of lightning. Sat in our director's chairs and looked at the stars. Peter gave us advice on how to find our way using the Southern Cross. Warm temperature with no flies and no mosquitoes.

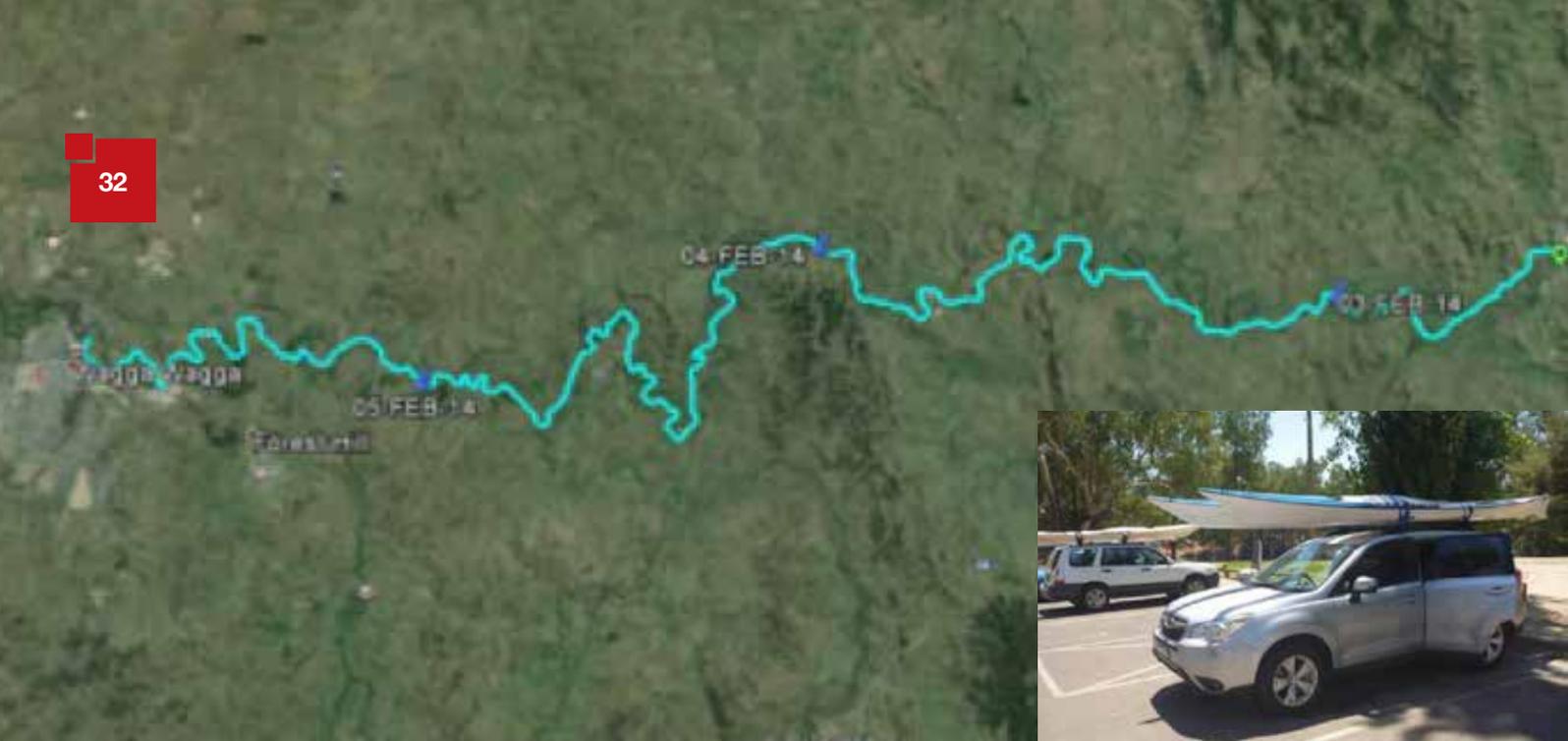
DAY 2: Tuesday 4th February

Relaxed start to the day and on the water by 9:00am. We had following winds and “gentle” river flow, with occasional “races” with trees in the river. We paddled for 3 stints of approx 1.5 hours each with stops for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. Distance was around 37 kms to Wantabadgery Recreation Reserve arriving about 3:00pm in the heat of the day. Again a good campsite with toilets and a few other campers to provide a bit of human interest. Strong winds in the night with the threat of falling limbs from the ancient river red gums.

The surrounding countryside was extremely dry with sheep and cattle, golden yellow dried grass. The birdlife spectacular with large flocks (50 birds) of sulphur-crested cockatoos, corellas and ducks. The cockatoos made a cacophony of noise virtually all day. We also encountered numerous sea eagles, kites and hawks. Spotted a couple of kangaroos but no snakes (thankfully), lizards or possums.

Navigation was achieved by Peter’s GPS and our Kayak Trail maps, otherwise it was very difficult to determine your location as there are very few features to identify. We did pass under a road bridge, which was easy to locate. Campsites were not that frequent as we needed a sandy beach, shady trees and a flat space, preferably with grass.





DAY 3: Wednesday 5th February

By now, the team was feeling very comfortable with the river and having fun together. Four people seems a good number as it gave enough variety but not too large to become difficult to coordinate. We started to build our own repartee and we all enjoyed our interactions with the various “characters” we met along the river. Towards day’s end, we spotted 2 kayakers on the river in home-made boats. Our full ocean gear looking a bit over-done!

Our target was 42 kms to Oura Beach Reserve. We found good stops under trees, refreshing swims and a fresh breeze to keep us cool. Arrived at Oura around 3:00pm feeling a bit frazzled in the heat. We carried and sweated all our gear up the bank to find shade under trees. By early evening we are all feeling better as temperature drops to a comfortable 20°C.

Mark demonstrates his superior negotiating skills by scoring a can of cold beer from our new friends in the two canoes. He enjoys bringing the can of beer back to camp and drinking it in front of us!

DAY 4: Thursday 6th February

After a good nights sleep we rise slowly for our last day on the river. The time has gone quickly and the distances are not onerous. Paddling 40 kms in one day is easy with a strong river flow and tail winds.

We debate whether the paddles have been strenuous and can’t agree. We still put in a couple of hours of solid paddling, occasionally into a strong head wind. The strong river flow and the relaxed time frame make it very easy to achieve what would be long distances in a Sydney Harbour paddle.

The last leg is 26 kms, which we paddle in two stints of about 1.5 hours each. We knew we were getting close when we spotted an aeroplane landing at Wagga Airport and then a road bridge on the outskirts of Wagga.

We pulled up at Wagga Beach around 1:30pm with the temperature around 32°C and loaded our cars. Before departing, we had our final lunch together in Romano’s Hotel before heading our separate ways.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Before closing, I thought I would add some trip data that Peter supplied after we got home, from his GPS and which was imported into Google Earth. The GPS recorded a position every 100m, so the path is a little angular. It shows the waypoints for the campsites and if you can even see where we pulled over for our various breaks – including the one on the last morning at Mark’s islands. According to the GPS, we achieved an average speed of 9.8km/hr, and a maximum on day 3 of 18km/hr. The river must have been flowing very quickly when that occurred.



Murrumbidgee River Trip Stats

| Day/ Date | Distance | Time | Avg Speed | Max Speed |
|--------------|----------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 / 3 Feb | 14.7 kms | 1 hr 35 mins | 9.3 kms / hr | 13 kms /hr |
| 2 / 4 Feb | 37.6 kms | 3 hrs 51 mins | 9.8 kms / hr | 14 kms / hr |
| 3 / 5 Feb | 41.3 kms | 4 hrs 11 mins | 9.9 kms / hr | 18 kms / hr |
| 4 / 6 Feb | 26.4 kms | 2 hrs 43 mins | 9.7 kms / hr | Unknown |
| TOTAL | 120 kms | 12 hrs 20 mins | 9.8 kms / hr | |



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| Mid | | | |
| February to May (including Easter) September to November | | | |
| ↳ midweek per night | \$160 | \$395 | \$270 |
| ↳ weekend Fri & Sat (2 nights) | \$385 | \$1600 | \$790 |
| ↳ weekly (7 nights) | \$835 | \$2600 | \$1700 |
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| ↳ weekly (7 nights) | \$550 | \$1650 | \$1100 |

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TASSIE BOOT CAMP 2014

AKA - Cockle Creek to Melaleuca Return, South West Tasmania

Campbell Tiley

Stuart shocked the old guard and surprised everyone in late 2013 by listing a serious 12-day trip to South West Tasmania on the club calendar. Needless to say the trip was rapidly oversubscribed and Stu was forced to apply the wisdom of Solomon to his selection process.

The team gradually took shape, resulting in much speculation regarding splinter groups, potential fractious negotiation over paddling goals, and general bemusement that Stu would have been crazy enough to saddle himself with such a team. Perhaps he really had lost it as he mused in the recent 'Fail' article following his attempt on the Tassie west coast last winter.

The Team

The old kayaking war-horse Wildey was a shoe-in. Rampaging Matt Bezzina could not be denied. The young guns Fernando Charnis and Wade Carberry were on the team with the age balance maintained by including Adrian Clayton with his long experience and undoubted skills and fitness. Mark Shroeder could at least have written a competent trip report if he had not pulled out when his life got in the road of paddling. Shaan Gresser, with the gender balancer role, pulled out due to a staggering combination of challenging life events, all seemingly needing to be resolved in the middle of the planned trip.

The final two making up our eight starters were me and the Nordkapp toting Michael Taylor.

The Plan

Given the variable and potentially wild nature of the weather at latitude 43 South, Stuart did not present a detailed trip plan. Rather, the plan was to meet at Cockle Creek on the evening of Sunday February 9 with a view to paddling from the following day for up to 12 days with a goal of reaching Bathurst Harbour. Both Stuart and Wildey had paddled the coastline before and had a range of useful contacts including Jeff Jennings.



Laurie Geoghegan wrote up a trip from Strahan to (not quite) Hobart with Andrew McAuley and Paul Loker in NSW Seakayaker April 2003; covering some of the same coast. Guy Reeve's account of their west coast trip in the June 2011 magazine described some sobering conditions. We had gleaned additional information regarding potential landing and camping spots from a range of trip reports on various websites including the Tasmanian Sea Canoe Club and blogs such as the excellent information published by Matthew Watton (see http://mwatton.customer.netspace.net.au/matt_blog.html).

The Preparation

When I received the email in late November stating 'If you get this e-mail you are invited on the trip to the South Coast of Tasmania' I experienced very mixed feelings. I was ecstatic to have the opportunity to paddle such an iconic coastline with such experienced leadership. There was also a healthy measure of terror as I began to scan weather observations from Maatsuyker Island, swells often over 5 metres and wind more often above 30 knots than below, and to take a little more notice of potential surf conditions at many of the landing options.

After a degree of self-examination and some quiet discussions with a couple of senior paddlers I parked my doubts and got on with updating my cold weather gear, sourcing a smaller sail (thanks Matt), getting to as many Tuesday night paddles as possible (thanks Rob) and seeking out a few more surf landings than usual.

The drive to Cockle Creek, including the Melbourne Devenport Ferry, passed easily with good company, travelling in loose convoy with the other paddlers. We all quietly hoped that the storm with hail and gusts over 50kn that hit Cockle Creek shortly after our arrival was not a portent of things to come. That evening I had my first exposure to the oversensitive hearing of my companions, whinging over my loudish MSR cooker.

Day 1: Monday - 26km

Started gently. We enjoyed a fast downwind run with sails out of Cockle Creek before our course swung progressively 180 degrees as we followed the coast around to the SW into a daunting headwind measured by the Mattometer (Matts calibrated hat) at 25kn gusting 30kn (when the hat blew off).

After failing to make headway around Whale Head, we retreated to Big Trumpeter Bay and dragged the boats up onto the available boulders. After a judicious wait and a feed we headed off again. The conditions were little changed, but we slogged on slowly towards South Cape Rivulet, accompanied by the occasional albatross cruising in and out of the wave crests, progressively more sheltered as we paddled NW from SE Cape. The group fragmented somewhat into pairs of paddlers matching speed into the difficult wind and sea conditions, effort that took a toll from everyone and provoked tendon injuries and self-evaluation that coloured the rest of the fortnight for several paddlers. A degree of groupthink clouded our navigation after SE Cape, the only time this occurred on the trip, and we took a less than direct route to our camp. The landing involved a 1m surf with intermittent larger sets and a shore dump that rolled one of our merry men out of his boat. We were all happy to be safely ashore after dragging up the small creek to a comfortable camp with a resident quoll. On unpacking I was concerned to discover that my day hatch and back hatch were half full of water, literally, and that the hull seams were split on both sides from the cockpit aft.



Breaksea Islands to Bathurst Narrows
- Matt Bezzina on Adrian's camera



Eight starters at Cockle Creek, by Matt Bezzina

After much discussion of more structural repairs, copious gaffer tape was employed with success. Wade had a rudder failure, fortunately late in the day, that he was able to repair.

Day 2: Tuesday - 31km

Michael made the difficult decision to pull out and returned to Cockle Creek, escorted by Stu back around Whale Head. He embarked on his own Tassie adventure exploring the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Bruny Island. Now down to seven we paddled in more gentle conditions around South Cape along the rugged and isolated coast to negotiate the protecting reefs into the calm of Rocky Boat Inlet for lunch. The deep clear blue water with long tendrils of Bull Kelp reaching up to the surface was pristinely beautiful and typical of many of the south west bays. Wildey lived up to his reputation by collecting two abalone which made an exotic entrée for dinner, prepared with his extensive condiments. We paddled the 10km to Little Deadmans Bay, the skyline dominated by the 1145m bastion of Precipitous Bluff. Exhausted on arrival, we were ready for another pristine campsite after an uneventful surf landing which required timing to avoid periodic 2m sets. Stu turned up not much later after paddling an extra 20km. Adrian impressed the crowd by pulling a forearm splint out of his hat for Wade's tenosynovitis.

Day 3: Wednesday - 34km

A diversion to rugged Maatsuyker Island some 10km due South from the coast was abandoned due to forecast thunder storms and we paddled on west in 10-15kn headwinds around the toe of the rugged Ironbunds Range and stopped for lunch sheltered from the wind on a small beach facing the narrow sand isthmus extending to shore from Louisa Island. The morning was interrupted by the 'glove' incident when one paddler was convinced he had left a glove behind. He was sore and paddling slowly and Stu went back instead to retrieve the item, only to discover that it was no-where to be seen and later found hiding in a hatch. We then plugged on again into the westerly headwind across Cox Bight and on to Ketchem Bay. We mulled over a moderate shore break and eventually all landed unscathed at a comfortable camp with good water.

Day 4: Thursday - 44km

We faced one of the crux points of the trip, rounding South West Cape and paddling up the west coast to Spain Bay. The cape is a wildly barren bluff reflecting the southern ocean that it faces. This was contrasted by the sleek seals that played in the rebound. We were aware of only one possible sheltered landing this leg, in McKays Gulch which is a narrow rocky inlet with a protecting reef extending far enough into the cliff line that the swells barely penetrated. We were glad to pull in there for a breather and lunch.

Then up the coast for 27km into the variable north wester with occasional showers between Mutton Bird Island and the east Pyramids, eventually around Hilliard Head and into the mouth of Port Davey. To maintain group contact and accommodate varying boat speeds the front paddlers stopped on the hour and waited for the group to catch up along this leg. We were all feeling the pace from the previous few days and some of the strains from day one were becoming major issues, particularly Wade's wrist tenosynovitis with severe pain, swelling and crepitus.

Day 5: Friday - 23km

Wade needed to rest his wrist and Fernando decided to take a day or two of R and R on shore. Both stayed at Spain Bay and explored the local beaches and middens. Four of us paddled via the Breaksea Islands to the cottage at Claytons Corner in Bathurst Harbour, incorrectly rumoured to be the family seat of the Clayton clan. Matt joined us along the route after a late start. The Breakseas protect Bathurst Channel from the ocean swells and are riddled with slots, caves and gauntlets – I managed all bar one offered on Wildey's tour. Just into the channel on the south side is a hose hanging down from a waterfall where we filled our waterbags. Then on up the narrow channel past the narrows where the walkers on the Port Davey track cross with dinghies permanently maintained on either bank, the rugged buttresses of Mount Rugby dominating the view. The cottage at Claytons Corner is a small slice of local history. Built in rain forest on a sheltered cove, it's where Clyde Clayton lived for many years, married to tin miner and local explorer Deny King's sister Win. The cottage has been restored by local cray fishermen and others and was a rather comfortable alternative to tents for a couple of days – apart from the possible matter of a rumoured snorer in the group. While a little busier than the south coast, with a few yachts and yachties around, the sheltered waterways were so tranquil and beautiful that this did not detract from their appeal.

Day 6: Saturday - 15km

A restful jaunt down Melaleuca Inlet and Moth Creek to the spot where Deny lived, mined alluvial tin, brought up his family and left an airstrip and bushwalkers huts that are one end of the world-renowned wilderness SW Coast track, a life described in his biography by Christabel Mattingley. We saw the Orange Bellied Parrot, an endangered bird with breeding pairs only in double figures, being saved by the local breeding program. In the afternoon, a steep walk up Mount Beattie behind Claytons provided a remarkable 270 degree view of the waterways from the Breakseas to Melaleuca and South to Cox Bight – all undeveloped, wild and pristine wilderness only accessible from the sea or on foot. We met a friendly group of Tasmanian paddlers camped nearby, coincidentally including Jason and Fiona who were the caretakers at Maatsuyker at the time Andrew, Laurie and Paul lobbed in there in 2003. They had chartered a cray fishing boat to transport them and their kayaks round from Southport and back. There was room on the boat for extra kayaks which they generously offered to Wade. Stuart therefore did another extra leg back to Spain Bay to let Wade know about his ride and bring him up to Claytons for a Monday departure with the Hobart group.

Day 7: Sunday - 25km

For most of the trip, no matter which way we paddled we had a headwind, this time gradually increasing to around 15kn SW with intermittent gusts to 20kn. Adrian and I had a dawdling paddle back to Spain Bay, exploring gauntlets and the shoreline, Matt and Wildey headed up Mount Rugby, a 771m peak dominating the region, 4.5 to 5 hours round trip, and Stu headed upstream to see the parrots.

Day 8: Monday - 45km

Stuart is slowly prevailing and we seem to be getting on the water earlier each day. Six of us paddled out of Spain Bay, not missing an opportunity to stress my split seams in unexpectedly broken water inside a rocky outcrop rounding Hilliard Head.



Happy Landing at South Cape Rivulet, by Stuart Trueman

We were hoping the forecast would hold for a couple of days of moderate north westerlies followed by a swing to the south west that would allow us to divert out to Maatsuyker tomorrow. Stuart had noticed a potential tunnel on the trip north so we headed for Wendar Island to explore. The tunnel was indeed there, a dogleg so the exit was not visible, with white water intermittently surging out as waves hit the other side. While Adrian attempted to establish a VHF link to the other side, one senior team member advised a simpler approach “if you see green fibreglass coming back out, you know there is a problem”. We all bounced through, watched by a curious seal population with a close call at the exit as Matt was held up in kelp and I surged through above him, fortunately separated by the next wave. Shortly afterwards, the cray boat with Wade and the Hobart paddlers steamed past. There was a lot of happy waving which we interpreted as friendliness but later heard from Wade that they were already on the grog with freshly caught fish and lobster for morning tea. We had a steady slog in benign conditions south along the forbidding coastline to McKays Gulch for a bite. Adrian, Matt and I indulged in a roll in oily 2m swells off SW Cape, attempting to join the SWCRC (South West Cape Rolling Club) referred to by Laurie in his 2003 article – the water really is cold.

The view east on rounding the cape must be one of the most impressive maritime sights on offer with the islands off the coast and the procession of rugged bluffs extending some 70km east to South cape. It was then a short run into Ketchem Bay again.

The HF weather forecast scuppered our plan to paddle to Maatsuyker with gale force SW weather and accompanying seas coming over the next three days. We had to get off the south coast or risk being pinned down for perhaps 5 days by the expected conditions. We needed a big day tomorrow.

Day 9: Tuesday - 61km

An even earlier start. The sky was the most unsettled that we had seen, with very fast high level clouds from the SW and lines of grey intermediate level cloud. I had the pleasure of being accompanied by a large pod of dolphins across Cox Bight for some 15 minutes, racing past the kayak within reach and diving under the bow. This leg provided some useful tailwinds but not yet the excitement with the sail that Matt was waiting for. We abandoned a plan to land on De Witt Island and headed in closer to the coast, retracing our strokes to Louisa Island for the only shore stopover of the day. We continued past Deadmans Bay to South Cape Rivulet, the longest paddle of our trip and an indication that we had all picked up some paddle fitness along the way.



The End
- Matt Bezzina

It was disappointing to catch our last glimpse of Maatsuyker as we rounded South Cape but I suspect that we will all be back to make another attempt.

Day 10: Wednesday - 24km

I think that even Stuart was taken aback when his plan to get us all out of bed in the dark, given the impending storm forecast 'early' that day, resulted in everyone being packed up, through a surf break and paddling (still dark) 10 minutes before the launch deadline of 5:30am. Fernando was clearly suffering with flashbacks from his army service in Argentina and seemed quite surprised that the sunrise was worth seeing, if only occasionally. The sunrise was glorious, with the storm clouds in the south and the forbidding bastions of SE Cape and Whale Head we had an easy run back to Cockle Creek, just landing as the heavens opened and the change came through.

The final chapter of the trip was an unexpected shock for Wildey. His wife, Gillian, had planned to walk to meet us at South Coast Rivulet on day 1 and did not arrive. We tried unsuccessfully to contact her with our emergency sat phone.

She met us as we came back in to the beach with facial bruising and her arm in a sling. She had slipped off a section of track and fallen several metres, dislocating her shoulder and sustaining a long list of soft tissue injuries. Very fortunately she was helped by some lads snorkelling nearby, culminating in a chopper ride to Hobart and a short spell in hospital. She was already making a good recovery. I am glad we kept the walking to a minimum – dangerous business.

And then the trek home with so much to reflect on after such a personally challenging but absolutely stunning trip. Fortunately Fernando asked us to drop him at Launceston Airport so Adrian and I had a quieter trip than we were preparing ourselves for. Fernando and Matt's blogs provide other perspectives on the trip.

What did I learn...

Mirages, and possibly all kayaks, eventually need external seams for serious conditions. Most of us took too much food. Stu and Wildey were impressively organised in their packing and unpacking and we have all taken notes.

The paddlers who had done more long distance endurance training held up better. Wildey's vegetarian meals looked mighty tasty. My MSR really is too noisy. Michael was the only starter without a sail, one factor in his decision to pull out. It would have been better that all boats were similarly equipped. We saw Stu deal quietly and effectively with a range of challenging leadership issues including struggling team members, the varying weather typical of the region and the constant need to review our plans. His ability to synthesise a comprehensive weather picture from the skeletal daily forecasts available by HF radio was also very instructive.

I am enormously grateful to Stu for his generosity in running the expedition as a club trip and imparting so much wisdom along the way. And thanks also to all on the trip for such excellent, spirited and entertaining company.



Early Start at Ketchen Bay, by Matt Bezzina

Solo trip **IN CROATIA**

Circumnavigation of Mljet Island and Elaphiti Islands

Dragomir Pejić

Returning to Mljet felt like I was returning home. This was my third visit to Mljet but the first one where I intended sightseeing by kayak.

My holiday got off to a bad start. My pre-arranged rental kayak was not available from my starting base in Mali Zaton, near Dubrovnik (bad on you Adriatic Kayak Tours). Luckily there was another kayak shop in the village willing to rent out a kayak (good on you Huck Finn Adventure Travel). With my Prijon 520 HV, aluminium paddle, basic rental spray skirt and PFD, I was ready to go.

For the first 5 days, I had sunny weather, flat seas, with little or no wind. I couldn't have wished for better conditions. My first day took me across from the mainland, past Koločep and Lopud islands to Sipan Island, a quiet island with fishing villages at each end.

From there, I followed the south side of the island, then jumped across to Mljet Island, my main destination. The waters were crystal clear blue, with the smell of pine trees in the air and cicadas interrupting the silence. Much of the shoreline is hard and sharp rocks, so landing could only be done at the sandy or pebbly beaches in the ports.

Upon arriving in the ports and villages, I would go to the first "Konoba" (pub, restaurant) and ask for accommodation. Usually I would get something in less than an hour. Most often this would be a room with shower in a private house not far from the beach.

Every day I would meet my ex-countrymen and talk about our new lives and "good old days" in ex-Yugoslavia. Typically over charcoal grilled local fresh fish and local wine!

The highlight of the trip was Odysseus Cave, on the south side of Mljet Island. According to legend, "Odysseus found his shelter in the cave after surviving a shipwreck on Mljet. He swam into the cave for shelter and there the nymph Calypso, daughter of Poseidon, waited for him. Amazed by the beauty of the nature and in love with the nymph Calipso, Odysseus stayed on the island for 7 years." Needless to say, I didn't see any nymphs when I pulled in.

Further up the Mljet coastline and tucked inside the western end, were the beautiful "Veliko" (Big) and "Malo" (Little) Lakes. You can see my GPS circumnavigating these internal lakes!

Alas, as I was leaving Mljet, the weather turned nasty with 30 knot gusts, rain, thunderstorms, mix of "Jugo" and "Bura" winds blowing from all directions causing the waves to behave the same.

My front hatch became fully flooded due to an ill-fitting neoprene cover. With nowhere to stop I kept paddling by leaning back as much as possible for the next 7 km, until I reached the little islet of Ruda. There I found shelter from the rain and wind and was able to empty the front hatch.

During this return trip, I had this uneasy feeling of being the only one on the water and paddling against the advice of the locals, even the ferry service was cancelled!

Map and Distances

My trusty GPS recorded my trip, distances and times, so when I reached home I was able to plot the trip on the map.

| Start | Mali Zaton (mainland) | Distance | Track Colour |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------|
| Day 1 | Sudjuradj (Sipan Island) | 17.7 km | Yellow |
| Day 2 | Saplunara (Mljet Island) | 33.1 km | Green |
| Day 3 | Soline (Mljet Island) | 35.5 km | Yellow |
| Day 4 | Polace (Mljet Island) | 33.3 km | Red |
| Day 5 | Okuklje (Mljet Island) | 30.9 km | Yellow |
| Day 6 | Lopud (Ruda & Lopud Is) | 32.4 km | Red |
| Day 7 | Mali Zaton (mainland) | 15.9 km | Pink |
| Total Distance | | 198.8 km | |



ALL CARE, NO RESPONSIBILITY?

There are no easy answers.

Michael Steinfeld, Solicitor

In December 2004 I published an article in the NSW Sea Kayak Club magazine regarding the legal position of kayakers, the instructors and the Club, for compensation for injuries. This article is a follow up.

The Civil Liability Act 2002 had the express intention of limiting the right of persons to claim compensation when undertaking recreational activities and particularly dangerous recreational activities such as sea kayaking.

What has been the practical effect of the Act and does it mean that the Club, its instructors/leaders must take care but have no liability to compensate an injured member or family in the event of a member's death? There are no easy answers.

Legal Protection to Instructors/leaders

The instructor/leader when participating in a Club activity is protected by the Club's insurance policy, as the Club is vicariously liable for acts of its instructor/leaders. The Civil Liability Act 2002 gives further protection to the instructors/leaders and exempts them from personal liability when they carry out voluntary work for the Club (being a non profit sporting organisation). But there are limits to that protection. They must not act outside the scope of their activities or contrary to the instructions of the Club. For example, paddling in conditions where a gale warning has been issued.

Proving Negligence

The injured member must first prove that the Club through the actions of its instructor/leader was negligent. That is, the Club and its instructors/leaders failed to follow the standard of care reasonably expected of them. Usually an expert kayaker from the peak body, in our case, Australian Canoeing would give evidence. If there are two opposing expert opinions the Court will usually "hot tub" the experts to find common ground and to see what it is precisely that leads them to hold their differing views.

If a case of negligence can be established, the Club will seek to rely on the defences set out in the Civil Liability Act 2002.

Obvious and Inherent Risks

Where an injury is caused by a risk that is obvious or should be obvious to the injured member or is an inherent risk, the Club will not be liable to pay compensation notwithstanding that the instructor/leader was negligent. The logic behind this is if you know the risk then you should be able to avoid it or accept that it is part of the thrill of kayaking.

A sea skills paddler should know most of the obvious or inherent risks when setting out on a paddle and would not need to be informed of them; for example an obvious risk is being hit by another kayak in surf or hitting rocks.

An inherent risk is a risk that cannot be avoided by due care, such as being attacked by a shark or stung by a blue bottle.

So as a corollary the instructor/leader does not need to closely supervise a sea skills grade paddler. A list of the likely risks and how to prevent them is set out in the Club's Policy Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures which can be viewed on the Club's website. But even to a sea skill grade paddler there can be times when the trip leader's conduct can be viewed as grossly negligent and therefore not an obvious risk. e.g. leaving a paddler to fend for themselves in big seas unless a risk warning was given at the outset, that could happen. Another example would be the duty to pass on information, which has come to their attention but not known to the group, such as an updated adverse weather forecast, which may imperil the group.

The Courts examine in detail the specific facts, which gave rise to the injury, and whether that risk was obvious to any reasonable paddler with similar experience.

Risk warnings

What would be an obvious risk to a new or grade 1 paddler?

A new or grade 1 paddler would not know many of the risks of paddling - especially out to sea.

So the instructor's task is give risk warnings of the dangers they are about to come across, such as paddling over a shallow reef, keeping away from rocks or watching the swell. A risk warning should be given early so that the paddler could avoid the risk. Again it is helpful to go through the Club's policy, which guides the instructors on measures to take to avoid accidents. When a risk warning has been given the instructor/leader has no duty of care in relation to that risk.

There are a number of exceptions to this defence, e.g. where the instructor/leader gives the risk warning but says something to contradict that warning. The risk warning section of the Act is long and full of exceptions and if the warning was oral there may be a dispute whether it was actually given.

Waivers

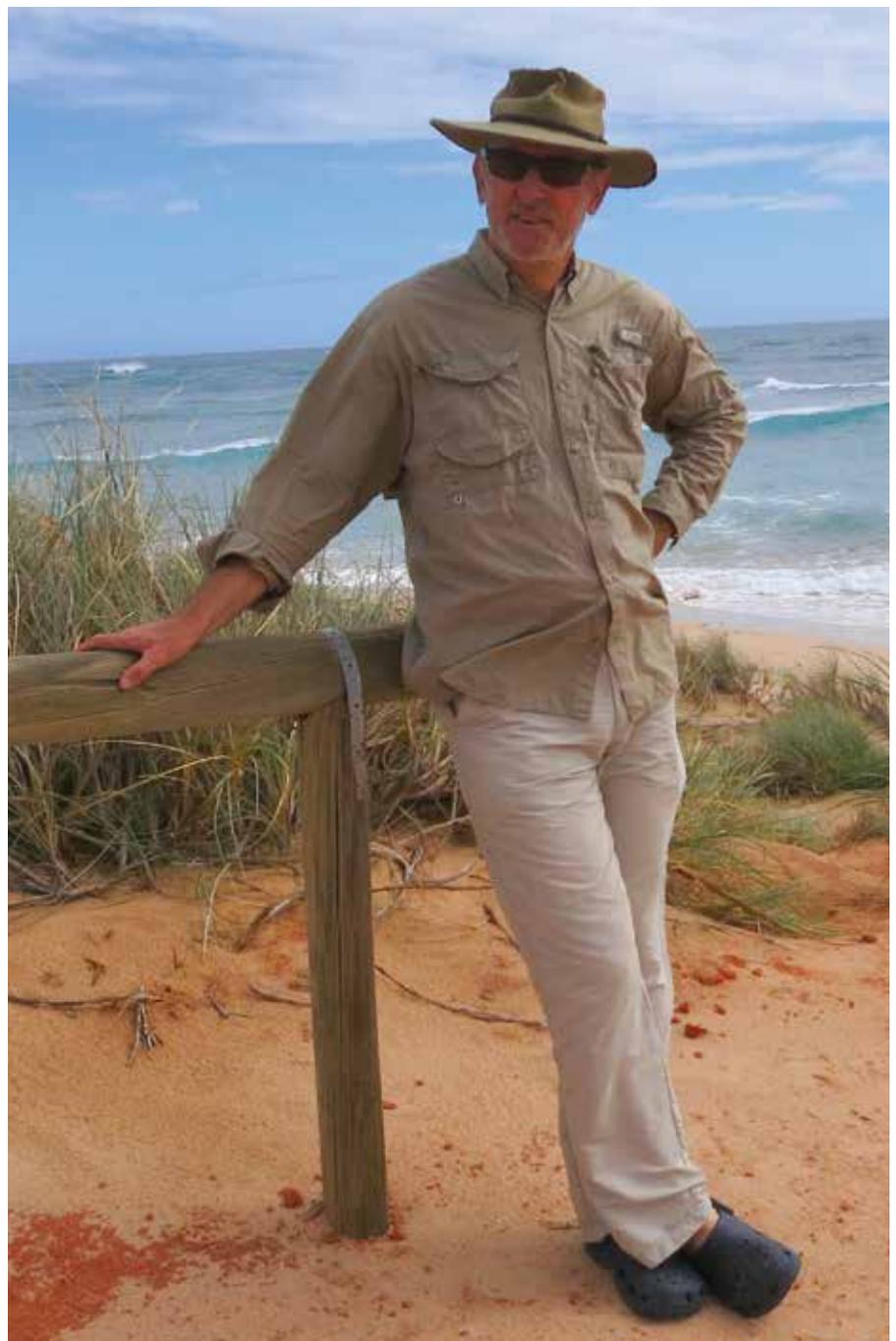
Another defence, which can be used by the Club to exclude liability, is the Club waiver which a member signs saying in effect the Club/instructor/leader will take "all care but no responsibility". That is, the member has agreed to assume the risk of injury by contract. But Courts have taken a restrictive view of interpreting waivers and if the specific risk which causes the accident is not covered by the waiver it will be void and of no effect in defeating the claim.

Conclusion

The law in this area is complex and in an event of a serious injury the Court will carefully scrutinize the instructor/leader's actions and experts are likely to be called. The Civil Liability Act 2002 has made it harder to succeed in a claim for compensation but the litigation will be stressful for the Club/instructor/leader and the result in any particular case will depend on the application of the law to the facts as found by the Court.

A case study

For those interested in these matters I suggest a reading the court case of *Echin v Southern Tablelands Gliding Club* [2013] NSWSC 516 (28 May 2013), which deals with a claim for compensation by a relatively experienced hang glider who sued his volunteer Club arguing that his instructors were negligent. He hit power lines when coming in to land at the end of the day. The case applies the facts to the law as it affects a dangerous recreational activity. The Court found that the instructors were volunteers acting in good faith, were not negligent and the risk to the hang glider was obvious.



NAWI INDIGENOUS WATERCRAFT

Philip Rose

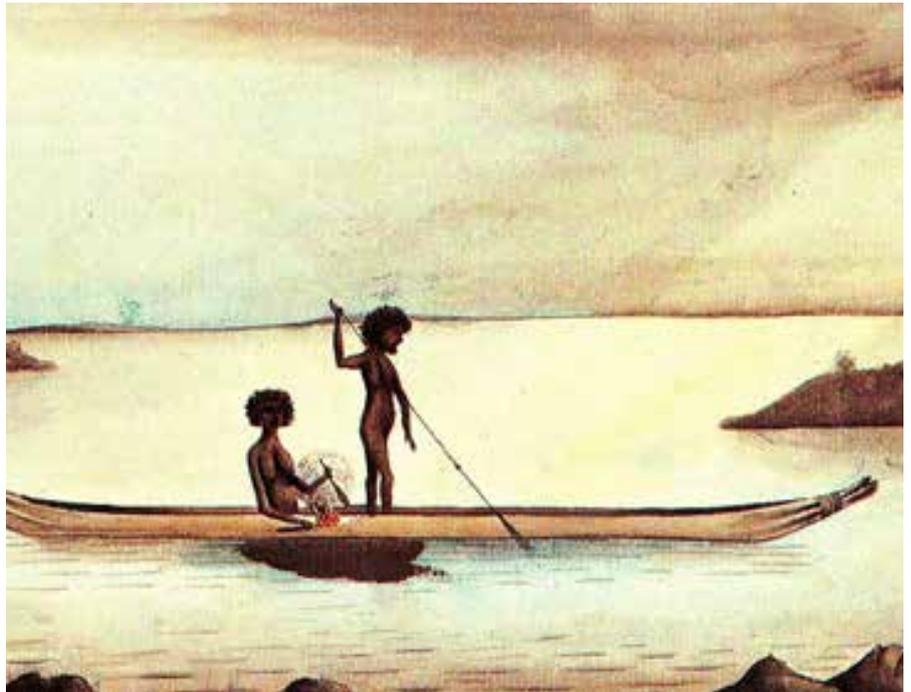
While we enjoy the wonders of Sydney Harbour, spare a thought for those original inhabitants who had a thriving “canoe culture” well before we arrived.

Nawi is a local Sydney Aboriginal word recorded by early Europeans to describe the bark canoes that plied Sydney Harbour. Records show that during the first two years of settlement at Sydney Cove, the harbour at night was always dotted with the small fires aboard canoes, mainly used by Aboriginal women for fishing.

The visiting French Admiral Francois Paris in 1830 pronounced that bark canoes were the ‘most primitive of all watercraft.’

Our most common image of aboriginal habitation is of desert peoples. However, the coastal regions contained large populations who obviously had adapted to using marine food resources, including the use of canoes. In recent years there has been an increased interest in understanding and preserving the traditions of aboriginal watercraft. Many indigenous communities are becoming involved in canoe making across the country.

The 2006 film *Ten Canoes* created great public interest. In 2012 the Australian National Maritime Museum conducted a conference on Australian watercraft.



Aboriginal striking fish, unknown artist. Courtesy of the British Museum.

Up to this point the museum had collected a couple of examples of Indigenous craft – but comparatively little attention had been paid to the maritime history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples. The inclusion of several canoes on the museum’s Australian

Register of Historic Vessels

“Was an important shift in the recognition of a continuity in an Australian maritime history that was thousands of years old. It is also recognition of the unique, sustainable and complex designs that form an overlooked historical diversity of watercraft around Australia. Early colonial European accounts of Indigenous watercraft simplified what are incredibly complex craft. They also ignored their diversity – of form, construction and use.”

While early nineteenth century travellers and squatters were quick to use Aboriginal craft to cross rivers, move supplies or rescue stranded stock, they could not replicate their manufacture. The process of securing and treating bark for example, is a highly skilled affair."

Dr Stephen Gapps, Australian National Maritime Museum

Australian native canoes were adapted to their local environments, which generated a variety of types. In Northern Australia dugouts were constructed from logs no doubt influenced by similar canoes in Papua New Guinea. On the Murray River a variety of hard bark canoes was developed, differing from the softer Sydney bark canoes.

In Tasmania, bark was rolled into tubes and although they seem more like rafts, sections were cleverly bundled into a canoe shape.

Along the Kimberley coastline, double-ended fan-shaped rafts made from a series of poles were important platforms for turtle and dugong hunting. These were perfect in their utility – being able to separate into two halves – one becoming a float attached to a harpooned dugong.

In Torres Strait, outriggers were added to dugout canoes and woven mat sails were used. Many of these craft could travel great distances in open seas. An aboriginal story from the south coast of NSW relates how the young men made a canoe journey to Montague Island, quite a distance offshore, to collect mutton bird eggs. They were caught by a storm on the return journey and all of them drowned.

A recent exhibition in the Manly Museum and Art Gallery contained a model aboriginal watercraft, Nawi, built by David Payne of the Australian National Maritime Museum. He states that: -

"The Gamaragal and other coastal clans possessed a canoe culture, and saltwater, as much as land, was their natural habitat. Aboriginal men and women skimmed across the water in the fragile watercraft. Their canoes were three to four metres long and about one metre wide, shallow and shaped from a straight sheet of stringybark, bunched and tied with cord or vines at each end. Spacer sticks jammed across the centre held the sides in tension."



Aboriginal canoe on the Barron River, 1890s.
Image: Cairns Historical Society



PHOTO: Manly Art Gallery and Museum - Model Aboriginal watercraft

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