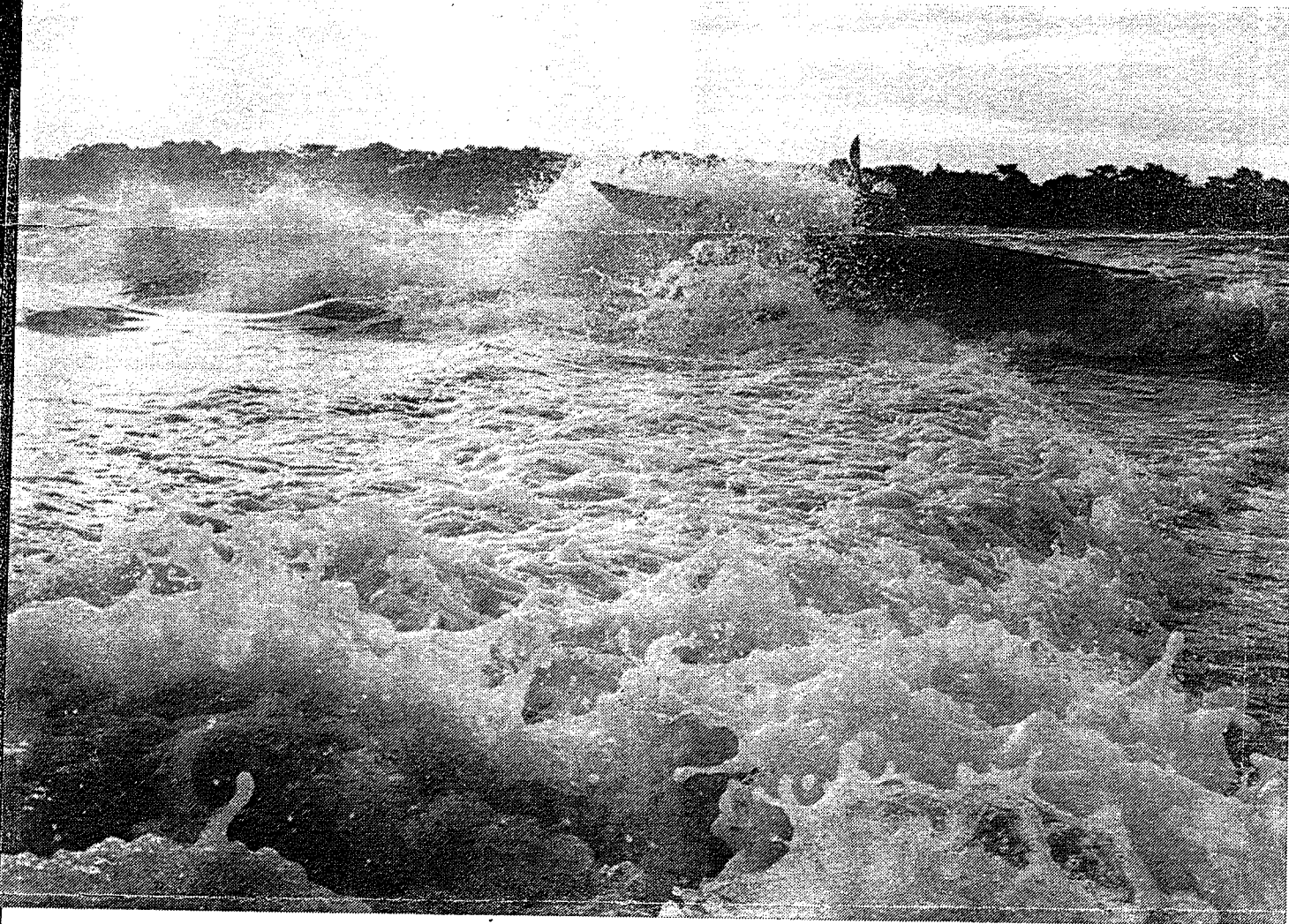


sea trek

The official newsletter of the Victorian Sea Kayak Club Inc.



**November
1996**

Issue 25.



Victorian Sea Kayak Club

November Issue No 25

Keep sending the articles. If sending a 3 1/2" floppy disk please have it formatted as Claris works or Microsoft word (Apple Mac). If DOS send either standard double-sided disks in 720K format, or high-density disks in the 1440K.

Pease send all articles to Chris Sewell.
6 The Grange Bairnsdale 3875.
Fax (051) 568759

Alternatively email your article to
lofty@netspace.net.au

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Seaford 3198

VSKC Web page

<http://netspace.net/vskc>

Front page Derek Wigley at paly in tide race at Anderson Inlet entrance-photo John Hyndman.

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Minutes of the 1996 VSKC AGM

2 November 1996

Meeting held: Flinders Motel Conference Centre,
Flinders

Meeting started: 7:30pm

Minutes Secretary: Therese Pollard

Attendance: Tony Payne, Michael Loftus-Hills, Julian Smith, Ian Hill, Keith Anker, John Hyndman, Laurie Atkins, Therese Pollard, Chris Sewell, John Basemore, Bill Robinson, Leigh Brennan-Smith, Robyn Anker, Fabrice Pierre, Jane Sullivan, Derek Wigley, Steve Weston, James Weston, Colin Addison, George Crebbin, Glen Cant, Rex Brown, Pete Dingle, Ray Musgrave, Mike Cromie.

Apologies: Mal Cowell, Keith Mitchener, Daryl Davidson, Karen Thornton, David Slater, Paul Hoy, Michael Crouch, Harry Hiscov.

Previous Minutes: Posted prior to meeting. Moved Julian Smith. Seconded John Hyndman. Carried.

Business arising: Insurance: to be taken up in general business.

Correspondence: Circulated at meeting. Letter sent in July to VCA re affiliation-no reply.

Minutes of the 1996 AGM cont

Reports: Posted prior to meeting.

Comment on editor's report-Ray Musgrave is now printing magazine at work. Much of the August magazine was hard to read. It was due to a 40 page report (NZ sea kayak symposium) reduced to 10 pages. Many people supported the report and found it informative.

Election of office bearers:

Position	Nominated	Moved	Seconded
President	M. Cromie	R. Musgrave	C. Sewell
Vice President	J. Smith	J. Hyndman	MLH
Sec/Treasurer	R. Musgrave	M.Cromie	B.Robinson
Touring Com del	L. Atkins	R. Musgrave	J. Smith
	Ian Hill	R. Musgrave	J. Smith
Trip Resource Officer	I. Hill	R. Musgrave	J. Basemore
Editor	C Sewell	L. Atkins	J. Basemore
Assistant Editor	Michael L-H	L. Atkins	J. Basemore
VCA Rep.	M. Crouch	R. Musgrave	T. Payne

General Business:

1.)VCA Affiliation

L.Atkins: VCA is the state level of association. In past had difficulties with insurance. Now we are in no-mans land. Not a member. There is no sea kayaking viewpoint in association. The benefits are what we put into it. It is recognised by Govt. These include projects, impact on canoeing invited to make submissions or put forward our own submissions.

Q. Can we go it alone and get equal recognition? VCA may get more notice than our small organisation. All touring clubs get together for a stronger voice. Comment: we get nil recognition from VCA see we get nothing from VCA. LA: You get what you put in. eg. Representations of the Coastal Management Plan-there is a full page describing sea kayaking. Represent of sea kayakers to major project planners. Question-Wilsons Prom. Would it be a help if we are members of VCA ? LA: As long as involved in planning will be recognised. Off shore islands a no-no, need recognition for any restricted access.

Membership depends on how much pressure we want to make.

JB: We can get names on touring committee too make strong comments on policies. P.D: They are the ones who can make decisions on our behalf: we put in to control what thy decide. LA: VCA comment on management at the recourses we use.

Motion: We affiliate as a member of the VCA (\$7.00 / head) without paying their insurance. Moved Rex Brown.

Seconded John Basemore. Motion put: **Carried**

We now apply for affiliation and send the fee (no insurance) to VCA.

Motion. AGM is shifted from the Melbourne Cup Weekend. **Moved** Rex Brown **Seconded:** Leigh Brennon-Smith Motion put. **Carried**

2) AGM:

Motion: AGM to be held on a weekend other than cup weekend **Moved** R.Brown **Seconded** R. Musgrave-**Carried**

3) VSKC and new members

Ricketts Point Weekend - Involve local manufacturers, involve Beaumaris Life Saving Club - hire hall. Try out different boats. Advertise with VCA Moved L. Brennan-Smith **Seconded** F. Pierre J.Hyndman : Do we have to actively seek new members - people seek us out if they want to join. Could we achieve same thing with a listing in the yellow pages. People who want and seek us out are the ones we want. Motion: Move that the VSKC put a listing in the yellow pages Moved: F. Pierre **Seconded:** J. Smith L. Atkins: Post cards - Ask to attach post cards to sea kayaks in shops selling sea kayaks or to leave in a prominent spot. M. Loftus-Hills - We also have a home page on the Internet

4) Beginners in sea kayaks

I. Hill - Handed around NSW sea kayak gradings. What do we think for beginner sea kayakers?

J. Basemore : Up to the leader to decide if the trip is safe and if correctly equipped M. Cromie : Intending paddler must contact the organiser. The organiser can change the trip with conditions C.Sewell : Put beginners in doubles and appointing assistants for each double to guide and watch over. Doubles can be hired from Capacity Sports and Mal Cowell

5) EPIRB - There have been several recent successful rescues when epirbs have been activated. (not sea kayak misadventures) Boat overturned between Gabo and Tullarberga Is. Rescued under three hours Trawler sank off Gabo Is after being rammed by ship. Rescued under three hours. Yacht hit reef near Cape Liptrap. Rescued under three hours. The VSKC strongly recommend that they be carried on any offshore trip. Law to carry them two nautical miles off shore.

J. Hyndman : a new variety on market only the size of a cigarette packet but cost \$600 Others are around the \$200.

6)Sea Trek

M.Cromie : Every scheduled trip - please send an article to the editor - no matter how short or long. Leader to appoint a reporter on a trip.

7)Trips to Tassie

R.Brown : Could trips be organised - Easter??

P.Dingle : to work with Tassie club

J.Hyndman : going down later in November. Will try to make contact.

Meeting Closed: 9:15

Club news and events

Paddling Agenda

Nov 30, Dec 1

Lake Eildon

Contact: John Basemore

Phone: 03 9560 5718 H

December 7-8

Introduction to sea kayaking
under the auspices of the VBCE

Contact: Laurie Atkins

Phone: 03 052 431 035 H

1997

February 1- 2

Ricketts Point

Contact: Leigh Brennan-Smith

Phone: (03) 9598 1963 H

Meet: Life Saving Club about 10:00am

February 22-23

San Remo to somewhere in Westernport

Contact: John Basemore

Phone: 03 9560 5718 H

March 8-10

Wilson's Prom East Coast

Contact: Ray Musgrave

Phone: 03 5975 2414 H

Please contact Ray well before this date

New Members

Rod Jocksmith

81 Autumn Cres Mt Eliza 3930 03 9787 8443 H 03
9641 3260 W

John & Aldo Fazio

1 Marshall St Flemington 3031 03 9376 2601H 03
96700720 W

Leon Heale

34 North Cliffe Rd Edithvale 3196 03 9772 4214
H/W

Robert Adams

33 Hanby St Brighton 3186 03 9592 2906 H 03 9555
3311W

Matthew Jones

129 Leveson St Nth Melbourne 3051 03 9329 8468H
03 9415 7599W

Robert Dewhurst & Eleanor Hughes

16 Thomson St Northcote 3070 03 9481 4281H

Ken Fraser

78 David St Hampton 3188 015 352 600 H mobile

Malcolm Cowell

PO Box 45 Warburton 3799 059 66 5110 H 056 88
1457 W 018 105 337 M

Frank Masci

85 Liston Ave Reservoir 3073 03 9460 3052 H(after
9:00pm) 03 9344 7073 W

Derek Wigley

726a Bourke Rd Camberwell 3124 03 9415 7121 W

**Annual Subscriptions are now
due**

see back page for details

Annual Subscriptions \$25.00 All subs renew-
able November 1st

Joint family subscriptions \$35.00

Change of address

Fabrice Pierre 46 Grarwyn Rd Carnegie 3163. 03
9563 1554 (H) 041 936 7027 (W)

Please note: All Country Victorian Phone numbers
now have the prefix of their old area code as part of
their phone numbers:

eg 051 521 533 is **Now** 51 521 533

Recent Trips

Bay Paddle number seven: Werribee to Geelong

Lyndon Anderson, Ray Musgrave, John Hydman, Rex Brown, Glen Cant, Pete Dingle, Bill Robinson, Chris and Eric Davidson

The plan was initially to paddle from Werribee to Geelong, however the forecast of 30-40 knot winds meant the plan needed slight amendment. The forecast of 20 knots increasing to 30-40 knots in the afternoon from the N-NW dictated that the best direction should have been from the west to east, so the plan was amended to depart from Avalon to Werribee. After the car shuffle to Avalon, nine paddlers hit the water keen to discover the delights of the western side of the bay. The paddlers rounded Point Lillias, the controversial site of a planned toxic waste dump, before heading to the wreck of the "Anneaura". The "Anneaura" looks like an old barge used for dredging operations. It has been cut in half and scuttled, and worth looking at. A sandy beach to the east of the wreck saw the first stop. At this stage in the paddle, all those who had sails had put them to good use, but this was not to be for much longer.

The Point Wilson ammunition storage dump was to our east and is a restricted area. The signs warn not to enter within 300m of the shore or the pier. After departing our first stop the group remained close together to alleviate any problems when trying to enter the restricted zone near the Point Wilson Pier. Upon approaching the pier we were met by one of the friendliest Navy people I have ever met. Instructions that this was a restricted area and to keep away were offered without hesitation. The pier extends to the south for 2.5 kms so it was to our advantage to paddle within the restricted area and under the pier. After some quick talking he reluctantly radioed back to HQ to obtain permission to allow us to paddle under the pier. This was really in vain as by the time they got back to him we had all made our way under the pier on our way to Werribee. We must have looked very trustworthy because he then followed us in his vehicle on shore until we had passed the boundary of the storage area.

Once under the pier we headed directly into a head wind of a steady 15 knots gusting to 20, from the N-NE and not the NNW as promised by the weather bureau. Another stop was made about 4 kms short of the Kirk Point boat. The group then battled the wind and invisible rocks to make it to Kirk Point boat ramp. It was at this stop that the finish point was in sight but at least another 2-3 hours paddling away. By this time it had taken 4.5 hrs to cover 16kms. It wasn't a hard decision to agree we had achieved our aim and stop the paddle at this point. After a

quick phone call, yes mobiles work in this part of the world, my trusty wife Nicole was on her way to pick us up. Many thanks from all nine paddlers for the lift.

The next hour and a half was taken up with car shuffles and reloading the kayaks onto the vehicles. Although the initial aims were not achieved, all those that took part now have a good understanding of the western side of the bay.

Several lessons were learnt from this paddle: first ensure you have alternate plans if the weather turns bad and secondly don't trust the weatherman. Looking forward to seeing many more paddlers for the weekend of 23-24 November, Geelong to Queenscliff with an overnight stop at the Portarlington Caravan Park. I guarantee the weather will be better, and we WILL paddle in the same direction as the wind!

Port Welshpool to Port Albert 19 - 20 October 1996

Twenty bods arrived Friday evening at Port Welshpool. After a grand evening were woken to a mild and pleasant morning. This quickly changed to a gusty 20 - 30 knot nor westerly. We checked out suitable launching sites. While doing this, John and Rex were unloading their boats when a stronger gust got a boat and twisted it out of their hands and sent it flying. Just as well it was Rex's, being doubly strong it just bounced and suffered no damage.

Several decided to pull out when the rains came. I must admit, I was tempted too. It was a bit bleak. After the car shuffle, 4 doubles and 4 singles set out across to Little Snake Island. The more accomplished paddlers became mentors for each of the novice paddlers. The wind moderated a bit and a hassle free crossing ensured. We paddled only four kilometres and sort refuge from the elements at the jetty on Snake Island. John, Rex and Ray had set off earlier and made a great fire. Tea-tree smoke has a great effect on the eyes and the mosquitoes. On landing Huey really sort to harangue us. The wind screamed and a heavy down pour ensured so that any that were remotely dry were soon drenched. It only lasted while we ferried the boats up onto 'dry land.' As the last one was lowered, everything eased off. In fact, the sun soon appeared and began to dry the wet items. A suitable and very sheltered campsite was found and a small tent village was soon erected. After lunch, several decided to walk across the island to the cattlemen's huts. Most returned reaching them, so as to prepare meals and partake in social intercourse, but the two Peters decided to push on. They returned sometime in the evening, no one seems to

Recent Trips

remember when. Showers persisted throughout the afternoon and evening as did the wind. If one ventured out of the campsite area - they knew! Maggie made a comment that after being initially hesitant (never having paddled before), really enjoyed the crossing - the water being very shallow and if the worst did happen you could get out and walk.

The sheltered campsite was the perfect setting for a great evening with the usual tales of past trips and those planned for the future taking place.

After listening to the morning's weather report of 20 to 30 knot southwesterlies and later moderating, it was decided to give the Prom a miss and continue on our way towards Port Albert - 26 km away. We made great progress with the outgoing tide, covering 7 km in a little over an hour. The low hills looked like different islands from afar. We pulled ashore for morning tea amid an ancient banksia and casuarina forest then set off for the Port Albert entrance. Lunch was taken in the lee of a large wooded dune, as the wind was still quite cool and strong. Boats had to be left a hundred metres away due to low tide and sand flats. We watched as water slowly covered the flats and boats started drifting - luckily they were secured to a log. We paddled out to the entrance where Wilsons Prom could be seen in all its splendour from what must be one of the most expansive beaches in Victoria. With an incoming tide we made good time to Port Albert, taking a little over an hour to get there.

Khancoban to Bonegilla

George Crebbin/Glenn Cant

Between Christmas and New Year we paddled the section of the Murray from Bringenbrong Bridge to Lake Hume and then "across" the Lake Hume to Bonegilla. This resulted in two very distinct paddles with very marked differences between river and Lake which I certainly did not appreciate until the event.

We left at 7.00 a.m. from Berwick and drove to Bonegilla where we left Glenns' car in a caravan park there and after transferring his boat and gear to my car we headed toward Khancoban (approx 130km by road) stopping for a bite to eat at Corryong and arrived at the Bridge about 2.45 p.m. Sorting and stowing took about 30 minutes, bogging my car and getting unbogged a further 15 min and we got on the water at 3.30 p.m.

We estimated a river current of about 4km/hr but who knows - certainly it was a fair assistance to us and we covered about 30 km before selecting an overnight

camp. This was selected with due deference to Glenns aversion to cows at about 7.45 p.m., just a little later than we would have liked but it was OK. The weather had been fine, sunny and about 25 c.

Next morning we were on the water in very pleasant weather again at 8.30 a.m. We paddled in very pleasant conditions and surroundings pausing to pass the time of day with anglers and campers. One group used Glenn's camera to take some photos of us. We sat and talked for quite a while and they were very interested in what we were doing. We must have evoked some sympathy because they gave us a whole barbecued chicken laced with garlic. We both had lunch off it but Glenn is not keen on garlic so I had the rest. Apart from the odd tangle with tree branches as the river swept round bends the days travels were uneventful. Weather fine sunny and about 30c.

Day three was a 8.30 a.m. start again, weather still excellent, and up until about 2.00 p.m. we had the river current albeit a bit slower. After about 2.30 it was slack water like paddling and it must be said that Lake Hume presents a problem of Navigation - it is very easy to head down the wrong arm which can turn out to be a dead end. A mistake of reckoning /estimating/ guesstimating our position lead us to be expecting the ferry at Wymah round every 'next bend'. At 8.00 p.m. with no ferry in sight we camped - a bit tired by now. Day four 8.30 a.m. weather same but warmer, it got to 37c. The ferry was about 1 1/2 hours farther on and we attempted some sailing here with an improvised rig of a jacket and paddles. Not a great success but it gave us some way with a rest thrown in.

Toward lunch time we were near the correct turning to take to get back to the Dam Wall and Bonegilla. Even with a map it is difficult so we decided to ask directions of two blokes in a motor boat/cabin cruiser who just seemed to be drifting aimlessly. It turned out that their boat had broken down! They pointed us in the right direction and I offered to tell their friends if I saw them and asked his name. It was NORM and he absolutely was a Norm and without thinking I said "Well it would be wouldn't it".

He didn't seem to notice as he reacted for another stubbie. We didn't see his friends.

The rest of the paddle was not of the same quality as the first three days.

Motor boats, skiers and jet skis all around us with the associated noise and smells. The chop on the water due to these activities made paddling a lot less pleasant also. We would recommend that the trip be ended at the bridge as this cuts out the worst of the plague of petrol powered "pleasure" boats. We mis-calculated

Recent Trips

and ended up at Ebde, and then had to back track to Bonegilla to get the car. This day ended at 6.30 p.m. With the car shuttle and packing up etc it was close on midnight by the time we left Albury for home.

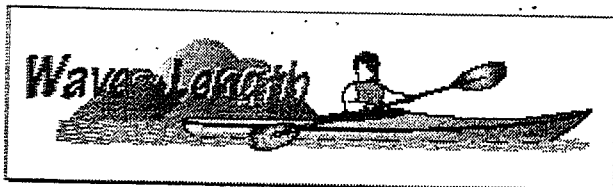
The distances as far as we could estimate were- day one 30km, day two 55km, day three 55km and day four 40km.

Keith and
Robin Anker
and Ray
Musgrave near
Tortoise Head,
French Island



Photo John Hyndman

VSKC on the Internet.



One of the online magazines available on the Internet. Selected articles are available online including graphics.

Check out our web site now at

<http://netspace.net.au/~lofty.vskc.html>

The VSKC has been on the Internet now for over 12 months. The club web site has Sea Trek online and basic joining information. We also have links to other canoe and kayak sites in Australia and the world.

I have created a index page-Kayak-Canoe-Paddle (Australia) that takes you to our club site, the Fairfield Canoe Club, the Victorian Dragon Boat Association and information about the Murray Marathon.

There are also links to the latest weather information and the newsgroup rec:boat:paddle.

Kayak related pages on the web include

Peter Carter's Home Page (Kayak Links)
Australian Canoe Board of Education
Melbourne University Mountaineering Club - Kayak Page
Sydney Outrigger Canoe Club
Canberra Canoe Club
The New South Wales Sea Kayak Club
ANU Mountaineering Club (Kayaking)
Monash Bushwalking Club (Kayaking)
RMIT Outdoor Pursuits Club
Townsville Canoe Club page (Queensland)

If anyone would like to (help) maintain our page or have some ideas to liven it up please email me at

lofty@netspace.net.au
Michael Loftus-Hills

Bass Strait Waves



(Cruising Helmsman, July 1996)

This story begins three years ago when I was standing on the beach in front of Flinders Yacht Club in Westernport Bay and three small waves rose out of the dead flat sea, broke on the sand with a gentle hiss, and disappeared. It was a breathless hot summer day with not even a catspaw disturbing the surface of the sea. There was nothing to make a wave, so where had the three waves come from? My companions reached the conclusion that it was "the turn of the tide", and it was only afterwards that I realised that the tide had turned some hours ago. It remained as an unidentified occurrence until it was flushed out of my memory when an acquaintance mentioned the "Whoompf Waves" which he sometimes heard on still nights from his clifftop house further up the Bay.

He called them "Whoompf Waves" because they were a set of one, two, or three waves which crashed on the beach with the typical "whoompf" of a dumping wave, always at night and at high tide and, he thought, at full moon. His neighbours also knew of these waves, but people back from the clifftop were unaware of them. He pointed out they might also occur in daylight but the daytime noises might mask the whoompf; also, occurring at high tide may merely mean that only at high tide is there enough water on the beach to carry a wave, as the beach is quite narrow and the water line retreats beyond the sand and over a rock shelf well out of earshot of the clifftop as the tide ebbs. If they did not occur at less than three-quarter tide they would not be heard on the clifftop.

My friend undertook to note the time of the next wave, and after several weeks had gone by he called to say a wave had sounded at 2:00am that morning. High tide was 2:07am and it was the night of a full moon, with a completely still sea. The tide was not big. Shortly after, a "whoompf" wave startled a group of people outside the Flinders Yacht Club at 6:52 pm. It was a dead still evening. Actual high tides can vary as much 20 to 30 minutes either side of listed high tide.

I mentioned this to Tom Delaney, a former fisherman, ex-Pilot Boat Coxswain and his immediate reaction was the "Whoompf Waves" were echoes of "Three Sister" waves which are a well known phenomenon amongst Bass Strait fishermen. Investigating Three Sisters waves led me on Bass Strait "Rogue Waves", with their attendant risks to yachtsmen, and this became the thrust of this article.

"Three Sister" waves seem to be peculiar to Bass Strait

and are a set of three waves which rise without warning, are different in character to the prevailing wave pattern and can arise from a flat sea. The first wave has enough authority to alert the fisherman, the second is a big wave and the third is a very big, breaking wave, which breaks over the average fishing boat, flooding the working deck and carrying away any loose nets or equipment on deck as well as drenching the crew. If nets have been set close under cliffs they are lifted and draped over the rocks with considerable damage. Rock fishermen are in great danger of being sucked out to sea.

The only explanation put forward by the fishermen is that waves are created by movements in the sea bed, becoming miniature tidal waves. There is no hard evidence that this is what is happening, but these waves can occur anywhere in Bass strait, whereas a tidal wave usually surfaces when it reaches land.

Dr Kerry Black of the Victorian Institute of Marine Science suggested that they may be swell waves, similar to "Surf Beat" wave groupings, and I must congratulate wave people on the imaginative names they use for. For those of you who don't know what a "Surf Beat" is, it is the term used to describe the rhythm of waves breaking on a surf beach where every seventh wave is a big one. They also talk about "swell waves" and they are not referring to good surfing waves but to waves which have travelled in from a different weather pattern. Swell waves can travel great distances in open water and don't have the broken surface that a wind driven swell has. They are an unobtrusive source in the ocean but they don't release their energy unless they meet an obstruction such as a beach or an opposing current. The description of large breaking Bass Strait waves most often heard is that they came from nowhere, and this description fits a swell wave being forced up from a calm sea and breaking, it also fits both a "Three Sisters" wave and a "Rogue Wave".

Rogue waves, which would pitch-pole the average yacht, will be called super waves in this article as they are not rogues as reported from time to time in the press, but are part of the normal Bass strait wave makeup and should be accepted as such by sailors. Fortunately, they are fairly rare and this article sets out the probable cause of these waves and the danger areas where they are likely to occur.

The first question to be asked of this family of waves is the source of their energy and the obvious place to look is the western end of Bass Strait where some of the

Waves cont

biggest ocean swells in the world arrive after an uninterrupted journey from South Africa, having built up over thousands of miles in the roaring forties. The swells pound into the gaps between King Island and Cape Otway, and between King Island and Hunter Island on the tip of Tasmania, losing part of their energy but not all of it, and this remaining energy is carried by swell waves running eastward into Bass Strait. One has only to see the swell in Bass Strait resulting from a storm in the Southern Ocean to appreciate the power in these waves. On a calm day they come heaving in from the southwest lifting up and sliding underneath the boat without a splash, in eerie silence until they hit a cliff, when they explode 20 to 30 feet up the cliff face in a mass of foam.

Tom Delaney tells how the Westernport Pilot Boat had a hairs breadth escape from a super wave in the spring of 1988 when it was standing by off Westernport Bay waiting to take a pilot off the tanker Arthur Phillips. There was a swell from strong southwesterlies which had been blowing for the previous two days and the coxswain and his crew were standing with their backs against the instrument panel watching the Arthur Phillips approach from behind, and talking to two friends of the pilot who were sitting on a settee at the rear of the cabin.

As the Arthur Phillips approached the pilot boat the ship to ship radio suddenly blasted into life in the pilot boat with the voice of the pilot of the Arthur Phillips shouting into the microphone "Tom, Look up! Look up!" Tom Delaney, the coxswain, turned and faced forward to be confronted by a vertical green wall of water in front of the boat. It was so high that he couldn't see the top of the wave from inside the cabin of the launch.

Instinctively he shoved both engines on to full power and clung to the steering wheel. His crew grabbed the overhead rail and found themselves hanging in mid-air as the boat rose up the wave. The passengers were thrown against the back of the settee and found the crew's feet swinging in their faces. Only the instant response of the turbo-charged diesels driving massive three blade propellers and the wave piercing design of the pilot boat saved the boat as it accelerated up the wave gaining enough momentum to pierce the thin curling top of the wave and appear out the other side like a leaping dolphin, the propellers throwing back twin streams of water as they emerged. The 17 metre pilot boat, weighing seven tons, landed safely stern first with its occupants in a state of shock, unable to speak for minutes afterwards.

Meanwhile the wave roared on towards the Arthur Phillips. When it hit, the hull disappeared beneath a wall of foam except for the elevated bridge structure which appeared to be floating without support on top of the wave. Some deck equipment was damaged but otherwise the tanker was unhurt. However, they were able to give an

exact description of the incident, and to verify that the wave was unrelated to the prevailing sea conditions. It had nothing to do with the surface waves.

This is a particularly handy example of a super wave as the wave had expert observers both inside and outside the boat unlike many "rogue waves", which happen on a dark night or are heard of second hand. It was in sight of the Westernport Heads and verified in daylight by the pilot crew and the pilot on the Arthur Phillips. It now appears that similar waves occur outside Port Phillip Heads under particular conditions, such as a big swell from the Southern Ocean meeting an outgoing tide through The Rip. The Port Phillip Pilots' Association confirm that breaking waves which swamp the decks of laden tankers in the same way the Arthur Phillips was swamped outside Westernport exist outside Port Phillip. One suspects the Westernport tide was running out when the Pilot Boat encountered the breaking wave.

These are the same conditions as exist at the western entrance to Bass strait where the Southern Ocean swells meet the ebbing tide from Bass strait as it rounds to the north and south of King Island and the northwestern tip of Tasmania, and this confrontation creates a highly dangerous sea. Evidence given to a recent coronial enquiry stated "they are the roughest seas in the world. Tide rips and wave patterns that can stand up from a virtually glassy sea to 20ft 30ft waves." These waves are not unusual in this location and fishermen stay in shelter when they are likely to occur, but these waves occurred within Bass Strait they would be labelled "rogue waves". But they are not "rogues", just normal waves out of place, and they occur in Bass Strait occasionally when similar conditions are created.

Both Westernport and Port Phillip have strong ebb tides which confront swell waves from the southwest travelling in the opposite direction, duplicating to a lesser degree the conditions previously encountered in Bass Strait. Captain Carolin of the Port Phillip Sea Pilots' Association confirms that large breaking waves do occur in the ebb tide affected area up to three miles seaward from The Rip when the tide is running strongly and there is a big ocean swell. Under these conditions yachts should wait until the tide turns and in Westernport, keep away from the Seal Rocks side. There may be other areas in Bass Strait with similar situations.

The "Three Sister" waves probably emanate from the same Southern Ocean swell, but in a different manner. Kerry Black suggests a surf beat effect, with swell waves entering Bass Strait through the King Island/Cape Otway gap and the King Island/Hunter Island gap. These two swells paths come together as they move down Bass strait and statistically some waves will coincide and build on each other to create a breaking wave in the same

Waves cont

way as a surf beat operates. Not as savage as a breaker created by a swell being confronted by a tidal current, but big enough to give a yacht a good dunking, the build-up in size over three waves supporting the concept of two wave trains coming together. As an example, a crew member of one of the yachts in a recent Melbourne-Devonport was washed overboard in calm conditions, which followed three days of storms in the Southern Ocean. He was clipped on and was hauled back on board. It was dark and there was no warning until the wave broke down the full length of the boat, except that the high winds in the Southern Ocean should have been a warning signal, in the light of hindsight, that the swell waves in Bass Strait would be heavier than usual, which in turn should've alerted yachtsmen for both Super waves and "Three Sisters" waves. Probably the first recorded instance of a "Three Sister" set of waves sinking a boat was the overwhelming of the pilot Boat, The Rip, over 100 years ago, when the first wave knocked the boat on its side, the second struck before it righted and the third filled the boat.

Thus both of these dangerous Bass Strait waves have a common source, which is a heavy swell in the Southern Ocean, and a forewarning of a heavy swell is a low in the Bight. Safety harnesses and battened hatches are a safe

guard against "Three Sisters" waves, but the only safeguard against super waves is to keep away from the danger spots, particularly the ebb tide from Port Phillip when there is a big south/westerly swell.

The "Whoompf Waves" are still unresolved, but it does seem they are local and not part of the Bass Strait scene. Evidence so far supports the importance of their occurrence at high tide, whereas their appearance only in calm conditions such as night time is probably because they are such a modest wave that they would be blanketed by any wind waves or household noises such as television. The most likely explanation is that a trough probably develops as the water level in Bass Strait falls after passing through high tide and before the water in Westernport follows the Bass Strait level down. The trough develops because the upper reaches of Westernport have a restriction between Cowes on Phillip Island and Sandy Point which holds back its outgoing tide, allowing the trough to develop, and the Whoompf waves are the front of the "held back" tide as it finally meets the incoming tide.



Adrian Mann (Pittarak)-Port Fairy

Photo John Hyndman

Risk Management

Taken from Sea Kayaker Newsletter Brisbane July 96

The following analogy could be likened to what could happen when you go sea kayaking. Imagine a slot machine, a one armed bandit. Everytime you go paddling, you are putting a coin in the slot and pulling the handle down. Each risk factor that is overlooked or ignored means a lemon pops up in one of the windows. as more and more risk factors are overlooked, more lemons are lined up. The process continues until you either arrive at the end of your paddle or you rack up enough lemons to hit the JACKPOT... DISASTER. Competent, experienced leaders are always on the look out for lemons which they deal with before they cause accidents.

It can be argued that the outdoors is not inherently dangerous. The environment is neutral. It is only when people go into the outdoors that problems occur. We need to be able to recognise risks in the outdoors, practice assessing them and if necessary, managing them to ensure high quality experiences.

Some definitions:

RISK: The potential to lose something of value. The loss may be physical, mental, social, or financial. The presence of risk creates uncertainty. The motivation for risk is to gain something of value.

COMPETENCE: The ability of an individual to deal effectively with the demands placed on them by the surrounding environment.

ACCIDENT: An undesired event which results in harm to people, damage to property or loss to process.

RISK MANAGEMENT: The process of reducing potential loss to an acceptable level.

Research into accidents in the outdoors has found that there are three main causes of accidents:

- 1/ an unobserved or underestimated unsafe conditions.
- 2/ an unsafe act or
- 3/ an error of judgement.

Seems straight forward? Some would argue that all accidents are preventable with enough preventative planning and information gathering, however, there are obvious limits as to how far a leader can go in "their planning". All the research seems to point to the common sense value of planning in order to reduce the chance of having an accident. The planning should consider the four major factors involved:

- 1/ The activity
- 2/ The environment
- 3/ Resources and equipment
- 4/ The people involved.

The risks associated with any activity must be identified before they can be dealt with. There are two main types of risk: real and perceived. Real or physical risk is that which actually exists at any given time. A waterfall is a real risk to a white-water paddler. Perceived or psycho-

logical risk is the individual's subjective assessment of the real risk present at any given time.

Two mountaineers are crossing an unstable avalanche chute. Their real and perceived risk are both high. A person bungee jumping is in a situation where the perceived risk is high but real risk is low. A problem exists when the real risk is high, but the perceived risk is low: a white water paddler is drifting along oblivious to the fact that a waterfall is waiting around the next bend.

Perceived risk may be influenced by lots of factors such as confidence level, experience, tiredness and so on.

Unwittingly, many people, when entering the outdoors, take unnecessary risks. The first step in coming to terms with risk is to admit that an accident can happen to any one of us. Don't fall into the trap of thinking 'it can't happen to me'. The lemon analogy is good because it shows that an accident is not usually an unavoidable act of providence, but rather the logical consequence of a series of unmanaged factors. These factors are compounded by carelessness, ignorance, shortsightedness, bad judgments or at times outright arrogance. The word 'crisis', meaning crucial turning point in a series of events, better describes the situation. Spot the lemons in this fictitious situation...

A group of three friends decide to go for a day paddle in winter. The paddling experience of the group is varied, from a complete novice to an experienced paddler (who hasn't paddled for many years). At the put in point, one paddler arrives late, having slept in then skipped breakfast and rushed to get there. She finds that in her haste, she has forgotten to bring her spray deck and life jacket. The group member responsible for obtaining the weather report found that his car radio was not working and so did not hear a forecast, but said that the weather was usually good at this time of year. He has a high pressured job and this will be his last chance to go paddling for many weeks. He says he really wants to paddle today. The group set off into a choppy sea with varying winds. The member without a spray deck took some water into the cockpit during launching but otherwise seemed happy enough. After two hours paddling, the group found they had missed their island lunch spot. They seemed to have been swept northwards and out to sea by the tide or the increasing wind. The group rafted. The paddler complained that she was feeling cold and was shivering. One of the other paddlers said that the rising wind and seas were making him feel uncomfortable and that he felt sea-sick. He produces a hip-flask and offers it to the cold paddler saying, "This will warm you up..." The sea-sick paddler's condition deteriorates as the seas increase and he capsizes after broaching before a large swell. The cold paddler decides to let off a flare, but is confused and finds her hands too numb to open the dry bag containing the

Risk Management cont

safety gear. When finally opened, it is found that the bag, which was loose in the bottom of the cockpit, has leaked and the flares are useless...

How many lemons? At which point do you strike the JACKPOT? While the appearance of individual lemons may not lead to serious consequences, it is when a number of lemons are combined and compounded that

the odds for disaster rise to 'inevitable' levels.

Taken from Sea Kayaker Newsletter July 96 Brisbane
(Adapted from 'Managing Risks in Outdoor Activities'
New Zealand Mountain Safety Council)

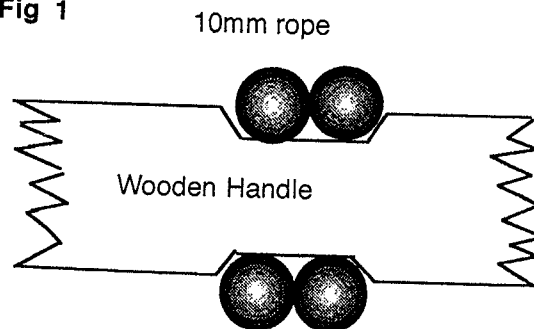
Toggles and Handles

T Once upon a time a long long time ago, a little old man was swimming his kayak ashore through a fair sized surf, when his hand became entrapped in the safety loop attached to the end of his craft. This is not a good feeling.

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I fill the extremities of the hull and drill right through. The rope runs loosely through this hole. Cut 300mm of the end of your wife's broom and you will have enough material for two handles. A hole can be drilled through the handle to take the rope, but I consider a notch cut right around the middle to be stronger (Fig 1). Secure the rope with a hitch. Add some whipping and it will never come off. Now to prevent it all flapping around and banging on the boat. Boat chandlers sell small plastic hooks which can be screwed onto the deck an inch or so further than the handle can reach. An ordinary

rudder gear can lead to bleeding, and bleeding could lead to sharks. Have fun and don't fall out!

Fig 1



Learning from the incident the little old man added a wooden handle to the loop. On a stormy day much later, while floating around hanging onto this handle, he

reaped the reward. He survived an hour in the water before rescue.

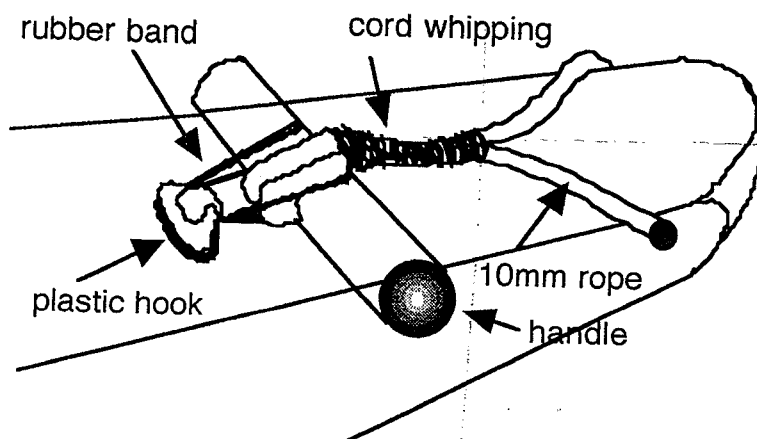
Holding a rope for a length of time becomes uncomfortable. A round wooden handle can be held one or two handed. It is positive to grip, enabling you to lift yourself higher to breath more easily. Changing hands is easy. Slide your hand down the rope and it strikes the handle without you losing your grip.

When swimming a kayak through the surf you need to hang on very tightly or lose it. The handle must be strong and well secured.

But when not in use a flapping handle can be a great annoyance as it bangs against the hull. Take a look at the diagram. I do not trust the strength of many decks.

John Basemore

Figure 2



rubber band holds the handle onto the hook and will break free easily when needed or can be slipped off if you have time (Fig 2). When fitting them, remember rudders and handles conflict with each other. I would do my best to avoid clinging to that end of a ruddered boat if I had a choice. Cuts from.

July in North Queensland (Advertisement)

This year I was lucky enough to spend July in North Queensland, mainly in the Whitsunday region. Whilst in Airlie Beach I caught up with an old mate John Beale. John now runs a sea kayak adventure business. John has travelled and sailed extensively around Australia and the world and this knowledge combined with his casual and easy going nature makes a short visit turn into three hours of coffee and conversation. John operates guided paddling tours ranging from one afternoon to overnight trips or whatever the customer wants. Kayaks are also available for hire and all equipment for any length trip is available. The one day guided trips are the most popular and these trips are customised to suit the paddlers ability and what they desire to see and do most. The trip may include a trip up one of the many mangrove creeks where colonies of fruit bats live followed by a paddle out to an island resort for a fully provided gourmet lunch. Afternoon tea is also provided and consists of packets of Tim Tams which are always a favourite of overseas backpackers who have never indulged in them before. Wild life is abundant in the Whitsundays. Most days I paddled with John the participants were able to have close encounters with turtles, dolphins, fish and birds - not to mention the amazing scenery of the Whitsundays. After your paddle don't forget to enter your comments in the trip book and have read of other comments and details of past clients from all over the world. Flexibility is the key whether you want a guided trip or just to hire a kayak for a couple of hours paddling. Drop off and pick up from other points can also be arranged.

So if you are in the area or just passing through drop in ~~for a coffee and a chat.~~ I paddled many different trips and locations with many different groups of people and always had a fantastic time. With a minimum winter temp of 25° and water temp of 19° it makes mid year an ideal time to visit the Whitsundays. Kayaks available for hire include 6 doubles Roscoes and Tasman Twins and many Mirage and Roscoe singles, all in excellent and sea worthy condition. For more more info give John a ring or feel free to talk to me about my experiences.

Whitsunday Sea Kayaking Adventures
P.O. Box 331 Airlie Beach, Qld 4802
018 318 354 (all hours) 079 465 574 (W)

Julian Smith

Lost and Found

During October I went for one of my regular after work paddles from Patterson River near Melbourne. I was paddling my plastic white water boat that lives on the roof of my combi so I wasn't intending on going all that far. I had paddled about 100 metres south of the river mouth when I noticed a piece of timber with rope wrapped around it. I began pulling this rope up expecting either a big shark or a body attached to it. I found it too heavy and beached the kayak and dragged the rope in from the shore. Attached to it was a tangled up ~ 100 metre long gill net made of light nylon and of quite new appearance. The net contained approximately 60 bream of about one kilogram in weight, a few flounder and flat-head and at least a hundred crabs - some very large. Obviously this was an illegally set net. the fish, though dead, were quite fresh - not more than twelve hours in the net. Why the net was abandoned is anyone's guess.

After finding the net, I rang the police who contacted the Fisheries and Wildlife. They weren't interested in seeing the net unless it was brought to them (it was after 5:00pm). They suggested we destroy the net and dispose of it after releasing as many live crabs as possible. The net already tangled beyond use was tied to my combi tow bar and dragged off the beach to where it was collected by Kingston City Council that night.

As sea kayakers, we have the opportunity due to our quiet nature of our travel to observe and report suspicious and/or illegal behaviour and preserve our fragile ocean environment for the future.

- Julian Smith

