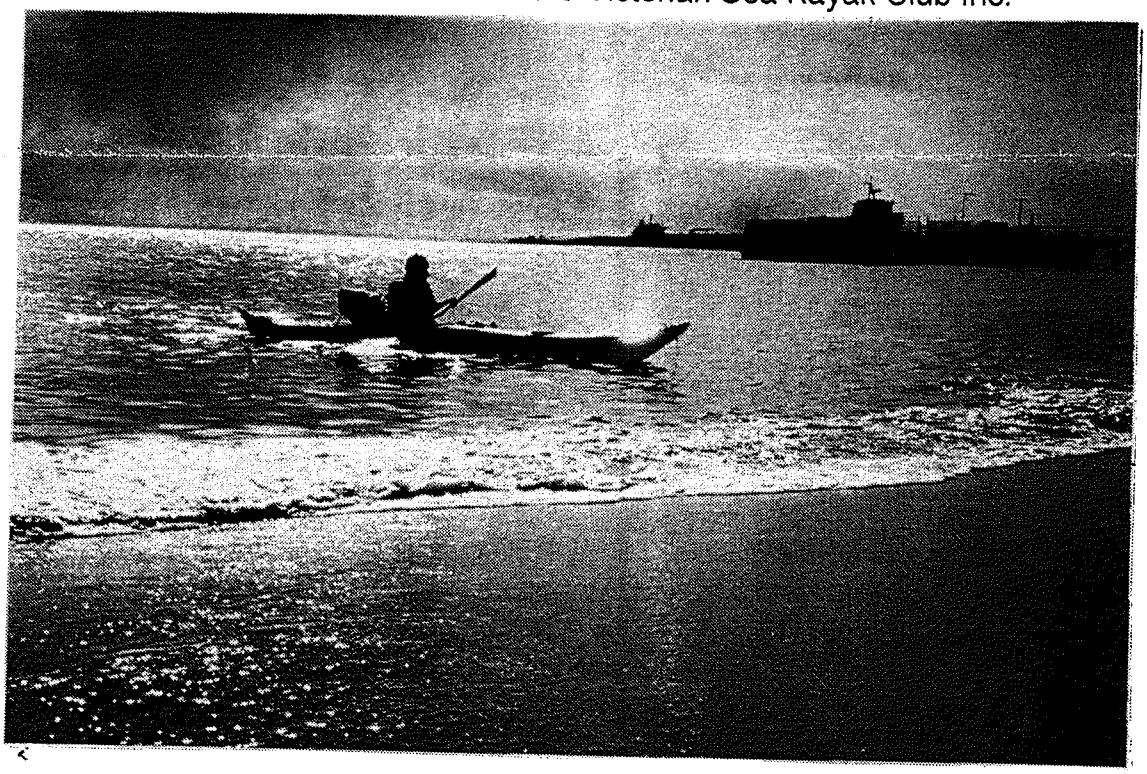
sea trek

The official newsletter of the Victorian Sea Kayak Club Inc.



February 1997

Issue 26.

Victorian Sea Kayak Club

February Issue No 26

Keep sending the articles. On disk would be great. PC or Macintosh-disks will be returned
Pease send all articles to Chris Sewell.
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Alternatively email your article to
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Deadline for next issue 25 April

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Photo above-John Hyndman. Wreck of "Miranda" Wilsons Prom. Beached during a storm in the Bay which now bears it's name, in 1854

Photo front page-John Hyndman.
Keith Mitchener in heavily laden Icefloe lands at Cowes

Club news and events

From the editor

I hope you like the new format. Many thanks to assistant editor Michael Loftus-Hills and his computer skills.

This is the first summer in many years with 'real' summer conditions. I hope you're out making the most this warmth and gentle breezes.

The three weeks we spent in Tassie were amazing. Apart from a couple of short lived fronts that provided some boisterous seas for a day and the usual afternoon sea breezes, the seas were amazingly calm. Cox Bight had only a 500mm surf!!
It was great to see a hundred? visitors attend the sea kayak day a few weeks ago. Full thanks must go to Leigh Brennan-Smith for organising the show and the assistance members gave the general public. It was truly a professional event!

Chris Sewell

Apologies for the late arrival of the February issue of Sea Trek – finally the new scanner has arrived!

Michael Loftus-Hills

For Sale
Rapid Rider Canoe – a few lumps and bumps and scratches Fair Condition $195-00.
Angus Walker. (018) 996-087 or (03) 7509-3447.

Reminder : Annual Subscriptions are now due

see back page for details

Annual Subscriptions $25.00 All subs remewable November 1st
Joint family subscriptions $35.00

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Apologies.

Rod Jackson-Smith (Mt Eliza) for incorrectly spelling his Surname as Jocksmith in the November edition of Sea Trek.

Information Sought.

Paddling the FLORES ARCHIPELAGO S/E Indonesia, Timor or Bali. If any body can provide information or would be interested in joining Angus in winter 1997 please contact him on (018) 996-087 or (03) 7509 3447.

Recent Trips

Crossing the Rip

by Lyndon Anderson

After a successful Saturday under the expert instruction of Derek Wigley we decided upon a gentlemanly hour start on Sunday at Point Lonsdale. The plan, the night before, had been to find a beach with some decent surf and expand upon the skills learnt the previous day. However, the one weekend we really wanted some wind to create that surf just didn't eventuate.

After some discussion on what to do next, it was decided a crossing of the RIP from Point Lonsdale to Point Nepean was the order of the day. With varying skills among the group, only four game kayakers set out for the crossing. With the RIP soon to start "pumping', as Derek put it, we needed to hit the water in record time to make the most of the current conditions. Derek must have still been asleep as he actually expected the game four to hit the water in under an hour! Even to my amazement it was achieved in approx 35 min.

After some more discussion on the best way to attack the crossing, it was decided to ferry glide across using the ebbing tide to assist us. With the crossing just over a kilometre wide we aimed for Queenscliff before heading into the main current. All was going well and we were aiming to stay within the heads and finish up on the bay side of Point Nepean. The force of the tide however was soon to show its full effect. A slight lack of concentration for about five minutes saw us move very quickly seaward and south of a line drawn between Point Lonsdale and Point Nepean.

Having heard many a story about the RIP, I can now believe most of them. The whirlpools and mushrooms created in the middle of the RIP need to be experienced to be believed. And this was a calm day with little or no wind or swell.

We reached the Point Nepean side just seaward of where we would have liked to have been and it took a little bit of effort and determination to paddle up the 'rapid' created around the point. Once up the rapid the paddle was much easier and we could actually take time to look at the scenery. The crossing took about 1 1/2 hours.

Now that we had achieved the aim of crossing the RIP, we followed the coastline to within sight of Portsea before again aiming for Queenscliff and the return paddle. By this stage the tide seemed to have eased, however it was still enough to assist with the crossing and place us back exactly where we started much quicker than it took us to get across.

From a novice point of view the instruction given on both the surf skills and the crossing of the RIP by Derek was first class. Many thanks from all that attended.

April 14th - Fifth section of Port Phillip Circumnavigation

by John Basemore

Stupidity deserves anonymity. One president, one French physician and one old age pensioner left Rickets Point for the 25 km trip N.W. to Sand Ridge Life Saving Club, near the mouth of the Yarra River with a brisk westerly breeze. Roughly 100 club members were smart enough to stay at home.

Progress was slow and allowed me time to ponder the nature of Port Phillip waves. Prevailing winds are south of westerly. The waves approach Melbourne's beaches over a mainly sandy, gradual sloping sea bed. On their 60 km journey they build with the aid of the wind until they start to feel the bottom - which in the case of our bay is a very long way off shore. As with all such waves they stand tall and the tops fall off, lowering their height, only to build and repeat the process without ever forming a line wave. Instead they form individual waves that rise and fall independently of those around them, thus leaving an interesting situation that demands constant attention.

In these conditions our president forged ahead while we struggled along behind. Eventually a capsize occurred and the rolling practice of our pool nights paid off. Our medico rolled up in very trying conditions. We can all take heart, practice does make perfect. I decided enough was enough, and returned to our starting point. On the way a second capsize. This time an assisted rescue was needed. We then had to find our missing president. No problem. It is hard to miss a man walking down Beach Rd in a wet suit with a paddle in his hand. He too would have returned, but turning in those conditions was more than he felt comfortable with. Instead he allowed wind and wave to take him ashore at Black Rock.

Some time later: Five people continued the journey. Instead of the usual car shuffle we left our kayaks on the shore then drove all our cars to Sand Ridge. With the aid of a mobile phone we summoned a taxi to transport strangely clad people back to Black Rock, and saved the second double journey we usually endure. We were fortunate with the weather this time. Some said it was because we had the company of a man of the cloth. I think it was simply, "You win some. You lose some."

Recent Trips

Bay Paddle Number 8 Jollying to Queenscliff

Lyndon Anderson ~ Skewer; Pete Dingle ~ Pittarak; Mike Cromie ~ Greenlander; Steve Weston ~ Pittarak; Jamie Weston ~ Pittarak; Keith Mitchener ~ Iceflow; Ross Pancione & Jodie Clark ~ Dusky Bay Double; Debbie Lucas & Bill Myers ~ Dusky Bay Double; Phillip Burgoyne ~ Puffin; George Cribben ~ Mirage; Rex Brown ~ Greenlander

November 23 '96
The forecast for the weekend seemed too good to be true. Wind less than 10 knots and temperatures in the mid 20's. What more could a sea kayaker ask for. After a relatively short car shuffle to Queenscliff, 13 paddlers were ready to tackle the first day to Port Arlington - a distance of approximately 32 kms. With six newcomers to kayaking, the distance seemed about right, and with the weather the way it was, they even seemed to enjoy it. The first stop was near the Alcoa pier before the harder slog across to our rather late lunch stop at Clifton Springs. The stretch between Alcoa pier and Clifton Springs provided little in the way of scenery, but the stretch up to Portarlington following the coast certainly improved things. The overnight stop was at the Portarlington Caravan Park at a very modest charge. A camp site was provided right on the beach, and the meal provided at the local pub, beat the hell out of 'Rices of the world'. There was a question on the quality of the brews made by myself. I blamed it on the metho spilling into the kettle. The evening saw most paddlers hit the sack early, I think the distance may have had something to do with it.

November 24 '96
Something was definitely wrong. The weather was perfect, the tide was in our favour, the wind was at our back, and the temperatures remained in the mid 20's. But I wasn't going to complain. My brews however had failed to improve in quality. I was dumbfounded, I checked the water, I had boiled the kettle several times but still the brews resembled the water near the Werribee Sewerage Plant. It wasn't until giving up on having a hot brew and packing the stove away I discovered the problem. I had left the waterproof matches in the kettle, needless to say they were very clean and waxless!! Handy hint - remove matches from kettle before boiling water.

After hitting the water at 0730, the first stop was at Indented Head. The next leg was a little longer but the scenery just seemed to get better. An early lunch stop on the spit north of Swan Island provided a perfect view into Swan Bay. By this time the tide had turned but the wind was still at our backs. It was decided to make the most of the wind and rig up the hootchie sail. Initially it was planned to only have three kayaks involved with the sail but a quick head count saw five kayaks having a free ride. A free ride however was not enough for some. Pete Dingle decided to sunbake across the rear decks of the kayaks and stayed there for most of the crossing! Considering the wind was about 5 knots and the tide was against us the hootchie proved its value. After reaching Swan Island it was a matter of a leisurely paddle around the submarine near Swan Island before heading to Queenscliff Boat Ramp to the pull out point. A distance of 25 Kms was completed by 1330.

Overall, a perfect weekend to finish the last of the bay paddles. Many thanks to Pete Dingle for helping to keep an eye on the newcomers.

Lake Eildon November 30 - December 1 1996

by John Basemore
Old John and not so young Ray Lendrum were the only participants, because the trip was held before it was published. Come next year - same place same time.

We left Jamieson and travelled toward Eildon. Camping overnight not far from last years campsite which was underwater. Water level was within 2 ft of maximum. Good campsites abound at this level. Eildon lake is a wonderful place. Why is it the wind is always in our face no matter which direction we come from. Driving there is a pleasure in itself. Great scenery, no mosquitoes, no flies, nobody on the water. Travel is about the same as to Port Albert.

Tamboon Inlet to Gabo Island Croajingalong National Park 26- 31 December 1996

by Lyndon Anderson

Participants: John Hyndman, Ray Musgrave, Brian Wallace, Rex Brown, Lyndon Anderson

Friday 27 Dec. Tamboon Inlet to Point Hicks
ETD 1050 ETA 1630 Distance: 20km Wind E 10 Km.
Swell and seas less than 0.5m

After a comfortable night in the campsite at Tamboon Inlet, the kayaks were loaded and cars stored for the next five days. We were travelling west to east so it was hoped that the wind would be generally be west, and Brian our

Recent Trips

local expert confirmed our wishes with statement, "We never get easterlies down here!" With confirmation from Brian we were confident of no head winds.
Tamboon Inlet provided a perfect start with tranquil waters and beautiful scenery. After departing the campsite, approx 6 km from the Inlet's entrance we arrived at the first of many bars we were to cross over the next five days. A quick inspection from the safety of the beach confirmed that the bar was passable with the surf generally less than 1 m. After all paddlers passed safely through the bar we were finally on our way. One problem however was soon encountered, the 'we never get easterlies down here' was wrong. A 10 Km head wind persisted all day, although not causing any real problems.

The first night was spent on the beach at Honeymoon Bay, just to the east of Point Hicks. Point Hicks was the first land to be "sighted" by James Cook. The point was named after Lt Hicks, the officer actually made the sighting. Point Hicks has a lighthouse and memorials to Captain Cook. Road access is also available for 2WD vehicles to the lighthouse.

The first taste of snakes for the trip was to occur at our campsite. After tea, and slowly sipping port, Brian noticed a 5 ft red belly black snake moving between his legs. With this he jumped, spilt his port on the snake, with the result being the snake was more scared than Brian. It was at this stage both Brian and I were happy to be sleeping in snake proof tents and not bivvy bags as were the other three. The snake moved to another rock about 20- ft from the camp and remained there until after our departure the following morning.

Saturday 28 Dec 96. Point Hicks to Wingan Inlet ETD 0730 ETA 1300 Distance 32 km (including paddle up Wingan Inlet) Wind N 10 -15 Km. Swell up to 2.5 - 3m. Seas to 0.75m

An early start was made to allow time to visit the Skerries and other intersecting sites. We tended to follow the coast about 100 -200 m from the beach, however a careful look out was needed to watch out for that rogue wave that would stand up and dump on you. It was during battling one of these rogue waves that I unfortunately lost my favourite hat. A lesson learnt, tie your hat to your BV. During the day penguins and flying fish were sighted, which added to the scenery.

The coastline provided beautiful scenery and the visit to The Skerries was definitely the highlight of the trip. The Skerries are a number of small islands, or rocky outcrops, about 2 kms seaward of Wingan Inlet and are the home of a large seal colony. We were able to get within 10 feet of baby seals with the larger seals entering the water and coming very close to the kayaks to get a better look at us. After leaving the Skerries we had approx 20 seals following us with continual leaps out of the water.

The next obstacle was to be the bar entering Wingan Inlet. Due to the location of The Skerries, waves seemed to refract around them to produce waves from both the east and the west. However the larger waves were coming at 90 degrees to the beach from the east. Most of the waves were approx 1.5m, and careful timing was needed to enter without succumbing to the surf. The bar crossing provided a test to our rescue and recovery techniques, with excellent results. After entering Wingan Inlet the campsite was found. It was at this point my spirits were lifted. After paddling for more than 10 km through 2.5m seas and crossing the Wingan Inlet bar without my hat, it had miraculously stayed on the rear deck of my kayak. Needless to say the first thing I did was to attach a piece of rope to it.

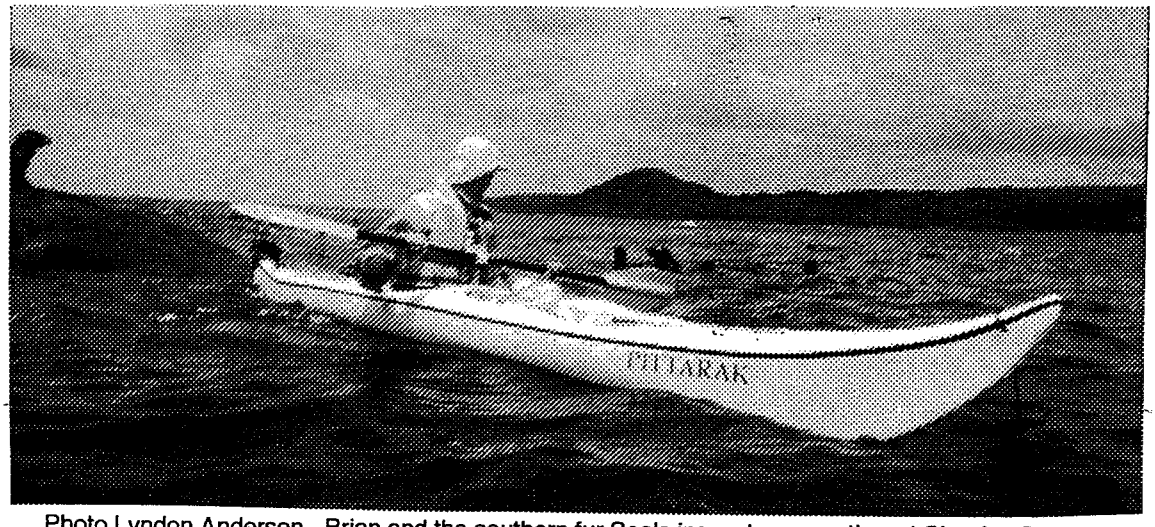


Photo Lyndon Anderson - Brian and the southern fur Seals inspect one another at Skerries Seal Rookery

Recent Trips

After a quick inspection of the campsite, a spot out of harms way was found. During setting up of the camp our second snake, a 4 ft brown, was sighted no less than 4 ft from our campsite. Rex had problems containing his excitement at this stage. With the time being only 1300, it was decided a paddle up Wingan Inlet to the falls were in order. The falls are approx 4 km upstream of the campsite and worth paddling to. The still water was a complete contrast to the days paddling and provided excellent photo opportunities with perfect reflections. The falls provided an opportunity to swim in fresh water, and if you were lucky you could pick up a couple of leeches. Rex however was simply happy to have been informed about two more snakes sighted near the falls.

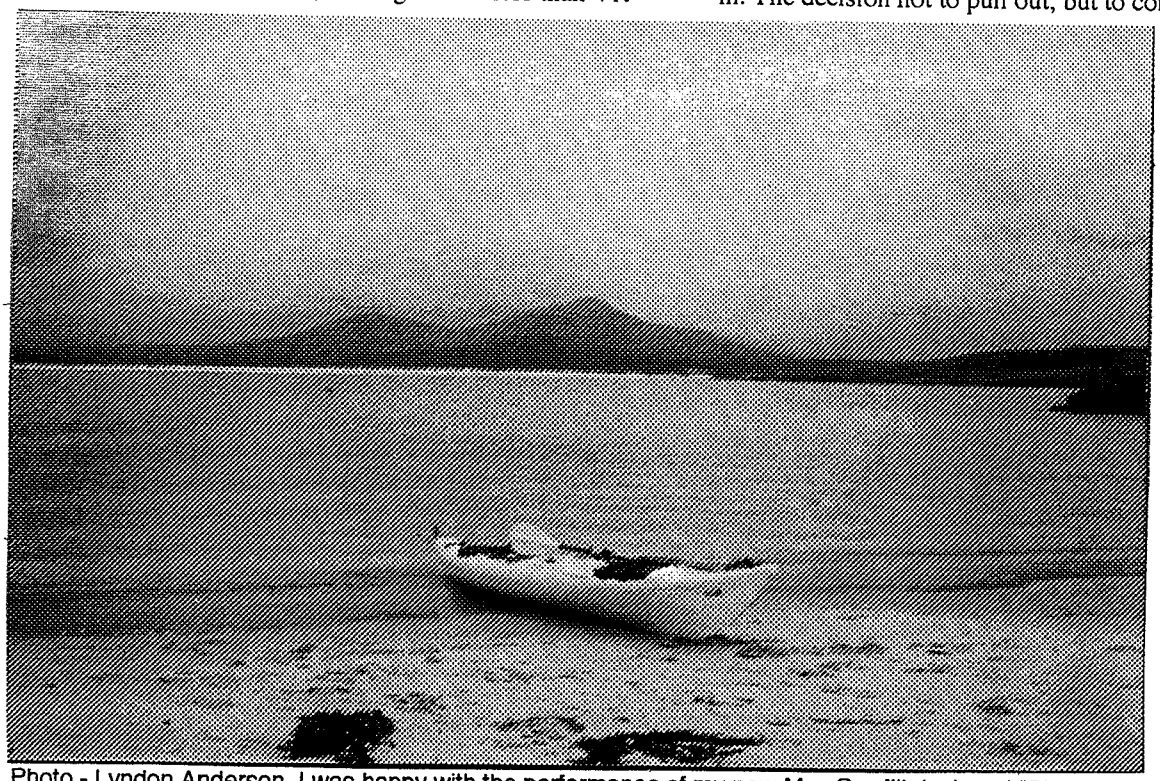


Photo - Lyndon Anderson. I was happy with the performance of my new Mac Cowfill designed "Skua" seen here on Gabo Island. It provides a good balance of strength, comfort and speed.

Sunday 29 Dec 96. Wingan Inlet to Shipwreck Creek ETD 0710 ETA 1130. Distance 25 km. Wind SW 5 - 10 Kn. Swell 2.5 - 3m. Seas 0.75m.

The weather seemed to be deteriorating, with grey skies and the wind increasing. Another inspection from the beach was required before crossing the bar at Wingan Inlet. The crossing provided waves from three directions and were approx 2m, with the larger sets coming in at approx 2.5 - 3m. After a successful crossing all paddlers were keen to make way. At about 0900 a storm was approaching from the SW, the swell, seas and wind increasing, it was decided to find a pull out point. Benedore River was the best option. Helmets were donned, and everyone prepared for a real surf landing. However upon approaching the beach it was clear the surf was over 2m and several larger sets provided surf to 3 - 4 m. The decision not to pull out, but to continue was not a hard one.

The paddling speed was lifted and the conditions provided for interesting paddling, particularly rounding Little Rame Head. The surf at Shipwreck Creek was approx 1.5m, with all paddlers arriving on the beach in one piece. All were happy to stretch legs after just over four hours in the saddle.

After a suitable campsite was found, a local fisherman raised Rex's spirits with information about two more snakes about a 100m from the campsite. This time however they were less threatening, a diamond python and the other snake couldn't be sighted. The day ended with a 45 minute walk (one way) to Seal Creek, a small beach to the west of Shipwreck Creek.

Monday 30 Dec 96. Shipwreck Creek to Mallacoota ETD 0740 ETA 1030. Distance 10 km. Wind less than 5 Kn. Swell 1.5m. Seas nil.

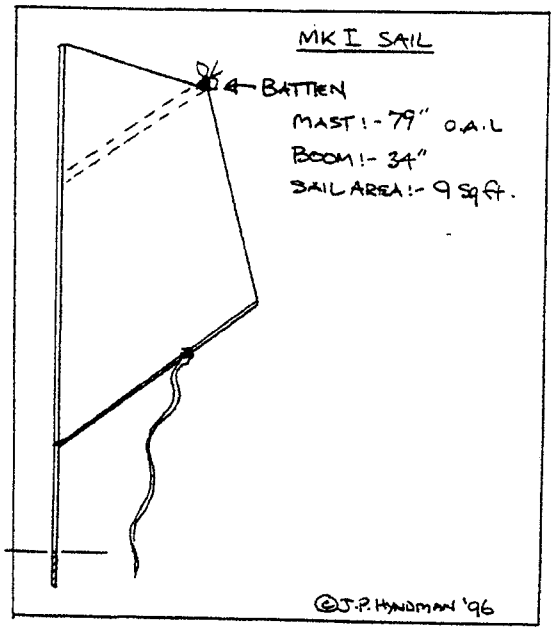
The exit off Shipwreck Creek provided no problems with the surf at 1m. The coastline between Little Rame Head and Mallacoota had changed considerably. No longer were there long stretches of sandy beaches, but rough and jagged cliffs with small coves. The effect of erosion by wind and sea produced some great sights. A stop was made at Betka River. It was during this bar crossing that one paddler decided to do the 'pipeline', producing a great visual effect for the other paddlers, but resulting in awet behind and a short walk to the beach. Then on to

continued page 11

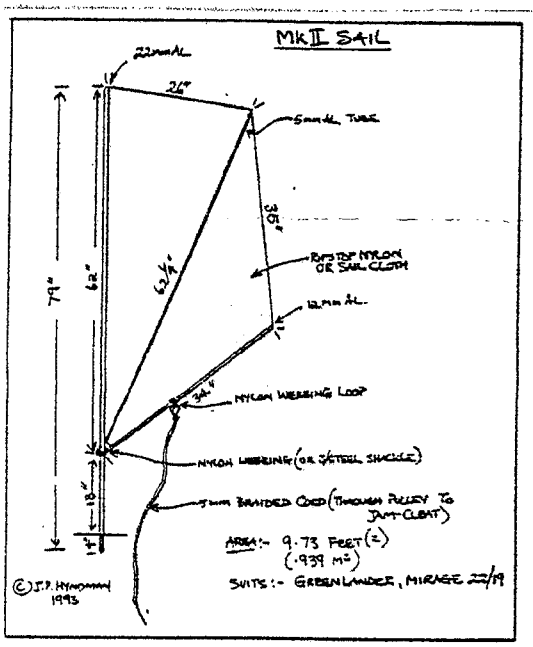
Sea Kayak sails
where are we now ?

by John Hyndman

A couple of years back I did a little 'discussion paper' for "SEA TREK" on sails; it included data from the Tassie club newsletter, from which my initial dimensions came,



and a summary of my own findings from tests I did on four of five variations. I've been asked to give my conclusions as to what I've found to be the best "all 'round"

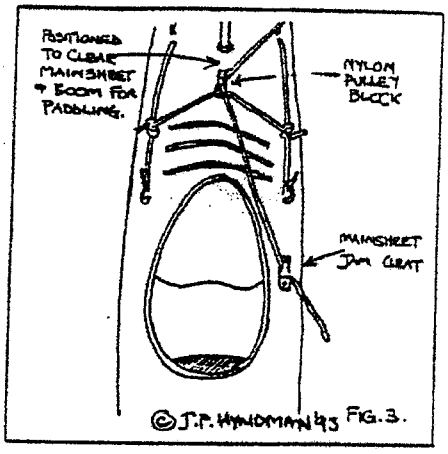


design, and I'm happy to do that. But looking around at the many sails that are being un-furled on most club paddles these days, I feel I'll be preaching to the converted. They're nearly all the same as my current design anyway! But, for those who haven't discovered the sheer delight of 'slicing' along at 6 to 8 knots in their heavily-laden kayak, whilst those non-sailing members of the group sweat to keep pace ... here goes!

For use with sea kayaks, it is desirable that a sail should :

1. Erect and stowe with a minimum of fuss,
2. Be short and compact enough to stowe on deck,
3. Work well with following to beam winds,
4. Not raise the centre of gravity more than necessary, but
5. Have the bulk of it's effective surface area clear of the paddlers' toro, and
6. Allow paddle usage without fouling the boom.

When we've applied all these conditions we begin to wonder whether we can possibly make something worthy of being called a 'sail' at all. No doubt John Bertram would laugh his arse off! Anyway, we have managed to come-up with something that works quite well, and does fulfill most of the above



criteria, and those of us (Ray Musgrave and Rex Brown), who have had theirs professionally made, can certainly apply the title "sail" with some degree of pride.

Of all the variations I have tried, I think my Mk1 (see diagram) worked best in all wind directions up to about 30 degrees off the bow, but the design doesn't meet all other criteria so well, being somewhat taller than later designs. This makes for a tippier boat and makes stowage a little messier. Having to rig and un-rig the batten each time was also a pain, the more so with cold fingers.

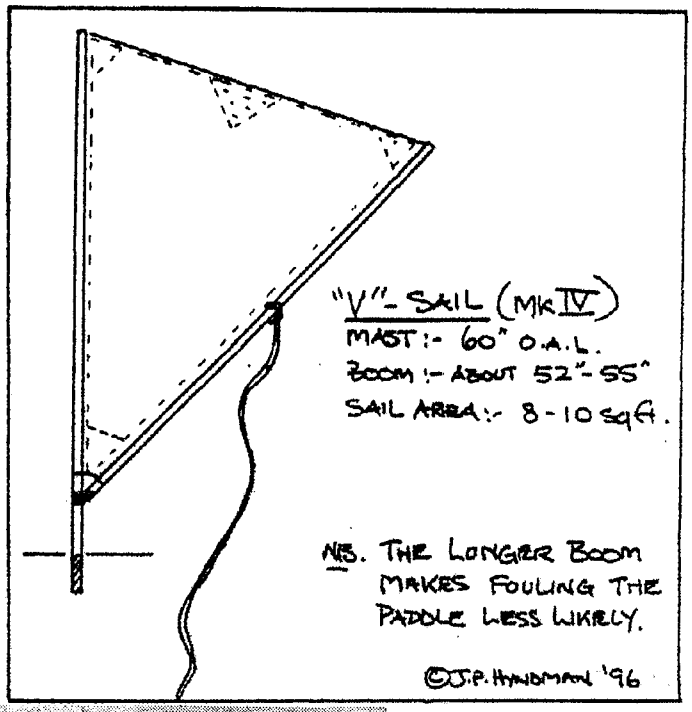
The current "V" sail design offers the best compromise in all respects, and is the simplest to make. Size is very much a personal thing (that's what the barmaid said to the bishop!), and the more 'gung-ho' paddlers will happily carry more 'canvas' just for the thrill of it. My estimation is that kayaks like the Icefloe and Pittarak are best with about 6 to 7.5 square feet, while Mirage 17, 19 &22, Greenlanders and Puffins will happily take about 8 sq.ft. I

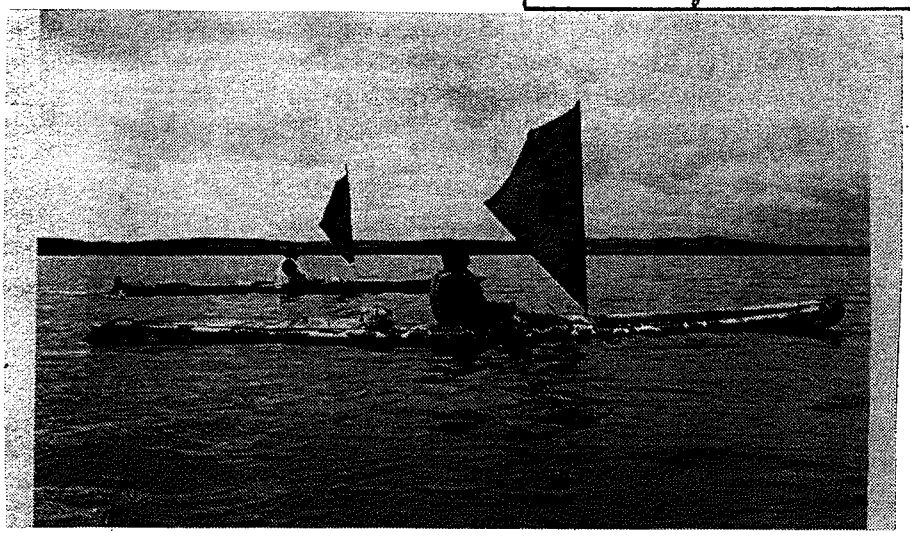
Sea Kayak sails

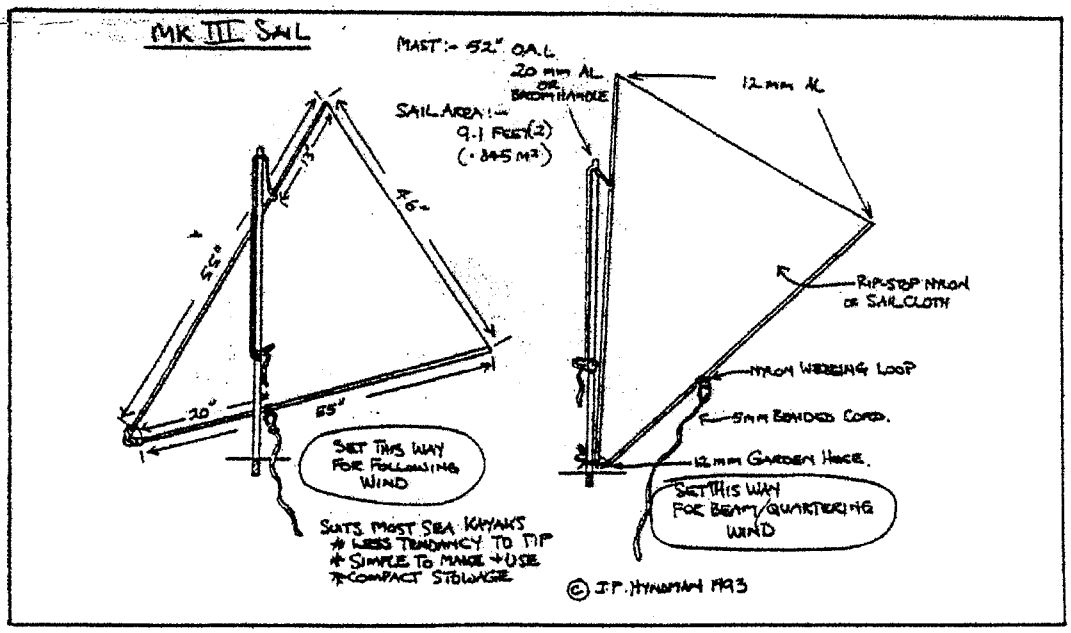
had 10 sq. ft for a while on my Greenlander, but found it a bit too much to be able to relax with, so pruned it down to around 8 sq.ft. Even with this I've been knocked over twice and had two masts snapped off.

Having said this, it is a good time to point out that you need to be able to un-step your mast easily, and it is a good idea to insert a dowel or sleeve into the bottom of the mast to prevent it bending flush with the deck and becoming jammed.

Finally, although I don't wish to become embroiled in the seemingly endless debate on "Rudders verses Other Options", sailing without a rudder can be an extremely frustrating experience . . . a good rudder is mandatory to get the best out of your sail!







Sails for sea kayaks

"Imagine being away in the boon docks and being incapitated in some way that would make paddling difficult"

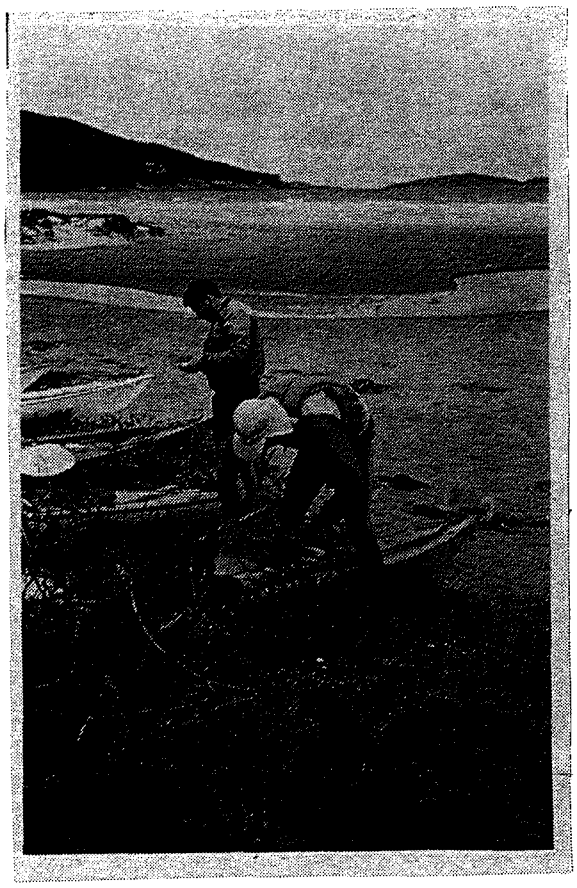


Photo - John Hyndman. John Stomps and Geoff Ford - Oberon Bay - Dec 1995

No doubt there are 'purist' paddlers who would disagree, but I like to think that sailing sea kayaks adds another dimension to an already multifaceted past-time. Much of the already published literature that covers sailing, seems to do so with added cautions, due to the increased risk of capsize, but I view the inclusion of sails as an added safety feature... one that out-weighs the minimal risk of capsize by a good margin!

Imagine being away in the 'boon-docks' and being incapacitated in some way that would make paddling difficult. With a favourable breeze you may still be able to continue and get yourself out of trouble, or at least minimise the burden you place upon your companions. On one occasion Therese Pollard and I were able to raft-up with an exhausted paddler, and by putting both our sails up, managed to make land-fall in god shape and right on the heels of the rest of the group who were paddling strongly.

Sure, in certain conditions, or in inherently unstable kayaks there is some added risk of capsize but this is a risk we live with all the time, regardless of whether we sail or not. We learn to cope with this eventuality by developing strong, reflexive support strokes, and for the times when these fail, we practice Eskimo rolling and other group and self rescues.

Things to be considered when selecting a design and setting a kayak up for sailing are:-

1/ Conventional sail or parafoil?
2/ Which design and surface area will suit your boat?
3/ Criteria for positioning mast socket?
4/ Steerage considerations?
5/ Stowage and deployment technique?

Firstly, I should point out that I haven't used a parafoil myself, but from observing them in use and with advice from those who use them, can offer this unbiased critique. They work best with following, or quartering winds from astern. The more quartering the wind is, then the nearer the cockpit the anchor-point should be in order to maintain direction (see illustration 1). They work best in winds of 20 plus knots. On the negative side, some designs are prone to tangles and are difficult to get aloft, and if you capsize and bail-out you'd best hang on to your craft or it will take off without you! Other than that, they are compact, light, and don't get in the way when paddling as well. The going price for a parafoil of about 7.5 sq. feet is around $120 to $180.

As well as saving lots of money, a considerable amount of pleasure can be derived from assembling the materials and 'knocking up' your own sail. An old tent fly and about $15 worth of aluminium tubing is all it takes. If you don't have the expertise on the sewing machine yourself, you may need to marry someone who does. Only joking of course! I only created a couple of 'birds nests' when learning to master the machine and now I'm an expert! (Another joke).

Sails for sea kayaks

The following are some designs I have used and found to be effective, as well as some that featured in The Sea Canoeist, Dec 1982, and again in our magazine in about 1990. I have included them again for the benefit of our many new members who may not have seen them before.

I stow my sail in a length of reject canvas fire hose tied to the deck-line in front of me, and while this works pretty well, it does tend to be a bit abrasive and will cause wear to the sail from sliding it in and out. It also shrinks when wet. Vinyl coated cloth hose would be ideal (as used for irrigation pumps).

The mast socket should be positioned so that the user can insert and remove the mast and sail from paddling position... or upside down if necessary, with an outstretched arm. If this position happens to coincide with the front bulkhead, so much the better. If not, some other form of bracing will be required (diagram 2). I have simply used PVC electrical conduit glassed in with plenty of polyester putty round the underside of the deck for support, and it works fine. Adrian Mann came up with a sliding sleeve idea which, although attached to the hull, allows any shock from beneath to be absorbed, thus reducing the risk of damage to the hull. Wish I'd thought of that! (diagram 2).

A good rudder is an obvious advantage for sailing, as it allows hands-free steerage... this makes pouring the wine much easier! If your boat is not equipped with a rudder you will need to rudder with your paddle, and some steerage corrections can be made by altering the 'set' of the sail.

Setting the sail while at sea should be as simple as possible; avoid having to fit battens and tie things together. I run the mainsheet through a little nylon pulley block which is attached to a short length of cord, which in turn is tied onto decklines on either side of the map bungies in front of the cockpit. I tie a knot in the end of the mainsheet so that it cannot pull out. In this way the sail can't be lost overboard, and when erecting the sail, I just have to grab the knot and pull on the rope... no threading and fiddling with cold fingers. I use one open-sided jam-cleat on the right side of the cockpit to secure the mainsheet. If I need to let go the sail in a hurry, there is no confusion about where to reach, and the cord comes away easily no matter how I grab it. This may be important in avoiding a capsize in gusty conditions.

Oh! One more thing. Be sure to attach your paddle to the kayak in some way when you're sailing, or you may part company, and with only your hands as paddles you may find difficulty in retrieving it!

Recent Trips

cont from page 7

Mallacoota, and yet another bar crossing. The surf was approx 1m with all paddlers entering Bottom Lake without problems. Due to the early finish the the car shuffle was completed before setting up camp. Tea consisted of fish and chips eaten in Ray's leased unit.

Tuesday 31 Dec 96. Mallacoota to Gabo Island ETD 0710 ETA 1400. Distance 32 km. Wind SW 10 Kn. Swell 2m to Gabo and 4m on eastern side of Gabo with seas of 1m.

With the surf running at approx 2m over the bar, careful timing was needed to stay dry. The groups rescue and recovery skills were again put into practise, and again with excellent results. After crossing the bar it was decided that Rex, John and Ray would paddle to Bastion Point before paddling back to Bottom Lake and up to The Narrows. This left Brian and myself to circumnavigate Gabo. A cracking pace was set by Brian and two hours later we landed on Gabo's only beach. We were met by the lighthouse keeper and marvelled at how calm the water was on the western side of the island.

After a chat with the keeper, it was decided to circumnavigate the island in a clockwise direction due to the surf coming in from the east between Gabo and the mainland. Once on the eastern side of the the island the full effect of the swell and seas were felt, with full concentration required. In an effort to take some photos of the lighthouse, support was required by another kayak. It took exactly one hour to complete the circumnavigation. The return trip and crossing of the bar back to Mallacoota proved uneventful.

Overall this is an excellent part of the coast for kayaking. Numerous beaches and sights in Croajingalong National Park could extend the same trip to weeks. Water is available at the major campsites with road access by 2WD available to the major campsites.

Swanston Dock rolling practice

by Michael Koppenol

Some time ago I went for a paddle around the docks in Port Melbourne.To get there I departed from Xavier Boat Club and headed down the Yarra. After arriving at the entrance of Swanston Dock I saw two harbour tugs busy manoeuvring a large freighter against its moorings. As I had worked on large harbour tugs before I knew this procedure can, depending on the size of a ship, take up to two hours whilst at full throttle. Sometimes three tugboats are needed with an individual capacity of 6000hp each, to manoeuvre large crude carriers into position. When you're thrashing water with 6000hp at full throttle you can imagine the turbulence!

Well, it was this kind of thrashing my little sea kayak was subjected to. As they were busy with this ship at no1 West (a docking location in Swanston dock) I kept myself at a "safe" distance near location no1 East (see your Melway for these references).

So I was at the opposite end of the dock!

I must admit my kayak was initially subjected to some mild turbulence but decided to proceed further into Swanston Dock, whilst hugging the east side of the dock. My reason for entering the dock was due to a failure in controlling my curiosity as there were quite a few ships moored in Swanston dock. Well, there is a price for everything! Suddenly large boils surfaced right underneath my little hull. The resulting turbulence was terrific and with great speed my poor old icefloe was smashed against two pillars (they didn't give way!). I said goodbye to my old icefloe, because I could hear a very loud crack, but then again any good old ship creaks! As my boat is about five meters long and the distance between any two pillars of the pier is about 3 to 4 meters, she was simply pushed against it with great force. As there was nowhere to go, she simply rolled over with me in it . I can still remember the great force of the water against my face as I was virtually torn out of my seat. I couldn't see an inch in front of me and at first thought should I try to stay in and roll her up but by being glued against the pier decided to bail out. I had learned to roll nicely in the cozy surroundings of a swimming pool, but had not learned (as yet) to roll when thrown underneath a pier at hundred miles an hour!

Well, I surfaced at a distance of about five meters from my boat! My wing paddle was gone too! (it was the only occasion I didn't attach the paddle to the deck) And while I was treading water I got thrown further underneath the pier (this pier must be about 5 or more rows deep as I could not see the wall). I tried to swim back to my boat but to no avail. Actually my boat was trying to join me as it manoeuvred itself underneath the pier. I finally was at the receiving end of a tug boat. Here I was swimming in darkness surrounded by plastic bottles and floating condoms. I could have thought of better ways to have fun! To halt my disappearance underneath the pier, I tried to hold onto one of the pillars.

Well, I admit it wasn't my day because I didn't wear my life jacket either. Yes, I had it strapped onto the rear deck, as I usually do this when training on the Yarra. It actually didn't occur to me that by putting it on I could stop treading water. The reason may have been that at the time I didn't consider it a priority. As I do a fair amount of swim-training I didn't feel tired as yet. Some time later the turbulence somewhat subsided which allowed me to swim back to my kayak. I pushed it from underneath the pier and settled her against two pillars. Well, a boat but no paddle!

I looked around but couldn't see it floating anywhere. At that moment I valued my paddle well above that of my old icefloe, because I had paid $350 for this wing paddle and I wasn't in the mood to say hello to a happy kayaker with a big smile on his face. The order was simple: "Find this damned paddle at all cost"!

I should say I had second thoughts about exchanging the relative safety of the boat for a leisurely freestyle amongst the condoms. I might be a pervert but this was a little too much, but then again I didn't have much choice! It was odd, prior to leaving my boat alone I was wondering if I could swim! Some years ago, when I was working on an ocean going tugboat, an incident occurred in which a man went overboard in the middle of the South Atlantic. In order to save this man we lowered a work boat in the water but this manoeuvre failed miserably, resulting in an extra five men in the pool. Four of them wore life jackets but for unknown reasons the fifth didn't. It happened that this fifth man also drifted dangerously towards the stern of the ship. As I was on deck he shouted at me: " Michael, It's hopeless"! The fact was that he only treaded water and because the ship at the time was nearly stationary, I told him to bloody swim which he suddenly did. He simply was stunned and needed only to have his switch turned on, after which he swam back to safety. During those first moments of finding yourself in a different world, the first thing which comes to mind is that it is not happening to you! I do however believe those who can quickly adjust themselves to their new and "comfy" surroundings, have the best chance of extricating themselves from it. So, I left my boat alone for a while browsing around the rubbish underneath the pier. I remember that I started to think about the cold feeling creeping into my feet as the water was quite

rolling practice-cont

cold. Swimming in darkness under a pier during broad daylight somehow has a demoralising effect, but as I swam deeper underneath the pier I suddenly saw my beloved paddle floating in deep far away darkness. How a simple item like a paddle can make you so happy! Money could never bring so much happiness as your lost paddle amongst floating condoms!

I felt revitalised and quickly "ran" back to my beloved kayak. By this time I was looking for a way to get back in my boat. I looked around for a steel ladder which sometimes can be seen on a pillar as it could have afforded me to re-enter the boat, but to no avail!

Anyway, after I had pushed my boat away from the pier I thought of doing a re-entry. As I have done this exercise many times successfully in a pool. It shouldn't have been a problem, but now that I had been mucking around for a while I could feel the cold slowly taking hold of me. Even at the best of times it takes a fair degree of coordination and thought to carry out such a procedure.

I therefore decided not to make an attempt, and tried to get the attention of these tugs instead. After all, my entire immersion was only an excuse to get an invitation on board these tugs! By now I decided that the time had arrived to put on my life jacket. It is surprising how much warmth they give. Life jackets for paddlers I find very hard to put on whilst treading water, because they have this persisting habit of bobbing up out of the water when one is busy trying to poke an arm through. It's like putting on your raincoat in an up-draft. Anyway deck personnel on board the tug had finally seen me, so I got lifted out of the water after which the tug returned to base. Well, I do not know how much time I had spent in the water but it wasn't over yet! Suddenly someone on the shore (the harbour master presumably) ordered the tug to stop near no1 west and asked me what the hell I had been doing there anyway (a fair enough question, I guess!). Apparently small craft aren't allowed in Swanston Dock. I started to worry about a hefty fine and asked the captain if he could let me jump overboard just past the West gate bridge. He agreed and probably wanted to get rid of me anyway! On the south side of the Yarra just past West gate bridge are a few small sandy "beaches", where I could easily beach myself. So, in the middle of the Yarra I pushed my kayak overboard and jumped after it. Back in a familiar environment ! Upon reaching the beach, I sorted things out and paddled back to Xavier Boat Club which is about a two hour paddle from that location. My return upstream wasn't particularly a crash hot affair, but at least I had evaded the authorities! Soon after this incident I changed the name of my boat!
So what had I learned from this incident?

- Never forget to put on your condom when swimming underneath a pier!

- Stay at home and watch ----------

PS : Anyone interested in a paddle journey from Australia to Europe? (via the Suez canal)

Photo - John Hyndman. Feathercraft "Elite" Collapsible kayak, great for the globe-trotting Paddler

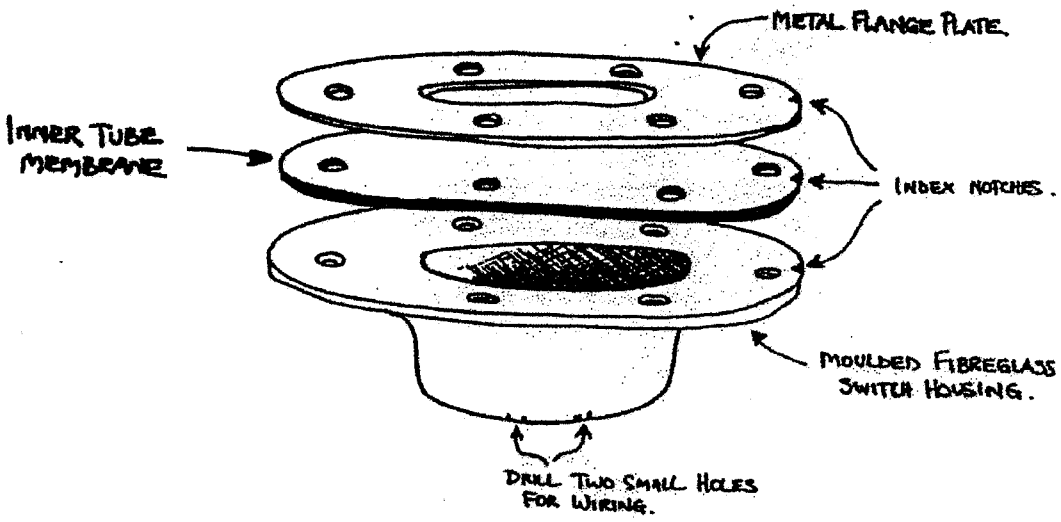
Bilge Pumps

Fitting of Electric Bilge Pumps

by John Hyndman

Components : Rule 500 G.P.H Submersible Pump - 12 volt., Clipsal 240 volt/10 amp household light switch 12 volt Gelcell battery - 4.5 amp / hr at least. 3/4 in flexible hose (2ft or so)
3/4 in tail & nut hull connection. Non - return valve, 3/4in. (or rubber stopper) 2x solderless spade connectors (red & black) Car inner tube (about 6inch square) 4x4in. Metal plate (1 - 1.5mm) Al.,brass, S/S 6x6

Fig 1 SWITCH HOUSING DETAIL:-



5/32inch x 5/8inc round screw - head bolts c/w Nyloc nuts and washers (s/steel).

Other materials : Silastic silicone sealant Neutral Cure, Polyester resin & CSM Micro glass powder.

Method

First, make a fibreglass housing for the switch of the dimensions shown in Fig 1. This can be simply layed-up on a waxed plaster or plasticine plug. Cut a matching flange from metal plate; measure and drill evenly spaced holes in both the plate and housing flange to accommodate the 5/32 inch bolts. Cut inner tube to same size as plate and punch holes a little over size
Then, 1 remove strainer from pump (ie blue plastic portion on bottom)
2. Mix a small amount of polyester putty, ie resin and glass powder to make a paste - don't forget the 2% hardener.

Place a blob of this at the lowest on the hull at the lowest point behind the seat, and position and position the strainer on it so that the putty oozes through the holes intended for the for the screws - don't allow it to restrict the strainer slots though! Be sure the delivery outlet on the pump will be aimed in the right direction when seated in the strainer. Allow it to dry.

In the mean time, drill a small hole (4mm approx.) through the highest possible point of the bulkhead. Pass the wires from the pump through , leaving enough, slack so the pump can be clipped into the strainer. Seal round wires on both sides of the bulkhead with the remainder of putty.

4. Find the most comfortable position for the switch behind the cockpit (left side if right handed is probably best, as it allows better control of paddle while activating switch; vice a versa for molly-dookas.) Allow enough room between bulkhead to facilitate tightening Nyloc nuts. Use the metal flange plate as a template to mark the drilled holes. Cut out 40mm diameter hole with a hole-saw and sand edges smooth

5. Roughly position the switch housing to be sure the holes match up; place an index mark on deck and housing so that it can be re-located exactly. With it in this position, locate the switch so that the rocker activates fore and aft, and mark the terminals - drill two small holes the same diameter as the wiring in the bottom of the switch housing as well.

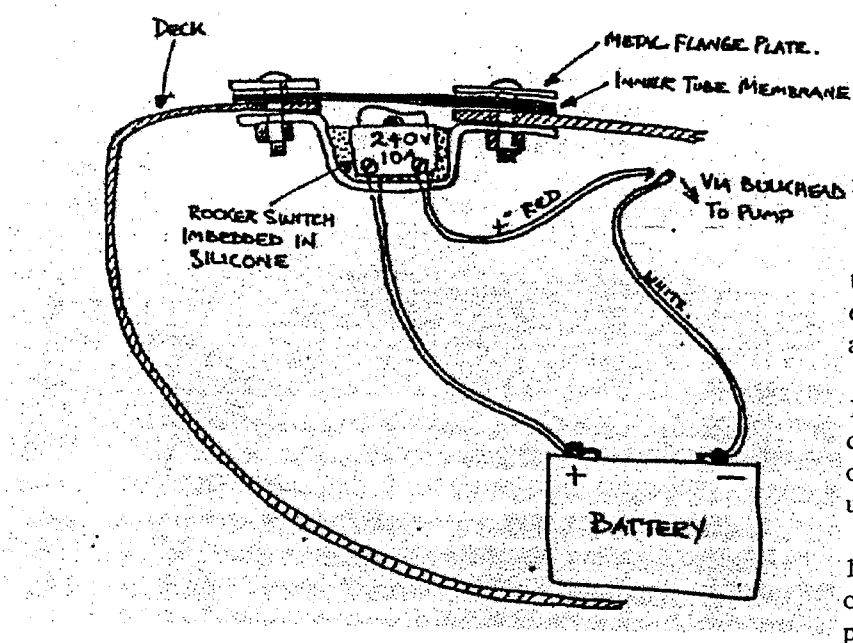
6. Tin all wire ends with solder and connect the wire form the pump marked "+", and coloured red, to one side of the switch through one hole in the housing.

7. Run another like diameter red wire through the other

hole and connect to other switch terminal . Firmly tighten both screws.

8. Make sure you leave enough wire to reach the battery terminals, and then crimp spade connectors to both the red wire from the switch and white wire from the pump.

FIG. 2. FITTING DIAGRAM:-



9. You can now connect the battery and test the switch. You may wish to reverse the wires on the switch to reverse the direction of operation.

10. If all okay, the rocker switch can be snugly siliconed into the switch housing and left to cure. This may take several hours.

11. In the meantime, a webbing harness or box system can be devised to retain the battery securely in position against the bulkhead. This can be a plastic box, revited or glassed onto the bulhead, with a webbing strap to retain the battery.

12. Once the silicone round the switch had set, the assembly can be installed Apply a film of silicone to the contacting surfaces of the switch housing the flange, the rubber membrane, and the metal flange plate, and carefully position them being sure to orient the switch correctly.

13. Lightly tighten the Nyloc nuts until silicone begins to ooze out , but do not over tighten them at this stage or the membrane will buckle.

14. Allow to the silicon to before tightening nuts down the last couple of turns.

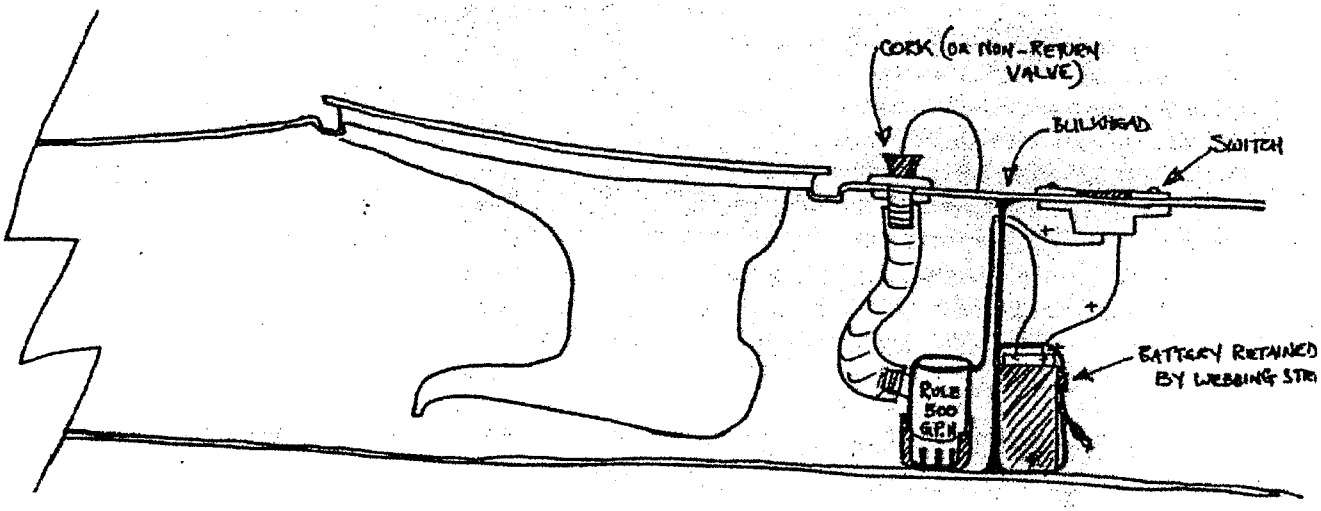
15.You should now have a water-proof switch that sits flush with the deck and cannot be easily damaged or get in way, and will reliable for years with a minimum of care.

15. Finally, drill a hole for hull breaching connection. This can be done in the side oriented horizontally, or in the deck pointing upwards. Install and tighten the nyloc nut .

16 Cut to length and fit the ribbed flexible outlet hose from the delivery side of the pump. If using a non return valve, it is best inserted in the hose as near the hull breach as possible. If using a stopper, attach it to a handy deckline on a piece of cord.
The above set up will empty the over sized cockpit of a Greenland !V in about 4 minutes if filled to the brim and can do it dozens of times per charge with a battery in good condition.

John Hyndman
10/92

FIG. 3. PLACEMENT DIAGRAM:-



Good news for Greenlanders

by John Hyndman.

For some, this will already be 'old news', but for those who only manage to paddle occassionally and who paddle Marks 3 & 4 Greenlanders, the following may be of particular interest.

For some years now I have been wondering why we continue to put up with the Greenlanders' tendency to 'point' down-wind to the extent that in winds above 30 knots it can be a real gut-wrenching experience to get the bloody thing headed back into the wind if you dared stop for a breather. Even with the rudder in the up position, considerable energy would need to be expended in scribing a circle 'half the size of Port Phillip Bay' in order to get the 'cow of a thing' going to windward.

Well, it's simply a result of the action of the wind upon the portion of the kayak above the water-line , against the resistance offered by that which lies below the water. In the case of the Greenlander, the bow sweeps moderately upwards, offering something for the wind to work on, and the lowest point of the keel in the water lies within the last metre of the stern end, setting-up a resistance about which the boat will pivot. Pittaraks and Icefloes offer a lot of 'bite' below the water near the bow and have a fair rise above the water at the stern, so they tend to 'weather-cock', or point upwind. It's often stated that these tendencies can be juxtaposed by ' so called' "preferential loading", ie putting more weight foreward or aft depending on the result required. This certainly has the desired effect, but if you've ever attempted a surf-landing in a Greenlander that's loaded bow-heavy, you, like me, will seek a better solution!

My regular paddling mates can testify to the fact that I've tried many variations in my search for a panacea; some worked a little in certain conditions, but most did 'buggar-all'.

Initially I tried a deeper, wider rudder but of course, this did nothing but exacerbate the problem by adding to the resistance in the 'arse-end'. So next I tried a low aspect rudder that didn't project below the keel-line, and this didn't stop the problem either, but I did notice that the boat tended to point down-wind more slowly. and that when the rudder was folded up the action of the wind upon it slowed things down even more. I guess looking back, it was about now that I actually got a 'feel' for the way the forces were actually working! To a being of higher intellect than 'yours truly', a solution may have been forthcoming at this stage, but to an average 'troglodite' the processes of evolution will take their course regardless of all else. So, now realizing that I had to be able to shift the lowest point in the keel-line (the pivot) to the forward portion of the hull, I fashioned a small retaractable fin and bunged it up-front, just ahead of my feet, and "presto!" Limited success. I say "limited" because it worked in lighter winds, but failed in strong winds due to its' small size. Of course it can only work with the rudder up!

Fitting a fin is a big commitment for most of us because of the apprehension we have for destroying the integrity of our hull by cutting a hole in it, and of course mine suffers from the same 'blight' as all the other fins I've ever seen fitted to kayaks ... it gets gummed-up with sand!

Anyway, having read Paul Caffyns' article on rudders in "SeaTrek" a couple of editions back, I decided to make a 'full frontal' attack on the problem by hacking a bit off the keel at the rear-end to reduce its' bite on the water (see diagram,) and so, with a nip of Bundy in my 'locker', I crawled under the house one rainy winters' night and got to work with the hacksaw and resin. Surgery complete, I stood back to admire my handywork. I was pleasantly surprised! It doesn't look half bad.

It was a few weekends before Ray Musgrave and I were able to get on the water to check it out, but a moderately windy Western Port day of around 15 knots gave me my first real hope that the operation was successful.

I staight-away noticed that the general handling of the boat seemed vastly improved, and by dropping it over onto an edge and giving two or three good sweeps, she went about on the spot, something it wouldn't do before with such consumate ease! And with the rudder down she still has the same down-wind tendencies as before, but flick the rudder up and she rounds up-wind like a weather-cock!

I haven't tried it in surf as yet, but I can't imagine I'll see any adverse effects. In fact, a couple of times when I've been broaching-in on a wave, (before the alteration) I've been caught by surprise when the kayak has suddenly swung 'round and taken off down the wave ,as a result of the stern getting a 'bite' on the water no doubt. So I'll be interested to see if this 'bad habit' has been knocked out!

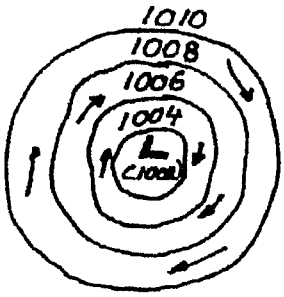
At the time of writing, two other Greenlander owners have 'attacked' their keels in a similar manner, and both have given the operation the "thumbs up", despite one near 'sinking' in the "Swashway Channel" due to a seam bonding failure! Of course, without a good rudder, removal of keel area will turn the kayak into a "up-wind" boat, but in the worst conditions it's nice to have the choice of either.

see back page for Johns diagrams

Weather Patterns on Victorian Waters

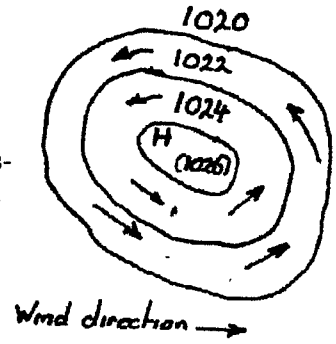
Rather that write a lengthy essay of personal observations on weather conditions that have affected myself over the years, I have with permission taken extracts from a book called. Wind, waves,weather: Victorian waters. Melbourne: Bureau of Meteorology. Which explains it a lot better than I could.

LOW pressure system (sometimes referred to as a cyclone) is a region of lower pressure than the surroundings. Its centre is usually denoted by the letter L on the weather map and has a number of isobars encircling the centre. These isobars have progressively higher values away from the centre.



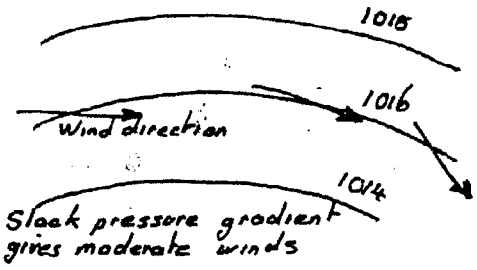
Wind blows in a clockwise direction around LOWS in the southern hemisphere (and anticlockwise in the northern hemisphere). Isobars around the Low are usually closer together than around the High. This means that the pressure gradient around the LOW is tight (i.e. the isobars are packed tightly together).
Rain or showers and strong winds are often associated with LOWS.

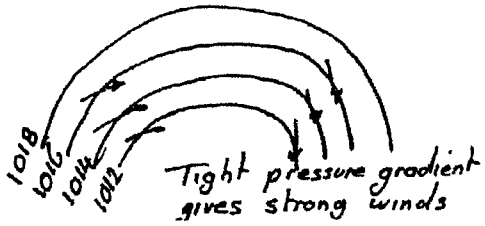
HIGH pressure system (sometimes referred to as an anticyclone) is a region of high pressure. It is often denoted by the letter H on the weather map and has fully closed isobars around its centre.



Successive isobars away from the centre have progressively smaller values. (The unit of hPa is not included on the maps.) Wind blows in anticlockwise direction around HIGHS in the southern hemisphere (and clockwise in the northern hemisphere). Generally, more settled (or fine) weather with lighter winds is associated with high pressure systems.

PRESSURE GRADIENT is the term used for the change of pressure measured over the horizontal distance between the two pressures. Wind speed is directly related to this pressure gradient; the tighter (or greater) this value, the stronger the wind. When you see the isobars close together on a weathermap, you can expect strong winds in that area.



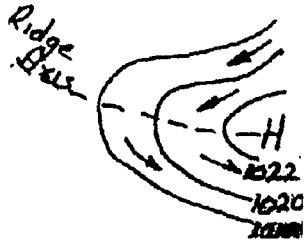


WIND (the movement of air) is caused by the horizontal pressure differences (the pressure gradient). Wind near the surface of the earth should blow parallel to the isobars, but surface friction turns the wind so that it blows at a slight angle across the isobars towards the lower pressure.

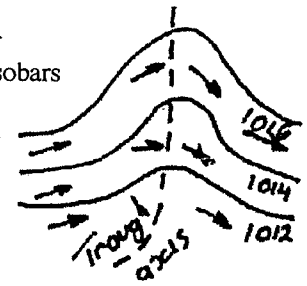
In Australia, wind values are averaged over ten minutes and units are either in knots (kn) for maritime and aviation purposes. or in kilometers per hour (km/h) for other purposes. Wind direction is the direction from which the wind blows, and is usually described in terms of eight compass points N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW. Hence, a wind described SW 15 kn is a wind blowing from the southwest with a 10-minute mean speed of 15 knots.
Wind needs to be averaged over a short time interval because it consists of a series of gusts of differing strengths and directions. A wind gust is a sudden increase in the wind strength of a very short duration. The

gustiness of the wind is affected by the land form and terrain, hence the wind over the land will be gustier than over the ocean.
A squall consists of a sudden increase in the wind that lasts for several minutes before returning to its previous value. A squall may contain many gusts.

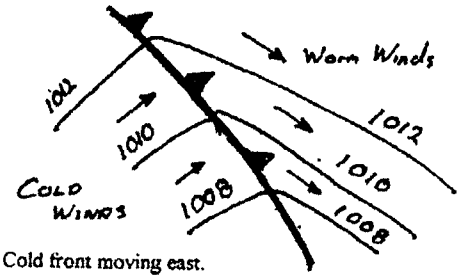
RIDGE (or high pressure ridge) is an area of pressure higher than the surroundings but with no fully closed isobars denoting a centre. A ridge axis is a line of pressure higher than on either side of it. A ridge may extend out from a distant High as illustrated. Wind blows in an anti-clockwise direction around the ridge.



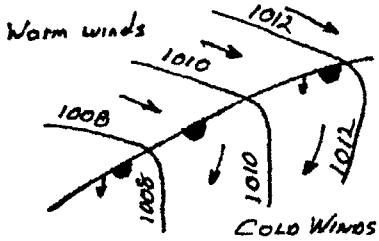
TROUGH (or low pressure trough) is the opposite of a ridge. A trough is an area of pressure lower than on either side of it but with no fully closed isobars denoting a centre. The trough axis is a line of pressure lower than on either side of it. Trough lines often develop ahead of cold fronts during summer in Victoria



FRONT is a sharp boundary between two distinct air masses of different characteristics. It is shown on the weather map as a line marked with sharp or rounded barbs. The cold front (sharp barbs) shows



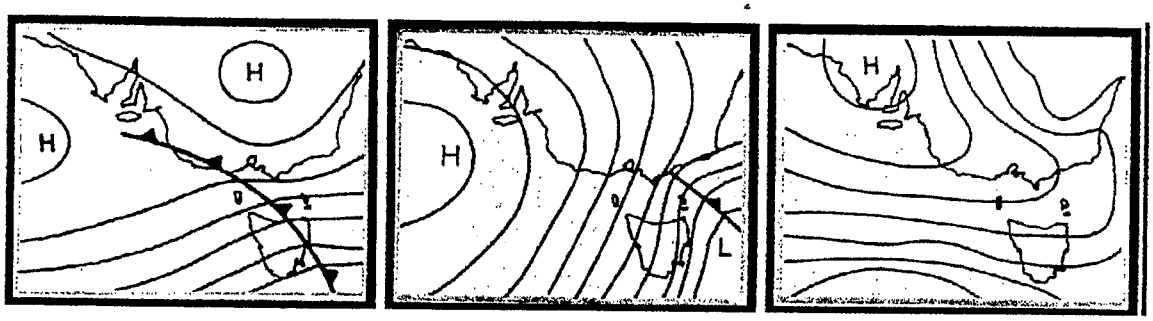
Cold front moving east.



Warm front moving south.

the distinct boundary between a warm air mass moving in from the southwest. The warm front (rounded barbs) is not often seen in Australian region. It shows the boundary between cold air that is being replaced by a warmer air mass coming from the north or northwest. Note that the atmosphere near the fronts may be unstable: that is the air may be rising. Hence rain, thunder-storms or showers and squally winds may accompany the passage of a front.

ANTICYLONIC CIRCULATIONS.
HIGHS TO THE WEST: When a high pressure system remains in the area of the Great Australian Bight or over northern Victoria, a southwest to westerly airstream is maintained over the State. The wind ëbacksí (an anticlockwise direction change) from west to southwest as cold

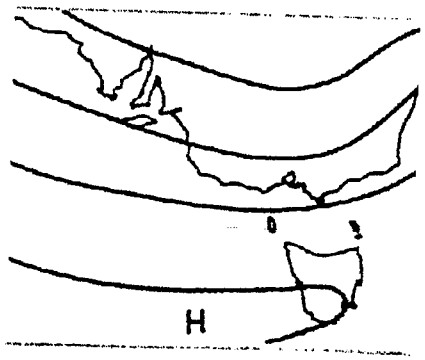


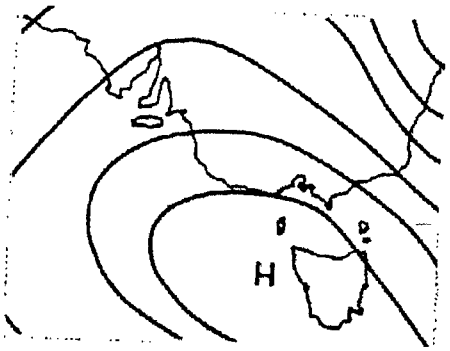
fronts pass into the stream. Although winds will strengthen with such cold fronts, it is rare for them to reach gale force except east of Wilsons Promontory where localised funnelling between Tasmania and the Victorian coast causes stronger winds. This is the more common of the anticyclonic situations and can occur in any season.

Weather Patterns on Victorian Waters

Particular note should be taken that during summer, sea-breezes may reinforce the general southerly flow producing fresh southerly winds over the coast. This is more noticeable over the northen end of Port Phillip Bay where a light wind is reinforced by afresh sea-breeze in the afternoon and evening to produce choppy to rather rough conditions.

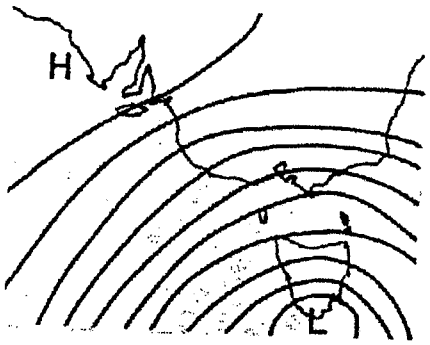
HIGHS TO THE SOUTH: This situation occurs when a south to south-easterly airstream develops after the passage of a cold front. If the high strengthens as it moves south of Tasmania then the east/southeasterly airstream can be fresh through Bass Strait. The northeast ranges may



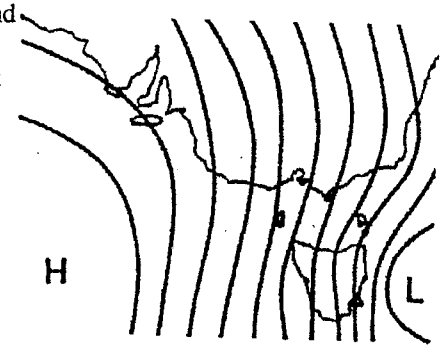


also deflect the airstream to produce strong winds off the Gippsland coast.
Winds over Port Phillip Bay can be complex during this weather sequence, depending on the strength of the east to southeasterly wind. During the morning, light to moderate winds are common over the northern end of the Bay while fresh to strong easterlies prevail in the south due to funnelling through the Latrobe Valley. As the day progresses the winds over the northern end freshen as a result of the sea-breeze reinforcing the southeasterly wind.

CYCLONIC CIRCULATIONS.



DEEP LOWS TO THE SOUTH.: Spring (early spring in particular) is considered the windiest time of year over southeastern Australia. A typical weather pattern in spring or autumn (and to a lesser extent in winter) occurs when the airstream is dominated by low pressure systems well south of Tasmania and strong winds continue for several days. The winds vary between northwesterlies ahead of cold fronts and southwesterlies behind them. The wind direction depends mainly on the position and movement of the major low pressure systems, and locally with the frontal systems extending from the Lows.

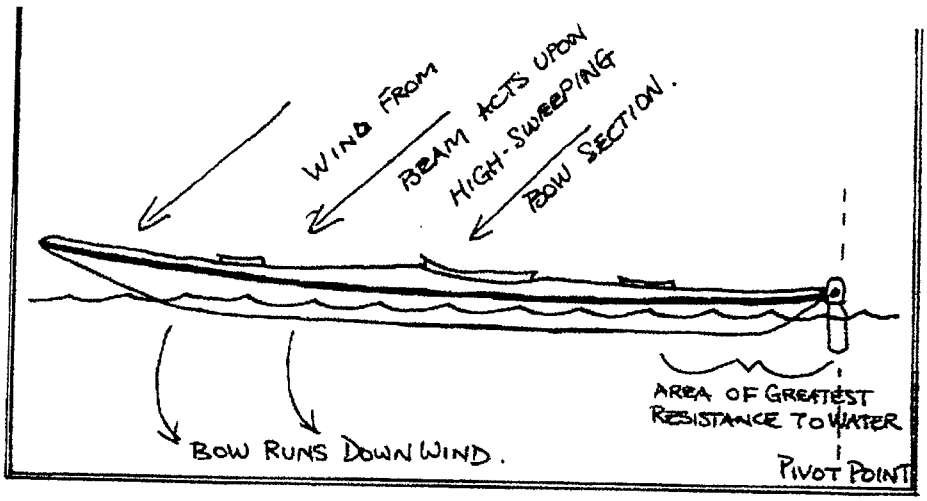


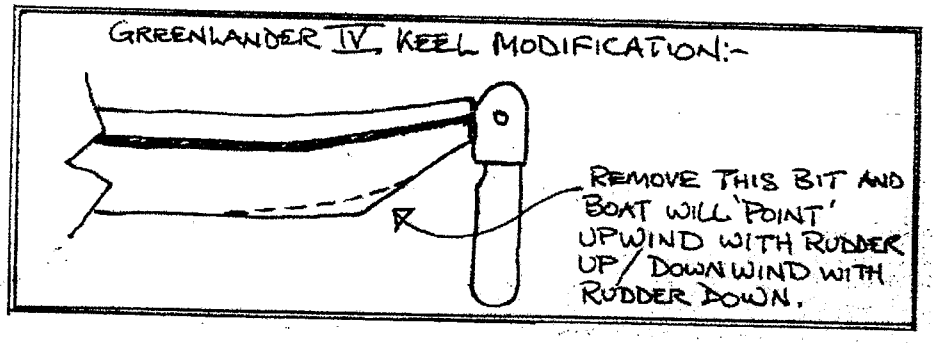
Cold fronts cannot always be easily identified and may move rapidly with only small changes in wind direction. Nevertheless, turbulence in the stream associated with the approach and passage of fronts and Lows may cause extreme gusts. The westerly stream is sometimes channelled through Bass Strait and may result in gale to storm force winds east of Wilsons Promontory. This sequence is rare in summer

COLD OUTBREAK

This occurs with the development of a High well south of the Bight, and the deepening of a Low just east of Tasmania. Cold dry air is drawn from well south of Tasmania, with strong to gale force southerly winds, showers, hail and sometimes thunder resulting. It occurs mostly in winter and spring.

cont next issue





If anyone would like a A4 copy of John Hyndman's diagrams, including the diagrams from the "Sails" article, please send a self addressed envelope to Michael Lofus-hills. 2/8 St Georges Gve Parkville. 3052

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