

# Sea Trek

A black and white photograph showing a large ship's hull being lifted by a crane. The hull is dark and curved, dominating the center of the image. In the foreground, a kayaker is visible on the water, paddling towards the left. The background shows a distant shoreline with buildings and a clear sky. The overall scene suggests a maritime or nautical theme.

June  
1997  
Issue 27

The official newsletter of the Victorian Sea Kayak Club Inc.

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## June Issue

## No 27

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**Deadline for next issue 25 July**

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photo front page – Tony Payne. Michael Loftus-Hills  
checking out the QE2 on the way to Williamstown.

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## From the editor

I'm sorry about this being so late but I had trouble getting the articles. Apart from one I received in February, the rest didn't arrive until a couple of weeks ago.

Thanks go to Ray Musgrave for chasing the people up. Please, if you have written something, send it to me as soon as possible. If you are unsure of time lines, give me a ring.

If sending a 3 1/2" floppy disk please have it formatted as Claris works or Microsoft works (Apple Mac) or on a DOS disk. If DOS send either standard double-sided disks in 720K format, or high-density disks in the 1440K format. I also need a hard copy, because occasionally the disk crashes and I can't get anything out.

The deadline for the August issue is the **LAST Friday of July (JULY 25)**.

Chris Sewell

# Club news and events

## New Members

The Committee welcomes the following new members:

Alwyn Baxter 63 First Ave North Dandenong, 3175.  
Phone: A/H (03) 9795 9966. Mob: 018 537 217

Jennie Hermiston Karawatha Deniliquin. 2710.  
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Peter Stephen 3 Delville Ave Mentone. 3194.  
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Please note  
Michael Crouch is no longer VCA rep. as he has gone to NSW.

## Reminder : Annual Subscriptions are now due

see back page for details

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

## Stop Press - additional trips

### Surf skills at Ocean Grove

Sunday June 29

CONTACT: Ray Musgrave (03) 5975 2414 & Derek Wrigley Phone: (03) 9882 9212

For those wishing to improve their skills in a range of surf conditions, please give the above a ring to organise time and place.

### Queensland

20 Sept - 5 October

CONTACT: Chris Sewell (03) 5152 1533

I'm still researching the coastline, but looking at something between Gladstone and Cooktown.

Ideas at this stage include: Keppel Island group, the Whitsunday chain and Port Douglas to Cooktown. The Port Douglas to Cooktown option is for participants to fly to Cairns and hire boats and 'guide' (bloke in charge of boats). He would look after all the bits & pieces and we only have to suffer a three hour flight as opposed to a four day (plus an extra day car shuffle) drive from Melbourne. Price per head is about \$700 PLUS airfare. For this to take part I need to know by July.

### Shallow Inlet

18-19 October

CONTACT: Chris Sewell (03) 5152 1533

This trip will be a little different to those run in the past, with looking and poking around the islands and entrances in the eastern section of Corner Inlet. It should be suitable for the novice paddler and for those looking at camping overnight.

# Recent Trips

## French Island Trip – February 22nd – 23rd

by Bill Robinson

### Participants

John Basemore – Own design and manufacture, Mike Cromie – Greenlander, Robert Dewhurst – Pittarak, Eleanor Hughes – Mirage 19, Ray Lendrum – Greenlander, Bill Robinson – Own design and manufacture, Gary Smith – Mirage 22.

### Trip details

We all met at San Remo at the beach just south of the bridge, and after the usual preparation of loading the kayaks with food and water for the weekend, we headed off at the top of the tide for our destination of Stockyard Point on French Island. Conditions were initially pleasant as we passed the Bass River, but the wind gradually picked up from the south and we had a following sea of approximately 75 cm in height, which required a bit of concentration. The group tended to disperse, and at one stage several kayaks were almost out of sight, which caused John Basemore and me to discuss the merits of all the group staying together, in close proximity, especially when we have members of varying strength and experience – I think that it is something that could be discussed at the start of each trip, where it could be decided which members should form the basic group and keep an eye on the slower and less experienced, and those who could break away from the group if required to do their own thing.

We arrived at Stockyard Point after about 2.5 hours paddling and were pleased to land in the sheltered rocky beach. I was initially surprised that the camp site was on the relatively exposed headland when there appeared to be an attractive beach to our west, but I was soon to learn that the decision was correct as the sandflies and mosquitoes had their picnic grounds on the beach and were absent on the headland. After pitching our tents and some lunch, we headed off on foot to explore parts of the island. We initially went up to the ruins of what must have been one of the very early farms on the island, where we discovered a very old well made of hand made bricks which we believe were made on the island and had the special feature of a heart embossed on the frog.

John Basemore, Eleanor Hughes and I set off to examine an old chicory kiln, which was a fascinating relic of an industry that thrived on the island in the 1950's until it was superseded by instant coffee. We then made our way through the bush to the beach where we found a cliff composed of lumps of sandstone which appeared to have

been set in a mortar of another type of sedimentary rock – if there any geologists in the Club please visit the area and tell us some more about it. We then walked around to the ruins of the old salt works, where continuing our geological theme, we discovered a remarkable black rock on the shoreline, which when struck with another rock, produced flints which were as sharp as a knife. We postulated that these rocks would have been important to the earlier Aboriginal inhabitants of the area. John Basemore decided to take some samples home to make arrow heads and I would estimate that his kayak carried an extra 10 kg of ballast on the return journey. We got back to camp just as it started to rain, which severely curtailed the usual VSKC imbibing at sunset. Next morning, after a brief visit from Ray Musgrave, who paddled over from Corinella, we set off on a falling tide to Rhyll with a 10-15 knot south-easterly wind which caused a slightly wet and sloppy trip. Lunch at Rhyll, and then we made our way to Churchill Island and were able to paddle in more sheltered water – the highlight for me was to see a pair of Cape Barren Geese at very close quarters on the southern shore of the island.

We arrived back at San Remo where the tide was in full flood, but with a careful ferry glide we all made it safely under the bridge and completed a very pleasant trip in an area which is very close to Melbourne – Many thanks to John Basemore for making it possible

## Wilsons Promontory - Tin Mine Cove Trip March 8/9/?

by Bill Robinson

### Participants

John Basemore – Own design and manufacture, Rex Brown – Greenlander, Mike Cromie – Greenlander, Ray Lendrum – Greenlander, Ray Musgrave – Greenlander, Bill Robinson – Own design and manufacture.

### Trip details

We set off from Port Welshpool on the early ebb tide in to a 5-10 knot south westerly, with our destination being Tin Mine Cove on the northern end of Wilsons Promontory, where Ray Musgrave had obtained permits for the 6 of us to camp for 2 nights. As we approached the main channel, Ray Musgrave's kayak started to get much lower in the water, so we had an unscheduled stop on Little Snake Island, where he emptied out litres of water and some very wet gear due to a faulty hatch cover seal. With some assistance from Ray Lendrum he managed to repair the hatch and we crossed the main channel in a now 10 – 15 knot south westerly and a strongly ebbing tide.

# Recent Trips

It was quite hard work, and we eventually made it to a small beach on the northern tip of the Prom for a welcome rest, and then headed off again for Tin Mine Cove against a strong tide and wind which slowed our speed down to 3-4 km/hour. As we paddled, one of the group was paddling much slower than usual, which was most uncharacteristic for him, so I went ashore with him while the rest of the group continued on to the Cove. I soon diagnosed his problems – the dreaded "Hypo Twins" of hypoglycaemia and hypothermia. This was soon corrected with warmth and shelter, a feed of rice custard and a cup of hot tea, and we headed off again and rejoined the rest of the group at Tin Mine Cove. – I intend to discuss hypos in more detail in a subsequent article.

We set up camp and went to bed early, and woke next morning to a perfect day – we were camped on a beautiful sandy beach with a view over to the main body of the Prom and the various islands in Corner Inlet. We spent some time fishing from the rocks where several good flat-head and wrasse were caught, and afterwards I paddled on my own over to Granite Island which is a small uninhabited island about 3 km away, over a flat sea, which was a great contrast to the day before. In the afternoon we all walked across to the eastern side of the Prom which took about 1.5 hours on the track which lead us to Lighthouse had a brief, but uneventful encounter with a tiger snake. When we reached the lighthouse platform, which would be at least 20 metres high, John Basemore climbed to the top in no time on a rather flimsy ladder – a few of us cautiously followed him where he informed us all that he was afraid of heights!

We got back to camp just before sunset, which was truly spectacular – wonderful light, still air and sea, Yellowtail Black Cockatoos coming in to roost, and a few drops of the obligatory VSKC Red made it the highlight of the trip. Ray Lendrum upstaged us all by producing ice cold tins of beer from the beer hatch in his Greenlander which he had filled with crushed ice before leaving Port Welshpool. Next morning we left early in calm and pleasant conditions on the rising tide and had a pleasant and uneventful trip back to Port Welshpool in about 2 hours, being joined on the way by Eleanor Hughes and Robert Dewhurst who had been camping independently over on the Prom.

It was a most enjoyable trip, – great paddling, magnificent scenery and great company. Many thanks to Ray Musgrave for making it possible.

## Hollands Landing to Paynesville April 12 - 13

by Brian Wallace

### Participants

Brian Wallace - Pittarak Nautilus  
Rex Brown - Ocean Explorer  
David Thompson - Greenlander  
Alan Cross - Pittarak Expedition

After meeting at Paynesville we headed off down to Hollands Landing, which is located at the eastern end of McLennan Straits which join Lake Wellington with Lake Victoria.

After packing the boats we paddled off on a calm sea around Spoon Bay where in one area the water was alive with fish, typical as no one had any fishing gear on board.

We then headed east following the southern shoreline along to the township of Loch Sport which also have some of the best sandy beaches on the Lakes.

Passing Loch Sport we entered the Lakes National Park area and our camp spot for the night was on the beach at Emu Bight.

This area is also a haven for birds, both the aquatic and land varieties, but unbeknown to us, this peaceful place was also the haven of an unknown neoprene wetty boot munching animal, who preys on those unfortunate souls who are foolish enough to leave their smelly wetty boots out over night.

Even one member of the party who was bivvying and snoring loudly (who shall remain nameless for fear of earning a bad reputation) had his boots whisked away while sleeping right next to them. Needless to say after much cursing and hunting around for the missing boots, it was back onto the water to a perfect sunny day with glassy calm seas that prevailed throughout the day.

We continued along to the end of Sperm Whale Head where we cut across to The Grange and then to Steamer Landing where it is a short walk across to the ocean. After having some lunch we headed back across Lake Victoria to Paynesville where the trip concluded.

# Recent Trips

## Swan Island off the top North East corner of Tasmania approximately 4.5 nautical miles off Great Musselroe Bay.

by Ray Musgrave

John Hyndman had received an invitation from Tony Gaiswinkler from the Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club to paddle to Swan Island on the Tasmanian Labour day weekend Sat 29th Feb to Monday 2nd March. They had a double kayak available, supplied by Mike Emery, if any body else was interested. We flew out on the Friday night to Launceston, picked up a car and headed to Gladstone (happy rock) then on to Great Musselroe Bay. With my great sense of direction we managed to get through Launceston and on the road to Scottsdale, which was not the intended route as we meant to head to George Town. Didn't tell John that, pretended I knew we were on the right road. Arrived at Scottsdale about 9-00pm, had to have an anaesthetic, then headed to our destination. The drive to Great Musselroe Bay was interesting having never seen the Tasmanian Devil before in the wild (seen them in captivity or the cartoon variety). There were plenty on the road side devouring the road kills by vehicular traffic, one had a go at the car, didn't see him/her till too late. Stopped but couldn't find a body, supposed it went bush and having read about these carnivores wasn't going to check the sex of the animal at that time of night. Also saw plenty of quolls (a native cat ) enjoying a few road kills.



*A selection of sails in the foreground is one of wooden kayakis based on the Prince Charles design a very well made kayak by the "Tamar Wooden Boat people". With the amount of sail it could have passed as an 18 footer. Behind is Tony & Rosi in their double with 3 sails up. magnificent.*

Arrived at camp site, met a few of our fellow paddlers then kipped for the night. Saturday met the rest of the group, loaded kayaks and pushed off. There was a great array of boats from doubles to singles to four wooden kayaks based on the Prince Charles design ( American design) more about them later. With a good wind behind, most boats had their sails unfurled sailing along very nicely.



*A view of the light house built 1845 by convict labour  
The light house keepers houses now owned privately*

Called in at little Swan Island on the way, a breeding ground for many coastal birds and saw two pair of Cape Barren geese, rather a rarity for we Victorians. I only have ever seen breeding pairs on Rabbit Island (Wilson's Prom). Had a bite to eat and paddled over to Swan Island.

Set up camp and did a bit of fishing. John went snorkelling and came back with the legal amount of black lipped abalone the size of a bread plate, cooked them for tea, excellent. Having set up camp you could see a cold front coming from the North East, it was fascinating to watch as it rolled across the sky with winds gusting to 50 knots (as told to us later by the care takers of the island later that day).

Sunday it was decided to circumnavigate the island. Pushed off about 10-00am in an anti-clockwise direction. The wind was picking up and paddling against the tide in places making it very rough around the headlands. After a while it was decided it would be too rough for many of the paddlers, we headed back to the camp. Had a good look at the wooden kayaks and discussions with their owners and makers. It's great to see another aspect of sea kayaking, with some modifications to the plans to suit particular conditions, the spirit of the inuit is carried on. Went for a walk around the island,

# Recent Trips

magnificent views of the other islands in the Furneaux Group. Had afternoon tea with the care takers of the island who were residing in the light house keeper's houses, who says seakayakers do it hard. Settled down for the night around the camp fire where many a legend is born or embellished especially after a glass of Tony's rocket fuel, misnamed cherry brandy.

Monday packed up and headed to Musselroe under sail. An excellent paddle enjoyed immensely by John and myself. A special thanks to Tony & Rosi for the offer to join them on this paddle and also to Mike Emery for supplying and bringing along the Dean double. And also to the other people on the paddle, thank you for making a couple of fellow paddlers feel welcome.



*Couldn't resist another photo of the prince Charles boats. Would you buy a used car from this lot, from left in c/w direction; My self, Mike Emery, Veronica Steane (hidden), Sandy Wilkin, Craig Wilkin, Curt Livens?, Kathleen Mc Laren, Drew?, Chris Davis, Liam?, Susan & Tony Stonehouse, care takers of the island., Rosi lai, Tony Gaiswinkler, Renata Shadaeck, Mark Howard, with back to camera*

All photographs courtesy of John Hyndman.

## French Island Circumnavigation – story and facts

by Julian Smith

Total distance 70.8km. Due to lack of suitable campsites, 1/2 this distance must be paddled the first day. At Stony Point safe parking for cars in the foreshore caravan park. Rob Dewhurst - Pittarak Eleanor Hughes - Mirage19 Tina Rowley - Mirage 19 Julian Smith

After countless phone calls we had organised a group of 4 paddlers for the weekend trip. It seems that without a years notice it's not possible to run overnight trips on long weekends. Most aren't sure where they want to go or think a day trip would be nice, but generally end up staying at home mowing lawns and washing cars, they then wish they'd done something on the long weekend. But this wasn't to be the case for four eager paddlers.

A week of assembling stuff, we were still convinced that half the beer wouldn't fit in the boats, let alone the tent, sleeping bags and safety gear. We pulled the Kombi up along side the boat ramp at Stony Point and met Rob and Eleanor. Began cramming stuff into the kayaks making sure to wedge the small things up the pointy ends of the kayaks so as never to see them for six months, for this was normal. After an hour everything did fit in. The boats now required 4 people to lift them - the only difference between 3 day and 3 week trips is you run out of beer. I'm sure Tina made sure we had a three week supply of food. After parking the cars and ensuring the kayaks still floated we paddled off towards French Island. It was about 10:00am, sunny and getting warmer, no wind and we had an incoming tide to assist us north up the north arm. After passing the oil terminals and BHP wharves we had to negotiate our way across the middle bank, paddling several kilometres in six inches of water as the expected high tide of 2.7m poured in. Scrub Point has a two foot high mangrove clump - well it was this or wee at sea! As the tide rose around our ankles we paddled off and passed on the inside of Barralier Island and then the long paddle across to Palmer Point. The sea was dead calm and we no longer had tidal assistance. We had planned to rest our bums at Palmer Point, but were disappointed to find nothing but mangroves and nowhere to land. We persevered until we landed at Sandy Point where we could camp. It was a somewhat exposed campsite, but free from mosquitoes which at times are in sufficient numbers to drag you screaming off into the jungle.

We awoke next morning to a chilly easterly breeze and set about re-stoking last night's fire. After spending a couple of hours walking along the coast to warm up we paddled a short distance to the old prison at Freemans Point. It is being turned into an organic farm and holiday accommodation type of place. After wandering around a while and using conventional toilets, we paddled across to Stockyard Point. Once again the sea was flat and paddling against the tide didn't seem too difficult. Rob and I paddled to shore to talk to people we saw at the barge landing - obviously bikers by the Broadford t-shirts. They said they had some land on the island. I can't imagine what they'd be growing there! The night was spent at Stockyard Point and is probably the best campsite on the island. Flat, grassy and sheltered, it sure beats camping on sand. That night much beer

# Recent Trips



Mosquito infested camp at Spit Point – French Island. Photo John Hyndman. Previous trip

and port was drunk and many stories were told as it was warm enough to sit around in t-shirts.

After a good night's sleep we arose late as we had to wait for the tide. After more bushwalking and exploring an old homestead (of which only some concrete and a well remains) we set off on an incoming tide. Around Stockyard Point the sea was again dead calm with only the tide creating eddies and upsurges to break the surface. On a different day with 20 km/h winds you can experience between one and two metre standing waves. On these points I was beginning to get bored with the flat conditions and almost wished these conditions would occur. We paddled our way past Elizabeth Island and onto Long Point for a stop. A north wind of maybe 10 - 15 km/h came up as we made our way across to Tortoise Head, making a bit of chop. By the time we rounded the head the sea was flat again but for a small ocean swell. We surfed this swell onto the beach at almost high tide. Here we enjoyed a late lunch and the afternoon sun on the warmest day of the weekend. Catching the last of the run-in tide we headed across to Stony Point. Half way across Rob and Eleanor spotted a large shark fin (or maybe a seal). This did not impress Tina at all and her paddle rate increased somewhat. At 4pm we arrived back at Stony Point and completed a circumnavigation of French Island and had a perfect weekend. If you weren't there you missed out big time!

For any info on this trip contact me on 03 9772 0817.

## Cape York Cairns to Thursday Island June 1993

by Angus Walker

*23 June – 10-15 Knot s/e winds, waves to 1.4 m*

Slipped out of Cairns at 8:30 after talking with the coast guard and agreeing with them that it would be unsuitable for taking the kayak out for a paddle. Surfing and sailing most of the day. Spent about 30 mins negotiating kayak through reef to get to beach. Lots of scraping noises from fibreglass against coral. Glad I packed the repair stuff and a tide table. Had to partially unpack boat to get it above high water level, 300 feet of mangrove and sand flats. stopped and made camp 5 km short of Port Douglas. Slept in the open tonight, no mozzies, sandflies, temp around 17°. Thousands of flying foxes flapping around in pairs.

*24 June – Near Port Douglas to Snapper Island*

On to Port Douglas then to Snapper Island (opposite Cape Trib). Left camp 8:30 and worked my way out through the reef. Found a good way to do this - with the sail up sitting on the deck I could sail efficiently through the channels, it gave me a better view of the bombies ahead and I could simply step out of the kayak and walk the reef if the draft was going to limit progress. This saved time climbing in and out of the boat.

About 2 km off shore I noticed the rear deck sitting a bit low, the rudder mechanism was totally submerged. Mmm, I did not think that I had packed the boat that badly. On

# Recent Trips

the bay towards Port Douglas I passed over a sand bar approx. 2 ft deep which allowed me to get out and put the back pack which was sitting on the rear deck to the front and I moved my body weight forward. This helped marginally to counter the pencilling effect. Paddling was still inefficient as the kayak would not surf on the waves with this angle of attack and would tend to want to sit in the troughs. When I pulled into Port Douglas I discovered a six inch hole along the bottom of the stern. Probably weakened by the lazy practice of dragging the kayak through the sand to get to the beach. A piece of coral had probably torn through the wafer thin fibreglass when I landed or exited the last beach. The whole rear storage area was totally filled with water and many of my water-proof containers leaked salt water into the food inside. The sleeping bag was also saturated. All the gear lay strewn along the docks alongside the Skase style mega cruisers.

I went off and purchased some additional repair gear, returned, applied silver tape to the hole and set off to Snapper Island. Wind had increased to 25 knots and waves to 2 metres. Saw a 12 inch dorsal fin of a shark submerge in front of me. The power head would be useless in these conditions had I needed it. Finally reached Snapper Island at 4pm. Several prawn trawlers were anchored on the lee side with the crew sleeping till evening when they would set off for an evening's fishing. I found a fantastic beach surrounded by tropical rain forest and set up camp. Had a superb view of Daintree River and Cape Kimberley.

## 25 June

6am rain bucketing down. Hope it stops so I can dry some gear out. The rain backed off to occasional squalls from approx 40kn SE. a good day not to be on the water. Spent the day exploring the island, drying food and clothing and glassing the hole in the kayak. Prawn trawlers returned at 7am this morning to shelter in the lee of the island, then headed out again with the flood lights on. Made camp more weather proof as the rain squalls became more regular as the evening approached. Hope tomorrow brings some better weather to move on.

## 26 June – Snapper Island To Rattle Snake Point.

*Winds se at 20kn, seas 1.5m*

Rained hard most of the night - collected 2 litres of water off shelter in 5mins. Will wait for resin to harden before making way to Cape Tribulation. Conditions the pits with heavy squalls and cloud obliterating land so most navigation by compass. Customs aircraft buzzed me diving from about 500ft and passing overhead at around 70ft.

Finished day at Rattle Snake Point. Bit of a grotty camp

spot. Exposed to the full onslaught of the easterly trade winds, it was covered with every conceivable kind of flotsam imaginable. Set up camp away from beach in the shelter of palm trees and salt scrub. Went for a stroll and came back for a snooze, as I went to crash out a short stubby brown snake which was a death adder slithered out from underneath my bed roll. What timing!

With the limited shelter from the wind I was kept company with hundreds of hungry mozzies which managed to fly underneath the mozz net when the wind blew it up.

## 26 June – Rattle snake point to Cooktown.

*Wind 25-35kn, Squalls To +35kn, Waves 2m*

Woke 5am and worked my way through surf at 7am just before a black squall hit.

Stopped about 10km before Cooktown at 1:30 and a coffee with a couple of elderly campers. Punched headwind into 35kn to round headland and continuously needed a stern rudder to keep kayak on correct heading. Reached Cooktown 1:30pm. Comforting rounding the point and entering the shelter of the Endeavour River.

Met a retired trawler fisherman, Colin who lived on his boat. Helpful guy as he new all the springs and conditions of the cape further on, especially Princess Charlotte Bay which I may cut across.

## 28 June

Spent the day in Cooktown. Bought supplies and checked out town. Glen, another prawn trawler fisherman told me about the mother ships at Cape Flattery and Flinders Island further up the cape. Wind blasts through the camp ground in excess of 45 kn, the gusts are what the locals call bullets, lee side thermals, which are extremely violent, I saw a dust devil come down the street today and pick up pebbles the size of marbles and hurl them around in a circle less than 15 ft across it then moved across the road and moved into the forest tearing leaves and bark off trees.

## 29 June – Cooktown to Nth Cape Flattery

*Wine 25-30KN ESE, moderating seas S 2 M TO 1 M*

Left Cooktown 8 a.m. Cape Bedford 11.30. 30 kn quartering wind and waves made paddling difficult with constant correction required. Arrived Cape Flattery at 2:40.

Saw turtle surface while paddling into sheltered waters. Rear storage area still taking in water through hatch cover probably due to the back pack being on top.

# Recent Trips

*30 June – Cape Flattery to ? (5 km west of Murdoch Island) Winds 10-15 Kn, Waves 1.2 M*

At last some relaxing conditions less wind and waves. Saw heaps of big turtles surface and let out a loud wheezing noise as they exhale air to drive when they see me approaching.

Got caught out by the mangroves and had to camp out up a river on a clay pan, got there just as the sun was going down with 3/4 moon. The sky was suddenly filled with thousands of flying foxes leaving the mangroves. Cooked up dinner and was relaxing when the shit hit the fan! The clay pan started to make bubbling noises. A crocodile, I thought, because I had seen a large one when I paddled up river, but no. The water was rising above the clay pan and there was no high ground for 20 km or more. The fire started to hiss as the water was now rising. I quickly threw everything into the kayak and made my way through the swamp to Peter's landing barge by this time I was getting paranoid of the possibility of becoming crock tucker. Peter was the guy who recommended the clay pan and said it would be ok to camp on. Whether he liked it or not I slept on board his boat till sun up when I packed everything and cruised off. He mentioned a guy called David who was paddling around Australia who was at that stage about three days ahead of me and was not using a sail.

*1 July – To Rocky Point mainland – 6.30 am to 2.30 pm  
Wind SSE 10-15 KN*

Easy day's paddling. Had lunch on Barrow Island. Absolute blow out scenery. Mega view to the north. Sensational weather. Passed some wild cattle on a beach and a dingo. Pulled into a sheltered beach to camp on, looked ideal apart from the mangrove swamp running along behind the dunes. I thought it best to check out the swamp and in doing so spotted a young crock about 1.8 metres in length. I decided it best to find another beach further on. Found a good spot and arked up a roaring fire.

*2 July – Rocky Point – Cape Melville – Flinders Island  
wind SSE 20-25 KN*

Stopped for water on Cape Melville spring then began crossing to the Flinders Island group up the Owen Channel. Crossing was more tiring than I had expected.

Camped at the ranger's shed which had a water tank. Met David Hooton who is paddling around Oz. Great to have some company and share some of our experiences together. Caught a good sized bream for dinner which we shared with some home made bread.

*3 July*

Kicked bank and took it easy today and had some well needed rest. Made a few repairs to the kayak, i.e., bit of resin here and there and made a new batten for the sail out of drift wood and a leach line. Bream for dinner again with oysters as entree followed by home made sultana bread with jam. That night we planned to head across Princess Charlotte Bay. We had a full moon, clear skies although the winds are a bit gusty. We anticipated becoming separated but we expected to catch up with each other at Portland Roads or Thursday Island. If either of us missed the beacon on the coral cay about the half way mark.

Peter travelled out to the mother ship which pull into these islands twice a week to sell supplies to the fishing boats and to store the catch of the boats in cold storage. At night time when the mother ship arrived she was lit up with bright lights on the glistening water. Gradually all the trawlers in the area travelled up to her to drop the catch and purchase goods. It was an amazing sight to see the light of the trawlers moving to the mother ship over a couple of hours until a huge section of ocean was brightly illuminated with hundreds of bright lights.

*4 July – Flinders Island – Mainland Opposite Fire Island  
Wind to 15KN, Waves to 1.2 M*

Dave and I lifted the packed boats to the water's edge and slowly headed out of the channel. 2.40 a.m. we cruised past a trawling boat (15 ft of it) and were oblivious the the guys working under the fluorescent lights. Once out of the shelter of the islands the wind increased and we soon lost sight of each other. The conditions were fantastic, a full moon, 15 knot wind. I put the sail up and started to power on into the night. After a few hours I picked up the navigation beacon (Wharton reef I think). Arrived there at 6 a.m. as the sun was rising. A fantastic coral cay with a mangrove fringe. Climbed the beacon tower and had a snack of damper while the sun crested the horizon. What a place to be! A tropical bird had made its nest on top of the tower and I could have had scrambled eggs if I wanted to but I had enough food already. Saw a huge tuna swishing around in the sun and a pretty reef shark.

I had a snooze and waited for David until 7.30 a.m. but no sign. He must have drifted further north and missed the beacon. Arrived opposite Fife Island 6.00 p.m. after looking for a good place to land. 4.00 p.m. was low tide and I ended up having to ferry boat and gear the best part of a kilometre to the high water mark.

# Recent Trips

5 July – To North Eve Peak 8.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.  
Wind to 10KN, waves TO 0.5 M

Caught a 3 lb Trevally coming around Friendly Point. Fish was in only 3 ft of water, 20 ft from the sandy shore. Heaps of red algae in the water. Every day I'm kept company by masked boobies hunting for fish. Tides are becoming a bit trickier now. Low tide in the morning when I'm ready to go and low tide again in the afternoon when I want to pull out. Lots of hauling over huge beaches! Absolutely spectacular scenery!

Fish was fantastic cooked in the coals. Eyes got a bit sunburnt.

6 July – North Eve Peak to Lockhart River Community 7.00 - 4.30 p.m. Wind 10 KN SE, Waves S 0.5 M

Stopped at the old mission and had tea and damper with Eddie. A real forgotten place. Old wooden buildings. Caught trevally for dinner and saw a dugong in the shallow sea grass and sand bars off Cape Direction. When I arrived at Lockhart River I was pretty buggered and the tide was fully out. Some Aboriginal dudes gave me a lift with the kayak on the back of the Hilux 4WD which saved me about 30 mins of heavy lifting. They let me stay in a little corrugated iron shelter on the beach which kept most of the weather off me.

7 July

Met Mike O'Riley on the Lands Council. Pretty interesting guy and also met Joe, a full blood who told me about hunting dugong and turtles, etc. Really friendly people. Had tea and damper. The Aborigines seemed interested in me and gave me a lot more respect presumably because I was paddling rather than cruising in a flash new 4WD. They let me stay in a little corrugated shelter on the beach. The black cop, Jack took me for a tour of the Lockhart mission and surrounds.

Went for a walk a few kms up the beach and saw an old WW2 aircraft wreck and a 10 ft dead Hammerhead shark. Scored a coconut for a drink, yum yum.

8 July – Lockhart River to Fair Cape 7.30 - 3.00 pm  
15 KN SE Wind, Waves to 2m

Had lunch at Restoration Island when a couple of guys pulled in and were pulling a 10 ft tiger shark. Pretty full on close up. Had a big chomp mark from another shark on its back. Why bother catching the big thing. Guys reckon they use its oil, 33% of its body weight (liver) is oil.

Caught two ox eye herring. Bit mushie to eat, lots of bones but the huge oysters made up for it.

Saw heaps of small flying fish and the guys with the shark had the snout of the sword fish which was 4 feet long with teeth along its length. Apparently they thrash their snout around in schools of small fish to kill them. They would have a lot of fun with a fibreglass kayak.

Saw lots of birds like black swallows with white crown on the head. Lots of feral hens and turkeys in dunes.

9 July – Fair Cape to Sunday Island 7.30am - 2.20pm.  
Wind 20 Kn SE, Squalling to 35 KN, seas 1.8m

9.00 a.m. reached first beacon and had damper and a rest for 0.5 hours. On approach there appeared 2 little islands however when close it was a coral cay and sand bar running east west for 2 kms. Had to punch out head wind to clear beacon and continue north. Saw two container ships pass close to beacon 1 Whilhelson. Squalls continued until midday and visibility was reduced to 75m. In the middle of fog and extremely heavy rain and wind (lots of faith on compass) passed tug boat towing a large barge with shipping container on it. Very close! Later a customs vessel came along side and said hello. One was wearing a Hawaiian shirt and there were a couple of fishing rods. Tough work!! Almost went the north side of ..... Island till I saw passage to Sunday Island. Camped on a great little cove on Sunday Is. Collected water from tarp. Enough for tomorrow's damper and coffee.

Saw a pair of dolphins come out of water vertically, somersaulted and dived vertically down. Fantastic bird life. Those black birds were going frantic in the bay feeding off predatory remains. At night the little bay is full of little glowing lights - must be fish moving through the plankton. Oysters again for dinner. Beaches here are covered in pumice stone which floats. I have been told that it gets washed up from Noumea.

10 July – Sunday Island to Captains Billys Landing  
6:20am - 2:30pm 5 - 15KN

Excellent paddling as sun was rising. On way to Round Point a beautiful ocean going yacht drew up next to me to say hello. Sun coming up and moon still above looked fantastic. Stopped around point for breakfast. Pulled in close just clearing sand bar. Cut into Shelbourne Bay huge glistening sand dunes as white as snow. Picked up visual on Island and pulled up for lunch 1:30. Checked maps as coastline not very well defined, very low hills. Heaps of pretty reef sharks around 4ft swimming under boat. Saw large shark in deeper waters. Managed to pick up Captain Billy Landing but not all that obvious. Glad I scanned charts and marked lighthouse and reef, Great little tin shed to stay in. Few 4WD people. Just had dinner with a group from Leongatha. First red meat in ages, with

# Recent Trips

pears and custard. Couple from Townsville Diana and Laurie camping outside. Good people and experienced divers. Couple of retired dudes gave me some spare water. Comfortable camping much appreciated. Clear starry nights lots of bats. Saw a fantastic looking ray - yellow and bright blue spots.

*July 11 – Captain Billys Landing to Orfordness  
SE 5 - 15KN, WAVES 0.5M*

Casual start to the day. Good having a rave to Diana and Laurie. Lunch at Orfordness, heaps of big fish going for lures. Rigged line stronger for tomorrow.

Saw another dugong. Oysters for dinner and caught bait fish. Orfordness Bay is fantastic. Sheltered from trade winds light mangroves, vines, rainforest and heath. Huge white sand blows. Heaps bird life, often hear owls hooting at night.

*July 12 — Orfordness to West of Sharp Point 7:30PM  
SE 10KN*

Paddling past barren cliff escarpment. Caught good sized mackerel then sharks cleaned up lures. Two dolphins cruised past. One had a very tatty dorsal fin, perhaps the result of a shark wrestle. Found good water seeping out of sand on beach. Had lunch with US dudes John and Lisa. Really good people. Fantastic yacht - very inspiring. Been sailing for 2 years, 2 more to go. Huge big porker came cruising through camp - more like the size of a bison.

Did washing in sea with little reef sharks swimming in 6 inches of water between my feet.

*July 13 — Sharp Point*

Paddled up The Escape River a few Kms to see some crocks. Saw about 10 of the critters, varying in size between 4 and 14 feet. They seem to sense you a fair way off and slip off the mud bank, semi submerging in the water.

Met another two yanks on a fab fibreglass 32 ft yacht. Chuck and Leslie. Had coffee and cake with them while we talked about currents that roll around the Torres Straits. Chuck reckons the flood tide begins at 12pm in the Albany Passage which conflicts with the tide charts for Thursday Island. Tides are radically localised throughout this region. Will start off early tomorrow and play it by ear. Saw heaps of tuna and other fish opposite Turtlehead Island and the Escape River. Caught a good sized mackerel for dinner. The Escape River has mangroves up to 60ft high growing in the swamp.

Headwind of 30 knots back to camp. Thought of taking short cut through sand bank, ie dragging boat through shallows for 50ft. saw an 8ft crock semi submerged and decided not to.

Great weather, bit warmer and the trade wind had been getting lighter over the past few days. Getting a little low on water so will make a move to Cape York tomorrow. Expecting hordes of tourists at the tip.

Customs surveillance aircraft buzzed the camp today. Yachties tell me that they get buzzed daily and have to report their destination, last port of call and so on. They—even take photos of all the vessels cruising the cape.

Went for a walk through the sand blow to an exposed beach. Had a swim and bathed in a rock pool which had fresh water in it. The aborigines came and scored some oysters from Sharp Point for bait.

Heard that a yacht 2 weeks ago (going through the Albany Passage) broke apart on the reef.

*14 July – Sharp Point to Punsand Bay 6:30am - 2pm  
SE 5 - 15KN*

An early start and fantastic paddling through the mangroves and wetlands opposite the island. Caught a trevally for dinner. Fly Point, the water was extremely agitated - 6ft peaked chop, 4ft apart for about 1km. then I was through the rough and into a 2Kn current ripping me into Albany Passage – very nice! A steady line of tourists walking out to the tip of the cape. Had my moment of glory as I passed through the narrow channel next to York Island. Stopped to check out some camping areas but it sounds like Punsand Bay is the go. Free tea and coffee – and cool owner. Cold and hot shower, shave - hmm. Fair few tourists around, bit of a culture shock. felt more at home at Lockhart in the corrugated shack.

Asked a Torres Strait Islander about the currents when crossing to Thursday Island. He was very shy and reserved then an idiot whity about 60 bumbled into the conservation and his ferry trip and what way I should go. Gee thanks pal. The islander said the current would not be too bad at the moment because we had neap tides. Checked out the marine chart and it said up to a 2Kn current. Its amazing how much knowledge to fisherman yachties and indigenous people have and then you get the moronic tourists.

*15 July – Punsand Bay - Thursday Island 6:15am - 10am*

Feeling a little curious about currents but they proved not to be a real problem. started early to catch the flood tide

# Recent Trips

going north. Fantastic sunrise, passed north Possession Island. There were some interesting tidal races over the reefs and it was a bit like paddling up a river rapid. Then the current changed and seemed to take me west. Ran over the top of a large turtle, heard it thumping under my boat.

Paddled the channels through the archipelago, incredible coloured waters, crystal clear and changing from deep aqua to sky blue. Called into the yacht mooring at Horn

Island and said hi to John and Lisa. They were heading west today towards Darwin. Hit Thursday Island and had to barge boat across horn to the shipping depot. Stuffed the excess gear into the boat and left it there on a fork lift pallet – poor thing has carried me all this way - felt a bit sorry for it but will give it a major going over once I get back to Cairns next week.



A seal, attracted by trawled lore, sports in wake between French Island and Phillip Island – photo John Hyndman

## Rolling sessions

John Hyndman is seeking expressions of interest for a short series of rolling sessions at one of the local (northern suburbs area) pools. The Northcote pool is a possibility. Please contact John Hyndman if you are interested.

ph (w) 92701767

(h) 94997084

email : [johnh-va@nmit.vic.edu.au](mailto:johnh-va@nmit.vic.edu.au)

## Batteries, Citronella oil, Stowbags and Skegs

### Battery connections

by Ray Musgrave

Having seen over the years the problems caused by salt water and the male spade connections on the 12 or 6 volt direct current Gel-Cell batteries, a few paddlers have experimented and come up with a solution. All though not perfect this solution provides a good result.

For connections on the other end I have found a two pin water proof connector found at most boat shops very good. Tin the ends of the bar wire with solder before screwing into the plug. Silicon around and in the rubber boot to expel all water. Solder two wires onto the spade connectors on the battery RED for positive+, some other colour for negative-, (black or blue). Then build up around the connection with plenty of silicon neutral cure can be done in as many layers as you like. I find about four will give a good seal and can be patted into shape. Plenty of spit on your finger stops it sticking to your finger.

### The Many Uses of Citronella Oil

by John Basemore

John Hyndman once said, "We will have to shift camp. There is something dead close by." But it was all right. The smell was only my socks. If we had smeared ourselves with a little citronella oil there would have been no problem. It eliminates the need for personal hygiene. Better still it confuses mosquitoes and sandflies. It smells good to us and bad to them. The reality is it confuses their antenna. These creatures usually get to us before we decide to apply repellent.

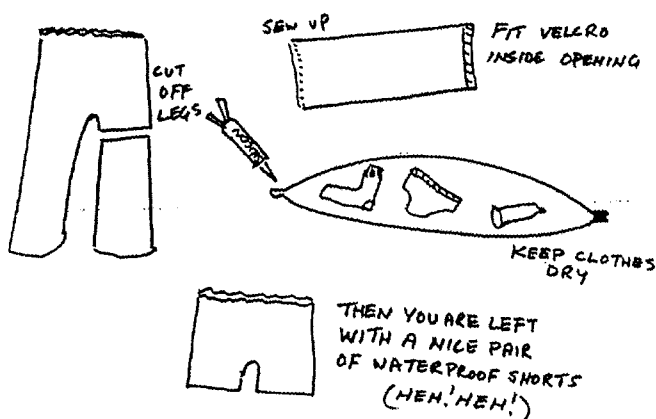
A fortnight after the last trip I am still scratching at the sandfly sores because I didn't take my mixture along. As with the Box Jellyfish (for that matter all jellyfish), the best

remedy is vinegar liberally applied to the affected area.

The 200ml bottles that two-stroke motor mower oil comes in is what I use to carry the mixture in. Stick in a teaspoon of citronella oil then top up the bottle with vinegar. When the need arises, rub this mixture on liberally. It will soothe any stings and give lasting protection against further bites. But NEVER stow it in the compartment your food is in. Still - it may improve pasta. Nothing else does, as if you didn't know.

### Cheap Waterproof Stowbags

by David Thomson



- 1./ Cut the legs off those old wet weather pants
- 2./Sew up one end on the sewing machine.
- 3./ Fit velcro into the other end.
- 4./Smear silicon over the stitches to keep out water.

### Thoughts To Get You Through any Kayaking Adventure.

As told to "Pastor Flagon."

1. Indecision is the key to flexibility.
2. There is absolutely no substitute for a genuine lack of preparation.
3. Happiness is merely the remission of pain.

# Technical Tips – cont

4. Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.
5. The facts, although interesting, are irrelevant.
6. The careful application of terror is also a form of communication.
7. Someone who thinks logically provides a nice contrast to the real world.
8. Things are more like they are today than they have ever been before.
9. Everything should be made as simple as possible but no simpler.
10. I have seen the truth but it makes no sense.
11. If you think there is good in everybody, you haven't met everybody.
12. If you can smile when things go wrong, you have someone in mind to blame.
13. One-seventh of your life is spent on Monday.
14. By the time they make ends meet, they move the ends.
15. Not one shred of evidence supports the notion that life is serious.

## Even more on skegs

- by Ian P Dunn

The ongoing debate in recent editions of Sea Trek concerning skegs versus rudders was somewhat academic to me until recently, when I purchased a new Skerray sea-kayak which has a retractable skeg. Previously I had almost exclusively used traditional craft with neither rudders or skegs. Having now having gained some practical experience with the skeg, and having applied some basic physics knowledge to understand how they work, I

thought I would make a small contribution.

## Wind Effects and Basic Physics

When a vessel is exposed to a cross-wind, it will experience a side force which will tend to push it sideways through the water. A "centre of wind-pressure" can be defined as being that point at which the sum total side force can be considered to act with the same effect.

The magnitude of the side force depends essentially on the profile area of the vessel above the waterline (obviously, also the wind-speed itself). The location of the centre of wind-pressure will generally be close to the geometric centre of the profile of the craft, including the paddler.

When the vessel starts to slip sideways in the water, it will induce drag forces from the water, and analogous to the centre of wind-pressure - there will be one point on the hull at which the water drag force can be considered to act - this is the "centre of water-pressure". The location of the centre of water pressure will generally be close to the geometric centre of the profile of the underwater shape.

Since the wind force and the water force act in opposite directions (and are not generally in one vertical line), they will exert a turning moment on the vessel. It will therefore turn upwind if the centre of water-pressure is in front of the centre of wind-pressure or downwind if the centre of water pressure is behind the centre of wind pressure (refer Figure 1).

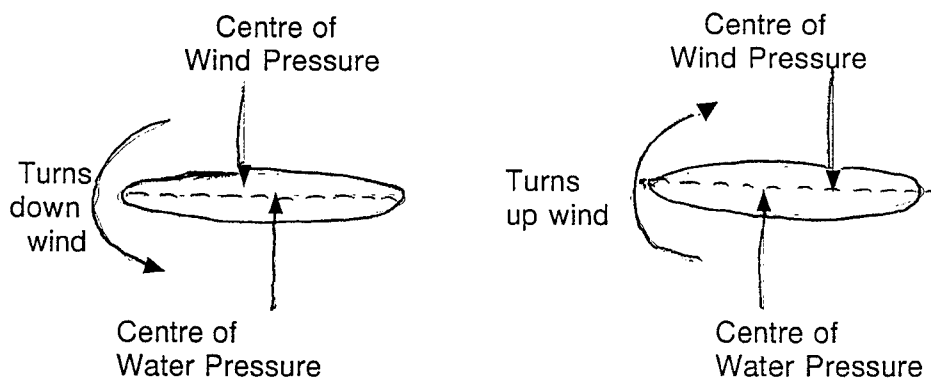


Figure 1 Schematic plan view showing position of forces causing a vessel to turn  
(a) down wind, (b) up wind.  
Wind direction is from the top of the diagram.

# Technical Tips – cont

In sail-powered vessels, skegs (also called fins), lee-boards and centre-boards are primarily employed to increase the resistance to sideways motion through the water. When a sail-powered vessel is caught in a storm on a lee-shore, such side-slipping can be fatal. For a kayak, side-slip is not generally so crucial, but skegs have a second function, and it is mainly for this function that they are used on kayaks. By correct choice of skeg-area and placement, the steering effect of the wind can be neutralised. That is, by aligning the centre of water-pressure onto the same vertical line as the centre of wind-pressure, the turning moment caused by the wind can be shrunk to zero. This means that the kayak should keep on track in side-winds without the need for energy sapping sweep-strokes with the paddle.

In practice this is so, and the steering effect of the wind, and control offered by a skeg, is easily demonstrated in a well designed kayak with a retractable skeg. For example, when paddling in a side-wind, and with its skeg fully raised, the Skerray tends to point upwind, but will veer downwind when the skeg is fully lowered. This is ideal - and a tribute to the designer - because it means that there exists an intermediate skeg position for which the craft will maintain a straight course!

In fact with a little experimenting, it is quite easy to find the correct amount of skeg to use to neutralise the wind effects - and once found, that skeg position will require no further adjustment (unless bulky items are placed on the deck), because it will be good for all wind speeds. Indeed, due to the excellent design of the boat, the amount of skeg needed to neutralise wind-steering for

the Skerray is quite small - only about 50 mm. Such a small area contributes no perceivable increase in the drag of the boat.

By contrast, a kayak with a rudder, will - because of its position - almost certainly have a centre of water-pressure well behind the centre of wind-pressure, and such a craft would therefore definitely tend to veer down-wind. Consequently, a non-zero rudder angle would be needed to maintain the direction of the boat. Not only is the amount of rudder-trim wind-and boat-speed dependent - requiring constant adjustment - but the additional drag (while still probably acceptably small) would presumably be greater than for a small-skeg.

In the light of my consideration of skegs, the foregoing, I have changed my view regarding the purpose of rudders on kayaks. Until now, I had always considered that a rudder's prime role was to alter course, but now I realise that at least an equally important role will be as an adjustable trim-tab to maintain direction when exposed to side winds.

However, in my experience all kayaks - whether fitted with rudders or not - turn most effectively by leaning the craft in the traditional manner. If this is so, it places even more emphasis on the use of the rudder to maintain direction, and less on the ability to change direction. Since a skeg can do the same but with a far simpler mechanism - and can offer a rigid footrest instead of a movable one as an added bonus - my vote definitely favours skegs.

## VSKC Web page

<http://netspace.net.au/~lofty.VSKC>

The VSKC has been on the Internet for over two years. I have copied our web page for members information - not in colour. Check out our site if you have access to the net. If anyone has any suggestions for information that can go on the page or some ideas for design please contact me.

For example - Some members have suggested that we could put full trip details on our site - as well as trip notes we could include charts and link readers to relevant information about the area.

I am also trying to put together a list of members email addresses. If you are on the net and would like to be part of a possible seakayaking update - email me at [lofty@netspace.net.au](mailto:lofty@netspace.net.au)

Michael Loftus-Hills



Club meetings

Newsletters

Day and extended  
tours

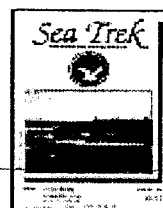
Skills days

# The Victorian Sea Kayak Club

The Victorian Sea Kayak Club exists to provide a loose bond for a disparate bunch of individuals, with exploration of wild places as common philosophy

*Earle Bloomfield*

Sea Trek (the VSKC newsletter) is  
available as a Pdf file



## Contact Information

The VSKC was formed in 1979 to bring together sea kayakers in southeastern Australia. We welcome and encourage all other sea kayak clubs, and individuals to email us or write to: The VSKC, P.O Box 426 Seaford VIC 3198, Australia

- [Paddle Links in Australia](#)
- [Recent Trips](#)
- [Paddling agenda](#)

## General Information

Club members have completed some pioneering sea kayaking trips including the first circumnavigation of Tasmania and the first northerly crossing of Bass Strait as well as covering vast areas of the mainland on other expeditions. We aim to satisfy the needs of all members and our club trips range from short bay trips or island touring to extended open sea crossings.

[Weather reports](#) | [The Fairfield Canoe Club](#) | [The Victorian Sea Kayak Club](#) | [The Murray River Canoe Marat](#)  
[Victoria](#)

# Have you renewed your club membership ?

## Victorian Sea Kayak Club inc Membership renewal/change of address details

Name.....

.....

Address:.....

.....

Telephone (H).....(W).....

**Canoeing qualifications**

(ACF/BCF).....

Annual Subscriptions \$25.00 All subs renewable November 1st

Joint family subscriptions \$35.00

Please send your membership subscriptions to VSKC ..

**VSKC**

**P.O. Box 426**

**Seaford 3198**