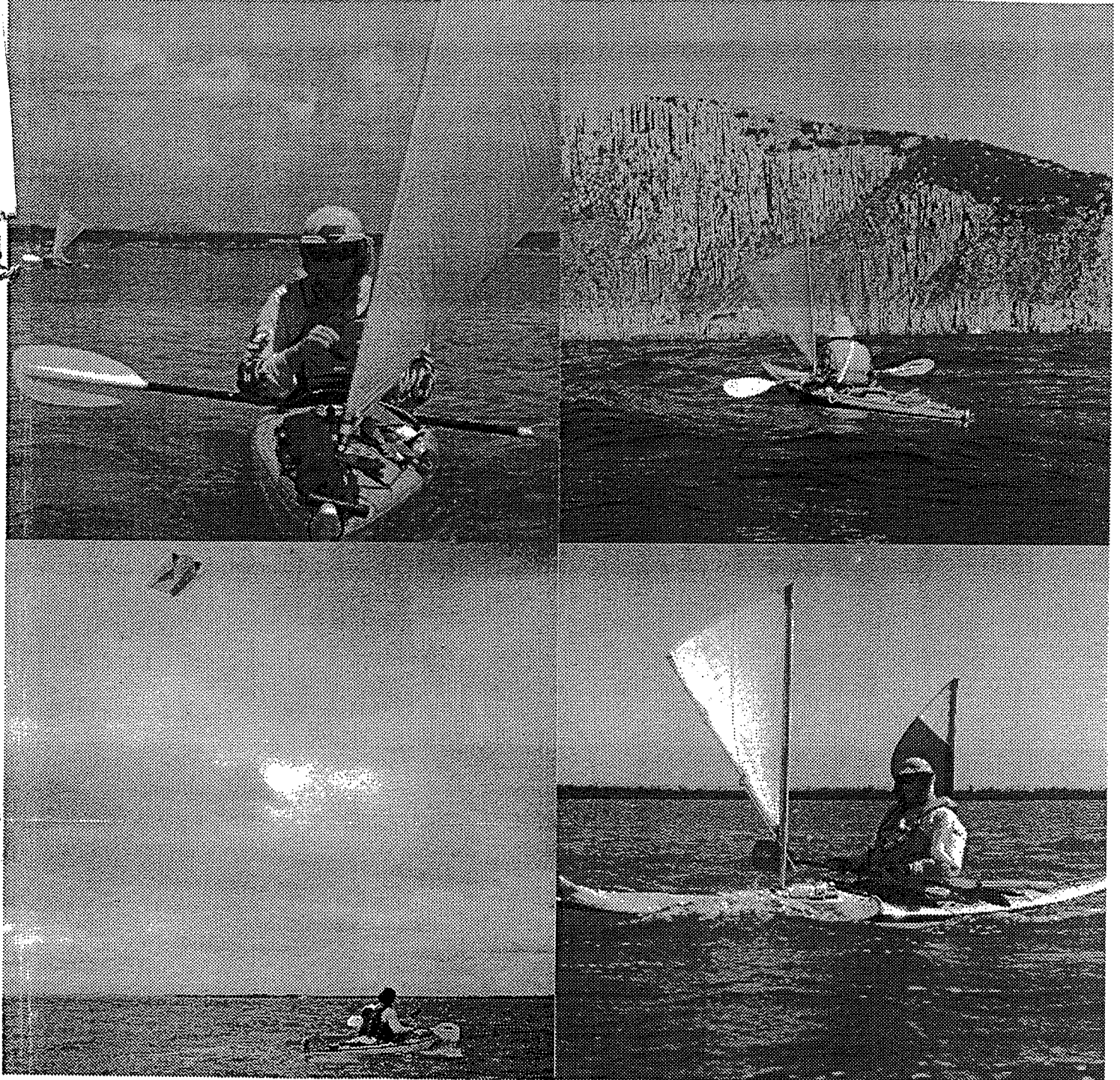


SEATREK

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN SEA KAYAK CLUB

INC. NO A17985B

WINTER 2000 ISSUE 38



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SEATREK

The official newsletter of the Victorian Sea Kayak Club
Inc. No A17985B

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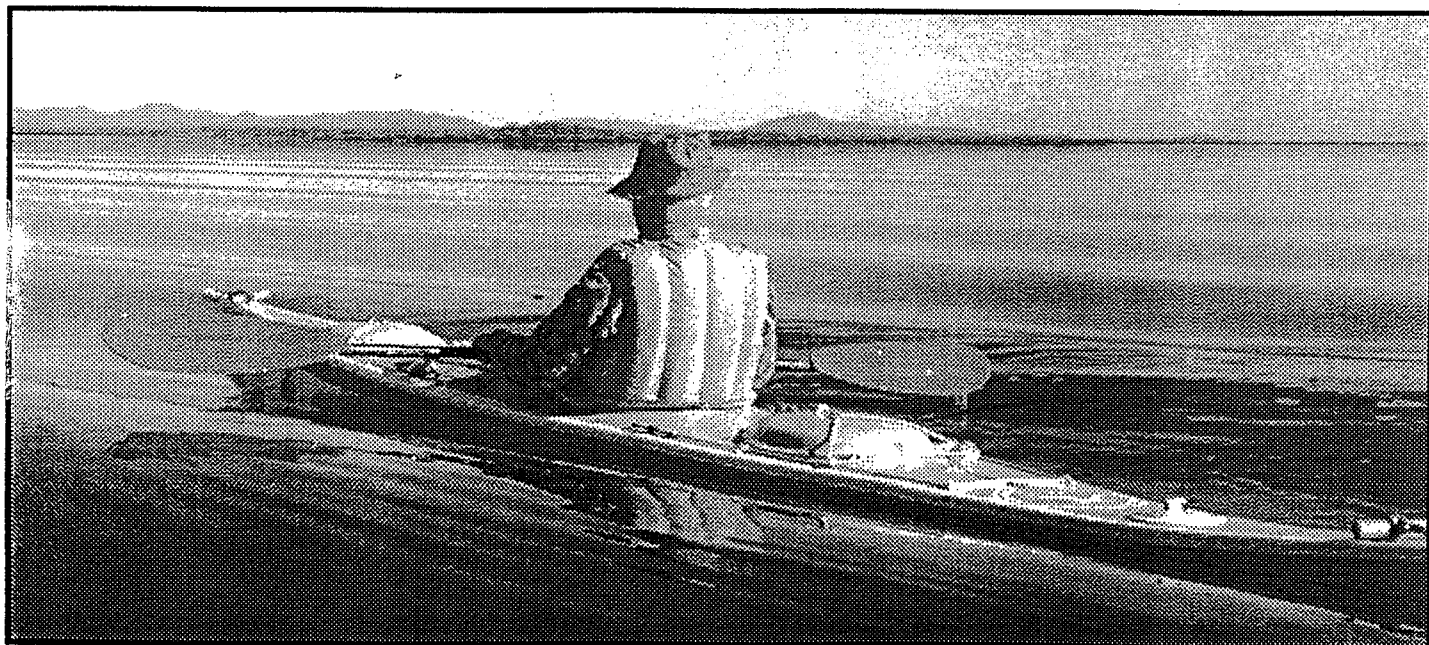
VSKC

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT
ISSUE:
END OF JULY**



FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

What a fantastic few months of kayaking since the last edition of Seatrek—here are just some of the activities

Bass Strait Crossing by VSKC Members

The highlight of the year and a great milestone in the history of the VSKC was the crossing of Bass Strait by Ian Dunn, Peter Provis, Julian Smith and Tina Rowley. There are more details of the trip in this edition of Seatrek, but I am very pleased and proud to be associated with these four outstanding paddlers. A Bass Strait crossing to sea kayakers is like climbing Everest to mountaineers and I believe it was an epic achievement for them as a group and also as individuals. I was involved with them in several training sessions and was also their land contact during the crossing, and was most impressed with the standard of preparation of their gear, kayaks and bodies.

I find it amazing that our mass media is happy to devote pages of newspapers to a footballer's strained groin, but they are just not interested in telling their readers about an achievement of this magnitude, so I suppose we will just have to get out and spread the word ourselves.

Come and Try Day

Our Come and Try Day was held for the second year in a row at Mount Martha and was a great success with over 20 boats on the water, and paddlers coming from as far afield as Bendigo to have the opportunity to try out a variety of sea kayaks.

Special thanks to Club member and owner of Sorrento Sea Kayaks—Nicholas Taylor who provided a fleet of kayaks to try and greatly assisted in helping to make the day a success. He deserves a free plug and I urge members to contact him on 0408 109 380 for any queries about gear, boats and kayaking in the southern end of Port Philip Bay.

Canadian Bay Paddles

The monthly paddle and informal meeting at Canadian Bay is working very well and we have been having up to 22 paddlers turn up. New members and potential new members have been well catered for, with some excellent instruction being provided by some of our more experienced paddlers. It was great to see at the end of the paddles that almost everyone is prepared to get out of their boats and to learn to improve their skills. Peter Provis and I have been renting our extra kayaks to those without boats for a nominal sum, which is much less than commercial rates. This, combined with the fact that the Club boat is stored at Canadian Bay Club, enables people who are new to the sport to gain some experience before they purchase their own kayak.

More experienced paddlers are able to have a longer trip and a bit of a workout if they desire, and the important thing to remember it is a meeting/get together where you can talk and discuss sea kayaking with your colleagues. I am pleased to say that many private and club trips come as a spin off from the monthly paddles at Canadian Bay.

Details

Meet at Canadian Bay –Melway 101 D10 at 9.00 am for a 10.00 am start

Bring appropriate clothing, food and water. Kayak should be seaworthy
If any queries please ring me on 9787-4704

Dates

- Sunday May 21st
- Sunday June 18th
- Sunday July 16th
- Sunday August 13th
- Sunday September 10th

Rolling Nights

The rolling nights at the Aquatic Centre in Frankston have been well attended and several new members are now up and rolling. They are held on the first Friday of each month, and if you plan to attend please telephone Julian Smith in the week before on 9776-9583

I urge all Club members to learn to roll—here we have some outstanding instructors in a warm heated pool, all for the princely sum of \$7. Compare that to the commercial classes. Also it is a skill that could just one day save your life!

Shortwave Radio

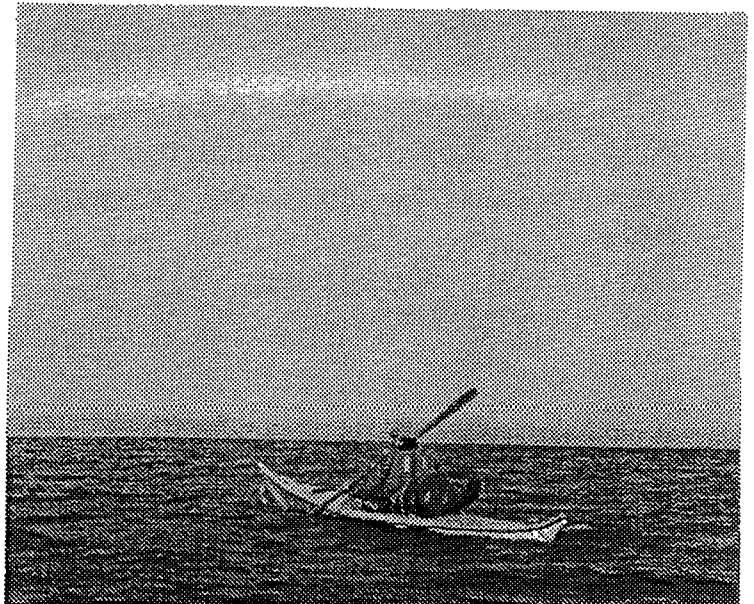
During the Bass Strait crossing there was at times some difficulty in getting weather reports, but it was noted that the yachties were getting excellent forecasts from portable side band short wave radios. Peter Provis has bought one, and is currently trialling it on a trip that he is doing out of Eden, so we will await his report

I also remind members that the Club has two EPIRBs and two 27 MHz radios which can be used on Club trips.

Very Proud Father

I hope that members will bear with me if I have a slight boast about my eldest daughter Jane. As a very young child I must have imprinted the notion that it is fun to push boats through the water when I used to take her out in an ancient kayak on Canadian Bay. The notion lay dormant until at the age of 23 she took up rowing, and 3 years later she rowed in the Atlanta Olympics in the Australian Womens Quad Scull.

Three weeks ago we were delighted when she put in an outstanding performance in the selection trials and now is in the Australian Womens Eight for the Sydney Olympics. It is a very good crew, and could be a medal contender, so I urge VSKC members to follow their progress



PADDLING TIPS

When you don't want to have water running down the paddle and down the shaft wetting your hands continuously. Rain X. You can get it in auto accessory shops. All you do is wipe a bit on each end of the shaft where it joins the paddles. It is a silicone-based product and the water just cannot hang onto the treated area. It is great for glasses and for car windscreens. If it is fresh on the windscreen you don't need the wipers in rain at open road speeds. It just blows off. Gelcoats on fibreglass kayaks are soft and are scratched easily on the sand. If you use a fibreglass polish on the part that has contact with the sand it really makes a huge difference, whether it's sliding off the beach into the water or sliding sideways back up the beach. It really gives the craft a lift and makes it slip through the water just that little bit better. If you're a lone paddler it's not a bad idea to carry a pair of flippers tied together with 2m of light cord (wouldn't want to drop one would you). In a worst case scenario, they will get you back to shore with a lot less egg on your face than pulling the pin on an epi-rib. Everywhere you go, Always take the weather with you. My work keeps me occupied most weekends, so I don't have much of a chance to paddle with other members of the club, but I have spent the last three months paddling every morning whenever possible. It has been a great three months. I live close to Safety Beach, and my routine has been to get to the beach at 5.30 and paddle close to the beach as the street lights are just as effective out on the water as they are on the road. Once the dawn comes then you can paddle further out. What I've found doing this is that strong winds often don't crank up until 7.30 and good paddling time can be got in up till then. It is a great way to start a day. The really satisfying part is using the one bit of calm weather in the day, coming home having a shower and breakfast and then seeing the wind come up and the whitecaps start rolling in. Sure beats the hell out of a gym. Fantastic sunrises, paddling with the dolphins, penguins, watching gannets diving for breakfast, all for free. I've just ordered a cag and a boiler to get me through the winter as I feel one hell of a lot better than I did three months ago. There is no way I am stopping now.

By David Thompson

QUOTE

Each member of an expedition is primarily responsible for his or her own safety. They must also be responsible to the party, as their folly will have repercussions of their comrades. For the group is committed to its member's safety.

Cath O'Doud. Mountaineer.

(submitted by John Basemore)

Labour Day Weekend - Port Albert area

By Lance Albrecht.

Ray Musgrove	- Greenlander
John Hyndman	- Greenlander
Dave Milne	- Ice Flow
John McSwinney	- Southern Raider
David & Jenny Uren	- Mirage Double
Lance Albrecht	- Artic Raider

Friday 10/3/00

John, Dave and Myself arrived at Port Albert at approximately 22:30, so we parked at the end of Port Albert Rd and slept in our cars.

Saturday 11/3/00

We awoke to the most amazing sunrise and the view over the water was fantastic. 7:00 and we were at the Boat ramp where we had arranged to meet the rest of the group, loaded our boats and departed at the agreed time of 8:30. Conditions were good, 25 degrees, calm seas and 0 -5 Knots wind speed (what a start to my first overnight trip). We travelled along the channel towards the Port Albert entrance and due to the good conditions it was decided we would travel out the entrance into Bass Strait and follow the Coast of Clomnel Island to the Kate Kearney entrance. Once we had cleared the Port Albert entrance we had the same conditions except now there was a swell of 1 to 2 meters. When we found the Kate Kearney entrance we hung back just outside the Break to assess the conditions and after 10 minutes we passed over the bar without incident and proceeded to our campsite on the unnamed Island.

As we got out of our boats we were greeted by thousands of tiny soldier crabs, which had surfaced as the tide receded, this was an interesting site. After setting up camp we enjoyed an el fresco lunch in still perfect conditions followed by some seriously relaxing, walking, fishing and for some of us, a body surf. Later that afternoon the sea breeze kicked in, what a surprise!

Sunday 12/3/00

This morning we arose to an overcast sky and 15 - 20 knot winds. Over breakfast we discussed our plans for the day and we decided that we would venture once again out into Bass Strait and head up towards Shallow Inlet and possibly 90 Mile Beach. John Hyndman decided to stay back as he had broken his rudder the day before.

9:30 we climbed back into our boats and headed

towards the Kate Kearney entrance. We made great time for we were on an out going tide. The double leading the way powered out through the surf while I was following Dave and John. The wind was still building and the surf seemed larger once we were out in it and by about the fourth or fifth wave my luck had run out, the next wave broke just as I had just started to climb it, I braced successfully and stayed upright but was now facing the shore and as I was turning the boat around I was hit from behind and ended upside down, I then proceeded to wet exit and moved to the rear of my boat to gather my thoughts. Meanwhile David and Jenny decided that they were not happy with the conditions so they turned back to shore to call it a day. Dave and John noticed me out of my boat so they turned around to see if they could give me a hand, I think it was at this stage Dave capsized. There were now two of us out of our boats. I asked John if I was being blown into shore or out to sea and he told me in, so I decided I would wait until the wind and waves brought me in past the sand bar and breaking surf before attempting to re-enter. Ray made his way towards me, threw me a towline and towed me into a place deemed safe to re-enter, at this stage John went to help Dave. Once I was past the bar I rafted up with Ray and re-entered the boat, when I had pumped the boat out I started moving towards the entrance, but since the capsize I had lost my confidence and I was feeling very nervous about capsizing again. There were still some breaking waves that were very unpredictable, probably had something to do with the wind against tide. It was a very unnerving experience.

John Hyndman had been standing on the beach watching all of the commotion and was quiet concerned to the point of triggering his Epirb for he could not see 3 of us for over 10 minutes and he could see us all being washed out to sea by the tide at a very fast rate. Fortunately for us we all eventually made it back to safety, after a huge amount of effort to come in through the entrance against the out going tide. Once we got back it was revealed that 4 out of 5 kayaks had capsized and Ray was the only person that had stayed upright to help the rest of us re-enter and get back to shore. Ray and I had also broken our rudders.

John Hyndman informed us that we had spent over an hour in the surf out of our boats which surprised us all for it did not seem longer than 15 - 20 minutes. The rest of the day was spent close to camp for the wind had built to 40 knots. Over dinner we agreed to leave for Pt Albert at 7:00am the next day.

Monday 13/03/00

6:00am and we were happy to be up for none of us slept very well due to the constant gale overnight. We left as planned with the wind behind us which made for a quick trip for about 2/3 of the way until we turned into the channel towards Pt Albert with the wind on the nose. We arrived back at the Pt Albert boat ramp at 8:30am. It was decided that we would all meet at the famous hamburger shop in Meeniyah. When we arrived at Meeniyah it was 25 degrees with barely a puff of breeze so it's hard to believe that there can be such a huge variation in weather in such a small area.

TRIP REPORT--MALLACOOTA- EASTER 2000

Participants

Julian Smith---Trip Leader (Selkie), Tina Rowley (Artic Raider), Glen Evans (Owner Built Cedar Stripper), Tim Strohfeldt (Prion), Bill Robinson (Inuit)

The plan of the trip was to go to Mallacoota and paddle to Gabo Island on the Friday afternoon, and then to paddle to Eden in the following days, stopping at such places as Nadgee on the way. We all got to Mallacoota on the Friday and did a car shuffle to Eden, but decided to camp at Mallacoota as the weather was rather cold and wet and the Mallacoota Bar was rather active

We used the Club 27 MHz radios and found that the local Coastguard provides a most extensive weather report at 7.10 and 15.10 on channel 86 each day. The forecast did not sound all that good-west to south westerlies of over 25 knots, seas of 3 metres and a swell of 2 metres.

We loaded up on the Saturday morning and paddled down to the Bar to see what it looked like, and when we got there the forecast was spot on and the radio told us it was blowing 30 knots over at Gabo Island

I looked out to sea and even several kms out I could see these enormous westerlies rolling in the direction of Gabo which still had the occasional break. Julian, who is a bit of a waveaholic was quite keen to have a go, but I simply stated that whatever the group decision was, that I was not going out

through the Bar. I was relieved that the others almost immediately agreed with me, so we made the decision that we would spend the day exploring the Mallacoota Lakes instead.

We paddled up through the Narrows in to the Top Lake and explored several bays, but as the wind remained as forecast we found a very good bush campsite for the night, which was very sheltered, where we had a fire a very comfortable night. The only minor annoyance was a tick, which imbedded itself in the back of Tim's neck, which I removed for him in my capacity as group veterinarian. As Tim remarked, he always considers himself to be a bit of a "Tick Magnet"

Next day we listened to the forecast which was just about the same as the day before, so we went down to the Bottom Lake and amused the locals with a raft of 5 kayaks and 4 sails as we headed across the lake to the site of an old mine which we explored, before going up to the site of a cemetery where James Smellie, one of the early settlers is buried. The poor bloke died as a result of complications from an accident when he damaged his eye with a bullock whip---not a nice way to go.

We found another sheltered campsite, where we spent another pleasant evening surrounded by beautiful luminous fungi. Paddled back to Mallacoota on the Monday morning and went up to Eden to collect the cars and spent a very interesting couple of hours in the Whale Museum, which is well worth a visit

Conclusions

Great company and a very interesting, though not very demanding paddle around the lakes. It is an excellent area for those paddlers with limited experience, and if you are intending to go there I would suggest contacting any of the participants for further information.

The weather reports from the Coastguard are excellent and we recommend them to any paddlers going to Mallacoota

Finally, I believe that although we did not achieve our original goals, we did exercise one of the real skills of a prudent paddler-i.e. Knowing when to go or deciding to stay. We are all still here to paddle another day, and yet we had a pleasant few days. As Bill Shakespeare the famous kayaker once said-"To go or not to go-that is the question"

Bill Robinson

Portland Paddles

Summary:

Saturday 22/4/00. Michael Johnson, in Current Designs Sea Lion, Peter Treby in Pittarak. Bridgewater – Cape Bridgewater and return. 6 km. Wind < 10 kn. Swell, 2m at the Cape, surf < 1m. Portland – Lawrence Rock and return. 20 km. 3m swell after Point Danger. Weather fine and overcast.

On Easter Saturday, Mike Johnson and I took in two really great short paddles near Portland. Put both of these on your list of must-do paddles, especially Bridgewater.

I met Mike on the Hamilton/Portland Rd at 9:15 am, only a quarter of an hour late, not bad for getting Sal and the kids there from Halls Gap. Sal headed off to Portland while Mike acted as chauffeur for the day and drove to Bridgewater.

We firstly went for a paddle to one of the largest seal colonies on the Australian coast. The put-in point here is one of the best anywhere, having mown grass to organize the boats, wide gently sloping sandy beach, 4WD access to the beach, and graded surf according to how far east along the beach you care to launch. Best of all, the kiosk serves great plunger coffee, and gourmet sandwiches.

We launched into low surf at the west end of Bridgewater Bay, to follow the limestone cliffs south to the seals. After a push in by Mike, I tried to hang back and wait for a lull in the breakers, without success, capsized, but rolled up happily and got out and waited for Mike. I was pretty pleased to have rolled up first time. Mike had less trouble, and we proceeded to the seal colony. The surroundings are really beautiful, with 100 metre high limestone and basalt cliffs, and the wide sweep of Bridgewater Bay leading to Cape Nelson to the east.

Up to 650 Australian Fur Seals occupy several large sea caves near Cape Bridgewater, a few kilometres from the beach. This day, I guess there were 50 - 100 or so on the rocks, and three groups of 30 to 50 in the water, keeping

cool. Mike tapped the side of his boat to attract their attention, and then they were all around us, heads up looking curiously at the intruders, swimming under and around, and following us when we went to check swell conditions around the point. The seals were so thick that I banged into a mid sized animal, which swiftly disappeared with a flick of its tail. Some of the larger males are an impressive size, with equally impressive large teeth. They reach 360 kg and over two metres long. I put aside thoughts of deliberately going over with the mask for a look after seeing a male baring its fangs while locking jaws with a smaller seal.

We returned and enjoyed a ride in on smaller surf, and refuelled at the kiosk.

We then moved on for a launch in Portland Harbour, beside the Maritime Discovery Centre. We headed out to Lawrence Rock and effected a clockwise circumnavigation. Lawrence Rock is a volcanic mesa, covered in gannets. On a calm day it is apparently possible to paddle close into what was the crater of the volcano. Not today. The three metre swells reflecting off the south of the Rock made white knuckle paddling for me, although Mike seemed to take it in his stride. On the return trip, Michael, who works with the other active Portland paddler Peter Bell at the aluminium smelter, had the pleasure of ringing Peter at work by mobile phone while we were half a mile directly offshore from the Alcoa plant. Peter was told in glowing terms just what a good time we were having.

We arrived back at Portland only 45 minutes late, after a four-hour trip. I had a brief paddle of the Sea Lion to finish a great day. Thanks to Mike for the terrific guided tour.

Peter Treby.



BASS STRAIT CROSSING-YEAR 2000

This is an account of the 14 day trip from Tidal river to Little Musselroe bay Tasmania, via Hogan group, Kent group and Flinders Isle. The information, thoughts and views are from my personal notes taken daily and is not necessarily the views of other trip members whose accounts I'm sure you will find in other articles and future Sea Trek newsletters.

The month before going, hundreds of hours were spent on gear and kayak preparation, including the fitting of a rudder to my Selkie, which is a horrid looking abomination as are most rudders, however I'm not completely stupid as it will save a lot of energy which is important. A new sail was also fitted and provisions for extra water storage in the cockpit.

Saturday 19-02-2000 Day 1

We arrive Tidal river 9.30am and catch up with Peters friend Mick the ranger who allows us access to beach with Peters vehicle and trailer. We pack the kayaks in front of an increasing inquisitive crowd who must be thinking the next time we hear of these 4 people will be the evening news. The weather is hot and sunny with northerly wind. 11am sees us on the water with a rising tide, lunch is at Fenwick Bight before striking north headwind around lighthouse point with moderate rebound from small swell. We land at Waterloo bay 3.30pm feeling a bit dehydrated. Along the way we spoke with the water police who weren't overly concerned with our trip plans and were pleased we all had EPIRBs, GPS and VHF radio. We also spoke with fisheries who were slightly more shocked about our plans and wished us well, both authorities were very interested in the sleek racing hull type vessel that had waved to us at Norman bay, they seem to be concerned about their activities. Set up camp at shady spot at the quiet end of beach and are immediately set upon by rampaging march flies, which even follow you in the water. Spent rest of day body surfing and resting. Weather forecast indicated s/w change delayed till late tomorrow, get early night for tomorrow as it will be a big day, first leg to Hogan Isle which can just be seen from beach.

Sunday 20-02-2000 Day 2

Up at 6.45am packed and on water at 8.00am. No wind, slight swell forecast for weakening s/w change Hogan visual after one hour. Peter feeling very seedy 29km's from Hogan towing Peter short distance before recovering slightly, we then stop, raft up Peter vomits. This helps and he makes good recovery, last

15 km's becoming sore and uncomfortable. We finally land in bay in front of hut built by Alf Stackhouse on Eastern side of Hogan Isle. Total distance today is 53km's. Fresh s/e wind soon comes up, could be here for a while, Peter's problem seems to be his drinking water or container. We check water tank at hut, is full to the top, tap not working inside so we repair it. Decide to camp in valley near hut as we heard about the native rats that bite.

Monday 21-02-2000 Day 3

Up at 7.00am, realize we are not going anywhere today, forecast is strong wind warning upgraded to gale warning for all coast from Cape Otway. Walked all over Isle checked out the solar lighthouse and disused weather station. Went fishing caught only parrot fish, most by Tina, tasted as I remembered like salt water carp. Swell increasing all day, wind 20-30 knots, watched penguins come up beach at night in tents by 9.00pm.

Tuesday 22-02-2000 Day 4

Long sleep up at 8.00am sea moderated a bit, Ian thinks we will be out of here tomorrow, nothing to do on this Isle any more except find and eat mutton birds, but seems to be out of season. 4pm wind up again, gusts to 50knots on wind meter at top of hill. Penguins seem to have stayed in today. Tried to plug VHF and marine radio into disused weather station but no success. Wind dropped off late today, swell no longer crashing into bay, raising our hope to get out tomorrow.

Wednesday 23-02-2000 Day 5

Up at 5.00am wind all but dropped off, forecast gale warning east of Wilsons prom. Make last entry in log book in hut, entries in log include many seakayak crossings over last 15years, it seems Tina is the second female to paddle across Bass Strait. On water 6.30am light wind swell up to 3 meters and sloppy, make good progress 7kph. Erith Isle visual but Peter doesn't look well and feeling sick again, spots shark about 8ft swim under my rudder. 3rd hour Peter vomiting, raft up bit of towing comes good again, 8km of Erith Peter violently sick. Tina rafts up and supports Peter, Ian and me tow both of them, Peter now cramped up and cannot paddle, s/w change hits, Erith Isle disappears in low cloud and rain, navigating now only by GPS, things getting very serious now, sea getting big and worried about missing entrance to Murray pass. Getting very exhausted and paddle tripping on Ians tow rope when surfing down swells followed by a violent snap when slack takes

up. Finally make it into Murray Pass fighting gale force headwind into small bay for shelter. Peter recovers enough to make it into Bulli cove where we find a hut and fresh tank water, set up camp. Distance today 39km's Tina and I paddle across Murray Pass to Deal Isle, meet caretakers Bob and Peter at homestead, help catch wallabies in compound and throw them over the fence. Are given a bag of tomatoes from 100 year old vegie garden, paddle back make dinner watch rats, possums and penguins, rest day tomorrow, explore islands and phone home.

Thursday 24-02-2000 Day 6

Awoken about midnight by the familiar sound of a V12 engine, peering out of tent can just make out in moonlight a shape of the black and grey suspicious looking vessel we saw in Norman bay slowly cruising around our bay then disappearing down Murray pass. Slept in today, perfect weather no wind, Bush Heritage people whose organisation leases these Islands turned up today with equipment and new water tank for the hut, plan to stay for 4 days. Girl gave Peter a tablet for stomach bug, hope it works. Visited Bob and Peter at Deal Island, had tea and biscuits, walked to lighthouse, 2nd highest lighthouse in the world, decommissioned because it is often shrouded in clouds. Spoke to crew of 'Mezair' in bay, Tina talked 4 cans of drink out of them, showed us some huge lobsters, gave us some abalone, tried it and gave it to the bush heritage crew, prepare for crossing tomorrow to Killiecrankie, forecast no swell, light winds.

Friday 25-02-2000 Day 7

Crap night sleep on angle, 2.00am wind came up most depressing sky, now overcast low clouds, up at 5.00am anyway doesn't seem any hurry to pack on water at 7.30am paddle east to Garden cove, decide wind too strong 20knts plus from east head back to Deal Isle catch forecast from 3 yachts, s/w change tomorrow hoping Sunday is the day to go. Peter and Ian head back to Erith to make new camp in fore-shore, forest campsites, Tina and I sit on pier half sleeping while a wallaby sits next to us waiting for something maybe. Go up to visit Bob and Peter get offered soup and muffins, wander through museum again now warm with light winds, could have gone today but who was to know. Police speak to us on the caretakers phone want to know about suspicious boat who we know is Cam Strachen from Hastings, he is banned from entering Tasmanian waters and is a bit of a pirate type character wanted for illegal fishing

but they cannot catch him as his boat is a converted ocean racing hull fitted with hi-tech electronic gear and a V12 turbo engine and a two foot diameter surface prop very fast can't catch him with evidence on board.

Saturday 26-02-2000 Day 8

Up at 8.00am s/w change here heavy rain starting to feel we are running out of time and food, discussion with Peter clears up a few issues. Visited Bob and Peter for last time got more tomatoes, said goodbyes and rang Bill Robinson, got forecast paddled round to Winter cove on other side of Deal Isle is 1 hour paddle time closer to Flinders Isle, experienced gale force gusts, strong currents and some big seas, landed in small surf found very nice sheltered campsite. Went snorkelling, lots of big reef fish but can't quite spear the bastards, caught small salmon on beach very tasty, cooked in foil good to eat some protein, wind abating, sit round fire till 9.00pm.

Sunday 27-02-2000 Day 9

Awoke to light winds, clear skies, cook porridge on fire again, I won't be eating this crap again at home. Getting bored now, made lure from tin foil, caught more salmon, ate for lunch with tomatoes, eating spoon full of promite daily, think is important, other's don't realise this (fools!) If I am on this Island much longer I will kill them..... a wallaby and throw it in the fire, haven't seen one today, maybe they know something??? Slept all afternoon, how good is it to do this, weather looking good for early departure tomorrow. Salmon and tomatoes for dinner.

Monday 28-02-2000 Day 10

Up at 4.00am this is the big one, every one running off up the beach trailing toilet paper this morning. On water at 5.15am seas flat sun rose after one hour, 7kph had us at Wright rock in three hrs photographing a seal colony and having snack, taking off cags as warming up now, 1/2 way to Craggy Isle. Ian and Tina spotted a dorsal fin of a shark much bigger than the previous one, very sinister looking according to Ian, this brought the group together. Rafted up at Craggy Isle, got out of cockpits had stretch, sea calm. Set off on last 22km's to Killiecrankie bay arriving just after 2pm feeling sore but very pleased with ourselves 10 days after leaving Tidal river. Directed to campsite by Mrs Stackhouse who runs the little camping ground also found the general store and off loaded \$150 between us which covered most food groups as you can imagine. Also found big tiger snake about

7ft long, seems they grow up to 9ft on and around the islands surrounding Flinders. Waited for Peter and Ian to have cold showers then lit fire and had hot shower myself, felt fine now and have not worn gloves. Distance today 61km's.

Tuesday 29-02-2000 Day 11

Casual start today se wind up, overcast, can't believe how well we did to enjoy yesterdays conditions. After raiding the general store again we were told by the shop keeper that her mother lives at Allports beach where we were heading, if we see her we may get some eggs. My thoughts at this stage were if we don't see her we may just get the whole chicken!! Sailed out of Killiecrankie bay all the way to Cape Frankland then turned into headwind of 20+knots, struggled across Marshall bay then along beach, had a late lunch with 8 or 9 km's remaining. Spectacular huge marble like boulders line this part of the coast, arrived at Allports beach in small bay at 5.00pm, found picnic type area with BBQ site and table, went for a walk after dinner along rural dirt road and met eccentric old fellow named Jim, who is a technical book writer for Penguin books, looked exactly like the Professor out of the movie Back to the Future and behaved rather similar, apparently he'd had a few before we arrived. He showed us the old bush tennis court where Laurie Ford's group camped during their return crossing in 1987. We took Jim back to camp to meet Ian and being both into astronomy and having spent time at the CSIRO they got on like a house on fire.

Wednesday 1-03-2000 Day 12

Casual start again off at 9.00am, sailed around Settlement point, met headwind from s/e again, few aches and pains from yesterdays effort. Cut across bay rounded next cape and paddled last 8km's in shallow reefy water into 15-20knt headwind arriving at Whitemark intine for mixed grill in pub recommended by Stuart Trueman on his crossing and excellent it was. We were now almost too fat to fit in the phone box, rang Bill Robinson to report in and Bob and Peter at Deal Isle to say thank you for all their help and that we were safe. Looked around town, Tina and Ian each purchasing some Killiecrankie diamond earrings from shop. Loaded more supplies in kayaks and set off to Trousers point 10km's away in calm conditions, took photos of Mt Strezlecki. Local copper advised us of the best campsite, met crew of recreational fishing boat "Fly Fisher" out of Hastings returning to Lady Barron from continental shelf chasing marlin, gave us a bag

of fillets for dinner, on board was Laurie Ford's ex brother in law, small world. Caught up with 3 yatches from Deal Isle moored in bay, received forecast 20knt n/w turning s/w up to 30knts tommorrow.

Thursday 2-03-2000 Day 13

Up at 7.00am possums been busy at night ate whole fish fillet off BBQ, sandflies also bad here. Away at 7.50, crossed Franklin Sound (16km) in two hours, flat seas, spoke to Flinders Isle copper again on his shark cat, flash unit with 500 hp hanging off the back. Ian spoke with crew on 'Furieux Explorer' n/w wind up now fast sail down to Preservation Isle had lunch on lee side, people in cabin here gave us some water, they had flown in earlier that day as this Isle has an airstrip. Wind now quite strong fast sailing with 1-2 metre sea having already passed Thunder and Lightning bay on Cape Barren Island our destination for today we headed for tommorrows destination Rebecca bay on Clarke Isle arriving mid afternoon the hottest day of the trip. Beautiful little bays but no water and campsite at the top of a steep sand hill, however the snorkelling here was the best I had seen so far. Can see s/w change coming in sky now had option of going across Banks Strait today but decided to rest here the night, think everyone is wondering whether we made the right decision.

Friday 3-03-2000 Day 14

S/w change came through early morning up at 8.00am, forecast 20-30knts s/w sky a bit dark but we decided to go 2-3 hours before low tide and ferry glide 7km's to the right of swan Isle lighthouse allowing for current on water. 10.30 lumpy sea 2-3 metre plus right hand beam head wind 10-15 knts after a while turn on GPS realise we are making good progress. Peter out in front on compass bearing of 240, pass lighthouse after 3hours, not bad for 18km's. Have lunch in bay on lee side, trawler skipper tells us stronger s/w change expected soon, time to go as soon will be slack water for last 4km crossing, have heard of strong currents to 5knots here. Front hits us with wind to 50 knots can't make headway, paddle close to shore to tip of Swan Isle, as we plan our blast across wind moderates making ferry glide possible to Little Musselroe bay, enter creek mouth and are greeted by Jeff Jennings (Maatsyyker Canoe Club) and Mrs Ponting. Who welcomes us to have a hot shower. Jeff just happened to be dropping of a NSW seakayak club member David Whyte who had become sick after leaving Launceston to paddle to Hobart with Mike Snoad and Dirk Stuber who had arrived here this morning. They all now planned to

head off in the next couple of days to Swan Isle then continue on to Hobart. After a few cold beers we wished the 3 NSW members well, with a full loaded kayak trailer we then headed to Jeff Jennings place at Bridport our trip now over feels like we only left Tidal river yesterday allmost feel like turing around and paddling back. Could we be as lucky with the weather again, might have to wait till next time to find out.

There are many people we must thank, for without their help this trip would not have been easy to put together or complete. **Bill Robinson: Base communications.** Bill had to deal with everyone from worried wives and mothers to water police-sorry about the extra grey hair Bill!!!

Lionel Wishwell: Mercy Radio. Radio communications expert, knew where we were before we did!

Yacht and fishing boat crews for their help and weather info across Bass Strait.

Bob and Peter the care takers at Deal Isle- for without their supply of tomatoes and tea with biscuits we would of starved!

Jeff Jennings, prior info, transport and accomodation,our Tasmanian connection.

Steve Vegh at Canoe Inovations for his amazing craftsmanship once again in altering and repairing our kayaks.

Sea To Summit for supplying their wonderful lightweight indestructible dry bags for all of us.

Laurie Ford for information prior to trip which was invaluable, however we never did find that water that just bubbles out of the sand. Canoes plus

The Yacht shop Frankston and anyone else we forgot.

The use of Ian Dunn's MSR water filter was invaluable, one thing worth taking on any trip. The group each used Ian's filter daily, which was important as nobody wanted to get sick due to bad water.

Another important mention is the use of a side band short wave radio, the yatchies use these to get accurate weather forecasts out in the middle of nowhere.

And of course Ian Dunn, Peter Provis, Tina Rowley for without them this trip would not have been possible.

Paddlers

Ian Dunn

Peter Provis

Tina Rowley

Julian Smith

All boats kevlar construction

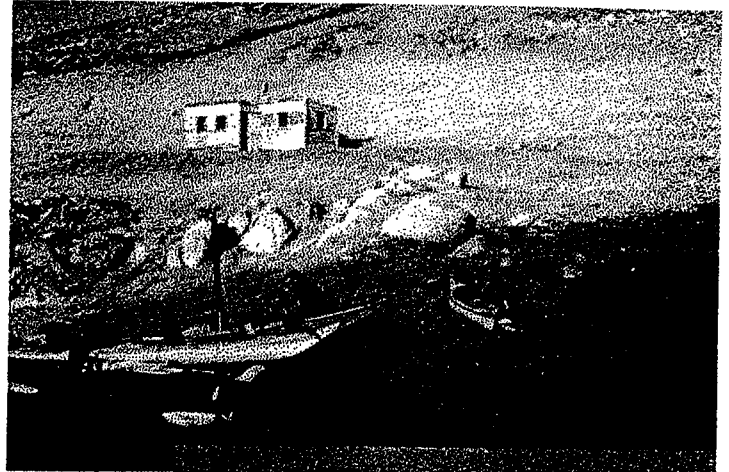
RaiderX

Selkie

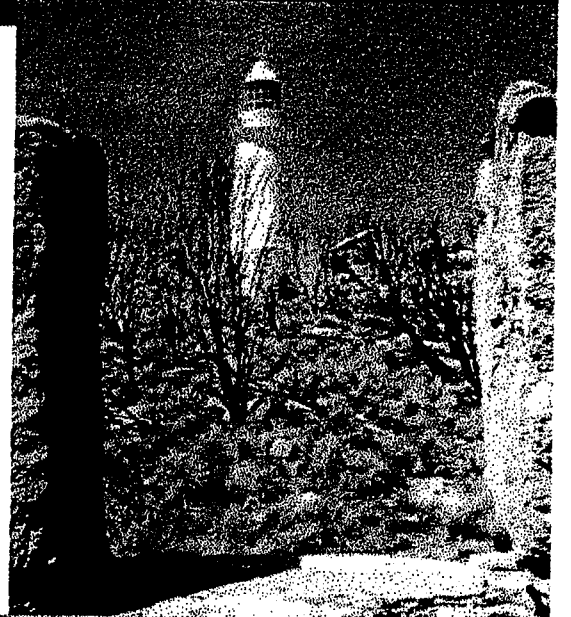
Artic Raider

Selkie

By Julian Smith.



Above,
Hogan
Island.
Right,
Lighthouse
on Deal Island.
Below, Deal
Island looking
out towards
Erith Island
and Dover on
the left.



SEA KAYAKERS AND PERSONAL INJURY LITIGATION

For many paddlers, the thought that you could find yourself in court if something goes wrong is not a welcome prospect, so many would probably prefer to ignore it. After all, we paddle for freedom and enjoyment, and not to be fretting with litigation paranoia. But in the words of the great crocodile wrestler Dave Winkworth (Phillip Island, October 1999) "SHIT HAPPENS!". So,

Can injury occur to sea kayakers? Obviously, yes.

Sea kayaking is potentially dangerous. In the short time I have been involved, I have become aware of incidents involving:-

- hypothermia
- capsize in surf and drift toward a reef with breakers
- nearly paddling across the path of a 50 m cable towed by a fishing vessel
- encounters with jet-skis and fishing runabouts skippered by people looking the other way
- back injury lifting boats
- head banging into sand after a surf capsize
- bodily collision with a heavy flooded boat in surf
- surf landings over rock at the shoreline

Not all injuries will lead to legal liability. But there are many possibilities and anyone paddling for a while will see narrow scrapes. As the sport grows, and as time goes on, unfortunately there will be injury.

Can we be sued if personal injury does occur? Yes.

A lot of modern personal litigation is based on the legal concept of negligence. Legally, each member of society owes some legal duty to take reasonable care to avoid injury to others. New and sometimes surprising situations are continually brought before courts, such as:-

A basketball referee sued her association for failing to instruct her not to run backwards while umpiring a game. She fell while running backwards and broke her wrists. She succeeded in recovering \$80,000 in damages.

Mt Isa Basketball Association v Anderson unreported, Queensland Court of Appeal 3 October 1997, No 8371 of 1996.

Supervisors of a skating rink were found negligent in not keeping experienced skaters out of a beginner's area.

Trevali Pty Ltd v. Haddad (1989) Australian Torts Reports 80-286

Members may start out with an attitude that they would never sue other members. Such attitudes change after injury occurs. Relatives and others encourage action. Think how your attitude might change from a wheelchair. If you are killed, your dependant relatives might not feel restrained at all when considering litigation.

Can the VSKC or its members be sued? Yes.

The VSKC is an incorporated association, and is liable to the extent of its assets. Members are bound by the rules and constitution which form a contract between us. That contract may have a term included by which the members agree to waive their rights to sue each other, or the organization, in the event of injury. The *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Vic)* provides some restrictions on the liability of committee members:-

"s.15 Rights and liabilities of members

(1) Except as otherwise provided by this Act or the rules of an incorporated association, a member of the committee, the public officer or a member of the incorporated association shall not, by reason only of his being such a member or officer, be liable to contribute towards the payment of the debts and liabilities of the incorporated association or the costs, charges and expenses of the winding up of the incorporated association"

But these restrictions are not exhaustive of all possible claims. Members may be liable individually for their own negligent acts or omissions, notwithstanding that the organization itself may avoid liability by virtue of an exemption clause. So....

Is a waiver or exemption clause effective to avoid litigation and liability? Not necessarily.

- Such clauses are strictly interpreted by courts against the maker of the clause. Courts may try and avoid an interpretation, which cuts out a person's right to sue. If a strict interpretation is applied to some circumstances, the clause may offer no protection. Or it might. We don't know until some future court has to interpret it.

"... the interpretation of an exclusion clause is to be determined by construing the clause according to its natural and ordinary meaning, read in the light of the contract as a whole, thereby giving due weight to the context in which the clause appears including the nature and object of the contract and, where appropriate, construing the clause contra proferentum in case of ambiguity."
Darlington Futures Ltd v. Delco Australia Pty Ltd (1986) 161 C.L.R. 500, 51.

But it is uncertain how a court would treat the club's present clause. On occasions, courts have given effect to such clauses, e.g.

Gowan v. Hardy (unreported) NSW CA 40531/89, 8 November 1989, where an injured sky diver in a claim against her instructor, parachute school and the pilot of the drop plane, was denied damages because she had signed a complete release from all liability.

In other situations, the supposed protection of the clause has failed, for example :-

Owens v. Midway Amusements Pty Ltd [1986] ACTSC 64 (15 July 1986), in which the injured person was flung from an amusement ride after buying a ticket with an exemption clause saying "Persons riding on this ride do so at their own risk. No responsibility accepted for injury to persons or damage to property from any cause whatsoever."

and

Le Mans Grand Prix Circuits Pty Ltd v Iliadis [1998] VICSC 104 (28 May 1998), where a broken arm from a go-kart accident at Keysborough resulted in damages being recovered, the Court holding that the exemption clause did not form part of any contract between the injured person and the go-kart operator.

and

John Dorahy's Fitness Centre P/L v Buchanan (94040386) (unreported) NSW CA, 40386/94; DC 518/88 18 December 1996, in which a gym member suffered injury through a defective weight training machine collapsing, and recovered damages of \$46,000 despite a general exemption clause. This clause was found to be harsh and oppressive and the court was prepared to ignore it if need be pursuant to the *NSW Contracts Review Act 1980*. But even without such legislation, the court stated "on the proper construction of the 'Membership Agreement', and having regard to the intention of the parties, the exclusion clause contained in the Conditions of Membership did not operate so as to release the respondent's claim in contract". The relevant clause was reasonably thorough, and read:-

"The Member hereby absolutely releases the Company its employees and agents from:
(a) any claim howsoever arising either during the term of this agreement or at any time thereafter by reason of the Member suffering disease deterioration of health illness or aggravation of any condition of ill health as a result of participation in the programmes acceptance of the advice or use of the facilities afforded to the Member by the Company;
and

(b) any claim for personal injury sustained by the Member in on or about the Club premises including (without limiting the generality of the foregoing) any claims for personal injuries resulting from and arising out of the negligence of the Company its employees or agents or the negligence of any other Member or any other person using the Club premises and the Member hereby acknowledges that he uses the Club premises and all facilities entirely at his own risk."

- An exemption clause is no protection in relation to claims by third parties. People other than members may be injured and sue. These include non-members invited on trips, people paddling at come-and-try days and such. People who are not part of a sea kayaking party may be injured, for example, swimmers in surf, or boaters colliding with kayakers, or rescuers coming to the aid of a troubled group.
- An exemption clause is very doubtful in its application to children under 18 who may be members, or members by virtue of a family membership
- An exemption clause may also be doubtful in its application to adult family members who have not personally agreed to it.
- In order for an exemption clause to be effective, record keeping needs to be thorough, and the original signed exemption clauses available for production in the event of a claim. If an exemption is included in the constitution of the Club, members should be given a copy when they join to ensure it is later viewed as part of the contract between members. If the constitution contains an exemption clause, it should be brought to the attention of each prospective member before joining, and the club should be in a position to prove this.

What do we do? Perhaps the following:-

- Be careful. Take reasonable care to avoid injury. Maybe self interest and common sense means you'll do this anyway. But being careful may involve doing a bit more than at present. If a court action proceeds, the court or coroner will be closely examining circumstances with the benefit of hindsight. Are there formal safety requirements for individual and club trips? If there are, are they followed? This may help defend proceedings. Requirements might include:-
 - training .
 - practising rescues
 - checking boats before launch
 - checking rescue and communication equipment
 - keeping in communication with paddlers during a trip
 - appointing lead and sweep paddlers, and staying reasonably close together etc.

A danger with this sort of thing is that members will not feel like leading trips if too much red tape is imposed, or if potential trip leaders feel subject to critical, unconstructive scrutiny. We need to try and strike a balance by which practical safety measures are taken habitually, without killing the enjoyment of going for a paddle.

- Get effective and proper insurance. This should provide coverage for club members whether on club or private trips, and against claims by both club members and third parties. It should provide cover claims for death and injury to \$5,000,000 minimum. What would this cost? I recently made enquiries of a local broker, who gave the following quotes:-

Sum insured	Premium	Cost for each of 150 members
\$5,000,000	\$1,377.00	\$9.18
\$10,000,000	\$ 2,015.50	\$13.44
\$20,000,000	\$2,477.45	\$16.52

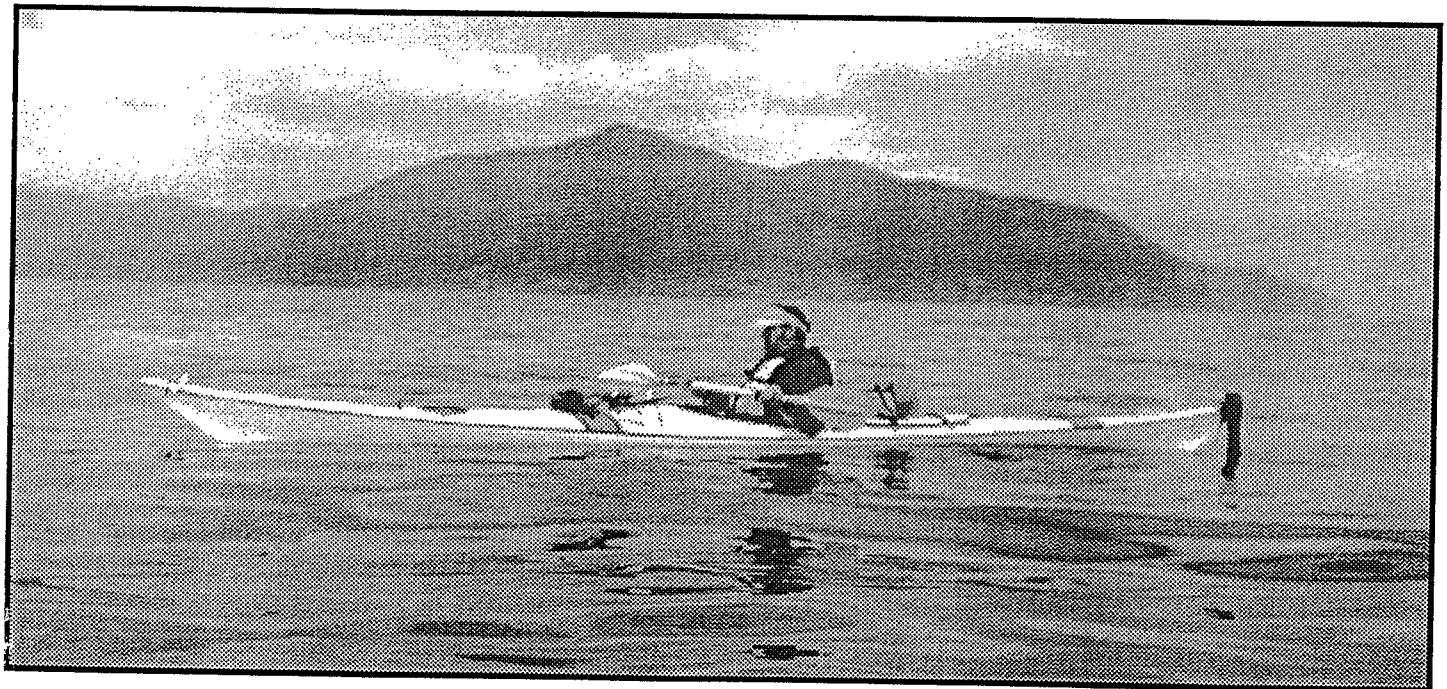
Perhaps the club subscription has to go up to cover this, but only by \$5.38 for the lowest level of cover, a pretty modest increase. Insurance should be updated and the coverage increased as time goes on. Last year, we spent \$570.00 (about \$3.80 per member) on insurance. Compared to the figures above, this is low. The present insurance may be inadequate. The NSWSKC now spends \$1,750.00 p.a. on professional indemnity insurance for instructors.

Insurance cover is available through affiliation with the Victorian Canoe Association. We are not affiliated at present. However, the cost of affiliation totals an extra \$45.00 per member. Adding this to our individual subscription is an enormous jump to \$70.00. This compares poorly with obtaining suitable insurance directly, although affiliation includes other advantages, disadvantages and issues, beyond consideration here.

- Consider having an exemption clause. Many organizations have them. Some clubs, for example the Bay Area Sea Kayakers in the USA, have a very discouraging exemption clause, and only carry insurance against third party claims. An exemption clause may stop claims between members, or by members against the club. If an exemption clause is in place, and insurance is also in place, the exemption clause may have the possibly unintended consequence of preventing claims on that insurance by members. It would be unfortunate to pay for insurance, which only turned out to be a benefit in relation to claims by non-members, and provided nothing to an injured member. If we have such an exemption clause, to be effective it should be both part of the Club's constitution, and included in the membership application and renewal forms. We should not suffer from the delusion that it will definitely offer protection against all claims in all circumstances.
- If all else fails, give away your home, own nothing, be a poor target to sue. Your boat may still be seized and sold to pay a judgment!

Peter Treby, solicitor and paddler.

Disclaimer/exemption clause: The advice set out above is general in nature and is not intended to be full or complete. It not intended to be relied upon by the club or any person without further specific legal advice after full instruction given to a competent specialist legal practitioner. Free legal advice is worth what you pay for it!



FOR SALE

ICE FLOW SEA KAYAK, expedition equipped, electric bilge pump, rudder and sail. Honest old seakayak which would clean up well with some TLC. \$700 **JOHN STOMPS** 9580 8226

Also for sale whale gusher bilge pump \$30

2 gel cell Batteries \$10 each

Must sell going overseas on the 27th May.

PADDLING DATES

REGULAR ONGOING EVENTS

Pool nights (Rolling nights) Held by VSKC and Patterson Lakes Club
First Friday each month Jubilee Pool
Frankston 7-30pm to 8-30pm some plastic kayaks available ring Julian Smith 03 9776-9583 or Phil Savage (Patterson Lakes Canoe Club) 03 9772-9729
Cost \$7.00

Introduction to paddling, run by the Patterson Lakes Canoe Club. Held most Saturday's at 1.30pm. Suit first timers and beginners. All gear supplied, cost \$5.00. Contact Phil Savage 9772 9729

REX BROWN'S HOBSON BAY AREA SEA KAYAKING

Friday and Saturday night's, Sunday paddling. Interesting paddle trips around docks and Yarra mouth ports area and Altona to Corio Bay. Paddles stopping at very nice places for coffee and light snacks if your interested, and why wouldn't you be! If you want to paddle on these days just give Rex at call on 03 9391-6889 or 03 9391-3839

MONTHLY CANADIAN BAY PADDLES

Sunday MAY 21ST Canadian Bay

Sunday JUNE 18th

Sunday JULY 16th

Sunday AUGUST 13th

Sunday SEPTEMBER 10th

contact Bill Robinson 03 9787-4704

Melway 101 D10 meet at the Canadian Bay Club at 9.00am paddling at 10.00am.

Beginner to intermediate and up paddlers

Local based paddles, starting from the end of Lorimer St Port Melbourne (ample parking free of charge) These paddles will vary on the day according to the weather. Options available are to paddle from here over to Williamstown, up the Yarra or into Hobsons Bay, the choice is endless. These regular paddles are to keep paddlers fit, enjoy each other's company and are catered for the less experienced wanting to extend their skills. Usual

life safety equipment will be necessary to bring.
Contact Yuones on 9436 4937 or
mobile 0413 610 964. 10.00AM START
dates are

28 MAY

4TH JUNE

25TH JUNE

2ND JULY

23RD JULY

6TH AUGUST

20TH AUGUST

WILSONS PROM TIDAL RIVER Camp base Sat and Sun, suit all paddlers skills. Surfing skills and trips to local Islands. Hot showers available, being based in one place other activities can be done, such as bushwalking, bird watching etc, bring along the family and enjoy!
Camp will be based at Tidal river on the following week ends;

JULY 8-9

AUGUST 12-13

SEPTEMBER 16-17

Journey Agent Julian Smith 9776 9583.

INVERLOCH PADDLE contact Rob Furmston 0351691653/0407839958. plan to meet at the inverloch main jetty at 10:30am for a run-down of prevailing winds and tides and the conditions expected. if circumstances permit, the destination will be cape paterson. the trip begins firstly with 2km flat water tidal race before reaching the entrance - typical surf type. once out on the open water, paddle westward along a picturesque coastline which includes high rocky cliffs, many coves, numerous submerged reefs and a sentinal called "eagles nest". continuous paddling time is approx 2-3 hours. add to that time, a stop at one of the coves for lunch. alternately, if the weather is rough, we can paddle inside the inlet. across to the "snags", then to mayers landing and back to the inverloch jetty. note; a car shuffle is required for the preferred trip to cape paterson.
date: **JUNE 25TH 10.30am**