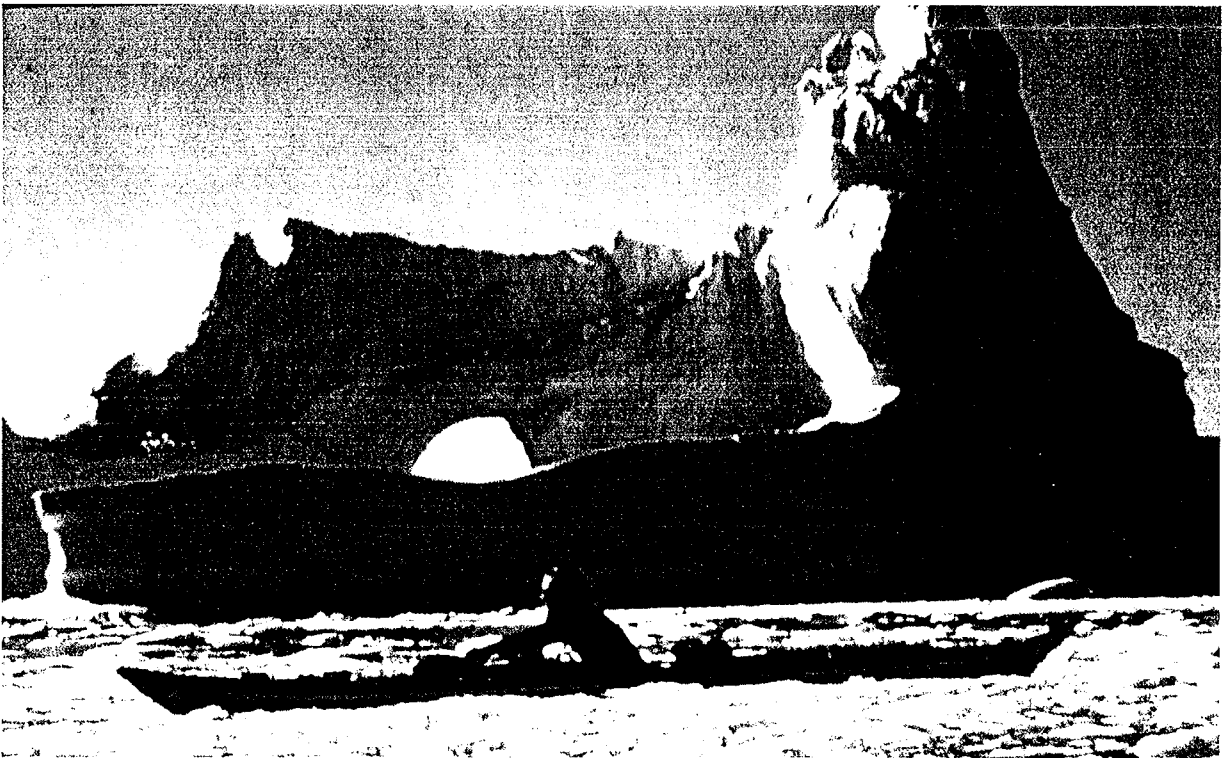


# SEATREK

The official newsletter of the Victorian Se Kayak Club  
Inc. No a17985B

Winter 2001 Issue 43



## *IN THIS ISSUE*

ROLLING TIPS, TRIP REPORTS, PADDLE AGENDA  
OFFER TO STUDY WEATHER, NAVIGATION  
AND LOTS MORE

Front cover

Larry Gray in Greenland

## **A FEW RAMBLINGS FROM THE HON. SEC.**

Since the last edition of Sea trek, several of your Committee members have been rather busy. Peter Provis has been traveling all around Victoria and southern NSW in his new Nadgee, and pushing the boats to their limits in the company of such notable paddlers as Dave Winkworth—the designer and builder of the Nadgee. Julian Smith, our President, is currently doing his 6 weeks of initial training with the Army at Kapooka, as he has joined the Army Reserve. I have spoken to him recently, and it sounds as though it is rather tough. I reckon that he will be straining at the leash to get paddling as soon as the course is over

### **Canadian Bay Paddles**

The monthly Canadian Bay paddles are going very well—for the June paddle we had 18 boats on the water, which is not bad for winter. The weather is not always benign, and the April paddle was memorable, when the southwestern sky turned navy blue and the wind went to 20 knots plus. We aborted the plan to head to Mornington, and headed home, with all paddlers arriving back in one piece. Never let it be said that paddling on Port Phillip is boring! Needless to say the May and June paddles were in perfect conditions

It is most encouraging to see that private trips are often planned as a spin off of paddling at Canadian Bay. I am pleased that it is providing a monthly forum for members, as well as an opportunity to practice and improve their skills. Even in the colder weather it is encouraging to see paddlers getting wet, with rolls, rescues and wet exits. The hot showers available have been greatly appreciated after these sessions

### **Self-Starters**

It was good to see that when Julian Smith was unable to lead the Wilsons Promontory trip due to his Army commitment, that several members got together and organized the weekend themselves. This is a healthy sign, as we can not rely on the same small group of paddlers to lead trips.

### **New Kayaks in the Club**

We now have a subtle invasion of some beautiful rudderless sea kayaks, designed by our colleagues in the NSWSKC. Peter Provis and

Peter Treby have Nadgees, which are designed and built by Dave Winkworth. I have paddled in Peter Provis's and found it to be a top performer. It tracked so well in heavy seas, that it felt as though it was on rails. They are very popular and I am told that Dave has closed his order book for the time being.

The other boat is the Inuit Explorer—a 17ft 6 in version of the beautiful little Inuit Classic which many members are familiar with from the Canadian Bay paddles. Younes Mohammed Aly sold his almost new Mirage in order to get his Inuit, and is delighted with it, as is Ian Jones. The Inuit is designed by the Old Sea Dog himself—Norm Sanders, and the Inuit fraternity in the VSKC is now referred to as “Norm's Boys”

Have a look at these boats—they certainly add weight to the case for the rudderless mob in the old debate of rudder, or no rudder.

### **Murray 200 Marathon**

Over the Queens Birthday weekend, I competed in my 9<sup>th</sup> Murray 200 in South Australia—Many thanks to Tina Rowley for land crewing for me—It was greatly appreciated. It is a tough race, with no current to assist you and the weather can be a bit of a challenge. The company and scenery are great, and I strongly suggest that some of you consider having a go at it next year. Feel free to contact me if you want further information.

### **Mark These Dates in Your Diary!!!**

- (a) **Saturday October 13<sup>th</sup>---Echuca  
50 km Mini Marathon**—over the past few years quite a large group of VSKC members have competed. It is within the capabilities of most of our members and is a lot of fun. We generally make a weekend of it and camp at Barmah after the race, and quite a few bring their families along. Give it some thought—we hope to have our biggest ever contingent this year. For further details please contact me
- (b) **Saturday November 10<sup>th</sup> and  
Sunday November 11<sup>th</sup>---VSKC  
AGM**—Our AGM last year was a fantastic success, and we plan to build on that and try and make it even better this year. We hope that Larry Gray will be able to join us

again, and other activities are being planned

More details will be forwarded to you in September-October, but we strongly suggest that you plan now to have this weekend free.

#### CANADIAN BAY PADDLING DATES

Meet at the carpark adjacent to the Canadian Bay Club Melway 101 D10 at 9am, and be prepared to launch at 10 am. Make sure to have appropriate clothing, food for lunch and a water bottle. Showers are available, so have a towel and change of clothes. The VSKC (by courtesy of Kate Robinson) turns on tea, coffee and scones after the paddle

Sunday July 15<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday August 12<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday September 9<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday October 7<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday November 4<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup>

#### Are you still forecasting with a "frog in a glass jar"?

There is help for you.

The Bureau of Meteorology would be pleased to improve your understanding of "what makes weather", how to read weather charts and how to do on the spot observations / predictions by sticking a finger in the air.

we are planning to hold a 2 hour course with specific emphasis on seakayakers weather needs

the course will also cover issues like

- \* seasonal prevailing weather / wind patterns
- \* specific weather patterns along Victoria's coastline

- \* the weather and the sea

- \* weather risk evaluation

- \* where to find weather information

our friends from the BOM offer this course free of charge to our club members.

we plan to run it around Nov. 01 at the BOM offices in the city, on a week day evening after work.

limited to 15- participants max

if you are interested please contact

Wolf Passauer

bus: 03/9541 5234

e-mai: [Wolf.Passauer@au.bosch.com](mailto:Wolf.Passauer@au.bosch.com)

bookings will be listed on a first come first basis.

in the meantime please do not forget to feed the frog in the jar.

#### CONTACT DETAILS

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE  
END OF SEPTEMBER



THUMBS Down to the so-called vet who told me my dog had cancer and wanted cash up-front to operate almost immediately. Thumbs up to Dr Bill Robinson who diagnosed the problem as fatty cysts and removed them at a fraction of the cost. My dog is again happy and healthy.

- Paquita, Seaford.

TAKEN  
FROM  
LOCAL  
PAPER.

#### Some Handy Web Sites for Kayakers

**National Tidal Facility –**

[www.ntf.flinders.edu.au](http://www.ntf.flinders.edu.au)

**Australian Hydrographic Office –**

[www.hydro.navy.gov.au](http://www.hydro.navy.gov.au)

**Bureau of Meteorology –** [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

**Australian Coastal Atlas –**

[www.environment.gov.au/marine](http://www.environment.gov.au/marine)

**Parks Victoria –** [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

**Australian Maritime Safety Authority –**

[www.amsa.gov.au](http://www.amsa.gov.au)

**Environment Protection Authority –**

[www.vic.gov.au](http://www.vic.gov.au)

**Marine Board of Victoria –**

[www.marineboard.vic.gov.au](http://www.marineboard.vic.gov.au)

**Coastguard –** [www.coastguard.com.au](http://www.coastguard.com.au)

**Water Safety –** [www.watersafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.watersafety.vic.gov.au)

**Navigation Charts & Books –**

[www.boatbooks.com.au](http://www.boatbooks.com.au)

**Natural Resources and Environment –**

[www.nre.vic.gov.au](http://www.nre.vic.gov.au)

**Surfing –** [www.surfingaustralia.com.au](http://www.surfingaustralia.com.au)

**Fishing –** [www.fishnet.com.au](http://www.fishnet.com.au)

#### Some handy phone numbers

**Victorian Forecast and Observations – 1900 955 363.**

**Port Phillip Bay – 1900 926 110.**

**Coastal Waters Forecast – 1900 969 966.**

#### Hitting the Wrong Note!

In the last issue of *Sea Trek*, I contributed a trip report, “*Learning from the Masters*”, which was intended as a humorous, ‘tongue-in-cheek’ piece. I was therefore quite surprised when told by one of the trip participants that he regarded the article as being a criticism of them.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

I have assured those concerned that it was written in good humour, and most certainly with no ill-intent. However, in case others might mistakenly take it ‘seriously’, I wish to

emphasise here that **I have nothing but the highest regard for Ray Musgrave, John Hyndman and John Basemore and truly consider it a privilege to paddle in their company.**

The paddling, the camping, the fishing, and the personalities made for a great and enjoyable weekend. If any disappointment was felt, it was that there were not more club members along to learn from those who rightfully – and seriously – are to be considered “masters” of the art of sea-paddling.

Ian Dunn, March 2001

## Port Welshpool to Johnny Souey's Cove

**3-4 March 2001**

Lance Albrecht (Arctic Raider), (An)Drew Dickson (Selkie), Ian Dunn (Raider X, *Ninja*), Wolf Passauer (Prion), Gordon Patterson (Southern Raider), Pete Provis (trip leader) (Nadgee Expedition), Julian Smith (Nordcapp), Peter Treby (Nadgee), Jurgen Weller (Prion).

It is difficult to write an engrossing report for what was essentially a routine club-trip. This is particularly so when nothing out-of-the-ordinary happened. It was a well-planned, well-conducted trip to a delightful location in balmy weather by a good company of capable paddlers. There were no equipment breakages and no

navigational problems or errors. No one died - it was a good trip.

Perhaps worth noting though - for the benefit of future paddlers - is the fact that the optimum time to do this as a weekend trip is within a day either side of 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the moon. This allows the use of an outgoing tide on the Saturday morning, and an incoming tide on the Sunday afternoon. The trip leader commendably arranged the Moon's 1<sup>st</sup> quarter for the Saturday!

Also worth noting – I would be chastised by my fellow paddlers if I didn't – is that one should try to coordinate visits to JS Cove with the times when at least one sun-worshipping French *mademoiselle* is camping there. (Alas, this time she was with her partner). Apparently her morning swims were well appreciated. It is

rumoured that at least one of the gentlemen-paddlers of the club is considering his next boat to be coloured red, white and blue!

We did the usual excursions from JS Cove. Out to Rabbit Island (four of us climbed it) and around to see the caves on the seaward face, then across to Miranda Bay for some surfing. The water was warm, and aqua-green, and the views as good as any Polynesian atoll. The rhetorical question was asked, "*How do you capture the beauty of such a place and take it home?*"

On Sunday's return trip, 'the sandy island' that has been forming opposite Entrance Point over the last few seasons was landed on, and tentatively claimed as *Ninja Island* (however, the name is yet to be ratified by the International Naming Commission of Newly Formed Sandy Islets).

At Biddies Cove, we regrouped to await the flooding tide before using the main channel to return to Port Welshpool.

The trip was formally completed with a round of hamburgers at "Billy's" at Meeniyan. For those 'not in the know' – one of the best hamburger establishments around.

Quote of the weekend - "*I never wear sunglasses - I find when I wear them, everything becomes darker*".

## ROLLING WITH THE PUNCHES

By Larry Gray

Club newsletters are a brilliant forum for sharing ideas, indulging in a bit of good-humoured banter and generally staying in touch with the latest trends in sea kayaking. Sometimes, if we are not careful, they can also be dangerous vehicles where personal prejudice and interests colour the view being expressed.

A case in point is a recent issue of *Sea Trek* featuring an article by Peter Carter. It made several allegations, including one that I am not a 'real' designer because I design by empirical methods and not by a naval architect's methods of theory and calculation. Actually, a fair bit of mathematical calculation went into designing the Pittarak, Pete, but some of us can

pick up this information through less conventional means. Does mileage in the field not count for anything? How else did the Inuit develop kayaks if not by hands-on experience?

I could go on presenting my case. But I know most club members get bored with this level of contribution. I don't believe people want to read petty squabbles to the point where someone is picking on spelling errors. I have received a number of emails since Carter's article was published as people believe there is a conflict of interest.

I don't mind fair criticism of my boat but I do object to what amounts to a personal attack by someone with a boat of his own to flog. Shouldn't those with vested interests have to declare their involvement before dragging down a competitor? Maybe there should be a tag line at the end of articles in future? This is standard practice in professional publications for good reason. For example, "Larry Gray is an expedition adviser and the designer of the Pittarak Sea Kayak." That way, people know where you are coming from.

There are also good reasons for the differences in my boat. It is an expeditioner's craft. Fifteen international expeditions that I know of are paddling Pittaraks this year, journeys from Antarctica and Papua New Guinea to a circumnavigation of Borneo. These expeditioners choose the boat because of the points I listed in the earlier article—small cockpits that allow total bracing and a manual pump that can be operated in or on top of the craft or with the aid of a fellow paddler.

A very real rescue situation took place at a recent NSW kayaking weekend involving many different kayaks.

Some paddlers were just too exhausted to use their foot pumps after many bail-outs and hours battling conditions beyond their limits and being swept out in strong currents. There were some electric pumps failing that day as well. Rafting up was essential with all. Those with external pumps (some electric pump people had yabbie-type backups--good thinking) were able to be easily assisted. The whole episode was a serious situation involving a spotter plane and rescue boats, not just a capsize self recovery situation.

Just correcting Mr Carter's comments about the Pittarak cockpit being an old fashion 70s design.

Once people have learned to roll off guard, swamped cockpits are not such a huge issue. This is why we have wet storage compartments on the current expedition model. Yes, it does increase the potential flood area but not enough to warrant a problem. For some expeditions we increase the wet area further. It's most useful on long journeys when you need to stow fish, wetsuits wet clothing etc.

Wet heavy stuff as ballast in the centre of the boat allows the kayak to pivot. It can also be handy to get to it without lifting hatches. Importantly, it eliminates steaming up in air tight compartments. A small cockpit opening means a paddler can really lock in and wear the kayak. It also allows for mistakes because your knee can be anywhere. If your into re-entering underwater and rolling up with the cover on, it's far quicker to put a small cover on than a large one. In harsh conditions, the danger with a big cockpit opening is that your knee can lift off the cover, especially when broaching in on a turbulent wave or getting bowled over by a dumper in the surf. A big wave can also implode the splash cover. Paul Caffyn's kayak has a small cockpit. Greenlanders, with all the choices now available to them, still opt for small cockpits. They remain the masters of our sport. So small is not to bad, at all.

Having said that, I feel no proven design should be rejected by a club- big or small cockpit, high or low volume boats, they all have their advantages in different conditions. A paddler who knows his stuff is the most important aspect in sea kayaking.

Two new Pittarak designs are in development now, one with a large opening for bigger people and has less expedition features, to suit the weekend paddler. And the other has the tiniest of cockpits, very slender, no pump and is designed around the Greenland competition boats-- fast and capable of the 60 rolls necessary to get anywhere in the Arctic challenge.

If expedition is the highest level of experience, maybe there is something to be learned from those who go to the extremes. Years ago Oskar Speck paddled a Klepper from Germany to Australia, a seven-year sea kayak journey. Just an amazing triumph of will that most couldn't contemplate. Yet his choice of kayak could be considered a risk on the most basic weekend sea journey only because it doesn't comply with our club regulations. Club Standards could be updated more often to reflect growing knowledge. Along with us instructors!

I'm not putting down electric pumps, big cockpits or other designs. They all work really well in most situations. I'm just explaining that today's Pittarak is proven and has its own system.

Let's share our views fairly and with respect.

Regards Designer Larry Gray.

## **WILSONS PROMONTORY June 2 & 3 2001**

Roger Ingram Dagger Magellan.  
Mick McRobb stitch and glue plywood.  
Anne & John Woollard Tasman Twin.

With a last minute ring around, there were four of us who were very keen to have a paddle. So it was decided that we would proceed with the weekend and arrangements were made to meet at Tidal River. When we arrived on Friday evening at about 7 PM Roger was just getting his tent up. The moon was beautiful bright enough to put the tent up without lights and we later had a walk along the beach by its light. We managed to get a good camp site kayak carrying distance from the boat launching ramp.

Saturday morning was cool but clear, Mick arrived on schedule at 9.00. After a quick discussion on the beach it was decided that as we had no designated leader that we would be democratic, based on the premise that we would all stick together and err on the side of caution. We wheeled, carried and paddled our crafts down to the beach. At 10 o'clock we headed out through small surf and around Pillar Point towards Tongue Point. We paddled N.W. into a light northerly wind with a half metre swell. Conditions were good with high cloud and the sun peeping out now and again through broken cloud. We soon passed Leonard Point and came abreast of Norman Island, because of the massive scale of the scenery it is hard to judge distances here and it felt that you could just reach out and touch the island despite it being 2 kilometres away. As we paddled the wind swung around to the northwest and picked up a little bit. Going was pretty easy and Mick was able to keep us informed about our speed and distance traveled with his GPS.

At Tongue Point Mick ran the gauntlet while Annie, John and Roger were a little more cautious and gave the rocks a wide berth.

'Easy" said Mick! We paddled around to Fairy Cove, a little difficult to spot as there is not much sand showing with rocks all around the back of the beach. Given the booming of the surf away towards Darby River, Fairy Cove with its gently sloping beach, small surf and rock free approach, was a good choice for lunch.

It had taken about 2 hours (approx 11 Ks) to get here and with the sun peeping through a bit more we all enjoyed lunch and a bit of a stretch. Lunch, a bit of a wander and the beach inspired us to paddle more, we could go on for ever!!

The sea looked calm from the beach and we planned to detour via Norman Island on the way back. However as soon as we got back into deeper water it was apparent that the wind had picked up a bit and moved further round to W.N.W. providing some significant waves with white caps and a disturbed pattern. As we rounded Tongue Point again we realised that we would have a following sea all the way back with waves up to 1.5m and decided that we would miss out on Norman Island in deference to caution. The following sea provided us all with plenty to think about on the way back with waves breaking around us, though not running very far and quite difficult to pick up and surf. It took some of us a while to relax into the swing of the conditions and actually enjoy the paddle on the way back. But there were some lighter moments and no one came anywhere near falling out or getting into a difficult situation.

As we approached Pillar Point the waves picked up to 2m in the shallower water and we were relieved to get safely back into the calmer waters of Norman Bay and then safely ashore and into a hot shower. Apres shower the cheese, bikkies and red wine made reliving the days paddle enjoyable!

Saturday night was pleasant, cooking dinner, chatting and getting to know each other, it was our first paddle with the group (even though it was a small group). It got a bit cold, would have been great to have a raging camp fire but we just rugged up and talked more! The wombats and possums came to visit to inspect our culinary skills. During the day we had plenty of feathered friends to check out what we were eating.

Sunday as Mick had to leave at half past [about lunchtime] we decided on a quick look around and then a play in the surf. As soon as

we got past the shelter of Pillar Point there were 2m swells quite close together, but nice and rounded, again discretion prevailed and we headed back to the surf after a bit of look at the rocks and Mick had a play with his sea anchor. We all got tipped out in the surf but Mick produced a good screw roll to be the only one of us to not have to do a wet exit. We obviously need practice with our surfing skills!!! And we didn't freeze to death. One of us did suffer a war wound though and was efficiently mended by Mick and his trusty first aid kit. We had fun though and enjoyed some challenging paddling. Isn't that the object of the exercise?

As always the prom was spectacular, providing great scenery exciting waters to paddle in, a safe beach to return to and a warm shower afterwards. I look forward to more trips to the Prom. as there are so many spectacular places to visit.



John and Anne Woollard with Mick McCrabb

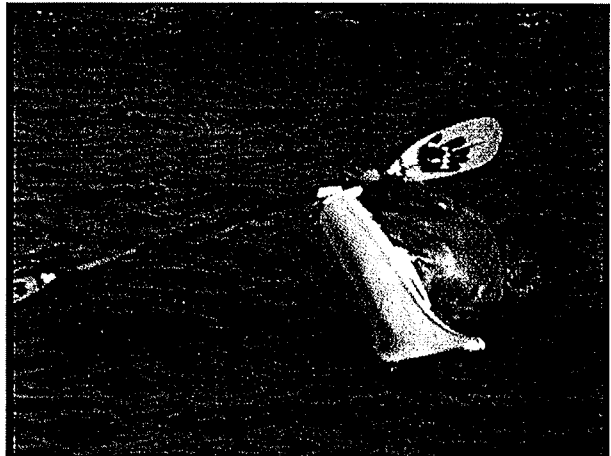
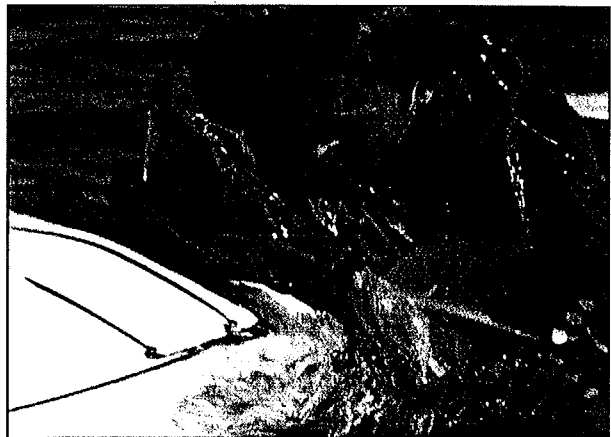
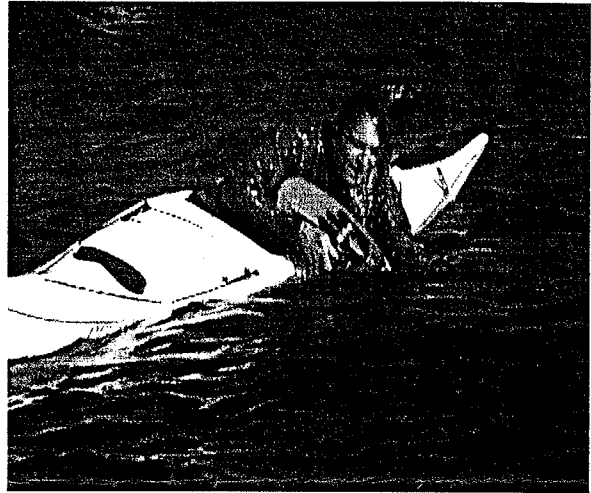
### SOME NICE TIPS

Another great roll!

I call it the forward brace roll because you end up in a powerful ready-for-anything position completely braced! Your body rises, leaning forward so your nose has no water in it. It short cuts the Pawlata in that there's no sweep movement at all. It's less complex than the put-across roll. Like the Pawlata it requires an extended paddle. The set up is at right angles to the kayak unlike Pawlata where the paddle is pointing in front of you. So the paddle is flat on the water straight out to one side. Your hand grips under the blade like Pawlata but the other arm is in deep brace position. Over you go, arms stay locked, no movement. Your off side knee winds the kayak under you as you curl up to the surface leaning forward face down, head out last in the most powerful brace known. I use this technique to easily roll Kleppers! Another tip: With all rolls scrunch your lips up to your nose then slowly exhale bubbles. This stops water entering and possible barnacle growth inside your nostrils!

### STATIONARY PIVOT

To rotate end- for-end on a dime with four strokes only and no forward or reverse travel. Tilt your boat on to one side-- and I mean right over. The keel needs to be out! Your body should be quite vertical and braced into the hind quarter of the combing. Your leg position should be braced with the top knee, bottom leg must be out straight. The paddle needs to be extended with blade in at 45 degree to give support while sweeping--otherwise you'd fall in. Hands must be low, in fact, the one in the air is against the top gunnel. As you sweep around to the tail, the kayak pivots. You may find at this point you are falling over. Instantly crank the blade over to the other face without lifting it/ Skim it across the water to the start point once more. This will keep you upright then just do it again times three. The manoeuvre is done entirely on either gunnel. Tip: keep the boat on balance. Try not to let the keel enter the water until the pivot is complete. Handy for ... about facing in rock gulches or rock gardens manoeuvring into or out of a cave. Quick facing a breaking wave etc. Regards Larry Gray.





### **CLUB PADDLE 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> of MARCH 2001**

Had four paddlers only as "Sea Trek" not out in time to notify other paddlers of intent.

Participants: Ray Lendrum, Ray Musgrave, John Hyndman, and yours truly John Basemore.

The proposed trip, from Port Albert to Mc Lauchlins Entrance or beach, was suitable to everyone as protected and ocean options existed.

However with only the "Old Buffers" present, who are bone-lazy and hate car shuffles, it was decided to wander down from Manns Beach to Shoal Inlet Entrance. With a light offshore breeze predicted for Saturday and the three following days with Southerly onshore everything seemed in our favour.

Saturday and Sunday were spent wandering around the island we were camped on. If something isn't done soon it will be over grown with boxthorn, which loves sandy soil. The rest of the daylight hours were spent paddling around feeding fish off fishing lines or, in my case, practicing with my new sails. The evenings were devoted to crapulousness, coarse language and politically incorrect conversation.

Instead of hovering around a candle we had a lovely big campfire below the high tide mark. Of course possessions left lying around at night were drenched in the morning.

Monday morning the wind was up before the sun. The "Navigator" said, "Up and pack, there is a gale warning." Unless I am forced by circumstances I am happy to follow the leader, because I have implicit faith in John H, Ray M and Ray L, not just their ability courage and loyalty but also their navigation.

There is an island between Manns Beach and our camp. We ran under sail N.E. with a brisk breeze then turned up the channel at W.N.W. Just four kilometres to go. Looking over my left shoulder I saw a huge black cloud from floor to ceiling and wall to wall, and said, "O Sh---".

This is where the fun began. First a stiff constant wind which I judged was due West. Then the squalls started to hammer through. No shelter from the wind, we were travelling with the wind just off our port bow. It kept getting stronger. Ray L and myself were making hard work of it. John H offered me a tow, stubbornly and probably foolishly I refused. The two Rays were a couple of hundred yards ahead when I saw Ray L going sideways with the wind towards St Margaret Island unable to hold his intended course. He landed and I saw he had a firm beach under him. So I followed his lead, as I was going nowhere on the water.

Stumbling along in the shallows was much faster than paddling. Besides I wouldn't have been able to last much longer. With only one kilometre to go in driving rain we reached the top of St Margaret Island.

John H returned even though he was at the end of his endurance. At this stage he was barely able to stand. In tandem we went past Manns Beach to where there was a little shelter and the channel was narrower. We crossed in a comparative lull. After a rest we walked and paddled along the shore back to town in knee deep slush. But who cares, we were there, seven kilometres in four hours. No sweat!

Of course we could have sheltered on an island, but when your goal is only one kilometre away you tend soldier on, not wanting to let your party down, or be the weak link.

I have been on the water with these men for many years, and know they will always be there for you no matter how bad the predicament.

Thank you friends for your company over the past fifteen years. In hindsight it was good fun, these experiences are what makes you feel alive.

Regards John Basemore.

## **Mallacoota to Womboyn, Easter 2001**

Julian Smith, Icefloe;  
Tina Rowley, Arctic  
Raider; Dave Uren and  
Jenny Bailey, Mirage  
double; Geoff Brewster,  
Raider X; Peter Treby,  
Nadgee prototype.

The gang gathered at the far end of the Mallacoota foreshore camping park on Good Friday morning, having arrived in dribs and drabs the night before. In Geoff's and my case, we had cruised the entire campground looking for cars with boats on top at around midnight, before remembering Julian's directions.

I was grateful that the car shuffle had been postponed from Thursday to Friday, so that while the drivers moved cars up to Boydtown, I had the chance to try and fit a totally unlikely huge pile of dry bags into my borrowed boat. The Nadgee demo boat has only 7.5" VCP hatches, causing me to curse and struggle getting gear into it. Borrowed from its generous maker, it is tiding me over while a boat ordered last year gets made. You can't rush a handmade work of art. Small wonder that when Pete ("Gannet") Provis turned up to paddle a little way with us, he spent 20 minutes applying polish and UV protectant to his

Nadgee. When you finally get one, you look after it! The shuffle meant a getaway after 11.00 am. We paddled off to break through small surf at the Mallacoota bar. Not too bad, I thought, having the luck not to get swatted. Tina had no such luck. Not for the last time this trip, she did a little underwater back-surfing before joining us outside the break.

We made reasonable time to Gabo Island in pleasant conditions, leaving Peter who turned around at Tullaberga Island. Geoff was having trouble with seasickness, and rested while we wandered down to the lighthouse and back. We rounded Gabo on the seaward side, and turned for Iron Prince reef and Cape Howe.

Along the way we passed rafts of red jellyfish, sometimes thick enough in their thousands to catch a paddle. Here I spotted a Yellow-Nosed Albatross, and what was probably a Shy Albatross. Their effortless soaring over the swells is always inspirational, and you feel part of their world in a sea kayak.

The late start meant we passed by the Victoria-NSW border cairn late in the afternoon, and arrived off Howe Beach with not too much daylight to spare. The choice of campsite was made for us by the waning day, and we went in through largish surf. Geoff, with

long surf experience, didn't hesitate, and landed first, followed by me, after a bit of foam sucking while heavily braced in a bongo slide. Julian elected to perform a 180 degree turn and complete the run in backwards, laughing all the way. Dave and Jenny in the double nearly got there, but overturned in the shore break and swam.

In the gloom we missed the best campsite, which is currently marked by a single rubber flipper on a stick. We camped on the dunes not too far above high water. The roar of the surf didn't help me to sleep, and by dawn I was imagining the waves had risen to huge proportions. Fortunately they hadn't, but they hadn't subsided either, and we lined up on the beach like gladiators ready for battle. Jenny and Dave got out after a partial swamping on launch. Geoff went next, and was almost through when he got slightly side on to a bigger breaker, went over, and swam.

Geoff and boat were carried northwards along the beach with the prevailing rip. Julian and I ran along the beach like boundary umpires.

Fortunately the moving water let go of Geoff twenty metres short of the rocks, to everyone's relief. He caught a couple of waves in to the sand. The wind had got up, and whitecaps had appeared

offshore. Geoff was shaken up and a little pessimistic about the prospect of a slow day's paddling into the wind. We tossed around options quickly. Geoff elected to stay and walk out to Mallacoota, undertaking not to paddle alone, for our comfort as much as his. It's difficult to decide to split a group, and usually the wrong decision, but in this case it worked out OK. The rest of us got out through the surf without mishap, and joined Jenny and Dave in a slog into a headwind of 15 – 20 knots. We were making progress, but it was a slow bash, and we put in around Black Point to Nadgee River Beach after a couple of hours. The landing went much better than at Howe Beach as the southerly swell weakened the further north we went. We lazed around having lunch. Ever optimistic, we left the boats loaded for a while hoping the wind would drop. It didn't until late in the day, by which time we had occupied a fine sheltered campsite in the tea tree towards the south end of the beach. Now, there's not much water at Nadgee River beach, so Tina and I set off with water bottles to Harry's Hut and filled up, returning via Impressa Moor, a two hour round trip. By the time we returned, the wind had dropped, and there was

not a whitecap in sight, but it was too late to launch. A radio weather report suggested rising northerlies again, so we got away early on Sunday, on the water before 7.30 am. But the wind never got up at all, and we cruised up the coast to Disaster Bay, inspecting sea caves, while sea eagles, ospreys and seals watched us. We arrived at the magic Merrica River in time for morning tea, so I made a cuppa on the beach while watching 10 people ferry their gear out in a 15' aluminium runabout. Very entertaining to watch steak-and-VB campers balance Eskies on their heads and try to load up a boat while it skews and bobs around in a two-foot shore break. The Merrica is an idyllic campsite, and very rewarding for fishing. The most pear-silhouetted of the departing campers reported making a large catch of trevally the day before. Dave assembled his speargun and scored a trevally and a large luderick for the campfire. Julian, Tina and I used the afternoon for a paddle along Womboyn Beach, to the dreaded Womboyn Bar. This deserves a reputation as a difficult place for paddlers. It was a calm day, but the opening to Womboyn Lake leaves about only about 20 metres width to get in. Tina was surfing

straight for the rocks until the wave she was on let her go with about 2 metres to spare. This impressive feat was bettered on the way out. Tina stood her boat on end, capsized over backwards, rolled up flawlessly, then slipped out past the break. A very hard act to follow, even for the dolphins which had followed us along the beach.

Three Sydney paddlers were also camped at the Merrica. They generously offered a lift to collect the cars, which we accepted. This made for a very short paddle into Greenglades the next morning to finish the trip. The drivers met up with Geoff at Boydtown. On Saturday, he had walked the beach to Mallacoota, found a mate with a tinny, recovered his boat on Sunday, and had a paddle in Twofold Bay before rejoining us at Greenglades. All had worked out well. This was a great trip up a fantastic part of the coast. Many thanks to Julian for organizing it, and I hope we can all return to finish it off through to Eden before too long.

Peter Treby.

## Night-time Paddling – Fawkner Beacon – Bio-Luminescence.

Some of my most memorable paddles have been at night-time in winter. This is not – as might be suggested - because cold, wet and miserable nights are unforgettable. In fact you only occasionally get nights like that. No - it is the complete change in the environment that creates the indelible impression. Night-time paddling is DIFFERENT and last night's paddle was better than most.

Each Tuesday night for more than a year now, a small group of dedicated sea-paddlers have launched from Sandringham. Last night, the group comprised Mike Young (*Pittarak*), Peter Costello (*Icefloe*), Les Bogner (*Raider X*) and Ian Dunn (*Raider X*).

The water was calm and the conditions were ideal to head straight out to the Fawkner Beacon. It is about 6 km off-shore and marks the closer edge of the shipping channel in Port Phillip Bay. We use deck-lights to keep track of one another and also to alert any other vessels of our presence. The day had been sunny and warm, and it was still about 17 C when we set off. Surprisingly for such gentle conditions, there were almost no other boats around. We had the sea to ourselves.

We chatted lightly to each other as we cruised out to the flashing marker. We had been here many times in the past, but on this night the sea was so unusually calm that we decided we could safely leave the comfort of our cockpits and climb the ladder to the beacon's platform to get an unusual view of the surrounding bay-lights.

Now it might be expected that being able to climb the beacon - a 'first' for each of us - would have been the highlight of the paddle, but on this occasion the climb played second fiddle to the display of luminous sea life we were treated to on our return. On the way out we had seen some reasonable patches but on our return the sea really turned on a show. It was alive with bio-luminescence!

In places, we were spell-bound with the bright display. Each paddle-stroke was aglow with an electric-blue light, and our bow-waves showed elegant bluish streaks. When a hand was dangled into the water it became alive with blue-coloured 'sparks' dancing vigorously about it. It was like viewing a galaxy of bright – yet transient – stars. As the Ancient Mariner said "*It was a wondrous thing*".

Entranced, we came to a complete stop. A penguin called, then swam up beside us – not so cautious as in daylight. As we soaked it all in – the darkness, the beauty, and the quiet - we began to hear a soft 'crackling sound' and concluded we were hearing the very munching of the sea creatures around us. (Somewhere in the dim recesses, I recall this sound as being attributed to the snapping of prawn's claws).

We collected some of the sea-water in a water-bottle, and even as we decanted it later on shore we could still see luminous discharges. At home I smeared some onto a microscope slide and viewed it under moderate power. Naturally a few interesting 'critters' could be seen but at present I cannot say which ones (if any) were associated with the light emission.

From what I have since read, the most likely source of this phosphorescence are the dinoflagellates which are single-cell algae. These sometimes number many hundreds per litre and are not at all uncommon. One of the best-known displays of them occurs in the northwest Caribbean Sea (Vieques Island, Puerto Rico) where densities of almost 200,000 per litre are known. Bio-luminescence can be triggered by even slight disturbance of the organisms.

For those who may want to know more about this fascinating subject, I suggest a web-search for "bioluminescence" or "dinoflagellates" should reveal some interesting material.

**Ninja. 18 April 2001**

## **PADDLE DATES**

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### **Canadian Bay July 15th**

Contact Bill Robinson 9787 4704

Launch at 10.00am

Melway 101 D10

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### **Western Port Bay Sunday July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2001.**

**Where:** Warneet – Tooradin- Warneet.

**Distance:** 14 kilometres one way 28 kilometres total.

**Information:** Meet at the boat ramp at Warneet near the Yacht Club at 9-00am and paddle out into Western Port and around to Tooradin have some lunch and return to Warneet in the afternoon. As these waters are fairly protected suitable for most paddlers. This is a great part of Western Port Bay the bird life is great. In this part of the world insect repellent is a must. And don't forget your Sun protection.

**Contact:** Ray Musgrave. 0359-752414.

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### **July 29<sup>th</sup> Yarra or Bay paddle**

Meet under Westgate Bridge for details contact Yvonne 9436 4937

### **August 5<sup>th</sup> Blackrock to Port Melb**

Meet at 10.00am

Contact Rex for details 9391 6889

### **Canadian Bay August 12**

Contact Bill Robinson 9787 4704

Launch at 10.00am

Melway 101 D10

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### **Western Port Bay Sunday August 19<sup>th</sup> 2001.**

**Where:** Balnarring – Cowes (Phillip Island) and return to Balnarring.

**Distance:** 26 kilometers round trip.

**Information:** Meet at car park Balnarring Beach at 9-00 am and paddle via Sandy Point to Cowes have some lunch and return to Balnarring Beach. This paddle is suitable for most paddlers if the winds are coming from the wrong directions on the day, all is not lost there are a few other options to be had.

**Contact:** Ray Musgrave 0359-752414.

## **NAVIGATION SKILLS WEEKEND**

Dates: Fri evening 17<sup>th</sup>, Sat 18<sup>th</sup> and Sun 19<sup>th</sup> August

Where? Twofold Bay, Eden NSW, based at Boydtown on the SW shore of the bay.

Grade 2 and above

What are your sea kayaking navigation skills? No, put your GPS away – anyone can use those!

Can you lay off a course, allowing for tides and compass variation, use a Douglas Protractor, swing your compass, use transits?

If not then maybe this practical and theory course is for you! It is for all Grade 2+ paddlers, Sea Prof. Award holders and those attempting to gain it, Sea Instructors etc.

Our base will be Boydtown Caravan Park right on the beach on Twofold Bay adjacent to the historic SeaHorse Inn. The weekend will be a comfortable blend of bay/ocean paddling and onshore theory and chart work. We will have the use of a cottage in the park for warm evening chart work.

A fee of about \$25 will cover you for the provided (yours to keep) laminated charts, course notes, Portland Square plus other bits and cottage rental.

Numbers are limited. Interested?

**Contact (Senior Instructor) David Winkworth on (02) 6494 1366**  
**email: storm@acr.net.au**

### **August 26<sup>th</sup> Flinders to Cape Shank**

Meet 900am Flinders car park

Proficient paddlers and boats required

Contact Peter Provis 9787 1916

### **Sept 2nd Yarra or Bay paddle**

Meet under Westgate Bridge for details contact Yvonne 9436 4937

### **Canadian Bay September 9th**

Contact Bill Robinson 9787 4704

Launch at 10.00am

Melway 101 D10

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### **Western Port Bay Sunday September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2001.**

**Where:** Warneet – Hastings – Warneet.

**Distance:** 36 kilometers round trip

**Information:** Meet at the boat ramp at Warneet near the Yacht Club at 9-00am and paddle out into Western Port and around to Hastings have some lunch and return to Hastings in the afternoon. As these waters are fairly protected suitable for most paddlers. This is a great part of Western Port Bay the bird life is great. It gets a bit dull towards Hastings, but there's the breaks. There are a couple of resident sea eagles in this area. And don't forget your **Sun protection**.

**Contact:** Ray Musgrave. 0359-752414.

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**September 29<sup>th</sup> Waratah Bay to Cape Liptrap**

Proficient paddlers and boats required

Contact Peter Provis for details 9787 1916

**Canadian Bay October 7th**

Contact Bill Robinson 9787 4704

Launch at 10.00am

Melway 101 D10

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**October 14<sup>th</sup> Yarra or Bay paddle**

Meet under Westgate Bridge for details  
contact Yuonnes 9436 4937

**Any one interested? March/April next year 2 week Tasmania trip**

Contact Rex Brown 9391 6889

Planned trip to the northern shores of Westernport with a social visit to the "royal" Warneet yacht club

a few weekends ago Ian, Geoff and I had a great day paddling the mud, sands and wild waters of the northern stretches of Westernport.

After an interesting day out on the waters we arrived in front of the "royal" Warneet yacht club around sunset. a scene straight out of Joseph Conrad's novels.

The mangrove swamps, a wooden gaff rigged boat pushing against the tide, hulls in all shapes and states of repair on their sides littering the sands, the setting sun and a joyfully cheering crowd on the club's balcony inviting us in.

We received the warmest welcome you

can expect from a great bunch of stranded yachties, with beers, wines and drumsticks flowing freely.

Our story "being the ones who bring the handmade cheeses from king island to the mainland in hand paddled sea kayaks" was received with three cheers..

We were invited to come back. The club offers a great spot right on the water (provided the tide is up), BBQ's, a great bar and Sunday lunch for \$10 a head.

There are plenty of camping spots around the club and a pet sheep to keep the grass down. The club's border collie gets rid of the leftovers.

We plan to make a return visit, when the tides are right in spring. Paddle under Geoff's guidance on a Saturday, return to the club at sundown, a BBQ, stay overnight, some more paddle the next day, a great lunch and an leisurely afternoon on the balcony with tall stories.

if you are interested please contact

Wolf Passauer

bus: 03/9541 5234

e-mail: [Wolf.Passauer@au.bosch.com](mailto:Wolf.Passauer@au.bosch.com)

**Pool night 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of every month**

Come along and learn new techniques in the comfort of a warm pool. Starts 7.30pm contact Julian 9776 9583

**FOR SALE**

**GREENLANDER** \$650 Red, bilge pump, fittings for 2 sails. Contact Rex 9391 6889

**Surf Ski** 2.4 metre \$150 Contact Rex 9391 6889

**Seakayak** \$1200 17ft fibreglass V-hull British design, custom stainless steel rudder system, aluminium rudder, adjustable steering, water tight hatches, carry handles and deck lines, seakayak paddle and spray deck included. Contact Dale W 9251 7215 H 9890 5150 Email [bickham@deakin.edu.au](mailto:bickham@deakin.edu.au)