

SEATREK

***THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN
SEAKAYAK CLUB***

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Julian Smith and Bill Robinson with their catch of salmon, note in background Ian Ribbons paddling a "NADGEE"

***LESSONS LEARNT..NEW TRAINING
INCENTIVES....TRIP REPORTS...
SAFETY CHECKLIST..
PADDLE DATES.....***

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DEAD LINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
FIRST WEEK IN NOVEMBER

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Cold Weather Paddling

I am pleased to say that quite a few of us are still actively paddling despite the cold and extremely windy winter that we have been experiencing. The Peninsula group have paddled most Tuesday nights out of Canadian Bay under most conditions and often in the dark, and still seem to enjoy the experience. I am convinced that the correct clothing and spray deck is the key to enjoying paddling throughout the year, and all I can say is be thankful for neoprene. With neoprene boots on my toes to the extremely fashionable "Neoprene nerd bonnet" on my head, it is possible to roll and get wet, yet stay relatively warm and comfortable.

Most paddlers have got the message that thermals, fleece, wool and neoprene are the only things to wear for cold weather paddling. We recently had to point out to a member that a cotton shirt, shorts and bare feet is not appropriate for a July paddle and could jeopardise both his safety and that of the group.

Club Boat

We are pleased to announce that we have bought a new Club boat to replace the ageing Greenlander that is very heavy and not suited to a wide range of paddlers. A plastic Penguin has been bought and the reviews from all those who have paddled it are most favorable. It is easy to adjust, very stable and has extremely comfortable seating. Performance in surf and rough water is very good, and maintenance is minimal. The only complaint is from the Hon. Sec. as I cannot get my size 15 feet to fit in under the deck.

It will be used under the same conditions as the Greenlander, in that it will be used by members on official Club trips. It will not be available for private hire, as this facility was abused in the past, and we had to curtail it. Those members wishing to use the boat will need to make a prior booking with me—it is currently being kept at Canadian Bay Club

Visibility at Sea

Being visible at sea is a topic worthy of discussion. Have you ever noticed how hard it can be to see other paddlers if their paddle blades are white and if their clothing and boats are blue or white? Being camouflaged at sea is well and good if you are in the military or trying to camp illegally in National Parks, but for most of us, easy identification means it is easy to keep a group together and can also lessen the chance of being hit by other craft. I have painted my paddle blades with Dayglo Orange paint, and colleagues tell me that I am easy to find even in big swells or dirty weather, as the flash of orange is visible even above white broken water. Peter Treby has Dayglo Green (as favoured by the cycling fraternity) on his paddles and it is also very easy to see. I suggest to members that they give some consideration to this question—the paint is obtainable from hardware stores and is sealed with a top coat of clear varnish.

Peter Costello

Peter Costello has not been well, and recently had surgery. We believe he is on the road to recovery and wish him, Yvette and Sienna all the best. I have the happiest memories of Peter during Club paddles this year, out in the Tasman Twin with Sienna (2

years old) in the front cockpit, complete with PFD and all the appropriate gear, and “fishing line” over the side. We hope to see him back on the water as soon as possible.

Insurance

I am pleased to announce that we have been able to get insurance, but the premium has doubled. Consequently our membership fees will have to increase by at least \$10 per annum, but I feel that at least we should be thankful that at least we have insurance, as other sporting bodies have been faced with refusal.

Fishing Notes

Never let it be said that a routine Club paddle on the Bay can be boring. On the August Canadian Bay paddle we were returning home—17 boats on a flat sea in sunny conditions, when suddenly the sea erupted beneath us, with pilchards leaping in panic as a giant school of Salmon began feeding---Gulls, terns and penguins appeared from nowhere and you could hear the water boiling around you as the fish were in a frenzy. Some of the Fishkillers of the VSKC who had the foresight to carry their fishing lines and lures, peeled off from the group like Inuit hunters and before long were in the fish. They were about 2kg in weight and were the biggest and best fish that I have caught in my 50 years of fishing in the Bay. The Salmon should be in the Bay until late Spring, so keep a look out for where the birds are feeding and use either a light metal lure, or the Secret Weapon—which is half a MacDonalds straw in a piece of clear plastic tubing. Thread it on the line and tie on a single hook. It is the best lure when they are in a surface feeding frenzy.

Towing

We are all aware of the importance of being able to tow or be towed. Well Peter Provis and I reckon we cracked the big one with regard to towing when we were out on the Bay logging up some distance in preparation for the Murray 200 Marathon in June.

We were about a km off Mornington in total fog---50 metre visibility and no wind on a compass course for home, when we came across an 18ft Cabin Cruiser with three very large blokes trying get home with a tiny dinghy paddle. The 175 hp Yamaha on the back had done a drive shaft, and our intrepid mariners had no phone, radio or auxiliary motor. As always we had our towlines and had them hooked in to a V tow in no time and soon had them back at Mornington Jetty. Needless to say they were rather impressed with what real boats can do, as we departed and disappeared in to the fog and headed back to Canadian Bay

In House Club Sea Proficiency and Trip Leaders Courses

Your Committee has given considerable time and effort to the question of in house sea proficiency. In this edition of Sea Trek –Vice President –Peter Provis outlines what we intend to do. It is intended to be of even a higher standard than the equivalent level set by Australian Canoeing. It will enable members to enhance their paddling skills, which will make them better and safer paddlers. It will be only recognised within the VSKC, but we feel that it meets with the requirements of most of the membership. Even for those who may wish to complete an official Australian Canoeing Sea Proficiency and

subsequent Instructor Certificate, we believe that the skills obtained from our qualification would place them in a very good position to complete such courses.

VSKC TRIP LEADER BRIEFINGS

The Committee of the VSKC has devoted a lot of time recently to the matter of adequate briefing before undertaking Club trips. We have been in contact with other clubs around the country and we are all striving to document and follow what is considered to be best practice with regard to safety in preparation for trips.

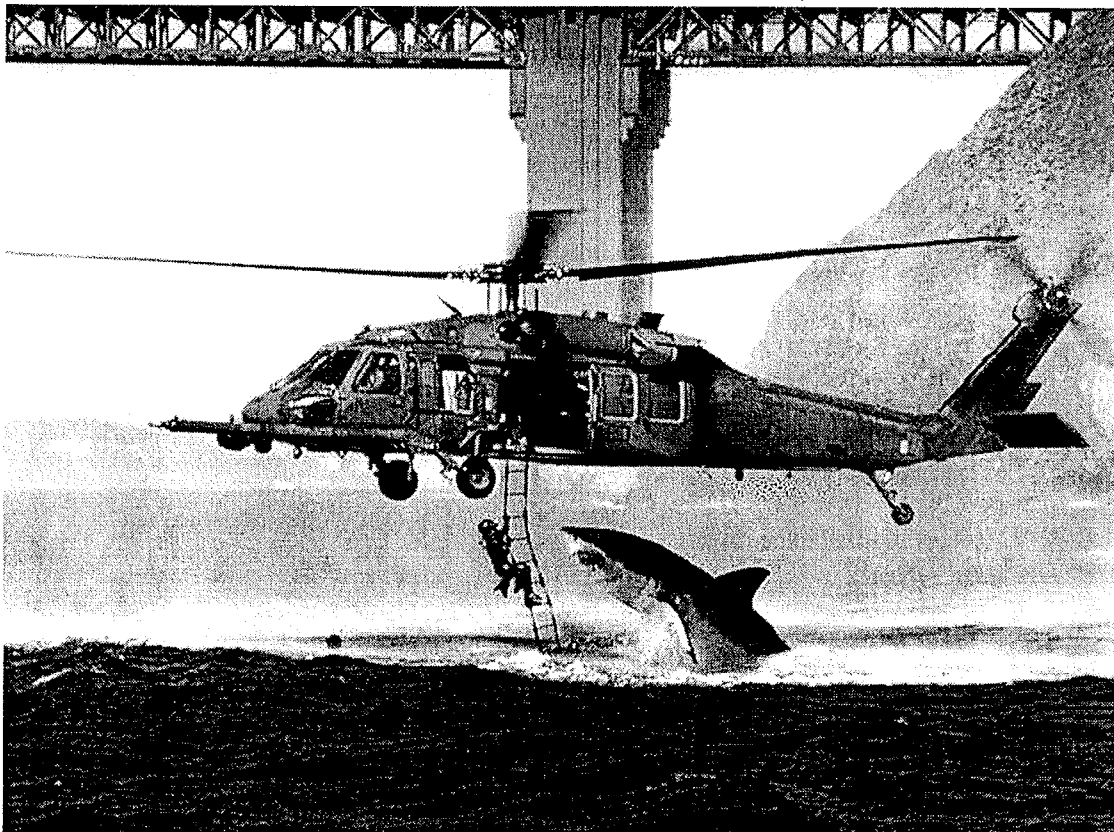
We have decided to mail a copy of the VSKC Code of Practice annually to all members and to attach to each edition of SeaTrek , the two standard Club documents—The Pre-Trip Checklist, and the Trip Leader Checklist .It is suggested that Trip Leaders laminate their copies, so they will be available at the pre-trip briefing

It is most important that all members read and are familiar with these concise and simple documents---they could be important for your safety and it is vitally important that we are seen to be following a safety protocol.

AND YOU THINK YOUR HAVING A BAD DAY AT WORK !!

Although this looks like a picture taken from a Hollywood movie, it is in fact a real photo, taken near the South African coast during a military exercise by the British Navy.

It has been nominated by *Geo* as "THE photo of the year".



A CAUTIONARY TALE

The importance of paddling with the group, or at least “buddying up” with someone in difficult conditions was brought home to me quite starkly during the recent Wilson’s Prom weekend.

On the return leg back to Norman Bay on the Saturday I got absorbed in the challenge Of paddling against rebounding waves while also contending with a following sea.

I paddled for nearly an hour before looking backwards and realizing there were no kayaks within view. I then propped at that spot (Whisky Bay) for 20-30 minutes hoping to again make contact with the group. I caught sight of two kayaks quite a log way behind me.

I could see they were heading towards my general direction, so while I waited for them to catch up I paddled closer to shore to see if it was suitable to land. When I turned just a few minutes later to head back out they had disappeared from view.

I waited for another ten to fifteen minutes and then headed back to Norman Bay. I did not see another kayak until I arrived back at Norman Bay, even though I paddled more slowly from this point on and stopped regularly to look behind.

The lessons learnt:

1. If you do insist on paddling alone, make sure you can see at least one other kayak nearby (close enough that they will definitely hear your whistle).
2. Be aware that in large swell and waves you could easily have someone pass you 100 metres further out to sea and not notice them slip by, particularly if you are concentrating hard on staying upright. (It seems this happened to me, as I was the fifth person to make it back to Norman Bay).

3. If you are paddling away from the sun, when you turn to look behind you, your visibility will be much reduced.
4. Day-Glo paddle blades are an important safety item.
5. The stress on the leader is considerably increased when a head count reveals *one* person missing as opposed to *two*.

On a brighter note, when an incident like this occurs and does not end in tragedy, it can serve as a useful wake up call for all concerned.

Ian Jones

***Extract from SEA KAYAK RESCUE
...The Definitive Guide To Modern
Reentry And Recovery Techniques.
By Roger Schumann & Jan Shriner.***

Extracted By Geoff Brewster with
permission from the publishers.

When to Tow and The Psychology of Towing.

There are endless reasons to tow. If someone is totally exhausted or injured, its obviously time to drag out your tow rope. But other situations may not be so cut and dried – for example, if you’re trying to keep a group from getting too spread out across the water, even if it’s a group of only two paddlers. A tired paddler slowing down a group so that it’s a few minutes late for lunch is one thin. But missing lunch entirely is quite another: so is getting caught out after dark or in the path of an approaching storm. In such situations the adage “A group travels as only as fast as its slowest paddlers” does not preclude doing something to speed up the slow ones. If a, paddler or paddlers, can’t pick up the pace when necessary, its better to start towing *before* they become totally exhausted.

For smooth, efficient towing, technique and finesse are required to handle not only the tow line but also the feelings of the towed paddler. Since human nature seems to resist wanting to admit that your having trouble keeping up with your partners, a certain psychology of towing is often involved.

Sometimes the hardest part about towing is convincing a lagging paddler that towing is in every-ones interest. Whether from pride or not wanting to be a burden, people often decline offers to be towed. We once watched a paddler adamantly refuse towing assistance even as a strong side wind was blowing her onto a vast mudflat at dusk on a falling tide. By slowing our pace to let her catch up, the rest of us in the group were getting blown towards the same mudflat. Our only options were to leave her behind to spend the night alone in the mud, to spend the night in the mud with her, or to tow. Unfortunately, there was little time at that moment for explanations, so her loud cursing had to be ignored as we clipped a tow line to her bow and pulled her to the safety of deeper water.

A situation like this is less a matter of asking a paddler if she'd like a tow than of telling her its time to be towed. A little face saving diplomacy, however, can go a long way. When approaching a potentially resistant paddler, for example, you may be tempted to say, "look , damnit, its getting dark, I'm cold and hungry, and I'd much rather tow you than wait for you" Don't do it. We've learned instead to simply explain the need for speed, and we try not to make towing seem like the end of the line, as if we were hooking a broken – down car to be hauled off to the dump. We've had better luck melting resistance by avoiding the T-word entirely. "We're going to give you a boost" we say, just a short rest until we catch up to the group" (or cross a swift current, or reach the lee of an island) .We encourage her to help

out by paddling as much as possible, and let her know that we'll unhitch as soon as possible.

Also, the best time to raise the towing specter is well beforehand, on shore. After the mudflat incident, we have found that if we explain to a group ahead of time that under certain conditions we might need to tow to keep everyone safe and comfortable, we tend to get better cooperation later if we have to pull out our tow ropes.

Towing can often be avoided in the planning stages of a trip, by choosing a route well within the abilities of each individual. But if more experienced paddlers knowingly drag beginners along on longer trips, they may end up having to drag those neophytes, literally, at the end of a tow line. This can be fine if the plan is communicated clearly so everyone understands beforehand what they are getting themselves into.....

When Not to Tow

One downside to towing is that the paddler doing the towing will be somewhat tied up. In rough water, for example, you may not want the strongest paddler in your group hooked up to a tow line if that person is also the best one to deal with rescuing a capsized paddler. You should also avoid towing in the surf zone. It's extremely hazardous to be tied to another kayak in breaking waves.



**Johnny Souey.
Easter weekend.**

Julian Smith	Icefloe
Tina Smith	Arctic Raider
Mark Heggy	Penguin
Roger Ingram	Dagger
Maggellan	
Mick Mcrobbs	Self made
plywood Seguin	
Anne and John Woollard	Tasman Twin

Easter is a very busy time of year at the Prom and it's virtually impossible to get camping permits for the southern section. It seems that the northern section of the park has been declared a wilderness area, so that the tracks are not being maintained.

Consequently the campsites in this area are not used much and we were able to get camping permits for Tin mine and Johnny Souey at quite late notice. I prefer to get permits, as I am happy to support the National Parks and I am not fond of trying to bluff Park Rangers, though it's unlikely that any would turn up. Also as we are all members of the VSKC, I would not like to tarnish our collective reputation.

For anybody planning trips to this area you can only have groups up to six in number and you can only stay two consecutive nights at anyone campsite. As we had five tents, six kayaks and seven people I told everyone not to stand in a line and to keep moving should a ranger turn up.

During the weekend we had some discussion as to whether we actually need permits as seafarers, I would like to hear some feedback on this if anybody knows the facts.

There was the usual anticipation and frequent gazing at the weather map as Easter approached, it looked good, highs had been crossing over Victoria on a six day cycle and it looked as though there was a big one lining up just nicely. Of course this one had to be just that bit slower, so that when we all arrived at the Long Jetty car park at 10am in time for the ebb tide at 12.30pm we were

confronted with a howling wind from the west. After much discussion and standing around we decided to drive to Port Albert to look at the Maritime Museum and generally kill some time. On our return to Port Welshpool we had lunch in a convenient shelter shed and it seemed that the wind had only gotten stronger. The weather forecast for the next day was no real improvement, so rather disconsolately we adjourned to the Long Jetty Caravan Park and pitched our tents for the night. Apart from a meal and a couple of drinks at the local pub the most interesting thing that happened was Julian's bit of creative surgery on a tent pole with Mick's trusty Leatherman and Tina's strange green colour and subdued demeanor [courtesy of a dodgy piece of ham] was a surprise. All night long the wind blew and there seemed to be only a slight improvement the next morning. Once we got down to the water the improvement in the conditions was enough to convince us that we had to try to make it to Biddies cove on the northern tip of the Prom, if the conditions turned us back at least we had had a go.

The tide was too far out to make launching at the long jetty attractive, so we launched at the boat ramp, using a set of wheels to ferry the loaded boats down the ramp. Conditions improved as we got out into Corner inlet and we were able to get sails up as we got closer to the Prom, though they did not do much good for those of us who stayed in the middle of the channel as the incoming tide had kicked in.

Once you reach the Prom everything changes and things looked good as we sat on the lovely sandy Biddies cove to eat lunch sheltered from the wind and wait for the outgoing tide.

We had made it out of Welshpool and everybody's mood had improved. As the tide turned we headed out of Corner inlet and round Entrance point, the wind had moved more to the south, giving us some resistance, despite this we made good time to Johnny Souey. We slipped into Johnny Souey bay to see 4 hikers scuttling out of the water and up

the beach to their campsite inviting their comparison with soldier crabs. Fortunately, the campsite closest to the water, with the cable drum table and drift wood benches had just been vacated by some fishermen. This turned out to be the reason for the scuttling hikers, as it turned out they had intended to shift camp prior to our arrival. Mick was the only unsociable one, pitching his tent 20m away from the rest of us, supposedly due to my snoring. The next day began with Roger taking his ritual early morning dip, confirming his masochist tendencies and for the second year in a row Easter bunny came to Johnny Souey. The weather was improving, we had no packing to do as we were spending 2 nights here, so we started off in fine spirits to do the ritual circumnavigation of Rabbit island, Julian informed us that it was appropriate to do this widdershins. There were several pairs of Cape Barren geese and a pair of Wedge Tailed eagles in evidence as we progressed and we had a few minute stop at a sea cave at the back of the island while the brave souls among us backed in to provide a photo opportunity. Lunch was had on the only beach on the island where we marveled at the formations of penguin footprints. There were some penguins still at home in the rock crevices which was a mystery to us, I have since heard that they were probably moulting and so not waterproof. Julian wanted to climb to the top of the island to see if he could see Hogan island, but was finally repelled by the possibilities of tiger snakes or a broken fetlock in the numerous penguin burrows. The weather was balmy with a light wind and we decided to make the pilgrimage to Five Mile Creek the scene of a very wet and windy weekend that the club spent here some years ago and is still remembered with trepidation. Knowing this some of us were concerned about landing in the surf here but we all got ashore with our dignity intact. We had a walk around and Julian revisited the infamous campsite, we made it back out through the surf with out incident and had a pleasant paddle back around the rocks to Johnny Souey. Along the way we

were entertained by Julian's antics, donning his face mask and rolling over for a look, then letting the waves wash him up onto a large sloping rock. After he was washed back down again he turned around to give us all a big cheesy grin.

When we got back to camp we had a play in the light surf and then adjourned to prepare for the evening.

Monday morning brought another dip for Roger and a light Easterly breeze. We got under way expecting the wind to swing to the north, luckily it stayed from the east. Everybody applied themselves and we made good time, getting the sails up just before Entrance point. Biddies cove was again our stop for lunch, where we waited for the tide to cover the mud flats and said our good-byes to the Prom.

As you cross Corner Inlet you go from the beautiful sandy beaches and massive rocks of the Prom into the mudflats and mangroves surrounding Port Welshpool, it seems to accentuate the fact that your trip is coming to an end and adds to the feeling of let down that comes with the end of a good paddle.

The Easterly breeze had freshened, so we got the sails up and pushed by the incoming tide we made great time across Corner Inlet. The boats looked great stretched out in a line with the brightly coloured sails. Mark was the only one without a sail, but his racing past showed through as he proved a good match for the big double sails on the Tasman Twin.

Once we turned east into the channel at Port Welshpool the wind freshened making us work for the last couple of kilometres and whipping up some unpleasant little waves. Roger and Mark pulled out at the Long Jetty and the rest of us at the boat ramp. After packing up we had a debrief and cup of coffee in Welshpool before heading off in our different directions. It was a great weekend, the company was great, we had a lot of laughs and the Prom is always an inspiring place to paddle.

John Woollard

Seal Island Group

The Seal Islands off the eastern coast of Wilsons Promontory have always held a great fascination for me. They are tantalisingly visible on the horizon as a hazy group from the vicinity of Johnnie Sussie's Cove. Yet the island group has rarely (ever?) been visited by sea kayak. Seal, Notch, Rag and Clifty are the four main islands in the group, and there are several outlying rocks.



Seal Islands (from SSW)

It is perhaps not surprising that the Seal Group has been overlooked as a kayaking target. Their remoteness protects them from casual visits. At more than 40 kilometres return trip into Bass Strait waters, they require fully committed paddlers and they are only feasible targets in excellent weather conditions. Also, with so many other superb kayaking destinations along the Wilsons Promontory coastline – Refuge Cove, Sealers Cove and Johnnie Sussie Cove to mention a few – why would anyone bother to tackle such a hard nut to crack?

The difficulty of visiting the Seal Islands has been compounded by the uncertainty of whether a kayak-landing could be made there. I could find no-one who could give me reliable first-hand information: fishermen and divers gave conflicting reports, but neither group are familiar with modern sea-kayaks. Binoculars reveal the islands to be typical Bass Strait islands – steep-sided granite, with wave-pounded, rocky and generally kayak-unfriendly shores. However, the 'bible' of the Australian Coast is the Australian Pilot and it (Volume II) says of Clifty Island – "**Landing** may be made on the N and S sides of the island where there are derrick cranes."

My desire to visit the Seal Group was more than just idle curiosity. If landing indeed proved feasible – especially on Clifty Island, the most remote of the group – then it could act as a better springboard for the 'standard route' across Bass Strait. This is because Hogan Island – the usual first stepping stone for crossing the Strait – is 'just' 40 kilometres from Clifty Island, rather than the 50 km from Refuge Cove (or 51 km from Waterloo Bay).

The last week of May 2002 had an almost stationary high-pressure system over south-eastern Australia which would have been perfect, but I had other commitments. Luckily, another strong system moved slowly across Victoria the following week. For eastern Bass Strait, "west to northwesterly winds of mainly 10 knots or less", were forecast for Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. With the previous week of calm weather, there was virtually no swell expected.

Armed with the encouraging information from 'The Pilot', coupled with the excellent weather forecast, I decided to give it a go.

I arrived at Port Welshpool late on Sunday afternoon and set off about an hour before the high-water forecast time of 17:37. Being just 20 days before the shortest day, darkness fell quickly and it was quite dark an hour and a half later when I camped at Biddies Cove near Corner Entrance. This "unofficial" campsite (for I was now within Wilsons Promontory National Park) suited my purposes well for it is the closest comfortable site to Corner Entrance.

Although my general goal was to reach the Seal Island Group, my particular target was to evaluate the landing possibilities on Clifty Island. The shortest practical route to reach Clifty Island is to go out and back from Johnnie Sussie's Cove, an each way straight-line distance

of some 21 km. An alternative strategy – and the one I chose – is to use the strong tidal current that (on the ebb) goes directly out of Corner Inlet towards the Seal Group. The one-way distance from Corner Entrance to Clifly Island is 28 km. But with current assistance, I reasoned the effort should be similar (or perhaps even easier) than the un-assisted route from Johnnie Sussie's Cove.

High-water on Monday morning was forecast for 05:14 and I reckoned that the strongest ebbing flow would be about 3 hours later. Accordingly, I got away at 08:45 and hitched a ride on the "tidal express". Initially it was too hazy to see the islands on the horizon. However, the water was streaming around each marker buoy as I passed, and I estimated its speed at about 4 kph. A subsequent analysis of my stopwatch times shows that I was moving faster than 11 kph for the first hour! This vindicated my choice of taking the tide-assisted longer route.

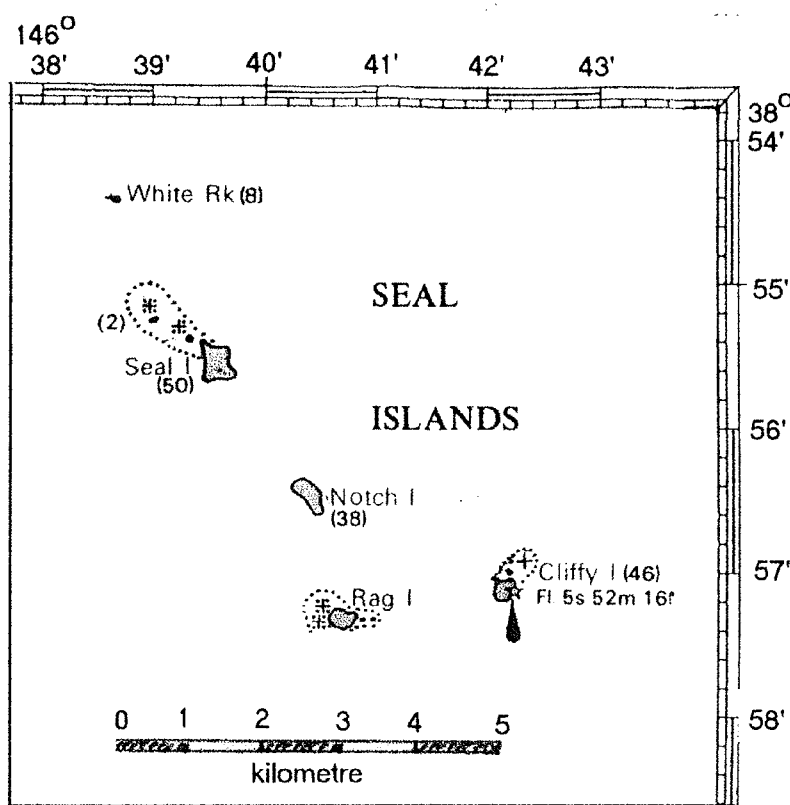
The islands gradually revealed themselves in the distance, and I soon settled into the rhythm of paddling. There was no swell to mention, and at this stage the light west wind was setting a sea of about 0.5 m. I passed about 500 m away from White Rock just 2h16m after setting off – an average of 9.7 kph for the 21.9 km. Two more kilometres and I arrived at Seal Island.

Seal Island is the largest island of the group. Along its lee side, I cruised to within a paddle's length of the rocks. There was no swell or sea here at all and under these benign conditions I could have easily stepped out onto the rocks. Berthing the boat would have been a problem though, because there was an extensive boulder field to negotiate. The island's ramparts have no level ground, so camping would be endured rather than enjoyed.

I paddled to Notch Island, about two kilometres to the south-east. Again, I cruised along the eastern (lee) side. A few young seals were sleeping on the rocks. A sizeable indent in the coast gave some prospect of landing.

As with Seal Island, in no-swell conditions (a rarity in these parts), landing might be made onto rock slabs and boulders – but at other times, best forget it. As on many granite islands, even if landing oneself is feasible, handling a laden kayak over rocks is a different scale of problem.

At this stage I still had high expectations that a landing on Clifly Island would be feasible – indeed I planned to camp there overnight. Clifly Island is almost 3 kilometres ESE of Notch Island and as I approached I admired the lighthouse, and its regular stone wall. I mused that the stone wall was to stop the lighthouse keeper from being blown off the island! I anticipated camping up near the light itself, perhaps beside one of the keeper's buildings. When I reached the island, I could see an inclined rail-track sloping down to a dilapidated structure well above the water's surface at the northernmost point of the island. Some seals were keeping guard on the rocks there. No jetty was in evidence, and the whole apparatus



seemed abandoned. Landing here would be a very difficult proposition. I suppose the unmanned light is now serviced by helicopter.

I paddled completely around Clifty Island and anticipated seeing a second derrick crane or at least a jetty on the southern side. The water there was surprisingly rough. Perhaps it was a tidal effect, or maybe a series of "freak" waves had rolled in? Whatever the reason, I needed to keep well out, but could see no trace of any human artifact – apart from the top of the light tower itself.

I was indeed disappointed. Firstly that Clifty Island was so hostile to kayak landing, but also perhaps that the reference made in the Australian Pilot seemed so misleading. I quickly realised that my trip for today, rather than being completed, was now barely half over!



The interesting profile of Rag Island from N.

I had been on the water for around four hours, and although it was looking likely that I would need to paddle back to the mainland, I still had one island left to investigate – Rag Island.

I had earlier noticed that Rag Island seemed to have a suitably indented coastline that offered good scope for a landing – rocky though that would presumably be. In fact I found Rag Island to be the most interesting of the whole group. It is more worthy of the name "Notch" island than Notch itself, for there is a sea-way breaching its backbone. Further, the eastern half of Rag has a metre-wide crack that allows daylight right through. These two significant cracks make Rag Island almost three islands.

I smelt the seals before seeing them. There had been small numbers on the other islands, and I expected that Rag Island would be no different. However, here I found a sizeable colony - perhaps a thousand strong. They were smelly and noisy. One of the big bull-seals bellowed, then plunged into the water. They are a daunting animal when aroused, and I figured this was their territory. Camping on this island would be a noisy, smelly, uncomfortable and dangerous affair. You could say I was bluffed out of making a landing here, and perhaps you would be right.

Even though I now faced an estimated three hour paddle into a head-wind, and I would have liked to get some food from my rear hatch to place into my day-hatch, I preferred not to argue ownership of the rocks with such noisy and smelly opponents! In retrospect, I should have gone back to Seal Island to transfer more food into my mid-hatch. I could have done this while standing beside the kayak in the water. But the wind had picked up a touch and the sea had now built to about 0.75m, with scattered whitecaps. I guess I just wanted the return trip to be over with, so I set off. The sooner you start, the sooner you finish.

I developed a "hunger flat" after a few hours and was pretty well spent by the time I reached Rabbit Island. I had eaten some chocolate and a sandwich a few hours earlier and now I was gaining my energy from a bottle of soft-drink. In the end, I resorted to eating a dry bread roll that I finally remembered was in my day-hatch. When one is energy depleted, even a bare bread roll tastes like a gourmet feast.

Earlier I had envisaged camping at Johnnie Sussie's Cove, but by the time I pulled the kayak up onto the sandy beach of Rabbit Island, I reckoned that camping here was a fair option. First though, I devoured half a block of chocolate from my rear hatch! There was enough room at the back of Rabbit Island's sandy beach for me to place my tent above the high water mark. I slept well enough there, despite noisy penguins.

Next morning I completed the short trip across to Johnnie Sussie's Cove, then gradually made my way back up the coast to Corner Entrance. I waited an hour to make sure the tide was coming in, and had a fast current-assisted trip (1h15m) back to Port Welshpool.

Ian P Dunn --- June 2002 --- ianp.dunn@bigpond.com

Westernport Paddles

Despite the prevailing winds, paddles organised on Westernport Bay have been a highlight of my winter calendar, and as Julian put it on the Somers to Shoreham paddle "we should do more of them as a club." So, I've included a couple more paddles in this edition of Seatrek. Please note that due to their increasing popularity, you'll need to get in early. Popular paddles! Yes! A trip on Westernport would be best described as a typical day from Canadian Bay. At this stage though we have not had the opportunity to repeat any of our destinations though I envisage this may occur.

The Somers to Shoreham sojourn started with a launch that thrilled those looking to practice their surfing skills. An enormous quantity of seaweed dumped along Somers beach provided a breakwater that the high tide bounced off creating an opportunity to surf out to sea. It was a foggy morning, and so sticking to the shoreline we (11 in total) navigated our way past Point Leo and into Shoreham admiring the surfers as we strolled along the beach after lunch. As we returned to Somers I recall watching Wolf as he cut a red line through the glassy sea and knowing at that moment the beauty and as Bill put it at the last Canadian Bay, the pureness that sea kayaking is.

Bill was trying in a word to relay as I have the sheer joy that sea kayaking can bring. After all Bill & Julian had just landed 4 Salmon for dinner, weighing in at over 1.8 kilos each.

Unfortunately, the French Island trip was cancelled due to gale force winds, though given another opportunity I'm

sure it wouldn't be hard to find a group to enjoy the trip.

An impromptu paddle was held following my return from a short and well-earned holiday in New Caledonia (N.C.). By the way if your looking to paddle in N.C. (as I was) then you will need to take your own boat, or track down a local with a boat, as all that was available to hire, were plastic sit-on-tops. I considered hiring such a vessel, but given that you could only paddle in front of the hire shop, I decided against it. The reefs in New Caledonia, the marine life, and the plethora of islands and reasonably sheltered water, would make the country a perfect place to enjoy a couple of weeks paddling. So if anyone's interested?

It was in my mind following the success of Somers to Shoreham, to organise the 30km return trip from Somers to Crib Point & the Oberon Class submarine. I'm always looking for an excuse for a paddle. The decommissioned submarine has been purchased by the Westernport Oberon Association for dry-docking at Hastings (given the relevant planning permission), and no I don't have an interest in the association. My only interest is to find and discover new paddle opportunities.

Setting off from Somers, I advised my 6 colleagues that we would be paddling against the tide for the first 15kms. It didn't appear to be a problem, though feeling a little off colour and out of condition, I found myself lagging. As we approached the submarine, the cry for food and refreshments was so loud that we saved the viewing until later. Lunch was rushed as we all felt the tidal pull to return to the sea and make use of what was left of the tide. We

made great time. Rounding Sandy Point, the tide turned (not in our favour), and we were confronted with a strong head wind for the final 5kms. Thanks to my colleagues who stuck by me as I limped slowly into shore, exhausted at the end of the day. Please note all paddles scheduled (by myself) this Seatrek are tide assisted.

You've probably all heard the rumours by now, so I feel the need to stress that there are no guarantees that the quality of refreshments following Westernport paddles will be maintained. Come for the paddling not for the cake and scones.

Katrina Newman.

The Editor
VSKC Magazine

Dear Sir

Anyone flicking through the dailies of late could not have possibly missed the full-page Subaru spreads featuring their new Impreza RV crowned with a yellow sea kayak. The link seems that, for the rugged individual thus equipped, one journey begins where the other ends, signifying an endless quest for the wild outdoors. While this will do no harm at all to the development of the sea kayak clubs that take advantage of Subaru's advertising budget to grow their own numbers and status, there is one individual who may have reason to question his earlier judgement. I refer of course to one of Melbourne's leading kayak retailers who, on our return from the first circumnavigation of Tasmania in 1979, scoffed at my suggestion that he support sea kayaking, saying 'It will never take off'. Kayakers today should remember with gratitude the vision and sheer hard bloody graft of the Len Bullers of this world who struggled on in cramped conditions with miserly profits to ensure that we could follow our hearts into the unknown. And today, that modern things with gelled spikes can strap their new status symbol onto the roof, roar off and maybe even get afloat. Opportunity knocks: think fresh blood, new ideas, increased energy, more fun. How's the website going, Chaps?

Earl de Blonville.

(Your dear old Founder)



Tales of the Seakayakers



Paddlecraft – Advertisement

Paddlecraft was set up by Laurie Atkins to provide high quality learning and participation experiences in the area of canoeing kayaking and sea kayaking. *Paddlecraft* specialises in small groups and personal coaching where individual attention can be given to each participant. Instructional programs and canoe tours can be designed for paddlers at any level - from beginner to expert.

Well it's a bit cold at the moment and soon we will be in those windy months. This time of the year is ideal time to brush up on your technical skills. *Paddlecraft* has a number of theory sea kayaking programs where participants DON'T EVEN GET WET! Crickey – you hardly need to even own a kayak. A great aspect of these programs is that they are not dependent on boat skills. Anyone with a practical mind can understand the principles presented in the dry courses. However, the programs are not restricted to beginner paddlers either with many old hands learning something new.

The Sea Kayak Pilot – Pilotage is navigation by mostly visual means. This program offers the participants a review of pilotage principles, the application of pilotage principles to sea kayaking, definitions of terms such as bearing, course, drift, and an introduction to the lunar cycle, tides and water movement. Participants will learn the application of the rule of 12 for interpolating tide heights, and the use of tidal vectors.

Sea Kayak Trip Planner – here's another great program that takes aspects of the Pilot and overlays the methods used to plan trips on the South-eastern Australian coastline. Learn about how to plan using a range of reference materials. The course will cover the use charts and maps, and horizons of planning, logs, contemporary sources of information, risk analysis and risk management, and other techniques

Participants will receive a program kit which provides a lasting reminder and reference of the programs. Victorian Sea Kayak Club members will receive as generous discount on the cost of courses. Contact me for program details and costs – be sure to let me know you're a VSKC member.

Contact Laurie Atkins – 0419 556 568 (AH) 03 5243 1035 or
icanoe@pipeline.com.au



225 Bay Road,
Sandringham 3191
Ph: (03) 9598 9821
Fax: (03) 9598 9847
capacitysports.com.au

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FOR SALE

PADDLES

Flyte 3 (221) Carbon shaft & blades with covers (EC)	\$150
Lendel Powermaster (225) carbon shaft glass blades with covers (New)	\$260
Q Craft (229) breaks in half, can be set at 2 angles, blade covers (New)	\$150

RUDDERS

Mirage – deep sea (New)	\$50
- intermediate with metal skeg (New)	\$50
- rudder pin (New)	\$5

BUOYANCY VESTS

Wild Water – blue (6.12kg) (EC)	\$50
Ultra Edge (L) PFD Type 3 (New)	\$110
Wild Water Leaders (L) pockets F & B, carabineer (New)	\$210

Paddling Cag – Fairydown (XL) (New)	\$110
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SPRAY DECKS

Mirage – suit 17, 19, 22, neoprene with pockets (as New)	\$65
Mirage – suit 22s, neoprene with pockets & zipper (as New)	\$60

Cockpit Travel Cover – Pittarak	\$25
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DRY BAGS

Sealine 5 – clear tinted – Qty – 2 (New)	\$25 each
- opaque – Qty – 2 (New)	\$25 each
Sealine IT – clear tinted – Qty – 2 (New)	\$30 each
Eddyline (S) – nylon – Qty – 5 (New)	\$25 each
Cascade (M) – (New)	\$35
Drisac – Midi – (New)	\$40

ACCESSORIES

Wild Water Helmet (New)	\$100
Parafoil (New)	\$150
Tripper Fluid Supply System (New)	\$50
Water Proof Switches – Qty – 2 (New)	\$10each
Accessories (CONT)	
Paddle Leash - (New)	\$20
Apollo Rechargeable 12V Battery – large AB6.5 (New)	\$50

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Drift Stopper – Sea Anchor launch and retrieval system (New) \$230
• Specially developed parachute system from USA *

Speed Tech USA – ALL NEW

**Speedmate – a speedo that gives current speed, average speed &
distance travelled in a choice of 3 unit meas. Stopwatch size Unit \$255**
choice of 3 types of operation – changeable *

Kestrel Windmeter – waterproof/floats – choice of 3 units meas. \$150

Hondex PS-7 LCD Digital Sounder – waterproof/floats. Torch size \$170

CONSOLE – Specially developed for competition – suits Mirage 22s
Could be adapted to suit other models – fits on deck/removeable
- unattainable – one only manufactured/solid construction

comes with SEIKO STOPWATCH – 100 lap split memory/wproof
and top-of-range POLAR HEART RATE MONITOR – w/proof
both will have new batteries.

\$500

There is also a range of light weight/compact camping equipment available mostly New.

CONTACT JOHN ADDISON PH 97299757 OR EMAIL addo@iprimus.com.au

VICTORIAN SEA KAYAK CLUB
PRE-TRIP CHECKLIST

EQUIPMENT -----A well maintained sea kayak with bulkhead(s) and buoyancy.

SAFETY ESSENTIALS To be carried on all off-shore trips

- ✓ PFD (In good condition and correctly fitted)
- ✓ BILGE PUMP (and/or baler and sponge)--Hands free operation is strongly recommended --i.e. Electric or foot pump.
- ✓ BOW and STERN TOGGLES
- ✓ DECK LINES
- ✓ SPRAY DECK (Correct fit and in good condition)
- ✓ SPRAY JACKET (Accessible at all times)
- ✓ SUN PROTECTION (Hat/sun block/sunglasses)
- ✓ DRINKING WATER (Accessible at sea)
- * ✓ HIGH ENERGY SNACK (Accessible at sea)
- ✓ THROW/TOWLINE (With adequate anchor points)
- ✓ BASIC FIRST AID KIT
- ✓ PERSONAL MEDICATIONS IF REQUIRED (eg Ventolin)
- ✓ SURVIVAL KIT (Emergency bag/shelter)
- * ✓ WATERPROOF LIGHT
- ✓ COMPASS
- ✓ THERMAL CLOTHING
- ✓ MAPS AND CHARTS RELEVANT TO AREA
- ✓ REPAIR KIT (eg Basic Kit---Duct tape/Swiss Army Knife)
- ? WHISTLE AND SIGNALLING DEVICE (Attached to PFD)
- * WETSUIT (Preferably the armless "Long John" type)
- ✓ WETSUIT BOOTS

SAFETY DESIRABLES (Particularly for trips to remote areas)

- * FLARES
- * 27 MHz or VHF MARINE RADIO
- ✓ MOBILE PHONE (Not to replace marine radio but adjunct)
- * EPIRB (Now a legal requirement if more than 3 km off shore, but not in the Bays)
- ✓ SPARE PADDLE
- * PADDLE FLOAT
- ? TRANSISTOR RADIO (For receiving weather reports)
- ? STROBE LIGHT

PADDLE DATES

AUGUST

SATURDAY 24/SUNDAY 25

Wilson's Prom all skill levels

Weekend paddle and surf and camp.

Suit sea kayak and white water/surf kayak. Trips will depend on weather and skill levels. Surf will suit all, hot showers available. **Contact Julian 9776-9583** (Anytime AH except on Monday's between 8.30 and 9.30 when South Park is on).

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY 1ST Warneet wetlands & beyond

Call Katrina to register your interest on 0413 304 013 or on 5983 2359 after 7pm.

FRIDAY 6TH

Regular pool skills night 7.30pm Contact **Julian Smith 9776 9583**

SUNDAY 8TH

Canadian Bay be there at 9.00am launch at 10.00am contact **Bill Robinson 9787 4704**

SUNDAY 15th Bottom End Of Bay Tour. 30 km

Sorrento start / finish, limited numbers.

Contact. **Peter Provis. 03 9787 1916**

SUNDAY 22nd The Early Bird Trip 30 km

Flinders to Hastings, car shuttle req., and this one is an early start.

Contact. **Peter Provis. 03 9787 1916**

SUNDAY 29th Blue Water Trip 30 km

Flinders to Cape Schanck return. Blue water paddle, for those who have sea proficiency in mind - this one is for you. (This trip is weather dependant)

Contact **Peter Provis. 03 9787 1916**

OCTOBER

FRIDAY 4TH

Regular pool skills night 7.30pm Contact **Julian Smith 9776 9583**

SUNDAY 6TH

Canadian Bay be there at 9.00am launch at 10.00am contact **Bill Robinson 9787 4704**

SATURDAY 12TH

Echuca 50km marathon for details contact **Bill Robinson 9787 4704**

SUNDAY 20th Surf Skills Day for all levels FLINDERS

Don't forget your helmet!!! & \$2.50 for a chino afterwards.

Contact **Peter Provis. 03 9787 1916**

SUNDAY 27TH Sorrento, The Heads, Chinaman's Hat, Mud island

Call **Katrina** to register your interest on **0413 304 013** or on **5983 2359** after 7pm.

NOVEMBER

FRIDAY 1ST

Regular pool skills night 7.30pm Contact **Julian Smith 9776 9583**

Saturday 9/Sunday 10

AGM Phillip Island for details contact **Bill Robinson 9787 4704**

DECEMBER

SUNDAY 8TH

Canadian Bay be there at 9.00am launch at 10.00am contact **Bill Robinson 9787 4704**

ONGOING

POOL NIGHT FIRST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH 7.30PM Jubilee Park pool Frankston. CONTACT JULIAN SMITH 9776 9583

For barbeque paddles on the Yarra, Hobson's Bay or Point Cook by arrangement call Yvonne on 0413610964
or yalyy@hotmail.com

POOL NIGHT FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT LA TROBE

UNIVERSITY Do you want to improve your technique of Eskimo rolling? If the interest level is there rolling nights will be held at the La Trobe Uni pool. Entry fee \$10 per person kayak is included.

FOR DETAILS CONTACT IAN JONES 9304-3287

PROFICIENCY COURSE

The club will be running an " in house " proficiency courses. These courses will be run free of charge to financial members and complying to Australian Canoeing standards, but will carry no AC accreditation. The format hasn't been finalised as yet but it is likely to be to be run in Western Port Bay over a weekend (camp over) with navigation work included .It is possible an extra weekend day will be required for the surfing session. Participants must hold a current resuscitation certificate and present it at the examination. Numbers are limited, for details & to book a position contact **Peter Provis 03 9787 1916**

TRIP LEADERS COURSE

The club is also making trip leaders courses available. This is for all levels; venue is yet to be decided.

Interested paddlers contact **Peter Provis. 03 9787 1916**



