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Autumn 2007 • Issue 58



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# Contents



The president comments .....4  
 Letters .....4  
 Safety should not be taken for granted!.....5  
 Aaaaarrgh your kids coming to the 'Pirate Club'!?.....5  
 AGM Portsea 2006 .....6  
 Murray Marathon .....7  
 The port to port challenge .....8  
 Anaconda Adventure Race 2006.....9  
 Sandridge Beach full moon Australia Day eve paddle.....10  
 A view for the north — the Mallacoota meet.....11  
 Australia Day at Mallacoota ....12  
 Wilsons Promontory.....14  
 Snake Island paddle .....16  
 On the wild side — paddling with rays .....18  
 Paddling with Molly .....19  
 Wilson's Prom paddle.....20  
 Air Show paddle .....22  
 Kayak across the Atlantic — a book review .....23  
 Make your own paddle protector bag for \$4 .....24  
 Phillip Is. circumnavigation ....25  
 Training notes .....25  
 A month in Canada .....26



Cover — Stephen Della hits the water to make racing history for our club

# The President comments

by Les Bognar

# Letters

Hello paddlers,

On the day of our last AGM we had 277 members (including families), 9 instructors, thirty-seven Sea Proficient Paddlers and an intake of nine level 2 paddlers moving to their sea proficiency. Our renewal rate has been great. The club is in good shape and one of the new committee's goals is to continue to build the skills core to support the membership. The new training committee had our annual training weekend at Philip Island and had over thirty-five paddlers present. The recent OvCA paddle had over thirty-five paddlers trekking from Portsea to St Kilda.

The June long weekend has two Wilson's Prom trips going in opposite directions. The Air Show paddle had a pod of over twenty and the Reverent Fred Fairey re-enactment had twelve paddlers set off from St Kilda.

The ultimate need fulfilled by our form of paddling is enjoyment of the outdoors and for some of us the regular non competitive exercise is important. Skills development is key to supporting healthy and safe paddling. A greater skill base means more people can lead or support trips.

More trips for beginners help them become better paddlers so they can go to more places and enjoy the special places only a paddler can really experience on the water under their own power. The committee will continue to support and direct club activities and initiatives that help us become a club that is a catalyst for a choice of trips for all levels of paddler.

Below: lunch on the Air Show paddle, see page 22

A couple of special projects started last year. The Round Australia Kayak Expedition Commemorative Project honouring Paul Caffyn's circumnavigation of our continent twenty-five years ago was approved by the membership at our AGM.

The club will sponsor the erection of a plaque at the site of his departure and completion which will be unveiled in December 2007. Progress reports will be provided during the year. The motion was carried requesting members for a \$10 donation to bolster the funding of project.

The committee would appreciate your contributions if you have not made it. I would like to acknowledge the generosity of the New South Wales Sea Kayak Club for their donation of \$500 toward the project. Many thanks to David Golightly for masterminding this initiative. The marine safety brochure for safe sea kayaking is now printed and will be distributed to locations where water sports are undertaken or promoted. Enhancements to our website have been published and it includes a new calendar facility and an electronic newsletter for the front page.

During the summer months, we had some great paddles. Terry Barry paddled from Sydney to Gippsland and Julian led a pod across Bass Strait on his third crossing. Winter is nearly here, the waters are cold but great paddling in the right clothing, so enjoy it.

Hello Peter,

I am a new member of VSKC but not new to the sea having spent thirty-two years as a professional mariner.

I read with interest the article describing the trip to Rodondo Island in the Spring 2006 issue. Tony's comment regarding their encounter with the container ship presents an understandable dilemma.

Last year I wrote an article dealing with what paddlers need to know about when interacting with shipping. The article can be found on the Rouge Paddler website. I have included the link as the information in the article may be of benefit to members.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Stockman

<http://www.rougepaddler.com/ports.htm>

Hello Peter,

The baby finally arrived. Bridgette Elizabeth Wise, 3.75 kg at 5:15 am, 6 March '07.

She has very large hands, so she might be a paddler.

Tim Wise



## Safety should not be taken for granted!

In 2004 the VSKC applied for and was given approval for a grant through the Boating Safety & Facilities Program Supported Projects 2003–2004 through Marine Safety Victoria. The category – education and training.

This set us on the path to define what would be useful as a safety and training pamphlet for sea kayaking in Victorian waters.

The focus had to cover the first-time paddler, the novice, the more experienced beginner and the more experienced.

Our approach has been not to treat this as a promotional brochure for sea kayaking or the club, but as a step-by-step process of the planning required for any venture onto the water, be it a short paddle, or a long journey.

The brochure has been printed on a synthetic 'waterproof' stock with the aim that they will last longer and be viewed as not just 'throw-away'. They are to be used prior to commencing your journey and not as reading material for when you are on the water and something is hitting the fan!

Key users will be water sports outlets, hire and retailers of sea kayaking or any paddle sports, schools and TAFEs, sailing and motor yacht squadrons, motor boat clubs. The reach is broad and will be used as an

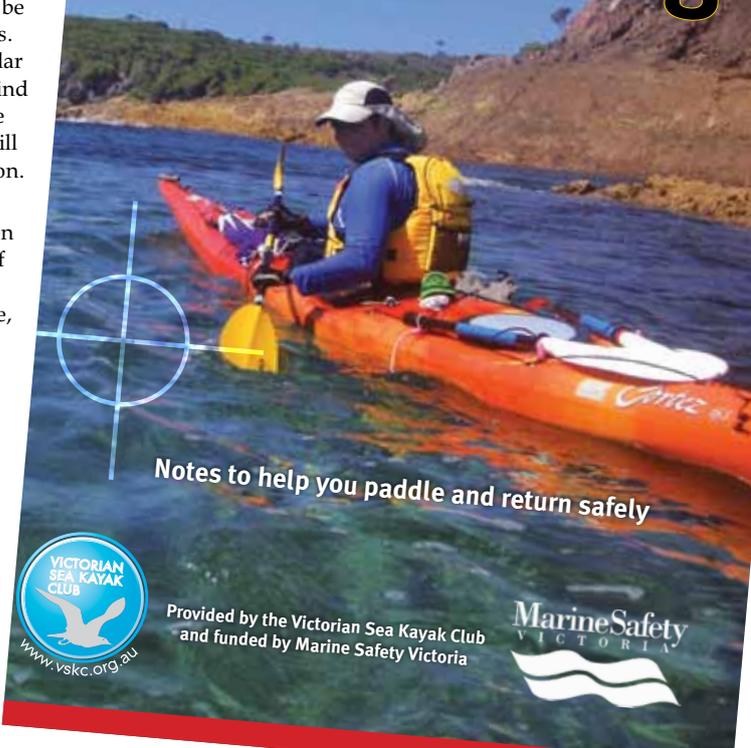
awareness of sea kayaking tool as well.

We hope that the information is of use and would like any feedback as to how it may be improved in future updates. If you can think of particular target groups that would find the brochure useful, please also let us know and we will be glad to forward copies on.

I would like to thank the cast of many that have been involved in the finessing of this brochure: Peter Treby, Roger Ingram, Peter Dingle, Les Bognar, Rob Smith, David Golightly, Greg Gleason, Paul Corkhill (MSV), Melanie Mills (MSV), Peter Corcoran (MSV), Taffy Evans (Rec Boating Safety Officer), Alan Wallace, PAGE Design and Metro Printing. Talent in the brochure features Raia Wall and Andrew Campbell plus a very wet Treby, and others on local paddles.

# Safe Sea kayaking

by Peter Dedrick



## Aaaaarrgh your kids coming to the 'Pirate Club'!?

Aaaaarrgh you a parent who would love to paddle more and catch up with friends at the Canadian Bay monthly get together?

Well the fun is not all just for you. This is a chance for our kids to get together and have fun with each other as well. With a little effort from those willing, this great idea of Tory's can become a success.

The next Canadian Bay will be the first, starting with April – it is a beginner level paddle and we have the use of a powered plumbed building.

Instead of struggling to get someone to look after the kids on a Sunday, members (family and friends) can pool their parenting skills, taking turns at either supervising children or getting in a paddle.

Ideally this will enable you to participate in the paddle at least half the times you attend. On the

occasions when you do stay 'in port' there will be huge appreciation bestowed upon you when you do catch up with the others after the paddle.

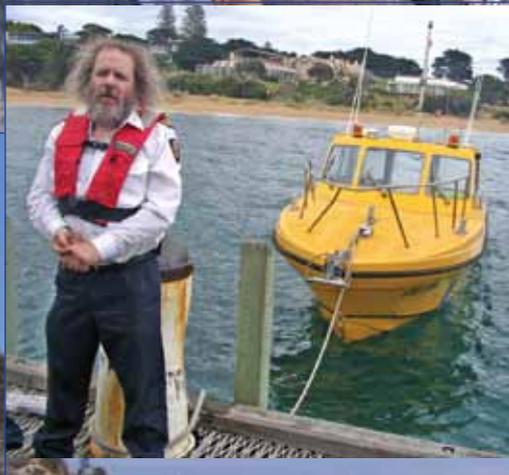
It would be based on mutual co-operation and a roster-style system to make sure enough parents are in attendance to manage the kids.

Like attending a paddle, your intention of attendance would have to be made in advance to ensure inclusion in that Sunday's Pirate Club. Parents will provide emergency telephone numbers, food, drinks and an activity.

Look on the website for more information or contact Tory on mobile 0410 760 588 or email felliniandtom@yahoo.com.au as she will be one of the 'landlubbers' at the inaugural Pirate Club.



# AGM Portsea 2006





## Murray Marathon December 2006

Gill & Bill Robinson at the start on day one



The drought breakers from NSW join the VSKC mob for a laugh



Glenn admiring his latest masterpiece



At the start on day one, at Yarrowonga

# The port to port challenge

If 200 km and forty hours wasn't enough last year, this year's Charity Challenge will be every bit as testing but with more time to recover before work on Monday.

This year we have chosen the National Ovarian Cancer Network (OvCa) as our charity to raise awareness and sponsorship monies for. Ovarian Cancer is not picked up through traditional tests and without early detection it has become the eighth largest killer of women in Australia. Raising the awareness of this and adding to the minute sum of \$22 000 that the Government gives them is our goal.

The charity is founded and headed by Karen and Nicole Livingstone (Olympic swimmer) who lost their mother and aunt to the disease several years ago. Our own Annette Golightly is bravely battling this disease as well.

So what is there to do you ask.

Paddle 100 km, either as part of a team or solo. First leg Rye to Portsea, Portsea to Tookgarook (tea), Mt Martha, Mt Eliza, Edithvale, Sandringham and finish at Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron.

Most importantly, raise funds for this great charity by getting sponsorship for your involvement in the paddle and let people know about the charity and what they do.

Dates 14 and 15 April. 1.30 pm commence time.

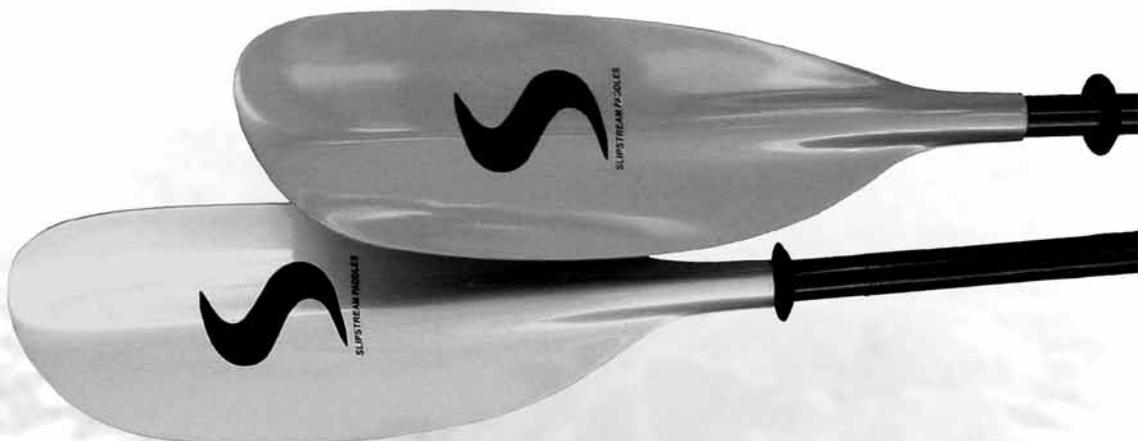
Last year we raised \$8350.00, so let's do better with this year's target set as ten big ones!

Sounds easy?, so drop us a line or call to join in the fun and fundraising.

Contact Peter Costello 0419 151 153 or Jennie Golightly 0422 566 521.



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# Anaconda Adventure Race 2006

by Grant Della

The Anaconda Adventure race promised to be a bigger event than last year with 360 teams competing. Three VSKC members entered this year (in the paddling leg of course). Peter Costello in Team Sarcomere, Stephen Della in Team Hairy Maclary (junior, under 17) and myself in Team Caprack.

The weather was calm and sunny, not what we had hoped for. There were a lot of paddlers on surf skis who clearly could not handle a bit of weather, so unfortunately, the sea kayakers were not going to have an advantage this day. This year both Pete's and my team entered the mixed team event.

The event began with 360 swimmers charging into the water from Lorne pier. The swim was 1.9 km and Pete's team swimmer "Wig" (17 yrs old) came in sixth fastest female at 29 minutes 40 secs. The sun built up heat through the haze from the bushfires, knocking the runners over on the grueling 12 kilometre rocky coast. The hot conditions were no problem in kayaks and the only problem I had was the race bib pushing the drinking tube down

behind my lifejacket, which nagged me over the race, trying to hold it in my teeth. In training, I had paddled the distance many times and been out in ¼ metre windy seas with Stephen, to be disappointed with benign conditions

Even the slight following sea in the last half of the race was not enough to mess up the inexperienced surfskiers. I can't complain too much, as our times were very good for the 13 km paddle. We were all well up in the top third of paddle times. Stephen did exceptionally well considering his age (13 years).

Stephen Della	1 hr 35 mins	8.2
km/hr average		
Peter Costello	1 hr 34 mins	8.3
km/hr		
Grant Della	1 hr 30 mins	8.7
km/hr		

The 19 km cycle at an altitude of 400 metres and 12% gradient turned our rider's legs to jelly. The following 3 km run along the beach took us nearly 60 minutes. Many of the athletes

suffered cramps on the last leg. Stephen's team won the under 17 year class and was eighty-sixth overall. Pete's team Sarcomere came 119th and my team Caprack came 231st.

Another VSKC member out to play that day were Craig Evans (paddle leg).

It was a great day and there should be less of it (more rough weather for sea kayakers, that is).

1. Peter Costello at launch
2. Team Caprack
3. Team Hairy Maclary
4. Team Sarcomere



# Sandridge Beach full moon Australia Day eve paddle —27 March 07

by Peter Costello

Les Doyle – trip convenor  
Peter Costello – trip leader

Paddlers included – Rob Creed, Paul Nichol, Phil Woodhouse, Todd Redman, Sue Flockhart, Jurgen Nelles, Andrew Campbell, Raia Wall, Neil Brenton, P Smith, Gary Porter, Tim Grogan, Annie Sharp, Peter Sharp, David Golightly, Warren Johnston, Brendan Van De Zand, Grant Della, Peter Treby, Tina Rowley and Julian Smith

Yes it has happened again. That dynamic duo – Costello and Doyle have pulled off another successful drift through the gloom.

There must be some attraction about paddling at night when the air temperature is hovering around 30 degrees as the numbers just keep increasing each time we have one of these paddles.

After unloading past the happy families with their ‘pipes’ and gathering on the very spacious Sandridge Beach, we set off

into a small breeze driven chop that was just enough to take the reflection of our boats off the water.

We courteously waited before crossing the Yarra and watched several fishing boats scuttle away after repeated blasts of the horn by a container ship as it steamed towards them on its way to the heads. Which bit of ‘Get out of the channel!’ did they not understand?

The balmy evening only got better as we explored under Victoria Pier and paddled to view the restaurants at the base of the Princess Pier.

The Penguin paddlers amongst us all got excited and shouted ‘Over here, over here!’, to a passing tour boat. Plenty of bewildered passengers on board looked our way with quizzical expressions on their faces, absolutely no idea that the shouting was in reference to the “Penguin Tours” emblazoned down the side of their vessel.

Well, the sun started to disappear below the Williamstown skyline and we were greeted by a magnificent, golden, glowing moon, hanging on the tops of the houses in Middle Park. Lights on as we crossed the first channel and held fire in the middle ground as a ship came in. You could say a nervous moment for some. The freighter did as it was supposed to and passed close to the Williamstown side, plenty of distance away. But do you ever really trust them?

As usual, Les lead us on a merry chase through the moored yachts and under the jetties of Williamstown. Greg Gleason showed how easy it is to turn a double with no rudder, especially with some help from some friendly paddler from behind.

We headed back to the beach and loaded up. A cold drink and a yarn or two before heading for a well earned sleep.



Left: leaving the beach empty  
Top right below: we mobbed the restaurant  
Bottom right: paddling into a ripper sunset  
Bottom left: full moon rising



# A view for the north — the Mallacoota meet

by ET

I was nervous. I wasn't sure what they'd be like. A Victorian sea kayaker ... mmm. Would they be like me? Not knowing, I wanted to get there early to set up camp and feel more secure. Knowing I'd sussed out the campsite made me feel ready to meet these strangers from across the border. The meeting place was Mallacoota, on the Victorian side.

When we got there, to my relief, we were the first. And not long after we checked in, more New South Welshman arrived. Yes! More of us — John and Stephan.

While pitching our tents, some of the 'others' arrived. John and Anne, Neil and Raia, Terry, Bill. Gee, there were a lot of them. But later more of us, Mike and Ken, then Margot and Lippy. Yes! There were nine of us but eventually, eleven of them. Here we were, outnumbered on their territory, dependant on their local knowledge. Would they behave like us? Would we find common ground?

Well, I was going to find out soon enough, at dinner, at the local RSL. Goodness. Now that was familiar. Maybe the Victorians knew how we like to congregate at a local watering hole and settle down with a drink and a kayak story or two. And it wasn't long before was the central topic of conversation were the respective Tasman crossings.

Kayak story telling — another familiar kayaking behaviour. Here we were loudly debating the merits of their trips, speculating about the boats, their planning, their gear etc etc. The night flew

by leaving us, late in the night, discovering that we all wanted to do the same paddle the next morning, to Gabo or bust.

It was shaping up to be a good weekend. The 'others' were seemingly quite like us. Maybe I was going to feel OK. Maybe these were a bunch of people that I'd like to get to know!

Saturday heralded in inclement weather. No Gabo, no bust. Instead only some of us ventured out of Mallacoota Inlet for a couple of hours punching south to blast back north. The rest of us went looking for Cape Horn. It was closer than I'd expected - one of the Victorians' favourite rolling locations. We had a scenic day exploring the Inlet, locating the Horn, having lunch and watching the Victorians participate in their peculiar communal rolling ritual. I began to marvel at our common obsession, kayaking.

Saturday night was the highlight. A barbecue hosted by Peter Provis and his mother-of-a-barbecue in an historic fisherman's shed on the headland. We listened to opposition to the local development plans for Bastion Point and then settled down to red meat, red wine and lots of carry on! Can't remember much after that, apart from recalling that Annie was in good form.

Sunday rolled around as did some groggy paddlers, wondering what to do with the day — take it easy and nurse the hang over,

Top left: gotcha

At right: JW shoreward bound

Bottom: Chicki smokin'

or go for an adrenaline pumping morning's surf?

And so, ten dare devils (four of us) exited the channel to play in the surf. Paddlers were surfing down the waves, hearts were pumping. From a distance I could see Tina punching the air with her paddle. Woo hoo! Some landed for a rest, others became bolder and bolder and one of them crashed out with a broken footplate. It was like a surfing vid. A great show.

After that, Sunday arvo was time spent chatting and marvelling at Ken's bog roll. Ask him to show you next time you see him.

You know, those Victorians are great people. We all got on, 'coz, we're all the same, really. So I'm glad we came, we met and we communed. In fact, the best thing is that we have all decided that we are going to do it again. This time on our side of the border at Boydtown in Dec 2007 — the Boydtown Bash. Put it in your diaries.

The who's who of Mallacoota  
Annie Woollard, Bill Zombor, Dave Winkworth, Elizabeth Thomson, Geoff Brewster, Greg Murray, John Lipscombe, John Poitrowski, John Wollard, Ken Motley, Margot Todhunter, Mike Snoad, Neil Brenton, Nick Martinovich, Peter Provis, Peter Treby, Raia Wall, Stephan Meyn, Terry Barry and Tina Rowley.





The Australia Day paddle was a hoot, distance 35 ks average 7.1 ks. What a tough looking bunch of dudes (above)

Below — pelicans line up at Mallacoota (photo by ET, see page 11)



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On Friday 27 October, the crew met at the Foster pub at 5 pm for dinner and to review our plans to paddle from Tidal River to Port Welshpool. The weather had turned nasty with driving rain, hail and strong winds making it a relief to arrive with the boats still intact and more importantly, still on their racks!

The forecast for Saturday was not pretty with the prediction of 30–40 knot winds s-sw and seas 4 – 6 metres, with a glimpse of hope of the winds easing to 15–20 knots in the evening. The more experienced of the group knew that our plans needed to be altered if we were going to make a go of it.

We decided to leave from Duck Point in the morning on the ebb tide and paddle the Prom in reverse to our original plans, hoping to shelter on the east coast from the s-w winds. A more benign forecast was predicted for the Sunday and Monday paddle around the bottom end and west side of the Prom.

By now it was getting late Friday night, and having sunk a few beers, and an all-you-can eat pizza and pasta buffet, the thought of setting up camp in wind and rain was not very comforting. Jurgen then announced that we were all staying at his nearby house in Sandy Point. Of course there were no objections coming forward, as we made our way quickly to the cars.

On arrival at Jurgen's, the pot belly stove was lit and after some drinks and good banter, the sleeping arrangements were discussed with Jurgen relegated to his caravan for fear of snoring and the two "naughters" (zero graders) Russell and Robin, allocated the lounge room floor with the more elite of the group, the use of the soft cosy beds!

The wind blew hard all night long and by daylight had not abated. There were rumblings coming from the leadership in the room, "its not doable," "we ain't goin' anywhere in that s..." and "we naught puddle in this Tina" when Jurgen, bright eyed and full of energy returned from his caravan looking aghast as to why we were all still in bed, how David and Chris had ended up in the same bed, and why we were not packing up, ready to be on the water by 7 am!

Good leadership prevailed and after surveying Duck Point, it was decided to postpone the Corner Inlet to Tin Mine crossing to later in the day following the second high tide. We made our way to Tidal River to drop off Tina's car and more importantly to consume Prom burgers (recommended) and chips. By 3 pm the sun had broken through and the wind

had dropped considerably, we packed up our gear and made our way to Duck Point departing at 3.55 pm arriving Tin Mine Cove at 5.40 pm.

We experienced some strong cross winds from the sw and confused chop and tidal current between Granite Island and Tin Mine Cove. The first cry of "shark!" came from Chris as a seal gently surfaced, checked us out, then submerged not to be seen again.

Once ashore, we all quickly staked our claims to the perfect tent positions, changed and settled in for dinner, followed by some cheap and not so cheap red and laughs. Chris decided to depart for bed early proclaiming a lack of sleep the night before, his zzzs providing soothing background ambience. The elite savoured in the delight of their steam puddings whilst the two naughters could only look on in envy.

We awoke Sunday morning to a flat sea and very little breeze. As the two naughters frantically packed, stuffed and forced gear into their kayaks, the rest of the group waited patiently next to their boats, no doubt whispering under their breath, "In your own time" "Whilst we're still young" and so on. We were finally under way by 7.30 am, paddling through confused water approaching the entrance to Corner Inlet as currents converged.

Whilst heading south off three mile beach, the group was halted by the first emergency when one of the naughters announced an urgent need for a leak. In true leadership style, Tina took control of the "member" in question and instructed both naughters on the finer art of the P rescue!

After this brief interruption, the group proceeded to Johnny Souey Cove for lunch. What started off as sophisticated conversation, soon degenerated after David, trowel in hand, disappeared into the tea tree. Whilst at lunch, Chris announced that he was feeling flat, fearing the onset of his son's

flu. Out of the best interests of the group, he was not sure if he should carry on, and was considering returning with Jurgen who was paddling back to Duck Point after lunch due to work commitments the following day. After considering all the options including an improving forecast for the following day and the enticement of a Cape Wellington Contour, Chris decided to continue with us. After farewell gestures to Jurgen and a noticeable spring in David's step, we were on our way paddling to our next destination, Refuge Cove.

The group had a relatively calm paddle into Refuge Cove arriving approx 2.5 hours from Johnny Souey. The sun was well and truly out now as we explored the campsite, perused the names grooved into the boards and hiked up the track back towards the ocean to get a good view of this stunning beach and Cove. We decided to take advantage of a large slab of rock over looking the beach, to lie down and bake in the sunny conditions. Chris remained with the boats to rest in an effort to shake what ailed him.

We decided to revise our plan and paddle on to the next campsite at Little Waterloo Bay, approx 8 km further south. The

Chris King paddling through an arch



David taking a break



advantage being to be able to perform the Cape Wellington rolls, just prior to completion of the days paddle and not at the beginning of the next days paddle, with the risk of being cold and wet with a long paddle ahead of us. Another, apparently less important consideration, was to shorten the distance for the next day's notorious 'lighthouse' paddle! Russell was doing some maintenance on his thigh braces, so Chris thought he could get a head start on paddling to the next campsite. Robin accompanied him for obvious safety reasons and to use Chris's CDMA phone, which was getting a signal once outside the Cove, to report in at home.

As Chris and Robin rounded Cape Wellington, the wind and waves increased markedly and the sea became very confused with the wind, waves and swell combining with rebounding waves of the cliffs. At Cape Wellington, Chris did the quickest roll I have ever seen! We proceeded into the wind to Waterloo Bay and soon realised that it was taking us a lot longer and harder than we thought it should. I asked Chris how fast we were going? And he replied "you don't want to know!" Not being sure exactly where the campsite was, we headed for two figures on the southern end of the beach. Unfortunately we had got it wrong, but not before landing in small dumping surf. Chris surfed in gracefully as did I, although I was slow exiting my boat and was soon drenched from the next dumping wave that had caught up with me.

David, Tina and Russell finally appeared in the distance and they too, looked liked they were having a tough time making progress. Chris and I launched from the beach and headed north and this time found the campsite. By now it was nearly 7pm and would soon be dark. We quickly unloaded our kayaks and made our way approx 80 metres into the tree's where we found a beautiful campsite, changed into dry clothes, set up tents and proceeded to cook dinner in very dim light.

Over dinner, we discussed the last portion of the days paddle, Tina, David and Russell had all performed their Cape Wellington rolls but agreed it had been the hardest stretch so far. Tina stated how she relished the conditions, only to retract the statement soon after saying she was over it! Not surprisingly, we all retreated relatively early for bed with the promise of an early start in the morning.

The forecast for Monday was very promising, variable wind to 10 knots, seas and swell to 1 mtr. We were on the water by 7.30 am with the two naughters duly present and accounted for. I must confess though that I was up at the crack of dawn and packing long before the more experienced campers had stirred! With Chris feeling better and the rest of us fresh after a very comfortable sleep, we paddled out of Waterloo Bay with no sign remaining of the awkward conditions we had encountered the day before.

Not long into the mornings paddle, we rounded the lighthouse. This truly is a wonderful sight with the lighthouse poised high on the boulder like cliffs.

play or fish near the base of the cliffs. The last day was relatively short compared to the previous day, however we all seemed to hit a bit of a wall sometime during the day, only to recover soon afterwards with the whole group finishing strongly.

As we pulled our kayaks up onto the beach and congratulated ourselves on a very successful trip, Tina declared that it was Prom burger time again! We got all the gear and kayaks to the carpark, showered, changed and headed for the kiosk to order the burgers, only to be told that they stop cooking burgers at 2 pm, it was now 2.10! We settled for fish and chips before Chris and Robin left with Tina in her car to pick up the other two cars left at Duck Point, whilst David and Russell stayed with the boats.

On picking up the cars, we thanked and farewelled Tina on a most enjoyable few days. Chris and I returned to Tidal River, where along with David and Russell, we duly packed up our gear and headed home.

This was our first overnight sea kayaking trip, and what a wonderful experience it was. Great company, great trip and wonderful memories!

Thanks guys and well done Tina!

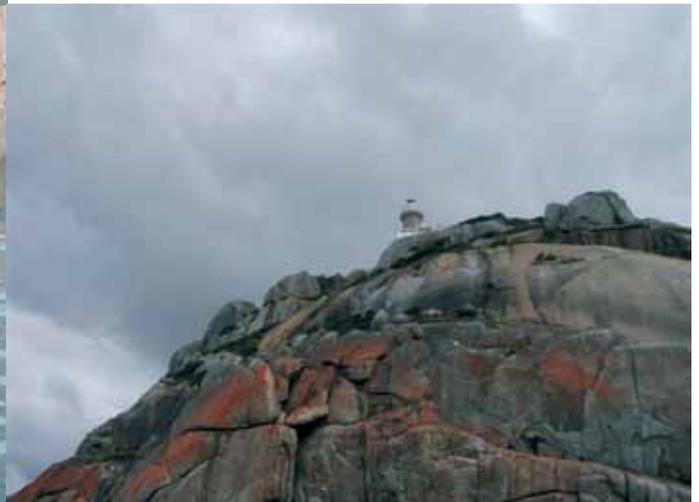
Day 1 Duck Point to Tin Mine Cove – 7.53 nm

Day 2 Tin Mine Cove to Johnny Souey, Johnny Souey to Refuge Cove, Refuge Cove to Little Waterloo Bay – 26.12 nm

Day 3 Little Waterloo Bay to Tidal River – 14.72 nm



From here you felt like you were now on the homeward run. The seas were flat, smooth and velvet like, the weather warm but overcast preventing uncomfortable glare. On the western side of the prom, there were quite a few seals which seemed to



# Snake Island paddle 18 – 19 November 2006

By Greg Gleason

Total distance paddled – 26 nautical miles at a moving average of 3.3 knots. This was an informal group paddle to enjoy as much as possible of what the island has to offer. As you will note, participants got far more than they expected.

We gathered at Long Jetty in preparation for a great weekend. The weather gods promised to be kind to us, and Peter Dedrick had arranged for a Cattlemen’s Association mate to join us at the huts.

We paddled up via the Swashway to minimize tide effect, then along the southern shore of Snake Island. Already, musical boats was the game of the day, with Tom in the front of the double, and Dad (Robin) piloting the Penguin. We gave Tom the opportunity to earn his explorer badge – armed with only a scant description of what to look for, Tom took the lead and found the path to the huts on first attempt.

There is something magical about the island, but even more so when you are greeted with an ice cold beer. Over a late

lunch, we chatted about plans for the remainder of the weekend, and got our camp in to good order.

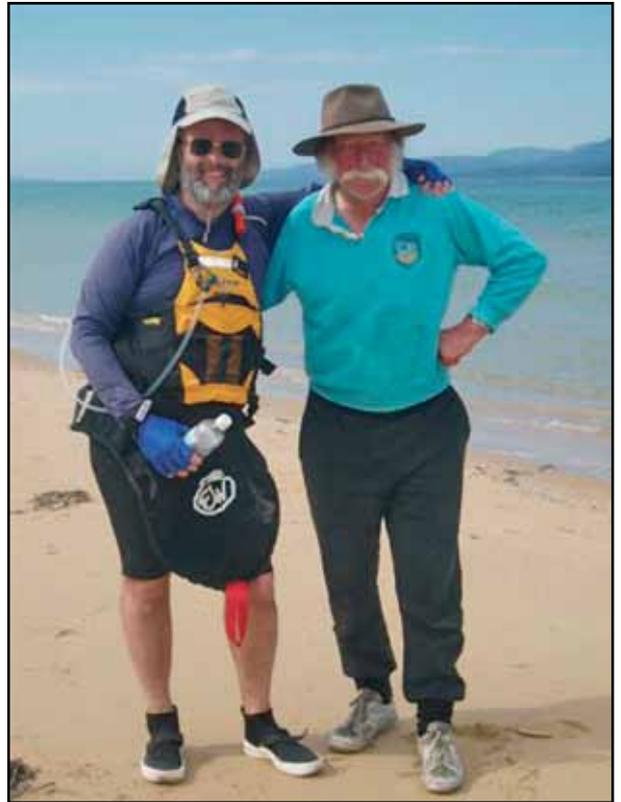
At about 4 pm, we set off for Bidy’s Cove and the bird lagoon. At dead low tide, it was a long slog over the sand to find the lagoon which was about home swimming pool size and carrying less birds than kayakers. At this point, my tenuous position as sightseeing tour guide was looking distinctly shaky.

I had even been displaced by Peter Sharp into the front of the double as the weekend’s “musical boats” game continued in earnest and Tom made the most of his time in Peter’s Mirage 530 (start saving now, Robin).

Back on Snake Island in the gathering dusk, out came the evening drinks. (Would a paddle with me be anything without a bottle of fine single malt whisky? This one a highland malt called Glenfarclas 8 yo.)

Peter Dedrick, Robin, Tom and I ventured forth on to the Royal Snake Island Golf Course, a somewhat agricultural course with only five holes but eighteen kangaroos (this could be where the golf term “natural hazard” came from). Robin plays a pretty good round of golf, but the course conditions were not to his liking, so I managed to win the inaugural “VSKC Snake Island Masters” by a small but comfortable margin.

After a hearty meal from the Trangia, Wal Cayser (who had provided the initial beers, the golf clubs, etc) offered me some local flathead fillet (fantastic) and then handed round the home made fruit salad. He even brought out a guitar so I could inflict myself on the paddlers – a magical evening all round. Not surprisingly, sleep came very easy.



top left: Peter Derrick on the water

above: Peter Derrick with Wal and the pod on & off the water at Snake Island

Next morning, we headed off early to see the sights. The first was a tiger snake sunning himself on the track. Crossing Singapore Deep, we scared some cormorants into flight. Only five to ten metres away, just below the surface was a large fish, probably a small bronze whaler

shark, but it headed down fairly quickly as Peter Sharp and I approached in the double.

We called in at Pelican Point, and strolled through the dunes – goanna, snake, kangaroo and bird tracks were readily identifiable, as were some “dog” paw prints

(are there any dingoes on Wilson’s Prom?). The trip home was aided by a solid tail wind, and we lunched on the bluff at the west end of Snake Island. By now, Peter Sharp was in the front of the double and Robin continued to pilot the Penguin, as we watched the stingrays gliding under our boats in the crystal clear water.

Coming back to Port Welshpool, we had literally dozens of banjo sharks entertaining us, startled, they almost become airborne on the surface. The north western corner of Little Snake Island had bait fish teeming in the very shallowest areas, then we saw why. About twenty-five or so banjo sharks were herding them up on to a sand bank and were feasting to their hearts’ content. It was a really amazing sight with a species we see as (and therefore assume to be) “solo performers”, when in fact they are capable of orchestrating a very impressive team performance.

Packing up, we all expressed a desire to visit this fantastic island again soon. It has a peace and a natural beauty that is very relaxing (apart from the nerve wracking tension on the golf course). Robin swore to return as soon as possible. He has his sights very firmly set on the next “VSKC Snake Island Masters” and as much the underdog as I obviously will be, my ego mandates a serious attempt to defend my first major!

Paddlers:

- Peter Dedrick  
Southern Aurora
- James Dedrick Penguin
- Greg Gleason  
Dusky Bay double
- Robin Boundy  
Dusky Bay double
- Peter Sharp Mirage 530
- Tom Boundy Penguin
- Greg Power Raider X
- Neil Power Raider X



# On the wild side — paddling with rays

by Peter Dedrick

Last November, a group of us paddled to Snake Island in Corner Inlet. Our aim was to camp at the cattlemen's huts and later explore the eastern shoreline of Wilson's Promontory. Rather than paddle directly to the huts, we decided to use the last of the incoming tide to paddle east to the Middle Ground and, when the tide turned, west through the Swashway, the narrow channel that separates Snake and Little Snake Islands.

This meant that apart from the initial channel crossing, most of our paddling was in shallow water, sometimes only a few centimetres deep. The attraction of this paddle included the many smooth stingrays and fiddler rays that we saw along the way.

## The smooth stingray

The smooth stingray is the largest of all Australian stingrays. It grows to 4.3 m in length, 2 m disc width and a weight of 350 kg. It is a bottom-dwelling species that is recorded in the temperate waters of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

In Australia, it occurs from southern Queensland, around the south of the country and north to the central coast of Western Australia. It lives in coastal waters and estuaries from shallow water down to about 170 m and feeds on shellfish, molluscs, crustaceans, worms and what ever it can scavenge from the sea floor.

During summer months, the smooth stingray can be found in water as shallow as 1 m, or less, especially where fish are being cleaned, for example near boat ramps or piers. It is curious and will approach swimmers and divers, especially if there is bait or berley in the water. The fish feeding display at the Melbourne Aquarium shows how these animals can be trained to take hand-held food.

The smooth stingray is not aggressive, but has one venomous spine halfway along the tail, which is used for defence. When threatened, cornered or molested it will curl its tail up and over its back in a threat display.

As recently evidenced, stingrays are capable of inflicting severe or potentially fatal wounds. An article in *NSW Seakayaker* <http://www.nswseakayaker.asn.au/mag/47/stingrays.html> contains information on the management of injuries caused by stingray barbs.

Could a stingray barb pierce the fiberglass hull of a sea kayak? The thought did cross my mind and I decided not to get close enough to find out. Best to enjoy them from a respectful distance.

## The southern fiddler ray

The southern fiddler ray is common in Victorian bays and inlets. It is also known as the banjo shark because of its shape.

Fiddler rays grow to 120 cm and are placid and harmless, so placid in fact that you can pick them up. Be careful before you do so, however, and make sure it is a fiddler ray and not one of the stingarees — see below.

The easiest way to tell them apart is to look for the twin dorsal fins, which are present on fiddler rays, but not on stingarees.

There are two species of fiddler ray. The eastern fiddler ray found on the east coast from southern Queensland to the eastern Victorian border, has a brown body colour with shades of yellow or olive. It has a pattern of pale lilac bands edged with dark brown and a distinctive triangle between and behind the eyes. The southern fiddler ray is found from the eastern Victoria border to Perth. It has a darker yellowish brown body colour decorated with blue-grey bands which do not form a triangle between the eyes. Both species can be found on reef, sand or seagrass beds where they feed on shelled invertebrates, crabs and worms that they crush between their jaws. They give birth to live young.

In February last year, James (my son) and I did one of our favourite walks, along the waters edge between Bentley and Townsend Points on Snake Island. There were literally dozens of adult fiddler rays along the shoreline. We didn't know whether they had come into the shallows to breed or whether they were just enjoying the warmer water. In any event they seemed in no hurry to go anywhere.

## The Southern Eagle Ray

The southern eagle ray is, to my mind, the southern version of the manta ray. They look majestic underwater and a delight to see on a snorkeling trip. The southern eagle ray grows to 1.2 m in disc width and 2.4 m in total length. It has a blunt snout and eyes on the sides of the head. The disc is wider than long and has pointed tips. There is a small dorsal fin followed by a venomous stinging spine on the long whip-like tail.

It is brownish, grey, olive-green or yellowish above and paler below. The upper surface has a variable pattern of grey-blue spots and bars.

The southern eagle ray is known from southern Queensland around the south of the country and north to the south-western coast of Western Australia. It may also occur in New Zealand.



Southern fiddler ray – showing the twin dorsal fins



Smooth stingray

### Other species

Two other kinds of rays are worth a mention stingarees and skates. Stingarees are smaller versions of stingrays but have rounded tails and rarely exceed 500 mm in length. There are about 40 species in Australian waters and, of these ten occur in temperate waters. One species – the banded stingaree has patterning not unlike the southern fiddler ray. Hence the need to be careful and check before you pick one up.

Skates are less common and I was surprised to pass over one as we approached the huts beach on the aforementioned trip. They can grow quite large – 1.7 m and 50 kilograms, but lack venomous spines.



Banded stingray



Southern eagle ray



Big skate

## Paddling with Molly — February 2007

By Alan Wallace

Lake Mulwala stores water for irrigation for the north of Victoria & southern New South Wales irrigation districts. It is part of the Murray system.

As such, it is permanently full and so is a mecca for those participating in all sorts of recreational boating and water sports. Yarrawonga (Victoria) and Mulwala (NSW) are popular destinations for holiday makers the year 'round, with Lake Mulwala being the major attraction.

The lake was created in 1936 when the weir was completed and the red gum forest upstream flooded. At the last minute, enterprising locals cleared, using horses, a good amount of the existing red gums trees closest to the weir and towns, leaving a legacy of a great lake ideally suited for water skiing.

The large amount of water ski boats and jet skis makes for a very unpleasant paddling experience, but as only part of the lake was cleared in 1936 and subsequent years (when the lake was emptied every four years for

weir maintenance), there is ample water well-suited to paddling. This is to be found further upstream, where many of the old forest trees remain as a stark reminder to the forest lost.

Still standing after seventy years, these trees are avoided by most powered craft (the exception being fishermen in their tinnies) and provide a buffer for one wanting a quiet paddle on the lake.

Many of the trees have rotted away, generally leaving a stump at or just below the surface, so some care is required.

On this occasion in February, we took a camera and some shots of Barb in her Mill Creek 16.5 double with Molly, our West Highland White Terrier leading the way as figurehead. She is not very keen on the water nor a great swimmer, but up on the bow is great.



*Adventure: a journey or activity where the outcome is uncertain or unknown" (definition).*

This is a summary of a paddle around Wilson's Promontory on the Melbourne Cup weekend 2006. The participants were:

Terry Barry, trip leader	Arctic Raider
Roger Taylor	Nadgee Expedition
Raia Wall	Dagger Cortez
Neil Brenton	Dagger Cortez
Dana Halsvik	Arctic Raider (very new)
Greg Gleason	Raider X

(complete with "L" plates)

The paddle was spread over the four days, we covered 49.5 nautical miles in 15 and a half hours moving time on the water. Our moving average speed overall was 3.1 knots, and our best day saw a moving average of 4.2 knots.

## The lead up

The weather predictions were less than perfect as the weekend approached, with the promise of at least some strong winds and big seas. In declaring the trip officially "a goer", Terry Barry's email concluded with "I'm excited". My reply was "me too, if 'excited' means 'shortness of breath', 'central chest pain' and 'abundance of smelly gooey brown stuff in underpants' ". When Terry responded "then bring lots of spare underpants", I suppose I got an inkling of what I was in for.

## Saturday

We paddled out at 10 am into half metre Tidal River surf, having left Roger's trusty Subaru wagon at Duck Point as our shuffle vehicle. All pumped and raring to go, we set course for South West Cape.

As we contoured the cliffs and rock walls rising straight out of the sea, the rising 1.5 to 2 metre ground swell created rebound slop that proved quite a challenge. I remember thinking "it doesn't get much more unpleasant than this". The next few days were to prove me quite wrong.

We passed by the southernmost point on the Australian mainland to occasional rain squalls and set our sights on Cape Wellington. After a brief but pleasant break for some rolls for those wishing to "bag the

cape", we headed for Refuge Cove. By this stage, the sun had broken through. A lunch stop in the lee of a granite island was quick and purposeful – we still had a long haul to Refuge, and arrived in bright sunny skies at about 3.15 pm.

The camp site was a private box view over paradise, even two trees exactly five paces apart for Roger's hammock. Terry's view was "if you like this, wait till you see Johnny Souey Cove".

## Sunday

We headed off at 8 am, bound for Johnny Souey Cove. By then, a 20+ knot south easterly was driving the swell size up considerably. Approaching Rabbit Rock, we found the wind had tended more easterly and increased to over 25 knots, rendering a visit to Rabbit Island out of the question, but adding a nasty cross chop to the paddling conditions.

We looked longingly at the beach on the land (lee) side of Rabbit Island as we sheltered in the lee of Rabbit Rock for a quick breather, before striking out again for Johnny Souey Cove, to arrive at 1.30 pm and beach, courtesy of gentle half metre waves. The regular rain squalls had abated for a while by that stage.

We chose a sheltered campsite up the hill via a very steep track, Roger again finding two ideal trees for the hammock. After some exploring, we settled in for the night and back came the rain – we huddled under the fly and hoped some of it found its way into Melbourne's water storages.

The weather forecast for the following day wasn't promising, but I was too tired for apprehension to keep me awake.

## Monday

We awoke to find the howling south easterlies all night had affected the surf, significantly. So challenging was the 9 am paddle out, Dana's brand new Arctic Raider got its first serious trashing (it is still a very good looking sea kayak, however).

On my second attempt, I actually made it out past the main break, only to find a 3 metre monster with my name on it – no amount of experience as a surfboard rider

can assist when something this big goes hollow and smashes down on the front deck and cockpit. I was up, I was down, I was up again, I was down again, and this time down for the count. A long, sorry swim back to the beach to try again.

The others took pity and returned to shore, so we had an early lunch and tried again. Despite no real moderation in the conditions, we all got out OK, although I was airborne twice going up waves so tall that my kayak was shorter than the wave face. Thanks Roger, your one liner on surf departures ("paddle like firetruck") came in very handy! (Well, maybe that's not the word he used, but it was something that started and ended with those letters.)

The paddle towards Entrance Point was a true education in the power of Mother Nature – huge 3+ metre waves with occasional 5 metre monsters and very confused and deadly cross slop. The surf was so big that it caused a series of bomoras that stretch several kilometres out from the point at 3 Mile Beach to come to life.

These don't appear on any charts, because swell this big from that direction is very rare, but avoiding them in these conditions wasn't easy, as Neil discovered to his significant disadvantage. While Terry was getting Neil back in his boat (by now well on the other side of the bombie), I had a little capsize myself, fortunately a very temporary one, courtesy of Roger's bow. Nadgees look good at any time, but they look sensational when they are helping save your bacon!

Further north, the shallower water started to cut the swell size. The water was less confused, but the opposing tide was by now very strong. At the risk of suffering greater wind against tide effects, we clung to the shore, just outside the surf.

First Terry went that smidge too close, and was suddenly on his side on the beach. Back under way, a freak wave saw Roger's Nadgee trying to mate with Dana's new (but no longer unmarked) Arctic Raider. They both came down on the hard sand, Dana unfortunately underneath Roger and the two kayaks.



With no real harm done (I doubt you could hurt Dana with an axe), we finally made it round Entrance Point into relatively calm waters and a tail wind, again, out came the sun and all was good in the world. I did ask Dana if the kayaks' union was fruitful and any of the "pups" looked more like a Nadgee than a Raider, could I have the pick of the litter. Strangely, he wasn't impressed and avoided me till we got to Tin Mine Cove in the late afternoon.

Good company, an idyllic campsite with a million dollar view, all to ourselves, and even Dana had forgiven me for my poor taste jokes about kayaks mating, what more could you ask? In Roger's case, it would be for more co-operative trees – there weren't any the required five paces apart. When he did find a compromise, his hammock hung so high, he needed a running jump to climb aboard, and risked altitude sickness sleeping there all night.

## Tuesday

The forecast was for light breezes 'till lunchtime, then moderate south westerlies after lunch, so we decided on an early start for Duck Point. However, Huey wasn't finished with us yet. Before we got to Granite Island, in came the south westerly headwind. Within thirty minutes, it was up to 25 knots and stayed that way for the remainder of the paddle.

My personal highlight occurred about three quarters of the way across Corner Inlet. First one dorsal fin within a metre of my kayak, then another, and I had two dolphins as a personal escort, diving across under my boat and swimming together on their sides under the bow of my boat looking up.

Alas, a sea kayak paddled by an old coot like me in a strong headwind makes for a very boring pace for a dolphin, and within a few minutes, they had lost interest and moved on, but the visit had capped off what was a four day experience I will never forget. The opening definition of "adventure", originally provided by Terry, had been absolutely on the money, as had his suggestion of bringing plenty of spare underpants.

Even the drive back to Tidal River was further opportunity to exercise some already well used senses of humour – from the back seat, Dana's laconic "easy Roger, you can't eskimo roll a car". In the finest VSKC traditions, no Prom trip would be complete without a legendary Fish Creek hamburger, but only the trip participants would ever understand why Dana surreptitiously slid the sauce bottle out of Terry's reach.

## The lessons learned

In addition to gaining some appreciable skills in rebound slop, big seas and strong winds, surf landings, departures and living out of a kayak, there were a few extra things I learned along the way:

- The weather will always be the principal determinant of what we can and can't do on a paddle. Huey calls the shots.
- Raia, Neil and Dana are very competent paddlers, but having Terry Barry and Roger Taylor backing you up is like being a kid whose best friends are the toughest boys in the school – you are untouchable.
- I found that if I paddle a kayak far enough, I can sleep at night, no matter how scared the forecast has made me feel about the next day's paddle.
- The remote parts of the Prom are as beautiful as anywhere Australia wide.
- You can have immeasurable amounts of fun and be "poop scared" at the same time.
- Terry Barry is a great trip leader, but I'll never trust his catering skills if raisin bread is on the menu (in joke).

Whilst I didn't contribute in any major way to the paddle, I have at least influenced my colleague paddlers. The various ways to eat an ice cream will never be quite the same again (another in-joke).

On behalf of my colleague paddlers, thanks to Terry for planning and leading what turned out to be a truly incredible adventure, and to Roger, Raia, Neil and Dana who made it such a blast.



# The Air Show paddle — Sunday 26 March 2007

by Annie Sharp

On behalf of my fellow paddlers, I'd like to thank David Golightly for organising such a good trip, from Limeburners Bay to Avalon Beach, Corio Bay. He performed his duties as Squadron Leader admirably.

Fellow paddlers included: Chris King, Peter Sharp, Robin Boundy, Roger Taylor, Raia Wall, Neil Brenton, Russell Blamey, Chris Stockman, Grant Della, Clare Della, Steven Della, Keith Freeman, Sonia Ivetac, Yvette Costello, Peter Costello with Sienna and Lachlan, Tim Wise and Derek Wilson.

The turnout of twenty-one paddlers in eighteen kayaks was terrific, considering the weather on the two previous days.

The day started calm and sunny with predicted S/SE winds of 10–15 knots, increasing to 15–20 knots during the afternoon. Waves near half a metre rising to one metre.

As we got organised, the wind had started to come up. This was emphasised as we watched the two opening parachutists at the airshow battle giant Australian flags from our first launch position.

We gathered on the beach at Limeburners Bay around 10 am for introductions and a briefing. We entered the water on an ebbing tide.

Our plan was to follow the channel somewhat then move in towards the ramp (marked on the map) where there is a very small isolated community of about twenty houses. Along the way we passed what looked like an original squatters mansion. No one knew its history. At the time, I thought 'if that house could talk, it would have quite a few stories to tell'. I later found out it was Austin Homestead. James Austin was the man who introduced rabbits to Victoria.

At this stage, the conditions were perfect for the 5 nautical mile Grade 0 paddle. We had quite a mix of new members, young paddlers and experienced club members. Once rounding the rocky Bird Rock just off Point Lillias, we found the crosswind and waves more challenging. Lots of power boats had the same idea, but we conquered the beach at what appeared to be the end of the runway at Avalon and staked our claim.

With guidance from Grant and Peter C., we all set up on the other more protected side of the dune and bushes. While enjoying our lunch, those with binoculars could see incoming aircraft. The real buzz was when the jets took off or flew over. We weren't as close to the flight path as we would have liked (we didn't get to use our earplugs), as most of the planes and choppers appeared to fly in from the other direction of Laverton Air force Base.

When the action lulled people, talked kayaking, such as Roger Taylor's Bass Strait/Tassie trip. Lachlan, Sienna and Peter Sharp kicked the footy, while Clare

and Steven found a really sunny sheltered spot to relax and dose.

The 5 NM paddle here had taken approximately 1.5 hours so we started back at around 2.30 pm, very close to low tide.

The S/E wind had picked up a little more and we faced a headwind till we reached the rocky point of Bird Rock. Along the way the waves were about one metre with quite a few deep troughs that swamped the kayak occasionally, but I was nice and dry for a change in my Reed skirt (highly recommended).

Once turning the point with the wind behind, there was plenty of opportunity to ride a wave. Sails appeared and everyone made the most of the conditions.

We got to see some of the best flyovers on the way back and oohed and aahed as the jets did mock bomb drops and back burns.

By the time we arrived back around 4 pm, I felt it had been a very full but really enjoyable day and I think a great day was had by all. Thanks everyone for sharing in it.



# Kayak across the Atlantic by Pete Bray

by Ross Armstrong

## — a book review

Pete Bray started paddling at school. At fifteen he enlisted in the British army as a boy soldier and ended up as a member of the SAS Boat Troop. On return to civvy street he continued paddling as a racer, instructor and expeditioner. In 1996 he circumnavigated Great Britain in a double sea kayak with his partially sighted paddling partner Steve MacDonald, to raise money for charity. Six months later he started to think about a solo crossing of the Atlantic.

Bray made two attempts to paddle across the Atlantic solo and unsupported. His first attempt in June 2000 failed a few days from the start due to a surprising equipment malfunction. After abandoning

his boat and spending thirty-two hours in a ripped and leaking liferaft in freezing conditions in open water he was saved.

Undaunted, Bray made a second attempt in 2001.

On his second attempt, his boat was a purpose built self-righting craft with a fully enclosed and watertight rear compartment, as shown in the photo. After a day's paddling he would lay out his sea anchor, get out of his wet paddling gear, move into this compartment and batten down the hatch to eat, sleep, communicate with his land based support and carry out many other tasks.

He carried food for ninety days with an on-board de-salinator providing most of

his drinking water. Cooking was not an option so all his food and drink were cold unless they were stuffed down the front of his shirt to warm them up.

This second voyage was not without incident. Broken rudder cables, being closely shadowed by a killer whale, almost losing his rudder, losing his sea anchor which was probably taken by a shark, these and many other problems were dealt with. The most serious one was probably when the hatch cover hinges broke and he had to do a running repair in consultation with the designer via satellite phone. An insecure hatch would have meant the end of the voyage.

Very unseasonable conditions throughout meant he had to spend upto four days at a time in the compartment waiting out seas that were sometimes horrific. He didn't see the sun for the first six weeks and after that only occasionally.

Seventy six days after leaving Newfoundland on 22 June 2001 he made landfall at Donegal Bay in Ireland on 5 September after paddling across 2400 km of open ocean. The first solo and unsupported crossing of the Atlantic by kayak.

*Kayak Across the Atlantic* is a straightforward and unadorned but very readable account of this venture. There is little attempt to glamorise or dramatise what is a remarkable achievement. His descriptions of his physical and mental states during the voyage and how he coped with many difficulties and problems are very matter of fact. There is some humour and he has a sense of irony which sometimes surfaces in unlikely places.

Included are thirteen colour photos, a map of the route and an early concept sketch of the craft used. He provides some biographical details and a short chapter on the origins of European sea kayaking.

Any paddler will find this a fascinating book and well worth reading.

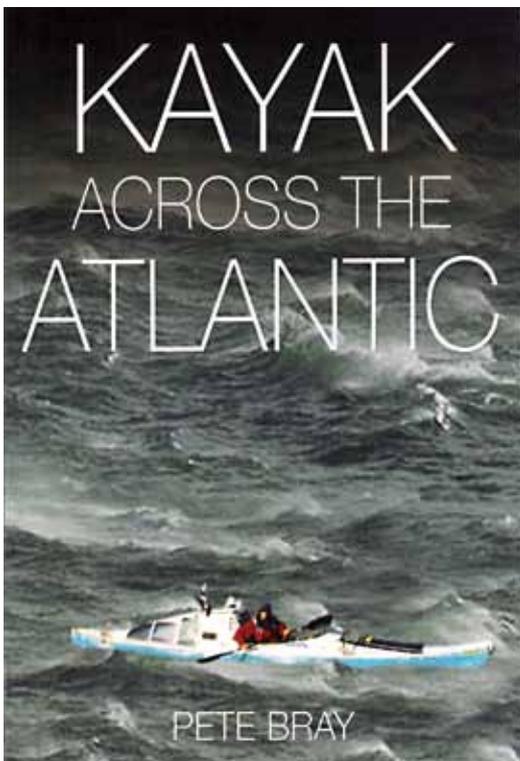
Afterword: since 2001, Pete Bray has not been idle. In 2003 he returned to Newfoundland and circumnavigated it by sea kayak, solo and unsupported. In 2004 he was a member of a four man team attempting to row the Atlantic in record time until their boat, *The Pink Lady*, was split in two by a storm 300 miles from their destination.

In 2005 he was awarded a a bravery medal by the Royal Humane Society for saving the life of another member of the team during this disaster. In December 2005 he finished the first sea kayak circumnavigation of South Georgia Island with Nigel Dennis, Jeff Allan and Hadas Feldmann. Before Hadas joined this trip, she was in the Israeli army. South Georgia Island has been described as the Everest of sea kayaking (see <http://www.humanedgetech.com/expedition/southgeorgia/>)

The book is in paperback of 175 pages, published by Polperro Heritage Press 2004 ISBN 0 9544233-4-8.

*Kayak Across the Atlantic* is available from the publisher [www.polperropress.co.uk](http://www.polperropress.co.uk) email: [polperro.press@virgin.net](mailto:polperro.press@virgin.net).

Post: Clifton-upon-Teme, Worcestershire WR6 6EN UK Price £9.95 plus airmail postage £3.15.



Setting out for my second attempt, June 2001



Training for the crossing, 2001



Arrival at Killibegs, Eire, 5th September 2001  
Whiskey and sandwich in hand

# Make your own paddle protector bag for \$4

This is a cheap and easily made paddle protector bag that will protect your two-piece paddle from scratches and knocks and prevent damage to your car's interior during transport. It will also keep the pieces together, making it easier to pack in the car and carry to the water's edge. Its not meant to be strapped on the deck.

The bag is surprisingly durable. The one I have has been used for three years and is still in good nick.

(When not being used as a paddle bag you can insert a chilled bottle of white or half a dozen cold cans down into the end of the bag and wrap the remainder around them.

The foil and foam material of the sunshade make for good insulation and will keep your libations cold for a couple of hours)

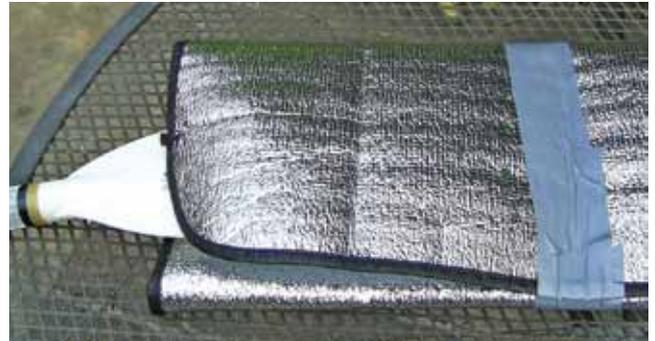
You will need a pair of scissors, a roll of durable tape (gaffer or duct are good) and a windscreen sunshade (this one cost \$4).



Simple needs — a pair of scissors, a roll of durable tape (gaffer or duct are good) and a windscreen sunshade



Step 1 Fold sunshade into thirds



Step 3 Insert paddle



Step 2 Fold one end back on itself and apply tape as shown



Step 4 Voila!

If you have a one piece paddle cut the bag in half, tape up the other end and slip the two pieces over the blades

# Phillip Island circumnavigation

By Phil Woodhouse

The plan originally was to paddle around French Island (≈70 km tide assisted) but the weather was perfect to go around Phillip Island (60.8 km). As I had not paddled around both in one hit my preference was for Phillip Island.

So with only the lights of the San Remo Bridge illuminating the out going stream, Greg Murray and I launched in to the fast moving stream. I strained my eyes to try and read the rippled swirling water and decide to ferry glide out past the middle of the channel and miss what ever was causing the bridge lights' rays to refract and reflect on the western side.

As I set my course around this disturbance, Greg called out a warning to me to avoid hitting a reef in front of me. What reef in front of me? There is some thing that I will pass on my right! So in that split second of time I altered my course to starboard while I wished that I had eaten more carrots as a kid or had the sonar of a dolphin. As soon as my boat's nose came around the stream was rocketing me straight in to the reef that was warned to be in front of me!

Greg at this stage (we are talking seconds here) was still giving me helpful advice on how to avoid imminent embarrassment and what ever consequences we both my have to endure if I did not extricate my self from my current situation. As my wish for better eye sight was fulfilled by default of proximity I put in some adrenalin charged strokes that positioned me clear of Greg's original warning. Where would you be without good mates watching out for you?

As we were carried down towards the ocean, the early morning light enabled us to negotiate the tidal race and soon we were cruising around Cape Woolamai heading for Pyramid Rock.

The morning was overcast, so when Greg tried to point out Pyramid Rock (photographed at right). I could not make it out and soon realised Greg could not see it as well. We set a bearing and headed off

in a significant wave height of 1.5 m (max 2.23) with an 8 to 15 second period.

This made for a lovely and enjoyable paddle with no sea to speak of except that the light breeze did chill me a bit.

At Pyramid Rock (20 km mark), we opted to go through the gap and deliberated for some time about the shallowness of the water and the break on the other side with the obvious risk of being dumped on the rocks. To paddle around would be approximately 500 m but what the heck, you can repair fibreglass.

Greg went first as a surge created sufficient water depth for the boats to pass over and I followed hot on his stern. However, I was left beached, thankfully on kelp and watched as Greg accelerated between and over the boars.

About three kilometres from the Nobbies we could feel the affect of the out going stream from Western Port. As we paddled under the observatory we could see a large yacht on the other side of the island. We negotiated around the reef breaks and made our way to the entrance with its out-going stream and incoming rollers. These shoaled and made that rumbling noise that makes you tense up, ready to be slammed as you snap your neck turning around trying to get a handle on the situation.

The yacht turned out to be the *Young Endeavour* and for the next 40 minutes or so, would be some 200 to 400 metres to port. It was great to take in the scenery since the sun had appeared and it was a beautiful day and great conditions. On the Western Port side of the Point Grant, you could see the observatory and after five minutes it was still there.

After ten minutes, you could look up while surfing down a roller to see the same aspect from five minutes ago. As we looked to port, the *Young Endeavour* would appear, then disappear, leaving only the last metre or so of its main mast and on the odd

occasion disappearing all together. After 15 minutes, the view of the observatory to starboard had changed little, despite all the paddling and surfing we were doing on a heading.

After 20 to 30 minutes the out-going stream let us go i.e. slack water was 20 minutes later than predicted, and we took off. During this time we had opportunity to see the break off Point Sambell and dared each other to surf it. As we approached it was estimated to be 1.3 to 1.6 m at the back (as measured using Greg or myself as a gauge). Greg ignored my invitation and taunts to surf the break as I did his through self preservation (I was chicken).

After Cat Bay, it was all very ho-hum, but the scenery and company was pleasant. We zig-zagged around to find the deeper channels and hopefully get some current assistance.

After Cowes the breeze came straight on and there was no assistance, so we just had to slap our way along in the chop and shallow water, continuing to hunt for the deeper channels between Rhyll and our destination. After 7 hours 40 minutes we landed back at New Haven. To the old and bold, this may be humdrum, but for me it is a must do one day-er, as we had a fantastic fun day.



## Training notes

By Peter Treby

The training group, comprising Tod Truscott, Geoff Brewster, Phil Woodhouse and Peter Treby, has run some interesting and enjoyable events in the first part of 2007.

The level three course started with a surf day at Inverloch. Launching at the ramp, we paddled out to the surf beach, and had a few thrills and spills while a stiff offshore westerly kept the waves up. The very keen Andrew Campbell came very close to performing a backwards pitchpole, to the delight of onlookers.

Our sea proficiency brainstorming and rescuing day was held at an excellent venue, the Flinders Golf Club, and later on the water at Flinders back beach. The golf club gave the sea proficiency

knights a round table for discussion, with a whiteboard, continuous tea and coffee, bar facilities, and a catered lunch. It was almost a pity to have to leave and paddle!

The course will continue with surf assessments on west coast paddles, and an assessment weekend with carefully choreographed incidents. Sea proficiency candidates who wish to improve particular skills should contact the training group members for encouragement and provocation.

The March long weekend saw a large group of

paddlers gather at the Cowes Caravan Park. With assistance from Julian, just back from his third Bass Strait crossing, and Les and company from a cancelled Prom trip, the faculty made sure that most, if not all learners gained an out-of-boat experience. Welcome to the new members who joined VSKC just to come on this weekend.



# A month in Canada

By Murray Hall

I spent a month in Canada, mostly in and around British Columbia and Vancouver Island. After a week attending to my daughter, (injured, snowboarding, Whistler Resort, where she worked), I took the opportunity to investigate sea kayaking possibilities, of which there are many in inner Vancouver and surrounding bays/inlets/open sea, and on Vancouver Island.

There are a number of commercial operations offering beginner to advanced services in many locations and environments. My activities were confined to Vancouver (inner and outer harbours) and Ladysmith, Vancouver Island. An excursion to Deep Cove, a fiord-like gorge North of Vancouver was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Vancouver's inner harbour, around Granville Island, is generally calm, suitable for beginners, surrounded by city skyscrapers, and peppered with marinas (Vancouver has to be the boat capital of the world), and moored craft, many illegally lived-on and not going anywhere. Aquabuses (sea-taxis) criss-cross this water, taking commuters and tourists to the many jetties.

The outer harbour, including Jericho and English beaches and Stanley Park, gets quite choppy and even challenging when the north wind gets up. Kayak hirers are discouraged from venturing into these waters, although I did on several occasions.

Ecomarine, the Granville Island business from which I hired boats, is associated with local clubs, and charges \$33

(Canadian) for two hours (single) paddling, proportionately less for longer periods. The sport is immensely popular in Vancouver, with hundreds of sea kayaks on the water on fine weekends.

I spent four days kayaking out of Ladysmith, on Vancouver Island's east coast. (Nanaimo, Vancouver Island is ninety minutes by large ferry from Vancouver, and Ladysmith is twenty minutes by bus south of Nanaimo). I hired

craft from Sealegs Kayaking at lower rates than in Vancouver (free on the last day!) and took day trips among the many stony islands, with a backdrop of forests and snow-covered mountains.

Except on the first day (40 knot winds stopped even the larger ferries), the weather was benign and I was able to paddle into the open sea several kilometres from Ladysmith. Only one other paddler was encountered, Dennis, sixty years



Sixty year old Dennis, practising his rolling skills among small islands off Ladysmith

The crowded inner harbour at Vancouver



old (same age as me but looking much younger!) and practising rolling (luckily I wasn't sufficiently waterproofed to attempt to roll in the incredibly cold water) off a small beach on one of the many rocky islands.

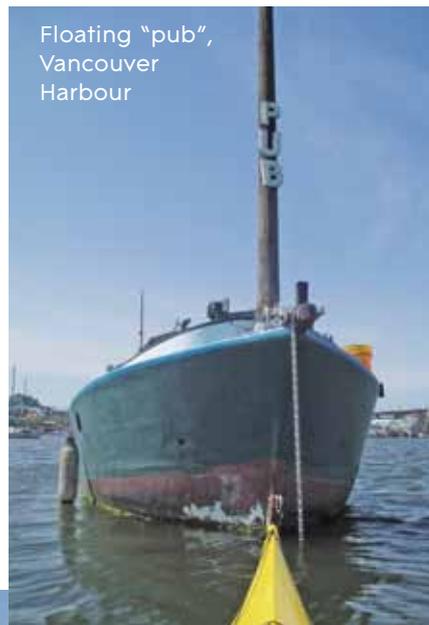
Ladysmith is the site of the annual Paddlefest, held the week after I left, and attracting thousands of paddlers and craft.

My experiences were limited to British Columbia, which itself is a sea kayaker's paradise. Further north, and (I'm told) on Canada's east coast, it's just as good!

Hopefully, I'll get the chance to explore some of these locations on my next visit (without the necessity of Halina again injuring herself).



Vancouver Island — traditional methods of floating and “herding” logs persist



Floating “pub”, Vancouver Harbour



A floating slum in Vancouver Harbour



Heading under the bridge to the outer harbour



Photo of the issue — how many lumps would you like?

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