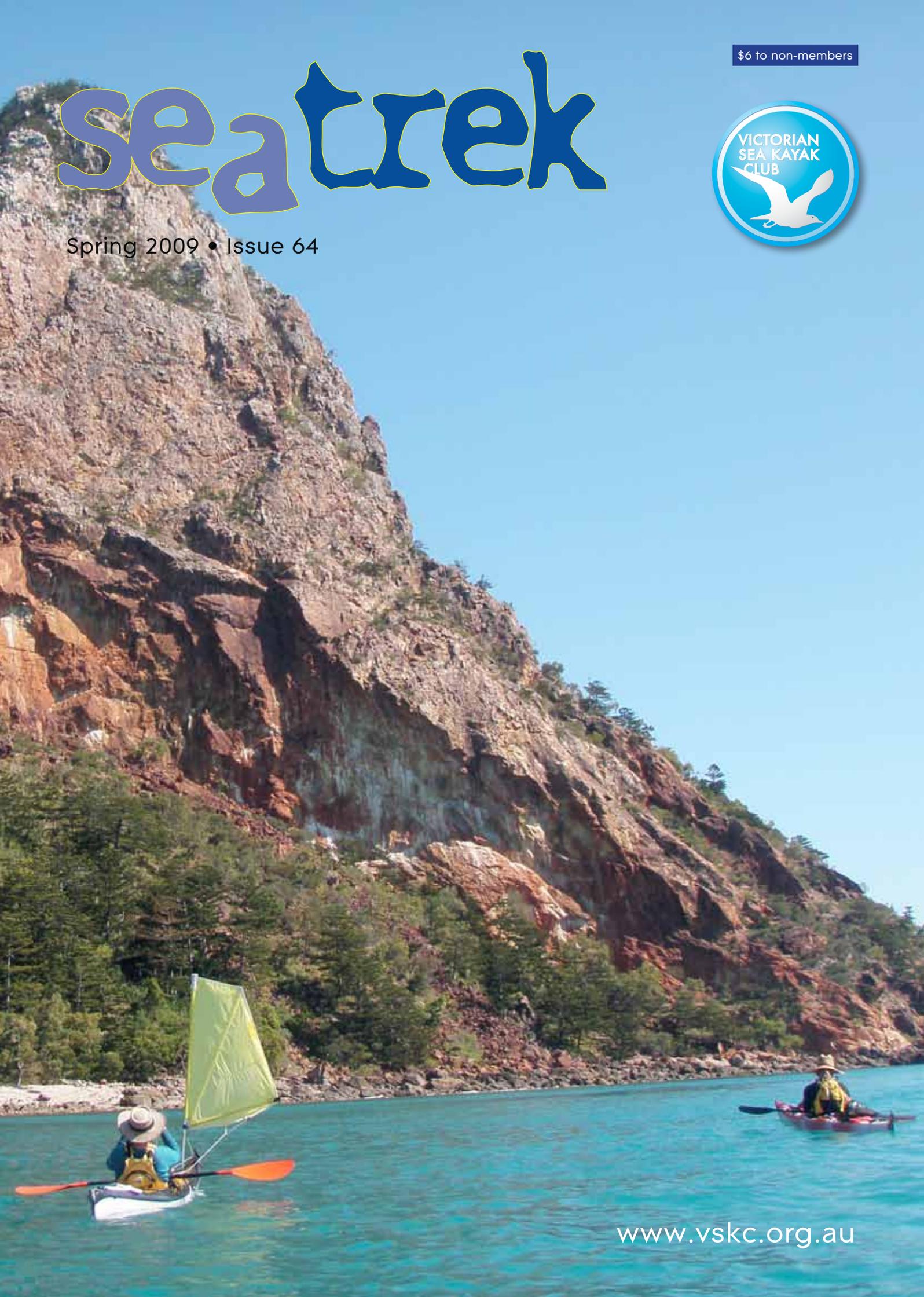


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\$6 to non-members



Spring 2009 • Issue 64



www.vskc.org.au

Paddling the Tasman Peninsular



Cape Conran log jam



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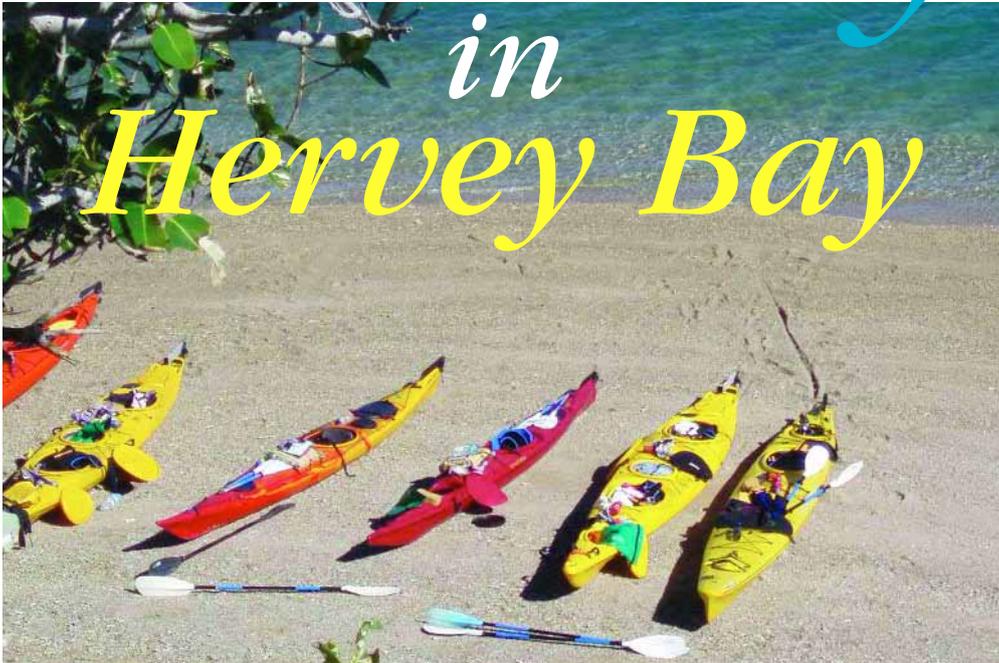
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Holiday

in

Hervey Bay



We are offering to members of VSKC an affordable and comfortable holiday destination for couples or small groups.



We are Barry and Anna. Our townhouse is in Hervey Bay, Queensland, opposite the beautiful sandy beach and close to restaurants and beachside cafes. It has three levels, three double bedrooms, large living and entertaining area, two bathrooms, a terrace, tropical garden, and large garage. It is fully furnished and has all kitchen requirements, as well as two bicycles and a double sea kayak with paddles, skirts and a trolley (easy access to the beach).

- Tarrif = up to four people = \$570/week.
- If more than four people + \$50/person/week



Local activities include: golf (a beautiful course is five minutes away), yoga, cycling, walking, swimming, beachcombing and sunbathing, fishing, sailing, kayaking, diving, tennis, lawn bowls, croquet, tai chi, boating (there is a modern marina) and excellent bird watching.



Places to go: World Heritage-listed Fraser Island (easy ferry access), Hervey Bay – the whale watching capital of Australia (and nearest domestic airport), galleries, fine restaurants, good shopping, country club, Cooloola National Park, Noosa Everglades, and more



See: www.fraserisland.au.com www.hervey.com.au



Contact: Barry/Anna on 0419327224, 03 9572 1625 or brouhaha@bigpond.net.au for more details and pictures



We seem to have survived the cold of winter and are now looking forward to cool crisp mornings that turn into the warm sunny days of spring — bring it on!

Many of our members fled north during the cold and by far, the Whitsundays are the most popular waters outside Victoria. I personally headed north to Magnetic Island with the family to revel in the twenty-eight degrees and there will no doubt be mine and many of these other trips written up in the next issue.

Terry Barry continues to drive our skills and training with a healthy group of trainee instructors looking like completing their requirements in time for the AGM. They are using our current Grade 3 intake as 'canon fodder' and this system is working exceptionally well. Good luck to all our trainees and prospective Grade 3s.

Our traditional Prom weekend in July had to be later in September, due to closure of Tidal River for maintenance. The only weekend before Christmas that Baldwin Spencer Lodge was available was Grand Final (AFL) and it will be interesting to see if a. the water is any warmer, b. the weather can be any better than last year, c. we discover how many footy fanatics we have amongst us.

The committee is already well underway with the planning of the AGM at Anglesea for the 6, 7 and 8 of November and I can only encourage all members to come along, especially those who are new and wishing to gain as much from the club as it can offer. Don't think this is some grand aficionado weekend, we all have a great time meeting new people, catching up with those we haven't seen for a while, making new paddling partners, learning heaps from the workshops and being awe-inspired by the VSKC and invitee guest speakers.

We have just secured Sandy Robson from West Australia as keynote speaker, to tell us about her circumnavigation SLAP (Sandy's Long Australian Paddle) and will have an amazing tale of the Tassie West Coast, told by our own Tina Rowley, John Evertze and Russell Blamey.

Raia and Neil continue to 'wrangle' Grade 3s to run trips and I hope that all members will find trips that they will enjoy available on the web site during the months ahead. If you have a particular trip that you would like run, contact these two and I have no doubt that a trip

leader will be found and your dream put into reality.

I have no doubt that many of you greet each day with a bowl of cereal in your lap and a look at Freya Hoffmeister's progress as she pounds her way around Australia's coastline. Although the arrival date is still subject to a few thousand kilometres at the moment, Freya is rounding the bottom of Western Australia and preparations are underway here for the big welcome.

This journey will make world news upon Freya's arrival into Caffyn Cove, Queenscliff and all members will have the opportunity to be there as part of this monumental occasion. The VSKC will also be hosting the 'after party', where members will have the opportunity to meet Freya and hear first hand some of this amazing 'Race Around Australia'.

We will keep you posted on the events in the lead up to her trip completion via the web site and ENews.

Speaking of ENews, it is to become more regular, members without email will have a hard copy mailed to them. ENews will be our way of keeping members informed of what we are doing as a committee and also getting news items to you quickly, some of which we may wish for a fast response and there may be things we don't wish to put on the web site. We are always keen for feedback if this is not getting to you, please check

your email address is current in the members' section.

Lastly, get out on the water and enjoy yourselves as if every day is your last, so you can look back and be happy that you had a go at everything you ever wanted.

The pod grows

Since our last newsletter we have had a healthy influx of members and I would like to welcome the following new paddlers -

Lindsay Bridgford, Gayle Burke, Mark Collier, Darren Collins, Tony Cusack, Jon Day, Margaret De Vries, Tim Grogan, Andrew Kollmorgen, Victor Lazar, Ben Newman, Scott Reid, Mark Renouf, Brian Roberts, Darren Ryan, Mick Shankie, Grant Stewart, Jeannine Strohbeck, Sean Sullivan, Paul Thurston, Ian Tovey, Kenny Wallace, Dayna West and Roland Williams.

I encourage existing members to make themselves known, share your wealth of knowledge and encourage our new members to get out on the water with us as often as possible and as this is what makes the VSKC the warm, endearing club that it is.

Enjoy

Pres.

0411 262 538

The editor's rant

by Tony Chick

VSKC members have been roaming far and wide.

In this issue, we have a bit of a focus on high end expedition paddling. The iconic Bass Strait has had VSKC paddlers all over it again this year; these crossings are not mainstream sea kayaking and never will be. It's committed and world-class paddling, if you ask me! A credit to the leaders and all involved. Well done. (Only the Tassie ferry has now crossed Bass Strait more often than Julian!)

Congratulations especially to John, Greg and Tina, on pulling off the very demanding and rarely paddled western Bass Strait crossing.

Tina Rowley is the first woman to

achieve this crossing. Historic stuff I reckon!

In this issue, some of our most accomplished expedition paddlers share some hard-learned insights into the nuts and bolts of a successful expedition.

Finally, remember for *Trek* to be good for anything other than swatting sand flies, we need your contributions.

Many thanks to all contributors to this issue.



Participants: John Evertze Nadgee Expedition
Tina Rowley Nadgee Expedition
Greg Murray Nadgee Solo

Marengo (near Apollo Bay) to King Island and on to Tasmania down to Strahan

Our plan was to paddle from Marengo over to King Island and down the north west coast of Tassie ending the trip in Strahan. We planned to take three to four weeks and each participant was well prepared. We had thirty days' worth of food each, we all carried 406 EPIRBs, we each had two flares strapped to the cockpit, strobe lights and we each carried a marine radio, in case we lost sight of each other.

Having scanned the weather sites, we saw a window of opportunity to attempt to start our paddle across from Marengo to King Island on Wednesday 18 March. We decided to start at 3.30 pm, as it would give us some daylight hours to paddle as much as we could, hopefully getting out of the shipping area before night fall. It seemed a little surreal heading down to Marengo and stopping for a counter lunch, knowing that we were going to paddle 100 kilometres that day/night.

Packing came easy as I had already done

Heading for Tassie

a dry run at home and everything was already packed in dry bags. We said goodbye to our mate Greeny who had driven Greg's car down and paddled out into the ocean on a compass bearing. The forecast was NE winds of 5–10 knots, swell 1–2 metres.

We had agreed to stop for a break at each twenty kilometre mark. Each twenty kilometres was on average about three hours. The first twenty kilometres seemed to go quickly and we stopped to eat some of John's home made egg and bacon pie.

After forty kilometres, the only sea life that I saw was one lone seal which was very surprised to see us. It was about 8.30 pm and it was starting to get dark, our lights came on which appeared bright and easy to see. We realised that our compasses were hard to see and John used his removable compass with a light stick under it to see the compass easier.

John paddled out in front and Greg and I seemed to paddle at a comfortable pace nearby. At the sixty kilometre break, I tried to have a bite of my sandwich but found it increasingly hard to swallow, after what seemed like ten minutes to chew the one bite I decided to give up.

Paddling in total darkness without a moon for me was bad as I became disorientated. At each break, my kayak moved around and drifted away from the

others.

Having no light to see a horizon was making me feel sea sick.

Without much warning of being nauseous, I asked Greg to stop paddling so that I could lean on his boat whilst I threw up. After doing this five times I wiped my mouth and paddled on feeling alright. Later on Greg asked that I stop so that he too could be sick, Greg spewed in sympathy to my sickness and I in turn repeated this by spewing up again an hour later.

Darkness seemed to play havoc with both Greg and myself as we both got sick and Greg needed to take a Nodozo as he found it hard to keep his eye lids from shutting. It was at this time that John stopped up ahead for the both of us and asked if we were alright. Later on, John told us that he had various thoughts running through his mind on how to survive with two sea sick paddlers.

Luckily for us we were ok to keep going, powering on by adrenaline. By three in the morning we could faintly make out the light on King Island. I kept paddling, looking at my watch regularly and praying that dawn would come quickly.

Light came at about 6.30 am and it seemed to suck out our energy as the last twenty kilometres seemed to take forever. Approaching Victoria Cove was a great feeling, as we could see the tide moving and we were able to paddle directing



into the cove. Greg asked if I could wait whilst he got to shore to take a picture, but after being in the boat for seventeen and a half hours I thought stuff that, I needed to get out and stand up!

Once all ashore, the next challenge was to wheel our kayaks one by one up the sand to safety. We all dressed and had a cup of tea and waved as one of Greg's son in law friends flew over the cove. Greg had arranged to get some photos taken whilst on the water but we got there a little too early ... next time?

We all chatted, feeling satisfied in ourselves and dozed off knowing that we all had made history. Greg being the oldest paddler so far to make the crossing, John to be the first paddler crazy enough to make the crossing twice and me being the first female to make the crossing.

I woke up and noticed that Greg and John had gone for a walk, I followed their tracks and found them chatting to a visitor looking at Cape Wickham. The visitor drove off and came back with some blue vein cheese for us to celebrate. He was visiting his daughter and told us some local information about the island.

Friday 20 March

Victoria Cove to Millers Bay — forty-five kilometres 8.30 am to 6.30 pm.

Weather had forecasted a 2–3 SW swell with little wind, perfect day for going down the west coast. We all paddled with little fuss and the conditions down to Curry was mostly flat with lots of fat salmon jumping out of the water.

John could not resist and spent some time trawling down the coast catching two big two kilogram plus salmon.

Our intended landing for the day was to be Fitzmaurice Bay, but like everything, paddling into SW swell is solid and with a heavy loaded boat takes time. We decided with daylight coming to an end to land at Millers Bay about nine kilometres short of our destination. We had to manoeuvre coming in between rocks on either side of the entrance and we each made it into the bay without harm.

Setting up camp in the dark and in coldness is little fun, but having fresh salmon for tea made up for it all. We all decided that we would have to get up a bit earlier to race against the clock before it gets dark tomorrow.

Sat 21 March

Millers Bay to Grassy — 45 kilometres

We paddled off into a rising swell and with the unknown ahead, we decided to paddle into Fitzmaurice Bay to ring our land base, Tony Sly, for another weather forecast. Tony advised us that the forecast was for NE wind and that it would decrease from 10–15 to 10 knots.

Tony having sailed many parts of Australia and Tasmania advised that the conditions looked alright to paddle around Stokes Point. The seas felt comfortable leaving Fitzmaurice Bay and we were all aware that from this point on that there would be limited landing spots available.

Travelling down the west coast of King Island was very scenic and Greg and John disappeared into a hidden cove behind some reefs. I quietly cursed them for leaving me, but I chose not to follow them, believing that they were looking for gauntlets.

Nearing Stokes Point looked a bit rough as there were many bombies to be seen.

We gave this point a wide berth but before we realised it, we were paddling in a tidal stream that had standing waves of one metre. Luckily for us, the tide was with us and we found ourselves quickly rounding the point.

We stopped for lunch at Seal Bay around the corner and laughed about our luck rounding this point as we had not considered there being a tidal stream to contend with. We all agreed that if luck had not been on our side, we would have had to turn back and surfed into a bay that looked reasonable to land on.

After lunch we decided to push on for Grassy, as the thought of spending a Saturday night at the pub with a steak and for John and Greg, a beer would be ideal.

We arrived at a sandy beach just outside of Grassy Harbour as there was a campsite. Coming into to shore, Greg forgot

to put his rudder up and when he surfed in the boat went sideways and he snapped off his rudder. Greg was not a happy camper until a local King Islander came walking by with no bra on.

After making camp, we had a bit of a journey trying to find our way to the pub, a local driving by was happy to give us a lift (about three kilometres) up to the Grassy club, saying that the sweet chilli octopus was good. Luckily Greg's charm and friendliness quickly got us a hire vehicle organised and a lift back to the campsite when the pub closed.

We spoke to a few locals who could not believe where we had come from. John and Greg celebrated with beers but I found that I had a huge craving for lemonade and drank about four bottles straight away. After the pub closed, Marie, who managed the bar, kindly drove us back to the campsite, arranging to pick us up in the morning for a shower and breakfast.

Sunday 22 March

It had been decided the night before and before the trip started that we would have some rest days and enjoy King Island. Marie came back to the campsite in the morning and took us back to her house to arrange a hire car and have access to showers.

Marie advised that her husband was away cray fishing down the south of Tassie and would not believe that we had paddled here from Victoria. Marie explained that she was a true 'Kind Islander'. Marie advised that if you were not born here



Departure day at Apollo Bay



you were not a local. True King Islanders had to be brewed and born on KI. Marie advised that true KIs would be extinct in the next 100 years, as the local hospital stopped delivering babies about forty years ago. All deliveries and major surgery was now done in Burnie.

Our rental car was arranged and a lift down to Curry was organised for John. Greg and I went back to camp and it was arranged that we would have a restaurant meal at the Grassy pub that night. We went for a drive to Stokes Point to see where we had paddled from the day before. This day it looked very wild and woolly. We drove over to Curry to see the sights and then visited the King Island cheese factory to buy a few local treats.

That night we went back to the pub for a meal. We were told that the local cook Steve makes all his meals from local produce and cooks a five star restaurant meal.

The sweet chilli octopus was a local favourite and very tasty. Main course was trumpeter, carrots, zucchini, potatoes and roasted fennel. Each vegetable had a real flavour to it and the fish was excellent. Steve enticed us with dessert which was baked quince with stewed rhubarb and KI cream. Yum!

After dinner we went back into the main bar and met some locals Betty, Bevan, Duncan and a blow-in called Brent. Betty and Bevan, who own the Kelp Crafts shop, asked if we wanted to join them at their house as they were having a party. John and Greg were pretty keen so the bar was quickly closed and we walked across to Betty and Bevan's house.

John and Greg at Stokes Point KI



Bevan makes a good home brew and Betty proudly showed me Bevan's stash of 300 plus bottles in the back room. John and Greg were happily talking to the locals and drinking lots whilst I quickly stopped after one and a half pints of Bevan's brew, feeling a headache coming on and not wanting to get blind being the designated driver.

As the night wore on, Greg was running around Betty's lounge room dancing away to old time music and John was starting to dribble talking to Duncan. Bevan was trying to talk to me in another language that he called 'aborigine talk' and Marie was on the couch with her legs up dancing to a song called bend and stretch it!

After some time, Greg came over to me and stated urgently that "we must go as the beer was not going to stop". I told Greg to tell John that and after some time we said our goodbyes and made our way back to the camp site. Going to bed had its challenges for John and Greg as Greg fell on his tent and broke a pole and John fell over sideways trying to take a leak. Two sore heads coming up for the morning!

Monday 23 March

Morning came and two people did not feel so fantastic. Luckily for me, I felt fine and let them both know it. It was decided at breakfast that the weather was favourable to leave King Island (SE winds turning variable) and paddle to Albatross Island the next day. We decided that we would have to leave at 3.00 am to ensure that we made the island in daylight as well as get the tides right. We had about sixty kilometres to paddle, but in this area with the swells coming from

the SW and strong currents, we actually paddled about eighty kilometres.

We found that when we left in the early morning, the first twenty kilometres we had drifted to the west and had to keep correcting ourselves to try to get back on track. As daylight approached, the sky was overcast and fog was hiding all land.

At about 1.00 pm we could just make out Albatross Island. The tides/currents have a

huge affect in the north west region and we at times slowed down in our paddling to then double our speed just by angling our kayaks a few degrees.

We got to Albatross Island at about 3.30 pm and John quickly hooked his kayak onto mine and then swam in to make contact with Tony, our land base, before the 4.00 pm deadline.

The landing was tricky; Greg went in first whilst John held his kayak away from the rocks and sea surges. Greg unloaded the contents his boat into bags to make the carry over the rocks easier. I then sent John's boat in and John and Greg repeated emptying the boat and then putting it safely on top of rocks.

I then went in and the scenario was repeated again. Coming to shore and emptying boats one at a time took about two hours, jagged and slippery rocks make work go slow as we did not want a hole in a kayak or a twisted ankle.

We climbed the hill and camped away from a nesting albatross. It was a great feeling of achievement to have made the journey from King Island that day with only twenty kilometres to Hunter Island.

Wednesday 25 March

With the right tide not appearing until 12.00 noon, we slept in and started to pack our kayaks at 10.00 am. The sea surge was higher today, so it became a quick effort to stuff everything into the kayak and then jump in our boats.

We had the right tide that would assist us to get to Hunter Island. We were aware that in the next few days, the wind would be increasing as well as the swell so we decided to head for the eastern side of Hunter Island camping at Shepard's Bay.

The fog again hid the land, as well as Dangerous Banks. You could hear the banks in the distance but could not see it until we were near. Luckily, we had paddled below the banks and were well clear. The tide appeared to suck us up the top end and around into the passage between Hunter and Three Hummock Island. We reached Shepard's Bay and made camp for the night.

Thursday 26 March

Paddled down to Cave Bay eight kilometres south of Shepard's Bay to find water and camp for a few days as there were strong SW winds coming.

Looking at our maps, we were aware of the creeks in the area and from the tracks we knew that there was a homestead. We walked along the track about two

thirds of a kilometre away and came upon it. We saw the creeks along the way, but these were brackish and dry. No one was home at the homestead as it looked like a weekender, so we took some water and walked back to camp.

Friday 27 March

We had a rest day due to strong winds and increasing swell. John went fishing, Greg went running and I went walking. John caught six salmon and whilst we were all sitting around camp, a plane landed near the homestead and soon after took off again.

Saturday 28 March

Woke up and felt dizzy, fell over in tent, Greg said that I might be dehydrated, so I made a note to drink lots. After breakfast, we heard a tractor coming along the tracks and it came out onto the beach and headed towards us. Hugh Macguire leases Hunter Island with his family and invited us up for a coffee later in the day.

Hugh collected us later on and put us in the back of his tractor trailer. Hugh advised that he is a beef farmer from Smithton and would be here for a few days with a retired farmer, Roger. Hugh stated that his father had the lease for Hunter since 1953 as a twenty-one year lease. Their family gave it up for about ten years and they had recently bought it back from a Victorian.

Hugh's father used to breed cattle and then take them over to sell on the mainland. Hugh took us for a drive to the western side of the Island and showed us some aboriginal sites. Hugh stated that orange bellied parrots fly through the island on their way to Werribee.

Hugh provided us with some local knowledge of the water ways and advised that we should cross three hours after the change in the tides to get slack tide. (Hugh showed us a great book about local knowledge of the islands; the book is called *The Legends of Hunter Island* by Pauline Buckby. Can be purchased off the internet and well worth a read about the history of the area.)

Went for a walk along the beach about 7 pm and we were met by Craig and Lochie the fishermen diving for abalone. Craig and Lochie were going to look at an aboriginal cave nearby and asked if we wanted to go in the boat to have a look. We jumped in their runabout and went around to see the aboriginal cave. After this, Craig took us to his trawler boat and gave us four abalone to take back to camp.

Sunday 29 March

SE winds 15–20. We ate the abalone for morning tea and Hugh met us on his tractor down at the beach. We said goodbye and left Cave Bay at 12 noon to get across the channel to Woolnorth Point at 1.00 pm. The wind had picked up and we got slack water across. We pulled in on the eastern side of the point and then on further investigation, we decided to paddle round to Dawson Bay to paddle less the following day.

That night, we were informed that strong SE winds would be around for a few days and we contemplated what we would do.

Monday 30 March

Woke up at 5.00 am dizzy again, I was moving around on my knees as standing up felt hard. After much talking, Greg and John told me that there was no shame in saying that I could not go on and it

was decided that I could potentially become a liability going down to Strahan, as we would be paddling into territory that would not have road access.

We decided to end the trip and we paddled back to Woolnorth Point. We set up camp and Greg went walking to the homestead at Woolnorth as we were aware that the land was privately owned.

After discussing why I might be feeling dizzy all the time, John checked me for ticks. I thought of vertigo or low blood pressure as the dizziness would come and go. Spent the rest of the day sleeping, reading and waiting for our land crew, Fuzz, to come over on the ferry. The wind was strong and consistent getting to a solid thirty knots.

Tuesday 31 March

Fuzz picked us up at lunch time and we travelled to Marrawah, a surf beach, to camp the night and celebrate. The wind remained strong and was predicted to stay this way for about a week. We all commented that we had made a wise decision to end the trip.

Greg left the trip the next day wanting to get home and John, Fuzz and I decided to go where the good weather was, so we headed to the east coast to meet up with friends and do some paddling.

I can only put my dizziness down to vertigo set off by the night paddling, not having a horizon to look at played with my mind.

On Albatroos Island



Hunter Island



I have sought the opinions of five accomplished expedition paddlers and posed some broad questions to draw on their extensive big trip experience, basically — what works? What doesn't?

Expedition styles, methods and personalities may differ but common themes and goals emerge. What can we learn from those pushing the high end to apply to our own multi day trips?

Tina Rowley, John Evertze, Julian Smith, Dave Winkworth, and Peter Treby kindly responded to the following. Many thanks for sharing your hard won experience.

What works, what doesn't?

Personal training

What personal training do you do to maintain paddle fitness?

Julian We work on time on-water paddling, not just distance, do trips that are ten to twelve hours long, at least once each week, plan not to get out of kayak during the trip, Murray marathon is great expedition training, its five big days back to back, no rest days, makes a good test if you're a first timer on a big expedition.

Peter I try to run a few times per week, usually 3–4 km, sometimes up to fifteen kilometres. A few body weight exercises and stretches, sometimes pick up weights but not consistently. Leading up to a longer trip, increase paddling in the 20 – 40 km range, with shorter Yarra paddles during week of one to two hours.

John Paddling, swimming, surfing, drinking beer.

Tina Paddling, swimming, walking, weights and sometimes, when I am feeling energetic, attempt to run. (See following story, for Tina's more in-depth account of her personal expedition preparations TC.)

Dave Plenty of paddling! Just putting the boat in the water, practicing some turns for an hour or so is better than nothing! In the weeks before a trip, I like to do at least a few hours a day. I also do a 10 km walk/run early every morning. Mixing it up I find to be just fantastic. I also take 3 kg barbells along for some upper body exercise. A good thing to remember is that your body is your motor, so it had better work well when you're out of sight of land!

Group preparation, training, attitude

Any aspects of preparation, training do you feel essential leading into a trip, as group or from a solo perspective?

Julian Once again, if all could do the Murray marathon, it would confirm fitness, select group carefully, cohesion is more important than skill, almost! You can learn the skills but can you learn to live together happily for three weeks?

Train as the group, live as the group. The attitude, will sort out what goals each member has and will they be possible and compatible, they need to be similar and flexible, you will need to do a trip of 4–5 days at least first before a big trip of several weeks, group debriefs often or daily find out what is in everyone's head!

If you identify a problem, fix it early, don't try to wing it, it won't go away and may ruin or end trip early. One leader should be in charge of this and will need to develop skills to manage this to the final outcome.

Peter Try to learn as much as possible about the area to be visited, pore over maps, check the sailing directions and

Tina paddling Matsuyker Island



charts for tricky areas, read books, scour the internet for other paddler's experiences of the area and talk to people who have paddled in the area. Paddle a lot with other members of a long trip.

John Getting to know who you are paddling with and going on weekend trips with them beforehand, paddling in similar conditions and long distance paddling, getting maps, food and camping equipment together.

Do as much homework as you can as far as prevailing weather conditions, tides, swell patterns work for the area you intend paddling.

Be realistic about the trip you are planning, whether it be solo or as a group e.g. if you don't like swell and wind, don't plan a trip along an exposed Southern Ocean coast.

Tina same as John, also need to paddle in gear that I am taking i.e. wet suit. Need to try out all gear and gadgets before trip. Have fun.

Dave Preparation for a trip is almost as much fun as the trip itself! I believe that getting a "feel" for the trip is essential. These days, we study Google Earth for hours, notating maps and making notes. Sometimes it feels like cheating, with these modern aids!

Allocating tasks to trip participants is a time saver, but I always like to know every bit, just in case I end up alone on the trip! Asking questions of paddlers who have previously done your intended route is a good idea. Trawling the internet for items of interest is also worthwhile.

Some people say that a big trip is just a whole lot of day trips strung together! I reckon it's much more than that and that you need to *focus* your mind on your trip. You will be on your own and you have to make it to the end to get out, especially for remote trips. You have to look after yourself and you have to look after your boat and gear and have the ability to repair any breakages. *Focus, focus, focus* is important.

Decisions

How are decisions on your expeditions made? Is a "leader" necessary?

Who has the last word?

Julian A trip with no leader will fail! The leader should inform, update and gain opinions of the group then, make final decisions. If the group does not have confidence in the ability or decision making of the leader, then it's too late and it's over! Find safe route home!

Or appoint new leader (good luck with this one). Keep debriefing and it should not get to this stage.

Peter Democracy is OK when things are going smoothly, but when difficult decisions need to be made, a person with steadiness needs to exert their influence.

John A trip leader may not always be necessary, depending on the expedition group.

If you have a group that regularly paddles together, knows each others' ability and communicates well, you may not need a formal leader, (constant communication is the key).

Tina Decisions are made in collaboration with the group.

Dave I think that the higher the standard of a trip, the less the need for a leader. Generally decisions are "group consensual". I must say I do like to be self sufficient in everything on a trip in case I want to do a side trip along the way, only if it doesn't endanger any of the group, of course

Group limits or rules

Are group limits or rules set prior to the trip? For example, a pre-determined weather forecast beyond which you will not paddle? (When are worst case scenarios or a "plan B" discussed, or not possible prior?)

Julian All members must know what conditions they are expected to cope with and handle prior to trip. This is part of prep and training, otherwise you could be stuck on some island for some time.

A plan B is worthwhile, but may not always be possible, make sure you have time to complete trip in a worst weather outcome, or a plan to fall back to get out point, or sit it out and go bushwalking and do camp maintenance. This situation needs to be well planned for prior.

Peter A group is forced to paddle to the lowest performance, since once you are committed to a long crossing, if one person is having trouble, everyone has a problem. A general consensus on what paddling conditions are acceptable will have evolved by paddling together many times before a big trip

John Limits and rules are set in a round about way depending on your situation.

Group limits depend more upon group dynamics, similar expectations, paddling ability and enthusiasm.

I find pre-determined weather forecast limits a fairly grey area. Eg. you may set out on a trip thinking you won't paddle

in winds stronger than 20 knots and swells greater than three metres, but you may have to lift the bar slightly as you get used to the conditions in order to keep the trip moving (after you have sat on the beach for the last ten days and you are running out of food, water and metho).

Worst case scenarios and "plan B" are definitely discussed before a decision is made.

Tina Discuss some rules/boundaries/expectations before beginning trip.

Dave I've never participated in big trip which had group limits set. However, I think it is an excellent idea for larger and less experienced groups, especially on weather limits.

Resources

On expeditions, do you pool any resources or prefer all paddlers be totally self sufficient?

Julian I like all paddlers to be self sufficient to a point they can cope if separated (yes, it will happen, probably more so to higher skilled level of trips, due to confidence in ability).

But sharing some food stuffs, radios, spots and GPS may be required due to financial constraints, e.g. one shotgun may be enough to gather food for all!

Fishing gear, diving gear, etc, though this should not include maps, charts etc. I require all my members to have personal EPIRB or spot unit, this is for on land use as well as water, some members travel far and wide cross country by themselves without indicating exactly where!

Peter Self sufficiency is my preference.

Tina Get everyone to think about being self sufficient just in case it is needed.

John Agree with Tina

Dave No more pooling resources for me! I stopped that long ago. It just didn't work for me — too many personal preferences to consider, especially with food! Little preferences conflicts can spoil a trip. For example, one paddler likes to eat before dark, another likes to wait another hour. I paddle totally self sufficient. It's no big deal really, only a slight weight penalty perhaps.



Stress and pod communication

How do you manage or gauge group stress? Pod communication? (Is it an issue?)

Julian Again, group training, debriefs, sort out spread and breaks, speed, direction prior to leaving land, on big crossings you should all be looking out for each other, set up leader and tail ender.

If conditions are rough, regularly group up then go off again, then reform again. This requires practice and if you can't handle paddling by yourself in a big spread, your training has been flawed, conditions may not allow close contact or raft up. Sort out what signals you will use as a group and practice them.

Peter You can pick up how people are coping by whether they look after themselves, keep warm and comfortable, eat and drink well. Anyone not keeping themselves in good condition may need a rest, a short day, or more help.

A group embarking on a long trip will already have a good idea of how everyone copes from past challenging trips.

John Stress can come in different forms. Work out what the stress is about and talk about it on land, not on water as communication on the water can be difficult.

Pre-paddling nerves are normal and usually subside as you get into the paddle. If this turns into stress and fear, get off the water as soon as possible.

If you have paddled together as a group consistently in different in weather and sea states, you get an idea of what can stress people out.

Tina Observe group dynamics and if necessary discuss openly risks, concerns, thought, feelings

Dave Not an issue really. I've found that stress can be related to the standard of the trip – participants should be vetted on their ability before the start. Re communication, VHF radios are a good idea on regular skeds. Last year, on a big trip, my companion refused to take his radio to save weight. Stuff him. He was the one who got lost and suffered!

Specialized gear

Any schmiko gear recently found its way into your bag of tricks? (Beyond normal kayak fit out standard)

Julian Latest thing is the spot tracking device, much better value than EPIRB, bright high visibility tops and hats are mandatory at sea.

Peter The Spot satellite messenger is worth using. Gives comfort to the people at home. A ruddered kayak is probably most efficient for covering distance.

Dave Winkworth's light spare paddles are good.

Tina Female whizzer, to assist me to go to the toilet sitting in a kayak and a female wetsuit that has a zip in the crotch area allowing me to go to the toilet with minimal fuss.

Dave A set of "Paddlewheels" are fantastic – never be without them now! I'm working on refining my fresh water distiller at the moment. It's much lighter and cheaper than a desalinator and will give me great peace of mind on my next trip.

GPS

What use do you put your GPS to? (Is this a dumb question? I'm thinking not the obvious stuff, maybe currents, drift, etc)

Julian We use GPS to gauge drift in currents on crossings, basically set course and the unit tells you how far of course left or right and to calculate aim off, work out exact tide change and all the obvious features.

Peter Don't have one, because of disinclination to try and stare at a small screen while on the water, and not carry anything unnecessary. Will get one soon and experiment.

John I use a GPS mainly to gauge effects of current and drift. Also to avoid hidden

South West Cape Tasmania



hazards, bombies and reefs, especially on foggy days.

Possible location of a missing paddler, assuming they also have a GPS and radio or phone contact. I don't use a GPS as a substitute for a compass and chart. A GPS can fail.

Dave I use a Garmin Gecko – it's the simplest, lightest GPS. I do all my navigation each night on maps and charts with a Portland square. Then I put the day's destination and a safety exit landmark perhaps into the GPS to see that the GPS and I agree! Then I put the GPS away in the day hatch and don't use it (I use the marine compass) unless I can't find the island to land on! There are too many gear freaks that rely on the GPS and skip mapping practice. I wouldn't trust electronics half a metre above the water all the time!

I think that on a big trip you get a feel for the environment around you – the weather, the tides, the currents etc. This sixth sense should be cultivated and used!

Navigation

How are mid trip navigation decisions made (is any one person responsible?)

Julian Generally the leader sets course, but I will often appoint a navigator, we raft up or form up group and decide on variations, but this will depend on skill of group, lately I've been spoilt by having very skilled members on my Bass Strait crossings, we throw around a few ideas and quickly agree on a plan.

Peter By me.

John Generally I like to have my paddle routes worked out in advance if it's a long open ocean crossing and stick to it unless something unforeseen happens.

With short crossings and distances, I tend to make it up as I go along, with consideration of what other group members may want to do or see.

There is no reason why navigation can't be shared around, if others have the ability and desire.

Dave If everyone is self sufficient, they should have a map in a waterproof case on deck, an accurate marine compass, a watch, a tide chart, adequate food and water and of course a GPS if they need it. With these items, group consensus shouldn't be a problem!

Last year, on a big remote trip, my companion decided to save about \$100 on a set of maps (he took none!) and instead spent \$600 on a GPS with a colour screen and up-loadable maps! Well, what a

piece of junk it was! His uploaded maps showed no roads, tracks, mangroves; spot heights etc and the names of some islands on his GPS didn't match my charts. Don't get me started!

Food and camp

Practical in the kayak lunch idea. Best light weight main meal

Julian We have been using freeze dried meals from the defence forces however, those pasta type cheesy meal things seem to be good you need plenty of calories on the big trips. We live on salada s,peanut butter and kraft cheese! You have to think light and compact.

Peter Small nibbles of nuts, dried fruit, or bars, if anything. If I am having issues with reflux, sometimes don't eat or drink until the end of the day. Rissoni with can of fish has become an evening meal staple.

John Adding fresh fish to de-hy curried vegetables is a definite winner.

Tina Found that Vita wheat's with cheese and salami good for lunches. Usually make these up on land and put them into zippy bags for easy access. Home made dehydrated meals are the best for main meal.

Dave My golden rule for lunch is that you must be able to access and eat it on a rough sea. Simple as that! There will be times when you are unable to land for lunch. My lunch is simply nuts, dried fruit and a couple of biscuits in a ziplock bag. It stores well for a couple of months and it's easy to eat – I can munch it quickly or graze over an hour.

For a main meal I go for rice or pasta cooked in a Jetboil. Put 150 g of rice or pasta (macaroni generally) in the pot, add whatever flavouring / dried sauce you have and add a measured amount of water. Bring to the boil, switch off and read a book for 10 – 12 minutes. Stir and eat. Bigger me, it doesn't get any easier than that, does it?

Improvements

In hindsight, anything you would improve or change, do differently?

Julian Don't assume you will be paddling everyday, take enough food so that if you get stuck in the middle of Bass Strait for ten days, you don't run low! The fish don't always bite and many furry animals are hard to catch. Keep in mind that if you can't paddle, the weather is probably crap for much else as well.

Peter Don't go out too hard early in a long trip, work into it.

Tina Become a man! (Need some balls!) Need to be stronger ...

John Would like to improve on my diving and fishing skills.

Dave I seem to be always working on something for the Nadgee. Lately it's been refining the wheels system and their deck storage, a new lighter simpler foot pump and front bulkhead, a new adjustable footrest system, a rudder bracket with line rollers and a low tapered deck bag.

Every trip is different. I like to come home and look at the gear I took on the trip. Ideally I would've used every item except the repair kit and the first aid kit! If something (other than boat and body repair kits) didn't get used I might consider leaving it behind next time or finding something else that will do the job!

Anything work particularly well?

Julian My last two groups across Bass Strait, due to good selection, training, communication and a good sense of humour. At the end of a big trip, ask yourself or the group, would you do another similar trip together?

If the answer is yes, then congratulations, you are there! You have done well and succeeded where many do not. If the answer is no, then learn from it, work out where you failed and try again, it takes a couple of goes to get it right!

Peter "The best number for an expedition is one." P. Caffyn.

Solo paddling is great if you can stand your own company, and you can do as much or as little as you like. There are no disagreements about the chosen course of action. On the other hand, it's nice to cruise along with a few mates. The harder the trip, the better everyone should know each other beforehand.

Dave My water bags work really well! I like them a lot. I use wine cask inners inside a nylon bag I sew up which restricts the volume of the wine inner to about 2.75 litres. They're like bricks and they stow in the day hatch really well with a minimum of wasted space!

I use one on deck for drinking, I don't like those drinking systems, a few in the cockpit and the rest in the day hatch. I can easily fit and carry 40 litres of water with the option of more if I take the inners out of the bags.

'Just something I worked out years ago which hasn't needed modification! Cheers! DW



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This is a summary of what I found useful when preparing for our recent expedition trip to Tassie and what worked well on the trip. Other paddlers might have other useful tips and suggestions, but this is my recount of what worked best for me.

Consideration for what to wear when paddling in colder waters and the potential for emersion was a wet suit. I personally have never liked paddling in a wet suit, but last year in the middle of winter I came out of my kayak near Torquay and had to swim about 100 metres to shore. I was very cold and had mild hypothermia.

I did some research and looking on the NRS web site I found a wet suit for females called the Farmer Jane wet suit. This wet suit has a zip from the front about waist height and goes up the back for women to be able to go to the toilet easier. It also has a zip in the front in the chest area to get on and off easier.

Having worn this a few times before the trip, it felt comfortable and warm and made going to the toilet both for number ones and twos really easy. I wore a merino thermal under the wet suit, which is soft and does not smell. I also bought from this web site a device called a 'Wizzer' this gadget assists females to be

able to go to the toilet in the kayak whilst sitting down.

It is made of latex and is like a funnel that you put close to the skin and place the funnel into a sports bottle, allowing the flow to enter the bottle just like blokes do. This device allows me to remain dry instead of sitting in my urine for long periods of time.

For paddling in the dark, we all chose to use Neil Brenton's light devices, that allowed us all to see each other in swell conditions. This device stands about one metre tall and hooks on to the kayak behind where you sit. It has LED lights and we used them for over twenty hours and did not have to change the batteries.

Even though most of us have compasses fixed on our kayaks, it was really useful to have a compass that you can place closer to you. We found the normal compass and its position difficult in the dark to read. We found that it was easier to have a compass that you could place near on the deck with a light stick under it. We found that the compass that was white with black numbers best, as the white lit up better with a light stick under it.

Training for the trip was about six months in preparation. We all regularly paddled an average distance of forty kilometres; we increased these distances

by sixty kilometres. Most paddles that we did each weekend consisted of a fifty to sixty kilometre paddle. My training consisted of doing three one and a half kilometre swims per week before work.

I also was lucky to do group personal training in my lunch time twice per week. I maintained doing push ups and occasionally would lift weights. I found that I became stronger through doing swimming.

How to prepare for long distance crossings? I knew that the longest crossing was one hundred kilometres and that I had never before paddled this distance in the ocean. One hundred kilometres is a lot harder than doing one hundred kilometres down the Murray or in the Hawkesbury race. I knew that I would be feeling pain and that there would be no one to assist as John and Greg would also be feeling the pain. Having completed many long distance marathons, it is all about mind over matter. I knew that I would have to block out the pain and just keep paddling.

Putting lanoline on your body in places that might rub is a good idea and rubbing in Savlon when finished, really worked well for me, who suffers from rashes and itchy welts.

Mid way paddling to King Island



As a constant sufferer of seasickness, I know that Kwells worked. I took a Kwell every six hours to ensure that I did not get sick. This plan did not work that well in the night paddles, as I could not see a horizon. Having no moon made it difficult to separate the water from the air and I lost all sense of direction and became sea sick.

Luckily for me, I felt a slight nausea feeling and threw up five times and continued paddling, feeling better. I again repeated this about one hour later throwing up again five times and continued paddling.

I did not eat or feel any desire to eat for fifteen hours of paddling. After finishing the seventeen and a half hour paddle, my stomach was very sore for about two days and eating and drinking hurt a bit. I don't really have any ideas about what to do.

I also developed from night time paddling vertigo. I have had this once before and it can really affect a trip. I do know that exercises for the neck and mouth can assist with avoiding vertigo.

A useful web site for a seven day weather forecast that is pretty accurate is the Bureau of Meteorology wind forecast.

Tina celebrates her epic paddle across Bass Strait to King Island



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West Coast surf training day



West Coast surf training day — Derek coping a fluffy wave



A slightly damp Bob Fergie, West Coast surf training



The plan was for a Prom trip starting at Tidal River and finishing at Port Welshpool. Six of us were keen to go and had arranged a day off on the Monday to give us the required three days to complete the journey without too much rush.

In the week leading up to the paddle, it became evident that the weather was going to have other plans for us.

By Wednesday, the forecast was pretty much confirmed that there was a strong cold front approaching and would hit on Sunday. Three of the group thought they would pull out and save their 'day off' for a better opportunity. But three of us were reluctant, we started to think of other options given the forecast.

The forecast for Saturday was for N – NW winds 10 – 15 knots increasing to 30 knots later in the day.

Sunday was N – NW winds changing to W – SW increasing to 40 – 45 knots late in the morning.

Monday SW – W winds decreasing 20 – 25 knots.

Sounded like going away for a sea kayaking weekend trip was impossible!

However after a bit of thinking and checking tides, it was decided a short trip to Snake Island would be a good way to spend our three days, we had a three day weekend and we are going to make the most of it! No bloody cold front was going to ruin our long weekend!

Perfect! High tide was around midday so we could get a run to the Swashway Jetty, have lunch and then run down to Bentley Point once the tide changed. Sunday we *might* just get over to the east side of the prom in the morning and be relatively sheltered for an exploration towards Jonney Souey and return back to Bentley Point.

Fingers were crossed that the wind would drop enough on Monday to allow a return to Port Welshpool.

To the three desperados, it sounded doable (let's call them Larry, Curley and Moe).

A check of the latest forecast before departure had the bureau upgrading their forecast for Sunday to 50 – 55 knots, storm warnings, snow above 1000 metres, hail and thunderstorms. Unperturbed, we arrived at Port

Welshpool

with ample time to load the kayaks. At this time, we met up with Macca, one of the cattlemen who informed us they were setting off soon for the Swashway Jetty and was happy we would meet up at the huts later that day.

We launched and set off towards the Swashway. A great down wind run, which at this point was blowing West at about 10 – 15 knots, aided by the tide, the going was easy. Curley had just had a sail fitted to his kayak by Larry. After an appropriate warm up of at least 6 – 7 paddle strokes Larry hoisted his sail, followed by Curley, who quickly got the feel of it and Moe spent the rest of the paddle to lunch trying to keep up.

The Swashway was calm and lunch was had near the hut in warm sunshine and completely sheltered from any wind. The ranger's boat arrived and started unloading.

We finished lunch and headed off with the now outgoing tide. The wind was fresh, a good 15+ knot headwind. We punch our way across the inlet for 500 metres and once we hugged the southern side



of Little Snake Island in clam conditions and aqua blue water it felt like paradise and confirmed we weren't really mad to have set off after all. A sea eagle flew over and perched on a dead branch close by. We felt sorry for those who had pulled out.

Once out of the lee of Little Snake Island, we had a rear quartering sea and tide run down to Bentley Point which with the sails up didn't take long at all. At one point Larry and Curley took pity on Moe and we formed a raft and sailed together. Great fun!

Our arrival at the huts coincided with the head ranger — Steve and Macca's arrival. We elected to sleep in one of the huts, a decision we would later discover was very wise.

Curley took charge of the alcohol rationing and we were soon very warm and comfortably at home. A welcome dinner invite from Steve was accepted with glee as we spent the rest of the evening dinning on a barbecue veg. and salad dinner in the ranger's hut with tall tales a plenty.

Steve expressed his concerns for kayaking in the area. The popularity of sea kayaking is growing and the area is experiencing large numbers. It

seems there are a few groups, mostly commercial and school groups who are using the area and have large group sizes (up to thirty). This is placing pressure on the environment and if it continues will force Parks to limit group sizes such as is currently the case on Wilsons Prom.

All VSKC members are reminded that if you intend to camp on Snake Island, you *must* obtain a camping permit www.parkweb.vic.gov.au and if using the hut area, contact David Jones on 5682 2905.

The VSKC has a great relationship with the cattlemen and the Parks Victoria rangers of Snake Island. By obtaining permits and limiting group sizes, we will continue to be most welcome in this fascinating area. Camping permits for Snake Island are free.

On Sunday we awoke with two nasty surprises — Curley is a very poor at rationing alcohol – tonight would not be as 'social' and the weather bureau forecast of 50 – 55 knots had arrived during the night and was here now!

Larry and Moe left Curly sleeping it off and walked to the beach. Sand pegs were almost required to hold yourself in one position, the kayaks were covered in wind blown sand. The view was a sea of

white water, foam blown streaks covering the surface. The bureau had one thing wrong, it was still a NW not SW. It took us half a second to decide we weren't paddling today!

On return to camp, Steve invited us to go with them for a drive around the island to check fox baits. (The baits are laid every 500 m along the tracks and checked every month.) Curley and Moe had never been to Snake Island, before so it was a great opportunity. A sore headed Curley was woken in time to squeeze into the rear seat of the Hilux ute and off we went. Stopping every 500 m to check baits. We drove around for 3 ½ hours and all but four baits checked had been taken. New baits were laid.

At the gulf, we were lucky enough to see a rainbow spanning from side to side with water spouts whipping up as the wind screamed across the water.

Back at camp there were plans for us to help construct a new water tank stand but the weather (mostly rain) soon put that idea to rest. That night we finished off the much smaller ration of alcohol and cooked our own dinner around the Coonara heater in the kitchen hut and then socialised with Steve and Macca. The wind hadn't died down or changed from a NW, so we were a little anxious

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that we might end up on Snake Island a bit longer than planned. Although we had extra supplies of food with us and could think of worst things to have to do. Steve was heading back the next day on the boat and the offer was there for a ride. Even for the kayaks which he would take to the jetty on the Hilux for us. It never ceases to amaze me the great friendship that always greets you when you visit the island and the rangers or cattlemen are there.

Monday morning we awoke early and checked the conditions. Still NW but a little more west in it (or so we tried to convince ourselves). But now dropping off to around 20 knots.

Larry, Curley and Moe tried to convince each other that we should do the honourable thing and paddle ourselves home, though the offer of a free ride was mighty tempting.

Bravado won the day and we committed ourselves to paddling back.

We set off mid morning with an incoming tide, five minutes after launch a squall hit increasing the wind to around 25 knots and it was on the beam at about 11 o'clock. More than one of us had thoughts of that free ride and decision not to take it.

We stayed close to Snake Island, not wanting to get too far offshore, as the waves dissipate in the shallow water. The squall passed, followed by another. This time, as well as wind, it brought heavy

hail that stung the face or any exposed skin. It paused on the deck giving the feeling of the arctic. Once passed the wind dropped to around 5 knots and we made good ground towards the end of Snake Island.

Then another squall hit, this time with heavy rain (at least it didn't hurt) Visibility dropped and we were sucked by the tide further in to the Swashway than we would have liked, resulting in a course adjustment that meant we had to paddle directly into the wind.

Relief was had once we rounded the end of Little Snake Island and had the winds more to our backs. Larry and Curley wasted no time in hoisting the sails and gave poor Moe a free ride till we recovered from the struggle. The squall had passed but in its place was a steady wind and rain.

A quick pack up once back in port in very chilly conditions necessitated a stop at Foster for hamburgers on the way home.

Well we did it, achieved the impossible, had a great adventure and wonderful weekend away in some of the worst forecast conditions we have seen for some time for Victoria. Would we do it again? You bet, but this time put someone else in charge of the rations!

Larry (aka Terry)

Photos from Snake Island, in weather fair and foul



Tom, Terry & Tony's lazy Whitsunday float



Above: slacking off, off Mackay
At right: Tom & Terry on Thomas Island
Below: Tom, happy to be on holiday



Prior to going to sea or venturing up your favourite estuary, you will need to do a little trip planning. Two aspects you must always consider, are the weather and the tides.

Generally, on land, if we experience bad weather, it poses no more than a nuisance. Local sporting matches may be cancelled or an outing may be spoiled, however while kayaking, a serious change in the weather could spell a major disaster on the water.

You should never contemplate going kayaking without having found out the local weather conditions. Your most up to date source of information pertaining to the weather is the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. Information can be sourced on their web site www.bom.gov.au or by fax on 1800 061 434.

The most significant meteorological condition to consider prior to going kayaking is the wind.

Should the wind speed be greater than 15 knots, then moderate to large waves can form. Wind is basically formed by the sun heating the surface of the earth which causes different areas of atmospheric pressure.

The speed of the wind is proportional to the space of the isobars on a weather map. The closer the isobars are together, the winds tend to be stronger and when the isobars are widely spaced or absent the winds tend to be lighter or even calm.

A mariner can make judgments about wind strength and direction by carefully studying the information on a weather map (synoptic chart).

Weather maps not only show the position of isobars but also give us information on fronts, ridges, troughs and rainfall. A front is formed when a body of air of one temperature meets the body of air of another temperature. This difference between temperatures can cause what is known as a line squall. Line squalls should be treated with extreme caution.

A ridge is an area of high pressure extending into or penetrating an area of low pressure whereas a trough is an area of low pressure extending into an area of high pressure. Generally with ridges, we experience light winds and clear weather, however with a trough, we can experience showers or thunderstorms.

As you can see, the above weather systems are greatly influenced by atmospheric pressure. One very useful instrument to indicate changes in air pressure is a barometer. A barometer measures changes in atmospheric pressure in a particular place.

However, in order to get the best possible idea on the weather, put your trust in professional services such as the weather bureau, local advice, your own knowledge and a continuous observation of the conditions around you.

Another aspect you must consider when planning a trip is local tidal information, particularly in areas where water depth and current speed and direction is going to have a major influence.

Basic tidal is easily sourced from places such as the radio, television, and newspapers, however I recommend using the tidal predictions available on the BOM web site.

The rising and falling of sea levels is a direct result of the gravitational effect from the moon and sun on the surface of the earth.

When we experience the occurrence of a new or full moon at a place, spring tides occur. Spring tides are the highest high waters and lowest low waters. In other words, at high tide, the water depth is quite deep and at low tide quite shallow. It therefore stands to reason that currents are also at their strongest with spring tides.

Seven and a quarter days after a full or new moon the first and last quarters of the moon, we experience neap tides. Neap tides are the lowest high waters and highest low waters. At high tide, we experience shallower water depth and at low tide we experience deeper water depths. Tidal flows are at their minimums during neap tides.

Generally, over a twenty-four hour period, we experience two high tides and two low tides. The time it takes for the tide to come in and go out is approximately six hours.

This period of time is called the duration of the tide. It should be noted that in this six hour period, the rate at which the water moves varies considerably. If we consider an outgoing tide (ebb tide), the greatest tidal movement occurs in the third and fourth hour.

Therefore, if waiting for an incoming tide to get across a shallow area, you may have to wait up to three hours from the low tide to get enough water depth. The current will also be at its strongest during the third and fourth hours of the tide.

In summing up, always do a little trip planning prior to going kayaking. Consideration must always be given to the weather and the tides. Failure to do so could put you in jeopardy.

Phil Dyer, human wind sock,
see trip report p 18



More a state of mind than technique, and I hope none of us ever test this for real.

I have come to the conclusion that if I ever had serious enough situation to set off my EPIRB or fire a flare, it is more than likely conditions would be dire and extreme, (e.g. I've stuffed up big time). I may not be in my kayak nor calmly re-enter and rolling, maybe even injured.

In a combination of high wind and heavy sea state, I know I would find it very difficult if not impossible to organize a flare, for instance, and still retain contact with my kayak.

Solution, use a lifeline. Many in the club are sold on the benefits of the short tow line.

Just another use for this really, it must be on deck permanently to be of any use, see photo at right for a simple set up for one possibility.

It must have clips at each end of line of large enough size to easily attach and unclip. The webbing waist band on my PFD is my chosen attachment point. Once attached, if needed you could unclip and reattach to any point on the

kayak, to the deck line to work along to the nose of the kayak for instance, or maybe the tail to fix a faulty rudder at sea?

For the type of paddling, I do I would attach to a lifeline only as an act of last resort, but attaching to a kayak while paddling in some circumstances is valid

and nothing new. (Stuart Trueman referred to this in his non- stop Bass Strait crossing report in last *Trek*).

Attaching to a kayak has its obvious risks and common sense must be used, attaching anywhere near surf for instance is a big no no and potentially fatal.



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Werribee South to Portarlington pub and return

by Philip "Biggles" Woodhouse

It was a Scottish summer's day as small white clouds swept across the grey sky and the diffused weak sunlight heated the air to a balmy 11°C. As kayakers arrived at the Werribee South River car park and got out of their cars, they performed an involuntary shudder and wiggled around trying to create some friction and warmth between their clothes and body.

The crew consisted of Greg "Bambi" Murray, David "Wee Jock" Golightly, Roger "Over and Out" Davey, Peter "The Cow-cocky" Manning, Peter "Captain Crusty" Treby and myself.

The goal of the paddle was a social overnight paddle, open to anyone and with the opportunity for anyone who had never paddled a loaded kayak to come along.

It was also an opportunity for people to self assess, since August is very much hit and miss concerning the ideal weather for overnight kayaking. As planned, by 10 am we were on the water, on a heading of 200°M, with in a force 5 WNW wind. The west bank of Port Phillip reduces the fetch and therefore we availed ourselves of its protection and only had slightly choppy seas.

After an hour and a half, we were in the middle of the entrance to Corio Bay, enjoying the wavelets created by the wind. Occasionally, a fellow kayaker would disappear in the following trough of a wave; hiding even their paddle and leaving only the white aerated line marking their kayaks passage up over the wavelet.

However, on the whole, you usually could still see their head bobbing around in the adjacent trough. Still on 200°M, the breeze pushed us across the entrance

to Portarlington, which was on a bearing of 180°M from Werribee South. Not far from the Corio Bay channel markers, the intrepid Captain Crusty said his farewell and turned around to paddle back to Werribee South River (the Saints were playing that night).

At 12 noon, the AWS at Point Wilson recorded westerly winds at 22 kn steady and 30 kn gusting (force 6 conditions). For the rest of us, the vista of the Bellarine Peninsula glided past us as we bounced along over the diminishing wavelets. By 12.47 pm, we were all at the seaside resort in Portarlington being confronted by a two metre high sand wall (as viewed from standing on the beach), running several kilometres along the beach front.

After negotiating a path through the obstruction, we pitched our tents, had hot showers and lunch overlooking views of the Melbourne city skyline. We then made our way to the local bakery for afternoon tea then to the Portarlington pub to make table reservations and while we were there, an ale.

After watching Bambi try and pick up some of the local talent in the main bar, we sauntered back down the hill for evening refreshments and hors d'oeuvres on the water front. At this time we were joined by Jacki, ET and two fellow kayakers from NSW Lippy and Margo; Roger Bellchambers was going to turn up but the Cats were playing.

In the evening, the wind had dropped and the lights of Melbourne decorated the bay's coastline like those adorning a Christmas tree. It would have been nice to sit there at the waterfront and enjoy the view, but I could not hold an

argument against both Jacki and ET; so had to capitulate, after the girls worked their evil charms on the others and convinced them to go to their cabin.

We then discovered you can fit nine people in an X-Trail. At the cabin, we were joined by the west coast crew of John, Tina, Chicky, Jill and Russell Blamey, who had come to join us after a day of laying concrete for a garage floor. By 8 pm we were seated at the pub and enjoyed a very pleasant social night.

Surprisingly, the next morning, we all got up not feeling too bad from the evening's indulgences. Prior to 8 am, there was no wind, but by the time we launched at 8.30 am, the wind had arrived. As Wee Jock said "we always knew Sunday was going to be hard."

For the first two hours, the wind was a northerly force 4, which created a short (about 2/3 boat length) chop for us to bounce our way through. As we expected the wind to increase throughout the day, we aimed 10° off Werribee South and paddled on a heading of 350°M in order to get as close to the west bank of Port Phillip as soon as possible.

As forecast, the wind at around 11 am came in from the NW at force 5 and by 11.30 am had increased to force 6. As we approached Wedge Point, we seemed to be at a standstill at one point. We ran the bows of our kayaks onto the sand and sat in the shelter of the weather shore and had light refreshments after which we then made our way back to the Werribee South River. Over all it was a very pleasant and social weekend.



Having driven half the night after a day at the office, to arrive at Cape Conran in the early hours of Good Friday, and then driving around the confused tracks of the campsite searching for the camp for another half hour, it was simply delightful to be woken by Terry at 5.30 am.

A couple of hours later Phil Woodhouse (trip leader), Terry Barry, Greg Murray, Roger Bellchambers, Peter Sharp and myself hit the water looking forward to slightly over 100 km of paddling along the spectacular Croajingalong coast in two and a bit days over the Easter break.

As far as I know, this is the longest stretch of the Victorian coastline not interrupted by development and hence is ideally suited to an overnight sea kayaking trip.

The forecast was surprisingly good for three consecutive days and as far as winds were concerned we had no more than 10 knots to deal with for the entire trip, with the vast majority being negligible. Swell was not quite a metre max, but the breaks onto the steepish beaches along much of this section of coast were more of an issue.

On one beach landing, I managed to jump out of my boat cleanly, but then a sudden change in the direction of the

waves washing onto the beach pushed my loaded boat into my shins before I could jump out of the way, still have the scar to show for it! Phil also had a fairly unglamorous exit and lost the fish he had put so much effort into catching.

On another occasion, Roger was doing a reconnaissance of a beach landing and got trashed by a wave. He ended up on the beach and seemed to decide that it was ok for us to come in, but being a nice guy, he jumped back in his boat and paddled back out through the surf to discuss. We then paddled twenty metres along the beach and all headed back into the beach!

The first day we paddled just under fifty kilometres along this spectacular and somewhat deserted coastline, to arrive at a small beach just south of the Point Hicks lighthouse. Light was beginning to fade and we just managed to set up camp in time before dark when a young blond girl appeared out of nowhere for a swim with her friends.

As she approached us she asked what us 'pirates' were doing camping on the beach, to which one of us jokingly said 'Raping and pillaging of course'. I think she only just got the joke.

We were feeling pretty tired after a long day on the water. That night we had a

few spots of rain right on dinner time, and several slackers amongst us retired to their tents, not to be seen again.

I was just starting to crank into the red wine however, and Greg seriously considered staying up drinking but politely declined (I could tell it was a close decision for him as he was looking at my glass of red as he slowly declined).

I soon gave in and retired to bed where I actually managed to fall asleep for several seconds with a glass of wine and chocolate in one hand whilst propping myself up on my elbow. The next morning Terry claimed to have been the last up, but he never proffered any solid evidence to support this claim.

We hit the water at eighthish and quickly rounded Point Hicks. The bays just north of the Point are quite spectacular and it was not long before we passed the Thurra River campground. For those who are not aware, one of the lighthouse keepers' quarters has now been split into two and is available for renting to the public for weekends and the like. The accommodation is basic but cosy and the views from the front veranda are absolutely spectacular.

We paddled into Wigan Inlet to top up our drinking water. Some of the group took five minutes of time out to check out the many seals in the vicinity of the Skerries, a small rock island just off the coast.

By this stage, it was becoming clear that some of the group were keener to press on and maintain a faster pace in order to get to camp sooner rather than later, whilst others were more focussed on taking in a few more of the sights along the way. Ultimately, we could make it work either way and it came down to a matter of preference, with differences in paddling fitness also having a bearing. There were undoubtedly many sights we had to miss in order to keep to our schedule of 105 km in two and a half days (eg a visit to the Point Hicks lighthouse, climbing the sand hills, Tamboon Inlet etc).

That night, we pulled up on a beach somewhere between Sandpatch Point and Little Ramshead. We dragged our boats up the beach and relaunched into an inlet and paddled twenty metres along to a bushwalkers' campsite on the south bank.

Pucker up, Phil and friend



We emptied our boats and left them in the water tied to a tree. The mossies were rather fierce that night but with most of the kilometres behind us and plenty of booze supplies left, the evening was a somewhat more jovial affair ... that is until Phil returned from his boat and said to Peter "I just tripped over in the water and cracked your boat".

Peter slowly looked up from the campfire and said 'Are you serious?', to which Phil replied 'Deadly!'. No one really knows what happened down there by the boats with Phil, but alcohol could well have been involved. Phil's Mirage had incurred a fairly serious crack in the glass across the nose, but nothing duct tape couldn't handle.

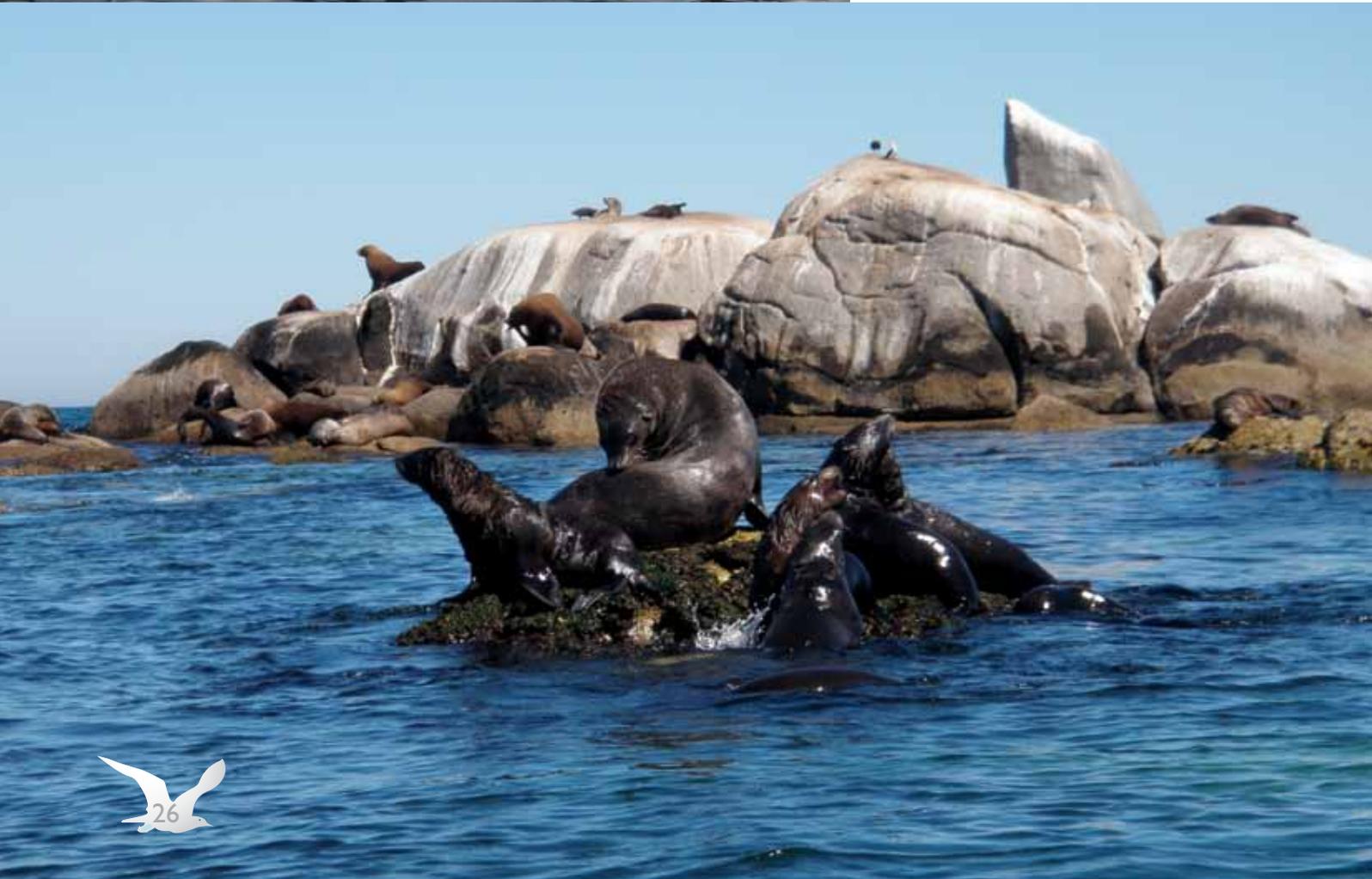
The next morning we had a leisurely two t three hour paddle, and in Phil's case, troll, north past Shipwreck Creek and into Mallacoota Inlet. Debbie and Phillip Barry, Anne Sharp, Jacki Woodhouse and 'ET' were there to meet us (well nearly) and, it being lunchtime, it was only natural for us to head straight to the pub for a counter meal.

Several jugs of beer were drunk, especially by Phil and Greg who both bought jugs just as everyone else had decided to switch to coffees. Greg liked his steak so much that he negotiated with the waitress to buy two uncooked steaks for \$20 to take back to camp.

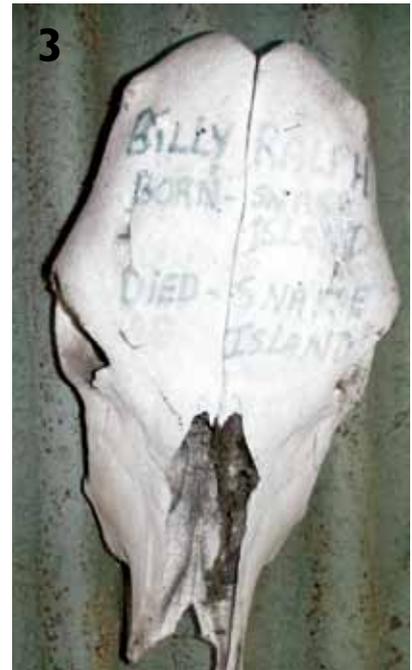
However, after a one and a half hour drive back to Cape Conran, Greg realised he had left his steaks on the counter of bottleshop at the Mallacoota pub. ET and others had an enjoyable paddle off the Cape the next morning before heading home.

There's not too many places along the Victorian coast where you can paddle 100 km without seeing a house. This misty and remote coastline is made all the more spectacular by the huge sand-hills jutting out of the scrub from behind the dunes. This is bushwalkers' paradise, and paddlers' heaven!

No idea, ask him!
Seals at The Skerries



Snake Island pictorial



Terry Barry organized yet another legendary long weekend trip based from Snake Island; here are a few of the more printable pics of the fun.

1. Exploring a crispy Prom
2. Evening calm
- 3 Billy Ralph (a Snake Is local) skull pic
4. The armada at Swashway jetty
5. Busy busy, stuffing boats! Hang-over, what hang-over?

Photo of the issue —
David Golightly kayak cam,
see trip report p 24



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