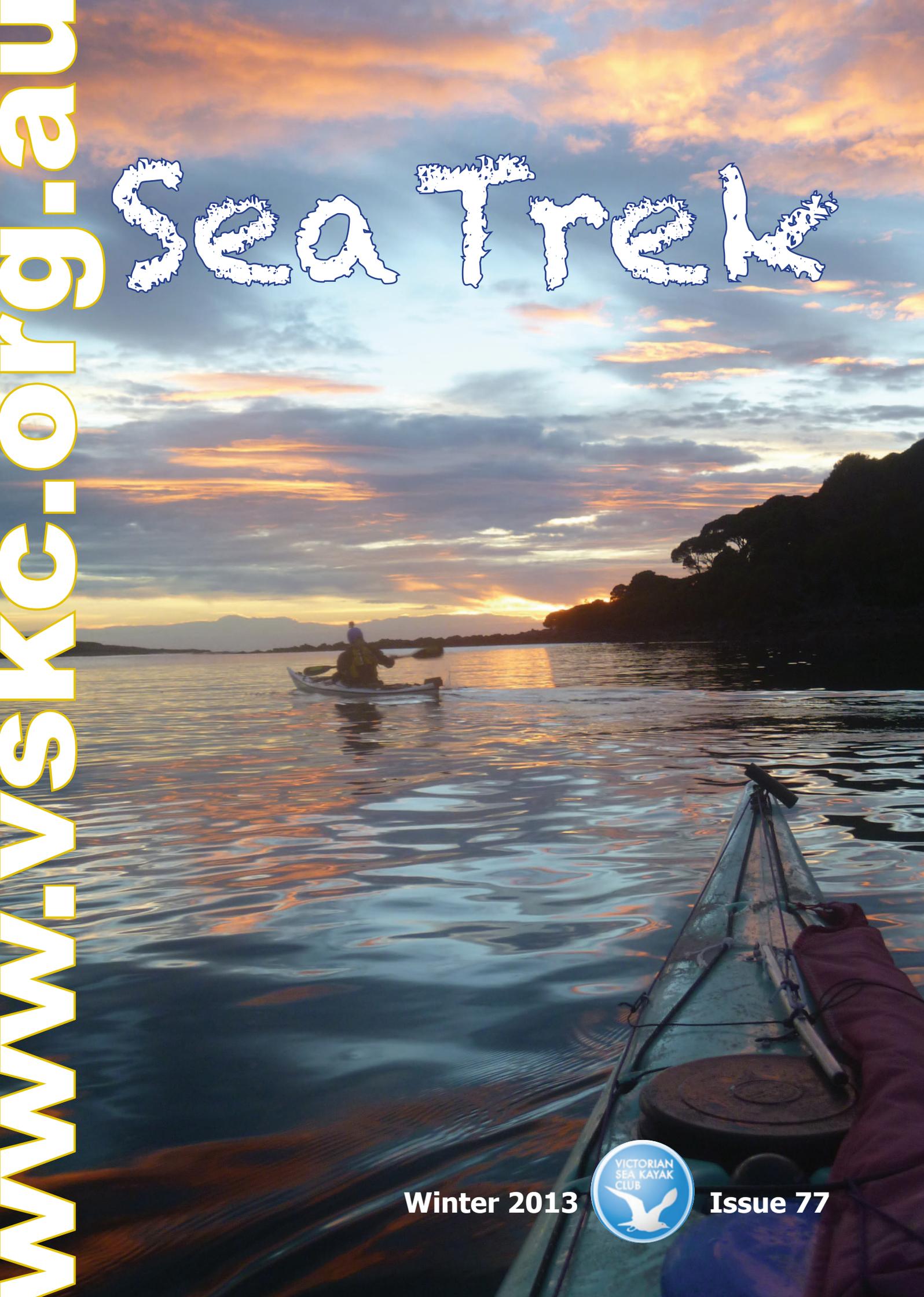


[www.vskc.org.au](http://www.vskc.org.au)

# Sea Trek



Winter 2013



Issue 77



## VICTORIAN SEA KAYAK CLUB

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## EDITORIAL



*One of the things I love about sea kayaking is the remarkable variety of experiences it offers. Interesting people, places and conditions ensure that there is something new to discover and enjoy every time you slide into your cockpit for a paddle. It's not just your own experiences either. As this issue of Sea Trek demonstrates again, there is much pleasure and insights to be gained in reading about the adventures of others too.*

*In this issue, the collective brush strokes are both broad and bold in this respect. You'll read about a solo paddle by Richard Rawling along the coast of Far North Queensland, and the remarkable re-tracing of Oskar Speck's pre-World War epic paddle of seven years from Germany to Australia by Sandy Robson, one of Australia's best contemporary female expeditioners. There are also a number of reports on shorter overnight trips by various VSKC paddlers.*

*On-water safety, wilderness first aid and kayak surfing also feature, together with a review of Stuart Trueman's book about his recent un-supported solo trip around Australia. Added to this, a report on the historic Networking Summit of State Kayak Clubs over the ANZAC weekend demonstrates that the national sea kayaking fraternal is very much alive and well in Australia and that we in the VSKC are part of a broad-church-family who love the challenge of paddling long narrow boats in some of the most enchanting waters of the world. Thanks to all our issue 77 contributors. Keep your stories and pictures coming. Issue 78's deadline is August 31st.*

*Cheers, Bob Fergie (Sea Trek Editor)*



## PRESIDENT'S PODCAST by Terry Barry



### Greetings once again

*It has been very pleasing to see the trip calendar so full in the past couple of months with many trips on offer as well as a number of training events taking place. As we head into winter I hope many of you will continue to support the club by participating despite the cold conditions. Sometimes some of the best paddles occur at this time of the year!*

*Last issue I announced that the '2013 Australian Sea Kayak Club's Networking Summit' was happening. The Summit proved to be a great success. Snake Island was a great venue to hold this event, and there were many positive outcomes. You can read more about this on page four. Since the Summit there has been a great increase in communication between the various State clubs. The representatives felt so positive about the Summit that it has been decided to hold them on an annual basis. Much thanks must go to Bob Fergie who acted as facilitator for this event, to all those who loaned kayaks to our interstate visitors, and to Neil Brenton and East Coast Kayaks for providing a kayak trailer and transport.*

*All clubs have agreed to give access to other state club members about paddles and other information. If you are heading over to Tasmania, John Dawson can be contacted [john.dawson@dier.tas.gov.au](mailto:john.dawson@dier.tas.gov.au) and you can access the TACC's forum (identify yourself as a VSKC member) and ask for advice or even join a club trip.*

*The Queensland Sea Kayak Club is holding their annual get together at Keppel Island in August. This inaugural Keppel Sea Kayak Symposium provides a chance to borrow or*

*hire kayaks for this event. Details are on the VSKC website.*

*The next NSW Rock n' Roll event is at Batemans Bay Beach Resort on the second weekend in March (Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th). This is a long weekend for us here in Victoria so it is hoped that we can have a good number from the VSKC attending. The second Australian Sea Kayak Club's Networking Summit will be held on Monday the 10th immediately following on from the NSWKC's Rock N Roll event.*

*In case you missed the email, guidelines for Life Membership have now been ratified by the committee and are available on the website. It is hoped that this will provide a clear pathway and guidance for any future nominations for this very special award.*

*We were indeed fortunate to have Sandy Robson speak about the latest leg of her remarkable journey retracing 'Oskar Speck'. Over fifty members attended this presentation at the Mordialloc Sailing Club. Sandy contacted the club at late notice to see if we were interested in her giving this talk while she was in Melbourne for another speaking commitment.*

*Planning is well underway for our annual get together in November. This year we will be holding the VSKC 2013 Sea Kayak Forum and AGM at Camp Coolamatong, located near Paynesville on the Gippsland lakes. There will be a wide range of on and off water workshops, a presentation of the recent South Africa expedition, a new and expanded photo competition, gear auction, demo boats to try and a range of other attractions as well as the usual socializing.*

*More details will be forthcoming in the next few months but please put down the dates of Friday 8th to Sunday 10th November in your diaries now.*

*See you on the water*

*Terry Barry*

*VSKC President*



# VSKC FORUM & AGM

CAMP COOLAMATONG  
Gippsland Lakes, 8-10 November



# AUSTRALIAN SEA KAYAK CLUB'S NETWORKING SUMMIT by Bob Fergie



## **ANZAC weekend** **April 2013** Snake Island

While there has been occasional get-togethers of senior members of some Australian sea kayak clubs in past years, the ANZAC weekend Summit held on Snake Island over four days was the first major gathering of its type in Australian sea kayaking history. It was the brainchild of VSKC President Terry Barry, very keenly supported by the VSKC Management Committee.



The primary motivation was to encourage mutually beneficial networking amongst the Australian sea kayaking fraternal. To encourage clubs to participate in this inaugural event, the VSKC offered to pay 50% of airfares for two senior club representatives of other State clubs to and from Melbourne in addition to hosting the whole gathering. As it turned out, a number of clubs were very willing to cover all their travel costs. While representatives from the Western Australia Sea

Kayak Club were unable to attend this time, senior representatives from Tasmania, Victoria, NSW and Qld clubs were.

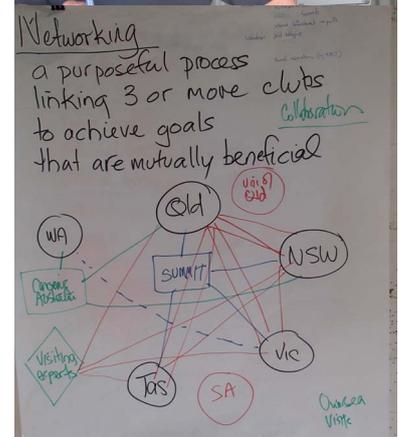
Collectively there was some serious sea kayaking experience in the eight club representatives. Raewyn Duffy and Campbell Tiley (Secretary/Treasurer and 'Rock N Roll' coordinator respectively from the NSWK); John Dawson and Geoff Simpson (Commodore and past Commodore of the TSCC); Eddie Safarik and Will Winton (President and Treasurer/membership officer of the QSKC respectively); Terry Barry and Raia Wall (President and Treasurer/Membership officer of the VSKC). Bob Fergie (VSKC) acted as the Summit facilitator.

Many VSKC members very generously helped to make the Summit possible. Under the supervision of Neil Brenton (VSKC Major Projects coordinator) each visiting state representative was provided with a kayak, paddle and camping kit, transit accommodation and transport to and from the airport. The Cattleman's Hut on Snake Island proved to be a wonderful venue for the Summit, made all the more interesting with a large

contingent of cattleman using the facilities for part of the weekend as well.

The Summit program incorporated many formal and less formal campfire discussion opportunities together with opportunities for bush walks and paddling across to the PROM. The formal meetings made good use of the Ranger's annex that proved to be a most suitable space for meetings, cooking and socializing. Not only did the program offer great opportunities to talk through varying issues of common concern, it also served to nurture strong friendships. While the Summit started with a rather loose agenda, each club came armed with their own club profile based on a common profile proforma designed by Summit facilitator Bob (see our VSKC profile on page 6).

The first day of meetings focused on these as the representatives from each club used this tool to





Already there has been a number of very positive outcomes from the 2013 Summit, including a successful petition to Australian Canoeing to amend recent unhelpful changes to on-water signal protocols made without consultation with the sea kayaking fraternity.



introduce their club's history and current operational frameworks together with issues for more collective discussion.

During the last session of the Summit, participants evaluated the weekend using a generic SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, Threats) analysis tool (see p 7). Without exception all participants indicated that their initial expectations of the Summit had been substantially exceeded.



This proved to be a fascinating window of insight for all participants. Clearly there were many similarities, but also a significant number of unique things about each club that often caught the imagination of other club representatives. There were lots of things to learn from and contribute to each other. From these presentations, issues of shared concern were identified for further discussions over the weekend. A comprehensive list of nine actions were subsequently agreed upon (see p 6).

Sincere words of appreciation were directed to our President, Terry Barry for his leadership initiative in organizing the Summit and to the VSKC more generally for hosting, subsidizing and running this historic inaugural networking gathering. In response, Terry was quick to acknowledge the significant contribution of many VSKC members that ensured that it was such a resounding success.



These included greater access to other club literature and events (including access to web sites, club magazines etc). Further, a plan to continue holding annual Australian Sea Kayak Club's Summits (ASKCs) was endorsed. They will be aligned to a major annual event of the host club. Next year the ASKSs Summit will follow the NSWKSC 'Rock N Roll' event at Batemans Bay from 8-9th March.

Three of the key documents from the Summit are included on the following two pages.



# CLUB PROFILE PROFORMA

AUSTRALIAN SEA KAYAK CLUBS (ASKC) NETWORKING SUMMIT 2013

Club VSKC Delegates and position Terry Barry- President Raia Wall -Treasurer & Membership Officer

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please type up the appropriate responses for your club with respect to the suggested areas under 'club details' and time frames. To do this, simply put the cursor in the appropriate box and type away. The box will expand as you go so you can put as much or as little detail in as you want. There is also space to add any additional 'club details' sections that you may want to include. Please complete this **BEFORE** the summit and bring along printed copies of all delegates (10 copies). Also, **EMAIL** a copy to Summit facilitator, Bob Fergie ([hobfergie@ozemail.com.au](mailto:hobfergie@ozemail.com.au)) before 22 April so that we can compile a master electronic copy of Summit materials.

	CLUB DETAILS	At inception (date)	Currently	Over the next 5 years
1	<b>KEY CLUB LEADERS</b> (founder, President/Commodore, Secretary etc)	Earl D'Blonville president	Terry Barry – President, Grant Stewart Vice President, David Golightly Secretary, Raia Wall Membership & Treasurer, Neil Brenton Trips Coord, Bob Fergie Magazine Editor, Vojin Miladinov Communications Officer	Committee make up will probably remain constant with the roles filled by new faces. Currently averages a turn-over of around 2 per annum. Current President will retire at the next AGM.
2	<b>CLUB ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE</b> (management committee, trip leaders, instructors etc)	Committee	Committee Instructor Group Trip Leaders	Same
3	<b>INTER-CLUB COMMUNICATION MEDIUMS</b> (web site, newsletter, magazine)		Website- Trips, news, documentation, etc Quarterly magazine – Sea Trek published on line Emails to members for more urgent notice or attention	Opportunity to diverge into social media such as Facebook
4	<b>CLUB MEMBERSHIP DETAILS</b> (Numbers/Age/gender/demographics/active member continuity/fees/insurances)	Around 12 at inception	Around 170 memberships, with approx. 20% being family memberships of 2 or more people	No need to increase membership foreseen but need for fresh faces to replenish older members
5	<b>TYPES OF CLUB EVENTS (pa)</b> . (Day trips, Weekender trips, longer expeditions, international trips, training events, annual gatherings, special events/visitors.)	Local trips and more adventurous expeditions including first circumnavigation of Tasmania, Greenland expedition	Monthly training paddles, Monthly club paddles Weekly 'Red Eye' paddle on Saturday am Ad hoc club paddles posted by membership Annual weekend get together incl AGM. Occasional interstate trips A few groups venture overseas each year	Perhaps an Australian get-together for all club members?
6	<b>CLUB TRAINING</b> (accreditation/grading system/organization)	Nil	Internal system not accredited elsewhere Levels 0 to 3 (trip leaders) instructors appointed by 'apprenticeship' system	Happy with current system but also seeking external input from national and overseas experts
7	<b>CURRENT ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR CLUB</b> (internal, external)		Internal: Age Demographic- need young blood Gender balance- more female memberships External: Impact of legislative changes	
8	<b>INTER-CLUB CROSS-FERTILIZATION AND NETWORKING INTERESTS</b> (overseas experts, summits, magazines, inter club paddles, training, major national and international expedition support)		Current and past issues of the magazine on line and open to anyone to download worldwide Attendance at interstate or overseas events (eg KASK)	Cross club paddle grading recognition- other club members welcome on club trips/events. Sharing of magazines and articles Sharing of international guests as presently occurs but more open info on how each club utilizes and costs the event.

## AUSTRALIAN SEA KAYAK CLUB'S NETWORKING SUMMIT, SNAKE ISLAND, APRIL 2013

Committed to purposeful processes, linking Australian Sea Kayaking clubs, to achieve goals that are mutually beneficial.

ACTIONS AGREED UPON	FOLLOW UP TASKS
1. <b>PADDLE SIGNALS:</b> With respect to Australian Canoeing's recent changes to signaling, it was agreed that a letter be written by the NSWSKC, but countersigned by the Tasmania SKC, Queensland SKC and the Victoria SKC to inform AC of our concern over their new and different system and our collective intention to continue with the long-held system, where a vertical paddle = come to me; a horizontal paddle = stop, a waving paddle = help required urgently, and; a hand to the head = are you okay?, and yes I'm okay.	NSWSKC to draft letter for countersigning by other clubs and subsequent presentation to Australian Canoeing
2. <b>VISITING EXPERTS:</b> It was agreed the following proposal be put to all our clubs for their endorsement: that in the event that Geoff Murray was no longer available to initiate visits of overseas instructors, a coordinated effort by ASKCs Networking SUMMIT participating clubs would pick up from where Geoff left off (he most mutually advantageous time was seen to be the months of February and March and the possibility of a skin-on-frame boat building project be considered for the next initiative). Finally it was agreed that a John Dawson, on behalf of the 2013 Summit participants would communicate our heartfelt appreciation for all that Geoff has done in bringing the likes of Axel S, Ginni C, Cheri Perry and Turner Wilson and Nigel Foster and Kristin Nelson to Australia over the last 3 years.	John Dawson to communicate with Geoff Murray on behalf of Summit participants
3. <b>PROFICIENCY STANDARDS MAPPING:</b> in view of the fact that some clubs are formerly accredited through Australian Canoeing (NSWSKC and QSKC) while others are not (TSKC and VSKC), it was suggested that all clubs complete the standards compatibility matrix (prepared by the VSKC with respect to AC awards and criteria) so that all clubs can see the equivalency of their awards relative to others. It was agreed that this would also be a helpful tool when hosting occasional visits from paddlers of another club. Terry Barry to email the VSKC document to all other state clubs inviting them to include their details for communal circulation.	Terry Barry to circulate the VSKC proficiency standards document to other clubs for their consideration and mapping input
4. <b>INTER-CLUB RESOURCES ACCESS:</b> in the spirit of mutually beneficial resource networking, it was agreed that all clubs consider making their various magazines, journals, newsletters and other archival resources available for other clubs to access. Similarly that all clubs give consideration to strengthening reciprocal visiting membership arrangements and the like.	All ASKCs Summit representatives to propose these arrangements to their constituencies and communicate decisions and mechanisms to other clubs
5. <b>TRIP LEADER CURRENCY DOCUMENT:</b> The VSKC offered it's Level three (trip leader) currency document to other clubs to use/modify for their club.	Terry Barry to circulate the VSKC Level 3 currency document to all clubs
6. <b>INTER-CLUB SPECIALIST COLLABORATION INITIATIVES:</b> It was agreed that there was much potential value in clubs bringing together their own specialists in various areas to look at ways of improving current systems (eg training, political lobbying etc) and communications mechanisms (eg web sites, publications etc). Consistent with this John Dawson (TSKC Commodore) offered to initiate this type of collaboration between the various club web masters.	John Dawson to initiate contact with other SK club web managers to explore information sharing and collaboration options
7. <b>COLLABORATIVE INCLUSIVENESS INITIATIVE:</b> it was agreed that we initiate the sharing of summit information with WASKC and any other clubs we may become aware of (eg in SA).	Bob Fergie to ensure that all Summit follow-up documents be passed on to the WASKC
8. <b>ASKCs NETWORKING SUMMIT CONTINUATION:</b> It was agreed that all 2013 Summit state representatives encourage their respective clubs to agree to participate in annual summits hosted on a rotational basis by a particular club. Subject to conformation from the NSWSKC management committee, it was agreed that the 2014 Summit be held immediately after the NSW 'Rock and Roll' event on the South Coast. It was also agreed that offers to lead workshops at the NSWSKC Rock and Roll event by experts from other clubs be tabled as a way of supporting the event, demonstrate collegiality, and encourage more participants from other states to attend.	Campbell T and Raewyn D to gain approval from the NSWSKC to host the next ASKCs Networking Summit immediately following the 2014 Rock and Roll event
9. <b>MEMBERSHIP FEES/INSURANCE DETAIL SHARING:</b> it was agreed that clubs be encouraged to continue to share membership details (especially with regard to fees and insurance matters) so help each club in the ongoing task of providing the best services to their club and the broader sea kayaking community in Australia.	All Summit representatives encourage their respective clubs to continue to share information of this type



# ASKCs NETWORKING SUMMIT PARTICIPANT EVALUATION via SWOT ANALYSIS

(where participants paired with a person from a club other than their own)

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparisons and similarities awareness of various clubs</li> <li>• Solutions through finding out about other club's processes (eg insurance)</li> <li>• Opening up of lines of communication between clubs</li> <li>• Development of friendships through face-face contact</li> <li>• <b>Understanding other</b></li> <li>• <b>New insights into ways of doing things</b></li> <li>• <b>Ability to resist external threats collaboratively</b></li> <li>• <b>Impartial moderator</b></li> <li>• <b>Dispels myths/suspensions</b></li> <li>• <b>Direct information from other clubs</b></li> <li>• <b>Clubs are quite similar</b></li> <li>• <b>Dispelled a few rumors about other clubs</b></li> <li>• <b>Great venue</b></li> <li>• <b>Extremely well organized</b></li> <li>• <b>Shared good ideas</b></li> <li>• <b>Understanding</b></li> <li>• <b>Insights into own club</b></li> <li>• <b>Different ways of doing things</b></li> <li>• <b>Ability to network and collaborate re. external regulations</b></li> <li>• <b>Good having a moderator</b></li> <li>• <b>Open communication</b></li> <li>• <b>Person to person contact</b></li> <li>• <b>Plenty of time</b></li> <li>• <b>Willingness to share</b></li> <li>• <b>Social time</b></li> <li>• <b>Great venue</b></li> <li>• <b>No set agenda</b></li> <li>• <b>Positive outcomes and Sets of actions</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all clubs represented at Summit (eg WA, SA)</li> <li>• <b>Summit representatives may not be a true reflection of their club's viewpoints</b></li> <li>• <b>Need to ensure impartial moderator for Summits</b></li> <li>• <b>WA didn't attend</b></li> <li>• <b>Represents the individuals here, not necessarily the clubs</b></li> <li>• <b>Missing some clubs</b></li> <li>• <b>No set agenda</b></li> <li>• <b>Head wind in both directions</b></li> </ul> 
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to travel inter-state and participate/collaborate in events</li> <li>• Improvements in our own club processes (not reinventing the wheel)</li> <li>• Unity and common purpose and resolutions for clubs</li> <li>• Ignites enthusiasm</li> <li>• <b>Increases awareness of issues that could impact on club participation</b></li> <li>• <b>Reduces the danger of reinventing the wheel by sharing ideas, resources etc</b></li> <li>• <b>On-going cross-fertilisation thus avoiding in-bred myopia</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased and continued collaboration between clubs</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased networking</b></li> <li>• <b>Web integration</b></li> <li>• <b>Harmonization of competency gradings</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased exchange eg notification of external threats</b></li> <li>• <b>Economies of scale by sharing resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Making new friends</b></li> <li>• <b>Built links</b></li> <li>• <b>Sharing information</b></li> <li>• <b>Identifying common problems/issues</b></li> <li>• <b>Future collaboration</b></li> <li>• <b>Dispelling myths and apprehension</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regime change in the future (next group of representatives may have different agendas and views to the value of Summit participation)</li> <li>• Budgets and costs</li> <li>• Time schedules</li> <li>• <b>Loss of momentum</b></li> <li>• <b>Competition (we do it better) egos</b></li> <li>• <b>Dilution of individual club culture</b></li> <li>• <b>Engagement of the rest of our respective clubs</b></li> <li>• <b>If it gets too complex or becomes too time consuming</b></li> <li>• <b>Competitiveness/egos</b></li> <li>• <b>Dilutes club culture</b></li> <li>• <b>Creating more work</b></li> <li>• <b>Creating activity for no gain</b></li> <li>• <b>Cynical views on non attendees</b></li> <li>• <b>Representatives to Summit not seen as representing the views of their club members</b></li> </ul>



## NOORAMUNGA EASTER PADDLE by Sue Mountford



The Easter paddle group assembled on Good Friday morning to pack and launch our kayaks for the 16.5 kilometre paddle to a camp site on the south east corner of Snake Island. A number of the group paddled the same trip last year in very rough conditions. This year's group comprised of Peter Sharp our trip leader and Annie, Russell Blamey, David Golightly and Heather Torbet, Sue Mountford, Arthur Papakotsias, Richard Rawling and Bill Zombor.

### A secret shared

The following winds made for a comfortable paddle to the camp site with a stop-over snack break at Snaggy Island. On arrival at the treasured camp site discovered by last Easter's group, Richard took newcomers on a tour of its amenities from the dining room



set around a fire pit to the deluxe camping suites. Tarpaulins were quickly erected over the dining room. The afternoon highlight was seeing a sea eagle flying the wind gradients during our walk along the beach. Bill and Richard's toasted hot cross buns came a close second in the highlight stakes.

### Emotional scars healed

The much anticipated trip to Port Albert for fish and chips was on. Our 11 kilometre paddle down the main channel took us past Drum Island, Sunday Island and Scrubby Island. On arrival at Port Albert kayaks were quickly lifted onto the foreshore, and spray decks ditched before heading off to the fish and chip shop. Once fish and chips were in hand the group relaxed in the sun. Silent happiness abounded as we consumed deliciously fresh fish. The emotional scars of those prevented by winds from making it to Port Albert last year were finally healed. This year the caffeine addicts were left hanging out as there was not a cappuccino to be found amongst the foreshore shops.



After lunch the group split into two groups for the return trip home, as arranged prior to the commencement of the trip. Arthur, Richard, and Russell took the longer route home to explore Clonmel Island.

### Go east ye paddlers

The guys headed out east from Port Albert trying to find a channel up behind Dog Island to get shelter from the stiffening westerly breeze.

After a couple of kilometres, much head scratching and peering at GPS's, it was conceded that that channel was not to be found. So turning west they punched back into the stiff breeze to follow the coastline of Dog Island. Russell sought shelter in some mangroves, but just as Richard and Arthur joined him, he darted off again, startling several hundred swans that took off in a rush showering feathers and organic material big time!



They headed up to Horn Island, crossing the Kate Kearney Channel and then onto Horn Island. This is clearly the best way through to the eastern end of Nooramunga Marine Park with some lovely paddling to be had. After Horn Island, they paddled up to Clonmel Island via Old Man Clumps and spied many great looking campsites. Landing on Clonmel Island, a photographic expedition was launched along the starkly beautiful sand flats as they gradually disappeared under the last of the incoming tide. Though it was getting late, the sunlight, wind, chop and water were all too inviting and after a short portage over a sand bank, they headed back north to the mangroves behind Drum Island and paddled back to the campsite. A final irony was Richard maintaining a pitch perfect ferry glide against the outgoing tide, with Arthur following Russell down the channel. Inevitably, they all met again at the campsite but guess who did the extra work!

The remainder of the group paddled back to camp sheltering from winds along the edges of the mangroves. Our paddle passed Sunday Island, an island privately owned by a shooters' club for deer hunting. The beautiful bird life on the

tranquil edges of the island belied the island's use. Tony navigated us through a channel amongst the mangroves behind Drum Island bringing us out two kilometres directly across from our camp site. Arriving back at camp, there was time for a leisurely stroll along the beach. The second group arrived a bit later after their 32 kilometre paddle (hampered by stronger winds than anticipated). They arrived to jokes about needing to call off the coast guard rescue.

### Party tricks

Dinner was a very relaxed occasion around the camp fire with refreshments flowing freely. The tarpaulin shelter enabled dinner to proceed comfortably despite the light rain.



Arthur came in for some ribbing with his "Russian" gas stove which sounded more like a blow torch and wouldn't have been out of place in a steel foundry. Never-the-less it seemed like the most appropriate tool to heat up his sumptuous 'Happy Camper' meals. Sue came close to banishment when she covered the dining group with fumes from her mini flares--otherwise known as wind proof matches. Bill recommended she keep them for use at the next soccer match. Sunday morning's winds confirmed the likelihood that the forecast 15 – 20 knot west to south westerly would be reached for our planned 9 kilometre morning paddle to Gulf camp. The merits of paddling in high winds to an exposed camp site with wet tents, to reduce the trip back to Port Welshpool on Monday, diminished with the prospect of easing winds on Monday.

### Easter bunny kayaks

A late Sunday breakfast was settled into, complete with Easter eggs and

toasted hot cross buns. The group sang happy birthday to Arthur who was unable to persuade the group his birthday was on Monday not Sunday. Breakfast was followed by a scenic walk to the ocean side of Snake Island overlooking the Port Albert Entrance and Clonmel Island with Wilson's Promontory's majestic mountains in the background. Wooden planks found on the beach were collected and used to complete the final wing of the dining room.

### Technology on water

In the afternoon Richard kindly agreed to take us through the modifications made to his kayak for his Cape York trip in 2012. Richard's criteria for any modification were firstly it must look professional and secondly it must be able to be taken off the kayak. From the kayak's solar panel, stow pouches, water pump deck outlet, his wheel system, these innovations clearly met his criteria. The compact storage battery and mini computer systems regulating the maintenance of power to various items of equipment were truly remarkable. Richard's straight seams on his stow bags impressed the women members of the group who contemplated getting Richard to run up a few frocks. Richard's persistence and problem solving skills in researching the various items were impressive.

### A covert mission



Bill headed back to Port Welshpool mid-morning as prearranged with Peter. Bill's cheery SMS confirming how good the Port Welshpool scallop pies were indicated other

motives driving his early return.

Sunday dinner was a quieter evening than the previous night which may be partly or wholly be explained by one empty refreshment bottle.



## POSITION INDICATING AND SIGNALLING EQUIPMENT by Sandy Robson

I attended a valuable presentation at the 2012 NSW Sea Kayak Club Rock N Roll sea kayak symposium and also was lucky enough to participate in a search and rescue exercise with a helicopter searching for us.

I am now reviewing what I am carrying in my PFD for signalling and I think you will find this information interesting.

Firstly, at the presentation there were four guests. A representative from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), two blokes from the local volunteer marine rescue (VMR) and a helicopter pilot who regularly conducts search and rescue (SAR) for people in the water. If you haven't a clue what AMSA do then let me tell you. This bloke is the one who sits in the rescue coordination centre (RCC) in Canberra and puts everything into action when you set off your PLB or EPIRB device or if you are reported missing. He ran through a few actual situations that have occurred and laid it on the line that really, you are pretty stupid if you do not have a PLB or an EPIRB.

The following day I participated in a search and rescue (SAR) exercise where we set off a training EPIRB whilst out on the water in the dark before dawn. The helicopter came looking for us and we did a night time search scenario and a day time scenario setting off and using various signalling and position indicating tools. It was valuable training for us in our kayaks and for the helicopter search crew too. Here are my conclusions.

### 1. Carry a PLB mounted on the shoulder of your PFD or an EPIRB with a tether.

If you are going to have a PLB then the advice is that it must be mounted on your shoulder so that you can deploy the antennae and



then attach it back into a shoulder mounted pouch so you have good communication with the satellites. PLBs don't float and they are not going to work antennae down and you will probably be needing your hands free. Shoulder mounting high on your PFD is best for optimum performance.

Of course an EPIRB is much more successful than a PLB because it floats. If you carry an EPIRB figure out a way to tether it to your craft or to you because it is a bummer when they find the device but not the person with it.

Actually, a mate of mine, paddler Paul Hayward and I had been discussing PLB mounting pouches before the symposium and he has

made me a pouch to mount my PLB on my PFD. So the AMSA bloke just confirmed that what Paul designed is spot on. Below are two photos showing the pouch that my friend designed.



Note – some PLB devices sold overseas and available online are not able to be programmed for use in Australia, so buy your device in Australia and save yourself the hassles. The advice on SPOT messenger was that it is great to let your friends know what you are up to on expedition with okay messages, but not reliable or recommended by AMSA for use in an emergency.

### 2. Keep the Registration Information for your PLB/EPIRB up to date with AMSA records.

So, you set off your PLB or EPIRB and what they are going to do is establish your position and check what you have registered online ([http://beacons.amsa.gov.au/register\\_now.html](http://beacons.amsa.gov.au/register_now.html)) with your device (e.g. craft type, registered trips, emergency contact numbers that you have listed etc). Then they are going to start telephoning you and people on your list to see if you are indeed out kayaking and in distress. Sometimes these devices go off accidentally and they will call you to establish if a rescue is indeed required.



### 3. Have appropriate people as your emergency contacts

In your emergency contacts registered for your device you should list people who are likely to know your whereabouts and your kayaking plans. You can update your device registry at any time. There is no point to list your mum, unless she knows where you are kayaking.

### 4. VHF Radio

Let's say you are out there bobbing around in the water, maybe with or without a kayak. Your PLB has been set off. Now what? Be prepared for a wait! AMSA only own five rescue helicopters. They can also draw on resources from other organisations such as the military, but this all takes time to coordinate. If you are close to a Volunteer Marine Rescue facility or other boats then these are your next option whilst waiting for that helicopter. On weekends it may take 1.5 hours for the helicopter to deploy, so I hope you are dressed appropriately.

Your next line of defence is your VHF radio. Like the PLB/EPIRB you should use this at the earliest time that things are looking like going pear shaped. Do not wait until it gets dark! Get on the radio and call for assistance. There is also a new feature available on some radios where you can read your position coordinates off the radio screen— handy in an emergency call I think. If you have a VHF radio



that is DSC capable then you can transmit your position at the touch of a button and the rescue chopper is fitted out to receive this message. Craft in the area and VMR will also get an alert tone broadcast over their radio when you push the distress button.

### 5. Signal your Position

Julian, the helicopter pilot explained to us how difficult it is to see a kayaker in the water, let alone a person without their kayak. The things that will help you get spotted are:

- Strobe mounted high on the shoulder of your PFD: In perfect conditions this was spotted from 2 nm by helicopter SAR wearing night vision goggles (NVGs). This was double the range of a head torch (visible at 1 nm).
- Sea marker Dye will make a large green mark in the water that they spot easily from the air.

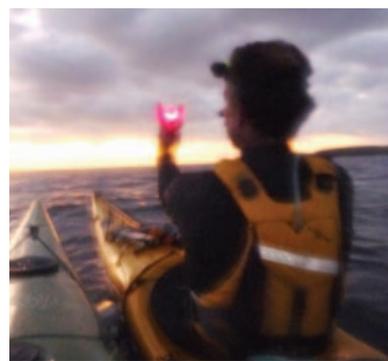


- VHF Radio to talk to the helicopter – that way you know for sure if

they have seen you or not and you can tell them when you hear and see them approaching.

- Flares – the Orange smoke canister was very effective and long lasting and hands free for day time use. Red hand helds and pen flares were great in the dark but short lived.

- Laser Flare – never expires or runs out and was very very effective - \$100 well spent I think <http://www.greatlandlaser.com/rescue-laser-light.html>



- Signalling Mirror – could be used. I saw a few people with a CD stashed in their PFD or on the kayak for this purpose.

### 6. Other Information

The helicopter is looking for you with night vision goggles so go to town with all the light sources that you have.

- The Helicopter has a big light called the 'night sun' – you are





going to hear the helicopter coming and when they turn on the Night Sun it feels very reassuring! Radio them on channel 16 and tell them when you hear and see them.

- Tassie does not have a rescue helicopter. It flies from Melbourne, so you will be sitting around for some time down there. Dress appropriately. In the presentation they told us a pair of kayakers waited around six hours to be rescued on the west coast of Tassie once.

- Log on with VMR before you paddle, then they know where to look and who to look for and have a 'let someone know before you go' system in place.

- When the helicopter finds you they may drop a very large flare into the water close by so that they do not lose track of where you are. This flare is self-scuttling, that is, it blows up when it is done, so do not paddle over to it. Keep a good distance away e.g. 50 -100 metres.

- When they are searching for you AMSA have technology to generate a drift model and develop a search area. This can then be provided to VMR and police for use when coordinating the search.

- If you have an old PLB or EPIRB to dispose of, do not put it in the rubbish bin! These guys are having a lot of time wasted digging up transmitting PLBs from rubbish

dumps. Old beacons can be disposed of at Battery World (<http://batteryworld.com.au/store-list>) free of charge.

- Read the helicopter pilot report: <http://www.nswseakayaker.asn.au/index.php/homepage/about-the-club/club-news/339-sar-exercise-results-currarong-26-mar-12>
- RCC information that you should know [http://www.amsa.gov.au/Search\\_and\\_Rescue/](http://www.amsa.gov.au/Search_and_Rescue/)

- Buoyant Orange Smoke canisters (like the one in the water above) are ideal for sea kayakers because you set it off and then throw it in the water, leaving your hands free to get on the VHF, brace in swell etc.

They are acceptable instead of two orange handheld flares. These can be purchased in Perth from Fendercare Australia (in Fremantle) for \$44 plus GST (at the time of writing this article). The minimum spend at Fendercare for cash sales though is \$100, so you could team up with another kayaker to purchase (<http://www.fendercare.com.au/>). Wilson Marine in South Fremantle 'can also order the canisters in for you. RFD at Rous Head is another supplier that you could try. I always have one of these smoke canisters in my day hatch.

## IN THE WAKE OF OSKAR SPECK'S 1932-39 GERMANY TO AUSTRALIA EXPEDITION TRAIL

Sandy Robson

June 1st 2013



### update

*At relatively short notice the VSKC was able to arrange an evening at the Mordiallic Sailing Club on Saturday 1st June to hear Sandy Robson speak of her journey from Germany to Australia. Sandy is part way through a paddle replicating the incredible seven year solo paddle of German Oskar Speck who set out from Germany in 1932 and arrived in Australia in 1939 in a canvas 'faltboot' (folding) kayak.*

*Sandy, who hails from Perth in WA, was in Melbourne for another engagement with the Outdoor Education community late May. Her offer to give a presentation to the VSKC as well was received enthusiastically by the management committee who set about to organize and promote the evening. The result was a great turnout of 50 or more club members who were treated to a fascinating presentation by Sandy of her journey to-date. She spoke of her 'one-day-at-a-time approach to a journey of over 6,500 km so far.*

*At the end of her most recent stage, she had reached the south eastern tip of India having passed through twelve countries in the process. Ahead of her are another 13,000 km as she makes her way from India to Myanmar to Thailand,*



to Indonesia, to PNG and finally Australia.

Sandy expects to complete this sea kayaking marathon of marathons by 2016, all going well. Along the way she has and continues to enjoy wonderful support from many



in Australia and various overseas local sea kayakers and clubs. The recounting of her passage through Serbia was a classic case-in-point as un-be-known to her, members of the local Serbian sea kayaking community (who had independently heard of her trip) got together to arrange trip planning, accommodation, contacts and police protection. Sandy commented, 'following a dream often results in things falling into place like a fairytale'. She spoke of lonely times too,

especially in Greece where there are very few sea kayakers. Even so, she found fantastic places of peaceful solace including small churches where she could stop for a break. Turkey, she said was a great paddling destination. She said she would confidently recommend it to anyone looking for an overseas adventure on the water. Her travel down the western coast of India held all sorts of unique experiences as well. Being questioned on the water by a helicopter drop-in security swimmer and another time being given the status of an official 'protected women' in India through the help of local officials she met on her way were classic stories.

Throughout her presentation, Sandy reiterated her hope that her journey would encourage others to follow their dreams while they can. 'I'm taking some of my retirement now (she said). Work can wait till later'. Sandy also spoke of a wonderful comment Oskar Speck made in an interview, 'sea kayaks provide a first class ticket to everywhere'. She said that this continues to inspire and motivate her as she hopes

it will for others too.

After her presentation, Sandy was asked about ways that the VSKC could continue to help her as she prepared for the next stage of her journey in March 2014. Her response was, 'If you could get a member who is in the Sri Lankan navy, who would give me permission to paddle around Sri Lanka, that would be helpful. Maybe some members who live in Bangladesh and Myanmar would be great too. No, but seriously you guys are al-



ready doing enough. I've got Vojin who is already putting the dots on the map and you have a fantastic website that is promoting what I'm doing, so I think you're doing well already.'



### **The team:**

Lieutenant, Thomas Davis  
Feisty Wench, Tamsin Visick  
Master Mariner, Paul C Snelgrove

### **Gabo Island, Disaster Bay, Nadgee Lake, Bittangabee Bay, Ben Boyd.**

The three amigos' stout and strong, the orders of the lieutenant Thomas Davis were clear, front right and centre at four bells or risk a lashing. It was to be the culmination of 600 leagues by road and another 100 by sea to reach Boydtown New South Wales. Rounding Tough Cape was indeed our goal and places seldom seen along the way, Boydtown was to be our final destination now we thought just four short days at sea, was this really competition for old Sydney town.

### **The Mallacoota Bar was to claim my first hat.**

A wave rising foaming and smashing over my frail craft then hurriedly passing on. This sea was to claim a fisherman's life within hours, lives lost to the sea, death on a bar. The perfect storm, a rouge wave, they all awaited us, bold and brave we set a course for destiny. Tough Cape or bust was our cry. The golden sands of Nadgee Lake called to us from far out to sea, it was the Sirens of the lake, come play with me. A brace a roll in surf we must to dance and play in this assure sea, of the rocks we bare no thought. Like Jason and the Argonauts we were drawn unerringly to this fatal shore. A shout goes up, then a howl; I hear a roaring from above, it was a foaming mass of Cyclops proportions raised to a towering height. We turn too late to see this thing of power and beauty and fear, poised mere meters above our decks.

There was to be no escape from its near fatal crash upon our frail craft, we took a breath a brace and gargantuan forces bounced us high then sucked us in, it was a crushing blow. The cliffs abound this fatal place to which we had been lured, the rocks below did shine. One boat was swamped and the rudder wrenched clean away, it now dangled by its twisted wires. The other boat was shuddering and shedding water from the violent blow, more monsters were lining up.

### **Another shout of anguish went up.**

The rocks were nigh, the Lieutenant shouted his orders, save me you cowardly scum he cried. Thoughts of two deaths that day raced through my mind, it could be three.

Another monster loomed, it decided my move. The bow swung seaward to meet the rising wall, she climbed and clawed once more to crest the second monster, another Cyclops of the sea and I was forced backwards toward the waiting cliff. Four more times the sea pounded and smashed us towards destruction, then a lull, a chance to move. The Lieutenant now astride his craft be it full to the gunnels. A deft stroke or two, a sideways a bolt to aid the stricken craft, as the boats met a grip of steel to steady the stricken Raider. Once more aboard there was no time to pump, I cried paddle, now paddle for your life. Within seconds we were free, a glance behind me saw the cliff but ten meters to my stern, the rocks below in churning sand had given up their grip. Like Jason and the Argonauts we had survived the sirens call.

### **What more could now stop this trip, we were yet to know.**

Hat number two was lost to the sea, we did not turn back, we dare not, wary of the Sirens grip. Tough Cape again our focus, we would consult with the Oracle as to our chances, the dogs of the sea, the birds of the air were now to be our friends. We must listen to them; we would/ should heed their message. We should not rely on rescue; we should not rely on modern devices for salvation, our survival was up to the god of the sea Poseidon. And his words could be heard in the song of the whale, the cry of the albatross. This is what the Oracle now told us.

Fair and true we set our sails, braced our hearts and powered on, the Raider, the Nadgee Solo and the Prijon Marlin had proved their worth. Within a day Tough Cape would be ours, Disaster Bay a mere memory. And as we approached our goal, as the Oracle had predicted, we would be picked up in a conveyance of great power, to re-unite with the start of our great adventure. We were home at last, salty tired yet with a growing confidence in the sea.

### **Vast shoals of fish accompanied us**

The odd shadow; the beasts of the land had forced us back into the sea, on the occasion that we landed. The Feisty Wench by diving into the waters had provided us with a hearty feast of mussels and oysters--their flesh sweet and succulent. We had feasted upon Tuna fresh from the sea, told tales of adventure in the firelight beneath a smoldering moon. We now shared a common bond of those hidden secrets as only men and women can that have shared a common purpose at sea. The trip was done. The Nadgee Nature reserve had given up her secrets. Could it be said we were now people of the Inuit way, would we ever go back.

**Legend:** Dogs of the Sea - Sharks; Conveyance of great power -Ford transit van; Oracle - Larry Gray man of the Inuit way; Beasts of the land - Goanna in every campsite

## RECENT VSKC NEWS AND EVENTS

### VSKC LEVEL THREE TRAINING April - October

The VSKC has three standards of sea kayaking proficiency. Level 3, the highest level, qualifies a person to lead club paddles. Given the rigors of level three requirements, a real commitment to study and practice is required for those attempting this qualification.



Candidates are involved in a number of training days, followed by the leadership of a trip, supported and assessed by a mentor. Finally, candidates participate in a rigorous weekend of practical assessment followed by a theoretical exam with a minimum 80% pass mark.

This year there are seven excellent candidates who attended the initial day-long level 3 training event at the Mornington Yacht Club under the oversight of VSKC Training Coordinator Robin Boundy. The first half of the day was classroom-based and covered a range of topics including navigation, weather, safety and leadership. The second half of the day involved practical on-water training covering basic paddle strokes, rescues techniques and towing skills.

### WILDERNESS FIRST AID TRAINING April 6

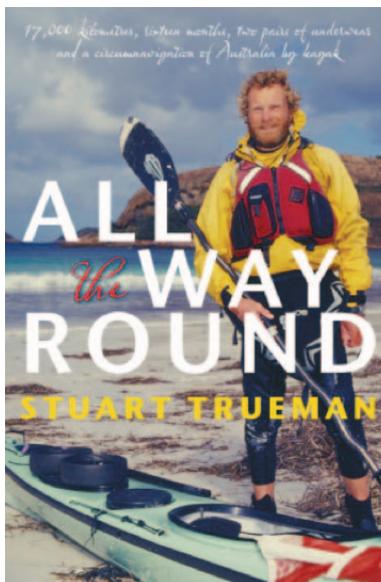
For the second year in a row the VSKC hosted a subsidized weekend intensive for twenty club members in the important area of wilderness first aid. The course was run at the idyllic waterfront Scout hall facility at Canadian Bay. As with last year the two excellent trainers were from the Wilderness First Aid Consultants organization based at Lakes Entrance. Realistic simulations helped learning greatly.



### NEW BOOK BY STUART TRUEMAN

*Reviewed by Terry Barry*

This is Stuart's account of his paddle around Australia from April 2011 to July 2012 – 16 months. It is written as an account of the journey in every sense of the word- physical, mental and emotional. As well as giving Stuart's account of the journey there are also contributions from his wife Sharon who gives glimpses of the emotional and physical stains placed on a family while the father is away.



It is a compelling read, and I had trouble putting it down, reading almost the whole thing in one sitting! Unlike other accounts of sea kayak adventures this book is much more than just interesting. I found the descriptions of the paddling riveting but it was Stuart's insights into the world around him that for me made the book so compelling. I cannot help but think that a bloke with the normal pressures of life

(family, mortgage) who sets off to enjoy the journey rather than the destination, genuinely explores the areas he travels through. In Stuart's account he models this in such a low key way. For sure he is a hero of mine.

The only negatives I could find was Stuart's own confession that he didn't take the photography serious enough. I would have liked to see a few more shots of some of the areas described. Unfortunately he also lost most of his notes on a section of his travels on the East coast.

This story holds insights into the mental and physical strains of big expedition paddling. It gives a great account of the paddling conditions and deserves a place in the library of any sea kayaker whether contemplating a big trip or not.

### WAVE WATCHING ON THE SURF COAST

John Evertze and Tony Chick, club instructors with special expertise in sea kayak surfing organized a rather unusual 'club trip' in May. It was well attended with over 15 keen participants, however none of them actually got on the water on this 'trip'.

This was not a case of foul weather.



Rather it was a novel but well received opportunity to study surf from a relatively dry and safe cliff lookout. John and Tony were able to explain the intricacies of wave formation and behavior and in so doing provide fantastic insights and instruction into the skill of sea kayak surfing and the even more essential skills of launching and landing techniques.

## TEMPESTUOUS TROPICAL TEMPTATIONS by Richard Rawling

I hit the first part of Cowie Point too close in and found myself in 20+ kt of wind from my rear quarter, highly confused rebound seas and to top it off a dropping tide gradually exposing reef that threatened to punch a significant hole in my kayak. This was not fun. It was downright scary and I was cursing big time. Managing to break free of this turmoil I soldiered on for another 50 m or so only to be confronted again by another facet of this monster bluff. This time it was worse because the rebound was compounded and the wind was strengthening. This happened two more times as I struggled to break free of this pig. I was bracing more than I was paddling and I was not loving the tropics. Eventually I went over, only to recover and struggle through to a small cove where I caught my breath. Why was I doing this? Was it challenge or stupidity? Could I conquer my feelings of self-preservation and actually enjoy what I wanted--to be another step up in my kayaking exploits – a solo 885 km paddle from Cairns to Thursday Island in Far North Queensland.

### Getting to the start line

I now understand the true meaning of trip preparation! Initially the planning started when Peter Treby and I decided to reprise his earlier attempt at the same paddle. He had to bail at Cooktown due to worsening wrist inflammation. Subsequently, James Bates and Peter Dingle joined in the planning and I was comforted that we had a great group of four to tackle this tough challenge. It is very remote country and once you get past Cooktown, rescue and support is very difficult. Alas, first James, then Peter Dingle and finally Peter Treby all had to pull out due to health issues. Wow, that left me with a tough call – do I go solo or not at all? I had arranged long service leave, so I had the time and could still do it, as long as I was back in Melbourne in time for a 4-month trip to South America. But this was not a deci-

sion to be taken lightly as I had to weigh up all the effort I had put into preparation versus the obvious risks of such a venture.

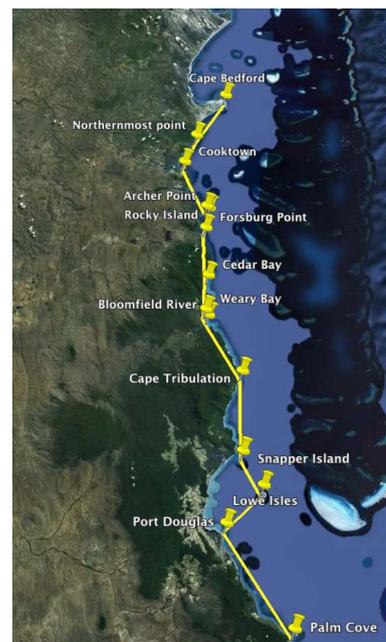
I'll come back to my decision making process later, but to set the context for this let me summarise the effort involved in getting to the start line. This is often overlooked in reports on long trips like this, but it is such a critical point to consider in choosing to commit. In summary, the things I did included:

- Researching all previous trips and documenting landing spots, water locations, weather and tide patterns, known hazards, reports of croc attacks, preferred campsites, etc.
- Loading all waypoints (300+) into the GPS and producing tailored maps for all segments of the trip - see trip innovations later in story.
- Preparing enough dehydrated food for 6 weeks
- Overhauling my kayak from top to bottom in terms of gear robustness, including a beefed up trolley system – see trip innovations.
- Designing and building a custom power management system to enable operation of GPS, satellite phone, VHF radio, torch and lamps, SSB radio and 3G phone (plus pump battery top up) – see trip innovations.
- Communications with water police and other authorities regarding trip risk management.
- Transport logistics to get me, gear and kayak to start line and back again, plus arranging food drops.
- Preparing myself physically and mentally for such an undertaking.

So, this was a significant effort and one that I did not want to go to waste, notwithstanding the somewhat gut-wrenching choice I had to make: go solo or not at all. I teach decision making as part of my consulting work, so I know a lot about good and bad decisions. The approach I decided to use was to talk through the pros and cons with paddlers from the club and others (non-paddlers) who I have great respect for in terms of character, skill and honesty. Honesty is a key

quality because it is easy to tell someone what he or she wants to hear. It is harder to tell someone what he or she needs to hear. I am not going to name names, but the people I spoke to know who they are and I greatly appreciated their candour. The message that kept coming through was twofold: be conservative with risk (which is heightened greatly on a solo paddle) and be prepared to live with the decision (eg do not moan about a missed opportunity when it was your own call). After wrestling with this and revisiting risk protocols, I decided that I would proceed. I am glad that I did, even though I did not fully achieve what I set out to do.

### Cairns to Cooktown



Cairns, my starting point, is a 2842 km drive from Melbourne. Luckily I convinced my brother to share the driving because most other ways of getting the kayak and gear to Cairns were impractical. We headed off in early June, aiming



to get there in 3.5 days. We drove between 700 and 900 km each day and went up via outback NSW.

Arriving in Townsville on the night before Cairns was cause for real celebration and a beer at a waterfront pub seemed fitting.



Once in Cairns we ran around getting everything organised, including visiting the Water Police, shipping food parcels (Australia Post) and picking up the satellite phone (hired from Melbourne). Paul Snelgrove (VSKC Life Member) kindly allowed us to park the car at a property he owns in Palm Beach, but before that I sweated over final packing test runs. I had to carry 30 litres of water as well as enough food for 3 weeks and all paddling/camping gear. Eventually I settled on a packing regime that worked well, and it still drives my kayak packing practices now!

My planned route was basically Cairns, Port Douglas, Snapper Island, Cape Tribulation, Cedar Bay, Cooktown, Low Wooded Isles, Turtle Group, Morriss Is, Barrow Is, Flinders Is, Pelican Is, Fife Is, Cape Sidmouth, First Red Rocky Point, Cape Direction, Restoration Is, Forbes Is, Sunday Is, Hannibal Is, Orford Ness, Turtle Head Is, Somerset Bay, Possession Is and finally Thursday Island. I had bad weather options planned by way of alternate camping sites. For each site I had studied Google Earth and knew where likely beach landings were. In terms of safety gear, I carried an EPIRB (always on my PFD), wore a tether line and strobe rescue light, carried a VHF radio and a SPOT tracker (which I programmed with AM and PM OK messages). I also had my GPS and 3G phone, plus a SSB radio

for weather schedules. Peter Treby acted as my onshore contact and he sent me weather forecasts as well in the form of SMS messages to the satellite phone (in case I could not get them).

I was able to walk the kayak down to the Palm Beach launch site from my hotel and on the first day at least I had fine, calm weather.

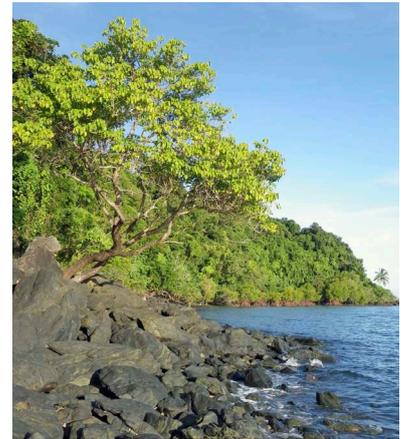


I was very excited at the launch, but excitement soon turned to apprehension as I pondered what lay ahead. I punched up the coast to Port Douglas in double quick time (38 km), bemusing miniature pink minke whales and tourists at cliff top lookouts on the way! When I hit Port Douglas I foolishly strayed onto a large reef and with the tide dropping it was a race to avoid becoming stranded. Knowing where reef systems are and how tide levels work to create dangerous water conditions is important in these parts. Safely in the Port Douglas campground, I had a celebratory beer and pondered day 2. The weather was still good, so I decided to head to Snapper Island via Low Isles (16 km off the coast).



This was hilarious because I arrived amongst hordes of day-trippers from Port Douglas all frolicking in the scrappy reef territory around the island in black lycra stinger suits. I also managed to get my photo taken by the caretaker for the front page of the Lowe Isles News--my 15 seconds of fame!

Snapper Island beckoned, arriving after covering 29.3 km. It is an idyllic place and I set up camp with the whole place to myself, almost.



This island is just off the mouth of the Daintree River and three young blokes were there in a tinnie setting shark baits. They asked and I agreed to tow one of the whole fish baits out into the channel, paddling with the line in my mouth and the fish bait dangling over the side. It then dawned on me that the Daintree is a well-known croc haunt, so not even the incentive of a cold beer could persuade me to repeat this foolish endeavour!

Day 3 saw the weather worsen, with the SE trade wind arcing up to 20 kt or so. This gave me a great but short run up to Cape Tribulation (25.6 km) where I met up again with my brother and we had a day off to visit the reef. On the paddle up I spied several sea turtles and managed to get some good under water shots.



Day 4 of my paddle started out well but I knew the forecast was for 20 kt SE. By the time I hit Bloomfield River it was thumping and I was not really enjoying it. I called into a remote fishing lodge to get a bead from one of the guiding staff on the

access road into Weary Bay (just to the north) where I had agreed to meet my brother for lunch. Well, by the time I got across the bay the dumping shore break was powerfully unpleasant. I got in through this, but the thought of getting around Rattlesnake Head into Cedar Bay did not appeal at all, with the forecast worsening for the following two days, with winds to 25 kt predicted. These SE trade winds are a big deal and demand proficiency in paddling with a rear quartering sea with a heavy boat. The further north you go, the stronger they get. I decided to stop at Weary Bay and we then decanted to Cooktown via the famous Lions Den Hotel where a beer and burger was most welcome.



I used the time in Cooktown to check out weather scenarios and I did not like what I was seeing one little bit because the wind patterns were settling in and I was going to have to contend with 20-30 kt from my rear quarter, constantly. At best, you tend to get a 2-3 day window of lower wind in between 1-2 weeks of stronger weather. I knew this before the trip, but reality sure bites!

Upon resuming the trip at Weary Bay, I got into Cedar Bay (34.5 km from Cape Tribulation), which is a lovely place except for the tonnes of plastic flotsam on the beach and wild pigs that dig everywhere and



create a real mess. I got a fire going at my campsite, which was tremendously comforting. My next big obstacle was Archer Point. I had



been warned about the wind there and the place looked evil from afar. To deal with the ever strengthening wind I was getting on the water by 6.30 am or so at the latest. At this location, I had decided on a landing at Forsburg Point just a few kilometres south of Archer Point, and then pushing off very early the next day. Forsburg Point was only 21.6 km paddling from Cedar Bay but was consistent with my tactic of getting off the water by 12.00 to try to avoid the worst of the wind.

### Crocodile checks out my crocs



Forsburg Point was a great little spot with an idyllic beach, campsite and great fishing. I caught two great trevally which I ate sushi style with wasabi and soy sauce, yummo! I was loving it, but what I did not love at all was a croc encounter on the very morning that I got up early to knock off Archer Point.

Picture this: fully loaded boat, standing in 30 cm or murky water, trying to squeeze into the small nadgee cockpit and then up pops a croc about 30 m from the kayak. I could clearly see its head but when it started cruising parallel to the beach I bailed quickly. It did not seem to be of the 'huge' variety,



but a croc is a croc in my book! I had been told that the best tactic in this situation was to walk along the beach and get away from the croc and its territory. But I only had 200-300 m of beach. By the time I had put the kayak back on the trolley wheels and walked 200 m or so the croc turned up again. I swear it was stalking me and that is a creepy feeling. I had to get off that bloody beach or my weather window would close, so heart pumping and with the croc submerged I threw myself into the boat and paddled like lightning out past the reef. I did not stop to look back and certainly did not take photos! I propped off the reef for a few minutes to catch my breath and never saw the croc again, but that is the worry, you rarely do.

Archer Point was a bit of an anti-climax after that because the weather in fact settled and I could get quite close in to explore Rocky Island and an old gravesite. Then I landed on a lovely beach with a bunch of grey nomads for breakfast. However, I lingered a tad too long and the wind started to get up. Off again, I belted along the spectacular coastline at the foot of quite large mountains and river outlets that define the entrance to Cooktown. This geography is what makes Cooktown such a windy place and it also marks the end of the wet tropics because north of Cooktown is a high wind area that dries the land out and promotes dry savannah country in the main. Cooktown was a welcome sight as I rounded the last point and entered

the Endeavour River. Upon arrival at the boat ramp (with croc memories seared on my brain) an elderly



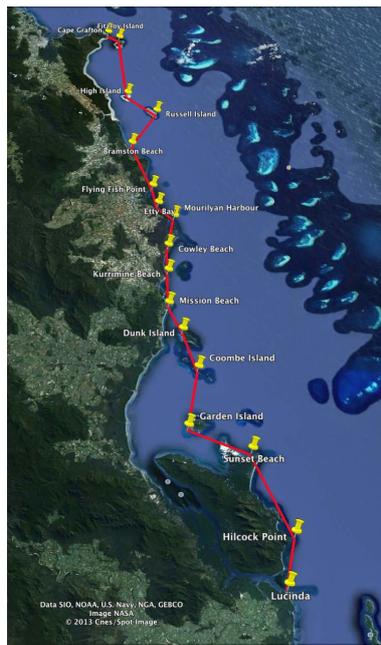
couple strolling in the shallows of the river kindly took a few happy snaps but I remember thinking how crazy that was given a toothless local telling me in the pub on my earlier visit that “them gators in the river will getcha in that bloody canoe”!



I rested in Cooktown for a day but the winds showed no sign of abating. The culprit here are high-pressure ridges that extend up the Queensland coast from down south. Based on my research into wind patterns, this seemed to be an unusually persistent period of high winds for June/July. This weather pattern enables great weather in Victoria, but generates high winds up north. Cooktown is the last practical bail out point and once past here, the logistics of exit or rescue are much harder. To test my mettle I tried paddling towards Cape Bedford with an empty boat. The geography here quickly exposes boats to the full brunt of the SE winds and I got tossed around amongst pretty large swells and confused wind waves, exacerbated by wind on tide from the river run out. Extracting myself from that

mess I decided over a seafood meal at the bowls club to have one final shot. I reloaded the boat and headed off early the next morning. Certainly the loaded boat handled the big conditions better, but this time I got pushed into the surf zone on the western side of the bay north of the Endeavour River mouth. I decided that I was better off battling the surf zone and turning back to Cooktown. I had admitted temporary defeat, but I was calm and pleased with that decision. If I had a paddling partner I would have gone on, but my mantra of conservative risk management stood firm. I had covered about 200 km and pushed my paddling envelope considerably, but I regard this part of FNQ as unfinished business!

### What to do now? – Lucinda to Cairns



Reluctant to go home, I pondered my options. I looked at the practicality of connecting with Terry Barry’s Whitsunday trip (see Sea Trek 74), but the text messages I had exchanged with Peter Dingle indicated that they were getting thumped as well. I then hit on the idea of paddling the Hinchinbrook Island coast and then paddling back to Cairns. I had no maps for this section of coast so I got a reasonable tourist map and worked out a trip plan. I also got onto a local trucking company and sent the

kayak and gear back to Cairns (but only after it survived a trip on a fork truck organised by toothless Dave in that quintessential FNQ outfit, the blue singlet). I caught a bus back and grabbed the car from Paul’s place. I grabbed the kayak on Monday and shuttled it and the gear to a campground at Lucinda (230 km south). I then drove back to Cairns and caught a bus and pre-booked taxi back to the Lucinda campground just near my launching point for the next day (phew!).



The route I planned was up the east coast of Hinchinbrook Island then to Cairns via Garden Is, Coombe Is, Dunk Is, Mission Beach, Kurramine, Cowley Beach, Etty Bay, Bramston Beach, High Island and Fitzroy Island. Tidal movements on this part of the coast are not too great, but you have to plan for this because you can get caught on large sand flats or miss the ability to use shortcut channels between landforms. Hinchinbrook Island itself is a spectacular place with large craggy mountains and sublime beachscapes. It is bounded by extensive mangrove systems on the western side making it 40 km of prime crocodile territory. Hillcock Point on the SE tip marks the start of the east coast-an imposing sight.



I would not want to be there in a thumping SE blow. I then called into Zoe Bay for a late breakfast and wash in the fresh water creek there. What a magical place, any wonder it is world heritage listed. I had not intended this, but my paddle up the east coast of the island was a cracker because the weather

was great and I was able to get the sail going. I raced along and covered 38 km in no time. That put me up the north end of the island past Cape Sandwich where I landed at Sunset Beach in Shepherd Bay.



This idyllic spot was also the port of call for two local paddlers, Vito and John from Cardwell. They were staggered that I had done in one day what had taken them two. Mind you Vito had put his mate John (who had never paddled before) in a Pittarak whereupon he had fallen out and had to be rescued twice, hmmm! The three of us got on pretty well and decided to paddle together for a day or so. We visited the Cyclone Yasi devastated Hinchinbrook Wilderness Resort and then headed for Garden Island under sail.



There we bumped into some local fishermen who Vito conned a few cold beers from, which were most welcome indeed!



The following day we parted company (we have since caught up a few times and Vito called into my camp at Mission Beach). They headed off to Cardwell in developing conditions and I headed for Coombe Island. I nailed the 17 km run in no time and whilst this is an

idyllic spot, I pushed onto Dunk Island. What a mess. Dunk Island is deserted, courtesy of Cyclone Yasi and the damage is severe. One of the buildings had been ripped right off its foundations and all that was left was a toilet cistern! Mission Beach seemed a better bet (38 km for the day).



Mission Beach is certainly a lovely spot but after getting trapped there due to nine days of high wind and rain I was getting pretty annoyed. I had eaten in all the restaurants in Mission Beach and was almost becoming a local! But, enough was enough, so I caught the bus back to Cairns, grabbed the car and checked into a motel in Innisfail with my waterlogged gear. A local newspaper headline said it all “Wettest July on record”!



Eventually the weather settled a bit and I resumed the paddle from Mission Beach and headed up to Cowley Beach (29 km) and then onto Etty Bay via Mourilyan Harbour (23 km) and finally Bramston Beach via Flying Fish Point (26 km). Bramston Beach is a lovely



spot and only about 75 km from Cairns by sea so I lobbied there for a few days and went and got the car from Mission Beach to give me options. The coastline along here comprises long surf beaches, steep in parts, with dumping waves. Yes, crocs are also still a potential issue. I tried several times to paddle to Cape Grafton (Fitzroy Island) but the best I could do in the weather conditions was a great out and back trip to Russell Island (32 km return). I would have liked to camp there because it is a lovely spot, but I was committed to paddling back to Bramston Beach. In the end I had paddled another 200 km on this second leg and the tug of cooler, drier latitudes and a decent bed was too much of a lure. So, I ended the trip, called Helen to fly up and drove back to Cairns. I had paddled close to 400 km and was really proud of that and the strength of character it took in those atrocious conditions.

## Gear Innovations

I like to refine gear to a point where it is elegantly functional. There were three things I did on this trip that might be of interest to those planning similar exploits:

1. Tailored maps combining topographical and marine charts, with distance and bearing look-up tables.
2. Demountable solar power system that charged while I was paddling.
3. Balloon tyres and beefed up trolley axle system to handle a fully laden boat.

I will write up the solar system in some detail in a future Sea Trek, but I have listed below the key points of these three innovations.

## Tailored maps



- I used 1:250K topographical maps and manipulated these in mapping software (Oziexplorer) to add colour coded way points (blue = drinking water, red = croc attack or sighting, yellow = beach landing, etc). There were 16 maps for the whole coast. They were printed on waterproof paper.
- I converted these maps to PDF format then edited them further by adding marine chart features (boating channels go very close to the coast).
- A colleague at work helped me to develop a clever little spreadsheet that calculated straight-line distances and bearings from any one location to another. I then edited this down for the waypoints on a particular map and then pasted this table onto the map. I was then able 'at a glance' to see options for trip modifications as I went by using this 'look-up' table.

## Demountable solar power system



- Keeping all my gear charged up was always going to be important, but I wanted to be able to charge stuff as I was paddling. It gets dark quite early in the tropics and use of land-based solar panels is okay but restricted.
- Every part of the solar power system was fully demountable from my boat.
- The system comprised a waterproof 18W semi-flexible solar panel mounted on purpose built carbon fibre racks (which also

formed a park for spare paddles and an anchor point for jamb cleats that held the trolley lines)

- This panel connected through the deck using a special IPC 68 waterproof connector to a storage battery and charging system in the day hatch
- The main storage battery was a 12.8 AH LiPoFe4 lightweight type. This weighs just over 800 gm, but an equivalent SLA battery would weigh 3.5 kg!
- The charging system was set up in a Pelican Box and comprised a special Maximum Power Point Tracker controller that optimises power output from the panel. The MPPT unit drove two chargers – a 4x AA/AAA 12V unit and a 12v universal charger for camera batteries, etc. There are also extra 12v outlets to charge the pump and VHF radio batteries.
- The main battery box was fashioned in carbon fibre and fitted to the hull shape of the Nadgee. It is held in place with nifty, miniature rubber latch fittings.

## Balloon tyre trolley system



- Expedition loaded boats are heavy so I needed a trolley system to help manoeuvre the boat by myself (or face long, tiring portage of gear).
- Golf cart wheels used on most trolleys are useless because they cut into soft sand or mud.
- The Nadgee axle system is a clever idea, but not well engineered. The welds are poorly designed (I have had one bend on me) and the guy ropes position the main strut at 90 degrees to the deck plane. This renders it unstable and prone to collapse.
- This was all redesigned so that the struts are raked back and self-positioning. The bracket was rebuilt with better welds and a notched, solid axle installed to take balloon tyres that just click on and off.
- The golf cart wheels were replaced with 250 mm "Wheeleez"

balloon tyres that are inflated to about 10 psi. The difference in the ability to move the boat over any terrain is amazing. I often fitted the wheels in the water and walked the boat straight up the beach!

## Final thoughts and thanks

Anyone who has done a trip like this knows the effort involved and the commitment it takes. I learned a lot, saw some amazing things and met fascinating people. Everywhere I went people were very curious and somewhat surprised at what I was attempting to do, but always seemed to admire the effort involved. There are many people who I could thank, but there are a few who stand out and deserve special mention:

- Peter Treby – for earthy inspiration, wise counsel and on-shore support.
- Peter Dingle and James Bates – for getting involved in planning and training.
- Anthony Malloch (Sea Mongrel) – who has done the trip several times and was a font of advice.
- Dave Winkworth – also has done the trip and was a source of wisdom.
- Raia Wall – for sharing previous trip planning and food preparation tips.
- Grant Della – for helping build the trolley system.
- Andrew Rawling – for driving all that way and hanging around for the first week.
- Paul Snelgrove – for use of his place in Cairns to store the car and helpful advice.
- Cairns Water Police, Seaswift, Silvester Palms Motel and Portland Roads Postal Agency for help and guidance.

Lastly I want to thank all my colleagues at the Nous Group for their support and interest, and my wife Helen for occasionally venturing into a kayak and for putting up with all the effort that went into this adventure.

FNQ remains unfinished business and the plotting has already started for a reprise!

## PORT TO PORT 100 km CHARITY CHALLENGE by Greg Skowronski



### April 18-19th, 2013

The weather really turned it on for us for this year's Port to Port 100 km Challenge. It was mostly calm just like Bureau of 'Numerology' predicted. The pod stayed mostly on or slightly ahead of schedule which allowed for frequent naps throughout the night on and off water. All solo paddlers completed the 100 km distance and all members of teams made it to the finish line. In the closing stages, as the pod was approaching St Kilda Marina, dolphins appeared and escorted us into the harbour. During our landing a rainbow appeared. Congratulations were exchanged, followed by consumption of the finest seasonal foods perfectly matched with selection of fine wines. I could not help but be overwhelmed by sen **\*KNOCK\* \*KNOCK\* \*KNOCK\***

**WHAAAAAAT??!!** - I thought. Oh right, Jeannine wants to get back into the car. It is 4:45 am and I've had no sleep for 24 hours. It is going to be another hour until we depart Rickett's Point to Sandringham. I move my sore butt back into the middle console and shut my eyes hoping to get some sleep.

I get none.

Port to Port Challenge is not something I ever thought I'd get

involved in. The 2013 edition was organised in support of two charities who tackle youth depression and teen suicide, namely Big Brothers and Sisters and C.H.I.P.S. The challenge involved paddling between checkpoints from Portsea and St Kilda Marina.



Depression has touched everyone at some point in their life whether they like to admit to it or not. Depression is not dissimilar to bobbing up and down in your kayak alone in the middle of the night, being hit by waves trying to push you over into the water. Lost and alone. I have been there, I experienced it.

When I first joined this challenge I was going to attempt to paddle the 100 km myself. Bron wasn't too keen. I wanted to see how far I could push my body before it

broke. I also wanted to provide some moral support to Jeannine. She is a much stronger paddler than I am but hasn't paddled 100 km in 24 hours either. I thought we could encourage each other along the way and perhaps go further than we otherwise would have. A couple of weeks before the event Bron volunteered to do the graveyard shift (midnight to 3 am). She wanted to provide encouragement and keeping Jeannine awake by serenading songs to her. A week prior to the event Angela who we met on a kayaking trip to Wilson's Prom contacted me to see whether she could join us. Forming a team



seemed like a good idea. The more the merrier and hopefully more awareness and money raised. I pushed my personal aspirations aside and Team 'Triple 0' was formed. I have come up with this name because all three of us were 'Level 0' kayakers i.e newbies with limited experience as per VSKC grading system.

On Saturday morning we were all ready to go but word got to us that the first two legs of the paddle have





erated somewhat but at that stage we were already behind schedule and the decision was made to pack up all the kayaks and drive north to Safety Beach for a possible launch there.

It was well and truly dark by then. The beach looked a bit like a washing machine. There were half metre waves breaking on the shore and whitecaps as far as the torchlight allowed you to see. Peter Costello did a quick survey of the group to see who would be willing to go out there. The group was more or less split 50/50. I am sure some would revel in those conditions (I am looking at you Andrew Campbell) but the less experienced people elected not to go in. In the end, after much deliberation the sensible decision was made to drive to our next checkpoint at Mornington Marina with plenty of time up our sleeves to make a decision.



been cancelled due to high winds which were gusting to 25 kt. I felt a bit like a deflated balloon. I was all pumped and ready to go but then all of a sudden I have been popped and fizzled out. I had to wait another five hours. Finally 2:30 pm came around and Angela and Jeannine showed up. We packed the Subie and were on the way to Tootgarook.

When we got to Tootgarook the wind was blowing quite hard. People were getting their kayaks ready but it didn't look like we were going to go anywhere. The swans were out there though, they didn't seem too concerned.

It was interesting to hear the conversations between paddlers as we were standing on the breakwater at Mornington. The sounds of crashing waves and the wind in the masts of moored yachts was messing with some heads. Since it was also already dark it didn't help to encourage people to go out there. By then the wind moderated and was blowing at around 12 kt. However the swell was still around 1 m but subsiding. Since the launching

We ordered some pizza which was promptly devoured. The wind mod-



point was inside the marina there was no surf to deal with and the pod would get a gentle introduction to the open waters beyond the breakwater. Our team decided to stick to our original plan so Angela was going to be the first one to paddle. The only night paddle she has done before this was a midnight paddle to Granite Island in Corner Inlet. This particular paddle was on flat water in 3 kt wind so this one was going to be a bit different. The girls had a quick cup of tea and after a briefing from Peter Costello, the pod departed into the dark night.

On the way to Canadian Bay I realised I forgot my entire bag of food containing muesli bars, bananas, gels, and other performance-enhancing substances of questionable origin and legality. I am a keen cyclist, enough said. I was not a happy paddler. If this were Tour De France I'd be dropped on the first climb!

By the time we got to the car park at Canadian Bay the pod was already in sight. Bron hit the panic button because she was nowhere near ready to go. I reassured her that it would be at least another 40 minutes before departure so no stress. I took a few long exposure photos and we made our way down to the Canadian Bay Beach. By that time the pod made the landing and were getting some food and drink. Apparently Angela had a great time and gave Bron the paddle report. Things were looking good for Bron to go out.

One thing I learned while standing on the beach at Canadian Bay is to step away from anyone demonstrating paddling technique! I got my butt slapped a couple of times by name withheld to protect the innocent. Bron proclaimed I actually enjoyed it, thanks! So I got a couple more! Ouch. When Jeannine learned I forgot my food bag she was kind enough to share hers with me even though she still had more than 50 km left to paddle. Very generous of her I thought.

The pod left Canadian Bay right



on time. Angela and I got back to the car. At that stage I paddled 0 km and driven about 200 km. I couldn't quite work out how much paddling Angela actually wanted to do but her suggestion earlier that day to have 2 team mates paddling might be a good idea. I sensed she was up for a challenge. Decision was made to drive to my place in Elwood to pick up my kayak. Bron was meant to get to the next checkpoint at 3 am so we had 3 hours to spare. Sleep is over-rated anyway.

We got to Elwood, loaded the kayak, I took half of a caffeine pill and at around 1:30 am we took off towards Edithvale down Neapean Hwy. As I was looking at the road ahead, in the corner of my eye, I noticed some bushes. They were swinging from side to side. Uh oh. This is not good. It means the on shore wind was wipping up the waves on Port Philip Bay. Normally this would not concern me except that Bron was out there on the water, in the middle of the night, paddling her kayak.

No sooner that I realised the wind has picked up I get a call from Bron and promptly hang up on her. I realised I swiped the screen the wrong way. She calls again, I hang up on her again. Engage brain! She calls again, this time I pick it up and she tells me she went into the water and is waiting to be picked up at Seaford car park. I know this area very well because I went there with my dog Nora for walks along the beach.

I imagined Bron to be upset but surprisingly she was okay, even happy. I guess having Jeannine by her side, who incidentally is the chirpiest chick I know, ensured this. Bron

has not been put off by the experience at all. I probably would have thrown my toys out of the kayak and gone home! Not her however! Very impressive.

Due to the conditions the decision had been made to stay out of the water. This meant carrying the kayaks 300 m to the car park. Some of the kayaks were extremely heavy but everyone helped out and we got the job done. Since we were falling behind schedule it was decided to drive to Rickett's Point and depart at 6 am which would put us back on schedule. Again, we had to load all the kayaks onto the trailer and all the cars. This was starting to get rather tedious but that's what happens when you're at the mercy of the elements.

Rickett's Point was windy. The wind has swung around to a south westerly and the temperature dropped. We still had 2 hours until departure. Through fogged up windows we saw Peter Costello and Neil Power. Sea kayakers are resourceful types so in that spirit we decided to let them fend for themselves. Kidding! We would never do that! Instead we invited them inside and tested the seating configuration of the Subie. As it turned out having six people is not a problem.

I think I must have drawn the short straw and ended up sitting on top of the middle console. I already had a sore butt after having it slapped with a paddle at Canadian Bay. Sitting on top of the console is not comfortable at the best of times especially if you forget to close the top cover and you end up sitting more or less on top of a plastic

box! We had three people at the front and three people at the back. I was hoping to get some sleep but I couldn't quite find a comfortable position. It didn't matter though. We had a great time! I forgot about my sore butt and thigh (which was being elbowed by name withheld to protect the innocent)

When you haven't slept for 24 hours and spent most of the day loading and unloading kayaks your mind starts to play tricks on you. We noticed some lights in the distance which according to Pete was a helicopter hovering above the water performing a rescue. I thought this was very unlikely at this hour. I suggested it must be UFO probably abducting the people waiting to be rescued. Those pesky UFOs always seem to pop up at night, either while you drive on a highway or when paddling your kayak. In any case we agreed that whether the story is true or not it would make for a great headline the next day. For the record the UFO took off (albeit very slowly) towards Melbourne possibly to land in the Port of Melbourne. (It was just a boat!) At 5:30 am it was time to get out on the water. I finally got to paddle! We left right on time. At this stage the wind has dropped right off to about 10 kt with 0.5 m swell which made for comfortable paddle. We didn't really see the sunrise because it was overcast so it progressively just got brighter. En route a seal surfaced 3 m away from a kayak which was very cool.

As we were coming around the

Sandringham breakwater names withheld to protect the innocent got tangled in a couple of fishing lines but promptly untangled themselves before the fisherman got a chance to reel them in. As we landed at Sandringham we were greeted by a couple of friendly dogs. After a bite to eat Angela swapped with Bron and we paddled to North Road. By that stage the Bay was completely flat with no wind at all. The sun was out and everyone's spirit lifted.

Finishing the paddle in full sun, flat water and no wind was such a contrast! I could not believe how quickly the conditions changed especially after all those gales just six hours earlier. As we approached St Kilda Pier we moved into a tighter formation, ducked under the pier and landed. We finished!

Yes, things didn't go as planned. Yes, it was frustrating. Yes, we didn't paddle as far as we set out. Yes, some of us got on each other's nerves. However what was the name of the paddle again? Port to Port 100 km what? Challenge! That's right. Challenge. Who cares how far we paddled. It's irrelevant whether it was 1000 km or 100 m. We still paddled as far as we possibly could on the day. This is exactly what we set out to do in the first place. We bonded, we laughed, we cried. Isn't this what life is about? Rallying together in the face of adversity? Sharing the laughter and the pain? If everyone works together towards a common goal, towards the common good

we achieve as much as we possibly can. Everyone contributed something to this paddle. It may not have been even noticed, remembered, mentioned or thanked for but it made a difference.

I have only been a member of VSKC for barely a couple of months. I am just a grasshopper. I don't even know what I don't know yet. The bunch of people who make up VSKC are exceptional. I haven't met everyone yet but having paddled with people like Andrew Campbell and Peter Costello has been an absolute privilege. Their knowledge and their willingness to share it is inspirational.

I am a member of a couple of other clubs, organisations and work at a couple of places. I have to say VSKC seems to be the kind of place where common good is being placed ahead of any self-interest or glory. I am proud to be a member of it.



Would I do Port to Port Challenge again in the same circumstances? You bet.



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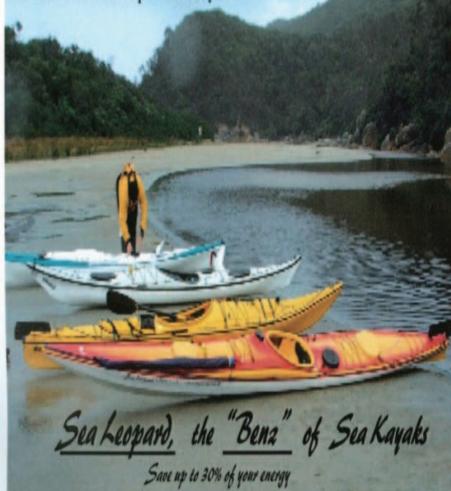
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