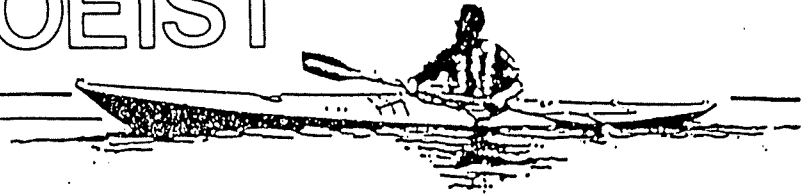


THE
SEA CANOEIST
NEWSLETTER

P O Box 26
NELSON
NEW ZEALAND

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In the last newsletter I mentioned the use of a skeg to help keep a kayak on track. You may have gathered that I didn't think much of them. The ultimate in skegs is, of course, a rudder. These have been used for years on racing kayaks and in Europe on touring boats. However, because in New Zealand our rivers are rather rocky, kayakers had dropped any idea of rudders and we had a fair degree of culture shock to overcome before we began using them again. Nowadays, rudders are so common on sea kayaks that a sea kayak without one is an exception. Paul Caffyn re-invented the kayak rudder for New Zealand and came up with a design that was far superior to anything else available around the world. Grahame Sisson has added refinements to not only the rudder itself, but also to the manner in which it is fitted to the stern of the kayak. Over the page is a photograph of Paul's Japan trip rudder, an early version of the rudder, but the photograph illustrates the essential components. Points to note are the very deep and narrow blade which is semi-balanced (has some of the blade area forward of the turning axis). Also the fold-up blade is able to be retracted by control lines and also able to be dropped by using the same control-lines from the cockpit.

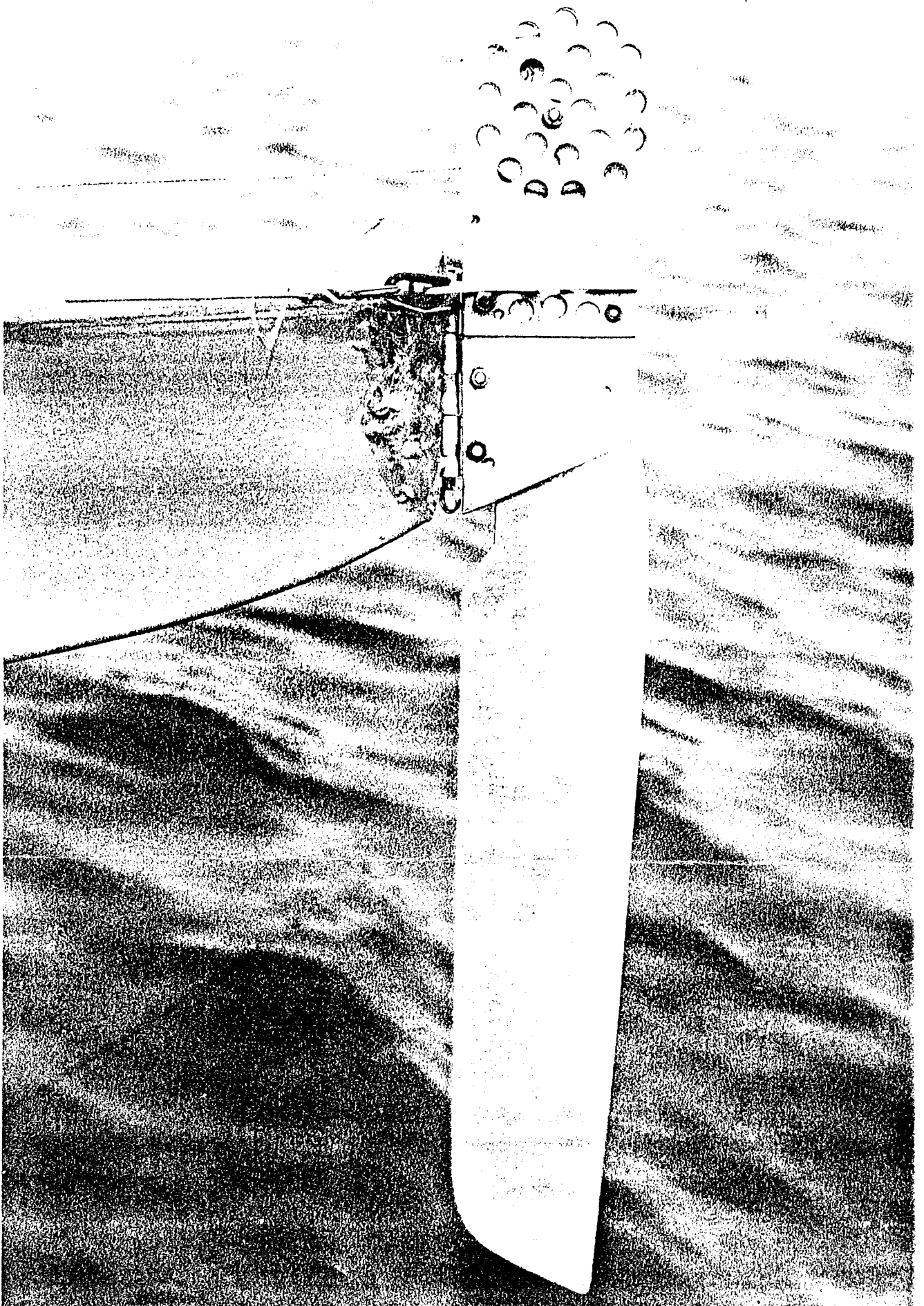
In the past most paddlers allowed their rudder blades to kick-up on impact and were not able to retract them from the cockpit. When taking off from a surf beach you need a rudder that is able to be dropped once you have got beyond the surf. Most paddlers prefer to go out, and come in through surf with their rudders up.

An interesting incident happened to Bevan Walker some time ago. When leaving a surf beach with his rudder retracted, a powerful wave washing over the boat bent his rudder blade out at an angle. Every time a wave washed over him the bent rudder caught the wave and twisted the kayak over so that Bevan had to roll on every wave - quite a feat and one that Bevan was not keen to repeat. The solution was to build wee 'rabbits ears' on the back deck so that when the blade was retracted and lying on the aft deck, it was held in place and could not be twisted sideways and off the deck. Grahame Sisson has now refined this idea by building into the deck a long slot so that the rudder blade is held secure and well out of the way of waves that wash along the deck. I believe that some paddlers complain that this reduces the carrying capacity of the back hull compartment. However, it is not wise to carry gear in the very extreme ends of the kayak and there is little room there anyway.

Grahame has also developed rudders for his triathlon kayaks that sit behind the stern with very little depth below the bottom of the boat. These rudders have minimal area and are designed to assist the paddler in keeping his boat running straight rather than giving any great turning ability. It seems to me that these are well worth consideration for paddlers who do a lot of estuary paddling and who do not want the bother of a large rudder and control lines along the deck. These small rudders would also be of some assistance in keeping your boat running straight in the surf where a large rudder blade area would tend to oversteer the boat.

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AN EARLY VERSION OF THE CAFFYN/SISSON NORDKAPP RUDDER



I have just this week received notification of a sea kayak seminar to be held in Auckland over the weekend of May 11-13. This will be based at the Mon Desir Hotel on Takapuna Beach. Speakers and participants are at this point unknown. An event registration pack is available from the organiser, Dave Robertson at PO Box 46-035, Herne Bay, AUCKLAND. Details on costs etc. have not been provided as yet. The seminar is called 'Coastbusters'

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Bob MacKerrow has thrown in the towel on his Auckland to Auckland via North Cape trip after hitting some truly huge waves breaking out of the Manukau Harbour. It seems he was well over the worst of it before he packed it in; the weather was looking like sending him more of the same. Apparently he and his companion in a Southern Light went vertically up a typical west coast roller, foaming with wind spume off the crest, broke through the top and got airborne for most of the descent into the trough. (Nobody told him about using a parapent off these peaks). Bob is very impressed with the Southern Light. Although a big boat and able to handle the rough stuff exceptionally well, it's no slug either. Bob has been putting up some good times in kayak races on Auckland Harbour. Those people who have these boats are certainly enthusiastic about them.

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The Resource Management Bill has been referred to a special Select Committee for consideration and submissions are invited from the public on the draft Bill. Submissions must be in by 23 February 1990 and I urge all readers to make themselves familiar with the Bill and to send in submissions. Most public libraries have copies.

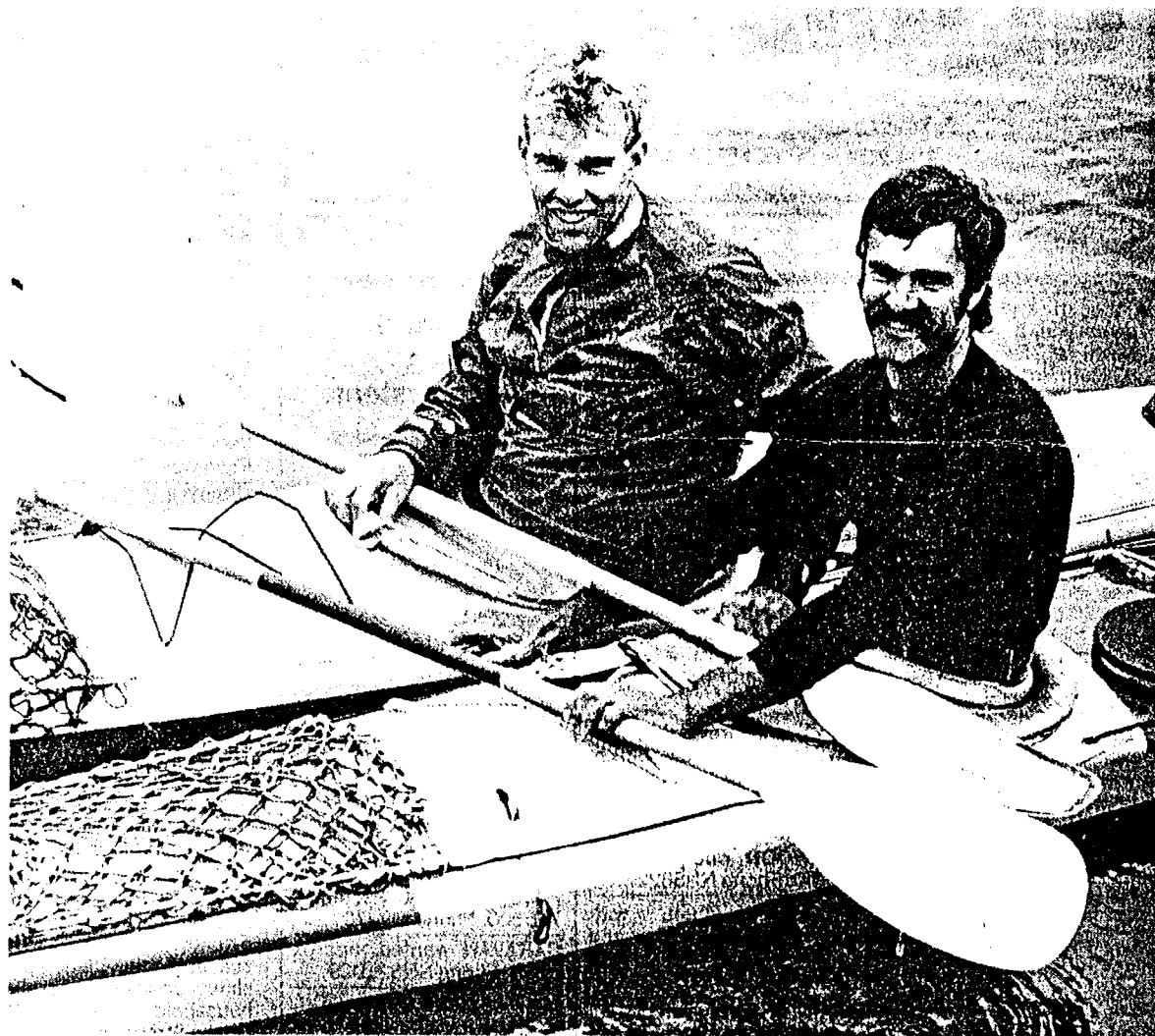
The Bill identifies the coastline as needing more effective management. Below mean high water mark will be the responsibility of both the Minister of Conservation and regional councils. The idea is that regional councils will prepare regional coastal management plans. These plans must maintain the natural character of the coastal environment without precluding appropriate use and development. I am not sure how that will be achieved as it seems a conflict in intentions before you start! The other point which needs looking at is the width of the coastal strip; it seems too narrow to me as the area up to, and including coastal sand dunes, coastal cliffs and wetlands ought also be included.

Sea canoeists should participate in public submissions on individual coastal management plans when they are prepared, so if you decide not to put in submissions on the Bill, at least be ready to put in your views on local issues later.

The New Zealand Underwater Association is forming an organisation to monitor water quality in the coastal marine environment and to participate and fund, litigation, hearings and other proceedings relating to water quality. The organisation is to be known as Aqua Trust and can be contacted at

PO Box 2571 WELLINGTON.

Canoeists take on Fiordland



Three Nelson men will leave Riverton, near Invercargill on Monday to canoe 500km around Fiordland to Jackson's Bay, south of Haast on the West Coast.

Craig Hornblow, a Motueka horticultural consultant left, and Bevan Walker, a Brightwater kiwifruit grower, right, have allowed themselves four weeks to complete the journey, although they hope to finish in three if the weather is good.

On their way south, they will be joined by Nelson builder Keith Dekkers, who is temporarily living in Christchurch.

Walker is the most experienced canoeist of the three.

After this trip he will have only one more leg to do before he has completely circumnavigated the South Island.

He plans to do the third leg, from Riverton to Dunedin next summer.

This will make him the second man to have canoed around the South Island. West Coast canoeist Paul Caffyn made the first circumnavigation, during his voyage around New Zealand in 1978. Caffyn has since circumnavigated Australia, Britain and Japan.

Walker has been involved in sea

canoeing since the mid-1970s and has paddled in the Marlborough Sounds extensively.

In 1985 he canoed for 9½ days from Jackson's Bay to Mapua, then from Picton to Kaikoura in seven days.

He followed this the next summer with a 19-day trip from Dunedin to Kaikoura. In early 1988 Walker and two associates canoed from Doubtful Sound 300km around the coast to Bluff.

Although Hornblow does not have as much experience as Walker he is well prepared physically. Two days before the departure from Riverton, Hornblow will compete in the Coast to Coast mountain race "as a warm up", he says.

Dekkers is not expected to complete the journey. He plans to stop at Doubtful Sound.

The men will travel in the same Nordkapp style canoes that Caffyn used in his earlier trip. They have been made by Nelson canoe designer Grahame Sisson.

The weather "will dictate what we do", Walker says.

If it gets too bad the trio may have to pull out at a sound short of their target, but Walker is deter-

mined to complete the circumnavigation.

Each day they will begin paddling at sun up and go through to dusk, sometimes canoeing as long as 14 hours.

Overnight they will stay in tents and caves.

They see the biggest danger of the trip as not at sea but on land. Coming ashore is the time of greatest risk, because there is always the chance a canoe can be holed by a rock in the surf, Walker says.

They will carry a radio to keep in touch with authorities but say this is only for weather reports. "It can't save your life," Walker says.

However there have been a few nervous moments at sea for Walker.

On a recent trip around Farewell Spit a shark took a liking to the small rudder on his canoe and proceeded to use it to "scratch its back".

He has also met sharks longer than his six-metre canoe but says he mostly sees dolphins and birds.

Walker rates this part of his circumnavigation as the most beautiful.

He says the Fiordland coastline has some of the best scenery in the world.