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FOREWORD

It would be hard to find a more engaging companion than Paul Caffyn for a paddling expedition. With his keen observation, widespread knowledge and total respect for the sea, fascinating anecdotes pour from him as he describes a scenario or situation. Even at a Safer Boating Forum, his sharp memory ensures a continuing flow of wit and wisdom.

Whether it be as editor or author, it has been rewarding that this effervescent flow has continued through his pen to paper, thus ensuring that it can be more widely shared and enjoyed.

There can be few individuals who have excelled in promoting the art of expedition kayaking in so many parts of the world over so many years. To be a gifted raconteur is an added bonus, especially for his readers.

For me it is a great shame that previous powers of New Zealand have not truly recognised Paul's achievements as a world leading adventurer.

KASK has greatly benefited from his wise counsel and it is with a sense of real appreciation that this edition of the magazine belongs to Paul.

Shaun Maclaren
8 July 2019

EDITORIAL

Fancy being so late with my very last KASK magazine. It has been a struggle. I wanted to include snippets from all my trips, but was struggling for choice with far too many photos and words thus it is a mix of one long story and highlights from a few of the trips. I managed to squeeze in a book review, new additions to my library and one very last terrible joke.

Significantly big seas in the past two weeks have been a tad stressful at high tide, one wave splashing across the front deck with sufficient force to drive mini geysers up the ranch-slider drain holes. Now that I am a retired KASK magazine editor, I foresee a busy time this summer with repairs to the sea walls, completing the book on the Alaskan trip and dusting the cobwebs off the wave ski when the surf settles down.

Sandy Ferguson has updated my dormant website (paulcaffyn.co.nz), and between us we will add reports, photos and book reviews that I have archived on my Mac.

My thanks to you wonderful paddlers who have supported the KASK magazine and me with stories and photographs, and for the emails wishing me well post-retirement.

Paul Caffyn 8 August 2019

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Deadline for magazine No. 202: 25 September 2019

Your new magazine editor is **Jac-
quie James**. I have provided her with a magazine template and a USB stick with lots of past magazine folders and PDF files. Please help her with stories and photos:
jacquejames@yahoo.co.uk

Cover photo:

August 2008, my all time favourite magazine cover photograph; perhaps the only one that includes me paddling on the cover. I've always maintained ice adds a fourth dimension to kayaking and this photo of massive ice bergs stranded in shallows by low tide illustrates my view. This was during our paddle down the East Coast of Greenland from Isortoq to Narsaq. Photo: Conrad Edwards

Page 2 Top Left:

One of my favourite pics from the Round Aussie trip. Surfing into Queens Beach at Bowen in north Queensland. Impeccably attired in a not too holey NZ op-shop wool singlet and a big, saggy straw hat. Photo: Lesley Hadley

Page 2 Bottom Left:

6 July 1991, nearing Cape Beaufort in the Chukchi Sea off the north-west coast of Alaska. 'Nothing fishy in the sea for our breakfast, but what do we have in that long yellow kayak?' Photo: Paul Caffyn

KASK

Presidents Report July 2019

by Shaun Maclaren

Hi everyone,

I do so enjoy the tranquillity and special light of paddling in the winter mornings. Conditions seem to be more settled and generally easier to predict. I am not a fan of the cold but there is something special about the crisp calmness of an early morning. There has been a scurry of activity in the last month with the launch of the KASK App, Kayak Fest 2020, Safer Boating Forum and Club Affiliations.

Kayak Fest 2020

With six months to the event, capacity of a hundred paddlers has already been reached. If you have not registered and would like to attend, please email hq@kask.co.nz to go on the waiting list. The organising team will keep you personally informed of any changes as a result of cancellations or change in the capacity. An amazing fete by the team, well done and thank you. I am looking forward to February 2020.

IKW 2020

Information on registering your interest can be found at <https://kask.co.nz/kayak-fest/international-kayaking-week-2020/>. It will follow on from Kayak Fest 2020 and be based at Urupukapuka Bay.

This ideal location of Urupukapuka Bay offers easy access for paddling, from protected island hopping to paradisiacal beaches, to rock garden, and ocean white-water play spots, to exploring the many sea caves.

Kayak Fest beyond 2020

As no interest has been shown to support the event in the South Island for 2021, it will remain in the North for a further year. So, the big question is East or West Coast – Gisborne or Raglan – any thoughts? if you or any of your paddling friends know of any unique locations on either the East or West Coast of the North Island and are keen to give back to the paddling community and organise

this special event, please contact me so that we can start the discussion and get the ball rolling:

Shaun@kask.co.nz

Affiliated Clubs/ Networks and Associations

I am pleased to announce that the Canterbury Sea Kayak Network (CSKN) is now the fifth organisation to become affiliated and has joined BASK, NCC, OCKC, and WSKN.

The aim is to increase membership numbers to give KASK a greater voice at national forums and increased credibility with local bodies, regional councils and other regulatory bodies.

Please note, that there is no change to those individual paddlers who wish to continue to receive their own magazine and have full access to all facets of the KASK App.

KASK App

Thank you to everyone who opted in to try the Kask app. Feedback has been encouraging and given us food for thought. Existing members who wish to login to the app will be directed to the app page upon membership renewal. Members who joined recently would have already have access to KASK app, and if not please contact:

tim@kask.co.nz

Safer Boating Forum

Every year Coastguard, Surf Life-saving, Water Safety NZ, Drowning Prevention Auckland, and Maritime NZ have promoted their own Safety Messages, many of which are similar.

All parties have agreed to co-share, promote and amplify each other's safety messages which are all about being safer on the water. It has been decided to extend the Safer Boating Week to become a Safer Boating Month, running from after Labour Weekend to encapsulate the beginning of the boating season throughout the country. As yet nothing is set in concrete, but I ask regional paddling organisations to support these events if contacted and asked to assist in some format or another.

Maritime NZ – FED Funding Applications

This year, two application submissions were made to Maritime NZ (MNZ) for grants from the government's fuel excise duty tax. The first was for further development of the KASK App for which we were unsuccessful. The second was for the KASK regional 'Meet the People' events.

'Meet the People' will be a KASK roadshow, visiting regional centres, presenting to the public the information and equipment needed to stay safe on the water. This will be a showcase of how and where to access current information that people may not be aware of. It will include some basic on-water training and recommend further training with local clubs, networks and associations. Provisional dates and locations are:

5 Oct 19 – Taupo

9 Nov 19 – Gisborne

7 Dec 19 – New Plymouth

18 Jan 20 – Nelson

20 Jan 20 – Wellington

15 Feb 20 – Auckland

14 Mar 20 - Christchurch

This is a great opportunity for local paddling groups to promote themselves. If you or anyone that you know who might be interested in assisting, please email:

Steve.flack@hotmail.com

NZ Sea Kayaker Magazine

For many years now, we have been spoilt by Paul producing a magazine of such high quality and fun to read.

With Jacquie James as the new editor, I ask you all to continue to support the magazine with articles and photographs of your trips, travels and adventures so that we can all enjoy and benefit them.

As you know the magazine will only be as good as its contents, so please get involved and engaged.

Be safe and enjoy the winter paddling.

Shaun

West Grønland 1999 The Long Journey Home for a Greenland Kayak Paul Caffyn

Why on earth would a couple of Kiwi paddlers spend an inordinate amount of time and money to fly with their kayaks to West Greenland? The answer to the question is largely due to the fact that on all my previous big trips, I had paddled a fibreglass kayak whose lines were taken from a West Greenland Eskimo sea-hunting kayak. Dugouts and sailing canoes were the former traditional mode of transport for my Antipodean odysseys (New Zealand, Australia and New Caledonia), and kayaks were not used in the old days in either Japan or Great Britain.

To gain experience in sea ice and view traditional Arctic Inuit skin boats, I set off around Alaska in 1989 from Prince Rupert, to reach Inuvik in August 1991 with sightings only of two skin kayaks in the villages of Hooper Bay and Tununak. Distinctly lacking appropriate tender loving care, the wooden framed boats were

stored on fish drying racks with canvas skins drooping forlornly in tatters. I had long dreamed of meeting an Inuit paddler on the water. Sadly however, fast runabouts with powerful outboard motors had totally superseded the old Alaskan skin kayaks.

My appetite for paddling in Greenland was whetted by articles by John Heath, George Gronseth and Lone Madsen in *Sea Kayaker*, which talked of a renaissance both of kayak building and instruction of paddling skills by the Inuit (see Sources). Kayak historian John Heath wrote in an article on 'The Greenland Kayak Club' that 'by the middle of the twentieth century, the kayak had fallen into disuse, and a whole generation of Greenlanders had virtually no knowledge of them.' John penned a moving tribute following the death of legendary paddler Manasse Mathaeussen, who was largely responsible for initiating the Greenland renaissance. John noted that:

Manasse was in demand for kayak demonstrations from the 1960s until he retired. He took his kayak all over Greenland and to Europe, Canada and Alaska. He did more

than any other person to keep interest in traditional kayaking alive.

I began collecting information and investigating the logistics of transporting my New Zealand built boat to Greenland. My bank balance suffered through acquisition of some of the Greenland classics, *Northern Lights* and *Watkins Last Expedition* by F. Spencer Chapman, *Greenland by the Polar Sea* and *Across Arctic America* by Knud Rasmussen, H.C. Petersen's *Skinboats of Greenland*, and the more I read, the greater became my desire to paddle in Greenland. Unfortunately the logistics problem and cost of transporting the boats seemed insurmountable.

By a stroke of luck, or maybe it was synchronicity, at a New Zealand sea kayak symposium I met a long-bearded American paddler whose lifestyle I could only envy. In the northern summers he worked on the Greenland icecap and spent the southern summers in the Antarctic, mixing in plenty of sea kayaking between work contracts and thus totally avoiding any winter months in either hemisphere. Kevin Killilea's slides of what he termed 'bor-



Conrad Edwards, dwarfed by a massive iceberg, during our crossing to Disco Island, in West Grønland



Right foreground, our red and yellow kayaks on a beach where we overnighted on an old Inuit house site before crossing to Disco Island

ing days in Disco Bay' were visually stunning, glassy seas festooned with humungous glassy icebergs. He also easily solved our logistics problem with airline schedules and contact addresses.

In June 1998, Conrad and I flew with our kayaks from New Zealand via Heathrow and Copenhagen to Kangerlussuaq, just north of the Arctic Circle and headed seaward via the huge former glaciated valley of Søndre Strømfjord. My cunning plan was to paddle south to the airport at Narsarsuaq, stash the boats for the winter then continue in 1999 around Cape Farewell and up the East Coast to Ammassalik. Then in 2000 we'd fly across to Kangerlussuaq with the boats and head north for Thule.

Paddling partner Conrad Edwards is a natural athlete, tall, lean with an enviable body that has no puppy fat. Of British birth, his misspent youth was spent in the Army although he took up kayak racing in earnest while he was at university. He is a grand companion on a mission, seldom perturbed by sea and weather conditions, smokes a pipe, and has developed an interest in Arctic literature. My only criticism of the 'young fella' is that he has an alarming English Pointer dog instinct of making a beeline for the most distant point on the horizon whereas that instinct has long been bred out of me in advancing years. I am more like an old black Labrador now, wanting to sniff

and pee on all the beaches.

Our 700 mile journey south in 1998 was a corker, highlighted by a close encounter with a pod of sei whales, meeting paddlers and kayak builders with local clubs at Manitsoq and Nuuk, visiting village museums to photograph old skin kayaks and equipment, paddling in awe through densely packed icebergs, and soaking up 1,000 year old Norse History at Gardar and Brattahlid. Kayaks safely stashed in an old wartime building at Narsarsuaq, we flew home to plan the 1999 mission.

In early October 1998, I was stunned by the sad news of Lone Madsen's death on the east coast of Greenland (S/K June 1999). In June 1998 we had spent two days in a small cabin

south of Kangamiut while waiting for a gale to ease. The hut log-book contained only three entries from passing paddlers, one of which was from Lone and her two companions, Inngi Bisgaard and Rina Broberg. In 1996 the trio paddled south from Sisimiut to near Cape Farewell (S/K June 1997).

That news plus the report by Lonnie Dupre (S/K August 1999) of bad ice conditions on the east coast of Greenland led to a rethink of my cunning plan for 1999. With a tight time frame (Conrad had a real job with only six week's holiday), a hold up with bad sea ice conditions could lead to missing flight connections home. After due consideration we decided to ferry up to Kangamiut and paddle north up the west coast to either Thule or Upernavik.

The outstanding highlight of our 1999 trip was a stay in the small Inuit village of Igdlorssuit. At a latitude of 71°15', the village lies on the north east coast of Ubekendt Ejland, where colourful Danish style houses, predominantly blue, red, green and yellow, lie dotted along a narrow coastal plain below a steep barren escarpment rising inland to over 1000m.

We arrived late morning on a gloriously calm day, no wind, blue skies and the sea dotted with huge lumps of ice from calving glaciers across the sound. Fish drying racks and parked up komatiks (sleds) were spread between the houses, close to



The small west Grønland village of Igdlorssuit, 120 people and 550 dogs



These dogs were disappointed not to be provided with a feed from the two paddlers; fed only once every three days if they were lucky in summer

the beach, while staked out sled dog teams seemed to take up the rest of the space on the narrow strip.

Paddling along the beach towards a small wharf or loading dock, we observed several skin kayaks stored cockpit down on the fish racks, perched safely out of reach of the hungry dogs. Although it was Sunday, we had hoped to stock up food for the next long leg to Søndre Upernavik but unfortunately the shop had just closed its doors. This was a good excuse to stay till next morning, a chance for my paddling muscles to recuperate and a great photographic opportunity, given the glorious weather and scenery.

As we maneuvered around the old skin kayaks with our cameras, five in total between us, a grey haired Danish chap in blue overalls stopped to chat. As our grasp of both Danish and Greenlandic was rather spartan, we were chuffed Hans spoke English, so we could learn more about village life and its history. For over 20 years Hans had lived at Igdlorssuit and currently worked as a mechanic/engineer for the Royal Greenland fish processing plant. His father, a doctor specializing in tuberculosis, had spent several summers treating Inuit patients at the Thule trading post established by Peter Freuchen and Knud Rasmussen in 1909.

Old faded photographs taken at Thule by his father inspired Hans to visit Greenland where he worked

for three years at the US Airforce base at Kangerlussuaq. A compatriot wished to return home to Denmark but lacked funds for an air ticket. Although Hans offered to lend him money, the chap refused but said he owned a dog team and komatik at Igdlorssuit - and that is why Hans first visited the village, to check out his new team and sled! He stayed, married a lass from Upernavik and learned to fish and drive his team of dogs.

With a population of 120 people and 550 dogs, fishing was the mainstay of the village, carried out throughout summer, and in winter through the sea ice. Autumn, Hans told us, was



1:250,000 scale map showing our paddling route to Ukbent Eylandt



The Igdlorssuit seal skin-covered traditional kayak which had such similar lines to our Nordkapps.

the worst time for fishing with bad weather. The latest two graves in the hillside cemetery were fatalities from a fishing dinghy that capsized in the freezing waters.

In summer the tethered dogs were only fed every three days. We watched an elderly Inuit chap with his six-year-old son feeding fish from a wheelbarrow to his team. Larger fish were cut in half, while smaller fish were thrown whole to the ravenous, excited dogs who caught their meal in mid air. Two large fish were carried to a patiently waiting bitch suckling a mob of tiny pups. Minutes later, the barrow load of fish had disappeared with narry a scale, fin or fish bone left on the ground, and the chap wheeled his barrow into the sea to wash it clean.

In winter the dogs were fed daily as they had to haul heavy freight komatiks out to the ice fishing holes. Fledgling tourist operations were trialed in several villages either for the experience of travelling behind a dog team or hunting for polar bears. Hans related a story involving a German couple travelling on a komatik from Ilulissat. When the Inuit driver was not satisfied with the behaviour of one of his team, to the horror of the watching couple, he shot the dog with a rifle, proceeded to remove the pelt with his skinning knife, then threw the bloody pelt on the komatik. Word spread quickly afterwards and that was the end of winter tourist dog driving in Ilulissat!

We observed seven old kayaks in the village, most with white painted canvas skins, but one traditional seal skin kayak still in remarkable condition. I marveled at its similarity in profile to our modern kevlar kayaks but had no comprehension that this village was the source of a skin kayak that was taken to Scotland 40 years earlier, and from which the fibreglass Nordkapp kayak evolved, the kayak that has been my bosom buddy for 22 years and some 35,000+ miles.

Back in New Zealand I began digging through sea kayak magazines and old files for more information on the evolution of the Nordkapp. In the British magazine *Ocean Paddler* I stumbled on an article with a drawing showing 'Lines of the Igdlorssuit Kayak' with an address for the kayak surveyor, Duncan Winning. Hot on the trail, I penned a letter requesting more information and was chuffed to receive a package of photocopied articles from Duncan to whom I am indebted for the following information.

A professor from St. Andrews University in Britain, Harald Drever, had a long association with Igdlorssuit and he persuaded a young Scottish university student and paddler, Kenneth Taylor, to undertake a one-man expedition to the village where he would study the kayak and its place in Inuit culture. In 1959 Kenneth arrived in the village with his own rigid kayak, a PBK 15 designed by Percy Blandford, but later had a slimmer beam skin kayak built

for him by 50 year old Emanuel Korn Nielsen.

Faced with initial shyness from the villagers, after a week spent recovering from the 'flu' Kenneth concentrated on a working Greenlandic language, which quickly helped break down shyness barriers with the locals. He camped in a ridge tent and was extremely comfortable and warm between two reindeer skins lent to him by the village headman, Ludwig Quist.

In a 1962 article in *American White Water* Kenneth noted that most village kids between the age of 9 and 12 were instructed in the art of kayaking by a paid instructor, in a specially built kid's kayak but it was rare for boys to own their own kayak before the age of 18. On a seal hunting trip with two villagers he capsized, but was rescued and his cockpit sponged out using support from a raft of three skin kayaks. In a footnote to Kenneth's article, John Heath noted that of the 18 active kayakers in Igdlorssuit, 13 could roll but most knew several methods. One of the three experienced hunters who could not roll confided that he was such a good paddle bracer he did not believe it mattered.

At the end of summer, Kenneth returned to Scotland with his Igdlorssuit skin kayak where Duncan Winning took photographs and made a drawing, which led to the development of several canvas covered and plywood replicas. After Kenneth moved to the USA in 1964, Joe Reid and Duncan carefully surveyed the skin kayak and Duncan produced a longitudinal profile and cross sections. Duncan passed the drawing onto Geoff Blackford in the early 1960's, who increased the boat length, enlarged the cockpit and raised the foredeck to produce a plywood boat called an *Anas Acuta*. Why on earth this name was used is beyond me, sounds more like a pain in the posterior, however in 1972 Frank Goodman began commercially producing this boat design in fibreglass.

In 1975, Colin Mortlock planned an expedition around the North Cape



Young kids at Igdlorssuit showing the influence of European TV beamed into this remote village; Conrad loading his kayak in the background.

(Nordkapp) of Norway, and was seeking a kayak with better load carrying capabilities than the *Anas Acuta*. He approached Frank Goodman of Valley Canoe Products who rounded out the hard chines of the *Anas Acuta* to produce a new round bilge fibreglass model, with bulkheads, deck accessible storage compartments and a pump, which he called a *Nordkapp*. Word of the success of Colin Mortlock's expedition spread as far as New Zealand where in 1977, a trip was planned in secret by three Nelson paddlers around the south-west extremity of the South Island, a wild and rugged section of coastline with a reputation for gales and huge seas which is known as Fiordland.

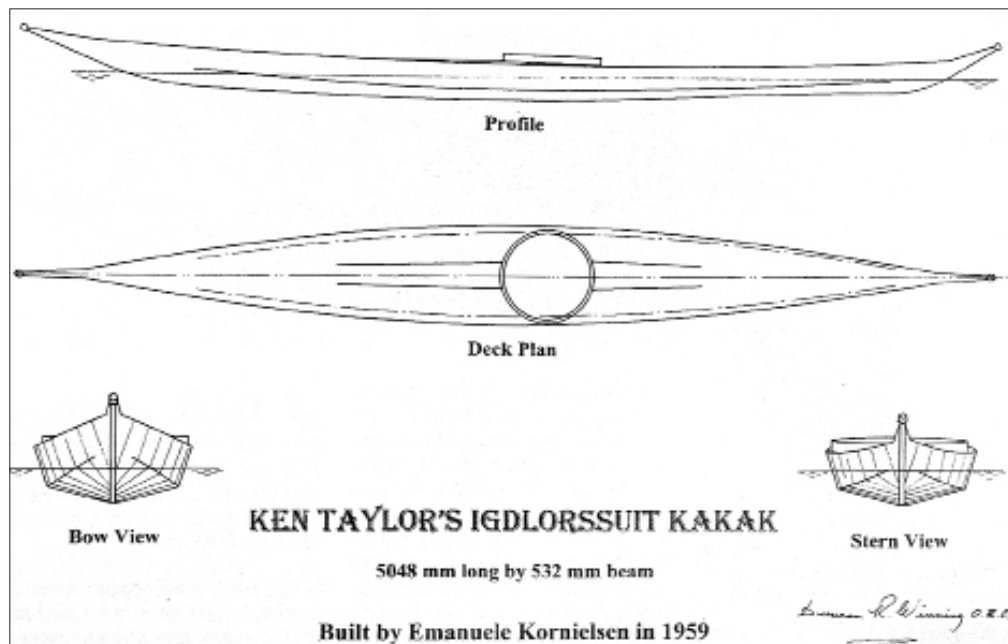
Grahame Sisson, a Nelson kayak builder, imported a *Nordkapp* mould from Great Britain for the Fiordland expedition in early 1977 and began building boats for New Zealand paddlers. The August 1977 Fiordland expedition paddled only 90 miles before abandoning their trip. Huge seas and a huge shark dampened the Fiordland paddlers' enthusiasm however the boats performed a treat in the big seas, which led to Max Reynolds and myself trialing and purchasing two of these kayaks.

In December 1977 we nervously set off from Te Waewae Bay to paddle around Fiordland, after agreeing that there would be, "No turning back." Following 27 days of gripping pad-

dling, capsizes at sea in breaking, humungous swells and a kayak-cracking loop onto a boulder beach in the dark, which smashed my helmet and sent a tooth through my lip, we limped into Jackson Bay 350 miles later, both determined never to sit in a kayak ever again!

Memories of those grueling Fiordland days faded only too quickly, for the sea kayaking bug had bitten me rather deeply. I continued around the South Island to complete my first odyssey at Te Waewae Bay with a champagne reception. Over the years, as post odyssey blues (very similar I would suggest to post natal depression) led to hauling out a world atlas and scheming further missions, my kayaks were progressively modified. Kevlar was used for the Aussie boat, *Lalaguli*, and a deep draft, aluminium overstern rudder added to a fibreglass shoe, which slid over the *Nordkapp* stern. Pushing my minimalist, lightweight philosophy to the maximum, Grahame Sission and I built a 30 pound (14 kg) kevlar/carbon fibre boat for the Japan trip and turned the seat into a middle bulkhead, with the addition of a third hatch/compartiment just aft of the cockpit.

Then on 1 August 1999, 40 years after Kenneth Taylor took his made to measure seal skin kayak back to Scotland, Conrad and I paddled two state of the art kevlar *Nordkapps* into



Duncan Winning's survey of the kayak which was built for Ken Taylor at Igdlorssuit back in 1959

the village of Igdlorssuit, completing a full circle around the world, back to the source from where these marvellous kayaks had slowly and progressively evolved.

Late evening, I joined Han's two young children on the gravel beach where Louise was wading through shallows to catch with her bare hands small fish to feed an attentive, clustered group of young pups while Hendrik towed a replica of a fizza boat through the shallows. These replicas were cut from a piece of 5" x 1" timber, bow end trimmed to form a triangle, and a small knob of wood nailed to the stern as an outboard motor. A 3' length of string from a nail at the bow was attached to the end of a short pole which is used to swing the replica in fast arcs over the sea. Attaching a second boat with a short tow-line and loading pebbles as ballast added to Hendrik's pleasure with this simple toy.

Wherever I saw these common kid's toys, or indeed at the village of Ar-suk, where we watched youngsters playing delightedly in blue and yellow plastic inflatable rafts, I was saddened by the fact that they were not playing in kayaks. Cable television, beamed in from Nuuk, seems to take precedence with adults in the evenings where as perhaps in the old days, the adults immersed the kids in the art of kayaking.

We joined Hans and his wife for a late evening feed of boiled seal meat

on the bone, and were settling into our sleeping bags on the floor of his living room, when Hans called out to look through the window. Although it was midnight, the lighting across a glassy sea was magnificent, a soft golden glow of dusk falling on majestic icebergs in the sound, with a distant backdrop of valley glaciers and broad icecaps. Close to the beach, a white Igdlorssuit kayak was gliding past, a black haired Inuit in a white parka moving the boat seemingly effortlessly along. What a magic moment.

Ten gnarly days later, we slid into the harbour at Upernavik where we decided to pull the pin on paddling further north to Thule. Days of mind-numbing concentration on a compass bearing through pea-soup fog, violent buffeting winds off vertical rock headlands and two gripping eight hour days on the outside coast, dodging rolling icebergs on breaking seas, were too much for my old black Labrador instincts. We spent hours in the local museum soaking up the sight and smell of the old skin kayaks and umiaks, and stood totally absorbed by beautiful colour prints taken by Danish paddler John Andersen of village life in north west Greenland.

Although disappointed at not fulfilling the mission to Thule, from two summers and 1400 miles of paddling along west Greenland's coastline, we gained an insight to the sea and weather conditions in which both

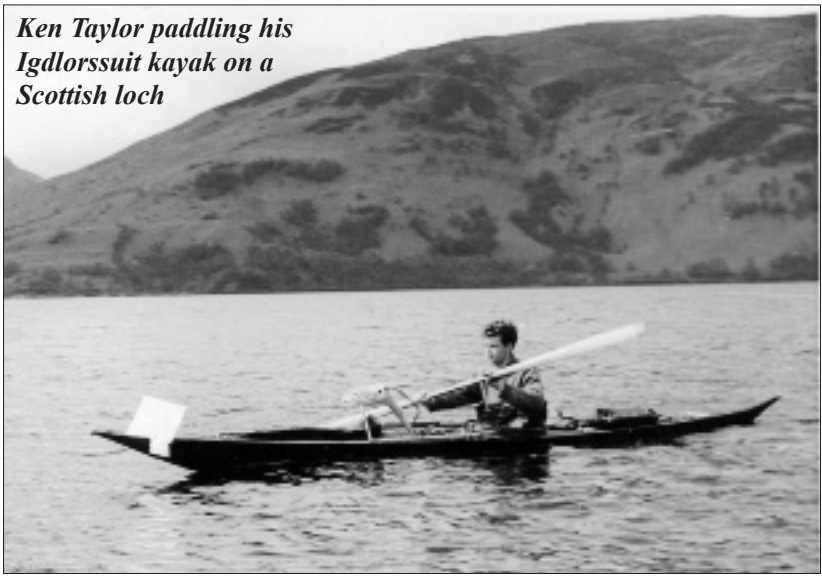
Inuit skin kayaks and paddling and rolling skills evolved over the centuries. Well-designed kayaks and bombproof rolling or bracing were mandatory for survival.

Best of all, our modern kevlar boats were able to visit their ancestor mum and dad skin kayaks in the small traditional Inuit village of Igdlorssuit.

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(Ken Taylor sadly passed away earlier this year)



Ken Taylor paddling his Igdlorssuit kayak on a Scottish loch

Paul's Big Trips

How It All Started?

Most likely it was a black and white photograph in our family photograph album of my father and his brother in wood and canvas canoes on the Brisbane River. Not encouraged by my parents to chase up a newspaper advertisement, it was my uncle Greg who helped me purchase my first canoe, a 17' Peterborough Canadian canoe.

Still at primary school, I joined the local Indooroopilly Small Craft and Canoe Club which had a boatshed on the river bank. Week-long club white-water paddling trips, and being encouraged to try and balance a tippy K1 kayak certainly led to a lifelong passion for paddling.

Paddling was seriously side-lined during my university years when I met fellow minded students who were passionate about caving, folk singing, rock-climbing and mountaineering. My lust for climbing and caving did lead to a fourth year at uni. My first visit to New Zealand and a mountaineering course at Ball Hut, was cut short following a telegram from my father re a supplementary chemistry exam!



The family album photograph that most likely led me to take up paddling. From left, my father Bill Caffyn, his younger brother Greg who helped me purchase my first canoe, and Bob Craighead, off the Lone Pine wharf on the Brisbane River in 1935.



The first day of a week long paddle down the Clarence River in northern New South Wales. Chris Lawson Baker on the stern paddle, PC on the bow.

Photo: Geoff Walduck

After graduating, the lure of really deep caves, and climbing in the Southern Alps drew me across the Tasman Sea, and I was exceedingly fortunate to land my first job as an exploration geologist on the West Coast of the South Island.

By the mid 70s, I was teaching music and outdoor education at a local high school, which led to my purchasing a white-water kayak, and learning slalom technique and rolling skills.

In mid 1977, a paddling mate saw a yellow sea kayak on top of a van in Greymouth. As one did in those days, when it was exceedingly rare to see another kayak on a vehicle, Shaun went and had a chat with the driver. And that's where the trouble started; it was the very first Greenland style fibreglass kayak built in NZ. A bitterly cold white-water paddle in winter led to a cunning plan of buying two of these *Nordkapp* kayaks and paddling around the south-western tip of New Zealand, better known as Fiordland - home to a squillion sandflies and more gales per year than you can shake a stick at.

Max Reynolds and I survived that first Fiordland paddle but swore our next paddling adventure would be across the Sahara Desert, as far away from the sea as possible. Although we had a solid background of expedition caving, white-water paddling and mountaineering, we both experienced a really sharp learning curve.

We were both capsized offshore by huge reef breaks. Mine was on our second morning - my paddle was sucked out of my hands, but I stayed in the cockpit, upside down, till Max presented his bow to me and I rolled up. In the entrance to Bligh Sound, I rushed a landing in falling darkness. What appeared to be a sheltered sandy beach from a distance, was



16 January 1978 - Paul and Max celebrate their safe arrival at Jackson Bay after completing the first of the big trips - around Fiordland. Ainslie at left, Lyn Taylor at right, Max in the middle. Photo: Maestro

a steep, gnarly boulder beach with monstrous bumper dumpers. I executed a graceful loop to land on my head on the boulders. So lucky I was wearing a helmet. It got cracked as did my top lip with a tooth through it. The kayak hull/deck joint took two cracks by the cockpit but didn't leak or bleed like my split lip.

At Jackson Bay, after swearing our next trip would be across the Sahara Desert - as far from the sea as we could get - Max went back to work. With no job in the offing, I ended up paddling around the rest of the South Island, and wrote a book *Obscured by Waves* about the trip.

Then my so-called 'mates' kidded me, 'Now that you've been around the South Island, when are you going to do the North Island?' Which led over the summer of 1978-79 to a solo paddle around the North Island, with a shore-based crew, along with my lovely black Labrador Ben.

The prevailing West Coast surf was much tougher than that of the South Island and the big harbour entrances sent me up to four miles offshore to clear a mess of breaking waves. A pavlova in the face from Lesley, at the completion of that trip back at Makara, set a precedent for all future circumnavigators.



25 January 1979: wearing the tatty remains of an op-shop wool singlet, Paul arrived at Tapotupotu Bay, near Cape Reinga, with a crayfish for his wonderful support crew. Photo: Bruce Annabell

To make a New Zealand kayak circumnavigation complete, I teamed up with Max Reynolds in August 1979 for a crossing of Foveaux Strait and a paddle round Stewart Island. Max only joined me after my assurance there would be 'lots of sun, nice calm conditions and no beef curry on the menu!' There wasn't much sun, the swell was up to seven metres high



9 March 1979: Paul surfing in to a lunchtime rendezvous at Porangahau Beach, on the east coast of the North Island. A retractable skeg visible on the stern. Photo: Bruce Annabell.

off Mason Bay, the tide races off the south coast were monstrous and we nearly got squashed by a massive elephant seal when camped overnight in Flour Cask Bay. But apart from that, it was a brilliant challenging trip. See KASK magazine number 199 for Max's write up of that trip.

Tragically, I lost my paddling mate Max in early 1980 when he was caught by a flood pulse in the Aorere River gorge and drowned. Fortunately I had written up the story (*Dark Side of the Wave*) before I had to be the funeral celebrant for his send-off.

1980 - Around Britain

In 1970 a young English paddler Geoff Hunter paddled around England, Wales and most of Scotland in an East Greenland style kayak, but he avoided the worst of the northern coast by taking a shortcut through the Caledonian Canal. Although it would be a bit longer than the North Island, at 2,200 miles, I saw a paddle around Britain as a my next desirable challenge along with experiencing a power of history, ancient castles, smuggling ports and some really serious paddling challenges like Cape Wrath, Pentland Firth with tidal streams running at up to 12 knots, and the massive tide races of



1 July 1980: Lesley Hadley helping Nigel Dennis launch at high tide from a steep cobble beach at Dover on the south coast of England. Photo: PC

the mulls of Galloway and Kintyre. Although aiming for a solo paddle, I joined up paddling with a young English chap, Nigel Dennis, for an 85 day trip, with my girlfriend Lesley Hadley as shore support.

1982 - Around Australia

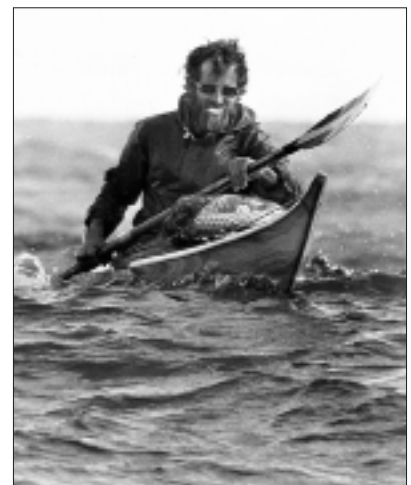
In 1981, my local 'mates' were now saying, "Well you've paddled around NZ, when are you going to do Aus-sie?" And that sowed the seed for the 360 day Around Australia Kayak Odyssey. I tried hard to attract some sponsorship for either kit or money or both, but reckon the concept was so outrageous that no companies approached felt that firstly the trip would be attempted and secondly my chances of survival were less than better than average.

We carried out the year-long mission on an absolute shoestring, even scavenging kit from rubbish dumps, but once we finished back at Queenscliff, we had no obligations to anyone, just the immense satisfaction of completing a really big adventure.



28 July 1980: Lesley Hadley, Paul and Nigel after completing their 85 day paddle around England, Scotland and Wales. The lily white legs clearly show who has been cockpit bound for weeks.

The worst day of the whole year, well apart from not being able to keep food down when faced by kicking out on the 120 mile long Zuytdorp Cliffs, was the morning after we finished back at Queenscliff. The challenge was over. No more elusive goal to be pursued.



18 December 1982: Paul cresting a big roller off the Victorian port of Warnambool. Photo: John Parkin



1985 - Around Japan

An article in a 1967 *National Geographic* magazine (photo above) got me mulling over paddling around Japan. It described a combined USA - British college student paddle from the Inland Sea to Tokyo. Photographs of centuries old fishing ports and stunning coastal scenery spurred my interest. The team had bypassed the exposed east coast of Honshu due to heavy, prevailing surf, which also got my interest up.

Grahame Sissons and I built *Haya Kaze* in Nelson, as I was keen to try out a microlight boat to see if higher daily averages distances were attainable. We used kevlar, carbon-fibre and vinyl-ester to build a 15 kilogram Nordkapp. This all-up weight included hatches, bulkheads and the aluminium, overstern rudder. A new seat was built, which when glassed into the cockpit, formed a third or middle bulkhead and a comfortable rigid, backrest. This minimized the amount of water which would enter the cockpit in the event of a capsize, and the middle compartment was easily accessible at sea with the VCP hatch just aft of the cockpit - very handy for cameras, the radio and my play-lunch.

With my girlfriend Lesley Hadley as shore support, we achieved a memorable trip around Japan - I was then probably at my peak in terms of paddling fitness and stamina, knocking up 96 kilometre days with pre-dawn



The 1985 expedition sticker

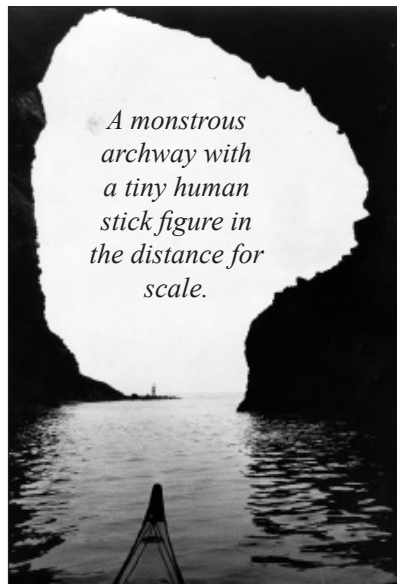
starts, and averaging 66 kms per day around Hokkaido.

‘Anata wa tabi wa do data?’
(How was your trip?)

‘Subarashi demmo muzukashi’
(Splendid but difficult).

Subarashi is the word to describe the beauty and contrasts of the coastal scenery, our contact with the Japanese fishermen, the magic of sunrises and sunsets and the faith and support from our friends in Tokyo.

An early response to a letter of inquiry was very succinct and to the point: ‘I do not think you should consider a paddle around Japan. Too many ships, too many people and too much pollution!’ But apart from some of the huge coastal towns and ports, the coastal scenery was superb, snow-capped volcanoes rising sheer out of the sea, tunnels, more caves than you could shake a stick at, massive archways I had to paddle through and a myriad of small



A monstrous archway with a tiny human stick figure in the distance for scale.



Battered down for the rainy season. Photo: Lesley Hadley

fishing ports that could provide a movie set for James Clavell’s novel *Shogun*. Sections of the coast were so rugged and remote there was no sign of man’s presence.

Japan must have the highest density of inshore fishermen in the world, and summer was peak season for those harvesting seaweed and salmon. The port of Uketo on the Honshu coast had a fleet of over 200 boats which left through a narrow entrance between 3:00 am and 3:30 am. The roar of the engines was like the noise of peak hour traffic in Auckland. I had no choice but to barge in to the bow to stern line up of boats, but the experience of joining in that stream of boats speeding out to sea in the soft golden light of dawn was indeed splendid.

Many nights we slept by the open hearths of the ryoshi-no-banya (fishermen’s quarters), rising at 2:00 am with the obasans (old ladies) who cooked breakfast over charcoal hearths, and departing before dawn with the fishermen. We were taken into the homes and hearts of the fishermen.

In marked contrast to previous ‘big trips’, no one person in Japan said I was crazy for doing the trip; instead they would call out ‘Gambate’, no exact English translation but a combination of good luck, try hard and show you spirit.



One of my favourite photos from the Japan paddle; the fisherman and I were unperturbed by a torrential downpour during the rainy season.

The Japan paddle was far more mukashi (difficult) than I had anticipated. Taifu (typhoon) number 3 was in the offing when I commenced paddling on 26 May and number 13 gave me a dusting on the far north coast of Hokkaido. While plugging along the south coast of Honshu, three of the sods were in the offing, 12, 13 and 14. The taifu effects were felt four to five days of making landfall, with fierce winds, massive seas and thunderstorms. Doyonami is a specific Japanese word for swell generated by intense typhoons.

I completed the trip on 19 September with a 40 kilometre crossing of Tsugaru Kaikyo, the infamous narrow stretch of water between Hokkaido and Honshu. Total distance was 6,434 kilometres in 112 days for

an all up average of 66 kilometres per day. All in all it was a splendid but difficult trip.

Months later in New Zealand I received copies of various magazines which carried articles about the Japan trip. The January 1986 edition of *Playboy* included a seven-page pictorial with a male nude centrefold picture of a certain paddler. It was actually a pic Lesley snapped when I was showering under a roadside waterfall. The photo appeared by the central line of staples and although it was not exactly a centrefold photograph, I like to kid myself that it's close enough to being a nude centrefold.

When *Haya Kaze* arrived back in New Zealand, aboard a huge

container ship, I was trying to speed my passage through the usual procedures of form filling and shuffling from department to department, by showing the *Playboy* to the chap from the Department of Agriculture and Fish. He said he would waive the normal \$20 fee for the clearance if he could show the article to his rather attractive receptionist. I agreed. He asked her if she had ever met anyone who had posed nude for *Playboy*, and then showed her the photograph. And her comment, "You can't see a lot!" I reckon I got twenty dollars' worth of embarrassment!



Not the centrefold pic, but this featured in the November 1985 Playboy magazine, right next door to Miss November!



Paul and Lesley in Tokyo after their successful Around Japan Kayak Expedition.



The diabolical delta country off the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta coastline. The sea is four miles to the left, the coast four miles to the right! Not mentally prepared for two overnight strandings, I was left with nightmares of my tent flooding for weeks afterwards. 22 July 1990

1989 - 1991 Around Alaska

After two failed attempts to paddle a double kayak across the Tasman Sea from Tasmania to Fiordland in 1987 and 1989, I needed a big trip to get morale back up. With no experience of paddling in ice, I decided to paddle from Prince Rupert in British Columbia around the entire coast of Alaska and finish at Inuvik on the Mackenzie River in Canada. With bugger all coastal access, I did this one solo, landing at the remote Inuit villages to retrieve food parcels that I had mailed from the lower 48. I always included a letter addressed to the postmaster, saying I was a Kiwi paddling around Alaska!

I planned this wee 4,690 mile paddle over one northern summer but that awful oil spill from the *Exon Valdez* put paid to that 1989 mission when I pulled the pin at Elfin Cove. Resuming in 1990, I left the kayak in Nome for the winter, then followed the ice pack north in 1991, and spent the last three days of that magic trip paddling up the Mackenzie River to land at the Inuvik road end, finally back in Canada. That Alaskan trip was one of my most enjoyable and challenging; dumped by big surf in the Gulf of Alaska, charged by a bull Musk ox, my tent ripped open by a big brown bear when I was asleep, but worst of all dealing with the drying shallows off the Kuskokwim and Yukon river deltas. Nightmare country.

1993 - Not a Good Year

1993 marked the end of the really big trips for a while. A perforated colon while geologizing on a remote mountain range led to nine months with a colostomy, perhaps the worst news for a paddler when waking from an anaesthetic.

After a successful hook up nine months later, getting my mind and body back into paddling shape was not easy. That losing of core stomach muscle strength following two big belly operations, was a major challenge to resume expedition paddling.

Fortunately, in 1994 I teamed up with ex-pat British paddler Conrad Edwards who was not only a skilled and very fit paddler, but he also had a similar love of books and history, and didn't mind a libation of medicinal whisky after a long paddling day.

Between us we notched up seven remarkable overseas expeditions, including four summers in Greenland, a circuit of New Caledonia (see next page) and a paddle from Kuala Lumpur to the island of Phuket. Our last big trip in 2017 was down the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula with a team of six Kiwi paddlers and one Aussie (see *New Zealand Sea Kayaker* no. 188 April-May 2017) for photos and a story by Diana Galbraith.

1997 - Kayaking Kanaky Around New Caledonia

It's strange or perhaps serendipitous how seeds for the big trips are sown. In a Greymouth watering hole (the Union Hotel) I bumped into Maestro who featured as the great white hunter in our support crew for that very first Fiordland expedition back in 1977. He has just returned from taking his father on a nostalgic visit back to where he had been based in New Caledonia during WWII. Naturally I had to ask Maestro what he thought about the prospects of paddling around the island. He leaned over, and with a conspiratorial wink said, "Knuckles, you'd have to watch it. There's an awful lot of frogs over there!"

Only a few months later, on a rather damp day at Jackson Bay, I offered a cup of tea to a lass who was based at Noumea, the capital city of New Caledonia, where she worked as a marine biologist. Cecile Debitus had an excellent working knowledge of the coastline and suggested September as a month when the trade winds were not so strong. We swapped email addresses and nine months later, Conrad Edwards and I flew with our Nordkapps into Noumea where Cecile met us at the airport.

My kayak was bare, the cockpit and hatches left open. With the boat on my shoulder, I was waved through customs by the uniformed gendarmes. Conrad's boat was however wrapped in plastic bubble wrap and foam sheets like a really big condom. With his short hair, NZ passport and military bearing, the French Customs officers must have thought he was on a mission to avenge the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior*. He was sent to run his kayak through the baggage X Ray machine. Quite a sight it was!

Our 23-day, 550 mile trip was in an anti-clockwise direction, commencing from Noumea. As expected, we jumped onto an escalator of strong south-east trade winds on the lush east coast but then had to head-butt into them for the arid west coast section. With 3:30 am starts, we managed to crank out 20 miles in before dawn, well before the old trades came away on the nose.



Inside the east coast fringing reefs, the landings were easy

The east coast scenery was just like on the front of those enticing travel brochures - tall, waving coconut palms, golden coral sand beaches, crystal clear, azure blue seas, with coral barrier and fringing reefs. That photograph for the brochure was obviously taken on a calm day some 17 years ago when the trade winds took a breather.

Highlights on the east coast were karst towers rising out of the sea near the town of Hienghene, sheer razor sharp, flutings of ancient limestone towering above the sea and called appropriately for a French Protectorate, the Towers of Notre Dame. And just to the north, waterfalls cascading and falling for over 300 metres to sea level - here we paddled up river to the first cascade, moored the kayaks and clambered up the spray-shrouded rocks to the base of the highest waterfall. Magic!

Big following seas on the East Coast and broad expanses of boat scratching fringing reefs led to challenging paddling and the necessity of working in with the tides and careful observation for the narrow channels carved in the reefs. The surfing rides were awesome with the following seas, but a torment for my surgery weakened abdominal muscles.

Near Balade, where Captain Cook was the first white maritime explorer



The stunning karst towers near the east coast town of Hienghene



Conrad with what we termed loaves of single kayak bread, purchased from the 'ambulance'

to land, we met two local kanaks who took pity on our thirst and shinned up a tall coconut palm to drop a heap of green coconuts. To date we had been only tackling the already dropped brown ones for the milk and meat. With ease they trimmed the tops off the green coconuts for long refreshing drinks of milk. And on their advice, we waited several hours for the 'ambulance' to arrive - it had been converted into a mobile shop - and stock up on tobacco and loaves of kayak bread.

Our meetings with the kanaks were superb, despite warnings from Cecile who when sailing a hobicat had been shot at. We were invited to stay a night at the village of Oundjo, where fishing provided the staple economy. After another 3.30 am start we had arrived on a Sunday morning at 10:00 am, in time to listen to beautiful harmonized hymn singing from the church. We joined one of the village elders for local grown lunch - all bar the kayak bread (long skinny loaves of French bread with a funny name) was produced in the village. In the afternoon we watched the men playing French bowls and the ladies playing cards.

The sea life was prolific - turtles, sea snakes, sharks, stingrays and colourful reef fish. The yellow banded sea snakes, termed Tricot Rayes, gave me the heebie jeebies, they were so prolific. And they were amphibious. Warnings to zip up the tent flaps were strictly observed. They have been known to slither into tents and into occupied sleeping bags! Although the toxin is as venomous as any snake toxin in the world, very few New Caledonians have been bitten.

The only bad guy, who is a master of disguises, is the deadly stonefish, and solid soled sandshoes or plastic sandals are recommended for walking not only on the reefs but the sandy zones of the intertidal zone. Only after trying to identify the stonefish in a Noumea aquarium did I realize the brevity of my walking around barefoot in shallow water. All that could be seen poking through the coral sand were two carefully camouflaged eyes and a mouth!

It was challenging trip with a great companion.



Conrad on one of the glorious white sand beaches with locals who were keen to learn about our mode of transport



This kanak's pirogue canoe was tied together with shot wire!

BOOK NOTES

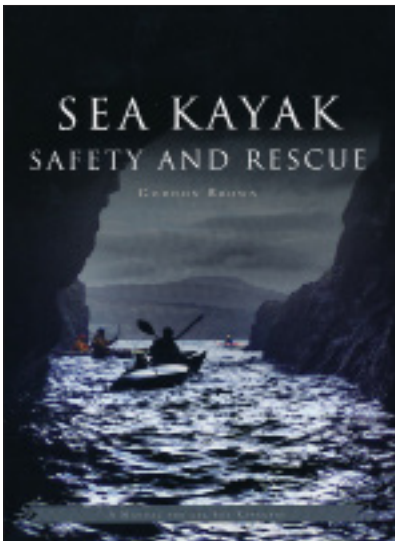
Sea Kayak Safety and Rescue – A Manual for All Sea Kayakers

Author: Gordon Brown
Publisher: Pesda Press, GB,
Published: July 2019,
Contents: 255pp softcover,
 colour illustrations throughout
Availability: Book Depository GB,
Price: NZ \$40.56

Gordon's first manual *Sea Kayak* was published in 2007, and this new edition is boosted with an extra 66 pages. In terms of a really comprehensive book, which covers just about all aspects of sea kayaking, I reckon this is perhaps the best. (Well apart from the 4th edition of the *KASK handbook*).

Although the compact size (210 x 160mm) will provide easy stowage in a kayak compartment, the ease of reading the text is hindered by the tiny size of the main text, 9 point or even 8 point with side bars and appendices. Fine for young eyes, but hopeless for older eyes without reading glasses.

The manual is profusely illustrated in full colour, although more effort could have been taken with some of the very brief captions. Sadly in my view, the cover photo is a black morbid scene with a capsized kayak and paddlers middle distance in a gloomy



Front Cover



Rear Cover

archway. The rear cover with grinning paddlers in the sea would be far better suited as the cover illustration. See what you think?

Each chapter begins with a real-life incident which sets the scene and helps to emphasize what follows. The underlying principles are highlighted, practical lessons learnt and the hard skills explored in detail. Numerous colour photos complement and illustrate the text.

In 2018 Gordon Brown moved from the Isle of Skye in Scotland to Vancouver Island in Canada. He has a lifetime's experience of kayaking in all its forms and well over 30 years of coaching sea kayaking. In 1992 he completed both sea kayak and white water kayak BCU Level 5 coach qualifications, and was involved in the development, training and assessment of these awards until they were discontinued when the award scheme was reorganised.

In 2016 Gordon completed a Master's Degree in Performance Coaching and has produced a set of three instructional DVDs in the *Sea Kayak with Gordon Brown* series, and the world's first sea kayak rescue video, *Over ... and Out*. Gordons's DVDs and book have been reviewed in past issues of the *KASK* magazine.

Aside from my niggles, if you are looking for your first serious manual on sea kayaking, I suggest obtaining a copy of Gordon Brown's new book.

Paddling with Spirits A Solo Kayak Journey

Author: Irene Skyriver
Publisher: Green Writers' Press USA
Published: 2017
Contents: 280 page paperback, one map, just a couple of fuzzy black and white images.
Availability: Book Depository GB,
Price: NZ\$35.29

Partly story of Irene's solo paddle from Ketchikan, south-east Alaska, south down the coast of British Columbia to her home in the San Juan Islands but mostly fictionalized accounts about her grandparents and mother and father.

Born in Port Townsend, Irene moved with her kids and horse to an off-grid lifestyle on Lopez Island. She decided to celebrate her 40th birthday with a long solo paddle, and she writes eloquently about her first serious paddling adventure, wild weather, and encounters with bears, wolves and whales.

The chapters headed 'My Father' and 'My Mother' comprise 200 or so pages, are her vividly imagined generational stories. I skipped over these novella sections, keen to see how Irene fared with her solo paddle, but overall a very interesting read.



Relentless

The First Person to Solo Kayak the Tasman

Authors: Scott Donaldson with Steve Kilgallon

Publisher: Harper Collins,

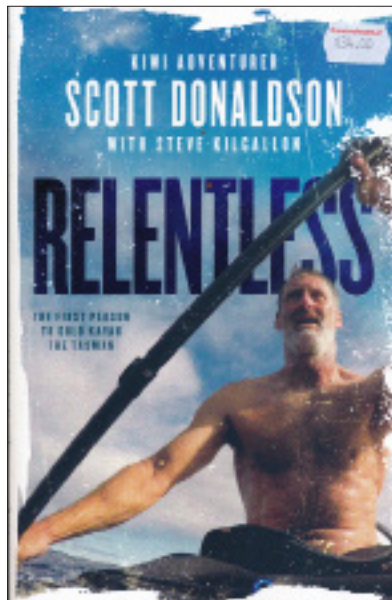
Published: July 2019

Contents: paperback, 260 pages, one colour plate segment

Availability: NZ book shops \$34

I can't help but admire Scott Donaldson's determination in persisting with three attempts to paddle across the Tasman Sea. I still struggle to call his paddlcraft a kayak with its midships pod, but as Sandy Ferguson noted:

A horizontal slice would make it look like most kayaks. So yes, I'd give it a kayak rating. The cabin is only for sleeping in easily. With your proposed Tasman crossing, your 'cabin' was under the deck? Just a low level cabin?



But with a monstrously heavy kayak, my view is that propulsion would have been far more efficient and a faster crossing if Scott had used oars. But then the Tasman had been crossed both ways by solo rowers.

I had a quick skim through the very readable text - the point size and leading are rather good for old eyes,



Scott Donaldson's kayak

but was disappointed to see that I am a Dunedin paddler! The previous paragraph refers to a Dunedin handyman who built his own kayak for an attempt at the Tasman. But surely proofreading or a quick Google search would have revealed the West Coast has been home since 1970.

Ghost writer Steve Kilgallon has strung together a very readable story, using a good mix of quotes from family, friends and acquaintances to build the character of Scott, his early days of competing, and then his nine year challenge to paddle across the Tasman. Earlier rowing and paddle attempts at the Tasman are briefly noted, including the two attempts by myself and then Andrew McAuley who got so close.

Although the dollar figures are not in the book, they are quoted in a media release for the book launch:

Having his record broken wouldn't motivate Donaldson to have another crack: and anyway, after outlaying at least \$200,000 on his Tasman adventures, he couldn't afford it. 'If someone said I will give you \$200-300,000 to go do it again down south [on a southerly, faster route] then, yes. But otherwise, no way. I need to focus on money for a few years - I've been giving it away for too many.'

That is a philosophy I find hard to grasp, that is being paid to tackle challenges, when really in my view, the satisfaction achieved completing a challenge is for the person doing the challenge!

Paddlcraft Book Collecting in NZ

a few notes by Paul Caffyn

In recent years I have tried seriously to stop collecting paddlcraft books, but I still have occasional lapses. I have included a few thoughts below to help if there is a specific book you are desperate to obtain.

For new paddling titles, in terms of availability and cost, my first check is with bookdepository.com in the UK. Books are priced in NZ\$ with

free postage. Amazon.com is where I will check particularly for titles published in North America, but although prices seem cheap, the air-mail postage can more than double the book cost.

Recently with an order from Amazon, when I checked the publishing date, and all the books had the very same print date, showing it is now

using on-demand print.

Closer to home, particularly for new NZ titles, I will try both fishpond.co.nz and thenile.co.nz.

For really hard to find and out of print titles, abe.books.com is where I will do specific searches. Both new and 2nd hand titles are listed. Postage ex-USA is expensive. It is always worth

checking not only the book price but where the bookshop is located in the world; postage is still cheaper and delivery faster from GB.

For 2nd hand titles, trademe.co.nz can produce for you a daily listing of new and second-hand paddlecraft books. Sadly we have been seeing the demise of old favourite and regularly visited 2nd hand bookshops but there are still a few around.

Our KASK magazine has over 70 paddling books reviewed. If you have a query re a certain book, please email me as I am only too happy to chat about paddling books (kayakpc@sxtra.co.nz)

If you are passing down the West Coast, you are welcome to call in and check out my library. Apart from the books, I have a full set of *Sea Kayaker* magazines, plus the club magazines for the NSW and Victorian sea kayak clubs; a big collection of the British *Canoeist* magazine, and a host of historical expedition reports and information published in various journals on historical aspects of paddling.

BOOK REVIEW

Title: *Canoe Crossings*

Subtitle: *Understanding the Craft That Helped Shape British Columbia*

Author: Sanford Osler

Published: 2014

Publisher: Heritage House Canada

Contents: 159 pp; two colour plate sections

Cover: softcover

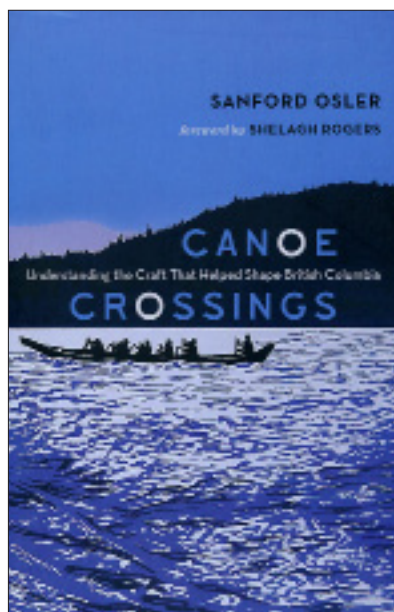
Price: NZ\$ 29.19

ISBN: 978 1 927527-7400

Availability: Book Depository UK

Review: Paul Caffyn

In 2007 the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation held a contest to determine the 'Seven Wonders of Canada'. Among 20,000 nominees was the canoe. Although one of judges felt the canoe united people across the country and, despite its ancient roots, it was still a part of everyday lives - in nationwide polls it scored poorly.



Author Sanford Osler, who had been paddling since he was a kid, was disappointed with the national results and suspected it was due to a lack of understanding of the significance of the canoe.

When asked to give a talk to his local church, he chose the canoe as a subject but after initially focussing on different types of canoes, he saw broader themes cutting across the canoe categories. His slide show with his 16 foot canoe at centre stage was so good, he was encouraged to take it to a wider audience and paddlers attending his talks were only too happy to share their stories, which ultimately led to this book.

At first glance, the photos in two colour plate segments suggest a strong bias towards racing, dragon boats, waka amas, Canadian canoes and really long Salish racing canoes (50+ foot long). A chapter titled 'Racing Canoes' I thought would not interest me in the slightest. Although I was introduced to paddling a K1 kayak as a school kid, and indeed still own a K1, once I started sea kayaking I felt there was no place for competitiveness - there was sufficient risk and danger when paddling exposed coasts let alone add to the risk by competing against other paddlers to get to some other place first.

Aside from my anti-racing bias, I do have a soft spot for Canadian canoes. The very first boat I owned

as a school kid was a 17 foot Peterborough style canoe. With so many books already in my library on the design, construction and paddling of canoes in Canada, what could a slim paperback size book add?

I started reading the first chapter late one evening thinking, 'This will put me off to sleep', but not far in I was hooked. The seven chapter headings seem rather broad, for instance the first four are:

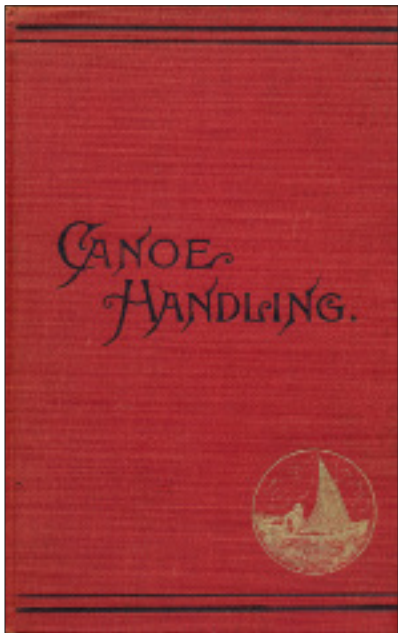
- The Birchbark Canoe
- The Dugout Canoe
- The Skin Canoe
- The First Canoes....

Entire books have been written about each of those heading subjects but Sanford Osler has carried out a remarkable amount of research, both via literary searches and interviews with paddlers young and old. In 'The Skin Canoe' chapter, Osler writes about the significance of the historical Aleut baidarka bifid bow and introduces George Dyson who lived in a tree house while building his 48 foot long baidarka *Mt Fairweather*. He then introduces Doug Simpson who founded a company to build his *Feathercraft* folding kayaks. So many familiar names from the 1970s and 80s, all associated with the rapid growth in sea kayaking.

Even the chapter on 'Racing Canoes' had me engrossed. The coastal First Nations racing canoe meets had almost died out by 1900, but a resurgence in recent years was led by community leaders who saw the canoe's potential to bring people together in exciting new ways, for instance, a group of high school students who practised on a tiny lake and went on to win several World Dragon Boat Championships; and heart-warming stories of at-risk Aboriginal youth who reconnected with their traditional culture through annual 'big canoe' trips.

A bibliography, end-notes and index round out a marvellous wee treasure of a book on the significance, both historical and modern, of how paddlecraft helped shape the history of British Columbia.

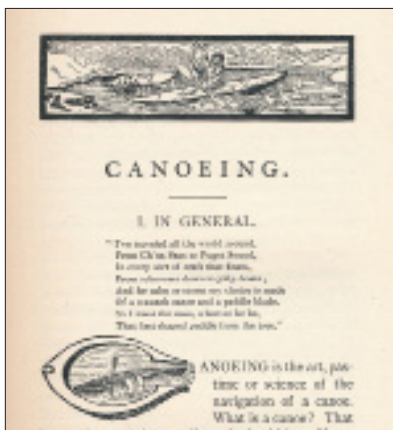
Old Books



I find it quite rare these days to be able to acquire an out-of print tome such as *Canoe Handling*, cover pictured above. First published in New York by Forest and Stream in 1885, I acquired this 1901 3rd edition, written and illustrated by C. Bowyer Vaux.

Despite dating from the Victorian era when early paddling books could be quiet dry and stodgy, the author Bowyer Vaux has a wonderful way with words. Many of his chapter heading quotes are pearls:

I've traveled the world all around,
From China Seas to Puget Sound,
In every sort of craft that floats,
From schooners down to jolly boats;
And for calm or storm my choice is made
Of a staunch canoe and a paddle blade.
So I toast the man, who ever he be,
That first shaped paddle from the tree.



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I forwarded this quote below, from the frontispieces page, to a few paddling mates:

I am the captain of my craft.
My word is law from fore to aft.
I am the cook and steward too,
I am the passenger and crew.
And though it 'tis said I'm hard
to please,
I'm not afraid of mutinies;
In fact, my complement at sea
Is as perfect as can be.

Conrad is going to print the quote for the wall of his boatshed.

Sadly the response below is from a talented Auckland kayaker, who enjoyed paddling so much when he was young, he even wrote an informative instruction manual but sadly in his advancing years, Kerry Howe succumbed to a severe case of boatulism and bought a yacht. I had to bribe him with a copy of the last KASK magazine to reproduce his shameful doggerel:

But I have a yacht
so I've got the lot
a stove and a bed
along with a head
and storage for stuff
and I don't care how rough
are the waves on the sea
because, you see
I sit on my arse
and the wind blows me fast
no stroke of a paddle
so don't give me that twaddle
about sea kayaking joys
just watch me zip by
- all comfort and poise.

One Last Joke

An elderly couple out celebrating their golden anniversary were having a few drinks together. The husband asks his wife, "Do you remember the first time we had sex together over 50 years ago? We went behind this very tavern where you leaned against the back fence and I made love to you for the first time."

"Oh Yes, I remember it well."

"OK," he says, "How about taking a stroll around there again and we can do it for old time's sake?"

"Oh Charlie, you old devil, that sounds like a crazy, but fun idea!"

A police officer sitting in the next booth heard their conversation and, having a chuckle to himself, he thinks, I've got to see these two old-timers having sex against a fence. I'll just keep an eye on them so there's no trouble. So he follows them.

The elderly couple walks haltingly along, leaning on each other for support aided by walking sticks. Finally, they get to the back of the tavern and make their way to the fence. The old lady lifts her skirt and the old man drops his trousers. As she leans against the fence, the old man moves in.

Then suddenly they erupt into the most furious/violent sex that the policeman has ever seen. It goes on for 10 minutes while both are making loud noises and moaning and screaming, the old lady's fingers clawing/scratching the old guy's back. Finally, they both collapse, gasping/panting and trembling on the ground.

Bloody hell, thinks the amazed cop. He thinks he has learned something about life and old age that he didn't know. After about half an hour of lying on the ground recovering, the old couple struggle to their feet and put their clothes back on.

The policeman, who is still watching thinks to himself, this is truly amazing, I've got to ask them what their secret is. So, as the couple passes, the old lady with a glazed happy look, and the old man wheezing and struggling to walk, he says to them, "Excuse me, but that was something else. You must've had a fantastic sex life together. Is there some sort of secret to this?" Shaking, the old man's hoarse whisper, barely able to be heard, replies, "50 years ago that fence wasn't electric!"

KASK

KASK, the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc., a network of New Zealand sea kayakers, has the objectives of:

1. promoting and encouraging the sport of sea kayaking
2. promoting safety standards
3. developing techniques & equipment
4. dealing with issues of coastal access and protection
5. organizing an annual sea kayak forum
6. publishing a bimonthly magazine.

New Zealand Sea Kayaker is published bimonthly as the official magazine of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (NZ) Inc.

Articles, trip reports, book reviews, equipment reviews, new techniques, letters to the editor, and moments when the word 'Bugger!' was said singularly or often (referred to by some as incidents) are sought to enliven the pages of the newsletter. Send to the editor:

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jacquiejames@yahoo.co.uk

KASK Annual Sub

Membership is now \$40 for individuals, family and overseas renewals.

You can join KASK by clicking on the 'Join' button on the KASK web site:

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**4th Ed. KASK HANDBOOK
OUT OF PRINT**

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www.maritimenz.govt.nz

KASK Website
kask.co.nz

Photos on opposite page:

Top right:

After a pre-dawn start, Conrad Edwards paddles into a sunrise off the east coast of New Caledonia

Photo: Paul Caffyn

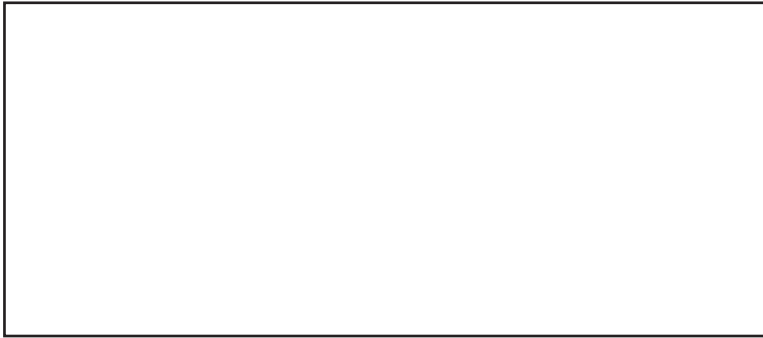
Bottom right:

In Prince William Sound, Alaska, Conrad is dwarfed by a massive calving face of the Blackstone Glacier. We were paddling into a bitterly cold, early morning katabatic wind off the icecap.

Photo: Paul Caffyn



MAILED TO



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*This poster which was compiled by the Grey District Council featured in a side alley opposite the town library.
Photo: Kay Costley*

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Current membership fees are:

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- \$40 for overseas membership (PDF newsletter only)
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- if a membership renewal is not received by 30 September, membership lapses
- new members who join between 1 June and 31 July automatically get their membership credited to the following year, thus receiving a 14 month membership

New members please join through the following link:

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