

No. 129 June - July 2007

ISSN 1177-4177

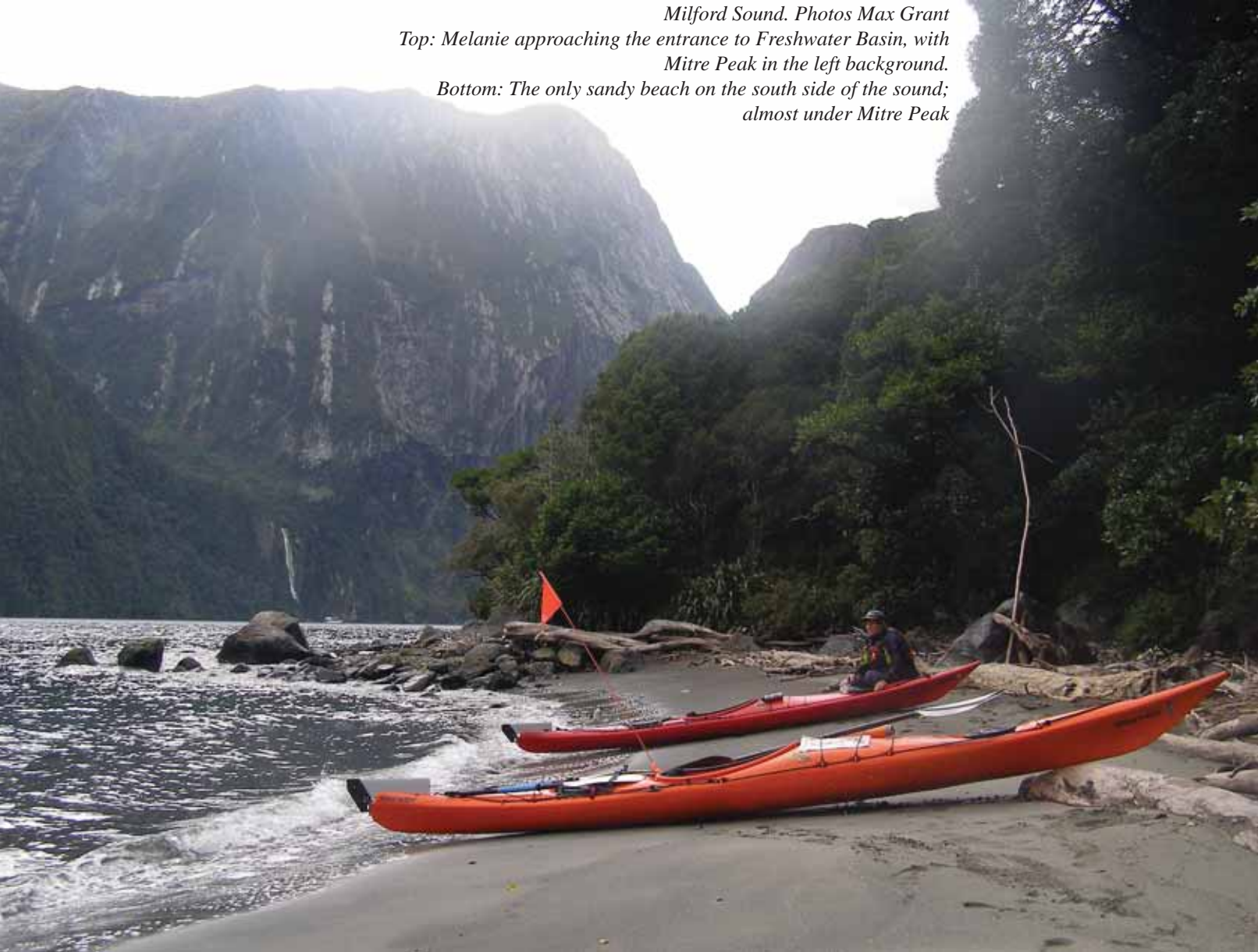
The Journal of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (NZ) Inc - KASK



THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER



*Milford Sound. Photos Max Grant
Top: Melanie approaching the entrance to Freshwater Basin, with
Mitre Peak in the left background.
Bottom: The only sandy beach on the south side of the sound;
almost under Mitre Peak*



INDEX

EDITORIAL p. 3

CALENDAR

KASK 2008 Forum p.18

Coastbusters 2008 p.19

SAFETY

Dead Man Paddling
by John Kirk-Anderson p.4

Sea Kayaking for Disabled Paddlers
by Beverley Burnett p.19

NZ TRIP REPORTS

CSKN Queen's Birthday Trip
by Karen Dawson p.8

Hell's Portage
Jackson Bay to Milford May 2007
by Max Grant p.9

OVERSEAS EXPEDITIONS

Andrew McAuley Fundraising Dinner
Sydney 7 June 2007
by Martin Fraser p. 6

Crocodile Attack North Qld.
by Sandy Robson p.13

Frequently Asked Questions
by Sandy Robson p.19

DVD REVIEW

This is the Sea 3
Review: Paul Hayward p.20

HUMOUR p.20

EDITORIAL

Late Newsletter Delivery

In 16 years of newsletter editing, I don't think I have ever been this late. But, I have one of the finest kind of excuses – a month kayaking in the Angmagssalik region of East Greenland. In brief, Conrad Edwards and I flew via Iceland into Kulusuk with two kevlar take-apart Nordkapps. For the first journey, we paddled north to Lake Fiord where Gino Watkins drowned 75 years ago, the second south to Isortoq with a side visit to the site of the 1930-31 BAARE base and a climb onto the Greenland ice cap. There were more icebergs that you could shake a stick at and it was as cold as a 'titch's wit' but a cracker of a trip.

KASK Subscription Renewals

Subscription renewals were due as of 31 July. We are aiming to have renewal forms with your name and newsletter address details included as a separate sheet with the newsletter, but you can also renew via the KASK website, with internet banking.

SAFETY

Search & Rescue Exercise

1. John Kirk-Anderson took part in a Canterbury region search and rescue exercise as a diabetic paddler who was overdue on a coastal paddle. His report is sobering reading and highlights the difficulty of searching for a drifting kayak. Take particular note of the communication gear that John carries on all his trips, especially the cellphone in a waterproof bag.

2. Mobile phones

A fatality on Lake Rotorua in late May, and a recent near miss north of Coromandel township have highlighted the importance of ensuring paddlers do not take cellphones out of ziploc or waterproof bags before use in an emergency. In both instances, cellphones became waterlogged and would not work. Maritime New Zealand both supplies and promotes a 'Keep it on you, Keep it dry' ziplock bag for cellphones, and an email from Jim Lott notes that no loss of signal is noticed, but slight loss of clarity when using them in the plastic ziplock bag. The bag label also notes 'splash proof bag'. Jim also notes Telecom provides

official cellphone bags for about \$20. Remember that flip-open phones will require a large waterproof bag.

Sandy Robson

Sandy was doing so well with her solo trip around Australia, but near Cape Direction, a large crocodile attacked the stern of her kayak. Sandy's diary for the day is reproduced in full, as it includes her thought process on what to do next. Sandy decided there was too much risk with crocodiles to continue solo around to Weipa, so pulled the pin and headed over to Western Australia. She has subsequently paddled from Broome south to Exmouth.

Anniversary

On Saturday 1 December 2007, the Victorian Sea Kayak Club is arranging a plaque unveiling at Queenscliff, marking the 25th anniversary of the completion of RAKE, or the Round Australian Kayak Expedition. Andy Wood and Lesley Hadley are winging their way across the Tasman with the editor for this salubrious occasion. A ceremonial paddle in, is planned and then pall bearers (wearing trusses) will carry Paul and *Lalaguli* for mounting at the Queenscliff Maritime Museum.

Hell's Portage

The photos and words of Max and Melanie Grant's kayak and portage trip from Jackson Bay to Milford showcase some of NZ's best scenery in what was quite an inspirational trip.

DVD Review

Paul Hayward has reviewed the third volume of Justine Curgenv's 'This is the Sea' series, which has New Zealand content. Justine and Freya Hoffmeister (the German lady who does the headstand in her kayak) are both looking at attempting to be the first woman to paddle around the South Island this summer. Freya and Greg Stamer, who were both at the 2006 Coastbusters in Auckland, completed a quick circumnavigation of Iceland this northern summer. They were in Reykjavik the night Paul and Conrad flew into Iceland and attended a slide show of the two Kiwis paddling in West Greenland.

Paul Caffyn

A big thanks to all the contributors. Contributions of articles and photos are requested for the next newsletter.

*Cover photo: Rohan Cordwell practicing a sculling support stroke, in Titahi Bay.
Photo: David Blake*

**NEXT NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE
20 September 2007**

SAFETY

DEAD MAN PADDLING

by John Kirk-Anderson

Recently I took part in a Coastguard Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) off the Canterbury coast in which I played a kayaker missing off shore.

It was interesting to be the subject of a search, especially following Hamish Blanch's excellent article in the last KASK newsletter.

My part in the exercise was small, in that I was one of more than a dozen scenarios that the SAREX dealt with, ranging from a collision between a jet ski and a mooring buoy (enough said!) to a fire on a launch.

I was the only person out on my own, and I also ended up furthest off-shore. I was more than six nautical miles into Pegasus Bay before I was recovered.

Jim Lilley, of the Canterbury Coastguard, approached me months ago when he was planning the SAREX, as the search for trans-Tasman paddler Andrew McCauley was still fresh in his mind. He wanted the search controllers to cope with looking for a very small target, with little knowledge of the craft's speed and capabilities.

The scenario was that I was on a multi-day trip, paddling from Kaikoura, south to Lyttelton, and that I was on the last leg, having left Waikuku Beach at 0600. I was reporting in to my wife every three hours, but I had missed the 0900 and 1200 reports, and so the alarm was raised at 1230.

This was the only information that was initially provided but if the controllers asked, they were to be given other info, including that I had a VHF and cell phone, callsigns and numbers provided, and that I was well equipped for off-shore paddling.

Oh, and I was also diabetic.

The cunning plan that Jim and I cooked up was that I had left Waikuku heading south, but then had problems, possibly due to hypoglycaemia, and was pushed off-shore by the outflow from the Waimakariri River. This would put me out into Pegasus Bay, and would widen the search area considerably, requiring a bit of lateral thinking and good control of limited resources. We also expected that a shoreline search would take place, but this would be hypothetical as land searchers were limited.

Rather than drive north to Waikuku and paddle south, I left Sumner Beach at 0900 and paddled north east, on a sea as flat as a pancake. I was disappointed by the conditions as I knew that the Coastguard Air Patrol (CAP) aircraft that were available would spot me easily in the flat light and flat sea.

Monitoring my VHF I heard other scenarios unfolding, and as time wore on the voices of the radio operators became tense as they dealt with greater demands, both from the controllers and the Coastguard crews. As I knew all the scenarios, I chuckled at their discomfort.

Making approximately three and a half knots to the north east, I noticed a few lenticular clouds forming over the Southern Alps, a classic sign of a nor-west wind. Sure enough an off-shore started blowing, rising to about 10 knots. This was perfect for the exercise, as the white caps and lumpy sea would add to the difficulty for the searchers.

Catching an occasional diagonal surf, the coastline was soon a dark line of trees, with nothing else visible of the flat Canterbury Plains. Banks Peninsula stood up very clearly, but I couldn't pick out individual buildings. Checking my GPS, I was about six nautical miles off the coast, and the wind had backed to the west, blowing directly off-shore at about 15 knots.

Reaching my designated area, I was sitting eating a snack bar when I noticed that I was being blown off-shore at 1.5 knots and, with still an hour to go before the search for me kicked off, I had to paddle back towards land

or I would have soon been out in international waters!

At 1220 my cell phone rang, and a cheerful Jim Lilley asked if I was ready as my 'wife' was about to raise the alarm. I gave him my position from the GPS and waited for the cavalry.

Listening to the VHF, I soon heard a call for two rescue vessels to head from Lyttelton at "best possible speed" into Pegasus Bay and await further instructions. They were soon on station and wanted to know what to do.

The message was passed that a solo kayaker, in a yellow kayak and wearing a yellow jacket, paddling NORTH from Waikuku towards Kaikoura, was overdue. They were sent directly towards Waikuku, before the message was updated to advise that I was heading SOUTH, from Waikuku towards Lyttelton. This happened after Jim Lilley, who was sitting behind a controller, told them to check their information.

The two vessels then headed along the coast, about one mile out and separated by about 300 metres, at 20 knots. A CAP aircraft was also involved, flying up with them and continuing past Waikuku, before returning south in a creeping search.

From my position, all I saw was an aircraft flying down the coast, several kilometres away. I didn't know that a second aircraft was also searching offshore, but I heard and saw nothing. I had four smoke flares ready to use, and I had also hoped to use a signal mirror to see how effective it was.

Another vessel was then tasked with searching Lyttelton Harbour, and they asked for a physical description of me, and what was provided was very flattering; aged 36, tall, lean and with fair hair sounded good, but I think I could have paddled past them without being recognized - I'm 43 and normally say I'm short and bald.

Suddenly I heard the sound of an aircraft engine very close, but I couldn't see anything. With a smoke flare ready I searched the sky, scattered with low clouds, for a sign of my



Kaikoura Rescue bearing down on John.

saviour. A light aircraft appeared out of cloud about 1 kilometre north of me, heading away - too far to see me.

At about 1400 I had a call from Mike Kennedy, another SAREX director, asking if I had seen any aircraft, and for an update on my position. By this time I had again drifted off, but the wind had dropped to below 10 knots.

Over the VHF I heard the search controllers say that a commercial aircraft flying out of Christchurch had reported seeing a kayak at my location, and the two search vessels were sent towards me at "best possible speed". This call (fictitious information) was dictated by the requirements of the exercise, as two hours had been allocated by the organisers to deal with me.

At 1430, two hours after the search started, I saw an aircraft approaching from the north, on a heading straight towards me. I had been given some smoke flares to use, all of which had been donated by boaties, as they had time expired, but they were still better than the ones that I carry.

The first two flares failed to ignite, so I pulled out one of my own hand flares, which I carry in a plastic tube. It had expired in 2005, but I was sure that it was OK. It also failed.

Next flare, nothing happened. Down to my last flare, the expiry date was 1985, and the writing was scuffed and fading.

Amazingly, it worked and orange smoke drifted across the water, but by this time the aircraft was very close and had already seen me. It began left-hand circles around me, and unbeknown to me, dropped several smoke flares close by, which I didn't see.

I heard the SAREX controllers call the vessels coming to me and confirm my location, and soon I saw a vessel breaking waves as it approached. Holding my paddle in the air, the vessel changed direction and came straight to me.

As the vessel, *Kaikoura Rescue*, an 11.3 metre RHIB, came alongside, the aircraft flew off, sent to find a life raft drifting off Lyttelton Harbour, another scenario.

The crew on the RHIB held the bow and stern of my kayak, while other crew members held me until I had popped my spray deck and clambered aboard.

Given a cup of tea and a bit of cake, I was soon transferred to another craft and taken back to Lyttelton. On landing, a St Johns Ambulance paramedic offered to check my blood sugar levels, in keeping with my 'exercise' diabetes. I declined.

Additional Information & Lessons Learned.

I was paddling a yellow Wilderness Systems *Tempest 170*; wearing a yellow paddling jacket over a yellow buoyancy vest and a yellow hat, and my paddle had fluorescent yellow and orange blades.

I was wearing two layers of polypro under a Gore-Tex drysuit, a fuzzy-rubber hood, and pogies. The water felt cold to the touch and the wind had a cool bite.

Safety equipment included a VHF radio, a cell phone in a waterproof case, a 121.5 EPIRB, a GPS, four smoke flares, two parachute flares, signal mirror, and strobes. Except for the EPIRB, which was borrowed for the exercise, I carry this gear on all trips.

I was on the water for five and a half hours and only ate three snack bars and

The 1985 orange smoke flare that worked. Photo: John Kirk-Anderson



drank approx one cup of water. This is not unusual for me, but I have 'hit the wall' before while paddling - an interesting experience. I regret not having my blood-sugar level checked when given the opportunity at the end of the exercise. It would have been interesting to see if I was in any way sugar-depleted.

While a long way off my likely route, the area in which I was 'found' was completely feasible given the prevailing weather conditions. The SAREX organisers, and presumably the search controllers, were surprised by the offshore winds, as it was onshore closer in, as forecast.

The skipper of the rescue vessel that recovered me said he would have recommended a search further offshore after his observation of the conditions.

The aircraft that 'located' me had checked the coastline, and the crew were certain that they would have seen me had I been in their search area. They had eight people on board, and were able to clearly see surfers, so had a good idea of the scale of objects on the water. After being given my location, they saw me from a range of about one kilometre. In their day job, they take tourists out to look for whales off Kaikoura, so they are skilled observers.

The other aircraft, that was searching, had a crew of three and was a low-wing plane, which hampered their view.

The vessel that recovered me had been given my exact position, which they loaded into their navigation equipment. They headed towards me at 30 knots until they saw the aircraft circling and changed direction towards the smoke flares that had been dropped. They couldn't see me until I 'hoisted that yellow flag', that is I waved my paddle in the air.

After talking to John Seward, Operations Manager of the Rescue Coordination Centre who was observing the SAREX, he said that a real search for me would have quickly upgraded to Class Three, which meant that far more resources would be available.

I think that the exercise was of benefit to all parties:

- The searchers probably have a better idea of where kayaks could end up and how difficult they are to see.

- For me, it reinforced the need to be self-sufficient and showed the dangers of relying on outside assistance. After my own flare failed I checked my parachute flares and found that I couldn't open the tubes they were stored in, a scary discovery given the strict maintenance routine I operate.

- If any sea kayakers are able to take part in search exercises, I strongly recommend they take the opportunity. It can be a learning experience for all parties, and may get you thinking about how effective your systems and equipment are.

- Just remember that the vast majority of people involved in SAR in NZ are volunteers, and all volunteer organisations have a mix of abilities. The lack of Government funding is appalling, and they need all the help we can give them.

- I have ordered a GPS-equipped 406 Personal Locator Beacon that will broadcast my exact position in the event of an emergency requiring outside help. While expensive, it is the one piece of equipment that would have saved me if the SAREX scenario had been for real.

- Without it I would be a dead man paddling.

John Kirk-Anderson

OVERSEAS

Andrew McAuley Fund Raising Dinner Sydney 7 June 2007

by Martin Fraser

When Paul Caffyn contacted us and said there was a fund raising dinner on in Sydney for Andrew McAuley, would we be keen to attend, Fiona and I said, "See you there."

On 7 June we should have been boarding a 2pm flight that would allow us an hour once in the hotel to get ready for dinner, but of course the plane was delayed by an hour, so plan B was brought into play, which was the same as plan A, but do everything much faster. Still we were there before Paul who had to rush over after a meeting in Wellington.

The venue was a Greek restaurant in downtown Sydney near our hotel which we walked to on a cool, sometimes raining night. There we met Dave Winkworth who had kindly arranged our tickets and a seat at the table with him, his wife and daughter - which was just as well as we didn't know a soul.

There would have been 200 people and you would think it would be the who's who of kayaking/adventuring in Aussie, but next to us were a couple that had never been in a kayak in their lives, from Perth, who had followed the story of Andrew's Tasman crossing attempt and thought it would be a good idea to turn up.

The MC was a really well known Aussie raconteur famous for all sorts of things, we were assured, who we had never heard of and whose name I don't remember but he got the evening off with an auction of some bizarre stuff, like a signed U2 guitar and some decent stuff like a signed Ed Hillary sketch and a nice looking glass sea kayak. Things were whistling out the door for thousands of dollars with the



At the fund-raising dinner for Andrew McAuley's family in Sydney; from left, Paul, Fiona and Martin.

MC whipping up a storm of spontaneous extravagance from the free spending Aussies, we Kiwi's, true to form, were sitting on our hands in case we got lumbered with an 18th century musket or some such.

Next was a talk from one of the team who paddled along the Antarctic Peninsula with Andrew about his approach to life followed by a demo of how to get into a dry suit. Quite why we needed a demo of this in a Sydney restaurant on a Thursday night still escapes me, but it was rapidly becoming X rated as the poor guy removed more and more cloths in an attempt to force himself into the suit. This got the Aussie women going and his explanation of the technique was lost in a deafening roar.

Food had been coming out in the Greek style with meat on a plate for the whole table followed 10 minutes later by vege then another 10 minutes until bread and so on. I had not encountered this way of serving before and dinner was almost over by the time I realised I needed to grab whatever I could as fast as I could as once the plate was gone there was no more. To supplement the lack of nutrition by chewable food I reasoned that if wine was made from grapes it is really just liquid food so did not squander any chance to consume as much as I could get my hands on.

Next up was a talk by a chap named Lincoln Hall who had the good fortune to be rescued when he was able to walk off Mt Everest a couple of days after being given up for dead, not long after the Mark Ingle's controversy. He seemed quite mystified as to why he was still alive given he had been staggering around hallucinating next to thousand meter drops but there he was minus most of his fingers and one assumes toes.

Sitting at the same table as Paul, Dave and a couple of Antarctic paddlers we had a constant stream of admirers in attendance with us basking in the reflected glory. Every so often an admirer would give us a quizzical look and inquire just who we were, in such situations I find it best to talk one's self up, informing them that I live in the same town as Steve Gurney and once did rather well in my trade exams. The magnitude of this achievement was lost on most of them.

Once the hoopla was over, the Aussies cleared out quite quickly leaving three Kiwis wandering aimlessly among the wreckage of the evening, feeling slightly dazed. As we meandered back to the hotel, the whole evening had a slightly surreal feeling to it, no doubt aided by the alcohol and lack of sleep. \$35,000 was raised.

Martin Fraser

Australian Geographic Magazine

For Kiwi paddlers who followed Andrew McAuley's progress across the Tasman Sea in early 2007, the July - September 2007 issue of 'Australian Geographic' includes a 14 page article by editor Deborah Light and is well worth tracking down a copy.

Included is a selection of the daily satellite phone exchanges between Andrew and his weather adviser Jonathan Bogais, noting forecasts and Andrew's position report. A map shows daily end of position plots up to Day 29, and how much influence the wind and sea conditions had on Andrew's set course for Milford Sound.

A well thought out two page diagram of the kayak shows his equipment and both Andrew's sleeping and paddling positions. Text on the same pages explains a list of 21 items of equipment, and the diagram has allowed an explanation for the photo taken off Milford of Andrew's capsized kayak which appeared in many of the newspapers. The photo shows a yellow object on one side which appeared to be a paddle float.

Adjustable arms with ball mounted deck fittings allowed the deployment of inflatable paddle floats that would stabilize the kayak when Andrew was trying to sleep at night.

Several theories on what transpired on the fatal Friday night are discussed; a rogue wave capsizing the kayak, the earlier damage to Casper's pivot arm, but there are no answers as to why Andrew used a VHF radio (thought to be in the aft compartment) rather than the EPIRB which was in the cockpit when the kayak was found.

A good selection of photographs round out the article. If you have trouble accessing a copy in New Zealand bookshops, you can track down the nearest AG store, or order a copy on line: www.australiangeographic.com.au

NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORTS

CSKNet Queen's Birthday Trip Impressions of a Complete Beginner by Karen Dawson

It started drizzling at Seddon. By Renwick, driving rain lashed the windscreen. Imagine then, our cries of glee at the glowing lights and the waves lapping softly at the end of the lawn when we arrived at the holiday home on Moetapu Bay in the Marlborough Sounds. Like Goldilocks we tried all the chairs and all the beds, and came upon Jillian snoozing in one of them. So we knew we were in the right place! What a fantastic place too – courtesy of Marie and her friends. Various other parties arrived at various other times through the night and did Goldilocks too until they found a suitable bed.

In the morning - SUN! - with glorious views from the house over breakfast and then packing the boats. Lots of little bags with mysterious things in them got stashed into the kayaks, which seemed to take a lot of wine and treats, as well as much technical equipment in case of disaster.

The Canterbury Network paddlers basking in the sun at Pipi Beach.



Our leaders Martin and Fiona arrived and did a very impressive pep talk. Wet exit. Emergency rescue; phrases which made me feel glad I had a practice the previous weekend – just in case! There were 15 of us altogether; a fast pod and a restrained velocity pod. Guess which one I was in?

The planning was superb. We had sun and the tide with us, and a little bit of wind in playful little gusts, just to keep it interesting. We had fun playing in the wash of the many boats passing through from Havelock, and a nice long rest at Pipi Beach at lunchtime.

Then we arrived at the DoC lodge at Nydia Bay - with both lights and hot showers, a huge kitchen with huge pots. Before all that, there was a bit more arm lengthening to do, carrying the kayaks up the jetty steps and storing them along the side of the path so that they wouldn't float away at high tide.

But afterwards, there was plenty of time for cups of tea and chats in the afternoon sun. And wonderful hot endless showers for those aching muscles.

The evening was a jovial event of potluck dinner and imbibing some of the many phials of wine from out of the capacious Kayaks. Nine p.m. felt like midnight!

Luckily next day was a rest day, and for some the wine provided a bit of a buffer against the snoring of all the others - ear-plugs are useful in these circumstances, and I find it best to admit to being a snorer, given the odds!

Next morning – not early - little groups went off intrepidly to explore Nydia Bay on foot. Some were more intrepid than others. Martin and Fiona even went out for a paddle. It was getting dusk and we were starting to murmur to each other about one group. Great relief when they returned from their intrepid expedition!

Leftovers for dinner, more wine and an early night, ready for reveille at 6am. Did I mention that I'm brain-dead until I've been awake for two hours? Luckily no thinking was required, because Martin and Fiona had thought it all out for us.

The early morning sun, on the mist on the water, was breath-taking as we set off. Again the tide was with us and, once I woke up, I had the sense I was really getting the hang of this Kayaking number! Beautiful scenery, wild goat kids calling from the shore, terns diving for fish right in front of us - despite the chain saws and logging operations, it was somehow peaceful, paddling into the morning.

The rest at Pipi Beach was welcome on the return trip, but not VITAL, as it had been for me on the outward leg! By the time we were heading back into Moetapu Bay, some of us were definitely malingering to make the trip last just that little bit longer!

Once the boats were out of the water and sorted, it was time for lunch. Sitting on the beach in the sun, looking back the way we came, it was hard to believe it was winter. What a perfect trip. If this is what sea kayaking is all about, bring it on!

KD - June 2007.

NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORTS

HELL'S PORTAGE

**Jackson Bay to Milford
May 2007
Max & Melanie Grant
by Max Grant**

Two of us kayaked out of Jackson Bay into almost perfect conditions for our proposed six day trip down the Fiordland coast to Milford Sound, via the Pyke River. Our plan for the day was to try and reach Hope River in Barn Bay, a total distance of 37kms.

After two hours we took a lunch break at Stafford Bay hut. Both Melanie and I were pleased with our progress and, with a following wind and the outgoing tide, we were looking forward to a brisk paddle to the Hope River Hut. The sea roughed up to a two metre swell going around Cascade Point, a spectacular bluff with many streams cascading down the cliff face. It was a little scary, but once we rounded the Point we had a strong tail wind and were able to surf a lot of the way to the Hope River.

After a good night's sleep, we set off once again in perfect conditions to paddle the 38km to Big Bay. At Gorge River we called in to visit Robert & Catherine Long and family, who live in isolation on the coast of Fiordland. Catherine invited us in for a cuppa and some delicious lemon and coconut cake, which she had just taken out of the oven. Robert had been living there in an old gold digger's hut for 26 years. He had made a few changes to it over the years and their home had been transformed into a great little homestead for the family of four.

One of Robert's talents is painting. He showed me photocopies of the many paintings he had done and gave me a few tips on how to include such things as depth into a picture, etc. It was a rugged two day tramp out to Jackson Bay River road and I had difficulty understanding how he sold his painting from such an isolated

place. He queried me on how I started my kayak business.

"I made a kayak for myself, then one for my mate, then one for his friend, and their friend" I looked up and Robert had a big smile on his face. "Same thing," he said laughing. "People send me a photo and deposit and I produce a painting for them."

After lunch Christian and Robin showed us the 'helicopter' they had made out of driftwood. I don't think this will ever conform to aviation requirements, but I could see they had put some time into making it and it certainly stood out as a feature in their front yard.

Paddling down Gorge River, and over the bar into the ocean, we once again had a following sea and wind with us. By late afternoon we rounded Awarua Point and, accompanied by a large pod of dolphins, paddled into Big Bay. It was a long but easy surf to the beach, then off to the DoC hut to stoke up a fire, dry out our gear and cook up a mean meal with all the trimmings. We had made it without any problems to Big Bay; now we prepared ourselves for a 12km portage across land to the Pyke River.

The following morning we had a look around the small Big Bay settlement of about a dozen huts and houses, all

built for the whitebaiters. While it was deserted now, it would be a busy place at the height of the whitebaiting season. Then it was out with our trolleys and off on our journey to the Pyke River.

And our first mistake – we had had a fairly relaxed morning and hadn't noticed that by the time we were ready to leave, about mid day, it was full tide. We had decided to use our trolleys to carry our kayaks along the beach to the Waiuna River. But the hard sand was now covered by the tide and what was left was very soft. The trolley wheels sunk into the soft sand, making for a real struggle to haul our kayaks along the beach.

Upon arriving at the river mouth, we saw to our dismay that the river we had walked across earlier that morning was now completely flooded and was well over a metre deep. Off with the trolleys and sitting on the cockpits, with our tramping boots draped over the front deck, we paddled our way across the Waiuna River/Lagoon.

Our portage trail was part of the Hollyford/Pyke Track, but was once used as a trail to transport gold and supplies from further inland.

Into the track, which, while slightly up hill, was not too bad for hauling our kayaks along. But it was not long

*Christian and Robin Long, in their replica of a helicopter at Gorge River.
Photo: Max Grant*



before we were confronted by a stream. The track didn't just cross it though, we had to drag our trolleys up the stream for about 50metres, through the icy cold water, before the track once again headed off into the bush. After another couple of hundred metres, there was another stream, and another after that. We were making slow time.

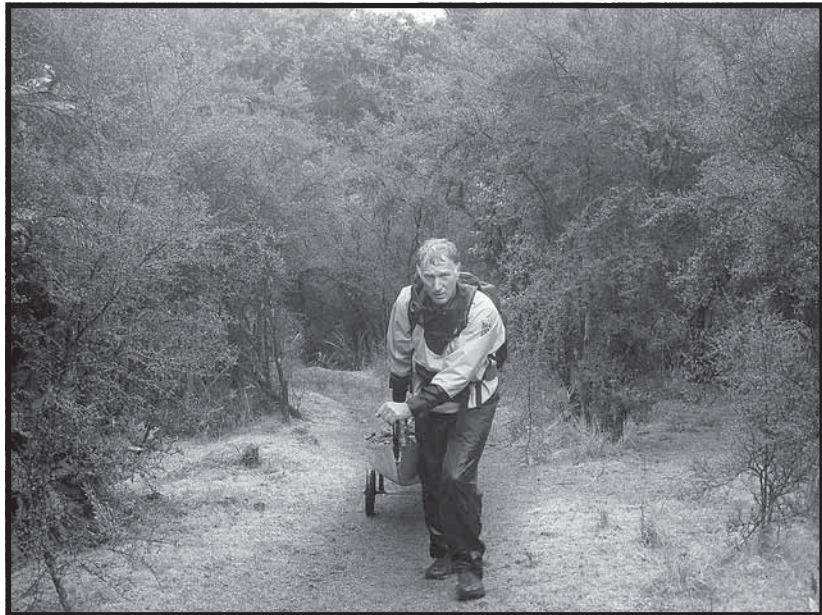
After an hour we came across the first of many trees that had fallen across the track. The tree had not been removed, rather the track dived off into the dense bush to go around it. We had no choice but to carry one kayak through the bush and then go back and get the other. Some of these 'detours' were evil!

Two hours had gone by when we came across a stream which was sign posted, 'Meat Safe Stream – 30 mins to Big Bay'. Not when you're lugging a damn kayak it's not!

We knew that it would be dark at 6pm. At 4.30pm we stopped in a good clearing and debated whether we should make camp here or make a return trip with a small amount of gear back to the hut. It was raining, it was cold and everything was wet. Into our packs went some food and dry clothes and, with our sleeping bags tucked under our arms, we made a very fast trip back to the nice warm hut. The rest of our gear remained packed in our kayaks, which were left in the clearing.

We made the return trip to the hut in 80 minutes. Although it was nearly dark, we could see a rough sea pounding into the beach in Big Bay. Thank goodness we were not on the ocean that day. As we made ourselves comfortable in the hut, the rain was falling heavily onto the roof. Our worry now was that the small streams we had crossed were filling with water and may turn into ragging torrents by the morning, cutting us off from our kayaks. At 2am it stopped raining!

Next morning we were up early and set off back to our kayaks. Our goal for the day was to make it to the Pyke River and kayak down to the Olivine Hut. Other than being a bit soft under foot, the track was the same as the day



Max Grant on a rather good section of Hell's Portage. Photo: Melanie Grant

before. We estimated that we were nearly half way and were not too far from the Dry Awarua River bed. We had had a sneaky look at this through google maps on the internet before leaving and knew it was a shingle strip about 150 metres wide. As we got closer to the river, more and more of the under growth had been washed out by water and we spent a lot of time carrying each kayak over large areas of boulders.

Finally, at midday we arrived at the Dry Awarua River. We carried our kayaks to the other side and sat down for a well-earned lunch break. The track now leveled out to cross a saddle into the Pyke Valley. There were no more boulders, which was great. But now the track became soft - in many parts a quagmire of soft mud. I was in the lead and when I became bogged down in the mud, Melanie would lift the rear of my kayak until we were on solid ground again. Then we would go back and carry her kayak through. It was tiring work.

I remember one log I stepped over and thought; "I'll drag my kayak over this one." I tightened my grip on the kayak and pulled with all my strength. But the log was too big. My hands slipped off the kayak and I torpedoed into the bush. Melanie rushed to my aid and asked. "Are you all right Dad?" "I'm okay, and don't you dare laugh," as I could see she was holding back

her laughter.

"But Dad, you look so stupid lying there in the scrub all covered in mud."

Then, as she burst out laughing she exclaimed, "I've gotta go wees" and disappeared into the bush in fits of laughter, leaving me to struggle back to my feet again.

By mid-afternoon we reached the Paulin Creek bed, which flows down to the Pyke. But here the track seemed to disappear. Walking down the riverbed, we noticed the track markers were now attached to trees running along the river bed. The river bed was the track. Back to carrying our kayaks over boulders again - this was becoming a real character building exercise.

Halfway down the Paulin we met a hunter, who was taken aback by what he saw. Taking pity on us he quickly grabbed an end of the kayak and helped carry the boats to the Pyke.

We finally arrived at the Pyke at 4pm. It was very braided and to our dismay, the main stream was on the other side of the valley. By the time we arrived at the river and had packed away our trolleys and changed into our kayaking gear, it was getting dark. It was a clear sky and a full moon, so we thought we might be able to paddle down the Pyke in the dark to the Olivine Hut.

A couple of kilometers downstream we came across two deer taking a drink. They just never saw us coming. We drifted to within metres of them before they realized we were about to run them down. There was a hell of a commotion as they about turned and raced off into the bush. We had heard deer roaring all day, but these were the first we had seen.

As darkness fell, we became aware that the river was running a bit faster than we'd thought and the hidden logs were hard to see, making it dangerous. We found a great little place to camp and soon had the tent up with a nice little fire burning away. A hot feed of 'honey soya chicken' followed with 'crumble apple pie' courtesy of 'Back Country Cuisines', and a hot cuppa tea. Sitting around the fire chatting and laughing about the day's events with your daughter under a star filled sky in the middle of no-where, what more could a guy want? And we had picked the only camp site in Fiordland that had no sandflies!

On day five, we packed up our tent and were kayaking down the Pyke River by 8.30am. It was a beautiful day with a clear blue sky and no wind. The Pyke was very similar to the Whanganui River with the occasional log jams, which made some of the small rapids quite hard to negotiate. The river was crystal clear and we took great delight in scooping up a mug full of water and drinking it. There is something special about being able to drink straight from a stream or river and we had been doing it for the last two days.

By mid morning we were kayaking across Lake Wilmot and then further down the Pyke past Olivine Hut into Lake Alabaster. The scenery was spectacular. The lakes are surrounded by thick native forest that climbs the sides of the snow-covered peaks of the Darran Mountains, which were silhouetted against a clear blue sky. We stopped for lunch at the Lake Alabaster Hut, where we had stayed several years ago, during our trip down the Holyford River. The original hut had been replaced by a very modern building that could now sleep over 20 people.

After lunch we paddled back into the Pyke which then flowed into the Holyford River. Here we encountered some good bouncy rapids before it flowed into Lake McKerrow. Paddling hard we finally made it to Hokuri hut as darkness fell. We had kayaked a total distance of 52km that day. It was good to have a big feed and crawl into our beds.

That night we received news via our mountain radio that a large front was approaching from the north and was due to hit Fiordland the following afternoon. We could either sit it out at the hut, or make a run for it to the shelter of Milford, a distance of 57km away.

Next morning we were on the water before 7am - we had decided to make a run for it! At 8am we paddled out of Lake McKerrow into the last 5kms of the Hollyford River before it runs into the sea. As we paddled closer to the sandbar, that separates the Hollyford from the beach, we became nervous as the sound of breaking waves filled an otherwise quiet morning air. At the sandbar we virtually leaped out of our kayaks and ran up the sandbar crest to view the ocean.

What a great sight greeted us, a dead flat sea with a small wave break. We quickly carried our kayaks over the sandbar and launched ourselves into Martins Bay. In her excitement Melanie made the oldest mistake in

the book by leaving her drink bottles on the front deck. By the time we had paddled through the surf break, they were gone. Luckily I had a spare one so it was no great loss.

Once again, we had a following sea with the tide in our favour. By 12noon we had a two-metre swell and an ominous dark sky chasing us from the north. The sea was really starting to rough up as we raced/surfed our way past Yates Point and finally into Milford Sound – we made it!

Once in the shelter of the Sounds, we stopped for a well-earned lunch break and pit stop at the one and only sandy beach in this spectacular fiord. As we paddled on to Milford, it was an eerie feeling being surrounded by towering cliffs that seemed to reach all the way up to the clouds. By the time we had landed and got changed, the temperature had dropped and it was raining. Off to the backpackers for a meal, hot shower and nice warm room and bed with the wind now howling outside. What a way to end our trip.

At 8am next morning, Stephen Counsell arrived to take us through to Queenstown where we were met by Ian Algie, who took us back to our vehicle at Jackson Bay. We arrived at 7pm, an 11 hour shuttle.

Both Melz and I are very thankful to Stephen and Ian for giving up their day to take us back to our vehicle. We

Melanie at the sandfly free campsite on Pyke River. Photo: Max Grant





then spent all of the next day traveling back to Ashhurst – a long, long trip but it was all worth it. Such a great adventure!

Our Equipment

For this trip Melanie and I put a lot of thought into the equipment we used. Our kayaks had to be as light as possible for the portage, but strong and maneuverable for the river, plus be able to perform well in a rough sea with a full load on board. At 22.5kgs the Q-Kayaks lightweight *Penquin* and *Shearwater* were perfect.

The trolley we used had to be very strong, lightweight (2.95kg) and be able to be taken apart and stored into a small area inside our kayaks. We used two Q-Kayaks sling trolleys which performed well beyond what they were designed for. Our meals were freeze dry meals from Back Country Foods Ltd. They were light and easy to prepare. We took enough food for 9 days. Our tent was a Macpac Minaret weighing 2.5kg. Our sleeping bags were Macpac Meridians weighing 1.3kg each, plus alpine covers. Time of year was early May.

All of our gear was designed and made in New Zealand

IMPORTANT NOTE

If using a mountain radio in Fiordland, it should be one from the Invercargill or Te Anau. We used one from the North Island and while we were able to receive forecasts okay, it was very hard to send messages out. And mountain radios are heavy!

Max Grant

OVERSEAS EXPEDITIONS

Crocodiles in North Queensland Email from Peter Treby

Talking of intrepid women, I met up with Sandy Robson by chance when Sal and I spent a week at Magnetic Island not long ago. By pure chance, Sandy was nearing Townsville, and we were able to put her up for a couple of nights where the in-laws were staying. She is in great form, now at Port Douglas as of 23 May. I thought she was in a positive state of mind and travelling well.

Attached is a photo of Sandy during her R&R on MI (she's the one on the left), cheers

PT 24 May 2007

(Peter Treby was the president of the Victorian Sea Kayak Club for many years)

8 June 2007 Email from David Winkworth:

I Spoke to Sandy tonight. She is on Restoration Island (near Lockhart River). Not sure if she will go on from here though. Her boat was attacked by a big croc two days ago as she was coming in to a beach just south of Cape Direction near the Old Mission Station.

She is pretty shaken up and hasn't paddled since then. She got some pics of the croc though - says it was as big as her boat! She called Dave Glasheen on Resto and he came down in his dory and picked her up. She hasn't made a decision about going on yet. You can call her on Resto if you like on 07 4060-7145. I think she will be there for a few days yet.

The Crocodile Attack by Sandy Robson Day 162 - June 5 2007 Night Island to Villis Point (near Cape Direction), North Queensland (approx 40km)

By morning I was even more anxious about launching. My stomach was so knotted I could not eat breakfast. I waited for it to be light enough for me to launch. I organised my gear so that an absolute minimum of time would be spent on the beach prior to setting off. Before launching I stoked the fire again.

My reasoning was that when I stoked the fire, the croc would retreat to the mangroves, thus giving me a safety margin of time to get on the water and paddle out over the shallow reef. I also found some rocks and half a star picket to ditch at any crocs that might get too close for comfort.

*Sandy Robson in great form at Magnetic Island, with a stuffed crocodile.
Photo: supplied by Peter Treby*



It all went OK and I got away extremely relieved that I did not see a croc and was not followed.

Paddling away, a terrible mental strain was lifted from me. Phew! I live to paddle another day. I was able to enjoy paddling fast and putting a large space between myself and Night Island. This island was mentally added to the list of places I do not want to visit again. I decided it was called Night Island because here you can have a night that you will never forget!

Reflecting on the experience, I was reconsidering paddling in the Gulf of Carpentaria from Seisia to Weipa. Dave Winkworth had told me that his friend Aranus had found it confronting and commented on it being too croccy. How on earth was I going to cope?

My destination today was Cape Direction. I had not camped on the mainland much at all during this journey north from Cooktown. The islands, apart from last night, had always seemed to be the safest and most enjoyable place to camp.

My first encounter with the mainland north of Cooktown was at Cape Melville where I had the encounter with the large bull. Yesterday I had planned to land on the mainland at Cape Sidmouth, only to see a large croc on the beach. Today I would camp on the mainland at Cape Direction and I was sort of wondering what surprises it might have in store for me. I reassured myself that it would all be OK.

Getting back on the mainland was going to be like getting back on the horse. Between here and Cape York I would be camping on the mainland at several places. I referred to a picture on my chart of Andrew Hughe's Cape Direction campsite. (Andrew paddled Hobart to Thursday Island in 2006 and I had some information about campsites from his blog). His tent was perched above the granite rocks and looked out over Rocky Island. Cape Direction looked like a great place to camp.

I made excellent time due to unleashing my relief at not being munched by a croc into hard and fast paddling. I was soon approaching Cape Direction and looking for that campsite. The wind was producing a bit of wave action onto a steep beach and the water was not clear so I thought I would go a little further and explore for a more favourable landing. I paddled along next to the big granite rocks on Villis Point and rounded the point to find a perfect sheltered beach with campsite potential on the headland. Around the point the water was sheltered and calm. The beach would be a fantastic landing.

Then as I paddled in, I heard Dave Winkworth's voice in my head. It was him talking about the Gulf, "Crocs like calm water." I paddled a few more strokes and noticed a few mangroves on the inside of the point. The voice in my head, "*Shit! Mangroves.*" I dismissed them because there were not many and rationalised that it would be OK.

Then SLAM! That sound changed everything! A sound like someone had just slammed two bricks together as hard as possible on the stern of my kayak.

My heart rate accelerated. Adrenaline poured into my system. A voice in my head knew that it could only be one thing. I forced myself to turn my head to look. I saw a large croc with its head fully out of the water, jaws open and right on the back of my kayak. I think at this point I may have sworn - "F***!" I certainly never thought to say 'Crikey!'

Dave's voice was in my head again, "If you see a croc just paddle away." I considered whether my situation would allow me to paddle out to sea, rather than be chased off the water and onto the shore. Bigger that! In order for me to paddle out of this bay and back out to sea, I would have to face the big croc head on - not an option. I happily paddled as fast as I could away from gaping croc jaws and towards the beach. All I could think was "Please don't get me, please don't get me, please

don't get me, please don't get me," all the way to the beach. Actually I don't think I just thought it, I said it out loud like some kind of mantra.

I did not know if I would be able to pull my spraydeck loop, leap out of the cockpit and run up the beach fast enough. This is the place where I knew I would be the most vulnerable to an attack. I took a glance behind to see if I had a croc on my tail. Shit where was it? The bow of the kayak hit the sand and I already had the spray deck off and was running up the beach, thankfully without getting tangled up in my paddle leash. No croc chased behind me so I was able to relax a little and hurriedly pull my kayak up out of the danger zone. Then I saw it in the bay arching its back, puffing itself up and fully displaying its tail. This had certainly been a territorial attack from a large male croc.

Once I felt safe from the croc I thought, "Bugger this! If I am going to be attacked by a croc, then I am getting photos." I took a few snaps and then pulled my kayak right off the sandy beach.

I sat down and was in shock and reeling from the experience. Now what? So much for getting back on the horse! Gee it feels good to be alive. I inspected my kayak to find no gaping hole at the stern. Just a little chip, and a few scratches. Bit of a let down for the impact really, but at least I was still seaworthy.

I got out my satellite phone. Each day I let Les Allen know my intended destination and I call Les by 7pm every day to let him know I have made it. If I don't call, then Les is the person who would initiate a search for me. Les had been in contact with me last night, through the Night Island experience, and was looking forward to me safely arriving at Restoration Island tomorrow.

This week Les was on a work trip in northern WA. I knew he would not be in phone range until about 2pm and it was currently 12.30pm, so I sent a text message informing him of my continuing saga.



The aggressive male crocodile telling Sandy that she was on his territory

Next I phoned Anthony Malloch. I thought that possibly he might be a day or two behind me and that I might be able to camp here and meet up with him and paddle to Restoration Island with a bit of company. I left Anthony a message. I thought about how I would feel getting back on the water tomorrow.

Let's take a look at this whole scenario from the croc's point of view. This is a large male crocodile and this is his territory. He will defend it from other male crocodiles and hopefully acquire some nice female crocs to join him here. The crocodile would have been aware of me paddling into his territory for quite some time as I approached. He was probably feeling threatened and imagining a large croc coming into his territory. He may have started to signal that this was his territory by vibrating in the water. Another crocodile would pick up on the vibrations and either come in to challenge or backed off. Me, well, I didn't hear the vibrations did I?

I was oblivious to the fact that I was coming in for a challenge. The crocodile was left with no alternative but to defend his territory. I was not even aware that he was there until that SLAM on the stern of my kayak. What was that crocodile thinking now? Had he won the challenge because I had paddled away, or was I a still a major threat because I had landed right on his beach? He was fired up, puffed up, watching me, displaying himself as a threat that would

take me on if I went back out there - and that was fine by me. You can have your territory; I'm out of here! I decided I would portage all of my gear and kayak back to the other side of Villis Point and camp there tonight. This would be a better spot to launch when I came to leave. There was no way I was going back into the bay where I was attacked. The big croc continued to parade himself offshore and was keeping an eye on me.

I decided to call Ian and see if he could look on Anthony Malloch's website to tell me if he was far behind. It was quite bizarre to say to Ian, "Um, I have just been attacked by a crocodile." "What?" I thought I could hear his brain processing." "Did she just say what I think she said?" Of course he wanted to know how big it was and I am a terrible judge of size. I just let him know that, "there is nothing scarier than seeing the gaping jaws of a croc right behind you."

I was surprised then, that I shed some tears as I reflected on how scary that moment had been. It was good to be able to talk to Ian on the satellite phone. Even though I am travelling alone, I have a fantastic support network.

Dealing with my circumstance on my own was not unlike any other critical incident that I have dealt with in the past as a leader of Outdoor Education programs. I feel like I have the training and experience to cope with challenges in the wil-

derness. I know I can make good decisions and cope with whatever is thrown at me. I know that I can be strong in a crisis and keep thinking clearly. I have done risk assessments and I am prepared with the right equipment and skills. I am used to getting out the satellite phone, reporting the situation back to base, and then moving on to deal with the situation using the resources at hand.

I put all my gear into a pile and went for a walk to scout out the best route for wheeling my kayak to the other side of the headland. When I returned the croc had come in really close and was asserting its dominance again. It was obviously still very much aware of my presence and I wondered if I had been much longer, if it would have tried to smash up my kayak. I started the process of lugging gear up hill amongst termite mound terrain.

Thank goodness once again for the Winky Wheels (a Dave Winkworth kayak trolley made especially for Sandy). This portage would have been hell without them. The terrain was easy with wheels. The land was imprinted severely with cattle footprints and there was also evidence of feral pig activity. It was so bumpy on the wheels, but the vegetation was low and easy to pass over. There was no shade, so I had lots of drink breaks along the way. I couldn't have cared less if this portage had been a hundred times more difficult. I was just glad to be away from that crocodile.

Once I got myself to the other side of the point I sat down in the shade, got out my notebook, and weighed up my options. I had a few options to choose between:

1. Stay here for 5 to 6 days while waiting for Anthony and paddle to Restoration Island with him. This would involve rationing my remaining food supplies and desalinating water or
2. Paddle the 30kms to Restoration Island tomorrow, launching from here. I felt very nervous about getting back on the water, what if something else happened? or
3. Get rescued - .not really what I wanted.

I had not had breakfast today. It was now about 3pm and I had not had lunch either, so I snacked on some crackers and muesli bars while I considered the options. I was not in a rush to make a decision. I would be happy to camp here for a couple of days if I had to. My satellite phone was on half battery power and I could recharge it a bit with the solar recharger that David Winkworth had made for me.

I found a place to set up camp and stashed all of my remaining food safely in my kayak. I was a little concerned by the numerous cattle footprints and that feral pigs had been digging in the wet areas around the base of the rocks near my campsite. I hoped I would not have any more wildlife encounters here. I considered trying to walk to the top of a large hill nearby to see if I could get mobile reception overlooking Lockhart River, but after a short walk I realised that the vegetation was really thick and I would not have time to walk that far today.

Out of curiosity I went back to observe the crocodile from high up on the headland. They are amazingly stealthy in the water. The crocodile was under the water, facing out into the bay, and right by the shore. In 20 minutes of observing, I only saw him lift out of the water once.

Back in camp I decided to phone Dave Glasheen at Restoration Island. He is a local and I thought he might be able to help me to make up my mind about what to do tomorrow. I was so glad I called Dave. When I told him about my experience, he said he would come up with a plan to get me picked up, either by himself, a trawler or by the police.

Dave said he would make some phone calls and promised to ring back. Dave did some ringing around and decided to come and pick me up himself in his boat. He told me he could take my kayak out to a trawler. All I had to do was be packed and ready to go at 9am tomorrow. I gave Dave my GPS coordinates so that he could find me and felt relieved that I would be at Restoration Island tomorrow.

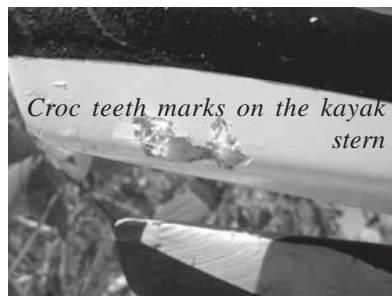
After letting Les know the good news (that I was getting picked up tomorrow), I tried to relax and cooked dinner. My mind was still a spin though, and I really didn't sleep the whole night because I knew that what had happened left me with some serious decisions to make concerning the remainder of my expedition.

This was a turn of events that I really had not expected. Is the risk worth it? If I don't go on past Restoration Island then what do I do? I did not want my trip to end like this. I played out all sorts of possible scenarios in my head. None of which seemed quite right.

After a few hours of trying to sleep, I got up and found my last mini Mars bar and ate it. The students that I had taken on Year 10 camps at Penrhos will know the significance of eating the mars bar. The Mars bar idea was first introduced by a colleague of mine, Erica Herron. I continued the tradition of the Mars bars after she left.

Just before the students go on the Year 10 Camp, I give each student a mini Mars bar. I warn them that at some point on the camp they will reach a low point from which they feel they cannot really get much lower. At this low point they are allowed to eat their Mars bar as a reminder that things will improve and also as a reminder that people do care about them.

This was certainly a low point of my expedition and eating the mars bar allowed me to keep a bit of perspective. I was not going to let this be the end of the journey for me. Everything happens for a reason right? Maybe I would be going home? Maybe something else would happen next? I thought I would like to stay at Restoration Island for at least a week before I really decided what to do.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS by Sandy Robson

Can you imagine being asked the same questions every time you meet someone for an entire year? Well I can. I have had the following questions on an almost daily basis for four and a half months and I treasure the people who think of something different to ask. Here are all of the answers, before you ask me again.

1. How far off shore do you paddle?

When I was paddling where there was surf I generally paddled just behind the break in the calm deep water. Often though, I go from point to point to save time and this can take you off shore a long way. In Queensland I have done some long open water crossings as I island hop my way north. I will be doing more of this as I head north from Cairns. I also have deliberately avoided some parts of the coast in Qld so as to stay away from river mouths, mangroves and crocodile habitat. At home we often paddle across to Rottnest island which is 20km off shore. I have not yet figured out why everyone asks this question, but it is the number one most frequently asked.

2. How far do you paddle each day?

I started out trying to average 40kms per day. This was difficult when I had strong NE headwinds and my average was only 25kms per day. Now I have the SE trade winds along the Qld coast and I have been paddling much bigger distances as it is easier. My biggest day is 75km down in Croajingalong.

3. Do you have an EPIRB?

Yes and I carry it in the pocket of my PFD. It has a test button to make sure it still works and I do test it regularly. I also lubricate the antennae to ensure it does not cease to work in salt water.

4. Have you done much paddling before this trip?

I have been paddling for at least 10 years in some way or another, but I started sea kayaking more seriously and doing expeditions after I joined the

WA Sea Kayak Club. This helped me to gain more advanced skills as I drew on the resource of the more experienced paddlers in the club. My longest trip before this one was the 10 days from Perth to Geraldton.

5. Why did you start in Melbourne? I finished work in December and wanted to start in Melbourne as this would allow me to reach the north of Australia at the right time of year to paddle across the top i.e. favourable winds and out of cyclone season and in the dry season rather than the wet season. I also started at the same place as Paul Caffyn because both he and the Victorian Sea Kayak Club asked me to. Some people assume I am from Melbourne, I am not. I am from Western Australia.

6. How much water do you carry? I carry 5L per day and I have carried up to 30L in my kayak so far.

7. Do you have a radio? I have a handheld VHF radio and also a SSB radio that allows me to listen to marine weather forecasts and tune into radio stations for weather, news, and entertainment.

8. So, What made you decide to paddle around Australia? There is not one reason, but a number of things that prompted me. I have been researching and gathering information and equipment for this trip for about 5 years after reading *Dreamtime Voyage* by Paul Caffyn. I was into sea kayaking at this stage and thought this would be an awesome adventure. I love self-sufficient journeying and participate in expeditions as a part of my work (as an outdoor educator) and also in my leisure time.

I have often reached the end of a journey and looked out and thought I could just keep going. I love remote places, the beach and camping. I have been reminded many times in the last few years that life is short and when people that you know die or become seriously ill suddenly, it really makes you realise that you need to live your life to the fullest and follow your dreams NOW. I think many people leave their dreams for

when they retire. I am taking some of my retirement now whilst I can still get out there and follow this dream. Later may be too late. I had my hip replaced in 2004, so I know what it is like to be in pain and to be prevented from doing the things you love and to wonder if you will recover and to what extent. It also gives me a great sense of achievement to look back and see how far I have paddled. To know the coastline in that way is awesome. I am having fun with this challenge. The people that are a part of my journey are also wonderful and add a dimension to the trip that is really lovely. It gives you a lot of faith in the community when people are so willing to help.

9. So, do you just pull in and sleep on the beach? Most of the time I am camping in a small 2-person tent on the beach or just off the beach. It may be in an official National Park campground, or it might be just a place I find where I can pitch the tent. Occasionally I have slept in picnic shelters at National Park campsites. From Sydney to Brisbane I was predominately camping in caravan parks. I have also been accommodated and looked after by my mates, avid sea kayakers, people who work in the Outdoor Education/ Recreation industry, nice people that I have met, friends of friends and members of the Victorian, NSW and QLD sea kayak clubs. When I get a bed for the night I feel very lucky. The coolest place I have stayed so far is in the lighthouse keepers cottage on Gabo Island, Victoria.

10. Have you ever slept in your kayak? No and I don't really want to.

11. Aren't you scared of all the sharks? I have seen several sharks now and none of them have threatened me. They are just out there doing what they do and they do not see me as food. Sharks are sensationalized by the media. The reality is not like the JAWS movie at all. I am told that up north they will bump the bottom of my kayak to see what I am. That has not happened to me yet and it may be a bit frightening.

12. What do you eat? I generally have cereal for breakfast with powdered soy milk. Lately I have had nice organic muesli. For lunch I eat a bread roll or a sandwich if I have just re-supplied or crackers/cornbread if it is a few days out. Fillings include vegemite, peanut butter, honey, tuna, tomato, Kraft cheddar cheese...occasionally I have a tin of beans or chick peas. Dinners are predominately dehydrated meals or pasta or rice based meals.

I also have cous cous, two min noodles, soups etc. I like pesto and pasta. I am getting a bit sick of the dehydrated food so I am continually looking for new things to keep it interesting. I eat a lot of snacks while I paddle and these include chocolate, biscuits, lollies, roll-ups, cheese, nuts, muesli bars, dried fruit and wherever possible fresh fruit. When I am in a town I eat lots of fresh fruit and vegies as I miss these things.

13. What is packed in your kayak?

<https://netstorage.penrhos.wa.edu.au/slap/Gear/UpdatedGear/updatedgear.html>

Less Frequently Asked:

1. How do you pee whilst paddling?

I sometimes use a device that allows me to pee whilst sitting in the kayak. You can see this device at: <http://www.travelmateinfo.com/page002.html> This is really only useful in calm seas and it is re-useable. When it is rough and I do not want to take off the spray deck I simply pee in my kayak and pump it out. It gets a bit smelly in the cockpit as a result so I wash it out with soap and water periodically.

2. What about number twos?

So far I have not had to tackle this problem. Although I have read about the blokes in "Keep Australia on Your Left" using a sheet of baking paper in the cockpit and then wrapping the contents and throwing it overboard. Other kayakers I have heard have a container instead of baking paper.

Sandy Robson
(from Sandy's website)

2008 NATIONAL KASK FORUM & AGM at OHOPE Friday 25 to Sunday 27 April

Where:

Based in an ideal location at Ohope Beach, near Whakatane, in the Bay of Plenty, with easy access to the sea at The Christian Youth Camp.

When:

**25- 27 April 2008,
Anzac Day Weekend.**

This is a great event for novices through to experienced paddlers to learn, teach and meet other paddlers. For early birds there is the option of an afternoon paddle from 1pm on Friday afternoon. Options over the weekend may include paddles to Whale Island, lake paddles, a harbour paddle and lots of training opportunities, including surf training and land-based sessions.

So far guest speakers include:

From New South Wales, Australian paddler, David Winkworth, who has extensive expedition experience. While paddling from Cairns to Cape York, his group had a nasty encounter with a crocodile. David also builds sea kayaks and has worked as a sea kayaking guide and instructor. This year David has offered to teach a variety of water and land based sessions. <http://www.nswseakayaker.asn.au/> (NSW Sea Kayaker Vol.40 Dean Man Walking)

NZ Expedition paddler and author Paul Caffyn, will report on his recent trip to the Angmagssalik region of East Greenland.

Accommodation is available in group bunkrooms; the camp has a total of 80 bunks and 70 camp spots. If you wish to stay off site you may have to book alternatives as it is a popular area, however there are many choices of accommodation from camp grounds to motels and hotels. Meals will be fully catered, including dinner on Friday, to luncheon Sunday.



Top: view of Whale Island from Ohope Beach

Below: View of the Ohope Beach Christian Youth Camp



**Registrations will be opening about mid November.
(Will be available in the next KASK Newsletter
& also on the KASK Website)**

Any enquiries contact, Evan Pugh,

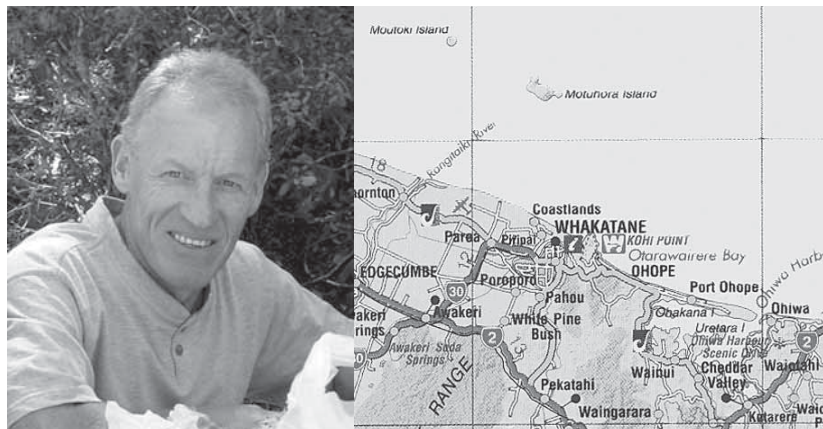
Lichfield, RD2, Putaruru,

Ph: 07 883 6898 or

e-mail enquiries to:

sheepskinsstuff@xtra.co.nz

Dave Winkworth



CALENDAR

COASTBUSTERS 2008

When: Friday evening, Feb 29 to Sunday, March 2 2008

International Kayak Week - the rest of that week

Website:

www.coastbusters.org.nz

Where: Auckland New Zealand (Coastbusters Symposium) Auckland & Rotorua (International Kayak Week)

Who: Novice to advanced sea kayakers

Feel like lending a hand? Big or small hand - it's a lot of fun. Just reply to the email address and tell us. The Red Team are currently scoping out the program and will have this locked down later this year. Now's the time for any content suggestions and ideas to assist shaping the event. We're all ears. Email to: **redteam@coastbusters.org.nz**

Local & international key note speakers, Seminars, workshops & panels covering all facets of sea kayaking Demonstrations & practical sessions on paddling skills & techniques. On-water activities to develop skills & competency. Leisure time to network & socialize with fun like minded individuals.

Benefits:

Improved -kayaking knowledge & skill base.

Increased knowledge of the Hauraki Gulf & surrounding facilities

Kayaking network increased with local & international paddlers
Entertaining fun social event

Sea Kayaking for Disabled Paddlers

by Beverley Burnett

At the 2007 KASK Forum held at Anakiwa in February, I proposed a motion to create a page on the KASK website which gave information about disabled kayaking. I also moved to make the next KASK Forum at Anakiwa in 2009 accessible to people with disabilities. Both these motions were carried. The first draft of the webpage about disabled kayaking is now available on the KASK website, and through my work on disabled kayaking I am meeting more and more people who want to try sea kayaking or are already sea kayakers.

I became interested in sea kayaking for people with disabilities because I was asked to coach a lady who was paraplegic during some pool sessions at Lower Hutt last winter. I begin searching for information on disabled kayaking through the internet and found that there was an active kayaking movement for disabled people in the United States, Canada and UK. However there was no information or expertise on the subject available in New Zealand.

The KASK committee and membership have been very supportive of my desire to introduce disabled kayaking into New Zealand and at the forum many people put their name on the list of volunteers to help at the next Anakiwa forum if any disabled people attend and need help. The idea is simply to open up the forum to people who are already kayaking and want to attend the forum in the same way as the rest of us, but they need a little extra help.

For instance, we may have to put down rubber mats leading from the building to the beach so that people could get down to the beach in wheelchairs, or sweep the gravel off the paths so that people could negotiate them in wheelchairs or on crutches if necessary.

There are programmes such as those run by Outward Bound and Backup New Zealand which introduce people with disabilities to outdoor adventures, but this is not the purpose of the KASK forum. My initiative was merely to remove any barriers that might prevent disabled sea kayakers from attending. I have a slight disability myself on land, but once I get on the water I participate in the sessions the same as anybody else.

My work in introducing disabled kayaking into New Zealand is focused on the Wellington area, trying to work with local kayaking companies to provide facilities for disabled people who want to go paddling, and to work with New Zealand qualifications organisations to try and develop a 'disabled instructor' addition to the current outdoor qualifications available.

If anyone has experience with disabled people who are sea kayaking already kayaking, I would like to hear about it. Any information you can provide to the current store of knowledge will be very valuable.

Please e-mail me at: **bburn55@Hotmail.com**

WANTED

KASK Taranaki Contact Required

Is there a current KASK member in the Taranaki area who would be willing to have their name and contact listed in the KASK newsletter, and on the Website with other regional contacts?

What this means is that you may receive a phone call or email on the odd occasion from other paddlers in your area, or from outside the area, needing information on paddling locations and/or how to meet up with other paddlers.

If you are keen to help in this way and perhaps meet up with other paddlers or to find out more info please get in touch with me.

Evan Pugh: **sheepskinsnstuff@xtra.co.nz**

DVD REVIEW

THIS is the SEA 3 (TITS3) reviewed by Paul Hayward

As the name suggests, TITS-3 carries on the series filmed and produced by Justine Curgenvin. Each of her 'This is the Sea' DVDs is a collection of short stories on the joys and terrors of Sea Kayaking.

Fair warning: Last year, I was involved in bringing Justine to New Zealand, for the Coastbuster's symposium. We hoped for an interesting guest speaker, with a good knowledge of our sport and a sense of humour. We got far more than that - and thoroughly enjoyed meeting the wonderful smile behind the trademark 'cackle' (her company is called Cackle TV). So I might be expected to sing the praises of her work - whatever its merit.

Luckily, it's not short on merit - so it's very easy to review. Let's get some of the negatives out of the way first. Some of the sections could benefit from a bit more pruning. Some of the sound track isn't up to BBC quality - occasionally there's wind on the mike - and there are even some water splashes on the lens from time to time. I can live with that - these aren't actors doing 'Take 7', with a sound studio to overdub the action. And, believe me, you are in the thick of the action.

As always, Justine's choice of soundtrack music is interesting. She often features music from emerging bands. Some is great and some is, well, terrible - but not boring!

So, the upside is what exactly? Well, it's where you get taken and where you get tempted to go.

Justine had only a short time in New Zealand; but she was able to see some of the country with Paul Caffyn - and who better to show it to her? Some of this DVD was shot here - the session on surfing at the Mount with big Steve Knowles, some intriguing footage with two very different international rolling stars - Cheri Perry

and Freya Hoffmeister (at Rothesay Bay in Auckland) - and a paddle and interview with Paul in the Sounds.

Don't watch this DVD because it has local content - just watch it because it's a celebration of why we go out on the water. If this doesn't stimulate you to dream of kayaking destinations yet un-paddled, you should probably hang the paddle up over the fireplace and take up draughts.

From the stunning beauty of the Faroes (a Danish group of Islands halfway to Iceland), to a long look at an Australian three-man expedition to Antarctica (one of the three being the late Andrew McAuley), via Wales and the Shetland Isles off Scotland - these stories tempt you and sometimes scare the hell out of you. If you've ever felt that white-water river kayakers feel holier-than-thou about their adrenalin levels, look at the footage of Alun Williams going out to test a new design in what he terms 'choppy' water.

If you ever get away with your boat - it doesn't need to be to the other side of the world, down the coast will do - you'll surely use some of the lessons that these images will lodge firmly in your memory. Images of tents pushed well beyond what usually passes through your mind as you stand in your local outdoor shop. Images of kayaks in conditions that make 'sea-kindly' suddenly seem as important as 'fast' when you're looking at a new boat. Images of what that innocent little word 'overfalls' can mean on a chart. Thousand word images.

Justine's interview of Paul Caffyn is worth getting the DVD for - alone. Paul, like most blokes, doesn't tend to bang on about why he's a unique sort of guy. He doesn't easily talk about what drives him to attempt feats that would tire most of us - just thinking about them. If you've ever wondered why, or how, he's achieved what he has; you'll come away a little wiser after watching this glimpse inside the man.

Let this collection of short films

HUMOUR

PRIESTS ON HOLIDAY

Two priests decided to go to Hawaii on vacation. They were determined to make this a real vacation by not wearing anything that would identify them as clergy.

As soon as the plane landed they headed for a store and bought some really outrageous shorts, shirts, sandals, sunglasses, etc. Next morning, they went to the beach dressed in their 'tourist' garb.

They were sitting on beach chairs, enjoying a drink, the sunshine and the scenery when a 'drop dead gorgeous' blonde in a topless bikini came walking straight towards them. They couldn't help but stare. As the blonde walked past them, she smiled and said, "Good Morning, Father - Good Morning, Father," nodding and addressing each of them individually. They were both shocked and stunned. How in the world did she know they were priests?

So the next day, they went back to the store and bought even more outrageous outfits. These were so loud you could hear them before you even saw them! Once again, in their new attire, they settled down in their chairs to enjoy the sunshine. After a little while, the same gorgeous blonde, wearing a different coloured topless bikini, taking her sweet time, came walking toward them.

Again she nodded at each of them and said, "Good morning Father - Good morning Father," and started to walk away.

One of the priests couldn't stand it any longer and said, "Just a minute, young lady."
"Yes, Father?"

"We are priests and proud of it, but we have to know. How in the world do you know we are priests, dressed as we are?" She replied, "Don't you recognize me Father? It's me, Sister Kathleen."

SWEARING AT BREAKFAST

A 7 year old and a 4 year old were upstairs in their bedroom.

"You know what?" says the 7 year old, "I think it's about time we started swearing."

The 4 year old nods his head in approval.

"When we go downstairs for breakfast, I'll swear first, then you swear after me, OK?"

"OK," the 4 year old agrees with not a lot of enthusiasm.

The mother walks into the kitchen and asks the 7 year old what he wants for breakfast.

"Oh, sh*t mum, I guess I'll have some Coco Pops." WHACK! He flew out of his chair, tumbled across the kitchen floor, got up, and ran upstairs crying his eyes out.

She looked at her 4 year old and asked with a stern voice, "And what do YOU want for breakfast, young man?"

"I don't know," he blubbers, "but it won't be fu*king Coco Pops."

PADDLER MUSCLE EXERCISES

Just came across this exercise suggested for the over 50's and the unfit to build their arm muscles & strengthen shoulders. Just what kayakers need. It seems so easy so I thought I'd pass it on. The article suggested doing it three times a week.

(1) Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side. With a 2kg potato sack in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them here for as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax.

(2) Each day, you'll find that you can hold this position for a bit longer. After a couple of weeks, move up to a 5kg potato sacks. Then 25kg potato sacks and then eventually try to get to where you can lift a 50kg potato sack in each hand and hold you arms straight for more than a full minute. (I'm at this level).

(3) After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each of the sacks.

CHINESE WEDDING NIGHT

A young Chinese couple gets married. She's a virgin. Truth be told, he is a virgin too, but she doesn't know that. On their wedding night, she cowers naked under the sheets as her husband undresses in the darkness. He climbs into bed next to her and tries to be reassuring. "My darring," he whispers, "I know dis you firss time and you berry frighten. I plomise you, I give you anyting you want, I do anyting - juss anyting you want. You juss ask. Whatchu want?" he says, trying to sound experienced and worldly, which he hopes will impress her. A thoughtful silence follows and he waits patiently (and eagerly) for her request. She eventually shyly whispers back, "I want to try someting I have heard about from other girls. Numbaa 69." More thoughtful silence, this time from him.

Eventually, in a puzzled tone he asks her, "You want... Garlic Chicken with corrifrowa?"

HYPNOTHERAPY

Woman comes home and says to her husband, "Remember those headaches I've been having all these years? Well, they're gone."

"No more headaches?" the husband asks, "What happened?"

His wife replies: "Margie referred me to a hypno-therapist. He told me to stand in front of a mirror, stare at myself and repeat, "I do not have a headache; I do not have a headache, I do not have a headache. And it worked! The headaches are all gone."

"Well, that is wonderful," said the husband.

His wife then says, "You know, you haven't been exactly a ball of fire in the bedroom these last few years. Why don't you go see the hypnotist and see if he can do anything for that?" The husband agrees to try it. Following his appointment, the husband comes home, rips off his clothes, picks up his wife and carries her into the bedroom. He puts her on the bed and says, "Don't move, I'll be right back."

He goes into the bathroom and comes back a few minutes later and jumps into bed and makes passionate love to his wife like never before. His wife says, "Boy, that was wonderful!" The husband says, "Don't move! I will be right back."

He goes back into the bathroom, comes back and round two was even better than the first time.

The wife sits up and her head is spinning.

Her husband again says, "Don't move, I'll be right back."

With that, he goes back in the bathroom. This time, his wife quietly follows him and there, in the bathroom, she sees him standing at the mirror and saying, "She's not my wife.

She's not my wife.

She's not my wife!"

His funeral service will be held on Saturday.

The Bravest Man in the World

Ed was in trouble. He clean forgot his wedding anniversary. His wife was really upset. She told him "Tomorrow morning I expect to find a gift in the driveway, that goes from 0 to 100 in 6 seconds, and is bright and shiny, ANDITHADBETTERBETHERE."

The next morning Ed got up early and left for work. When his wife woke up, she looked out of the window and sure enough there was a small box gift-wrapped in the middle of the driveway.

Confused, she put on her robe, ran out on to the driveway and picked up the box. She opened it and found a brand new set of bathroom scales.

Funeral services for Ed have been scheduled for Friday.

My face in the mirror,
isn't wrinkled or drawn.
My house isn't dirty,
the cobwebs have gone.
My garden looks lovely,
and so does the lawn.
I think I might never
put my glasses back on!

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 newsletter.

The Sea Canoeist Newsletter is published bimonthly as the official newsletter of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc.

Articles, trips reports, book reviews, equipment reviews, new techniques, letter 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 in a plain brown envelope, or via cybermail to:

Editor: Paul Caffyn,
RD 1, Runanga. 7873
West Coast .N.Z.
Ph/Fax: (03) 7311806
Email: kayakpc@xtra.co.nz

KASK Annual Subscription
\$35 single membership
(\$105 for 3 years; \$175 for 5 years)
\$40 family membership.
\$35 overseas

A subscription form can be downloaded from the KASK website. Cheques should be made out to: K.A.S.K. (NZ) Inc. & mailed to:

KASK Administrator
PO Box 23, Runanga. 7841
West Coast

Correspondence/Queries to:

Linda Ingram
KASK Administrator
PO Box 23, Runanga. 7841
West Coast

Send address changes for receiving the newsletter via email to

Linda at:
KASK.admin@xtra.co.nz

4th. Ed. KASK HANDBOOK

Updated to July 2006
For a copy (or trade orders) of this mother of all sea kayaking handbooks, contact Paul Caffyn, RD 1, Runanga, 7873, West Coast.
e-mail: kayakpc@xtra.co.nz
RRP: \$ 34.90 including p&p
New members: gratis
Make cheques out to KASK (NZ) Inc.

The fourth edition of the KASK Handbook, is a mammoth compilation on all aspects of sea kayaking in New Zealand, by many of the most experienced paddlers in the Universe. Following a brief introduction, the handbook is divided into six sections:

- Kayak, Paddle & Equipment
- Techniques & Equipment
- The Elements
- Trips and Expeditions
- Places to Go
- Resources

SEA KAYAKING NETWORK ADDRESSES

NORTH ISLAND

NORTHLAND Canoe Club
PO Box 755, Whangarei
Brian Lamerton
Ph: (09) 437 2858
email: brian.maree@clear.net.nz
AUCKLAND Canoe Club
PO Box 9271,
Newmarket, Auckland.
email:secretary@aucklandcanoeclub.org.nz
HAURAKI Kayak Group
Pelham Housego
PO Box 46-146, Herne Bay, Auckland
WAIKATO KASK Contact
Evan Pugh, RD2, Putaruru. 3482
sheepskinsnstuff@xtra.co.nz
Ph: (07) 883 6898
RUAHINE Whitewater Club
71 Salisbury St., Ashhurst.
Ph: 06 326 8667 Fax: 06 326 8472
www.q-kayaks.co.nz/pages/club.asp
BAY OF PLENTY - KASK Contact
Iona Bailey, Tauranga
Ph: (07) 576 1492
email: bailhut@clear.net.nz
ROTORUA- KASK Contact
John Flemming, PO Box 1872, Rotorua
Ph/fax: (07) 347 9950
email: shakey@slingshot.co.nz

Rotorua Kayak Club
7 Mahana Place, Rotorua
Ph: (027) 292 3138
email: Woolhouse.Clark@xtra.co.nz
GISBORNE Sea Kayakers Club
John Humphris, 3 Matthews Rd, Gisborne
Ph: (06) 868 4657
email: thetrolls@xtra.co.nz
Website: www.geocities.com/gisborne_sea_kayakers/

WELLINGTON Sea Kayak Network
Mike Wilkin
23 A Ilam Grove
Kelson, Lower Hutt
Phone: (04) 565 0880
email: mwilkin5@xtra.co.nz
Website: www.wskn.wellington.net.nz

SOUTH ISLAND

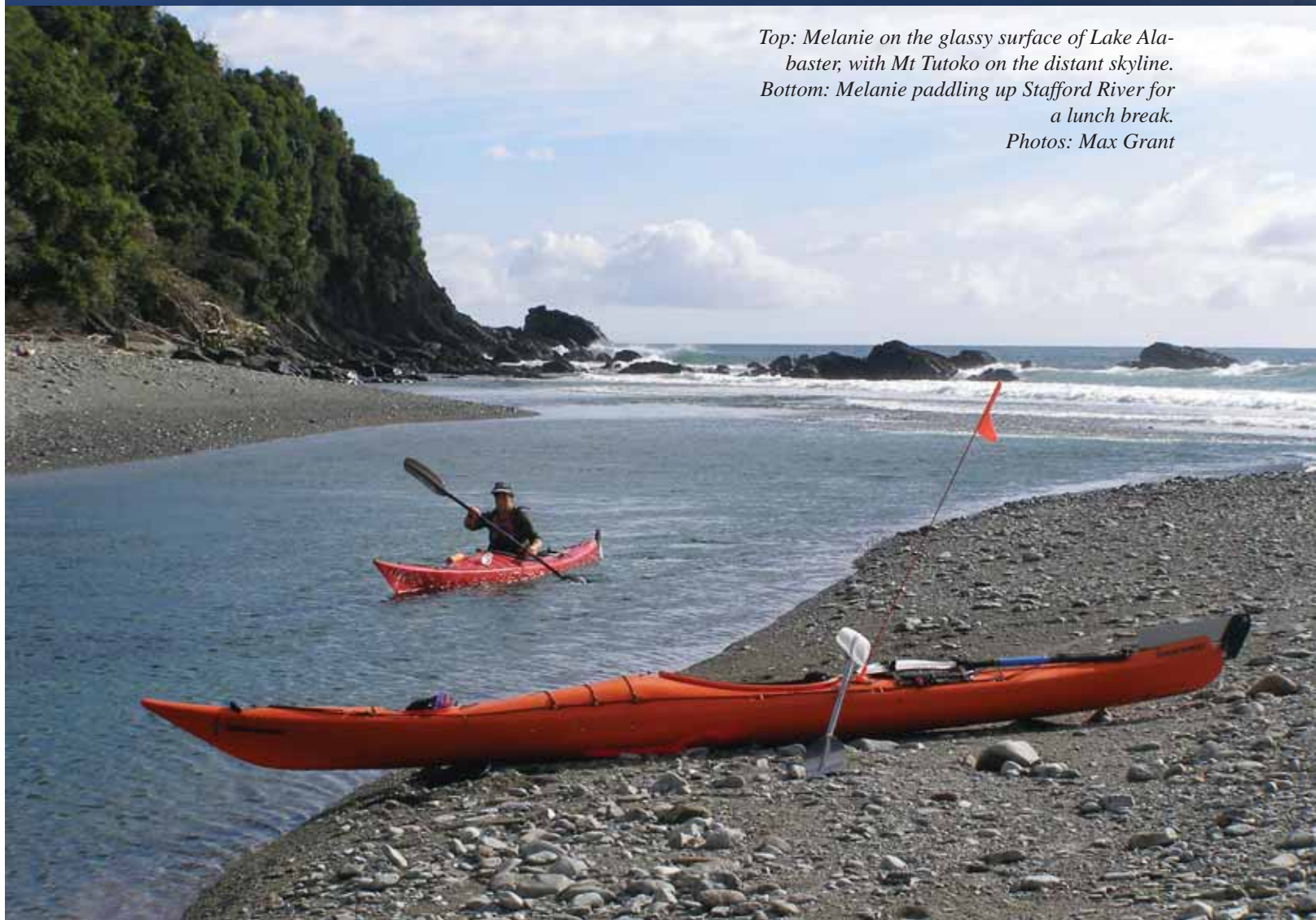
MARLBOROUGH
Helen Woodward
Ph: (03) 579 5669
h.woodward@xtra.co.nz
NELSON - KASK Contact
Nora Flight
Ph: (03) 544 7877
email: nflight@xtra.co.nz
CANTERBURY Sea Kayak Network
Andy & Deirdre Sheppard
53 Kent Lodge Ave
Avonhead, Christchurch. 8004
Ph: (03) 342 7929
email: d_sheppard@clear.net.nz
www.CanterburySeaKayak.orcon.net.nz
OTAGO
Rob Tipa
(03) 478 0360
robtipa@clear.net.nz
SOUTHLAND Sea Kayak Network
Stan Mulvany
03 215 7263
email: eiger@xtra.co.nz
Website: www.sskn.uniformnz.com

SKOANZ
Sea Kayak Operators Assn. NZ
SKOANZ
PO Box 1222 Christchurch
Ph/fax; 03 329 8317
email: skoanz@xtra.co.nz
Website: www.skoanz.org.nz

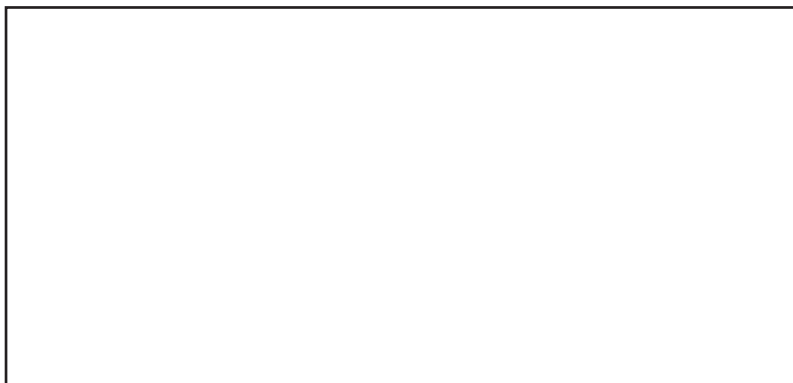
KASK Website:
www.kask.co.nz



*Top: Melanie on the glassy surface of Lake Alabaster, with Mt Tutoko on the distant skyline.
Bottom: Melanie paddling up Stafford River for a lunch break.
Photos: Max Grant*



MAILED TO



If undelivered, please return to:
KASK , PO Box 23, Runanga, West Coast. 7841



Melanie Grant on Hell's Portage. Photo: Max Grant (Story on page 9)

KASK MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Current membership fees are:

- \$35 for ordinary membership
- \$40 for family or joint membership
- \$35 for overseas membership
- new members receive a free copy of the handbook
- members should endeavour to renew by 1 August
- the KASK financial year runs 1 August to 31 July the following year
- a subscription due notice and up to two reminders are sent out with the newsletters between June and October
- 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, receiving a 14 month membership
- the KASK committee puts its emphasis confirming renewals from existing members from July to October; and promoting new KASK memberships from November to February.