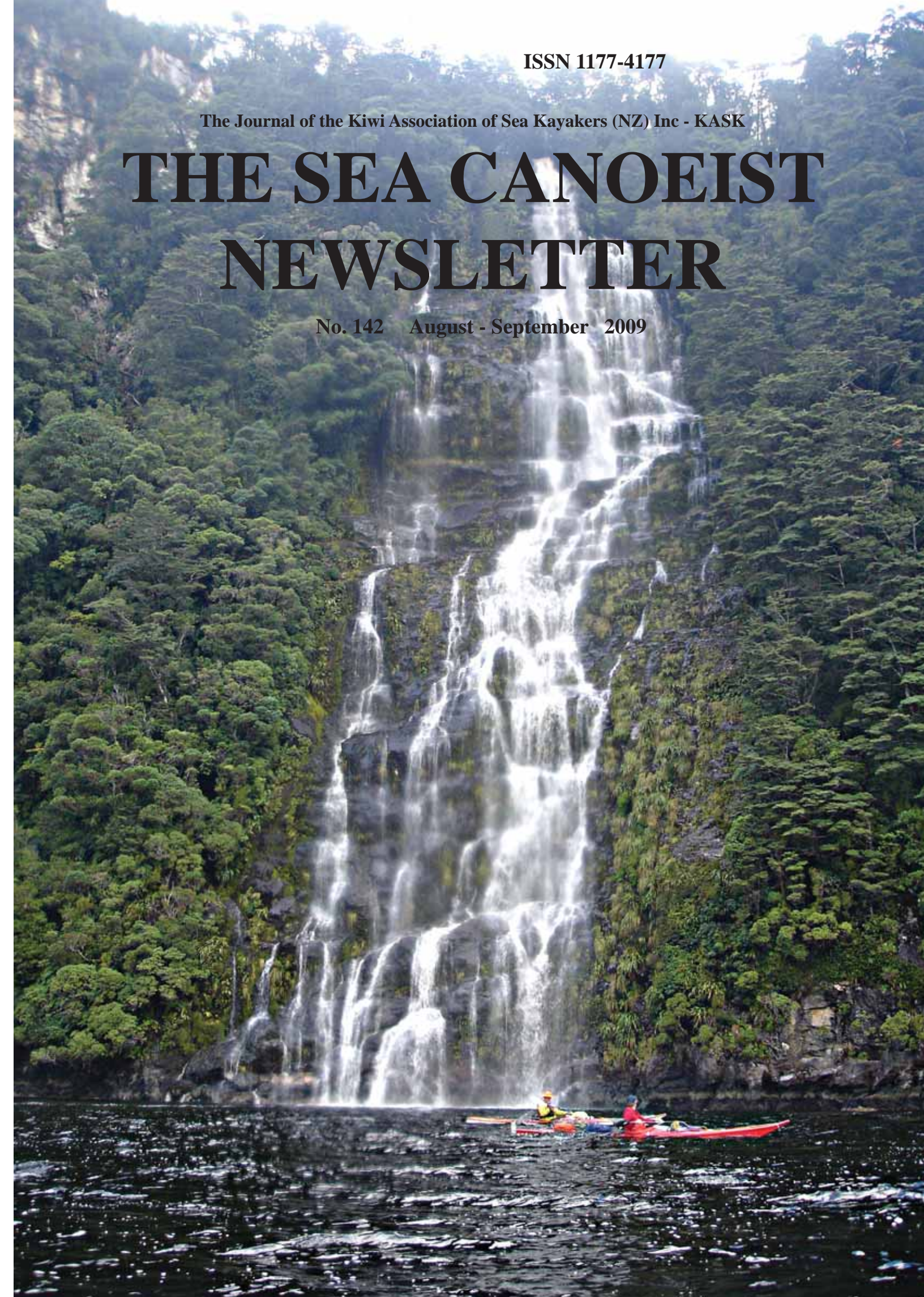


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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT
NEWSLETTER:
16 NOVEMBER 2009**

**IF YOU HAVE NOT
RENEWED YOUR KASK
SUBSCRIPTION, THIS
WILL BE YOUR LAST,
VERY LAST AND FINAL
KASK NEWSLETTER**

Thanks to all those paddlers who have supplied reports and photos for this newsletter.

EDITORIAL

KASK Membership Renewals

Thanks to all those who have renewed promptly, and also for the very supportive and kind feedback re the newsletter and KASK noted on several renewal forms.

There are two direct credits noted on the KASK bank account statements with no supporting information as to who has paid. One on 18 September for \$35 has some numbers on, and one for \$35 on 31 August with absolutely no details whatsoever. If this rings a bell, please email Linda Ingram at: KASK.admin@xtra.co.nz

Also Linda has received several mailed renewal forms without internet bank payments having been made.

On a sad note the following was noted on one renewal form:

'I am reluctantly cancelling my subscription as advancing age (83 years) governs my kayak trips and my kayaking buddy (73 years) has left his wife of 50 years and taken up with a younger bird. I will stay home and reflect on life. Good luck with the magazine.'

Auckland Near Collision

Colin Quilter's report on the near collision with the launch is a timely reminder to paddlers that you must never assume a boat skipper has seen you, despite the fact you are wearing high visibility clothing and carry a chopper flag on your stern. Colin was a pivotal figure with providing submissions earlier this year to the Auckland Regional Council re the navigation safety bylaw Clause 2.17.

It is pleasing to note that following Colin's prompt report to the ARC's harbour master (which provided details of the vessel and the owner) the harbour master sent a letter and warning to the vessel's skipper, which in turn led to a letter of apology from the skipper to Colin for the near collision.

Bribes

It is pleasing to report a surfeit of material for this newsletter with several reports held over for the next one. But extracting articles from some recalcitrant paddlers has led at times to desperate remedies. I had to threaten Cathye Haddock with slicing off the toes of her loaned black socks with sharp surgical scissors. A pair of socks loaned during the Dusky trip to a minimalist who took only one pair of socks instead of five! But right on the countdown to de-toeing, Cathye and Peter sent through the trip report and photos. On 27 September, Cathye opened a gift wrapped parcel with her intact socks.

Environment Waikato

The Waikato Regional Council (EW) has just released a 121 pp Navigation Safety Bylaw 2009 booklet. A good resource for local paddlers with excellent maps, I believe the ARC should take note of Appendix V which is titled 'Recommendation for visibility of kayaks and other paddle craft.' The key word being 'Recommendation' and not that terrible word regulation. The final two pages list practical ideas to enhance being seen on the water, leaving an intention's form and taking two means of communication.

The booklet can be requested online: www.ew.govt.nz/navigation or phone 0800 800 401 and request the navigation safety dept. to forward a copy. There is no cost for the Bylaw.

EW also have a selection of excellent harbour users' guides, for Lake Karapiro, Coromandel, Raglan and Kawhia.

2009-2010 Tide Tables

The latest Ocean Fun tide/moon tables, Sept 2009 - Sept 2010, are now on sale at newsagents and bookshops. There are four regional booklets for the North Island and three for the South Island. Or see: www.ofu.co.nz

Paul Caffyn

Photographs:

*Cover: waterfall in Acheron Passage, Fiordland. Photo: Cathye Haddock
Inside Cover: top, Tarn Rynn in New Caledonia. Photo: Al Rynn
bottom: the Walker/Flight Family off the west coast of New Caledonia.
Photo: Al Rynn*

BITS AND BOBS

Auspicious Paddler Birthdays Shakey (alias John Flemming) at 80 from Evan Pugh

Sounds like a riddle. It may as well be. On Tuesday June 30 John Flemming (he's the old guy from Rotorua) was awarded an **OBE**. He wasn't expecting one and not many people knew about this auspicious event. The **OBE** was presented to John (alias Shakey) not for his personality or kind giving nature, not even for the time he shared his few beers with the other paddler who left his own cans in his red van, not for all the trips he has planned and taken people on, or solo trips like the one around the complete shoreline of Lake Te Anau (over 400 kilometres), not even for seven days, of 10 and 12 hours paddling 303 kms on the Waikato river and portaging seven dams with a cracked rib or two, (too scared to complain apparently).

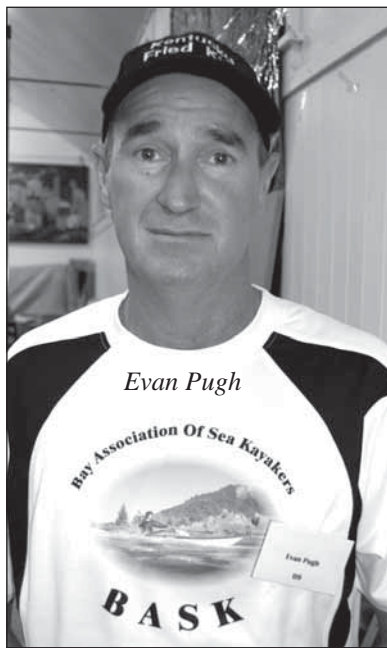
John Flemming OBE



The **OBE** stands for **Over Bloody Eighty**. June 30 was John's birthday, he was no longer 79 - I think he said damn a couple of times. At his party there were about 70 people and what a great bunch of funny, fit, trampers and kayakers; a few old friends even popped over from West Island. As far as kayakers go, I don't know of anyone of John's age that can still paddle 50 kms in a day. He may be a tad slower than he was when he was 79 but he's a strong old bugger and loves his paddling. Well done John

20,000 Times and Still at It!

Evan Pugh recently received a photocopied clipping from Rotorua's 'Daily Post' with a bold headline 'Man's Wife says He's done it over 20,000 times already, and is still at it.' With advertisements at the base and the newspaper banner at the top, the clipping appears so real that Evan rang the perpetrator of the clever mock up to enquire if he had the original newspaper. The text referred to a recent trip by Evan around Matakana Island in the Bay of Plenty when his cumulative paddling distance tally topped 20,000 kilometres. I reckon Shakey got his own back on Evan for the OBE.



No Longer a Young Fella

Wellington paddler Conrad Edwards reached the ripe old age of 50 in late September and can no longer be called 'the young fella.' On a recent paddling expedition to the northern coast of British Columbia, the debilitating effects of Conrad nearing the age of becoming a veteran paddler can clearly be seen in the shockingly disturbing photo (below) taken by KASK's international roving reporter. What hope is there now for a bloke who reads 'Elle' magazine? He held such promise as a great expedition paddler!



PIPE PADDLER STYMIED!

from Kevin Dunsford

I was up traveling around the back of Wairewa river (at the head of the estuary) a couple of weeks ago and there were three kayakers up the stream. Two kayakers managed to get through a smallish tunnel under the bridge (see photo at left).

The third kayaker turned out to be veteran Auckland paddler Peter Sommerhalder and because he had all the ARC recommended gear, including a chopper flag he was stumped! (the photo below shows Peter with his chopper flag tunnel impediment).

KASK

PRESIDENT'S REPORT **September 2009**

by **John Hesseling**

Daylight savings has arrived, another summer is on the way and hopefully the weather will co-operate. The KASK committee has just finished a face-to-face meeting in Wellington, which I believe was beneficial in that we were able to discuss many issues in more depth than is possible by telephone conference calls. Liaison with the Auckland Regional Council is continuing with respect to the draft kayak visibility bylaw, rule 2.17. Preparations for the 2010 forum are progressing and we expect to have a draft programme available by the end of the year.

On September 23 Land Information New Zealand launched a new map series, Topo50. These new maps will replace existing 1:50,000 NZMS260 maps and will use a different projection, NZGD2000 instead of NZMG. New Zealand's emergency services and the search and rescue sector have adopted the Topo50 maps, and changed systems to include the new latitude and longitude points and grid coordinates. Kayakers when communicating with search and rescue organisations should realise that official organisations may not recognise NZMG coordinates or grid references. Most new GPS units should be able to display coordinates in NZGD2000 and it may be possible to enter a user-defined projection in older GPS units. More information is available at: www.linz.govt.nz/topography/topo-maps/topo50/index.aspx

Topo50 maps use different latitude and longitude points. The difference is equivalent to an approximate 200-metre change in position. Grid coordinates have also been changed so as to clearly differentiate the Topo50 series from the old map series. Hopefully search and rescue organisations will still be able to cope with NZMG grid references in the future so that all those old NZMS260 maps will not be totally obsolete.

LINZ has automated the production of topographic maps, greatly speeding up map production and allowing cartographic data to be made available in electronic format. Individual maps may be downloaded from LINZ's website free of charge, or the entire topographical database is available from LINZ for \$84.

KASK NETWORK REPORTS **Marlborough Sea Kayaking Network**

by **Martyn Smith**

We now have over 50 kayakers on the network and I will expect more this coming season. It's surprising the number of local sea kayakers I meet that do not know of our network or have heard of KASK. However most are keen to join and to be involved, especially if there's training available.

At the start of every year I send an email out indicating planned trips for each month at various locations. Members then have an idea of what's coming up, and either plan for it or give it a miss. Of course, due to weather conditions or lack of interest, not all trips go ahead. It's open for others to make suggestions, comments or advertise their own trips or for anyone who may want to join in.

The network is a great medium to share or pass on information and also pass on what other networks are up to - like we do with CSKN and Nelson.

28th March: 10 of us turned up for a trip to Cape Campbell. There was a ½-1 metre swell coming in from the

east, nothing to onerous; in fact not bad considering there's no land between us and South America! Once through the surf it was basically flat calm.

It was low tide so it was easy to manoeuvre between the reefs to the south side of the Cape. We spent a few moments enjoying the calm and beauty, knowing that in a storm this area can be notoriously dangerous. On our way back we took a route around the edge of the reef, experiencing a brief moment of strong tidal rips.

We landed and went for a stroll up to the lighthouse to enjoy some spectacular views and take some photos of the lighthouse with a perfectly blue sky as a back drop.

The history of the lighthouse can be viewed on the web <http://www.newzealandlighthouses.com/cape-campbell.htm>

On our return to Marfells beach we took the opportunity to get some surf practice as conditions were ideal.

During the winter months we have been fortunate to get some pool training at Base Woodbourne, thanks to Lindsay Norriss. We really appreciate his willingness to share his time and expertise with us.

Lindsay also invited the network, as he has done in the past, to join him and others for a trip to Lake Rotoroa. It was a shame only two of us took up the challenge as conditions on the lake were perfect and not too cold. In fact Saturday was almost like a mid-summer's day. The Sabine hut was very warm and comfortable with plenty of firewood and a very efficient wood burner. If time allows there are plenty of tracks for those who enjoy walking. I was intrigued by all the empty shells lying in about a metre of water. I was unaware that these were freshwater mussels; they look more like clams than our mussels. We certainly are spoilt having such beauty in this country of ours.

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blueskua@hotmail.com

SAFETY

Calm seas and Complacency. Near - Collision on Auckland Harbour by Colin Quilter

Last weekend (September 27), I experienced a near-collision on Auckland Harbour. The circumstances were unusually benign; perhaps this event would not have happened in rougher weather.

Crossing the harbour in sunny near-calm conditions, my track converged with an old-fashioned displacement launch travelling at only 6 or 7 knots. Our courses were at right angles; he was on my starboard bow, and I was on his port bow. I watched him for at least five minutes as we approached, and it was clear that we would pass close to one another. Part 22.18 (1) of the Maritime Rules specifies that in this situation a power-driven vessel must keep clear of a vessel under oars (which includes a kayak). My obligation under the Rules was to maintain my course and speed until the moment when it became clear that the launch was not taking appropriate action to avoid me.

The launch had a raised cabin-top ahead of the wheelhouse. Two passengers were sitting on the cabin-top, leaning back against the central window of the wheelhouse. It's the sort of place you might sit in warm sunny weather.

The minutes passed as we steadily converged. I waited for the launch to alter course, and wondered whether he would choose to pass in front of me or behind me. Time started to run a little faster. I thought he was leaving his move very late. More time passed. I stopped paddling, as it crossed my mind that he really had not seen me. It was hard to believe.

By now events were moving rapidly. He turned slightly towards me. I found myself stationary in the water, directly in his path. The people on the cabin-top were shouting to the helmsman. In the seconds remaining I back-paddled hard, gaining about one boat-length in reverse. It was enough; his bow

crossed ahead of mine and he slid past with about 2 metres clearance between the bow of my kayak and his port side. I caught a glimpse of a shocked face at the wheelhouse side-window as it passed above me. An instant later I was in his wake. I shouted some comments about the quality of the look-out which he had kept, (or had not kept).

His next actions are harder to explain. There were none. Neither of the two people inside the wheelhouse looked back. The vessel did not slow down or alter course. No circling back to offer an explanation or apology. At the time I felt angry about that, regarding it as basic lack of good manners; but I've come to think that it just reflects the complete surprise and confusion of the skipper on seeing me unexpectedly so close alongside.

The lessons which I take from this incident are:

- 1) Brightly-coloured clothing will assist in making kayakers more visible to other vessels; but it won't guarantee it. I was wearing a red PFD with a high-visibility safety vest (fluorescent orange) over the

top of it. My kayak has a white hull with a yellow-and-grey striped deck. Had the power boat's skipper kept an adequate lookout he could have seen me at least 10 minutes before we converged.

- 2) I suspect that calm weather and his own relatively slow speed induced complacency in the skipper. He allowed his passengers to sit in front of the wheelhouse windows. Information on the web indicates that in Logan 33 launches the helmsman's station is on the starboard side, so that people sitting on the cabin-top would block the helmsman's view obliquely to port. That was the direction from which I approached. I think that the first time he saw me was when I was right alongside, or in his wake.

- 3) Perhaps the calm conditions also made me complacent. It took me too long to realise that I had not been seen, and too long to realise that the launch would take no avoiding action. I could have – should have – stopped or reversed sooner, to give more clearance in the last few seconds.

A Logan 33 launch (not the vessel encountered by Colin) from a website which advertises vessels for sale. The helm station is behind a window on the starboard (far) side of the wheelhouse. Note that passengers sitting in front of the central wheelhouse window would therefore block all the view for the helmsman ahead and to port, the direction Colin was coming from (and the direction this photo was taken from).



4) With the bow looming above and impact only seconds away, it is very hard for a kayaker to know what best to do. Chance begins to operate. If in the final seconds I had moved forward and he had turned to starboard in a last-minute attempt to avoid me, he would have hit me. When I moved back, if he had turned to port, he would have hit me. If I had remained stationary, and he had held his course, he would have hit me. It's too late for anything but luck to determine events. I moved back - he held his course, happy ending!

EPILOGUE

Because there has been so much recent discussion about ways to reduce collisions between kayaks and power boats, leading (in Auckland) to an ARC bylaw requiring kayakers to take steps to enhance their visibility, I sent a detailed account of this incident to the Harbourmaster John Lee-Richards. He mailed a written warning to the skipper of the launch. In due course I received a generous letter of apology from the skipper, in which he frankly acknowledged what had happened and his responsibility for it. From my point of view, that's a good ending to the story.

**Colin Quilter
1 October 2009**

THE 'BUGGER!' FILE

Big Fish Eat Little Fish. Sometimes you get more than you bargain for. by Kevin Dunsford

I caught a Gannet on the end of my fishing line the other day. I was using a live-bait. This is when you put a little live fish on a little hook on the end of your line and dangle a bigger hook off it to catch a bigger fish. I have not done this before because I thought it cruel. But a fishing book I read recently tried to convince me I was attributing human characteristics of pain on another species which lives in the big fish eats little fish underworld and feels fear but not pain. I decided to give it a go.

I caught a little Kahawai and hooked him on a small keeper hook. Behind this was a whopper hook dangling just behind. I placed the little guy back into the sea and let out some slack. He swam out then down and I could see the line wiggling. A few minutes later he came up near the surface, and swam around. I lay back enjoying the sun, thinking Kingi thoughts, when I heard a PLOOOP! I knew instinctively what it was and 5 seconds latter the Gannet rose to the surface looking very pleased with it self. It paddled a bit and the line went taught and it turned so it was looking at me. It tried to fly off and my line started whizzing off the reel. I gently slowed him up and he landed again and I slowly pulled him in. Close to the boat I managed to untangle the nylon from around his

its wings which, close up, are even more majestic than they look in the air. I cut the big hook of the line as it was flying around everywhere as the Gannet waved his head from side to side. But the Gannet just would not, or could not, let go of the live bait now in its gullet, attached to the line. From the look in its eye it was mighty cheesed off with me I can tell you. I tried to get a hand near the back of its head to secure it, but each time it lunged at me with its razor sharp bill. After two deep lacerations across the back of my hand I decided he could take care of the hook himself so I cut the line off as close as I dared come to that lunging Stanley-knife beak. It gave me one last treacherous look and flew off and whirled around me once before heading of to the West.

It is not the first time I've caught a bird on a line. A few years ago I was trolling a lure around Bream Head when I caught what I thought was a Kahawai. The line did not circle like a Kahawai and there was a hell of a noise so I turned around to have a look at what I had caught. A big Mollymawk. I pulled him in till his eye and mine were at the same level and just half a meter apart. We each eyeballed the other wondering what to do next. I kept looking at his bill.

The Mollymawk is a member of the Albatross family and looks like a giant Black Backed Seagull with a yellow and black bill that is turned down at the end to a razor like point. It was a few seconds before I realised I had to get

a hold of that head, but from behind. I reached around the back of its head and just as I lunged he spat the lure out onto my spray skirt. For a moment we both looked at each other in utter amazement and I can't remember who was the first or most relieved to move off, but I suspect it was me.

The extraordinary thing about this incident was that while it was going on, I was being dive bombed continuously by Black Backed Seagulls nesting on nearby rocks. Before catching the Mollymawk they had been circling above as they do when you get close to their nests, but as soon as I threatened another of their genus, I became the common enemy. It now seems to me that if different bird species can exhibit a human attribute of joint defence against a common foe then it is likely that fish might also feel pain when lampooned on the end of a hook and used as live bait. I'm not going to give up fishing but I don't think I'll resort to using live baits again, if not for the fish then for the most regal of all local flying creatures, the Gannet.

Peeved gannet not willing to give up the live bait. Photo: Kevin Dunsford



OVERSEAS REPORTS

Finding Freya (Perth, WA)

from Barbara Leslie

While we were reading the last KASK newsletter, we saw that Freya Hoffmeister was heading down the west coast of Australia, so we decided then and there to go to Perth to check out this rumour.

En route, we happened to be chatting to an Aussie bloke who said he was at Paul Caffyn's re-enactment celebration of his canoe trip around Oz in 1982 – a feat which to date has never been repeated. This bloke was a mate of the bagpiper at the re-enactment. Freya set off from Queenscliffe (near Melbourne) on 18 January 2009 and is expected to complete the trip by Christmas.

We arrived in Perth and discovered from her Blog that she was heading south from Geraldton. We contacted another member of the Perth Branch of the Northland Canoe Club, Margaret Banks, and found out Freya was due in Hillary's Bay just north of Perth the next morning. However, she in fact arrived the night before so we decided to head to Fremantle on the advice of her Perth host, Terry Bolland.

Terry told me the trip was 'very achievable' and he wasn't overly excited. Well – I was! It turns out Terry is a fairly well-known adventurer (see Canoe Down Under for further info) but more of a river/adventure kayaker though he has done some fairly long sea kayak trips.

We arrived at Rous Head, Fremantle, and arrived with some fairly average binoculars. Scanned and rescanned, and scanned again all views looking for a white canoe and black-clad kayaker. Eventually we gave up and then started yarning to a bloke as we walked back to the car. He had a decent pair of binoculars and we decided to have one more look.

Then voila! Richard spotted her with his eagle eyes and we followed her to within yards of our spot. Of course,

the expensive digital camera at that very moment packed a major sad. Then great excitement – she smiled at us! I yelled out "Good on you, Freya. Keep it up". She stopped, took photos of the lighthouse, rounded it and headed off. Her visit to Perth lasted 5 to 10 minutes. She appeared to be struggling in the wind and chop.

We couldn't believe our luck of spotting her so we decided to head further south along her route. By the way we were probably the only people in the world to see her in Perth (9 September at 12:20 pm). We had lunch and headed down to Woodman's Point.

Alas, no sign of her but we had a nice walk along the beach and collected some grit (shells) for Richard's sister's children. The next suggested viewing spot was Peron Point near Rockingham, so we hot footed it down there and climbed a mountain at John Point. Oh my goodness! Surely no sane person would kayak here. We had been told by Terry that Freya would go inside Garden Island and then down the coast to Penguin Island where she would land at Mersey Point.

We could see a causeway with two bridges joining the mainland to the island with a big tidal flow under both bridges. Further around the point and to the south were big seas, whitecaps, surf breaks, rocks, reefs and islands with dodgy looking passage ways between – scary stuff!

We scanned the sea in all directions and wondered with the increasing wind if Freya was still out there. Well, the day was moving on so we gave up on seeing her there and headed to Mersey Point and again no luck spotting her. By now, Richard was calling me a stalker. "Supporter," I told him.

My jolly cellphone wouldn't work when I tried to phone Terry for an update so I rang Vodaphone only to be told it was 8:00 pm in NZ and unless

an emergency not to bother them. Anyway, a lovely Ozzie bloke at the nearby Dolphin Adventure Tours let me put in a call. Terry's shop assistant told me Terry had set off for this spot and was expected soon. Freya had phoned from Peron Point and was due in shortly.

The wind was getting up, the sea was choppy and on the south side of Penguin Island a dangerous bar. I said to Richard if I were her I would have gone out to sea away from all the islands (and the previously mentioned causeway) and headed south for Safety Bay to land. Why else would the Bay be so called?

We were determined to wait for Terry to pick Freya up and see her land. No-one else seemed to be hanging about but by now it was 5:20 pm and freezing cold, windy and raining. We decided Freya had landed somewhere else and scanned the horizon. It was nearly dark now and the binoculars had nearly given up the ghost (no night vision for this one). So very reluctantly we headed north to Perth. Freya must have had a change of plan.

Imagine my surprise when on one of the various routes home (we chose one at random: the Roe Highway) I spotted the vehicle of Canoe Down Under with Freya's canoe on top! We were adjacent to their vehicle for about 4 seconds. Questions? Did we miss them at Mersey Point? Did she land at Safety Bay? Did she land further north?

Well tonight at the talk in Perth we will find out! We arrived late for the talk (got slightly lost) and Margaret had saved us seats in the front row. Freya's canoe was within touching distance and the stern was covered in shark bites.

Freya told us she had actually landed just north of the causeway, several kilometers away from where we had



Sandy Robson and Freya at the evening talk in Perth.

been. We should have stayed! We would have only missed her by a half hour.

Her talk was great – about 15 minutes describing the route she had taken and then opened up for questions which ranged from the personal – about keeping in touch with family to the technical strategies. Question time lasted for about an hour and a half!

Basically, her research was done merely from reading Paul Caffyn's book *Dreamtime* and Sandy Robson's trip report of her attempt at an Australian circumnavigation. Freya followed Paul's footsteps, traveling mostly point-to-point. In fact she considers herself to be a fairly slow paddler at 5 knots but does 10-12 hours a day to average about 60 kms a day.

Freya also said most sea kayakers use their arms/shoulders too much compared to using legs and body muscles. At this Margaret nearly had hysterics as my style of paddling is exactly as Freya described.

Readers may be interest to know Freya wore 4" high heels and a very elegant black shoulderless below knee frock for her talk. Someone asked if the heels pierced her drybag. Her answer was that she had just bought it in a 20 minute shopping spree in Perth!

The Gulf of Carpentaria took 8 days and 7 nights to cross. Freya would sleep lying back on her canoe with the paddles under her outstretched arms. These were held in place by huge paddlefloats. She had a system of tying herself in and sometimes used a sea-anchor. She would sleep for about an hour at a time.

Her diet consisted of mainly dry food

and cooked rice. The last two days, Freya became so tired of this diet that she hardly ate anything. To date she has lost 10 kg.

We also had the chance to speak to Sandy Robson and asked her if she was hoping to complete her trip. She explained because of the expense she would try to do it in stages. Her kayak

was severely bitten by a crocodile on her attempt a couple of years ago.

Someone asked Freya if she was going to go around Tasmania. The answer was no – but it could be a future option for a weekend paddle! Freya would lay over a couple more days until the weather improved and head towards the south coast and the Bight.



Freya about to head south from Perth with an escort of paddlers from the Western Australia Sea Kayak Club. Photo: Terry Bolland

THE ZUYTDORP CLIFFS

Retired bagpiper Ken Wilson was on the beach to welcome Freya ashore after she completed a 33 hour overnigher along the 120 mile long cliffs. While Freya recuperated from a bad virus and the arduous paddle, Ken looked after her in his clifftop home overlooking the mouth of the Murchison River. Outside the front door, a wooden replica of a piper stands guard. His name is Hamish. Alongside now, Ken has painted a 'plaque' which notes the names of the very few paddlers who have completed the Zuytdorp Cliff paddle. He noted in an email below, with respect to Freya's visit:

'I conducted myself with all due politeness as an 82 year old should. She did some shopping and looked stunning in the new apparel! I did not catch any germs even after 4 cuddles. My whisky did not suffer like 27 years ago.'

(photos: Ken Wilson)



New Zealanders kayaking La Cote Oubliee New Caledonia July 2009 by Nora Flight

Fancy an easy kayak trip in one direction in warm seas, along palm-lined beaches? Made more alluring by the occasional sprinkling of foreign cultural exchanges. La Cote Oubliee – the Forgotten Coast, is exactly that. Go as slow or as fast as you like, there's no other kayaker there, and an average of 10 kilometres/day is quite OK.

That was us, two families having survived 15 years of parenthood, and ready for yet another holiday-ish family adventure together. Plans were afoot for a Hinchinbrook kayak on the Australian Great Barrier Reef, when we were riveted by an article appearing in the local rag, by Nathan Fa'avae, a local multi-sports personality – La Cote Oubliee. So, changing plans, and watching for cheaper airfare deals, we committed to the trip half a year out, and it was all go. Going into an area a bit more unknown than the Hinchinbrook, proved appealing as well.

Making sure enough suitable kayaks were available for hire, was the first unknown to check. As far as we know, there is only one outfitter in Noumea, Terraventure, an organisation of enthusiasts, who offer a range of outdoor adventures. Odon Vanhalle is their main administrator.

Communicating via email was the most effective way, as Odon's English was better than my sketchy French. Having a recommendation from a mutual acquaintance, aided our ability to rent from Odon as well.

Renting from Terraventure made for easier logistics. We were provided with laminated topo maps with GPS points, a GPS, a suggested itinerary indicating suitable, but not essential camping spots, and facilities along the way. Transport to and from was provided also, all for a fair and reasonable fee. The timing of our trip coincided with our July school holidays, but according to Odon, the best time for reliable warmer weather is August to November. However, we were duly rewarded with seven days of sunny warm weather, between two very wet fronts.

So, on 30 June 09, the four members of the Rynn/Williams family of Al, Cath, Tarn and Francesca, met up in Noumea with the Walker/Flight household of Bevan, Nora, Adele and Kirk. Kiddies ranging in age between 11 and 14 years. Piles of gear were sorted, and the last of the food finalised. We were able to bring in quite a lot of food from NZ, which helped considerably with keeping costs down. 'Backcountry'

FreezeDri, was perfectly acceptable through customs.

Odon, and two helpers, picked us up at our accommodation at 7 am on 1 July. We were speedily delivered to our departure point of Mamie, on the South East side of New Caledonia, three hours later. A typical Kanak Tribu, on one side of the Ne Toro river, with lightly made shacks of a mixture of materials, surrounded by tidy yards and flowering plants. The Kanaks are the native people, and have ownership of a lot of the land up this coast.

Our kayaks were German made plastic doubles – Prijon Explorers - with a bulkhead at either end, and rudders. Despite our trepidations about packing, this went smoothly, and 1.5 hours later we had all of what we wanted to take, packed. This included a sleeping bag each, and enough food for about 10 – 11 days (just in case). We used small and medium dri bags as much as possible. After signing disclaimer documents, we waved goodbye, and headed off towards the small break in the reef 200 metres away. There was a small following sea and breeze. Enough to raft together and erect a fly/sail, using paddles as supports. 'This is the life,' we thought – two hours of sailing with 15 kms whistling past.

The family kayaking group in New Caledonia. Left to right: Nora Flight, Bevan Walker, Kirk Walker, Cath Williams, Al Rynn, Tarn Rynn, Francesca Rynn, Adele Walker. Photographer: Odon



A few people were on the reef with nets. The occasional hut was seen in the trees. Bevan hooked a Spanish Mackerel, which was the largest fish caught for the trip. Other fish were hooked, but not enough for a reliable food source.

We paddled the last 2 km of the day, into the Poco Mie River. Delightful coconut palms leaned graciously over gorgeous beaches. After passing an abandoned stone wharf, an indicated camping beach 2 km up-river looked potentially floodable. This was one occasion the provided GPS was useful, supporting what we had already surmized. With twilight rapidly dwindling, and kids tired, we turned back to the sandspit at the entrance of the river mouth. 5.30 pm had us quickly assembling tents in the semi darkness. In no time at all, a fire had us warm and cosy, despite some wind blowing. Marshmallows were devoured to celebrate a good bite out of the 100 km trip. No slowing the kids down, they had the first of their experimental coconut roasting fires, off to one side. Typical for all our campsites bar one, there was plenty of firewood and coconut husks, for fuel.

Settling into holiday mode was the order of the following morning. Cath had a brew on the fire at first light of 6.30 am. Piles of gear were repacked into better places. Al went on a scout for water. Bevan 'jury-rigged' his 'Pacific DownUnder' V sail onto his double. The kids scuttled around excitedly, but pretty much everyone



*Bevan and Kirk with a barrcouta.
Photo: Al Rynn*



Loading the kayaks on the first day of the trip. Photo: Nora Flight

was in the water by 10 am, with the temperature soaring into the mid 20's. What an idyllic start to the trip.

As a result of the water scout, we kayaked around our sandspit, and along the beach to the north, to fill up on fresh water. Not knowing how reliable it would be to find convenient water near campsites, we thought it a good idea to have at least 5 litres per boat as a reserve. Behind the palm tree zone fronting the beach, we found an abandoned camp, with piped water to it from a torrent further up the hill. Following this pipe, we came into a completely different vegetative zone of Casuarinas and spikey drought-tolerant looking plants. We could have been in outback Australia. The torrent gushed over red boulders and through perfect pools – a good place for a refreshing wash.

The sea calm and with 14 km to the next recommended campsite, we set off around the unimposing Cap Tadu, aiming for a white beach for lunch. Bevan managed a sneak preview of the fantastic world we were kayaking over, by snagging his lure on something. Out he hopped, and 10 minutes later retrieved his lure, with an exclamation "Wow, it's quite something down there", while the rest of us were patiently cooking away in our kayaks. However, the first of the shy Turtles were spotted, always causing cries of delight from everyone, including the turbulent teenagers. Table corals, staghorn and other corals in 3D crystal clarity in colours of

greens, pinks and purples, were seen during our lunchtime snorkel.

It seemed a slow paddle the remaining 8 kms into Ouinne, a service community for a large nickel mine. The sea was flat, and numerous campable beaches were passed. Working diggers and dump trucks moving over the steep scarred hillsides, kept us mildly entertained. Arriving at 4.30 pm, we had an hour of daylight to sort things out, including finding someone to ask if we could camp. The community had modern housing set amongst manicured lawns and gardens. Finally we hunted down some people, New Zealanders who run the shop. We had a pleasant chat with them, and were given permission to camp just inside the marina, virtually on someone's front lawn. But there was a lack of firewood, and toileting was awkward. In hindsight, it may have been better to camp further out of the bay, and visit the community as a side trip.

9 am had us joyfully paddling out into a perfect day 3. However, rounding Wopoke, a head breeze and chop slowed our progress. To regroup and have a rest, we found a slight nook in the reef, and surfed over it onto the reef itself. Low tide happened to be around midday for most of our journey, so it was tricky floating boats across the 100 metres or so of reef, and stepping delicately between the corals. Bevan's full wet suit booties were the most protective footwear for this, as Tevas didn't have any side protection, and cheap reef shoes could be easily



In Georgette's garden: Francesca Rynn, Kirk Walker, Adele Walker, Georgette Nonke, Tarn Rynn. Photo: Cath Williams

sliced underfoot. No serious coral cuts eventuated though.

Lunch under a gnarly Casuarina, spotting elusive native people further up the beach and on the reef. As the tide flooded the reef, a small shark zipped past the kids as they were about to take a dip. The wind abated somewhat, and we continued inside the reef for as far as possible, past habitated shacks and boats. Going around the headland of Do Konya was fairly choppy, but the kids charged forward bravely (no choice). Soon enough we were surfing over a small reef break into the haven of Gabe Bay.

Because of the headwind, we decided to call it a day here. Hidden amongst the trees were a tidy collection of colourful shacks. This is the holiday village for the mine workers we'd past the day before. As with all the trip, there was no road access, only by sea, so a jetty marks the place. The kids were quickly into the turbulent sea, jumping off the jetty. Kirk sliced his arm on an oyster, so the comprehensive first aid kit was utilised only the once.

We gratefully used the tables, chairs and tapped water – like a holiday away from the holiday. Firelight softly glowed on the carved wooden tree trunks, as we sang to the harmonica that evening.

The caretaker called in the next morning, so we let him know we'd received permission to stay here from the mine manager. Anxious a head wind might evolve, we departed at 9 am, making a beeline across Baie de Kouakoue, aiming for Ile Porc Epic. The tall bizarrely leaning Araucaria Pines made this peninsula notable. Pulling into the lee of the point, we enjoyed the rock pools and amazing snorkelling for a few hours. Rock pools full of Beche-de-mer, iridescent coloured fish, Eels, and a half metre long sea snake with white and black stripes. Tarn and Al snorkelled the reef edge, and had a large shark check them out.

The days 7.5 km was finished with a paddle into a blustery wind, around the point and to the narrow neck of land that makes Porc Epic an Ile. Covered in a lush forest of Hibiscus, Palms and Ficus, it was under-storied with swards of Boat Lilys. Horticultural heaven. Camping was very nice in your own grassy clearing. Rusa deer and pig live here. Kanaks had a camp further along the beach, but left in their boats just before dark.

Aware of our bay being tidal, we were up at 6.30 am to a balmy sea. Cups of tea were still being downed as Bevan and Kirk paddled off, to get a head start. So far, Bevan's sail had only been of use for a few hours – this was to be the extra set of arms when the youngest paddler wasn't up for

it. However, headwinds or no wind was the norm. Following just outside the reef edge at low water proved an entertaining way to while away the kilometres. The gentle surge would expose walls of coral. Eventually we paddled inside a large circular reef at Nee, and towed the boats the last 20 metres to a beach. From under the shade of the palms, we watched some Kanaks hunting the reef in the hot, bright sun.

At the 18 km mark for the day, we tentatively rounded a point to behold the most signs of habitation we'd seen in days. Women in 'mother Hubbard' dresses came running out of the trees, greeting us excitedly. They had been expecting us. Quite daunting really. Eager hands helped to drag the boats up, and we were hustled to the guest eating house. Tea and coffee was offered on large tables decorated with flowers. Passionfruit, papaya and mandarins were bought on platters for the kids.

Over stilted French, we introduced ourselves, and found out that Georgette and her husband Jon run a small scale tourist establishment, along with other family members. So following money negotiations, we were given a tour of the vege gardens, shown the delightful front yard and where to pitch our tents. Dinner was served under the grand thatched roof of the guest house, all local produce including octopus from the reef. The best part of the whole trip, declared Francesca.

A leisurely start to 6 July, had us departing Chez Georgette Nonke loaded with gifts of sugar cane and papayas. We only had 6 kms to Menyuru Island, a low lying area of vegetated land a few kms off from the mainland. We paddled within a reef the whole way across. We gratefully set up camp early, and pursued our own activities for the afternoon. Hundreds of hermit crabs rustled in the undergrowth. Good views back to the mainland, of thinly vegetated high hills, scarred with numerous nickel prospecting activities.

A general cloud cover, and opportunity to utilise a tail wind, had us cutting our rest day short on 7 July. The

kid's huts and rafts were abandoned, and all hands were on deck to hastily pack at 2 pm, and we on the water at 3. The high Tupeti Island loomed 8 km in front. At 5.20 pm we landed, after back-tracking and trying to find a beach large enough for four tents. A Rusa stag roared in the dense bush behind camp, and large bats flew into the trees. The two metre tidal range peaked at 6 pm, leaving us enough room for a fire on a sand platform Adele had busily constructed.

Woomph right beside your tent sure is a shocking way of being woken. A landing coconut was our wake-up call for our last kayaking day. Falling from 10 metres up, that could have been dangerous. The first rain of our trip was drizzling down, as we downed tents and breakfast. We followed the island edge with a tail tide, through a Mangrove lined shallow channel, and around a sand spit to the Tribu of St Roch.

We'd agreed to follow Odon's advice, and stop here, as there is a convenient area to camp, and the village is agreeable to Terraventure's clients disembarking here. Mind you, paddling onto Thio did look interesting. None-the-less, the rain was pelting down now, and the large picnic shelter was perfect for pitching tents under, and sorting gear.

In discovering the Tribu's malfunctioning public phone, we had a good wander around, and realized the prevalence of the Rastafarian influence on some of the Kanak's lifestyle. A very simple but beautiful church was at the Tribu's centre. A hitchhike to the small community of Petite Borendi, to the south, had us finally notifying Odon we were awaiting his pickup. He duly arrived, with smiles all around.

We enjoyed New Caledonian French hospitality during the 3 hour drive home, with a family barbecue at Edmond's place - another member of Terraventure. Of the French and Kanaks we encountered along our journey, we were taken with their warmth and friendliness. So for an all-round family kayak adventure, this would be a hard one to beat.



Beautiful coral sand beaches on the West Coast of New Caledonia, fringed by coconut palms. Photo: Al Rynn



Striped shirt (tricot raye) sea snake. Photo: Al Rynn

Nora Flight has been sea kayaking for 20 years with her partner Bevan Walker. Notable trips include Fiordland several times, Alaska, Vancouver Island, the Coral Sea, and more recently numerous family trips locally around the Marlborough Sounds and Abel Tasman. Other interests are skiing, mountain biking, and tramping. Nora is the KASK Nelson contact, and has an on-going interest in learning French. For more information on New Caledonia:
email Nora at: nflight@xtra.co.nz

SEE ALSO COLOUR PHOTOS ON PAGE 2.

NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORTS

DUSKY SOUND PART II

by Cathye Haddock

8 April: "I'm sure I left my kayak somewhere around here!" I said to myself as I came out of the bush and walked the few steps to the steep edge of Long Island. 'Bugger!' Peter and Paul had already left the small cove to give me some privacy, so it was going to be a long swim or an indefinite wait if I didn't figure something out fast. Then I saw it, a black rudder and minute bit of a turquoise blue stern disappearing behind some rocks to my far right. I pulled up my longjohns and waded up to my knees into the clear cold water (gasp!), edged along the rocks, and grabbed the kayak. A few more metres and I would have been swimming, so deep was the drop off into the fiord. In my haste into the bush, I had not leashed my kayak, and with an incoming tide the boat had soon floated off the marginal landing. Safely back in the boat, I counted my blessings and thought I'd keep this bugger to myself.

It was lovely and sunny, with hardly a ripple on the water. I paddled between some lovely islands and couldn't see the other two through the long passage ahead of me. I saw something coloured bright orange floating in the water to my left. I paddled over and pulled up Peter's fluoro-orange brimmed hat - and still not a sign of Peter and Paul. Gosh, maybe they've been vaporised by aliens. I searched for singe marks on the hat. Nothing. Funny what goes through your mind on the big trips!

I passed a few more islands and then spotted them. Peter was just emerging from a cleft in the steep side of the island, invisible until you're right on it, and Paul was disappearing around the western end of Long Island. "Lost anything?" I said to Pete, with wifely smugness. He was wearing a warm hat underneath the sunhat so had not yet noticed. I held the hat up. Peter reached for his head. "Bugger!" and he knew just the spot where low branches must have swept it off as he poked his nose into the cleft.

We soon caught up with Paul. We rounded the point just in time to see a pod of dolphins departing. Paul had been treated to some leaping and jumping and his grin said it all. Magic. Paul wanted to explore some sites on the tip of Long Island. I said I'd join him while Pete would have a munch-up while he waited for us.

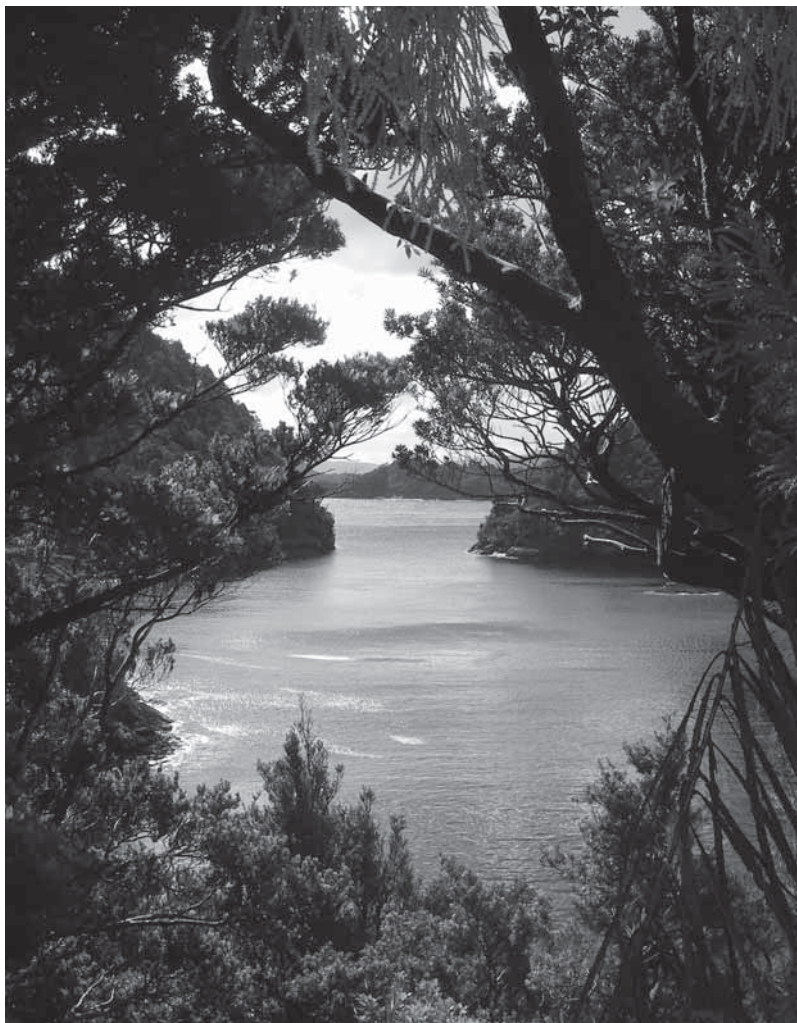
Then it came. Black water encroaching, wind full of hail. With no time to communicate, Peter and I went between the Two Sisters Islands to shelter from the sudden squall while Paul ducked behind the point. Once it calmed, Peter and I ate our pre-packed lunch (handy in situations like this)

while we waited for Paul. Reunited, the three of us crossed over to Indian Island.

Part way across, we were hit by another squall full of hail. Heads down and bracing into the wind, we sought shelter in the waka harbour at the North East end of Indian Island. This hidden harbour must have been a haven for the Ngati Mamoe family who lived on this island at the time of Cook's visit. Warming our freezing hands, we sheltered until the hail stopped and the squall passed. Imagining the hardship those earlier explorers must have endured, we praised our merino and Goretex.

View north from 'Astronymers Point' across 'Pickersgills' Harbour to 'The Narrows' through which Cook's Resolution was warped on 27 March 1773.

Crayfish Island on the right. Photo: P. Caffyn



We paddled out of the hidden haven into the sun and glanced back at the rock promontory on Indian Island where Captain Cook first met the Ngati Mamoe chief Maru and his whanau, on 6 April 1773. That was 236 years ago almost to the day! In bright sunshine now, we marvelled at the surrounding peaks covered in fresh snow from this morning and the day before.

In Cook's wake, we paddled between Crayfish Island and Astronomer's Point. This was the narrow passage Cook brought the *Resolution* through. We explored Astronomer's Point, a small peninsula which Cook's men cleared to set up instruments for an observatory to estimate the geographical position of Dusky Sound. William Wales, an officer of the Board of Longitude, was entrusted to do this work. His instructions from the English Parliament were to '... settle the position of the head Lands, Islands, and Harbours in Latitude and Longitude.' He was also directed to observe the height of the tides.

We walked along the DoC boardwalk to a viewing platform overlooking the narrow passage we had just paddled through. The 263-year-old tree stumps were still visible among the regrown forest. Soaking up more history, we walked up Cook Stream to Lake Forster. The ship's naturalists (George and Johann Forster) had found kokopu (native trout) in the stream, as had the Begg brothers in the 1960s. We didn't see any kokopu but we had a nice leg stretch through the bush on a rough route, enjoying being out of the boats.

Our final leg on this interesting day was to paddle the last five kms to Cascade Cove, checking out the cascade on our way. We had to work hard through another hail squall for the last few kms. Crawling along the shore, Paul landed us right onto the campsite that he and Max had camped at 35 years earlier. I was first out of my boat and Paul directed me up a barely discernable track to look for a large campsite under the beech trees. Amazed at Paul's memory, I popped out of the bush and announced we were right onto it! It took us three hours to set up camp, cook dinner, listen to the radio sched and get into bed. What a great day. As

I drifted off to sleep, comforted by a good forecast, I suspected we would not be moving far the next day.

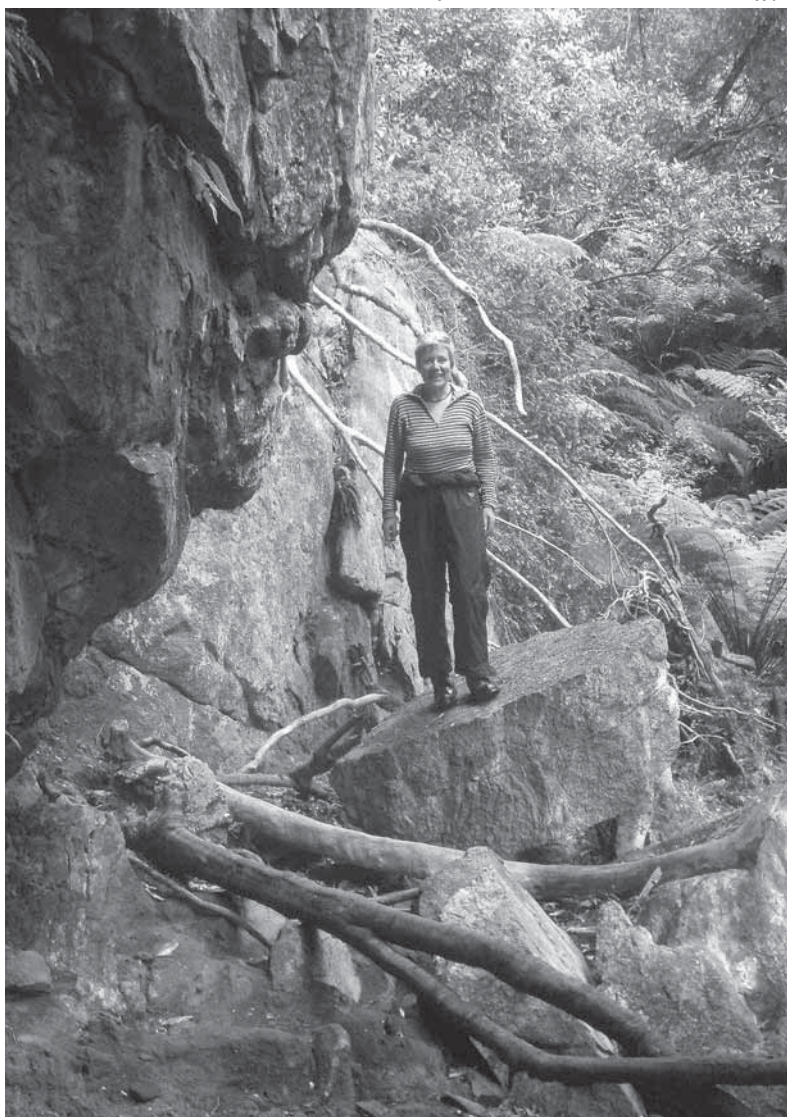
9 April: The morning was fine, sunny and cool with snow to 400m on the surrounding peaks. We had a leisurely pancake breakfast on the beach and strung all our damp gear out to dry. Cascade Cove looked like a flea market on a Sunday morning. We even did some washing. Paul and Peter, having only brought one pair of socks each (to Fiordland!) were torn between washing the week-old odorous pair, or brewing them for another week. I bartered morning cups of tea in bed to give them a pair each from my stash of five pairs, which still left me with more socks than them!

It would have been a good paddling day but we had exploring to do. First

Paul showed us the 'dog box' site where an old deerstalker's biv had stood 32 years ago when he and Max had camped there. Then a walk along the beach northwards to find the Maori cave dwelling we had read about in Begg and Begg's book *Dusky Bay*.

It was more of a rock overhang than a cave but we could see the blackened rock where two fireplaces once were. Some huge rocks had fallen from the roof and landed on the only flat area forming the floor of the overhang. This is where the Begg brothers had found human bones. There was a ledge above this – on which one of the Begg party had climbed and found more human bones. I found a way around the back where I could scramble up and carefully climb down onto a dry flat ledge large enough to sleep on. You would not wish to turn over in

Cathye standing on part of the rockfall that fell onto a Maori occupation site on the south-east side of Cascade Cove. Photo: P. Caffyn





*Cathye on a narrow ledge above the Maori cave in Cascade Cove.
Photo: Peter Simpson*

the night due to a three metre drop. The Begg brothers speculated that the family, that Cook met here may have been killed here by maurading Kai Tahu from Preservation Inlet.

Cook had recorded that the family mysteriously disappeared after he met them. A rusty scrap of iron was found in a crevice at the back of the dwelling, by the Beggs, suggesting it may have been the remains of the knife given to the family by Cook's men. Scientists had also analysed the bones and even found a few in the midden, suggesting some of the family may have been subject to a feast.

After leaving the rock overhang we returned for lunch in the sun, before wandering south of our campsite to explore the old sealers' campsite. Several boat runs were visible at low tide (see photo). We found some flat areas where the sealers' huts may have been in the bush, and I found a lovely 'bath' site in the river-bed. It was a nice relaxing day exploring. We all hunted for the source of a very strange noise we heard every time we sat on the beach. I thought it was a penguin,

Paul thought it was a possum. We saw adult kereru flying in and out of the bush in their ungainly way, every now and then. Finally, we located the tree the kereru were flying to - to feed their noisy young! We had identified the noise.

The tent flies we brought were great. We pitched them over our tents so we could de-robe before entering. It was also handy to cook under a fly and store gear out of the rain. We had a lovely fire to sit around for a yarn while Pete cooked. After dinner on the beach in the dusky sunset, we had a drink in memory of Max Reynolds. Watching the colours intensify and fade with the light, Paul recited Bilbo's Last Song, which he had recited at Max's funeral a few short years after they had camped right here:

*Day is ended, dim my eyes,
But journey long before me lies.
Farewell, friends! I hear the call.
The ship's beside the stony wall.
Foam is white and waves are grey;
beyond the sunset leads my way.
Foam is salt, the wind is free;
I hear the rising of the sea.*

*Farewell, friends! The sails are set,
the wind is east, the moorings fret.
Shadows long before me lie,
beneath the ever-bending sky,
but islands lie behind the Sun
that I shall raise ere all is done;
lands there are to west of West,
where night is quiet and sleep is rest.*

*Guided by the Lonely Star,
beyond the utmost harbour-bar,
I'll find the heavens fair and free,
and beaches of the Starlit Sea.
Ship my ship! I seek the West,
and fields and mountains ever blest.
Farewell to Middle-earth at last.
I see the star above my mast!
by J.R.R. Tolkien*

A moving moment passed and misty eyed, we wended our way back to the tents for an early night. A stag roared close by.

10 April: Up early and packed in no time, we breakfasted in the sun by our loaded boats, which were getting lighter by the day as we chewed through our provisions. We paddled off to the north side of Long Island, retracing our steps of two days before. Snow clad peaks marched north and south before us. We pulled into Detention Cove for a look around before crossing to Acheron Passage, and hugging the west side of the fiord to shelter from a slight northerly breeze.

As we crossed from the west to the east side of Acheron Passage at the narrows, Peter spied the unmistakable vapour spouts of dolphins at the entrance to Wet Jacket Arm, a few kilometres to the north. At a desperate to let the morning cuppa out, Peter and I landed on a tricky bouldery beach. Ten minutes further on, we came to a small sandy beach with an easy landing. Typical!

The final crossing to the campsite at Wet Jacket Arm was dead flat calm. We were out of the notorious Acheron Passage, which Max and Paul had taken two days to negotiate on their South Island trip in 1977. A stag roared his welcome as we pulled into camp. We spent an hour levelling our beach-front tent site with fine sand ready for a flat sleep as this would be a two night stopover. The forecast for the



Cathye and Peter at the head of a seal slaughtering crew boat run on the south-east side of Cascade Cove in Dusky Sound. Photo: P. Caffyn

next day was awful. Paul recited *The cremation of Sam McGee*, a Robert Service poem, for our amusement as we huddled around the fire while he cooked us Lamb Madras for tea.

11 April: The rain pissed down during the night and got heavier as dawn broke. It was not difficult to imagine what Cook's men might have experienced up Wet Jacket Arm. APIT DAY was declared. Taking the trowel for a walk was not fun. When I returned I emptied 16 big billies of water from an impressive lake in the fly Paul had pitched over his tent. Our fly was taut and flat and the water was running off fine so I placed billies under to collect water. Peter got us tea and breakfast in bed. It was going to be a long day. No more tea as we did not want to exit the tent unnecessarily. So a combo of sleeping and reading was the sum of the day's activities. Easter bunny came a day early and that was lunch. What luxury, sleeping, reading, and eating chocolate! Pity about the ensuite.

By evening the rain had stopped and I cooked spaghetti bolognaise and delivered it to the boys in their tents. They finally got up to a clear starry night for the radio sched. It sounded like we would be able to move the next day but a series of fronts were coming after that. So exploring the moose man's camp up Wet Jacket Arm and discovering Breaksea Sound's secrets would have to wait for another trip. This was day 13 of our trip and time

was almost up. We made the decision to make a run for Supper Cove in this small weather window and see if we could request a day early pick up using the mountain radio.

12 April: A clear dawn and we were up at 7am for a quick breakfast and packing. On this trip we had muesli for quick getaways, and pancakes, porridge or bacon and eggs for more leisurely days. The tide was out. In pairs we carried the loaded boats a few metres to the water from where we had packed them. It was a trick to estimate the pozzzy to put the empty boat to pack, allowing enough time for the tide and the completed packing to coincide, so we could just get in and paddle off when we were done. We got very good at this – a ploy to save our ageing backs from carrying loaded boats too far. We made our lunches and had snacks handy so we could eat on the water if we needed to – landings in Fiordland do not always coincide with when you need to eat!

We were on the water by 9am. It was calm where we set off, but stormy up Wet Jacket Arm. Shafts of light



Cathye cooking pancakes at Cascade Cove.



Peter waiting to receive the evening Mountain Radio forecast

slanted down to the water like silver arms reaching down from the dark sky. Silver paths fanned out on the water, painting a dramatic canvas before us. It was a good run down Acheron Passage to Passage Point with the tide against us but no wind. Paul wanted to make a beeline for Supper Cove. We were keen to explore Sportsman's Cove so we parted on opposite routes around Cooper Island. Being a mostly solo paddler, Paul loves to 'slip the leash' at times, so we were all happy and would reunite at Supper Cove.

We watched Paul become a sleek silhouette as he glided along the distant shore. Peter and I crossed open water to the Shag Islands and on to Sportsman's Cove, a keyhole inlet on the western end of Cooper Island. It had a narrow crooked entrance, so you paddle through a steepish gorge before it suddenly opens out into a lake-like jewel surrounded by steep deep-green forest. Morning mist veiled the scene. The water was dark and still with perfect reflections on the sides of the fiord. Pleased to have visited this magic wee glen, we paddled back out of the gorge and along Cook Channel on the south side of Cooper Island. Cook's coopers had used trees from this island for some of the ship's repairs.

With the wind behind us, and the tide with us, we made good progress for the first few kilometres. It was calm in the middle third, then the wind picked up behind us for the final third. *Celmisia* daisies were still in flower on the sides of the fiord. Three curious young seals stopped gang-fishing to follow us like so many puppy dogs. They stuck their

sleek heads out of the water for a good look, then slithered under and around our boats to check everything out. Their curiosity satisfied, they went back to fishing!

A large waterfall opposite the end of Cooper Island marked the end of Nine Fathoms Passage, and it was here that we spotted Paul crossing to Girly Island at the entrance to Supper Cove. "You made good time," he said, when we caught him up. Paul had experienced dead calm conditions with no wind on his side of Cooper Island, while our windy sections with waves to push us along had helped reunite us to paddle the last stretch together. In our exchange of stories, we found out Paul had paddled within meters of a young 'two pointer' stag.

Peter spotted a straight row of birds out in the middle of the fiord - they continuously alighted and landed on the water in a line, so he paddled over to investigate. He got really close to the 20 or 30 terns, perched on a floating log, competing for space on the crowded real estate. He got some great movies and photos.

We arrived at Supper Cove at 2pm, to a welcome of smoke coming out the hut chimney. We immediately strung out the mountain radio aerial on the beach and I dialled up Southern Lakes Helicopters (SLH). Our mountain radio had a phone key-pad on the back so you could make phone calls on the radio signal. No mobile phone reception here.

However, I had no luck as I could not hear SLH answer the call, but they could not hear me! Disappointed, we contemplated spending the next few days in the Supper Cove hut while waiting out the pending storm along with seven trampers and hunters who had arrived at the hut that day. The thought was enough to spur me into radioing IB Base in Dunedin. I asked them to call SLH for us, which they did while we stood by. The message came back: "Can you be ready in two hours?" that was by 5pm.

Paul and I danced a jig on the beach and we all started unpacking our boats like mad. IB base asked us if a certain party

was at the hut, as they had been trying to get a message to them for days. Pete walked the 10 minutes to the hut and found the party who walked down to the beach to take the call on our radio. Wilderness technology. We enjoyed exchanging stories with the young Auckland lads who had been hunting in the wilds of Fiordland during 'the roar'. The radio message was from their mates who were to fly in to join them in the next weather break.

We retrieved our \$2 shop stripey gear bags and helicopter strops and ties we had hidden in the bush two weeks earlier and we were ready by 5pm. We sat on a log on the beach and fed the few sandflies that appeared, while the clouds closed in and the drizzle set in. We never said anything, but we were all thinking the helicopter may not make it in time and we may be here for days. At 5.40 pm we heard a distant thub thub thub and watched as a tiny sandfly turned into a dragonfly, then into a helicopter and land on the helipad at Supper Cove. Yes!

The pilot leapt out of the cockpit and above the rotor blade noise instructed us to load the gear up to him first, followed by the kayaks. We passed all the gear to him, then the four of us strapped the kayaks to the skids using only sign language as the rotor and downwash noise blotted out any voice comms. Paul and I tied our two kayaks bum-to-bum on one skid while Peter and the pilot strapped his kayak to the other. This all took 20 minutes and we were into the chopper and away with rain splattering the windscreen and the hills darkening by the minute.

I asked the pilot through the headset "have you flown much with kayaks?" He replied "this is my first time". We all hummed a mantra for our knots and strop tying to hold on until Te Anau. The main divide was clear of cloud and the 60 minute ride back to Te Anau base was much moodier than our clear, calm and sunny flight in two weeks before. Paul pointed out 'The Monument' of Lord of the Rings fame on Lake Manapouri as we flew over it. Pete and I paddled out to it a few days later and climbed to the top, enjoying awesome views over the lake and surrounding mountains.

We touched down at SLH base just on dark at 7pm. We loaded our gear and boats straight into and onto the vehicles and hugged our goodbyes. It had been another great Fiordland adventure and we couldn't wait for the next. Port Pegasus and Port Adventure on Stewart Island are calling.

Most useful piece of kit:

Pete: Small broadcast band radio – to listen to the marine forecast on national Radio at 5am. There was no VHF marine radio reception in Dusky and the mountain radio forecast gave the situation and mountain forecast but no marine forecast.

Cathye: Buller lace-up gumboots – the luxury of dry warm feet in Fiordland.

Paul: My new huge lightweight rain fly. A must for the sodden fiords.

Favourite day or experience:

Pete: The first day - actually getting in there and knowing we had two weeks of exploring ahead of us.

Cathye: The wet day paddling when we were surrounded by dolphins for an hour in a calm drizzly misty fiord. The poetry recitals were pretty special too.

Paul: Landing and camping at two of the coves where Max Reynolds and I had over-nighted 32 years earlier.



The elegant Ashley gumboot salsa dancing team at Supper Cove in Dusky Sound. From left: Paul, Cathye and Peter.

Further Reading:

Dusky Bay - In The Steps of Captain Cook by A. Charles Begg and Neil C. Begg, Whitcombe and Tombs, first published 1966, revised edition 1968.

(SEE ALSO COVER PHOTO & TOP OF P.23)

WILDLIFE

Orcas

by Robbie Banks

Less than 50 metres from shore, heading towards Matawhauwhau Point on Great Barrier Island a spout of water shoots into the air! 'Dolphins' is my first thought - then an Orca fin emerges. Heading straight towards us - my pulse is pounding as a black mass resembling a live submarine swims towards me; the fin towering above. Another Orca is slapping his tail on the surface! What does this mean I wonder? Is he signaling his intention to attack! Munch munch - then diving down under my kayak - I freeze and watch as a black moving mass glides by.

This inspires me to research the mighty Orca, so here are some interesting facts. They are identified by their distinctive black and white markings.

Both females and males have similar markings except on the underside, where it is possible to distinguish male from female. The dorsal fin also distinguishes male and female adults. In the mature male an erect dorsal fin may reach a height of 5 1/2 ft. (1.7m) but the female dorsal fin grows only to an average height of 3 ft. (0.9m)

Orcas are the largest member of the dolphin family, Delphinidae. Males grow to a maximum length of about 32ft (9.8m) and weigh 10 - 11 tons (9 - 10,000 kg). Females are smaller and grow to a maximum length of about 28ft (8.5m), weighing as much as 7 - 8 tons (6,500 to 7,500 kg). Calves at birth are about 8ft (2.4m) long and weigh about 400lbs (180 kg).

When large groups of whales arrive and head into an area, there is often a lot of intense vocal activity. At these times there is a great deal of excitement,

both for the whales and the human listener alike. Orcas are very social animals. During the summer season, when they are observed the most, they spend many hours intermingling with one another.

But why were they so close to shore? I found a few ideas such as - for feeding and scratching backs? For the Northern Resident orca of British Columbia, Canada, after they resume travelling, they will most likely head for the Robson Bight area and the rubbing beaches beyond.

These rubbing beaches are a unique feature of the area. Though whales have been observed rubbing in other shallow areas, their use of these particular beaches is very consistent and well documented. It seems to be an important part of their traditional use of the Johnstone Strait area – off the north-east coast of Vancouver Island.

*Bull Orca (tall fin) with females off Great Barrier Island. See also colour photo on p.23.
Photo: Ted Voyce*



The beaches are covered with small, flat, round and smooth stones. The whales dive, blow out air as bubbles to lessen their buoyancy, and then skim their bodies over the stones. Sometimes several whales will use the beach at one time, but they will also take turns, waiting a short distance offshore for their turn. This activity

brings the whales very close to shore. Again, they may or may not be vocal as they are rubbing. I didn't find any documentation of sea kayakers being attacked even though Orcas are also referred to as Killer Whales. I am still researching the meaning of the tails slapping. If anyone knows, I would be pleased to hear from you.

It was an honour to experience the great Orca in it's liquid environment and I am happy to be able to share this priceless wondrous encounter. From one moment to the next, the ocean offers so much pleasure.

Robbie Banks
(email: rbanks@kol.co.nz)

KAYAKING KALENDAR

2nd National (Aust.) Sea Kayaking Symposium

Weekend of 27 - 29 November 2009

Palm Beach Currumbin High School, Thrower Drive, Currumbin, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

Queensland Canoeing Incorporated. Email: mark.thurgood@canoe.org.au

For more information: www.qld.canoe.org.au

COASTBUSTERS 2010

Weekend of 26 - 28 February 2010 - Auckland

And an International Kayak Week following as per 2008.

See: www.coastbusters.org.nz

2010 ROCK'N'ROLL - Australia

Date: Weekend of 19 - 22 March 2010

Venue: Batemans Bay Beach Resort, New South Wales

For further information: www.nswseakayker.asn.au

(the annual gathering of the New South Wales Sea Kayak Club)

KASK FORUM 2010

Date: weekend of 16 - 18 April 2010

Venue: north of Whangarei at the Manaia Christian Camp. Right on the edge of Whangarei Harbour, with camping, bunkroom and chalet accommodation. Key note speaker for Friday night is Jeff Allen from the UK, who has paddled around Japan and South Georgia.

Saturday night will be dancing from 8 - 12pm.

The following week, 19 - 25 April, is scheduled for semi-organized social paddling, in the area north of Whangarei up to the Bay of Islands.

HUMOUR

Sea kayaking joke of the year

Two female sea kayakers were paddling together - silently!

Too much Spaghetti

A doctor is having an affair with his nurse and is told by her that she is pregnant. Not wanting his wife to know, he gives the nurse a sum of money and asks her to go to Italy to have the baby there. "But how will I let you know when the baby is born?" she asks. He replies: "Just send me a postcard and write "spaghetti" on the back. I'll take care of expenses." Not knowing what else to do, the nurse takes the money and flies to Italy. Six months go by and then, one day, the doctor's wife calls him at his surgery and says: "Dear, you have received a very strange postcard in the mail today, and I don't understand what it means" The doctor responds: "Just wait until I get home and I will explain it to you." Later that evening, the doctor goes home, reads the postcard and falls to the floor with a heart attack. While the paramedics are rushing him into intensive care, the lead medic stays to comfort the wife. He asks what

trauma precipitated the cardiac arrest and she hands him the postcard, which reads: "Spaghetti, spaghetti, spaghetti. spaghetti – two with sausage and meatballs, two without."

London Lawyer Versus Glasgow Cop

A London lawyer runs a stop sign and gets pulled over by a Glasgow cop. He thinks that he is smarter than the cop because he is a lawyer from LONDON and is certain that he has a better education than any cop. He decides to prove this to himself, and have some fun at the Glasgow cop's expense! Glasgow cop says, "Licence and registration, please?" London Lawyer says, "What for?" Glasgow cop says, "Ye didnae come to a complete stop at the stop sign." London Lawyer says, "I slowed down, and no one was coming."

Glasgow cop says, "Ye still didnae come to a complete stop. Licence and registration, please?" London Lawyer says, "What's the difference?"

Glasgow cop says, "The difference is, ye huvte to come to complete stop, that's the law. Licence and registration, please?" London Lawyer says, "If you can show me the legal difference between slow down and stop, I'll give you my licence and registration and you can give me the ticket. If not, you let me go and don't give me the ticket." Glasgow cop says, "Sounds fair. Exit your vehicle, sir."

The London Lawyer exits his vehicle. The Glasgow cop takes out his baton and starts beating the f*ck out of the lawyer and says, "Dae ye want me to stop, or just slow down?"

Sick of Snoring Males?

A couple has an elderly male dog that snores. Annoyed because she can't sleep, the wife goes to the vet to see if he can help. The vet tells the woman to tie a ribbon around the dog's testicles, and he will stop snoring. 'Yeah right!' she thinks.

A few minutes after going to bed, the dog begins snoring, as usual. The wife tosses and turns, unable to sleep. Muttering to herself, she goes to the closet and grabs a piece of red ribbon and ties it carefully around the dog's testicles. Sure enough, the dog stops snoring. The woman is amazed.

Later that night, her husband returns home drunk from a night out drinking

with his buddies. He climbs into bed, falls asleep and immediately begins snoring loudly.

The woman decides maybe the ribbon might work on him. So, she goes to the closet again, grabs a piece of blue ribbon and ties it around her husband's testicles. Amazingly, it also works on him! The woman sleeps soundly.

The husband wakes from his drunken stupor and stumbles into the bathroom. As he stands in front of the toilet, he glances in the mirror and sees a blue ribbon attached to his family jewels. He is very confused, and as he walks back into the bedroom, he sees the red ribbon attached to his dog's testicles. He shakes his head and looks at the dog and whispers, "I don't know where we were - or what we did - but we took FIRST and SECOND place!"

The Lost Bagpiper

As a bagpiper, I was asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service for a homeless man who had no family or friends. The funeral was to be held at a cemetery in the remote countryside near Kincardine and this man would be the first to be laid to rest there.

As I was not familiar with the backwoods area, I became lost and being a typical man, did not stop for directions. I finally arrived an hour late. I saw the backhoe and the crew who were eating lunch but the hearse was nowhere in sight.

I apologized to the workers for my tardiness and stepped to the side of the open grave where I saw the vault lid already in place.

I assured the workers I would not hold them up for long but this was the proper thing to do. The workers gathered around, still eating their lunch. I played out my heart and soul. As I played the workers began to weep. I played and I played like I'd never played before, from *Going Home* and *The Lord is My Shepherd* to *Flowers of the Forest*. I closed the lengthy session with *Amazing Grace* and walked to my car.

As I was opening the door and taking off my coat, I overheard one of the workers saying to another, "I have never seen nothin' like that before and I've been putting in septic tanks for 20 years."

Duncan the Humble Crab

Duncan the humble crab and Kate the Lobster Princess were madly, deeply and passionately in Love.

For months they enjoyed an idyllic relationship until one day Kate scuttled over to Duncan in tears.

"We can't see each other anymore," she sobbed.

"Why?" gasped Duncan.

"Daddy says that crabs are too common," she wailed. "He claims you are a mere crab, and a poor one at that, and crabs are the lowest class of crustacean and that no daughter of his, will marry someone who can only walk sideways."

Duncan was shattered, and scuttled sideward away into the darkness and to drink himself into a filthy state of aquatic oblivion.

That night, the great Lobster ball was taking place. Lobsters came from far and wide, dancing and merry making, but the lobster Princess refused to join in, choosing instead to sit by her father's side, inconsolable.

Suddenly the doors burst open, and Duncan the crab strode in. The Lobsters all stopped their dancing; the Princess gasped, and the King Lobster rose from his throne.

Slowly, painstakingly, Duncan the crab made his way across the floor, and all could see that he was walking, not sideways, but FORWARDS, one claw after another! Step by step he made his approach towards the throne, until he finally looked King lobster in the eye. There was a deadly hush. For quite a while.

Finally, the crab spoke, "F*k, I'm pissed."

Children's Science Exam

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.

A: Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

Q: What does the word 'benign' mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

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:

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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:

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4th. Ed. KASK HANDBOOK Updated to March 2008

For trade orders of this mother of all sea kayaking handbooks, contact Paul Caffyn, RD 1, Runanga, 7873, West Coast. Ph/fax: (03)7311806
e-mail: kayakpc@xtra.co.nz
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Price to KASK members only, including p&p, \$22.50
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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

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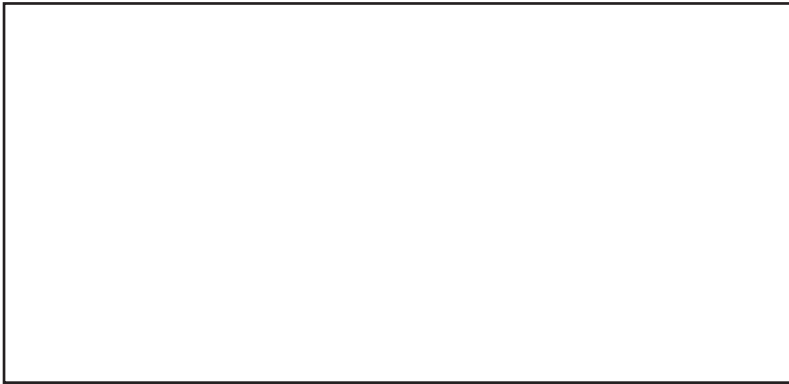


*Top: Robbie Banks and pod of Orca off the coast of Great Barrier Island.
Photo: Ted Voyce*

*Below: Storm brewing in Wet Jacket Arm, Fiordland.
Photo: Cathye Haddock*



MAILED TO



**If undelivered, please return to:
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*How the tide has turned. Melanie Grant can now outpace her father Max any day. Photo: Margaret Grant
Max notes Q-Kayaks have made about 20 of these take apart doubles over the last 10 years, most of which have gone overseas. They are good for two people to take on an aircraft - each person can walk a half each onto the plane with them. They can also be stored easily in an apartment, etc.*

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.

