

THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

A sea kayaker is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt, a life vest, and a cap. The kayaker is holding a black paddle across their chest. A red flag is attached to a pole on the kayak. The background is a vast expanse of blue ocean under a bright, hazy sky at sunset or sunrise.

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Thanks to all the contributors and photographers.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER 17 JULY 2010

EDITORIAL

Newsletter Feedback

Thanks to all those paddlers who provided superb, positive feedback re the last newsletter with cover girl Sue Levett. Comment from both overseas and New Zealand, re the colour photos and content, was very reassuring.

Newsletter Articles

My apologies to those whose articles have not appeared in this newsletter as promised. Rest assured I have a surfeit of articles for the next one.

KASK Forum

It was a cracker. Jointly organized by the Northland Canoe Club and KASK, the forum had a great mixture of on-the-water instruction and paddling, and session and slide shows on shore. The Saturday night dance was most enjoyable as the photos on page 5 suggest. The weather co-operated for the weekend, and many paddlers went on to Whangaruru Harbour for the following social paddling week.

New Zealand Paddling Reports

Melanie and Max Grant completed their anti-clockwise circumnavigation of the South Island at Jackson Bay on 19 May, to be met with the traditional glasses of bubbly and slices of pavlova in the face. The thought of the pavlova reception seemed to worry Max more than encounters with the West Coast surf. They had a glorious day to finish, with a glassy sea, sunny blue sky and a backdrop of the Southern Alps showing the first hint of winter snow. Max has penned an account of their paddle from Picton to the 12 Mile and has promised a final trip instalment for the next newsletter. See cover photo, colour pics on page 2, article pp. 7 – 10.

Their expedition blog address:
<http://southislandcharityexpedition.blogspot.com/>

Colin Quilter has written an informative report on his solo paddle around Stewart Island, and John Gumbley has a report on a raid by three North Island paddlers on the South Island lakes.

Overseas

Stuart Truman set off from Broome, Western Australia, in mid April to paddle solo and unassisted around Australia. But sea temperatures of 30°C and air temperatures up to 50° led to heat exhaustion and a return to Broome to wait for the end of the wet season. Stuart started again late April, and arrived at Kalbarri at 3 pm on 30 May after completing the long and committing crux of the Australian trip, the dreaded Zuytdorp Cliffs. Ken Wilson opened a special bottle of whisky to celebrate. Stuart began mid-April from Broome in order to arrive at the start of the cliffs in June which is the best time of the year for calm conditions. Stuart is unsupported but is using assistance from that dreaded four letter word, a 'sail'. Stuart's blog:
<http://nadgeekayaks.com.au/news-events/australia-by-kayak.html>

Correction

The colour photo, top of p.23 in the last newsletter, of Mark Hutson and Jim Kakuk off the Cavalli Islands, was taken by Sasha Joura.

Nelson KASK Contact

Chris Hinkley has taken over the role of Nelson KASK contact from Nora Flight. Chris has eight year's sea kayaking experience, and is membership secretary of the Nelson Canoe Club. Chris has also suggested not using personal email contacts for the KASK contacts, both to avoid spam and make it easier for replacement contacts. Thus the Nelson contact is now:
kask@nelsonkayakers.co.nz

Paul Caffyn

PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

Cover: Max Grant powering to shore at the 12 Mile, on the West Coast of the South Island, in front of the editor's coastal cottage. Superb timing in terms of high water and a great sunny day for the West Coast. Photo: Paul Caffyn
Facing page: Top left - Melz Grant preparing to launch from Wharariki Beach, at the top NW end of the South Island, with the Archway Islands in the background. Photo: Max Grant
Bottom Left: Max lining up to pass through an archway in Oananga Bay, Croisilles Harbour, north of Nelson. Photo: Melz Grant

KASK

President's Report May 2010

by John Hesseling

In April I attended the KASK Forum in Whangarei and also the subsequent social paddling week. I consider that both events were a great success and it was great to meet so many paddlers. I would like to thank members of the Northland Canoe Club for the excellent organization of the forum. I would also like to thank all of the presenters and instructors for their quality input.

About 70 people mainly from Auckland and north attended the forum and up to 20 paddlers camped at Oakura on the Whangaruru Harbour for the social paddling week. The weather during the paddling week was excellent and quite a few paddlers managed to paddle around or out to Cape Brett.

At the KASK AGM the following committee members were elected. Myself as President, Paul Caffyn (safety, publications and funding), Sandy Ferguson (Website), Evan Pugh (2011 Forum), John Gumbley (DoC liaison, funding and minute taker) and Sandy Winterton (WSNZ liaison). I am looking forward to working with the Committee over the next year.

John Hesseling

Notes from the AGM

Two items brought up under General Business were new membership fees to include the cost of a handbook and looking at producing the *KASK Handbook* as a PDF file. To date the handbook has been included gratis with \$35 new membership. This is now changed that new membership fee is \$50, \$35 for membership and \$15 to cover the handbook cost. New overseas membership will be \$50 plus the handbook postage cost. New joint or family membership rises to \$55, that is \$40 for membership and \$15 for the handbook.

Membership renewal fees remain unchanged.
Paul Caffyn

2010 KASK FORUM

by Paul Caffyn

With a combination of a great seaside venue, excellent local organization of registration and reception, tasty tucker, and entertainment by the Northland Canoe Club and a very talented group of keynote speakers and instructors from Australia and New Zealand, this 2010 Forum was a cracker. A selection of forum feedback articles discuss the overall weekend, selected sessions and also touch on the social paddling week that followed.

Only two comments for improvement were made at the Sunday debrief; firstly a microphone and sound system would have helped with speakers and a request for duplication of some sessions next time.

We were so fortunate with the quality and experience of the forum speakers and instructors. For me, the outstanding highlights of on-shore sessions were Colin Quilter's PP show of paddling around Stewart Island, Paul Hayward discussing emergency marine communications, and Mark Hutson's colourful, culinary cooking session, when he created chocolate brownies and tasty pizza using an array of MSR stoves. On the water, Steve and Sue, Tina and John, Sandy and Susan, Evan and the two Marks passed on their skills and knowledge, and the NCC club members led the local paddling discovery trips.

On Saturday night, the AGM went smoothly (see separate note) and after a sumptuous buffet-style dinner, the floor was cleared for dancing, and what a great night ensued.

PHOTO COMPETITION

A lovely mix of colourful photos graced a corner of the main hall at Taurikura with some excellent imaginative pics entered in the brand new humour category. The judges were Silke Magens-Groot, Lynnis Burson (both from Whangarei) and David Golightly (from Aussie).

Ruth Henderson did rather well with eight awards plus gained the prestigious 'paddlers' choice award for her print titled 'Dark Knight'. Needless to say, Ruth has been dobbed in a judge for the 2011 KASK photo competition.

Open

1. Steve Cooper
2. Natasha Romoff
3. Ruth Henderson

Action

1. Ruth Henderson*
2. Ruth Henderson
3. Ruth Henderson

Seascape

1. Ruth Henderson
2. Ruth Henderson
3. Renee Olivier

Coastal Marine Flora/Fauna

1. Ruth Henderson
2. Janet Scanlan
3. Ruth Henderson



Ruth Henderson and Steve Cooper burning up the floor at the Saturday night dance.

Humour

- 1. Mike Scanlan
- 2. Mike Scanlan
- 3. Natasha Romoff



Mike Scanlan receiving his 1st prize certificate from Paul and judge Silke

Paddler's Choice

Ruth Henderson*(see photo on p.24)

ANNUAL AWARDS

The Graham Egarr paddle trophy award recipients for the past 12 months were:

- 'Better than average Contribution to Sea Kayaking':

Kevin Dunsford

Kevin was a key figure in the protracted round of meetings, submissions, and negotiations with the Auckland Regional Council re the navigation safety bylaw clause 2.17.



Paul Hayward presenting the paddle trophy award to Kevin Dunsford

- 'Better than average Contribution to the Sea Canoeist Newsletter':

Cathye Haddock

This was for two informative articles on a tiki tour of the historical sites in Dusky Sound.

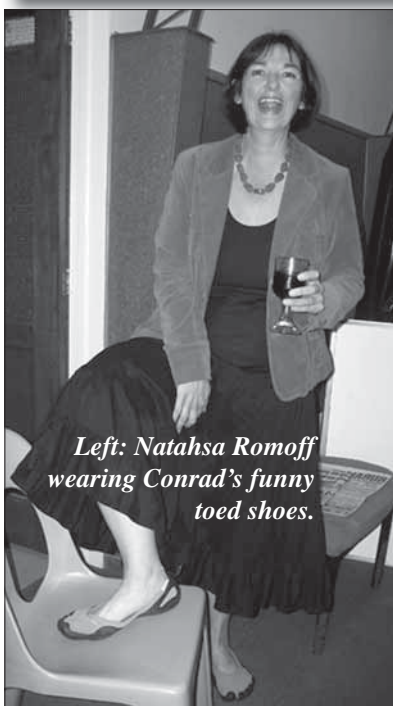
'Bugger! of the Year' Trophy

This was presented to Steve Cooper for his unfortunate shoulder dislocation in company with some of the world's best known paddlers.

See also colour photos of the forum on page 23 and one of Ruth Henderson's winning photos () on page 24.*



Above: Debbie Dunsford encouraging other dancers to take to the floor. Below: Susan Cade, mesmerizing Conrad Edwards with her fascinating footwork.



Left: Natahsa Romoff wearing Conrad's funny toed shoes.



Below: Custom cuisine presenter, Mark Hutson, reveals his cooking skills while wearing Evan's Pugh's naughty BBQ apron.

FORUM 2011

Planning is already afoot for a return to Anakiwa in 2011, for the weekend 1 – 3 April. Evan Pugh and Helen Woodward are organizing the forum. Updates with further details will appear on the events page of the KASK website and in the newsletter. The venue is the Outward Bound School at the head of Queen Charlotte Sound, some 20 minutes drive west of Picton. The Sunday night will be a camp-out at Mistletoe Bay and a 'social paddling week' will follow the forum, either in the Sounds or out around D'Urville Island.

The date again: 1 - 3 April 2011



2010 KASK FORUM SKILLS FOR WOMEN

by Renee Olivier

When I got the KASK schedule – I was in a bit of a conundrum as to what to pick as there were so many interesting topics. Whenever I go to these multi-session events I wish there were four parts of me – so that each one could attend a different session, to later download all the information to me.

Skills for Women with Tina Rowley was one of the first that I marked as a ‘must attend’. Why? Because it was a talk presented by a women for women and I am always keen to understand how to improve my skills.

When we arrived at KASK and were all standing in front of the lists putting our names down there was quite a bit of discussion/hypothesising from the men and women about what this topic could be about: How do women and men’s skills differ? Do they differ? Is it a technique thing? Could men attend?

That evening Tina gave two very inspirational talks - one about crossing Bass Strait and the other about doing a partial circumnavigation of Tasmania. On Saturday morning she gave another talk about circumnavigating Kangaroo Island.

After listening to Tina speak and hear David Winkworth say that he rated Tina as Australia’s most skilled woman paddler - this really solidified for me that I had made a good choice. On the day - the group was “no surprise” only women, although John, Tina’s partner –was our under-cover / honorary woman. Before we got on the water there was general discussion on some aspects of kayaking that can be problematic for women, especially if solo:

- Getting kayaks off & on cars, when on your own.
- Techniques for getting your kayak onto your trolley, especially when full.
- Tips for lifting kayaks, especially when on an expedition/long trips. Keep kayak in waist deep water, and then carry the kayak out of the water.

This negates the need to bend & lift the kayak from beach level which could cause causing back strain / or injury

- Empty boats before moving them. This seems very obvious and it appears to be a common thing that the Australian guests speakers do, emptying their kayaks into two dollar shop striped bags. I have not seen it done much here. We generally pack our boats near our cars and then haul the full boat to the water – using a trolley or carrying it – 4 persons to a kayak.

- Shewee use - Farmer Jane wetsuit, with zipper that enables easy Shewee access.

Next up were the things Tina wanted to focus on:

- Boat Fit & forward paddling stroke.
- Kayak fit: Tina emphasised that a nice snug fit is the key to controlling your kayak as your kayak moves with you when you do. This is especially true, when railing, rolling etc. So if you are not snug in your kayak, modify it to fit you better. Add thigh braces, add padding etc. Tina demonstrated by climbing into her “borrowed” kayak and moving it – while still on dry land. As I am on my own journey learning to roll my sea kayak, this was something I could really relate to.

Forward paddle/power stroke:

We mostly paddle in a forward motion, but are we using the correct technique? If you have sore arms, this could be an indication of bad technique i.e. paddling with the arms – and not using the core muscles.

Tina spent some time showing us her stroke and dissecting it into steps to assist us to engage body rotation which uses the body’s core muscles. She showed us her strong punch out, at eye level and slightly crossing the body and also emphasised the use of the legs. After her demonstration we all gave it a go and she gave us feedback.

She then showed us a couple of new tricks: Strong wind turn:

A new idea to most of us and a useful way to turn a kayak in strong wind. Hold on to end of paddle blade (with one hand) and put the other blade into the water as close to the bow of the kayak and then make small strokes away from the kayak (instead of one long sweep stroke). This easily moves the kayak around. The same can be done at stern of the kayak.

Waiting/resting position: I called it -hug the paddle blade. This is useful in choppy conditions while waiting for others. It involves using the paddle as an outrigger. Place one paddle blade flat on the water (as if you are going to do a brace stroke). The other blade of the paddle you hug to your chest with both hands crossed over. This should keep you stable in the water.

What a fabulous session and what lovely soft spoken very skilled kayaking Australian lady.
Renee Olivier

Tina Rowley demonstrating support strokes during her session for women paddlers. Photo: Renee Olivier



NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORTS

SOUTH ISLAND CIRCUMNAVIGATION PICTON to the 12 MILE by Max Grant

Arriving to catch a ride on the Blue-bridge at 3am was one hell of a way to start what we hoped to be the final leg of our circumnavigation of the South Island. We slept for most of the crossing and were changed and ready for an early start when the ferry doors opened. At 7.15am we launched our kayaks laden with eight days of supplies into Picton harbour and started our first days paddle up Queen Charlotte Sound as the bright red skies of a new dawn appeared in front of us.

Conditions were perfect and by 3pm we reached the small marina at Anakakata Bay, where we met Ron Marriot who was busy working on his boat and was only too happy to give us the latest marine weather up-date and information regarding kayaking around Cape Jackson. Another two hours remained until full tide, just perfect for getting around the Cape, but a strong northerly wind was whipping up. This could slow us down and make things unpleasant. Ron also offered us the use of a hut he owned on the Port Gore side of Cape Jackson where there was a small beach about two kilometres back from Cape Jackson itself.

Just over an hour later and Melz and I were making good progress into a strong headwind and two metre chop. By keeping close into the rocky shoreline, we were able to avoid most of the strong currents surging around the cape. Once around the cape we followed Ron's directions to a small beach, where we landed and made our way up to the hut.

It was a little beaut – two bunks, a table and chairs, cooking bench with stove and cooking utensils and a view across Pelorus Sound all the way to D'Urville Island. Not having to unpack our tents meant it would save us a lot of time next morning and would make for another early start for the day.

But it wasn't to be. We awoke to a strong NW wind that was pushing a rough sea straight into Cape Jackson. Whitecaps were building up to big waves that were breaking heavily into our little bay. Instead of kayaking that morning, we found ourselves going for a walk along the track for a stunning view of the lighthouse and across Cook Strait to the North Island.

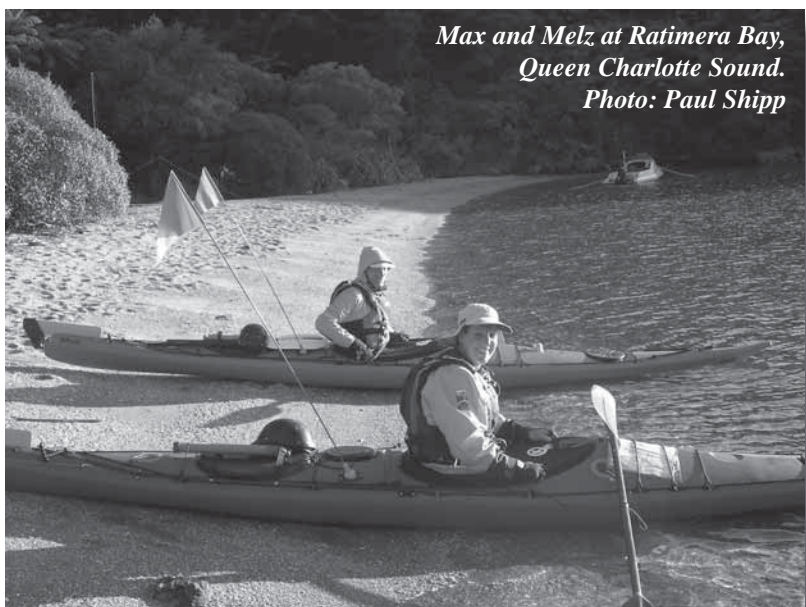
At midday we noticed the wind had changed to a westerly, so decided to head out into Port Gore as Cape Lambert and Alligator Head were now providing some shelter from the wind. After a rough start into a fairly strong headwind, we were soon paddling in the shelter of Cape Lambert where the sea flattened down enough to allow us to kayak through the large cave that runs through the end of the cape. Then on to Alligator Head where we stopped for a rest and a bite to eat. By now we were being assisted by a strong in-coming tide and also noticed the wind had gone right round to a predicted southerly, which meant we had both the tide and wind helping us on our way.

We seemed to be flying along and were able to round Clay Point to see French Pass in the distance before the sun went down. It was a full moon and as darkness fell, we decided there was enough light to keep paddling on

towards the lights of French Pass. At 8.15pm we ran the bows of our kayaks into the sandy beach in front of the DoC camping ground at French Pass. Not long after we had our tents up and were enjoying a hot meal after a most successful day's paddle – 50kms.

But not every day goes according to plan. After an early start next morning and a daunting paddle against the current at French Pass, conditions became very dangerous with a southerly now at full force. Okuri Bay was a mass of whitecaps and willie-willies that twisted their way into the sky. Both of us agreed to resting up at Little Waikawa Bay for the rest of the day and take a leisurely day fishing, having fun with some of the local seals and visiting a couple of the locals who lived there. We were offered the use of a caravan for the night so it turned out to be a good place to rest up.

With an early start the following morning and good conditions, we were able to reach Cable Bay before dark. At the local camping ground the caretakers, Phil and Sue Thompson, were very helpful and Phil passed on a lot of information about the West Coast around Karamea where he used to fly aircraft. He also gave us a lot of info about getting over to Farewell Spit from Separation Point, as we wouldn't be able to see



*Max and Melz at Ratimera Bay,
Queen Charlotte Sound.
Photo: Paul Shipp*



*The large freight vessel that spotted the orange chopper flags on the kayaks during the crossing of Tasman Bay.
Photo; Melz Grant*

the lighthouse on the spit until we were about halfway there.

Another brilliant day and an early start allowed us to head straight across Tasman Bay to Stephens Bay, near Kaiteriteri. Two hours out from Cable Bay one of the Royal New Zealand Navy frigates passed about a kilometre in front of us, as it left Port Nelson, followed by a second large freight ship which appeared to be heading straight for us. But a call up on my VHF radio and they assured me they had us in their sights and had spotted the orange flags we had attached to our kayaks, from quite a long way off. This was good to know as several fishing boats we had met along the way had made similar comments about our flags being clearly visible in an ocean swell.

At 2.30 pm we arrived at Stephens Bay where we had the use of our family bach. Here we had a good clean up, washing all our clothing and restocking our food supplies in preparation for our 7 to 10 day paddle to Paul Caffyn's home at the 12 Mile, north of Greymouth. Several of our relatives arrived that evening and we enjoyed a great feed of fresh steak and veggies washed down with a few wines and in all had a good catch up with our 'rellies' from Motueka.

After a striking red sunrise, we headed into Abel Tasman National Park in perfect conditions. For a couple of hours, we were paddling among several groups of kayakers doing their

holiday thing in groups that varied from two to up to a dozen, mainly in large double kayaks. For once in our trip we didn't feel so special, as boaties & water taxis sped past us without so much as a wave or "hello". We were just another couple of paddlers in the Park!

A westerly breeze hit us as we rounded Abel Head and made our way to the beach at Awaroa for our lunch stop. A short walk along a bush track and we arrived at Awaroa lodge, a very 'up market' holiday complex with luxury accommodation, bar and café. We decided it was time to treat ourselves and sat down to a very delicious meal of 'warm lamb & zucchini salad & hot mochachinos'. It was two hours before we made our way back to our kayaks to continue our trip – time flies when you're enjoying good food!

Within a couple of hours we had rounded Separation Point and headed into Whariwharangi Bay where we planned to spend the night at the Whariwharangi Hut. That evening I took a compass bearing on the lighthouse at the end of Farewell Spit, a distant flashing light straight out from our beach, just about due north.

In darkness next morning, we launched our kayaks at 5.30 am. This was to be a big one – out to the end of Farewell Spit and on to the Pillar Point lighthouse. A westerly breeze made conditions unpleasant for paddling across Golden Bay in darkness, but with a full moon, we

were able to keep an eye out for each other as we paddled in the darkness. We followed our compass bearing for just over an hour before the flashing white light from the Farewell Spit lighthouse finally appeared over the horizon. As the sun came up the light gradually disappeared and the outline of large pine trees started to appear in front of us. By 10 am we had rounded the shell banks at the end of the spit, and paddling along to the lighthouse on the northern side of Farewell Spit. We were now fully exposed to the Tasman Ocean and had to kayak through moderate surf before landing and making our way to the lighthouse and accompanying buildings.

Built in 1896, this was the second of two lighthouses constructed at the end of the Farewell Spit. The bottom two thirds of the tower is constructed of open steel girders with only the top third being enclosed with a dome on top where the lens for the light was encased. Standing approximately 26 metres high, its light flashes a full 360° every 30 seconds, with a section facing east coloured red to warn any boats that they are passing into the shallow waters adjoining the sand spit.

On the beach we were met by the local ranger for Golden Bay, Mike Ogle. After checking we were okay he gave us a quick run down on the various birds to look out for and to take special care around the Godwits, as they were preparing for their annual migration to China. The whole of the Farewell Spit area is a DoC nature reserve and permits are required for anyone planning to land or camp there.

That afternoon the westerly wind became stronger and as the evening approached it became obvious we weren't going to make it to Pillar Point, so had to land and make camp in the sand dunes on the spit. Sand was blowing everywhere and we were lucky to find a steep dune that gave us some shelter from the wind. The sand seemed to find its way into everything and by morning we were thankful to get back onto the ocean again.

A strong westerly wind made for unpleasant conditions and it wasn't until

mid afternoon that we kayaked among the Archway Islands and landed on Wharariki Beach. This was our first landing through the big breaking surf that we had been warned about and to expect all the way down the West Coast. This area is a DoC reserve and camping wasn't permitted, so we continued on to Greenhill Bay where we were able to kayak 2 km up the Greenhill River to an old abandoned hut that provided a great place to stay for the night.

While it was good to have a warm dry hut to stay in that night, we were concerned that conditions weren't good to continue down the coast and seriously considered pulling out at the next road access. That night I phoned Paul Caffyn for his views on the weather and what we could expect for the next few days. "The sea is going off like a bride's nightie, and there's nothing nasty coming in for several days." was his reply. "Put some big days in and get down here as quickly as you can."

Next day saw another early start onto a calm sea with a light north westerly breeze. By midday we reached Patu-
rau and were met by several surfers who were enjoying a good surf break on the beach. A good landing and lunch with some local holiday makers who were out enjoying the Easter Weekend and we were revived and ready for a big afternoon. Towards evening we reached Big River, where large waves were breaking over the river bar for about a kilometre out to sea. It looked really nasty, so we backtracked a kilometre to where the Raukawa stream flowed into sea. Away from the Big River bar, this proved to be a better landing place which we negotiated without incident.

There was also a hut not far from where we landed, but this time it was full so we opted to sleep out in our tents. But it was good to have company and enjoyed a good evening around their camp fire sharing food, drinks and stories.

The sea had roughed up a little over night, but after paddling out over a few large breaking waves, we settled down to a good pace with a northerly

breeze and swell helping us on our way. Our aim for the day was to reach Kohaihai, the most northern point of the road from Westport. As the day progressed the swell became so large that we were unable to make a landing for lunch. We paddled past the Heaphy River close enough to view the hut, but far enough out to avoid the mongrel sea breaking across the river bar.

Late that afternoon we approached Kohaihai Beach. A large swell was driving huge waves into the beach as we cautiously moved closer to try and find a good landing place. We were still a long way from the beach when two very large waves rolled in behind us. Turning to face them I was thankful to see Melanie clear the top of the first wave as it folded over and smashed into the water in front of me. I momentarily did not know what to do as this massive wall of water was about to hit me. As my bow started to climb into the furious mass of water, I instinctively rolled into the rolling position to try and go under it. All I can remember is being upside down with my arms out stretched above my head, as the water tried to wrench the paddle from my hands.

The next thing I can remember is being upright at the back of the wave, buried up to my waist in foam and sliding backwards down the wave. I paddled frantically and somehow pulled myself away from the wave, only to have the second wave bearing down on me. Paddling as hard as I could I was able to go over the top and eventually meet up with Melanie again.

We were both shaken up by the sheer size of the waves we had just paddled over. After a short rest to assess our position, we each concluded, "we have to land here as we don't have another option." We spent some time working our way in, turning and facing the larger waves and avoiding the breaking part of each wave. When we were reasonably close in and could see 4 to 5 lines of smaller rollers behind us, we both made a frantic effort to reach the shore before any larger ones caught up. It was hard to catch a ride on these large rolling waves, but somehow we were able to

get close enough to the beach so that when the larger waves did arrive, they had broken, and we were able to side surf them to the beach.

After catching our breath and making sure we were both alright, we discovered the damage that had been caused during the landing; my helmet had been torn from my rear deck, my knife was missing from my PFD and my rudder blade was bent, even though it was in the retracted position. Melanie was slightly worse off. One of her paddle blades was broken in half. From here on, she had to use our one spare paddle, which meant we no longer had a spare – scary stuff!

That evening after our tents were up and we had downed a good meal, we both stood on the beach and discussed how we were going to handle this huge surf we would have to negotiate at the start and conclusion of each day's paddle. Any food, rests or toilet stops from here on would all take place out on the ocean. We did not want to come in through this surf for anything else but to end our day's paddle.

To our delight the sea had calmed overnight and we successfully launched off Kohaihai Beach and arrived at the Karamea River about midday. Paddling upriver 2 km we were able to reach the 'Last Resort', a holiday resort that we had stayed at previously when whitewater kayaking on the Karamea River. We enjoyed a relaxing afternoon and treated ourselves to a three course meal and soft hotel beds to celebrate reaching the halfway point of our trip.

Over the next few days we successfully negotiated landings and launchings at Mokihinui, Birchfield and the Nile River mouth at Charleston. Leaving the Nile River after a good night camped further up-stream, we were pleasantly surprised to kayak through moderate surf out to a calm sea. By mid-morning we arrived at Woodpecker Bay, or where I thought Woodpecker Bay should be. As we kayaked towards the Fox River entrance, several dazzling flashes from someone's welding torch let rip at the southern entrance of the Bay.

NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORTS

South Island Lakes Journey by John Gumbley

John Hesselting, Evan Pugh and myself kayaked 360km around several South Island lakes in February this year. We kayaked the full shoreline (or in some cases the best bits) of lakes Waitaki, Aviemore, Benmore, Ohau, Tekapo, Pukaki in Canterbury, Lake Hawea in Otago, Okarito Lagoon and Lake Brunner (Moana) on the West Coast and finally Lake Rotoroa in Nelson/Marlborough. We thought it would be interesting to experience the wide 'high country' landscapes the eastern lakes would offer and in travelling up the west coast the quite different experience of lakes in forested environments.

The trip took two weeks in which we averaged 30km of paddling a day except for two travel days, one rest day and the novel experience of a day of rain on the West Coast where we visited Paul-the-Caffyn and held an impromptu KASK meeting whereby all the important affairs of state were neatly sorted over a few doubtful reds.

Prior to commencing, we enquired about the presence of Didymo algae on the lakes and learnt it is widespread in South Island waterways and present in streams entering/exiting many of these lakes. We did not see the algae although on Lake Ohau's western shore (on the village side), we had our suspicions. Applying Biosecurity New Zealand protocols of 'Check, Clean and Dry' we made sure kayaks and gear were

clean and dry before launching into the next lake. We sprayed detergent (10% concentration- NB double previous guidelines on concentrations) on our footwear before leaving for the next lake. Subsequent advice has been that we should assume didymo is indeed present on many of the lakes. Positive results have been recorded at Lake Ohau but in most lakes sampling has not been undertaken because the best means of collecting algae is by using drift nets. Often didymo will not manifest itself in lakes except on the shallow wave zone where it can get enough light and oxygen. It is assumed that Tekapo and Pukaki will not enable didymo establishing due to those very milky glacial lake waters having poor light levels.

Our routine was to be on the water by 7 am and usually we were off the lake and making camp by mid afternoon. Early starts were great and certainly the stillness of the water and early morning atmosphere made this the best part of the day. The weather was amazingly consistent. Often overcast, no rain and no wind except by mid afternoon when it was not uncommon for the wind to pick to 15 knots making lake conditions choppy. Regardless of what direction we paddled around a lake we always had a head wind in the afternoon but life is not all gravy and pushing in to a wind made it all the more varied and enjoyable. On a few occasions the wind would come up very quickly from anywhere.

The Waitaki District lakes

Lake Waitaki: Commencing on the south-west shoreline on private property we covered 11km, which is about 3km short of a full circuit. As with all the lakes several trout were

"Could be someone trying to signal to us." said Melanie.

"Like who?" I asked. "Those are definitely welding flashes."

And so, into the beach at the Fox River entrance we went. We had hardly had time to stretch our legs when a car pulled up and we were officially welcomed to 'The Coast' by local sea kayaking dignitaries, Paul Caffyn, Lynda Ferguson, Leon Dalziel and Cordelia Chu. For Melz and I it was just so great to be met by our sea kayaking friends after 14 days of continuous kayaking from Picton. And I was told in no uncertain way that we had not landed at Woodpecker Bay! It was another 500 metres further on, where they had been busy signalling at us to come in. I think we were forgiven though as drinks were handed around and a much needed spare paddle was given to us.

Now, all that remained to finish such a good day, was to end by landing on the doorstep of Paul's home at the 12 Mile. Late that afternoon the flashes from Paul's signalling mirrors could be seen from several kilometres out from the 12 Mile. As we ran the bows of our kayaks up the beach in front of Paul's home, there were handshakes, hugs and smiles all round. We hauled our kayaks from the beach and up the retaining wall to where a barbecue was ablaze with sausages and all sorts of other food, a grand feast that had been prepared in anticipation of our arrival.

A highlight of our trip, to arrive at Paul's home and spend a warm and enjoyable evening eating and drinking with him and his friends. As we sat there enjoying one another's company, the sun sank slowly below the horizon. Later that night Melz and I were busy restocking our food supplies for the final part of our trip back to Jackson Bay, the point where we originally started our circumnavigation of the South Island.

*To be continued –
the final chapter
to Jackson Bay*





John Gumbley and Evan Pugh paddling on the glassy surface of Lake Ohau. Photo: John Hesselring

seen and here a few salmon as well. The landscape was largely barren rock scarps with a willow lake fringe and occasional shallow wetland sections where most wildlife were found, especially Canada geese.

Lake Aviemore: From the Parson Rock campground at the south west end this 40km paddle enabled us to do a near full circuit except the last 500m river section at the Benmore dam. The landscape is similar to Waitaki. We passed numerous possible campsites especially on the northern shoreline with a feature of many of these lakes being the presence of (empty) tents and caravans. On the northern shore (E1384273 N5057817) we encountered a totally loaded apricot tree which served us well over the trip. Paddling late in the afternoon that day made for a good headwind push home.

Lake Benmore: Departing from Waitaki District's Sailor's Cutting campground on the southern shore of Lake Benmore's west lobe, we paddled 88km around the full lake edge over 3 days. The west lobe has a shallow marshy west end where fish and birdlife are abundant. Nearing the narrow connection with the main lake was a highlight with stark steep hillsides of bare rock. This section and the southern half of the main lake are

the most interesting from a landscape perspective due to the proximity of steep sided valley slopes. The hillsides are bare except for clumps of briar, *Hieracium*/ hawkweed and eaten out tussock and grasses. Rabbits are everywhere but hares too cause serious damage. Looking along the lake with its many peninsulas, it was easy to distinguish islands due to the latter being covered in wilding pines, having escaped intensive rabbit and hare browsing as seedlings. Rabbits are still on the islands but not in the same density as the mainland. The lake water is a Ming blue colour (due to the glacial rock flour) which adds to the stunning semi- arid high country feel of the place. The current at the powerhouse at the northern end is very strong with standing waves.

Campsites are easily located by looking out for mature willows on the shoreline, although generally the giveaway was their being located on outwash gravels at the foot of catchments. The two campsites we camped on had their share of nocturnal wildlife – rats, possums and bloody hedgehogs. There is a boat ramp at the Benmore dam which is a good access point.

Lake Ohau: We stayed at the Lake Middleton campground on the Ohau

lake edge near the alpine village and did a 43km full circuit of the lake. A lesson learnt at the site was to always disconnect your gas cylinder from the stove overnight -it leaked after being knocked over. A wide high country landscape that would be stunning in winter. There were a few "campsites" on the eastern edge but the Middleton site is good. The wind late afternoon sprung up very quickly from nowhere.

Lake Tekapo: The Tekapo campground on the lake edge is a very busy place late afternoon but it clears out almost entirely by mid morning. Good walks up to Mount Bruce Observatory with fantastic views of the lake including Lake Alexandrina. Again those early morning starts are great and we did an almost a complete circuit at 36km by kayaking along the eastern edge to the northern end and straight lining to Motuariki Island located in the middle of the lake towards the southern end. We scoured the island for the large football sized pine cones it is renowned for but no luck. We had stunning views of Mount Aoraki/Cook and a spectacular landscape all round – a geologist's dream.

Lake Pukaki: We camped on the eastern edge about half way along the lake. There are other campsites



Luxury travelling, while touring the southern lakes. From left: John Hesseling, John Gumbley & Evan Pugh.

but certainly the eastern side offers the best privacy. Perfect views of Aoraki/Mt Cook especially at sunset and the lake water milky with near zero visibility. Very occasionally there were crystal clear room- size "holes" in the lakewater where springs were up-welling. The 25km northern half circuit is recommended.

Lake Hawea: The DoC Kidds Bush campground is an ideal place to stay to explore this lake, and kayaking eastward from the camp and northward along that shoreline with its incredibly steep bluffs, was very interesting. We did a 30km circuit and found the lake water exceptionally clear. The lake was raised 19m for the hydro dam and it was somewhat eerie looking down on or weaving around the still standing skeletons of tall trees. A lake we would have liked to have explored further.

The braided rivers running into lakes Pukaki, Tekapo, Ohau and Hawea are very important ecologically, and provide habitat for threatened species such as kaki/black stilt, black-fronted tern and wrybills – refer to: <http://doc.govt.nz/conservation/native-animals/birds/wetland-birds/black-stilt-kaki/>. Birds that breed in these places migrate to northern shores like the Manukau Harbour and Firth of Thames to over-winter. We did see three NZ falcon at the lakes and at Ohau were within 3

metres of a harrier hawk that was not going to abandon the quite large trout it was feeding on. Otherwise, the usual wildfowl were seen and cute southern crested grebes. Often only a few of these birds can be found on a lake – usually only a pair. These birds generally spend their entire lives on a lake despite the freezing winter conditions.

WEST COAST

Okarito Lagoon: Moving on to the West Coast, we considered the many lakes worth exploring, but settled on staying at the quaint Okarito (campground) and paddling 18km of the lagoon. Fascinating place with its saltmarsh meadows and mosaic of different wetland vegetation types including kahikatea lined crystal clear streams. Best to follow the marked poles to keep to deeper channels, but it is worth going as far as possible up streams. We saw a number of royal spoonbills and the kotuku/white heron – magnificent birds.

Moana/Lake Brunner: Inclement weather saw plans shuffled, but paddling on Moana was a real treat. We covered 34 km which is close to being a full circuit. Departing from the Moana boat ramp we enjoyed paddling on the tannin-stained water past granite bluffs and weaving amongst kahikateas. It is magical at the southern end, going up streams and wetlands and along

the sandy beaches, especially Swan, Carew and Bain bays. Swan Bay is great for photographing trees and wildlife. Good swimming too with a DoC campground at Bain Bay. We met up with a commercial eel fisherman on the lake setting fyke nets, who informed us he 'catches short- and longfinned eels as thick as your arm'. Longfinned eels have the same conservation threat status as kiwi so a sensitive subject locally. We really just skimmed the West Coast and must go back.

Nelson/Marborough

Lake Rotoroa: 50 Trillion sandflies with a similar number of wasps aside, this very pretty narrow lake within Nelson Lakes National Park was a treat. The circuit of 32km from the DoC campground allows for paddling alongside great beech forest, rising up to the sharply demarcated bushline, to alpine fell fields on craggy mountains. The water very clear and very deep once off the 2m wide shoreline shelf. The sandflies and wasps are not a problem once on the water. We passed two DoC huts at the southern end and several streams had trout.

The trip was full of contrasts with each lake different. Being on the lakes enabled us to get a good feel for the place(s) - a privilege and with lots more to go back to as well.

John Gumbley

NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORT

Kayaking Around Stewart Island by Colin Quilter

*Reprinted from the
Auckland Canoe Club
Newsletter*

In Physics, most forces of attraction decline with distance. For example the pull of gravitation and magnetism both decrease as distance increases. But for a kayaker the reverse is true. The more remote the destination, the greater the attraction it exerts. It follows that if you live in Auckland as I do, Stewart Island exerts a powerful attraction. Recently I turned 60 and retired from full-time work. This gave me the freedom to make longer trips, unconstrained by the deadlines of paid employment. My kayak is a 24 year-old plywood Sea Bear, perhaps not ideally suited to hard landings and rough treatment on an exposed coast, but it is an old friend in whom I have great confidence.

To reach Stewart Island, I drove onto State Highway 1 in Auckland and stayed on it for three days. It's not a cheap trip; the cost of petrol to drive to Bluff and back (\$400), the return crossing of Cook Strait (\$380), the return crossing of Foveaux Strait for me and my kayak (\$180), and secure parking for my car for 16 days at Bluff (\$70) totalled more than \$1,000.

While in Bluff I visited Meri and Ian Leask in their cottage on the waterfront. Meri operates the Bluff Fishermans' Radio network. Each morning and evening, from her kitchen in Bluff, she speaks to commercial fishermen scattered along the Southland coast. She is their point of contact with home, and with rescue services if they are ever needed. I wanted her help because I knew that my 5-watt handheld VHF would not have the power to contact her from remote Stewart Island beaches. I asked her if I could request any fishermen whom I met on the coast to pass messages on to her using their 25-watt sets. She agreed that was a good idea, (and I later found out that she had asked fishermen in her network to look out for me, so that information about my travels reached her, in some cases, without my even knowing).

I crossed Foveaux Strait on the ferry, a powerful aluminium catamaran that takes just an hour to reach Oban. Oban is the only settlement on Stewart Island. It addresses itself to tourists; there are a couple of cafes, some bed-and-breakfasts, a backpacker hostel, a hotel or two, and a DoC office which is where I went to fill out a Trip Intention form. The ranger there confirmed that I had come at a good time. After weeks of windy weather the 5-day forecast predicted light winds due to a slow-moving ridge of high pressure over the South Island. It was time to reconsider my strategy for circumnavigating the island.

Stewart Island is roughly triangular, with each side being 60-90km long. Two of the sides (the NE and SE sides) are relatively sheltered from the prevailing westerly wind and swell. They both have many protected inlets and bays. The third side, the west coast, is a different story. It bears the full force of the 'roaring forties,' (its latitude being about 47° south). The great westerly swells of the southern ocean march onto the west coast without ceasing. Landings here (except in a few sheltered inlets) are always going to be difficult. Still, the forecast was as good as one could ever hope for. I decided to seize the opportunity and get onto the west coast as fast as possible.

After a quick lunch on the waterfront at Oban I headed north-west. My kayak was deeply loaded with enough food for three weeks; since each day's food weighs 1 kg, that was about 20 kg in addition to the usual camping gear. I didn't expect the trip to last that long, but if bad weather trapped me on some remote beach then at least I wouldn't go hungry. The afternoon was grey and calm, and the tidal stream was running at 1-2 knots in my favour. The NE coast is made up of a series of white-sand beaches separated by headlands. A kayaker could land and camp just about anywhere, (and there

are also several trampers' huts which are part of the North-west Circuit Track). By 8pm I had reached Smoky Beach, with 40km paddling behind me, and most of the NW side of the island in my wake.

At the western end of Smoky Bay I found a good campsite, previously used by hunters, in the bush behind the beach. Stewart Island is home to a herd of Whitetail Deer, and hunters have established small huts and campsites all over the island. In most of the bays where I stopped, hunters had been before me, and since they have an eye for a comfortable camping spot I found it was always worth searching for sites they had used before.

Next morning when the alarm went at 5 am I breakfasted, packed up my tent, and loaded the kayak by torchlight. At first light I was on the water, heading towards Cave Point where I would turn left onto the mighty west coast. As I turned the corner in the sharp light of morning the full scope of the problem was revealed. Glassy swells lifted themselves and broke with a roar all along East Ruggedy Beach. A dense mist of spray hung like a curtain along the coast, hiding the beach and the dunes behind it. I knew immediately that I would be unlikely to find a landing for the next 30 km until I reached the southern end of Mason Bay where the Ernest Islands protect one end of the beach from the swell. At 6 km/hr I had at least five

Colin's kayak being craned on board the ferry at Bluff. With three weeks food on board, it was too heavy to be man-handled.





A curious dotterel on the stone fields behind Mason Bay

beaches of Northland, where humans, oystercatchers and gulls are the most common visitors.

Dunes back the beach for most of its length. In places they extend a kilometre or two inland. Stone fields occur among them and on these windswept flats, dotterels were common. They were cautious at first, but when I sat down on the sand and remained very still they approached out of curiosity, and I was able to take some nice photographs of birds less than a metre away from the camera.

hours of paddling ahead of me, and it was essential that I not encounter a headwind strong enough to slow or stop me.

The morning passed as I worked slowly south. The beaches on this coast have evocative names; East and West Ruggedy, Big and Little Hellfire, all partially hidden behind a mist of spray flung up by the breakers that hurled themselves onto the coast. The distant roar of the surf was constant and unsettling, a reminder of what awaited me if the wind got up and I was forced to attempt a landing. But the hours passed, and in the early afternoon after paddling for 8.5 windless hours I eventually pulled ashore at the sheltered southern end of Mason

Looking south to the southern end of Mason Bay. Colin's campsite was below the arrow, near a lagoon called 'The Gutter'.



Bay. I was tired, and very relieved to be there. Half an hour later a fresh south-westerly wind filled in across the bay; if I had still been paddling it would have brought me to a complete standstill, with consequences I didn't want to think about. It was a powerful reminder of the value of an early start, and I vowed never again to grumble when the alarm went off at 5am.

Mason Bay is the iconic beach on the west coast of Stewart Island. I saw it in all its rugged beauty next morning, after a cold front had passed through during the night. Lines of breakers marched ashore along its 10km length, and a grey sea flecked with whitecaps stretched northwards towards Codfish Island on the horizon. It was a day for walking, not paddling. I set off along the beach after breakfast, trying to recognise who had made footprints on the sand during the night. Here a seal had come ashore, leaving symmetrical flipper marks. The three-toed prints above the high-water mark, were from a kiwi with a distinctive curving scratch where one claw had scraped the sand as each foot swung forward. The deep pug-marks were from deer which had used the beach to travel from one grassy clearing to another. Quite a change from the familiar

At the northern end of the beach, a few kilometres inland there is a local summit – the 'Big Sandhill' – about 160 metres high. The view from the top, buffeted by the wind, took in the wide sweep of the bay. Sand carried by the wind stung my legs, and I noticed that granite outcrops below the summit had been etched by windblown sand with a pattern of deep parallel grooves, all aligned with the direction of the westerly wind. Considering the hardness of the rock, one could only wonder at the timescale of such events.

The wind eased overnight. Next morning, before forecast southerlies arrived, I put in a couple of hours to reach Doughboy Bay, crossing a lumpy swell left over from the previous day. Doughboy is another curving beach of golden sand, but much more sheltered than Mason Bay. There's a DoC trampers' hut here, (part of the 9-day Southern Circuit) but I preferred a campsite in the bush behind the beach, north of the hut. Behind the bay is Doughboy Hill (400m). That afternoon I climbed it to gain the view, and to see if I could pick up a VHF weather forecast on Channel 23 (from the repeater on Mt Rakeahua). Not only was that successful, but I was



Colin overlooks the sandy beach at the head of Doughboy Bay. It was possible to walk without a shirt because the sandflies were slow fliers and could not keep up with a walking man. But couldn't stop for long.

able to txt home as well; so the climb was well worth the effort.

By now more than half of the west coast was behind me. About 40 km remained before I turned the corner at South West Cape onto a more sheltered coast. I was on edge, knowing that the good weather couldn't last forever. During the night the wind souged in the trees above my tent, and when the alarm went at 5 am, I lay in my sleeping bag in the darkness and thought that there was little hope of paddling today. But then my conscience stirred, and I decided to paddle out and check conditions at the headland; although I fully expected to be back, pitching my tent in the same spot, within a few hours.

Before the sun cleared Doughboy Hill, I rounded the west head of the bay and had the 10 km of cliffs leading to South Red Head ahead of me. Unbelievably, the wind had died away to nothing. Just as well; there were no landings here. I paddled steadily southwards across an oily swell all morning. Further south, the cliffs relented and I began to pass sheltered inlets where landing would have been easy, (Three Legged Woodhen, Easy Harbour, Tupari Bay) but I didn't stop. I wanted to have done with the wild west coast.

Now I was entering the channel between Big South Cape Island and Stewart Island, and the south-going

tidal stream had me in its grip. The headlands began to slip past at an increasing rate; my GPS showed 12km/hr, double my normal speed. I'd been warned only to attempt to pass South West Cape at slack water, and this was mid-flood on a spring tide, with the current running at full strength. But what a day; fine and glassy calm! It seemed a pity not to blast on through.

Nicholson Harbour was approaching on my left, the last sheltered landing before the cape. Should I stop? Too late, I was swept past the entrance. It was just like missing a motorway exit. Hesitate for a moment, and the chance is lost.

On my right, in the deep water of mid-channel, continuous lines of standing waves toppled with a roar into breakers. Overfalls indeed. On my left, close alongside, swells broke on the cliffs of the cape. Between the overfalls and the cliffs was a narrow lane of calmer water where the current was less swift, and that was where I had to stay. There were huge eddies here, 50 metres across, and as I hit them at speed the bow of the kayak was flung sideways with such force that a brace stroke was necessary. What made this tidal race impressive was not its speed, but its volume. The channel is 2 to 3 km wide, and it felt like half the Pacific Ocean was pouring

through. I have traversed French Pass at full flow, but although the current velocity is greater at French Pass, it is a puny trickle compared to the immense power of the Big South Cape tidal race. I am glad to have experienced it once; and it will be only once.

Moments after I rounded the cape, an inlet opened up on my left. Tucked improbably into one side of it is a tiny cove called Flour Cask Bay (named after a rock supposedly of that shape). Being at the extreme southern tip of Stewart Island, Flour Cask Bay is perhaps the most remote beach in New Zealand, and I wanted to camp there for that reason alone. I was also in a state of nervous tension after an hour in the tidal race, and needed to relax. As I rounded the corner and sighted the bay it looked like paradise: a bush-clad cove with a shingle beach, tranquil in the afternoon sun, and a complete contrast to the big swells outside.

However at that moment, unbeknown to me, two different world views were coming into conflict. I thought the cove was mine, at least for one night. The bull sea lion who lived on the beach thought it belonged to him; (this species is endemic to New Zealand, and used to be called Hooker's Sea Lion, now the New Zealand Sea Lion). Bull sea lions weigh up to half a tonne. They are highly territorial, bad-tempered, have big yellow teeth, and they DON'T like kayakers trespassing on their property. So while I floated peacefully at the mouth of the bay, congratulating myself on finding such a haven, the sea lion was heading towards me, deep underwater, at a speed of about 20 knots. The first indication I had of his presence was when he erupted out of the water close alongside with a hissing roar, mouth agape and bloodshot eyes rolling. My heart stopped. Then after a few seconds my brain rebooted and I decided that, sea lion or no sea lion, I had to land. There was nowhere else to go. So in to the beach I went, paddling furiously, with the sea lion protesting at every metre, and doing everything short of actually hitting me.

Once on shore I found a shaded and pleasant campsite in the scrub at the eastern end of the beach. After a cup



Colin by his campsite at the head of Flour Cask Bay

of tea and a wash in the stream I was completely happy, in contrast to the sea lion who patrolled the cove all afternoon, not coming ashore but casting baleful looks in my direction on each circuit. I met sea lions several times during the following week, and never lost my fear of them. Judging from my experience (and comments from fishermen) I think it's unlikely they would make actual physical contact with a kayaker, but they are such big and aggressive animals that the consequences of an attack would be serious indeed. In size and temperament male sea lions are completely different from fur seals, which always flee from humans.

The forecast next morning was for 20 knot headwinds later in the day, so I started early in spite of having the tidal stream against me. However by using eddies close to the rocks I made surprisingly good progress; it was just the headlands that were a struggle, where I paddled at sprint speed to creep past them against the sluicing tide. Then at the southern entrance to Port Pegasus I was enveloped in fog, and had feel my way in using GPS. However by midday the fog had cleared, and I found myself in an expansive harbour so well enclosed that from most places the open sea is out of sight, and you might imagine yourself to be on a lake. On every side the bush comes right down to the water, and to the west bare granite hills lift themselves above the forest.

I expected that there would be many beaches and camping spots in Port



Port Pegasus is so sheltered that bush grows right down to the water's edge. Bald Cone is on the the skyline.

Pegasus, but that is not the case. All the beaches are backed by rocks, and on many of them at high tide the water covers the sand completely and laps at the rocks, so that the beaches are only exposed at mid and low tides. Moreover, since Port Pegasus was created when the sea flooded an ancient valley, it is the old ridges and hill tops which now make up the foreshore, and these are generally steeply-sloping. There's little flat land close to the water. I wandered around the harbour for several hours looking for a campsite without success, but late in the day found a DoC hunters'

hut (the North Pegasus Hut) on an attractive white-sand beach in Pegasus Passage, inside Anchorage Island. The hut was empty, clean and homely, with 8 bunks and a potbelly stove, and I decided to make it my base for the next few days. (Note: both DoC and the Rakiura Maori Land Trust have established a number of hunters' huts on Stewart Island. Hunters have priority in booking them, but if they are empty then recreational users are welcome).

The six days which I spent in Port Pegasus were enough to explore most

From the granite summit rocks of Bald Cone, the view eastwards over the sheltered waters of Port Pegasus.





The North Pegasus Hut sits just behind this beach in Pegasus Passage

arms of the harbour. The day I enjoyed most was spent climbing Bald Cone, a 230 metre summit overlooking South Arm. The hill is so named because its granite core is exposed on the summit, and the naked rock has been weathered into spectacular slabs and boulders, some of enormous size. The track up Bald Cone begins in a little creek on the southwest side; once I had found the beginning of it the rest was easy to follow.

Near the summit the route ascends a steep, bare rock chute but someone has helpfully hung a rope down the gully which turns a rather exposed climb into an easy scramble. The view from the top - of mountain, sea and shore - is stunning. I wandered around on the warm, bare granite in a happy daze, certain that this must be one of the best views in New Zealand, and feeling privileged to be standing alone in such a place on a glorious February morning. If I had seen nothing else, that hour on top of Bald Cone would have made my Stewart Island trip worthwhile.

(Note: it might have occurred to the reader, as it did to me, that there's an element of risk in clambering alone among empty hills when no-one else knows of one's intentions or location. However on these walks I always took the 406MHz radio beacon from my kayak and carried it with me as insurance against a broken ankle or

other injury. EPIRBs work as well on land as they do on the water).

From Port Pegasus there's a 25 km stretch of coast where landings are few or absent, heading east towards Port Adventure. I started early (of course) and reached Big Kuri Bay by noon. The hunters' hut there sits on the edge of a white-sand beach; it looked so inviting that I declared the afternoon to be a holiday from paddling. Now that the west coast was behind me I felt much more relaxed, and lying in the shade of a tree behind the beach I recalled the words of the baseball player Satchel Paige, "Sometimes I sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits." Paige must have known a thing or two about sea lions, because another quotation attributed to him was, "Don't look back; something might be gaining on you."

Leaving Big Kuri Bay next morning I stopped briefly at the mouth of Lords River. Anyone serious about seeing the coast would have explored upriver but a holiday mood was upon me, so I crossed the river mouth and paddled on along the coast to Little Kuri Bay where another hunters' hut sat just behind the white sand. It was barely 11.30am when I arrived there. One could not possibly justify stopping travelling so early in the day, but it was such a nice spot that without hesitation, I did. Just as well I had no companions to reproach me for laziness. Another

afternoon was spent doing - nothing, and very pleasant it was too.

Heading east, the next headland was Shelter Point, with a 2-knot tidal race running in my favour; and beyond that, Port Adventure. The reader can probably predict my activities here (or lack of them). I paddled slowly around the harbour; wondered how the inlet called Abraham's Bosom had got its name; landed at the DoC hunters' hut in North Arm, (which I disapproved of because it was south-facing and lacked a shady tree suitable for a contemplative kayaker); and then found a second hut at Kelly's Beach on the western side of the harbour. This one was so beautifully sited in a sunny, north-facing cove that I declared a holiday for the afternoon - again.

By now, although progress was limited by my unwillingness to paddle beyond lunchtime each day, I had reached the eastern end of Stewart Island. I turned northwards. About 9am next morning, after a couple of hours on the water I reached Chew Tobacco Bay where there is another well-sited hut on a lovely beach. I confess that I very nearly stopped to spend the rest of the day here, but even by my standards 9am seemed a bit too early to quit for the day, so with several backward looks I continued northwards.

By noon I had rounded Bullers Point, with Paterson Inlet open in front of me. In the distance, for the first time in a fortnight, I could see boats, houses, and people. Oban was just a few kilometres around the corner. What to do? I didn't want the trip to end. When in doubt, make a cup of tea. Over lunch in a little cove just east of Bullers Point I looked at the map and decided to explore the far western end of Paterson Inlet, perhaps including the Freshwater River which enters from the north-west.

A lazy afternoon at Little Kuri Bay.



"Sometimes I sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits."

During the afternoon I worked my way up Paterson Inlet, past Native Island and Ulva Island, and eventually landed at the DoC campsite at Sawdust Bay. A cold front preceded by strong north-westerlies was forecast, and as predicted the next morning dawned grey and windy. This end of Paterson Inlet is very shallow, with extensive sand and mud flats exposed at low tide. At about mid-flood tide I tried to find the mouth of the Freshwater River, but ran aground on mudflats two kilometres seaward of where I thought it must be.

Assuming that somewhere the river must cut a channel through the mudflats I left the canoe and trudged some distance looking unsuccessfully for it; (I've since located the channel on *Google Earth*, well to the south of where I landed). By now clouds had hidden the hilltops and a stiff north-westerly was making life on the mudflats unpleasant, so without regret I settled into the boat and with the wind behind me travelled swiftly back down the length of Paterson Inlet. Once around Ackers Point, Halfmoon Bay opened up ahead of me, and before I could really accept what had happened I found myself standing on the Oban foreshore, 16 days and 354km after I had left it.

To summarise my impressions about Stewart Island: it is a kayaker's dream, being remote, beautiful and seldom-visited. The northeast and southeast sides of the island contain so many sheltered bays and inlets that, with the possible exception of the 25km stretch between Port Pegasus and Big Kuri Bay, one could always find a landing and somewhere to camp if the weather required it. Even on the west coast, the

southern one third is well supplied with sheltered harbours (Doughboy, Three Legged Woodhen, Easy, Nicholson's). The four significant problems that I see in a trip around the island are:

- The cost and time required to get oneself and kayak to and from Oban (more than \$1,000 and 6 days of driving if you take your car from Auckland with a kayak on the roof).

- The northern 30km of the west coast from Cave Point to the south end of Mason Bay. On this stretch there are no harbours and the southern ocean swell creates such a heavy surf that landing, if it becomes necessary, will almost always be a desperate measure. On this coast the wind may stop for a day or three, but I doubt that the swell ever does.

- Tidal races around the major headlands, especially South West Cape; but the solution is to traverse these at slack water, especially if that occurs early in the morning before the wind gets up.

- The likelihood that bad weather on the west coast will trap you ashore for several days or longer. The solution is to carry plenty of food, and be prepared to walk out from Mason Bay or Doughboy Bay if that becomes necessary.

If anyone is planning a trip to Stewart Island I am happy to share information, (colin.g.quilter@gmail.com). I've also written a "paddlers' guide" to Port Pegasus which will be available on the KASK website. This describes huts, campsites and places of interest.

Colin Quilter

FURTHER READING

Stewart Island Explored, by John Hall Jones, 1994, Craigs, Invercargill. Superb history of the island with 200+ photos and sketches. 216 pp

Rakiura - A History of Stewart Island, by Basil Howard, 1940, Reeds, Wgtn Comprehensive early history, best sourced at a library. 415 pp

Isle of Glowing Skies, by Gertrude Demsey, 1951, Reeds, Wgtn. Mainly about family life on the island. 64 pp

Dark Side of the Wave - Stewart Island Kayak Odyssey. The first kayak trip around the island, by Paul Caffyn. 1979. 96 pp. Long out of print.

BOOK REVIEW

Title: *The Watkins Boys*

Author: Simon Courtauld

Publisher: Michael Russell UK

Website: michaelrussell@waitrose.com

Published: 2010

Contents: 208 pp, index, one map, 8pp b&w photos, bibliography

Cover: Hardback with dust-jacket

Size: 160 x 240 mm

Price: UK RRP £18.95

ISBN: 978-0-85955-318-6

Review: Paul Caffyn

In 1930, a charismatic young Cambridge undergraduate raised financial backing for an expedition of 13 equally young men to the Angmagssalik region of East Greenland with the principal aim of establishing weather stations both on the coast and on the Greenland icecap for a proposed trans-Atlantic commercial air route. It was called the British Arctic Air Route Expedition, or BAARE. The young bloke was leading his third Arctic expedition – Gino Watkins was only 23 years old.

Given a long history of disastrous British polar expeditions - the era of heroic failure when some or all of the participants died through ineptitude and/or poor planning – the outstanding success of BAARE was such a positive breath of fresh air to the British public, who were still suffering from the post war shortages and calamitous loss of British manhood from the first world war.

Simon Courtauld, nephew of August of the 'stranded on the ice cap fame', has written a long overdue book on seven of the key figures of BAARE, how they came to be invited to join this expedition and how their time in East Greenland so influenced the rest of their lives.

Following two preliminary chapters, the book summarizes the lives of six of the key members of BAARE who went on to lives of outstanding achievements; August Courtauld, Martin Lindsay, Quintin Riley, John Rymill, Jimmy Scott and Freddy Spencer Chapman; while the final

chapter describes the charismatic leadership and short life (25 years) of Gino Watkins.

Publicity in the British media of the plight of August Courtauld, who was stranded at the ice cap weather station, 120 miles west of the coastal expedition base, significantly raised public awareness of BAARE.

Buried in his tent by winter snows, August Courtauld was totally reliant on his own resources for five months and, having left his shovel on the surface, was entombed in the ice cap for the last six weeks, with successive re-supply trips unable to find the buried tent. A three man relief attempt, led by Jimmy Scott, suffered atrocious conditions on the ice cap and unable to locate the buried tent, Jimmy blamed himself for failing to rescue Courtauld, ruining his confidence so much that he never again returned to the polar regions.

The subsequent relief trip, utilized the survey skills of the only Antipodean member of BAARE, John Rymill, to locate the ventilator tube marking the top of August's tent.

The 1934 published expedition accounts by Freddy Spencer Chapman, Northern Lights and Watkins' Last Expedition, were sanitized for the British public. Any salacious material, such as the sexual shenanigans and the native progeny of Gino and Freddy, down to the labelling the steep glacial grunt up to the ice cap as 'Bugbear Bank' instead of what it was actually called, 'Buggery Bank', was removed.

My library now has upwards of 32 books on the two Gino Watkins-led east Greenland expeditions and accounts by its team members; autobiographies by Lindsay, Courtauld and Spencer Chapman, biographies of Scott, Rymill, Riley, Courtauld, and Spencer Chapman, several with chapters on the leadership style of Gino, and a recent account of the 1986 Australian expedition led by Earl Bloomfield.

I had always felt there was a need for a book which described the influ-

ence that BAARE had on the later lives of the expedition members, what they got up to in their waning years, if they kept in touch with each other, what contribution they made to inspiring younger folk and how they fell off their perches, whether by their own hand or the ageing process. Simon has satisfied all my demands for such a book with *The Watkins Boys*. A select bibliography of 28 titles and comprehensive index complete the book.

The photo section is very disappointing, with only eight pages of photos; most of which are commonly seen in other books; pics such as Gino hunting in his 'white kayak', and the 14 vignette portraits of the BAARE team. I would have liked photos of the six 'Watkins Boys' in later life, on their subsequent expeditions, during the war years or ageing gracefully. A full-page photo of Margy Graham is a strange inclusion. Although Gino asked her to marry him in June 1932, she is not one of the key fig-

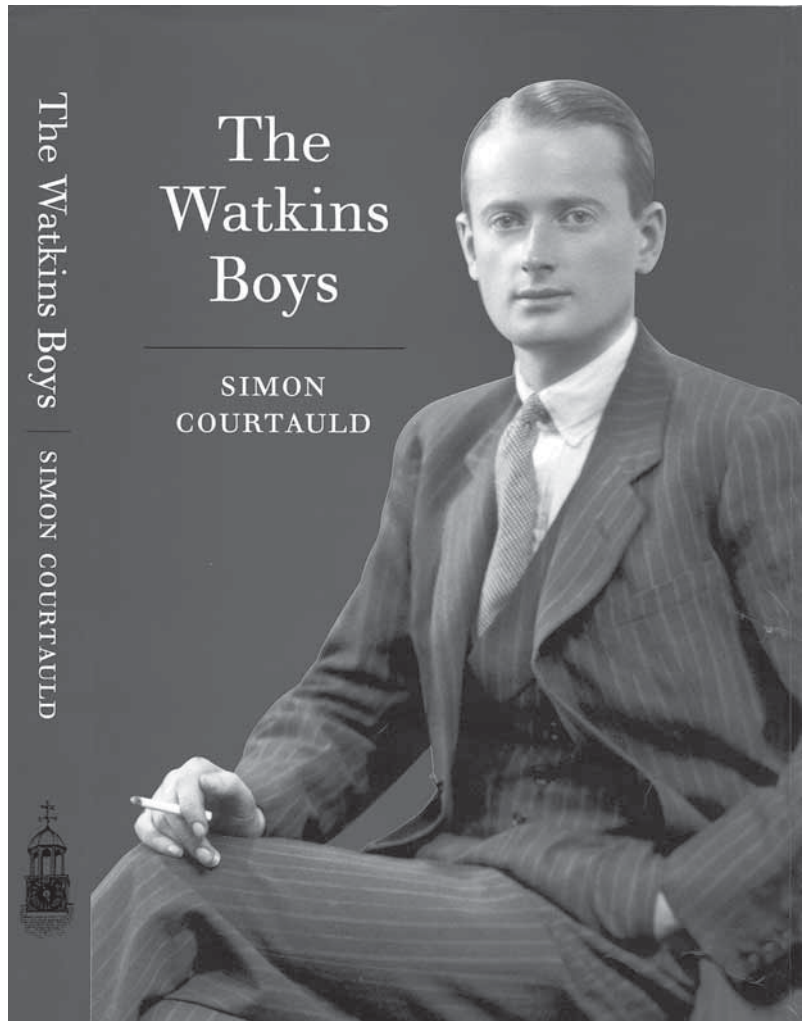
ures in the book. The last photo has not reproduced well but it shows two Kiwi paddlers (Paul and Conrad) in 2007 by the Watkins Memorial cross in Lake Fjord.

In summary, an engrossing and inspiring read, with my only niggle the choice, quality and number of photographs.

Paul Caffyn



Author: Simon Courtauld



BOOK REVIEW

Title: *Stepping Stones of Ungava and Labrador*

Author: Nigel Foster

Publisher: Outskirts Press, USA

Website: www.outskirtspress.com

Published: 2009

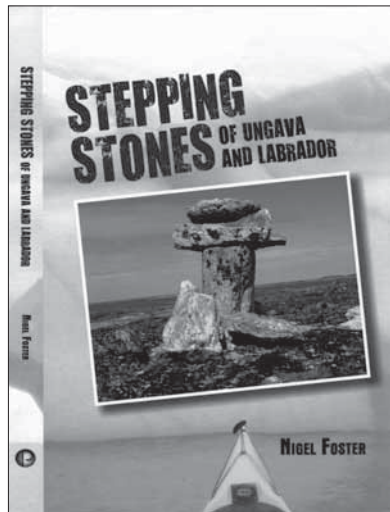
Contents: 269 pp

Cover: Hardback with dust-jacket

ISBN: 978-1-4327-4528-8 (p/b)

978-1-4327-4555-4 (HB)

Review: John Kirk-Anderson



Nigel Foster and his wife, Kristin Nelson, will be familiar to many Kiwi paddlers from the coaching tour they did here in 2007, and their attendance at that year's Anikiwa forum.

Softly spoken, they were a brilliant coaching team and stunned paddlers with their boat control, awakening many Kiwis to the fact that kayaks can be made to behave without a rudder being used.

KASK members who attended the Anikiwa forum were riveted, and horrified, by their presentation on their five-week journey along the coast of Labrador, north-east Canada, in 2004. They showed amazing images of a kayak journey through a harsh landscape, and spoke of multiple close encounters with polar bears, an animal that sees kayakers simply as slow-moving food.

Nigel had first attempted this journey solo in 1981, and that almost claimed his life. Crossing Hudson Strait from Resolution Island to northern Labrador, the 70-kilometre paddle was almost his last. Battered by ferocious wind and freezing rain, battling strong tidal streams and surrounded by fog, he was navigating by compass for a target 6km wide. Arriving exhausted and frostbitten in the dark, he crash-landed on the harsh shore, losing some equipment and also feeling in his fingers, and was then trapped by storms.

Travelling south he saw a group of men in a boat heading for shore and he landed right beside them, only to be ignored. It was chilling to hear

Nigel describe how he thought at that point that he had actually died on the crossing, and was invisible to them because he was dead. It turned out the men were from an oil tanker servicing a weather station and, assuming he was from the shore station, didn't think to greet him. He got a lift out on the tanker and nursed frost-bitten fingers, psychological effects and a yearning to return.

This he did with his wife, Kristin, 23 years later, travelling through areas that had been seen thousands of years of Inuit occupation, before the Canadian government cleared the families to ease management. This had the effect of allowing the polar bear population, once hunted by the Inuit, to increase.

Nigel and Kristin were stalked many times by *ursus maritimus*, the largest carnivore on land, able to sprint at 40kmh and swim nearly as fast as a scared kayaker can paddle.

To have one of these animals standing two metres away while sitting in a kayak, grounded on a rock when leaving the beach, should have been cause to flood their dry-suits before being eaten alive. As Nigel fired very ineffectual distress flares toward it, Kristin commanded, "BEAR! BE GONE!" Remarkably, the polar bear paused, allowing them to escape, only to have many further cases where the animals actively stalked them from the shore, attempting to cut them off close to land. After the first chilling encounter, the rifles they had been loaned were always close to hand.

Other encounters were much friendlier, with workers who were restoring old Inuit villages and cleaning up polluted Cold War sites, and Inuit families at remote hunting and fishing huts.

The pair camped on ancient Inuit sites, the coastal equivalent of motorway rest areas, collected berries and mushrooms for the cooking pot, and felt the closeness of a long-gone people who would have found their kayaks very familiar.

Having heard their stories first-hand, and viewed their wonderful photographs, I was looking forward to reading *Stepping Stones of Ungava and Labrador* and being reminded of their remarkable journey.

Sadly, the book does not do their story justice. The "disinterested eye" of an editor should have tightened the text, as the nearly page-length paragraphs make hard reading.

And while their story was adrenalin-producing, this layout is not. The book begged for more photographs and maps. There are only four maps, two of them historical, and none detailed enough to give an idea of the landscape. With no link to accompanying text it was frustrating to read of an area and not be able to picture it.

Tragically, in the 269 pages there are only six photographs, all black and white, and all very, very small. With no captions to explain them they serve little purpose except to remind me of the wonderful images KASK members saw at the Anikiwa forum.

Nigel and Kristin are lovely people and remarkable paddlers who completed an amazing journey. Unfortunately, most readers of this book won't realise that.

Nigel, JKA & Kristin; Anikiwa 2007



HUMOUR

The Power of Policing

A young policeman stops at a remote dairy farm north of Westport and talks with the owner who is an elderly farmer. He tells the farmer, "I need to inspect your property for illegally grown marijuana." The old farmer says, "Okay, but don't go in that scrubby field over there."

Quite new to the West Coast, the policeman verbally explodes saying, "Mate, I have the authority of the New Zealand Police with me!" Pointing to the badge on his chest he says, "See this badge? This badge means I am allowed to go wherever I wish, on any land, whenever I want to. No questions asked, no answers given. Have I made myself clear? Do you now understand me?"

The old farmer nods politely and goes about his chores. Minutes later, the he hears loud screams and glimpses the policeman dodging around splindly flax bushes while running for his life. Very close behind is an enormous, obviously irate Hereford bull. With every step, the bull is gaining ground. The policeman is clearly at the point of messing his blue trousers.

The old farmer ambles over to the intervening fence and yells at the top of his voice to the young policeman, "Your badge! Show him your f*cking badge!"

Spanish Ballsup

An American touring Spain stopped at a local restaurant following a day of sightseeing. While sipping his sangria, he noticed a sizzling, scrumptious looking platter being served at the next table. Not only did it look good, the smell was wonderful. He asked the waiter, "What is that you just served?" The waiter replied, "Ah senior, you have excellent taste! Those are bull's testicles from the bull fight this morning. A delicacy!"

The American, though momentarily daunted, said, "What the hell, I'm on vacation! Bring me an order!"

The waiter replied, "I am so sorry senior. There is only one serving per day because there is only one bull-fight each morning. If you come

early tomorrow and place your order, we will be sure to save you this delicacy!"

The next morning, the American returned, placed his order, and then that evening he was served the one and only special delicacy of the day. After a few bites, and inspecting the contents of his platter, he called to the waiter and said, "These are delicious, but they are much, much smaller than the ones I saw you serve yesterday!" The waiter shrugged his shoulders and replied, "Si senior. Sometimes the bull wins."

Leaving Home

A father passing by his son's bedroom was astonished to see the bed was nicely made, and everything was picked up. Then, he saw an envelope, propped up prominently on the pillow. It was addressed, 'Dad.'

'Dear Dad It is with great regret and sorrow that I'm writing you. I had to elope with my new girlfriend, because I wanted to avoid a scene with Mum and you. I've been finding real passion with Stacy, and she is so nice, but I knew you would not approve of her, because of all her piercings, tattoos, her tight motorcycle clothes, and because she is so much older than I am. But it's not only the passion, Dad. She's pregnant. Stacy said that we will be very happy. She owns a trailer in the woods, and has a stack of firewood for the whole winter. We share a dream of having many more children. Stacy has opened my eyes to the fact that marijuana doesn't really hurt anyone. We'll be growing it for ourselves, and trading it with the other people in the commune for all the cocaine and ecstasy we want. In the meantime, we'll pray that science will find a cure for AIDS, so Stacy can get better. She sure deserves it! Don't worry Dad, I'm 15, and I know how to take care of myself. Someday, I'm sure we'll be back to visit, so you can get to know your many grandchildren. Love, your son, Joshua

PS. Dad, none of the above is true. I'm over at Jason's house. I just wanted to remind you that there are worse things in life than the school report that's on the kitchen table.

Call me when it is safe for me to come home.

Hard of Hearing

Preacher To His Congregation:

"Anyone with needs to be prayed for, can come forward to the altar!" Jimmy got in line, and when it was his turn, the preacher asked, "Jimmy, what do you want me to pray about for you."

Jimmy replied, "Preacher, I need you to pray for my hearing."

The preacher put one finger in Jimmy's ear, and he placed the other hand on top of Jimmy's head and prayed and prayed and prayed for Jimmy.

After a few minutes, the Preacher removed his hands, stood back and asked, "Jimmy, how is your hearing now?"

Jimmy replied, "I dunno Reverend - it's not until next Wednesday."

Out of the Mouths of Kids

Tomato Sauce:

A woman was trying hard to get the tomato sauce out of the glass jar. During her struggle the phone rang so she asked her four year-old daughter to answer the phone. "Mommy can't come to the phone to talk to you right now. She's hitting the bottle."

Police:

It was the end of the day when I parked my police van in front of the station. As I gathered my equipment, my K-9 partner, Jake, was barking, and I saw a little boy staring in at me. "Is that a dog you got back there?" he asked.

"It sure is," I replied. Puzzled, the boy looked at me and then towards the back of the van.

Finally he said, "What'd he do?"

Elderly:

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to an old folks stuck at home, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass.

As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"

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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4th. Ed. KASK HANDBOOK

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Price to KASK members only, including p&p, \$22.50
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The 4th. 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
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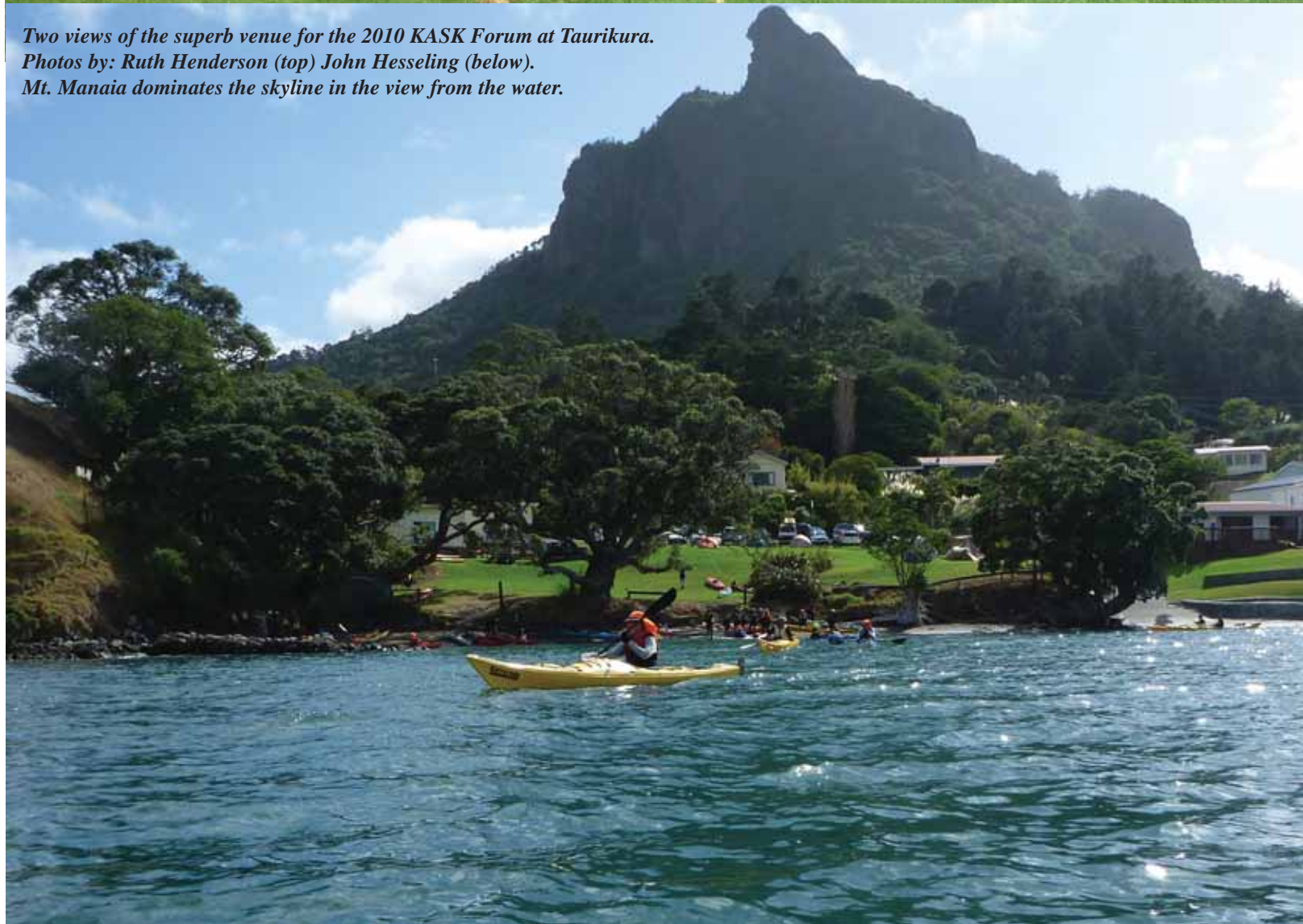
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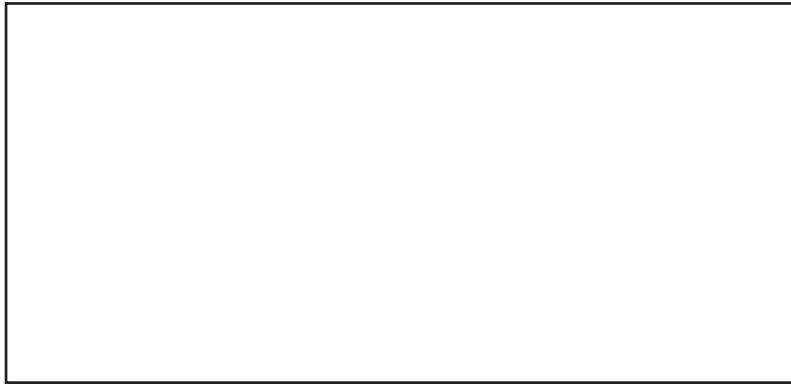
**KASK Website:
www.kask.org.nz**



*Two views of the superb venue for the 2010 KASK Forum at Taurikura.
Photos by: Ruth Henderson (top) John Hesseling (below).
Mt. Manaia dominates the skyline in the view from the water.*



MAILED TO



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*Paddler's choice winner at the KASK Forum Photo competition. Titled: 'Dark Knight' Photo: Ruth Henderson.
Steve Levett starring as the Dark Knight, cracking a lovely righ hand reef break, using a skinny. stick paddle.*

KASK MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Current membership fees are:

- \$35 for ordinary membership
- for new members \$35 or \$50 to include a copy of the KASK Handbook
- \$40 for family or joint membership (\$55 to include a Handbook copy)
- \$35 for overseas membership (PDF newsletter only);
\$50 for new o/s members plus cost of overseas postage for a copy of the KASK 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.

