

No. 98 April - May 2002

THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

Wanganui River Downstream from Pipiriki
Wellington Anniversary, 19th – 21st Jan 2002.



Photograph: Susan Cade

**The Journal of the Kiwi Association
of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc. - KASK**

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.

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KASK HANDBOOK

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COST:

New members: gratis
Existing members: \$14 + \$1 p&p
Non-members: \$18 + \$1 p&p
Make cheques out to KASK (NZ)IncTrade enquiries to Max Grant.

THE LRB2, or the Little Red Book 2nd. Edition, 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

Each section contains up to nine separate chapters. The Resources section, for example has chapters on:

- guide to managing a sea kayak symposium
- Paddling Literature
- Author profiles
- Guides and Rental Operators
- Network Addresses
- Sea Kayaks in NZ listing

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EDITORIAL

Questionnaire

Enclosed with the newsletter is a combination 2002-3 subscription renewal form and questionnaire. Please take a few minutes to complete this. As the next KASK committee meeting will be in Wellington 20 - 21 July, your feedback re the newsletter, training and if KASK is achieving its stated aims and objectives, will be vital for future planning. Thanks to Vincent Maire for compiling the document.

Newsletter Back Issues

Paul Hayward's idea of placing all the KASK newsletters on a CD in PDF format is a great suggestion. I do have hard copies of many of the earlier newsletters but virtually no copies from No. 80 onwards. I did notify availability of back issues a while ago but only had two responses. We need to gauge demand for a CD with all the back issues (I started with No.35) so if you would like to be able to view back copies in PDF format, please get in touch with the editor.

A feeling of Invincibility

Paul Hayward's letter to the editor re Tel Williams' Zuytdorp cliffs article suggests that such articles will lead to a feeling of invincibility and the need to temper such feelings with formal accounts of a fatality or near-fatality in the sport. What did other readers feel about Tel's account? The only feedback I have heard is that this is one of the best ever sea kayaking accounts that has appeared in the newsletter. I felt Tel's story was a classic one for the 'Bugger!' file, or a classic example to use in a Cathye Haddock risk management case. After Tel's night of lost sleep, leading to the desperate night of trying to stay upright, then the raft-up and capsize at dawn, this came so close to being a disaster. A prompt and very efficient rescue in torrid conditions brought this back from the brink of disaster and allowed a successful completion to the cliff paddle. In no way do I feel this account leads to a feeling of invincibility. After first reading Tel's article, my first thought was, 'Bloody hell, and I thought I had it tough along the cliffs!' Years of planning were involved with Tel's trip, then months of

physical training including night paddling, and a thorough training paddle from Perth up to Kalbarri. One of the critical lessons to be learned from the trip is how important a factor sleep deprivation can be. I asked Tel if he had sleeping tablets with him. He did, but they were in a medical kit packed in his kayak, and he did not want to wake his two co-paddlers by retrieving the tablets. The second lesson for me is reinforcing the concept of optimising settled weather and sea conditions. The two days the boys spent at Kalbarri were settled with a flat sea and no appreciable wind. Conditions like that are rather rare on the Zuytdorp Cliffs. If they had set the day after they had arrived, the overnight paddle would have been achieved in brilliant conditions.

Clint Waghorn

Clint Waghorn is heading back to Alaska to complete his Prince Rupert to Prince Rupert circuit via the Yukon River and Alaskan coast. In 2001 Clint paddled from Chignik to Homer, then through Prince William Sound to Cordova (newsletter No. 94, August to September 2001). He set out on the last but crucial open Gulf of Alaska coast leg to Cape Spencer and the northern entrance to the sheltered inside passages. After a desperate 19 hour night in the Copper River delta, unable to land, then two days landlocked in dense fog, Clint paddled back to Cordova. This year Clint returns with his girlfriend Becky Middlemass, to tackle the last leg from Cordova to Prince Rupert. Clint will tackle the open gulf coast alone, but sounds like Becky will join him for the last section to his start point of 1999. The 'Waikato Times' will be chronicling Clint's trip in feature stories. Thanks to Joyce Singleton and Diane Morgan for forwarding the press clippings.)

Chris Duff (South Island Circumnavigator)

Publisher Globe-Pequot want to feature 'Southern Exposure' on their Spring 2003 release- still a year away. In terms of trips. I'll be leading a team of two others plus myself in an attempt to circumnavigate Iceland June thru Sept of 2003.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From: Chris Hinkley

Enjoyed your latest edition of the newsletter, received recently. I have a couple of suggestions which you might like to consider.

Would it be possible to include a small sketch map with the trip reports? I always try to find the places people go to in my atlas but sometimes am not successful and end up wondering where on earth they have been.

As a complete beginner to sea kayaking it would be of interest to me to know what boats people are using for their trips. I note that Max Grant used a Torres on the Stewart Island trip, but there is no mention of the other two boats. I have a Current Designs Squall, would anyone paddle that around Stewart Island?

The book reviews are also always interesting, how about some boat reviews? Most of the advice I was able to get when looking for a boat last year was from re-sellers, who are not always the most independent source. It was good to try a few different boats at the symposium in Porirua and to discuss the merits of different models with people who use them. Boat reviews by experienced kayakers would be valuable to many of us, as are the gear reviews (e.g. the torch you reviewed in this issue).

Keep up the good work, the newsletter is always absorbing reading.
cheers, Chris Hinkley

Back Copies of the Newsletter

From: Paul Hayward

I am enjoying your KASK newsletters. I am a new member of KASK - and have only a couple of years of sea kayaking under my belt. A couple of questions & then one suggestion.

Is there any way of getting hold of previous issues of the KASK newsletter? There is obviously a wealth of distilled knowledge (and entertainment) therein - it'd be nice to browse through it, either electronically or 'in the hand'.

Maybe KASK could look at making the collection available on CD (say in PDF format?) to members. I'd be happy to be involved in putting that together, if it sounds like a good idea. (I'm meaning on a volunteer basis - not for pay.) I don't know if it would be seen as 'too easy to copy or steal', once it was in that format - but perhaps that risk is worth it, in terms of a better-educated NZ kayaking population...

Second question - has the newsletter ever reviewed Dowd's book Sea Kayaking on long-distance kayaking or Burch on Fundamentals of Kayak Navigation? Having just read both of these - I think they are both worthy of consideration for a review (unless you've already reviewed 'em!).

Now for a suggestion:

From my previous life as a scuba enthusiast, I remember the national association's policy of printing an occasional 'disaster' report in the newsletter - being the formal account of a fatality or near-fatality in the sport. I like to think that this was seen as a 'reality check' and a reminder that safety was more than an abstract concept - rather than a desire to wallow in sensationalism.

This came to my mind as I read the 'Perth to Shark Bay' account in your Issue #97. I felt that, while undoubtedly a great testament to man's spirit and his ability to survive terrible experiences - a steady diet of such articles (written, obviously, by a survivor) could lead to a feeling of invincibility.

It might be well to temper any such feeling - that however unwise the decision, I'll get away with it - with an occasional counter - example (of poor decisions leading to someone else needing to write the trip report).

Perhaps this is something you already do - I've only read two copies of the newsletter and I'm dangerously projecting well beyond my available data. So treat the above merely as an attempt to be helpful.

Best Regards,
Paul Hayward

EDITOR'S RESPONSE

Maps to accompany trip reports: When maps are supplied with a trip report, I will scan and include with the report. But to work up a specific map from scratch involves too much time.

Note on kayaks paddled: Good idea and should be included either in a trip report or with an author's background to accompany the report.

Boat Reviews: Difficult one - 'Sea Kayaker' magazine carries out fully independent kayak tests, with up to two models reviewed each issue. The KASK Handbook has a listing of what boats are available in NZ, with dimensions listed. The KASK Forums and network mini-forums are the ideal setting for trying out different boats and finding out from owners how a boat handles and how dry the compartments are etc. I would like to include boat reviews in the n/1 but how do we achieve a fully independent review? I would always include a write up of a favourite boat model, or a new release from a manufacturer. (see also editorial)



From: Vincent Maire

You will find in this issue of the newsletter the annual subscription form plus a questionnaire. KASK is now ten years old and has experienced rapid growth in recent times. Your committee is keen to find out how the membership perceives KASK and the various services on offer. Please return the membership form and the questionnaire as soon as possible. The committee is having a working weekend in mid-July and we would like to know the results of the survey by then.

On 17 April a group of Rotorua sea kayakers met to discuss the idea of holding a KASK forum in their region. The idea has been enthusiastically taken on board by all concerned and currently suitable venues are being investigated. The date is in 21 - 23 February 2003. More details will be published in the newsletter as they come to hand.

TRAINING COURSES

You will note on the subscription form the opportunity to receive the membership list, either in total or just for your area. This development has resulted from a suggestion made at the Wellington KASK forum and enables members to make contact with fellow paddlers. This is especially useful where there are no clubs or networks operating. Please make use of this opportunity to expand your paddling network.

BASK back in the Sun

The Bay of Plenty sea kayak network is undergoing a revival. Alan Hall, a sea kayaker with many years experience kayaking in Scotland, has recently come to live in Tauranga and has agreed to act as co-ordinator for the group. Any kayakers in the Bay of Plenty wishing to paddle with like-minded people should contact Alan on (07) 579-2922 or email alanhall11@hotmail.com

In Gisborne, KASK member John Humphries is also establishing a local network. He has the support of a local retailer and a growing band of kayakers are now beginning to paddle together on a regular basis. John can be contacted on 025 808 229 or email: thetrolls@xtra.co.nz.

On the other side of the coast, KASK committee member Bob Talbot is doing the same thing with Taranaki sea kayakers. Bob is on 06- 754419 or email imageinfocas@clear.net.nz

Down in Dunedin, the once active OSKA is also undergoing a revival. KASK committee member Rob Tipa is interested in hearing from any member wishing to participate in regular network activities. Rob can be contacted on 03 478 0360 or email robtipa@clear.net.nz.

Should there be any other sea kayakers based in areas without a dedicated sea kayak club, and who wish to start a local network, the KASK committee would very much like to hear from you. In the first instance contact Vincent Maire on (09) 424-2293 or vincent.maire@xtra.co.nz

Happy paddling
Vincent Maire
President

'Boys wear skirts too' from Vincent Maire

Recently, members of the Auckland Canoe Club have had the opportunity to participate in some excellent training days. Rebecca Heap ran the first session under the heading, 'Girls can do anything in a Skirt,' actually, that doesn't sound quite right. Maybe it was 'Girls do it sitting down' or perhaps it was, 'Girls are OK providing they are sitting down.' Either way, a number of 'girls' from the Auckland Canoe Club turned up at the south end of Long Bay and under the expert guidance of Rebecca, participated in a full-on skills development session.

Not being a girl I opted for the second course run by Mike Randall at Sullivans Bay on the beautiful Mahurangi Harbour. A strong onshore breeze made for challenging conditions however it made no difference to me. I had the wrong date. I was a week too late. I learnt nothing.

Rebecca was the author of the third session, 'Boys can wear skirts too'. Making sure I had the right date I arrived at Long Bay to find a group of keen guys and girls equipping their boats for some serious skirt lifting.

Rebecca put us through an ice-breaker whereby we stood in a circle, tossed a ball to and fro, calling out the name of the catcher. We found we had lots of Ians and Johns in the group.

Our instructor then demonstrated some nifty buddy and self-rescue techniques on shore. Once this was done, we headed out to sea for the real thing.

I guess the most important thing you learn is that you can never devote enough time to practicing your rescue techniques. My buddy John Hieatt and I rescued each other to exhaustion. Then we rescued ourselves. Each time we found errors in our technique and worked on these with each subsequent rescue. It was a very, very valuable session and, later, as Rebecca

handed out cake and other goodies, we gave her our profuse thanks as giving of her time for the benefit of the club.

My thanks to Rebecca and Mike for sharing their considerable expertise with so many keen members of the Auckland Canoe Club.
Vincent Maire

OKAINS BAY MINIFORUM

From: Alex Ferguson

What does computer software and sea kayaking have in common? I thought of that as I was preparing to write a report on the Okains Bay miniforum that the Canterbury Sea Kayak network runs every year. Firstly, a large percentage of you must be using computers for something, if it is only for email or writing a letter. Most of you will be using a Microsoft product. You pay for Microsoft, it has all the bells and whistles, or so they tell you, but not everyone likes their attitude. In the world there are a lot of people who don't like their attitude and these people support something called Linux - it is free and everyone who wants to can contribute to its development. Its symbol is Tux the Penguin, which should make someone happy.

The Okains Bay miniforums are much like Linux, they are free, anyone with something to contribute can do so and they are about co-operation and learning. You pay for your camp fees (the CD that the 'software programme' comes on?) and that's it. If you come without a kayak it is possible you could borrow one but if not still learn from the shore sessions and watching the practical sessions from the shore.

This year we had two miniforums. Mainly because there were some people who were going to be away and miss one of them and partly I suspect because it is a good excuse for us to get together for a weekend. The first one this year had a few learning experiences that weren't planned, especially when one participant managed to dislocate his shoulder. We had a doctor present and with his experience, called in the experts! The only

down side for the patient was that the rescue helicopter was diverted to a road accident and road transport was reverted for our patient.

I was nominated to run the second event as I'd been away and missed the first one. So what do you have to do if you end up in my position? When your club or network turn to you and say, "You are IT."

Firstly, make a list (lots of them, lists that is) and write down the names of those who know something about something. Write a list of possible subjects. If you can't think of them look in the index of a kayak book or at a previous KASK forum events list. Ask everyone what they might like to be told about. In some cases ignore that list!

Two things that make an event good or better, the weather and the venue. As Coastbusters have found out, if the weather is bad year after year around the same time maybe a better time can be found. Similarly, if you tend to get good weather each year at a certain time, it is a good start if you schedule your event then.

A good venue should be within easy reach, have accommodation or camping available and have a sheltered and an exposed bit of coast. The former is the more important. If the sheltered water is tide dependant then the event will hinge round the tide times. Cut sessions short if they are going to encroach on paddling training sessions. Shore sessions can always be held at regular club meetings but the wet bits can't.

Costs - do you need to feed everyone? No. Do you need to pay instructors? No. Do you need handouts? Not necessarily. Most people can find a book with subjects in it. What you are doing is explaining and illustrating the subject. The reference material can be sourced later.

What do you expect to achieve? We are simply giving paddlers a chance to practice basic skills with 'experts' around for support. We aren't trying to provide training to BCU 5 star or

anything like that. For those who have done it before it is a chance to practice and often find out how it is possible to get it wrong.

There are 3 main areas of instruction/ support:

1. Rescues, self and assisted.
2. Handling surf, usually the basics. Our venue is a very good place as it often allows the paddler to pick the size of wave that they are happy with and then find out how to handle it. Hopefully they'll get wet in the process as this reinforces the learning experience. Admittedly, we often don't have surf that is big enough to do much with.
3. Paddle strokes, power and performance.

Add the shore sessions with weather, fitting out a kayak, navigation, gadgets, how to build a kayak, etc. and there's not much to it, organising it that is. Just make sure you have a core of 'instructors' and away you go. Most people are only too happy to assist in any way they can. Remember to bring a white-board and pens, for instructors to scribble on, for you to put a timetable on (if you have one), buy-sell-exchange, lost property etc.

If nothing else, it can be a weekend for getting to know members or swapping stories with friends. With a bit of luck someone might even bring a guitar and sing songs about those who are there (thanks to Stephen, at Okains Bay!).

Sandy Ferguson.

TECHNICAL

'Going solo' from Kerry Howe

I'm not a gun paddler, but a middle-aged plodder. I could never do extreme Paul Caffyn-type trips, though I'm inspired by them. A long trip for me would be 10 days. I might typically paddle 20-25 nautical miles each day. I like paddling with other people on shorter, social trips. I prefer to paddle alone on longer and more purposeful journeys. The inevitable response is: 'that's dangerous!', or worse, 'you must be crazy!' - the unstated implication being 'you are in heart attack and/or drowning territory!' Well, maybe. But here are some thoughts in defence of 'man alone'.

When I'm going solo (or indeed on any trip at all) I have some priorities to make sure that I get back alive and in one piece.

Equipment and skills

I'm a gear freak. I carefully and lovingly maintain my equipment, both for sea and shore. I carry a full range of rescue/safety aids from tow ropes to spare paddles, from a heliograph to flares, from a cell phone to a VHF marine radio, from a first-aid kit to emergency on-shore food, clothing, and shelter. I sometimes practise self-rescue techniques, surf landings, and paddling in rough/windy seas.

Information

Ultimately more important to me than body and gear is my capacity to undertake and complete a trip in my head before I go. I gather information from marine charts, topo maps, AA maps. I photocopy and laminate maps for deck use. I enter planned routes into my trusty GPS. I try to talk to people who have kayaked the route before. I read newsletter trip reports. I have sometimes visited a coastal region in advance by road. I plan for all possible landing and camping points, road exit points, water stops. The internet is also a mine of information.

CALENDAR

KASK Rotorua Lakes Sea Kayak Symposium

21 – 23 February
2003

There's barely a location in New Zealand that does not have photographs, often valuable aerial ones, especially of harbour entrances and beaches, and other information on-line. Vincent Maire's recent guide book to kayaking in northeastern New Zealand is now a wonderful resource. Planning can give me months of pleasurable anticipation, and I mentally complete the journey many times before I actually set out. When a section of coastline is much as I anticipated I'm pleased. When it offers something unexpected, as is usually the case, I'm excited.

I'm also a weather forecast and radio freak. A last minute check on the internet gives me weather maps for 6 days in advance. On a trip I receive weather forecasts on a small multi-band radio (Sangean ATS-909). Its multiple timers switch first to the marine forecast on the National Programme every morning at 5.03. Even in the most secluded and cliff-surrounded bays where MW radio won't reach, it then picks up the Maritime Radio marine forecasts on the HF band at 5.33am. My before-going-to-bed ritual is to string up an HF aerial. If this is not enough, my VHF marine radio will usually receive the same Maritime Radio forecasts, and, in many parts of the coast, can also receive similar or same forecasts from local coast guard and private coastal stations. I get details about times, frequencies, and stations from the NZ Nautical Almanac, and print them onto a small card which I laminate. I can get marine weather information every few hours of the day if I really want to, but normally one early morning forecast is sufficient. Cell phone coverage of coastal regions is improving all the time. I arrange with a kind friend to text me significant long range weather - hopefully not 'cyclone coming Tuesday!'

But I'm also very aware that New Zealand coastal conditions are infinitely changeable, and I've been in many situations where what is actually happening in my locality bears no relationship at all to the forecast. So an ability to eyeball the weather patterns, plus some conservative assessments are always required.

Communication

I leave a reasonably detailed trip plan with family and friends. I can text where I am each day if there is coverage. Also depending on coverage, I can make VHF trip reports to local coastguard stations, or Maritime Radio. If I think I'll need to contact a private coastal station, I'll write in advance and check that it will be OK (it always is) and make a donation afterwards. I don't usually do all these things. There's not much point in a solo journey if it becomes an all-day, everyday commentary with others. Generally I try to conserve VHF and (voice) cell phone battery life in case they are really needed. To make brief contact with someone once every couple of days (usually by text) to report my position is reassuring enough for me, and hopefully for those back home.

Safer alone?

No group or solo expedition is ever risk free. In some situations, going with a group can be more risky than going it alone, and vice-versa. But I believe that there have been far more incidents and rescues of groups in trouble, than of individuals. Groups are only as strong as their weakest member.

I'm aware of the argument that I shouldn't expect someone to rescue me if I deliberately put myself all alone in a remote and/or difficult situation and then get into serious trouble. I have no real answer to that, other than to contemplate a life of staying in bed. But I plan and prepare as best I can. I feel confident and capable of looking after myself in a range of situations on sea and shore. I make conservative judgements, and I try to know my limitations. But I'm not bomb-proof. Accidents can happen. I'm always mindful of a fisherman's wisdom in J.M. Synge's *The Aran Islands*: 'A man who is not afraid of the sea will soon be drowned for he will be going out on a day he shouldn't. But we do be afraid of the sea, and we do only be drowned now and again.'

In any case, there are some safety advantages in solo paddling, in my view. For example, it is very easy to

alter or cancel a planned departure date. I sometimes think that incidents at sea (in any craft) are set in motion when a group of people have all variously made work/family arrangements to depart on an agreed date. The consequences of delay or cancellation can weigh upon them to the point where they go out regardless of unsuitable weather, and in the desperate expectation that things will improve.

Going solo also means that I don't have to worry about how my behaviour will affect others, or vice-versa. I believe that incidents are sometimes caused either by your concern for others, or your worry about their concern for you. I can be utterly selfish, cowardly, and grumpy without upsetting anyone. I can go fast or slow depending on how I feel. I can rest, fish, eat when I like. I can knock off early, or paddle into the evening. I can stay ashore if the weather is dodgy without feeling wimpish and that I'm hindering others. Or I might just want a day off. I'm someone who (at least on seakayak trips - but never at home) likes to be on the water before sunrise. I get into damp seakayak clothes, guzzle a cold cup of disgusting Complian for breakfast, pack the wet tent rapidly, and I'm off. This is not exactly a sociable act. But I believe that late starts are also a common and under-acknowledged contributor to incidents. The chances of calm and windless seas are greatest early in the morning. I like to cover some distance before the inevitable late morning breezes start up. At my leisurely 3 knot cruising speed (in windless conditions), plus a few stops, I can easily get 12 or more nautical miles (21 k) under my belt well before lunch.

Satisfaction?

Above all, paddling solo gives me great mental stimulation and enjoyment. I'm always very conscious of being alone. I'm often nervous, but it's invigorating. My perceptions are heightened. I'm much more alert, more conscious of my existence, and aware of basic survival requirements. Priorities are refreshingly different from my usual everyday world. There's endless planning, calculating and observation in the constantly and

amazingly changing seascape. A detached part of me also observes my moods during the day, noting how the inner and outer worlds interact. And there's always the slight frisson of wondering where the next campsite will be, or will there be one? My typical seven or eight hour paddling day just zips by.

There's also a heightened sense of accomplishment when you get things right, particularly in difficult situations, or make it through even though you haven't got it quite right. The afterglow generally comes in safe, warm retrospect when you can behave more normally. Even so, for me it's always tempered by an awareness that my limits can be reached all too quickly. Moreover, the 'challenge' might also have been a nightmare at the time, and the revealed self not always very nice. But, as I recently read, 'if you aren't near that sometimes uncomfortable threshold, you're probably not learning anything about yourself.' Solo seakayaking so readily lends itself to extended contemplation, to interior journeying.

At a more basic level, solo seakayaking offers some sort of primeval satisfaction of being independent and self-sufficient in the wilds, if only briefly. One of the great joys of seakayaking is that every trip, even if it's half a day, can be a real adventure, given all the variables of weather and sea. Going solo just gives a trip that little extra edge.

Kerry Howe
(krhowe@wave.co.nz)

MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS

From Malcolm Geard

Vincent Maire suggested I scribble a few lines about wooden boat building from the point of view of the average backyarder, when we met at the forum. So herewith. I've tried not to get tediously detailed about the process and offered up a few generalities instead. If you'd like a couple of snaps let me know.

Messing about in Boats

'The double-paddle canoe gives the most fun for the money of any type of boat a person can possess.'

L. Francis Herreshoff, 'Sensible Cruising Designs'

This cheerful advice from a great, old-time American yacht designer suggests that in one form or another, the small double-bladed craft we enjoy has been cherished as a recreational vessel for a fair while, at least from the early 20th century and more probably back to the mid-19th century. The building techniques in those days were sophisticated and required a skilled woodworker, usually a boat builder to produce a seaworthy craft.

For some of us who paddle a century or so later, part of the fun of messing about in boats comes from the experience of building one yourself. Materials and design ingenuity have made it possible for the backyard builder to produce a nice sea kayak, with little or no preliminary boat-building skill or woodworking experience. As far as I can see, the thrust of this development, on the sea kayak front, seems to have come from the United States over the last 20 or 30 years.

In the wider world of recreational sailboats, though, New Zealand has a splendid tradition of backyard boat building, going back to the 1920's if not earlier. An enduring example is the little 7 foot P-class in which many famous NZ sailors have learned their early skills. First designed and demonstrated in 1920 by Wellingtonian, Harry Highet, it became the smallest

of the stepping stone, one-class yachts and thousands were built by boys and/or their Dads in those days, firstly of kauri, kahikatea and kaikawaka, subsequently in ply from the mid-1950's. Nowadays a professionally-built fibreglass P-class will set you back about \$10,000, I gather, though I suspect you could still put a hull together from 4mm ply for a couple of hundred dollars and a few hours work. At the other end of the grass-roots boat building was the 60 foot, triple skin kauri yacht Ranger launched in 1938 and built in a Ponsonby backyard with very limited funds by the two Tercel brothers.

Lou Tercel, was a crane-driver who taught himself yacht design courtesy of the local public library. When 'Ranger' was launched, she completely dominated the Auckland competitive yachting scene, as soon as the two brothers had learned to sail her. She remained the 'undisputed champion of NZ keelboat racing for 27 years' according to my history of New Zealand yachting.* If she has survived it would be nice to see her tucked into the National Maritime Museum wharf on Auckland harbour, beside Robert Logan's recently restored 28 footer, 'Jessie Logan', built in 1880.

The story of NZ canoe and kayak building, backyard or otherwise, in the 19th and earlier 20th century seems to be less well known and would possibly make an interesting research project that KASK might wish to encourage.

The present day rash of sea kayak plans, instruction manuals, building videos and kit sets emanating from America gives any potential builder a wonderful range of options both in terms of cedar strip or marine ply building, with a wide variety of designs for singles, doubles and even triples. According to Ted Meares, author of *Kayak Craft*, anyone who can tie up their shoelaces can build a fine strip-planked kayak. Likewise, Chris Kulczycki of Chesapeake Light Craft has written books promoting his elegant marine ply kayaks that 'anyone can build.' In essence, they are

doing the same thing Harry Highet set about in 1920 with the prototype P class. The differences now are in the materials, with marine ply, epoxy resin and fibreglass cloth providing an extremely light yet strong hull structure without internal framing. You can even do without bulkheads if you are happy paddling in a sea sock !

I set off my own particular craze with a now superannuated CLC model called the Cape Charles. It has a hard chine hull, which is probably the easiest to put together, having only 2 side and 2 keel panels. This makes the lines of the panels easier to fair up when you are stitching them together with copper wire prior to gluing the panels. In this respect my efforts have been more successful with the hard chine hull than with my multi-chine single and double. At the time I started to make a Cape Charles I decided against glassing the hull with cloth and resorted to glass taping the seams only. This works fine in normal paddling but the hull would certainly smash in a forced landing on a rocky shore. The relatively small extra weight of one layer of glass cloth will double the strength of your hull panels and two layers will double that again, adding just three more ounces of weight per square foot.

Incidentally, Ted Meare's lab. experiments in this area, indicate that for a given thickness of timber and weight of glass cloth, marine ply is almost three times as strong as cedar strip. (see Kayak Craft pub. Wooden Boats). Be kind to your beautiful cedar strip craft!

My CLC multi-chine West River 180 is a recent design from the CLC drawing boards, longer, sleeker with an elegant profile that pleases me. I've glassed it with one layer of 6 oz. cloth and probably would have added a second layer had I read the above information before building. Anyone, interested in a spot of home building might like to take a look at the CLC website which is www.clcboats.com and which will answer most of your initial questions. You might need up to about 120 hours of building time and current cost of materials for the

West River as an example, amounts to about US\$700.00 including rudder. You might do better sourcing the materials locally and they can all be found here from marine suppliers and specialist timber yards. In sourcing a local rudder system I have found the genial Tasman Boat builder, John Dobbe, ever helpful. Tools needed are minimal. I bought a hand sander and jig saw from The Warehouse and a good Stanley blockplane from a decent tool store. For the rest, a hand egg-beater drill, pliers, tape measure (Imperial if you but US plans) screwdrivers and somewhere out of the rain to put it together.

If you are keen to go ahead, please start by buying the Kulczycki book 'The New Kayak Shop' if marine ply is your thing or Kayak Craft by Meares if fine woodstrip construction is more congenial. Both books will keep you on the straight and narrow. Finally, a helpful quote from a colourful American small boat designer, H. H. (Dynamite) Payson I think it was, who said

'There is no mistake in small boat building that cannot be rectified by the liberal application of epoxy resin.' It's a comment I have had reason to be grateful for more than once.
Malcolm Geard

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*'Southern Breeze A History of Yachting in New Zealand' by Harold Kidd, Robin Elliott & David Pardon

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

PADDLING CAVES CORRIDORS GUTS AND GARDENS

By Nick Woods.
Cable Bay Kayaks.

For many, open coastline, sandy beaches, estuaries and the spare time to paddle it is what sea kayaking is all about - a unique perspective on coastal travel. With the advent of the plastic sea kayak however, a growing number are experiencing the thrills of paddling in close proximity to solid objects i.e., rocks.

This was always possible but often costly and inconvenient when the inevitable repairs were made. Scorned by purists as 'Tupperware Tanks,' the modern plastic boat weighs in about the same as a standard fibreglass version and can handle a range of abuse from gravel rash to deck sitters before being given the treatment we are about to prescribe.

At this stage I should point out the human body has lagged behind in this evolution and the object of this article is to give a few tips on self-preservation. There are however some unique hazards encountered and techniques required when paddling the inshore routes and while the plastic sea kayak could be termed, 'the mountain bike of the sea' your ultimate safety depends on a thorough understanding of the risks and the ways to minimise these.

PREPARATION

'Be prepared - Be aware.'

There is not space here to cover all the safety aspects of sea kayaking- suffice to say:

- Know your boat and accessories.
- Know your weather.
- Know your location.
- Know your companions.

EQUIPMENT.

What you will need in addition if you are getting serious, are the following ;

- 1) Heavy duty neoprene spray deck.
- 2) Plastic head protection and wetsuit.
- 3) Short tow rope.
- 4) Cheap polaroids and swim fins.

Most of these are used by river paddlers and make sense in this environment as well.

You will almost certainly get wet so wear a suitable top, and as an O.O.B.E. (out of boat experience) is also on the cards, give some thought to the lower half, footwear is essential if you are walking on barnacles, pacific oysters, kina etc. Remember assisted rescues are often not an option in surf and rocks, but the one advantage is that if you can't get back in you can usually get out.

THE HAZARDS.

- 1) Restricted spaces
- 2) Surf / Surge with rough edges.
- 3) Solid objects i.e., Rocks.

Straight forward really but it's the combinations of the above that require understanding. Its best to view these areas as a series of obstacles linked by safe zones in much the same way as a river paddler or rock climber would.

This encourages an objective assessment rather than just blundering in. Following is a list of likely places of interest. (read obstacles)

- Caves
- Archways
- Corridors
- Rocks and Ledges
- Beaches

In flat seas all could be approached without difficulty - wind chop and wind swell would raise the risk - add groundswell surge and a few knots of tidal current and some could be downright dangerous.

Worst scenario is a cave closeout, self-explanatory really - 'no room in the inn.' The only solution is to roll or at least get under your boat. The buoyancy of the boat combined with surge or swell is capable of crushing a

paddler. With suitable foresight this situation should never occur.

Archways are open-ended and while turbulent at times are more easily negotiated - no turning required.

Corridors much the same as above though beware shallows causing surge to break.

Rocks and Ledges can create hydraulics similar to rivers subject to swell or surge. Holes and pour overs etc will form..

Beaches are the least dangerous of the obstacles mentioned, though I'm sure all reading this will have been trashed at their local more than once. When applying sea state to the equation a good rule of thumb would be, if you are not happy fooling around in the beach break then don't attempt paddling the rock gardens that day.

TECHNIQUES.

Sea Skills.

Learn to read the sea state.

A surfing background really helps here, as an ability to pick up the sequence of sets is crucial to being in the right place at the right time. Your safety depends on it. There's a complex array of factors determining sea state, local and distant. The net result is a pattern or sequence which itself is in flux so its not something you assess and forget about. Suffice to say that the seventh wave theory was formed by a marketing agency not a surfer.

L'Attitude.

Be focused, yet aware of the big picture, poised yet relaxed, your mental state is crucial to safe kayaking. Most psyche up for say a surf landing but many will enter a cave or corridor in cruise mode then totally lose it when the lights go out and the boulders rumble or they find themselves surfing at 20 knots through a rock strewn gap. If you're mentally prepared you'll deal with it and this in itself will minimise the risk of unpleasant surprises in the first place.

One of the problems of paddling in adverse conditions is that the inevita-

ble tension created is detrimental to surviving those conditions. i.e., gripping or locking up. Focus on relaxing and dealing with the present rather than the possible consequences. Enjoy it.

Paddle Skills.

Competent boat handling is an obvious prerequisite. Learn to control your boat without using the rudder as in most cases it is more hindrance than help around rocks and is also damage prone.

There's not room here to cover paddle strokes in detail but you should be familiar with:

The s's. sprinting/stopping, stern rudder, sweeping
Support strokes / bracing - sculling - seal launching - surfing

The R's. Rolling / Railing / Reversing.

And a couple of new ones: Fending / Propping / Planting.

These are support strokes which take advantage of your predicament, eg., perched on a rock.

Quick reactions, aggressive paddling and good judgement are the key to survival amongst the rocks. These skills are best learnt in rivers or surf and need practice to make perfect.

Some Do's and Don'ts.

1) Always check gnarly bits for at least a few minutes to get 'in sync' with the wave pattern.

2) Only use a rudder if it's too narrow to use a paddle.

3) Don't get sideways in channels and corridors as your boat will jam and then pivot with the surge.

4) Beware of over hangs and ledges in caves as the bow or stern will come fast in a lifting swell and you'll be pointing at the roof.

5) Always shoot narrows with the wind and sea from behind as if you are too cramped to paddle the conditions will help you through, besides

its enough excitement surfing forwards.

6) Back into 'no exit' areas as you will be set up to sprint out should the need arise.

7) Use the paddle as a prop to hip flick the boat upright when the water is too shallow to roll e.g., a boulder reef where the last resort is to get out and walk.

8) Never follow another boat into a narrow corridor or channel in any sea, as you could surf down onto it with no way of avoiding them.

9) Always fan out in surf conditions as sea kayaks require room to manoeuvre and are prone to unpredictable broaching or sheering off course.

10) Rescue swimmers by having them hold the bow as communication and paddling are easier.

11) Beware the 'boomer' on an isolated rock or ledge that breaks heavily. These can be difficult to spot from seaward and are often encountered in cruise mode.

12) Don't get caught with your paddle across the boat while attempting a squeeze. It will break if caught even at slow speed and will do you damage as well.

13) Keep hands off pacific oysters while paddling; lacerations with wet hand are painful and bleed a lot. Get your own back by eating them.

All common sense stuff really so get out explore that coastline rather than paddling point to point which you can do in any old boat.

It's the paddler's playground and providing you stay within your limits (most of the time.) You will be surprised by the discoveries made even in familiar territory.

Nick Woods

NEW ZEALAND TRIP REPORTS

KAIPARA HARBOUR Trip Report Easter 2002.

by Vincent Maire

Other than it is the harbour with the longest coastline in the Southern Hemisphere (3,800km) few people seem to know too much about the Kaipara. What we do know tends to have negative overtones. For example, more than a hundred ships have foundered at its narrow entrance, the infamous saltmarsh mosquito is a recent resident on the harbour, tidal currents can reach eight knots, sand bars abound and white pointer sharks are regular visitors.

NIWA has long studied the Kaipara Harbour and their scientists tell us that more than one billion cubic metres of sand lie at its entrance and 26,000 cubic litres of water pass through the 8km wide harbour mouth per second.

Even more interesting was the fact that I could find few sea kayakers who had paddled the mighty Kaipara and this, plus ideal tides over Easter, spurred a group of us to explore this fascinating area of the North Island's west coast.

Planning started with nothing more than the idea of crossing the harbour to Pouto. It took only a few telephone calls to organise a trip that would eventually cover almost 90kms. The first phone call was to the Dargaville Information Centre who recommended I contact the local backpackers in Pouto for information on accommodation. I was also told to contact the Kellys Bay campground and was given the number of the Kaiwaka Information Centre where I was told about the Pahi campsite and put in touch with the most important person of all, Lindsey Hargreaves.

The Hargreaves families have been farming the central-eastern area of the Kaipara for five generations. The Puketotara Peninsula bears the name Hargreaves Run at its highest point and the Hargreaves Basin is just a few kilometres downstream from Port Albert on the Oruawhero River. Lindsey was a mine of information and best of all she agreed that we could leave our vehicles at her place.

The party comprised seven members of the Auckland Canoe Club. Ann Schofield, Mike Randall, Ryan Whittle, Kevin Dunsford, Maurice Hanvey, Brian Strid and Vincent Maire.

On Good Friday we drove north to Kaiwaka and turned left into Orini Road for the 20-minute drive to the Hargreaves farm which is located in the vicinity of Otaru Point just across the Otamatea River from Batley. This is where three rivers, the Otamatea, the Arapaoa and the Whakaki converge amidst high headlands.

Day one had us on the water by 10am and we paddled down the Otamatea River towards the main harbour. Prior to departing we had made cellphone contact with Kaipara Coastguard and this was one of the few times we were able to inform them of our intentions. Both VHF and cellphone contact is severely restricted on the Kaipara due to the lack of transmission towers.

Soon after our departure the tide turned. However, any benefit to be gained from paddling downstream with the tide was cancelled out by the 15-20 knot sou-west winds.

The first hour was uneventful other than we had to battle wind- against-tide waves as we pushed our way around the Puketotara Peninsula. Once into the main part of the harbour we found a small beach and climbed a hill to get an idea of conditions in the main harbour.

Lindsey's husband Tony had told us the presence of 4.5m king tides would flatten out the water and enable us to cross the Lady Franklin Bank. This advice, plus the apparent lack of stand

ing waves mid-harbour, convinced us to head due west.

The journey across the harbour was relatively uneventful. Our target was a vertical line caused by a landslide on a distant cliff face and we held a steady course for most of the way.

Just over an hour of paddling had us among a line of dancing waves that seemed to appear out of nowhere. At first we tried to avoid these waves but we were very quickly among them. We had arrived on the Lady Franklin bar. Other than getting very wet the bar made no difference to our course or our time. In wasn't until we arrived in the deep channel that runs up the eastern side of the northern peninsula did we feel our boats being pushed seawards. By this time we were close enough to ferry glide to a beach and a much needed comfort stop.

The last kilometre of what became a 21km day took us at a gentle pace to Pouto where we were met on the beach by Hugh and Lorraine Messenger, the couple who left the rat race of Whangarei for the peace and quiet of Pouto (population 13). The community hall has been converted into a backpackers and campsite and this is where we stayed the night. Glad we were too of having Kevin's trolley, as the campsite is some 300m up a steep road.

Later in the afternoon four of us paid Hugh Messenger \$20 each for a tour of the north head in his 4WD van. This proved to be one of the highlights of the trip. We followed the harbour entrance for some distance stopping to see the remains of an American ship that was wrecked in 1877. The remnants had only recently reappeared from beneath the sands.

Once we had cleared the entrance and the beach turned north our guide aimed his vehicle directly into the sandhills and we soon found ourselves in a place known as the Valley of the Shipwrecks. The valley floor was littered with wood. This area had once been on the coast and claimed many wrecks and no doubt many lives. It now lies several hundred metres from the coast. Our destination was the disused light-

house but along the way we visited the site where strange carvings had been uncovered. These now lie in the Dargaville museum and are used as proof that perhaps the Portuguese once visited the harbour long before Abel Tasman sailed into our history books.

Hugh took us to see the grave of a nine-month-old baby buried there in 1909 and told us of many other graves of drowned sailors in the vicinity. We also heard of the cannibalistic feasts that took place in the area.

Some of these sand-filled valleys are so desert-like they were used for a set for an episode of *Xena*.

The lighthouse is made of Kauri and stands amongst trees on what was once a cliff-face overlooking the channel. It now sits several hundred metres inland. This is a fascinating place and should you go to Pouto by kayak or by car, make sure you do this trip.

That evening we had dinner in the hall and ended the evening playing indoor bowls. Brown team skippered by Ryan won over the blacks skippered by Ann.

Day two had us on the water soon after 9am. As we were packing up a woman came calling and told us of being attacked by a white pointer in 1996 while she sat in her sit-on kayak. The only thing that saved her was the fact the shark dived at her through a fishing net, became tangled and eventually drowned. She believed the shark was attracted by the green colouring of her kayak.

We had two hours of tide to take us up-harbour to Kellys Beach. However, the wind had shifted and the nor-wester blasted away at our faces as we struggled upstream.

This part of the coast comprises sandstone. The very high tide was eating away at the cliffs and we saw extensive erosion which stained the water yellow. To begin with we made good time. Our first stop was some 6km upstream on a beautiful beach just south of Pareotaunga Point. It would have made an ideal place to camp.

The wind gained momentum as we headed north. At some stage along the route we rounded a point in what must have been 30+ knots of headwind and very confused seas. It was very hard going but once clear of the cliffs, the winds dropped back a bit.

I had been told the Kellys Beach campsite was fairly basic but what appeared around a headland could only be described as 'feral'. The campsite and the people there caused us to linger off the beach until Brian landed to check out the situation. We were somewhat relieved to see a hand wave us further north. Wrong beach!

As it happened Kellys Beach could not have been nicer. This too has a population of 13 and the local hall doubles as a campsite. The manager was a very generous man who couldn't do enough to ensure we were comfortable. We used the hall for cooking and this was welcomed by us all as the rain had started to fall. Total distance for day two was 18km.

Day three was always going to be a biggie. We were on the water at 7am at dead-low water. This proved to be a very wise decision as it enabled us to cross the Wairoa River at slack water. We crossed two sand bars each time hitting the bottom but only Brian elected to get out and drag his kayak. At one navigation marker, Ryan and Kevin took time to harvest a very healthy batch of mussels. One this leg of the journey, Kevin used his sail and looked very impressive as he rode over the waves.

We had a short break near Kaiwhitu Island before paddling down river and rounding The Bluff into Tinopai. Here we had a brew and heard the news that the Queen Mother had died. We knew how she felt!

Tinopai amazed us all. We had seen it on day-one and were astonished at the 60 or so houses along the waterfront. A local informed us that there are 250 houses in Tinopai of which a third are holiday homes. It has a permanent population of 400 a third of whom are retirees. There is a camping ground right on the water.

The winds had been forecast to go from north-west to south-west and this is what happened. In fact, off Tinopai, the wind died to a gentle breeze that pushed us up the Otamatea River.

Off Pakaurangi Point we aimed our bows into the Arapaoa River for the final leg to Pahi. This was a 12km stretch of hopping from one point to the next. We saw many ideal camping spots but the topography had the effect of turning the wind into a nor-wester so once again we were paddling into headwinds.

Pahi doesn't come into view until you are 2km short of its high, house-covered hill. The camping ground is on the northern side of the wharf and lies between a massive Moreton Bay Fig tree and a lovely old hotel which is now a private residence.

We were met at the campsite by Ralph Williams of the Kaipara Volunteer Coastguard. He was an excellent contact and is willing to help any sea kayakers exploring the harbour.

That evening we had a shared meal of mussels plus other goodies. It had been a 35km day so it was a tired bunch of sea kayakers who crashed out that night.

Day four was marred by 40+ knot sou-westerly squalls that blackened the sky before riding over the top of us like herd of hungry hyenas. We had to stop twice to escape their power which meant the trip back to our cars at Otaru Point took an hour longer than expected. Lindsey met us on the beach and we dragged our boats up to her lawn and sorted ourselves out. We all agreed that it was a fantastic trip and that the Kaipara Harbour has a lot to offer sea kayakers. All of us plan to return there for further exploring.

Some points worth noting for planning a trip on the Kaipara Harbour:

1. Plan your trip around high tide. Slack water lasts about an hour each side of high tide and this is long enough to reach safe water.
2. We also found dead low water to give ideal paddling conditions however, we did have the benefit of king tides.
3. The exception to this is crossing the harbour to Pouto. We recommend you allow three hours for this trip and aim due west, not directly at Pouto. Start two hours before high tide and allow for time spent evading sand banks. This is a trip for experienced paddlers only.
4. There seems to be plenty of opportunities for free camping. We passed many miles of farmland with ne'er a house in sight. The western coast of the harbour seems best for this.
5. Lindsey and Tony Hargreaves are happy to care for kayakers' cars. We paid them \$20 for this service. Their number is (09) 431-2045
6. Ralph Williams in Pahi is a good source of information. His number is (09) 431-7449 or ralph-w@xtra.co.nz
7. Hugh and Lorraine Messenger at Pouto can be contacted on (09) 439-4298. The hall has some excellent bunk beds at a cost of \$10 a night. We paid \$5 and used our tents but had use of the kitchen and the hall for cooking and eating.
8. The contact number for the Kellys Beach motorcamp is (09) 439- 4204
9. The contact number for the Pahi motorcamp is (09) 431-7322
10. The contact for the Tinopai motorcamp is (09) 431-6797.
11. If you do not wish to cross the harbour try paddling from Otaru Point to Pahi. This is an easy trip of less than three hours with plenty of opportunities to stop along the way. Another option is to stay at Tinopai.

12. Wind is a big factor on the Kaipara harbour. Rounding headlands can be a tricky business and wind-against-tide is also a factor to consider in trip planning.

13. We did see other boats on the harbour but not many, as few as 20 vessels over the entire weekend.

14. VHF contact proved to be impossible in most locations. We tried channels 16, 66 and 84. Only the latter gave us some success.

Prior to this trip I carried a mental image of a dirty harbour clogged with mangrove trees. This is not the case. Even as far inland as Pahi we were paddling in clean (but not clear) water. The few mangrove trees we came close to were rooted in white shell banks. We did see mangrove forests but they were up distant creeks and channels.

This was an excellent trip although at times, the wind made it very hard work. The Kaipara Harbour is a fascinating place and we urge you to explore this magnificent waterway.
Vincent Maire

CALENDAR
KASK FORUM
2003
28 - 30 March
Port Underwood

Whites Bay at the entrance to Port Underwood, the Rarangi Surf Lifesaving Club rooms, and adjacent DOC campground. The club house has shower and toilet facilities, bunks for 20 for those who don't want to camp. The club room upstairs has a good sized room for communal meeting, and a large uncovered deck area outside. The campground, adjacent to the beach, is a nice grass area with native shrubs and trees. The bay is on the east coast, north of Rarangi, and is sheltered from the northerly, north east and westerly/NW winds. It is at the south west end of Port Underwood, along which the coast is riddled with caves. Fishing is excellent.

Go North Young Man

By Ryan Whittle

Departure day had arrived. Ryan Whittle in an Albatross and Wally Gilmer in a Storm loaded boats at Okahu Bay and were seen off by members gathering for the swim escort. From North Head we spotted the overnigheters from Rangitoto returning (a fair way off) and waved a cheery hello, but they snubbed us and continued on.

We had decided to leave Auckland on a direct course so as to spend more time in unexplored territory. Our first stop was Whites Beach on Rangitoto, facing the crossing of the Hauraki Gulf to the Tiri Passage. This part of the Gulf is where the Americas Cup boats race, and today was part of the warm up regatta, so there was a bit of traffic building up before the races. The yachts arrived just as we were leaving. We offered them a warm up race but they weren't interested, so we paddled on leaving them in our wake.

Crossing the open stretch of water, we watched numerous gannets bobbing about on the calm surface and wondered if their inactivity was the gannet version of being a couch-potato. Approaching the Tiri Passage between Whangaparoa Peninsula and Tiri Tiri Matangi Island, a yacht motoring along at about 5 knots approached going our way and we decided it was the ideal opportunity to try riding his wash and getting a ride. We did this while chatting to the owners, who turned out to be friends of Clive Hookham, a well known Auckland paddler. They eventually ran low on gas and had to turn off, but not before passing down a couple of cold Speight's to supplement our water supplies.

The end of Whangaparoa provided a nice stopping place for a late lunch, and a view of Tiri, which seemed to be acting as a marina that day going on the number of masts there. Another short crossing to Motuora Island saw the end of the first days paddle. We arrived just as the last weekend boatie was leaving and the DOC campground was empty but for our kayaks. Isn't that the way it should be?

This stop on the first night was the only stop we had decided on prior to the start of the trip. We felt that choosing a site on the day, taking into account the conditions and how we felt, was a much safer option than possibly pushing too hard to reach destinations decided on before the trip. So the planning for the trip had consisted largely of checking for places where we could replenish our water supplies, and it looked like water was never more than a days paddle away.

Monday dawned to a forecast of up to 10k breezes, and the sea was glassy passing Moturekareka Is. Penguins were floating about in pairs, and I guess all the shearwater feathers floating on the surface was their hair in the plughole. The shearwaters must have a fixed downward gaze, as several times they veered off in obvious surprise at the last second to avoid colliding with us.

Around the coastal side of Kawau Island, we take a break on a small sandy beach and share our snacks with three Weka wandering the back lawn of a bach on the shoreline. The wharf here has an old red phone box that has been converted to a boat shed complete with water and power supplies. It was able to house a dinghy standing upright.

On to Tawharunui to see the surfers, and lunch at the campground on the grass under the pines. A trip here a few weeks previously had shown us good rock gardening around to Omaha Beach, and so it proved again. There are far too many people on the beaches not working on a Monday. No wonder the government is cash strapped with most of the population enjoying the sunshine on the sand instead of working and paying taxes.

Barely into the Marine reserve at Leigh, we are accosted by a guy in a floating Bambina wanting to know if we are fishing, and a "You can't fish here, its a reserve", puts his mind at rest. We stop for the night on a coarse sand beach with a small waterfall just before Pakiri Beach, and the clear air allows us views out to Little Barrier, Great Barrier, the Coromandel Penin-

sula, the Hen and Chicken Islands just up the coast, and Bream Head in the distance.

We had been told by other kayakers that the paddle up the long stretches of beach were boring and never ending, but we found this to be far from the truth in our case. Shearwaters would land beside us, fly ahead and land until we arrived before taking off ahead again. This may be the way they look for their meals, following large fish looking for the smaller ones to be disturbed, but it provided us with company along the beach.

We spotted what we initially thought was a cloud shadow and closer investigation showed it to be a huge (30m) school of 2-3cm black fish which we did not recognise, a neat sight floating above them looking down into the clear water at their shimmering shapes. A lone shark fin, visible from 20-30m didn't stay long, and at the end of the beach we were passed by tens of thousands of shearwaters before landing around of us, peppercorns on the sea. Mangawhai had the impressive towering sand dunes, and a surf club that let us refill our water bottles. Bream Tail marked the end of the first 'boring' stretch and a nice flat grassy site on the beach front proved another great campsite. The view on the menu tonight was out to the Hen and Chicken Islands, and up the coast along Bream Bay to Marsden Point. Our route for the next day.

When you can see your intended destination, and its just a blur on a clear day, its an imposing start. The chimney at Marsden Point was our marker, but paddling just outside the surf zone (and sometimes just inside!) and having the sights on shore fairly close, meant that we could focus on things apart from the solitary chimney you would have on a direct route across the bay. Sprats jumping from the water in front of us - "Look at what a strong swimmer I am, don't waste your time trying to catch me", and another flock of shearwater floating offshore, were the only wildlife activities we saw that day.

A stop for lunch at Ruakaka and a local fisherman tells us about how people would swim out to his nets at low tide and steal his catch. Across Whangarei Harbour entrance, we move from long white sandy beach to rock gardens along the cliffs. The water is calm in the lee of the North Easterly breeze, but around Bream Head it chops up. This obviously wakes the fish up, the lure that has been dragged all afternoon earns its keep, and its kawahai for dinner in the sand dunes of Ocean Beach. Watching the breakers before landing in the surf, trying to pick a lull, one decides to break early and pushes me sideways into the beach. Come on, Wally, that's how its done! The tents get a chance to dry off from last nights dew, and the only view out to sea tonight is South America, the Hen and Chickens now well to the South of us.

The disabled seabird we saw last night on arrival didn't make it through the night, and makes me think of the efficient job nature performs disposing of all those dead fish, birds or whatever. Having marvelled at the numbers of schooling fish and flocks of shearwater, they all have relatively short lifespans (compared to us), and only a minority of them end up as dinner for hunters, and they will all die. Yet we don't see animal graveyards. I wonder what human population nature could handle cleaning up after.

Back to the living, and the VHF nowcast tells us that it's blowing a 20 knot Easterly in Auckland Harbour. We set off into still airs, no longer affected by the "Bream Head to Cape Colville" weather. The easterly soon reaches us as well, and we poke into the natural shelter of the inlets near Taiharuru then Pataua for a look at the quiet life. Getting out of these spots against the incoming tide requires some strenuous paddling.

Stopping for lunch at a point halfway up Ngunguru Bay tempts us to abandon the trip and spend the rest of our time here. There are no buildings, just white sand and farmland, with an easy walk up the hill on the point giving spectacular views back down the coast to Bream Head and to the Poor Knights

Islands out to sea. That's not to be though, and we cross to Ngunguru through working birds, but its no fish for dinner today.

Picking our way over breaking surf on the bar, we pull into the local township and fill bottles from the tap outside the school. You wouldn't have a tap with bad water outside a school, would you? We had planned to continue another 10km up the coast, but this mornings 20 knot easterly from Auckland had arrived in full and we sneaked in through the rocks at Tutukaka Harbour. A nice flat grassy spot on a backyard was our campsite in the harbour, courtesy of Dawn.

The Easterly is still blowing the next morning, but the VHF weatherman says that the seas are slight. We decide to pop out for a look and talk to a charter boat hiding in the harbour entrance on the way. He says he's not going anywhere and when we get out its not hard to see why. The weatherman must be looking at the conditions from his beach house in the Bahamas. Its the first time we've come across slight seas that tower above us. The paddling that day was a relaxed tour of the harbour and the marina. The coastguard at the marina was happy for us to pitch our tents on the grass by the car park and we were able to keep warm and dry at the marina with plenty of boaties to chat with.

The word on Saturday morning is for clear calm conditions with a north easterly expected later in the day. We are able to leave the harbour OK, but the wind soon springs into action and makes for a very messy sea. A stop for lunch at Matapouri Bay along with the weekend crowds, past Woolley's Bay and we decide that its getting too uncomfortable so start to look for a camp site. Something wanted us to continue as the wind immediately dropped away. Whananaki estuary got the once over in the rain before rounding the peninsula and checking in to the Whananaki doc site. Its a very pleasant spot, with numerous mature pohutakawas above the white sandy shoreline, and the campground on a large open field behind them. Camp mother there turns out to be a lady I

knew from badminton 15 years ago, who made us very welcome. The red sunset bodes well for the next day.

Sunday is the start of our second week, and the wind has moved to an offshore westerly. The sea is calm, and the sky is blue. We can rockgarden everywhere, and the pohutakawas are thriving. Coming into another sandy beach, the surf is rust colored and the water visibility is low. What looks like pohutakawa seeds are floating everywhere, but the trees aren't flowering so we decide it must be algal bloom that's causing the red colour. The Poor Knights slide past on the tide, and Wally has time to compose a poem following an earlier mishap which he later named, 'Rock gardeners Lament.'

As he paddled beside a rock
A swell placed him on its top
The future indeed looked dim
As Wal went for a swim
A rescue made to save the day
And continue paddling to
Mimiwhangata Bay

But...

A mere one hundred meters paddled
had we
And the swell struck again with glee
The albatross hull exposed to the sun
Ryan a roll, expertly done
Thought as we paddled west
This is sea kayaking at its best

A stop at Oakura at the entrance to the Whangaruru Harbour to satisfy our ice cream cravings. I later worked out that nearly 50% of the money spent during the trip, was on ice cream. And we were riddled with guilt! Across the harbour from Oakura is another doc site. We have decided that a mixture of freedom camping, with the isolation and views, and DoC campsites, with showers (in the summer only - they are cold), flat grassy sites and water, is the way to go. This is reinforced as our new neighbours welcome us with hot chocolate and biscuits.

Leaving Whangaruru Harbour, big cliffs and calm deep clear water around the continuous rockgardens are the

order of the morning, The only sign of habitation that day is at Bland Bay. A lone dolphin in Bland Bay appears to be unwell. Hope its just our imagination. The tremendous coastline continues full of caves and tunnels. This section of coast I had paddled once before in unpleasant conditions and memories of the worst days paddling now combine with one of the best over the same piece of coastline. The conditions can make the same place seem like heaven or hell, you just need to be fortunate and get the good days.

We eventually get to Whangamumu Harbour, having gone north only 10km in a full day' paddle. But what a great 10km. A picturesque setting at the base of the Loop track provided our campsite for the night. A dozen moored boats and a red sunset promising more tomorrow. And where did all those sandflies come from? Suddenly feels more like the deep south!

We stop at the defunct whaling station in the morning and wander around the old structures. It was started up pre 1900 and ran about 50 years, the busiest year being 1942 when they killed 76 whales. Before the invention of the harpoon gun, they would place nets across locations whales were known to pass. The nets, with floats attached, would serve to slow the whales down and prevent diving while they harpooned them. The carcasses were cooked slowly for 36 hours in concrete tanks and the stench here during that period must have been sickening. Back on the water, the trees along the shoreline are mainly pohutakawas, and all but a few are dead. The possums must be rife here.

We get to what we thought was Piercy Island (The Hole in the Rock), but its an imposter island on the previous headland. Prior to the trip we were informed that there were no landings once out of Whangamumu Harbour, but we spot at least half a dozen small sandy beaches and make use of one of them for a break before Cape Brett.

The wind has picked up and the sea is messy enough to stop the commercial boats going through the hole in the rock, but Wallys no commercial boat

and is keen to pass through on his first visit here. Some hard paddling into the heavy wind passing through the gap while I wait to pick up the pieces, and its 'Been there - done that.' We also go into the cave on the north side of the island, its in the lee and for my money its much better than the hole in the rock. Outside there are large schools of Blue Maomao with their backs in the air looking like granite cobblestones on the surface. They don't move until we get to within a few feet then the entire school explodes as one as they dive for cover.

We sneak on the inside of Cape Brett and see the landing for the lighthouse. Only a kayak could get through this way on this tide. The landing was not designed with kayaks in mind and you would only brave it if you had to. Around the Cape into the Bay of Islands we are in the lee of the wind and its flat calm clear water again. Into Deep Water Cove we pull alongside a yacht to get a weather update. Its a charted boat and the Canadians have been touring around having just come from Great Barrier.

We must have looked in need of a feed as they supplied us with a bag of freshly cut watermelon with crystallised ginger pieces sprinkled in. Going to make a habit of visiting yachties if they are all as generous as the ones we have met on this trip! We make camp for the night on Rawhiti Peninsula, just over the hill from Rawhiti township, and enjoy Wally's brandy sauce for dessert on another great evening.

A visit to the Rawhiti shop for another ice cream, before spending the morning island hopping. Lunch on Okahu Island then cross the 10km to the Ninepins on the northern point of the entrance to the Bay of Islands. The weather is kind to us again, and its a comfortable crossing through an area that can be anything but.

The Ninepins provide more rock gardening around some rather large rock formations, and by the time we get going, the wind has come up and we are forced offshore to escape the mess close in.

We spot a likely beach on the Purerua Peninsula and share it with a Dory that is already ashore. The owner left from Waipu Cove, and has rowed to here in three months. And I thought kayaking was a sedate way to travel. He has to be much more selective about the days he can travel on, so many of his days are rest days. Wally gets the flattest spot on the shoreline, so I brave the wind up the hill in a spot that will give fantastic views. Shame I'm in a tent, the outlook is always the same from inside.

Day 12 is still windy, and our rowing friend is staying ashore. The swells and clapotis force us offshore again but we are able to take a break in the lee at Taronui Bay. All along the coast the swells are coming in and every few minutes, two large ones will appear. They are large enough that we change course to take them head on as they look to big to pass under us beam on. We make a lunch stop at Takou Bay, just before Matauri Bay, where a 4WD parked back off the beach by a creek appears to have been abandoned for the day..

The following wind has pushed us along, and we can't see our start point from this morning. The wind dies over lunch and we are able to start rock gardening again. It feels like we missed a bit this morning, being offshore the whole way.

Around the last headland before Matauri Bay, we are escorted by a Hammerhead shark (much smaller than us) enjoying the sunshine for a few minutes. Within site of Matauri Bay we catch our first fish in four days of trawling. I was beginning to wonder if the northland coast had any fish!

Making an early stop at Matauri Bay in the campground, we treat ourselves to hot showers - and an ice cream! A walk up to the lookout, lets us see back to Cape Brett and up to Flat Island over the picturesque Cavalli Island Group. Wally has called his wife Sue and arranged to meet here in a couple of days, so we plan to travel north to look at and camp on Flat Island before returning to tour around the Cavalli Islands.

The flat sheltered campground makes for a good nights sleep before going north along the coastline before stopping for lunch on the Mahinepua Peninsula adjacent to Flat Island. We are able to walk across the narrow Peninsula to get a view of the coast to the north. The northerly wind has whipped up the whitecaps and its a mess compared to the coast we just came up.

We have a good look at Flat Island, but it is surrounded by boulders and crashing surf with nowhere to land. Those big swells from yesterday are still here, one seemed to block out the sun. The route is set back to the Cavalli Islands, and we have our choice of camp sites on the main island. There is an old DoC hut here but is been condemned and is no longer in use. A walk up the hill to the roof of the Cavallis provides an enticing look at what we can expect the next day.

We were sucked in! Saturday doesn't dawn sunlight, only rain and wind. It does take much thinking about to stay put and read a book. This is our first full day off the water since we left, so its not a hardship.

The rain clears late afternoon, and a group of kayakers arrive on the beach and we wander down to say hello. Turns out to be Mark Hutson (a well known tour operator in the Bay of Islands) with a small group. Any of you that has been on any of his trips know that his food is of high quality, and he'd bought too much! So Wally and I helped out by reducing the stocks of fried chicken and those heavy cumbersome chocolate biscuits. You owe us one for that Mark!

The final day is just a short paddle back to Matauri Bay to meet up with Sue, who had arrived the previous day.

Its an excellent stretch of coastline, and we have both picked areas that would provide great destinations for club trips.

From: Ryan Whittle
ryan@delphic.co.nz

Gondoliering in the Fjords by John Hall-Jones

Whereas we greatly admire the courage and tenacity of the likes of Chris Duff and Paul Caffyn for the way they 'battled' their kayaks up the wild West Coast of Fiordland, my kayaking mate Dieter Kraft and I would commend 'In Fjord' kayaking as a more genteel way of seeing the West Coast Fjords. Inside the Fjords the sea can be so calm (well, er, on rare occasions - read Paul Caffyn's account of traversing Acheron Passage in 'Obscured by Waves') that is even possible to 'gondolier' your kayak around the fjords (see photo for indisputable comment!)

For the past four Februarys (the optimal month, weather-wise on the West Coast) Dieter and I have kayaked all the nooks and crannies of Preservation Inlet, Dusky and Doubtful sounds. And on our 'Triple Sounds' expedition last February we actually ventured out into the open Tasman Sea between Sutherland and Bligh sounds for two whole hours, negotiating the tricky Sutherland Bar on the way, and paddled down to Bligh Sound as fast as our paddles could paddle!

From Bligh Sound we got choppered on to Charles Sound. (Choose your chopper pilot carefully if you want to be delivered to the right sound - again

read Paul Caffyn's account of a flight to Charles Sound instead of Nancy Sound 'The Sea Canoeist Newsletter' No.80, April - May 1999). In Charles Sound we kayaked up the large Irene River for 5km, probably the ultimate of all rivers to kayak in all the West Coast Fjords. 'Here is the deepest silence and Nature is hushed.'

The other reason Dieter and I like 'In Fjord' kayaking is the greater potential for close encounters with wildlife. To sneak up on a penguin quietly preening itself; to have dolphins porpoising in front of your bow (without touching it!); to have seals bobbing towards you in their curiosity; must surely be the ultimate in wildlife experiences.

It also leads to wonderful photographic opportunities, wildlife and those mirror calm reflections, which you don't obtain from a cruise boat. Some of these photos and also our kayaking trips are being published in my book, 'The Fjords of Fiordland', an illustrated (colour) of all 14 West Coast Fjords, which is being released in October this year.

Note on the writer: John is the author of 24 historical books, of which 10 are on Fiordland, including 'Discover Fiordland', 'Fiordland Explored', 'Doubtfull Harbour', 'Martins Bay' and 'Goldfields of the South'.



Dieter Kraft gondoliering our kayak in Dusky Sound.
Photo: J. Hall-Jones

HISTORY

from Alan Byde Fridel Meyer, the background. Starts in 1987.

John Dowd, a Kiwi, was editor of the 'Sea Kayaker' magazine. We were in frequent contact, mostly by 'phone, Vancouver to Middleton in Teesdale, north of England. Sheep country. The story of Fridel Meyer's voyages round Britain were later featured in the Sea Kayaker magazine.

In Harrogate Yorkshire, lived Mrs. Dalling Hay. She was in her early seventies and badly affected by diabetes. She was very well known in the town and when she died the Harrogate Advertiser had a quarter page obituary. That newspaper clip went to Germany, to Kitzingen where she was born circa 1910. A kayaking enthusiast sent it on to USA, and yet another sent it to John Dowd in Vancouver. He 'phoned me and asked, did I know anything about her, Fridel Meyer as was?

Harrogate is 60 miles from Middleton, or 26,000 by the Great Circle route. That was a Thursday morning. By Thursday afternoon, 23/7/1987 I posted a letter to the Harrogate Advertiser, seeking further information. At 9 am on the Friday morning the 'phone rang and a cultured voice, Glen Dalling Hay, invited me and my wife to visit him. The letter post in England can be swift.

We found the address, a tall Victorian terraced house in a wealthy part of Harrogate, facing parkland. Glen showed us into the drawing room, richly furnished with antiques. Fridel had been a collector of fine furniture. Glen showed me two small compasses which Fridel had used on her voyage round parts of Britain in 1933. He showed us a photograph album too. He told his story, his life with Fridel, whom he obviously admired greatly. One great absence was a diary of her voyages. She never kept one.

The story of her voyage from Kitzingen in Bavaria to London in a

British made folding canoe in 1932, camping along the river banks and sea shores is another story. So is the yarn of her setting off in competition with Jack Nolan in 1933 to be the first to paddle a canoe round Britain. That ended in Aberdeen, when Fridel was being driven to a lecture engagement and was 'T boned' off the road near Stirling. She had serious injuries and on release from hospital went to North Yorkshire to convalesce. Jack Nolan had kidney problems and vanished from the scene.

We went to lunch at 'Pinocchio's' a restaurant that had been a theatre, before that a Music Hall, and before that in the 1880's, a Baptist chapel. During the 1939-1945 war the property was almost derelict, but some shops on the front of it were let. In that time perambulators for babies were not being made. Fridel, now divorced from her first husband, recognised this lack and went to the town rubbish tip and raked it over to find bits of prams, wheels, frames, bodies. She was an able mechanic and rebuilt battered prams. From the shop she sold or hired them.

Mechanic? After her voyages and two children, she set up business on the Kent coast as a taxi service. She did her own maintenance and could strip a car to its crankshaft if necessary. That is when it was necessary to have the head off and decoke the motor about every 2,000 miles. That is when a gearbox, if missing a tooth or two, would be filled with a mixture of grease, oil and sawdust, to deaden the racket. Her father was a sea captain and an able engineer and taught her how to use spanners on engines. I digress.

Came the war and Fridel was interned under Regulation 18B, by which people of 'enemy' extraction were put in gaol until interrogated. Fridel was sent to Holloway, still a notoriously tough women's prison in London. She shared a cell with one of the Mitford sisters, one of whom was a friend of Hitler, and later shot herself. All the Mitfords ('U' and & Non U') were far right wing, very pleased with themselves and favoured national socialism.

Fridel was interrogated by Norman Birkett a leading barrister, after six months in a cell with peeling walls and constant damp, locked up with an impossibly snobbish woman. There is a bronze plaque to the memory of Norman Birkett near Howtown in the Lake District. It is fixed to a vertical crag that rises sheer from the lake, and can be seen only from the water. I paddled past that place circa 1965 and saw it and didn't know then how it would return.

He asked her, wasn't she ashamed to be German? Fridel was not intimidated by this specialist in intimidation, and replied with firm conviction that the German people and the British people were all people, kindly; it was only the purblind politicians that set them at war with one another. Norman recognised a powerful honest soul and she was released on condition that she lived no closer than 30 miles to the coast in UK.

She had friends in Harrogate, far inland where there is a German influence, where she had convalesced in 1933. That is how she came to be rooting around on a rubbish tip for pram parts. Her taxi business on a foreland in Kent had been taken over by the military and her collection of valuable old cars was pushed over the cliff. They'd be worth millions now.

The war ended and Fridel's business now included the ruined Music Hall behind the shop. She employed a man and a boy to repair perambulators where the stage had been. Below in the basement there was a night club. That night club took fire one morning early and burned out the restaurant but that was much later.

Meanwhile, back in 1933, a young boy, aged 14 perhaps, Glen Dalling-Hay, lived with his Mum in a coastal town just north of the Humber and Spurn Head. They knew from the newspaper there that this young German woman would be passing the town one day and they watched her go by in her kayak with her pet Chow, Wu-Pei-Fu, an old sea-dog.

Glen kept a clipping of that newspaper item from 1933 (and showed it to us in 1987.) Time went by until 1950, to the tall Victorian terraced house which then belonged to Glen and his Mum. Glen's sister with new baby was to visit for a couple of weeks, so Glen was sent to the shop to hire a pram for a fortnight. He met Fridel, one thing led to another and they married. She was maybe 10 years older than Glen, but oh! how he admired her.

So they lived their lives far from the sea and the voyages that would be remarkable even today, and Fridel loved her garden and the social life in Harrogate. She became blind, as diabetics do, and died in 1987. One daughter was killed in a car crash near Harrogate, the other emigrated to Canada where she lives to this day.

That's it? The end of this story? Oh no it isn't. Joan and I visited Glen about every other year until the last time, in 1999. Then we started the paper work to emigrate to NZ and we wanted to visit Glen again to say goodbye and to thank him for his kindness and courtesy. He wrote letters and cards in perfectly beautiful italic script. Unlike his usual practice of returning a phone call to a letter, there was no message from him. We were immersed in packing, paper work, receiving e mails from NZ on the purchase of this house, and the night before we were to leave, 1/10/2001, there was a phone call from Bettina Roehnelt.

Who is she? I hear you ask. She is a young German woman who is studying to be a film producer. She was then at Leeds Uni. She had heard of Fridel's voyages and went to Harrogate to visit Glen if she could. She met the Canadian daughter who was mourning the loss of Glen, who had died the day before. Being too upset to talk about Fridel's story, she let Bettina have my phone number, which would be disconnected the next day, 2/10/01. Like the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo, we can agree it was a damn close run thing.

Bettina is going ahead with the film and keeps in touch from time to time

with us here in ChCh. She has raised a large part of the money and is keeping at it. She enquired from Britain, from the British Canoe Union what they knew of Fridel. She was referred to John Dudderidge, 96 (ish) ex president of the BCU and he also referred her to me. Small world. It seems my name will go on the titles of the film as a living witness. I was only 5 in 1933, but it is to the visits with Glen that she refers.

There is a destiny which shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may. Fridel's story isn't over yet.

Alan Bye

HUMOUR

From: Malcolm Gunn

Can't vouch for the truth bit, but it's a great story...

A TRUE LAWYER STORY

A Charlotte, NC lawyer purchased a box of two dozen very rare and expensive cigars, then insured them against fire among other things. Within a month, having smoked his entire stockpile of these great cigars, and without yet having made even his first premium payment on the policy, the lawyer filed a claim against the insurance company. In his claim, the lawyer stated the cigars were lost "in a series of small fires". The insurance company refused to pay, citing the obvious reason: that the man had consumed the cigars in the normal fashion.

The lawyer sued....and won! In delivering the ruling the judge agreed with the insurance company that the claim was frivolous, but stated nevertheless, that the lawyer held a policy from the company in which it had warranted that the cigars were insurable and also guaranteed that it would insure them against fire, without defining what is considered to be "unacceptable fire," and was obligated to pay the claim. Rather than endure a lengthy and costly appeal process, the insurance company accepted the ruling and paid \$15,000 to the lawyer for his loss of the rare cigars lost in the "fires".

NOW FOR THE BEST PART

After the lawyer cashed the cheque, the insurance company had him arrested on 24 counts of ARSON.

With his own insurance claim and testimony from the previous case being used against him, the lawyer was convicted of intentionally burning his insured property and he was sentenced to 24 months in jail and ordered to pay a \$24,000 fine. This is a true story and was the 1st place winner in the recent Criminal Lawyers Award Contest.

The Perils of Speaking English

A) The Chinese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

B) The French eat a lot of fat and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

C) The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

D) The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

Conclusion: Eat & drink what you like. It's speaking English that kills you.

Safe Drinking Water??

From: Malcolm Geard

Here's an amusing little response to a recent British O level exam question.

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!

HOW TO TELL THE SEX OF A FLY

A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband, a jetskier, stalking around with a fly swatter.

"What are you doing?" She asked.

"Hunting Flies" He responded.

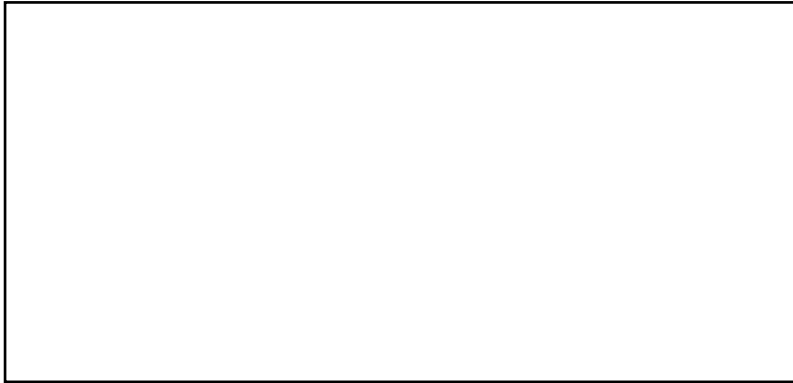
"Oh. Killing any?" She asked.

"Yep, three males and two females," he replied.

Intrigued, she asked, "How can you tell?"

He responded, "Three were on a beer can, and two were on the phone."

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