



Journal No 12. Perth. August / September 1998.

## From The Editor

Well I'm back from hols. Peter Cappendell, Paul Sutton and myself went north to paddle the Dampier Archipelago Islands. A great paddling spot, and although we met with some unseasonal weather and high winds, it was enjoyable. Many thanks to Les A and John S for helping publish this edition. Ed.

### The Presidents Comments

It's great too see our journal going from strength to strength with interesting input from the members.

I see the journal becoming an excellent forum for discussion on all aspects of sea kayaking, and a great method of promoting the club!

It is planned to have extra copies made available to the public through outdoor retail outlets, leading to better awareness of our activities. The editor needs as much input as possible from you, so please write about any interesting or unusual experiences, or if you have any questions we will try to hunt down the answers. Good paddling...John Satherley.

## Gear Talk

### Paddles

Paddles are as important as your boat because the boat don't go if the paddle doesn't work properly. Its like the gear box on a car, it takes the energy from the motor (you) and turns it into momentum. There are a myriad of different paddles on the market from propellers to flat blades, plastic to carbon fibre and a variety of shafts to choose from. I have no doubt people put a lot of thought and research into the type of paddle you buy (well I think you should) and we could argue the pros and cons of different designs for hours. I don't like propellers for sea kayak touring but I am sure there are people out there very happy with their propellers.

The area I want to discuss today is the paddle length.

I believe there are a lot of people paddling sea kayaks with too short a paddle. My first paddle was at the length recommended by the shop I bought it from and being a beginner knew no different. I must admit it was quite suitable for my first 12 months of paddling as I did not have the skills or paddled in the conditions that required a longer paddle. On flat water touring, not racing, I don't think paddle length is that critical and it must be remembered a longer paddle with the extra reach does take more effort to use. Its like going up a gear in your car. In rough or confused water there are a lot of times when the water on one side of your boat is quite lower than the other side and if your paddle is too short its difficult to maintain speed and rhythm when you use a paddle you have to reach down to the water with. This can produce the air stroke and a capsize. In waves being able to reach out that little bit further to better place the paddle gives you a noticeable advantage. When I started experimenting with paddle lengths I was surprised at the difference it made in 2 mt swells with 1mt wind waves off Greenough.

Like all things you can go too far and too long a paddle is too ungainly to handle properly. How long is the correct length? How long is a piece of string ! I think it depends on the individual. My paddle is just short of the top of my fingers with my arm up. The length that suites me is only 6cm longer than my old paddle but that 6 cm makes a lot of difference. My suggestion is you try different paddle lengths in rough water to find what suits you. I believe paddle length requires the same thought as the paddle type. I would be interested in the comments of people who have sea kayaked in a lot of conditions and people who race, to see if their comments concur with mine L. Allen.

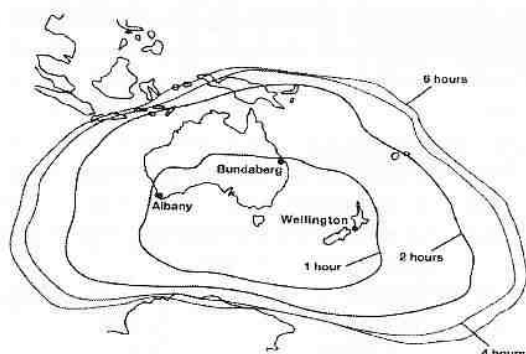
### Epirb's

Sea kayaking is one of those sports where you are one with nature, taking on the ocean with all its moods and exploring remote and beautiful places. The potential to end up in serious trouble is definitely there. To survive requires some thought before you leave the shore and one of those thoughts should be to carry an EPIRB. The law requires you from 1st October to carry one if you are going over 2 miles from the shore outside the exclusion zone. The EPIRB has proven itself to be a life saving device.



They work by using the COSPAS/SARSAT concept. The concept is a joint program, co-ordinated by the USA, Canada, France and Russian satellites. Many countries participate with ground facilities known as local user terminals (LUTs) to provide a global search and rescue service.

An activated emergency beacon is located using an effect known as Doppler Shift. Due to the relative motion between the satellite and the beacon, the beacon's transmitter appears to shift in frequency.



The signal variations transmitted to an LUT and then to Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC), where the position can then be calculated by relating it to the satellite's precisely known position in orbit.



The diagram depicts the typical coverage area and average times for detection of your 121.5 MHz distress beacon by the Australian and New Zealand ground receivers in the COSPAS/SARSAT satellite system.

There are two types of EPIRB the marine and pocket models. They both transmit the same

strength of signal but are designed differently. The marine type of EPIRB are designed to float with the aerial pointing up. This means the unit is much larger than the pocket model and would need to be boat mounted. This is fine while you have the boat but if you capsize in high winds and the boat is blown away so is your EPIRB.

The other option is to buy the pocket type and keep it on your PFD in a position where it will keep the aerial pointing up with out you holding the EPIRB. This means providing you are wearing the PFD you will always have your EPIRB.

I contacted Marine and Harbours to see what they said about pocket EPIRBs. Both types are legal. They always recommend the marine type officially. Unofficially they thought keeping a pocket EPIRB on the PFD and wearing it a good option. Legally there is no law to stop you putting things on your PFD providing it does not alter its ability to pass it's standard.

Regardless of what the law says carrying an EPIRB can save your life. This makes them very cheap insurance and as most paddlers do other adventure sports a pocket EPIRB can be used in a variety of areas. L Allen

## Keeping Up Standards

Imagine you are just into a great trip, it's late in the afternoon and there is a large beach break in front of a magic camping spot. You make your move, swing the bow so you're broach on to the brake and a large wave picks you up and lands you on the beach with a bone jarring thump. Leaping put of the kayak you pull it out of the way of the next wave happy with the fact you executed the perfect landing.

After setting up camp you're ready for that bottle of vintage red that's salted away up the bow of your kayak. When you reach into the bow to retrieve the wine glass you find to you're horror that the rough landing has shattered the glass. I mean what would you do! How could you sit on top of a sand dune taking in the atmosphere and drink red out of a bottle.

You could take solace in the fact that a great cup of



plungered coffee will capture the atmosphere but a bump that can break a glass will probably break the glass in your plunger.

Thankfully the situation can be rectified with two products from Mountain Designs. The first is an unbreakable wine glass that is made from . Its better than plastic and totally unbreakable (that's what the brochure said ). Its not quite glass but very close and the stem screws off so the bottom can fit in the top and take up less room. The other product is a plunger made of plastic (no rust) with the glass made of ?? so it too is unbreakable.

If your not packing for a major expedition the benefit of sea kayaking is the ability to take some of life's little luxuries. It certainly makes for some magic evenings and tops off at trip.

## Skilful play at Hillarys

For our skills day we had perfect weather, fine and mild not too cold and a lovely 1mt wave with the big

## Trip Reports

sets getting to the 1.2 - 1.5 mt mark to make things interesting. We started off with some take offs and landings. John was catching some excellent rides then cutting off the wave to catch another one, until he decided to shoot the tube on a big one. From the shore it looked really good, John flying along inside the tube..... then the wave landed on him and we had a good demonstration of an involuntary wet exit.

Everybody except Steven took a swim in this session of landings and take offs. Some tips from people watching certainly helped people but the bulk of the learning comes from doing it over and over. It doesn't matter who you are skills need practising to even maintain a level.

We then went off shore to practice self rescue. I tried John's sponsons and was very impressed with the stability and the fact you can still paddle easily. It is the best method of self rescue I have tried to date. Re-

entry rolls and paddle floats I believe will fail in rough conditions where I think sponsons will work. I will try them (I have bought my own now) in rough conditions and let people know how they go. Every body tried various forms of self rescue, some more successful than others. Steven showed us a hand roll (we should ban 20 year olds from the club) he has perfected in his pool. Learning self rescue should be a priority with all paddlers as it is very easy to find yourself all alone in a big ocean.

During morning tea one paddler was shivering quite badly. Unfortunately he was one of these really fit types with no body fat to insulate him. As it was a training day, some of the more mature paddlers tried to explain that our decadent life style was necessary to produce that insulating fat layer. (I don't think he believed us, but it was worth a try)

We finished up the day playing in the surf (Steven still didn't go over) with some interesting techniques displayed. The 8 paddlers there agreed we should do more of this as everybody learned something and had fun. L. Allen

## Roughing it at Garden Island

Bathers beach, to Carnac past Garden Island to Shoal Water Bay

It appeared to be a beautiful pre dawn day, then I rang the weather bureau for the boating forecast. Twenty to thirty knot north east winds in the morning strengthening to thirty to forty north westerlies in the afternoon, a gale warning with winds to fifty knots in squalls with the winds currently blowing twenty one knots at Rottnest. Hmm could be a little rough. On the way down John and I thought we might get 6 paddlers and were surprised when 12 paddlers turned up. We headed off Carnac on dead smooth seas at about 8.30 as we were in the lee of the harbour with a north easterly. We let the sea rescue know our plans because of the weather forecast. (I think they thought we were crazy.)

At about 1 km the wind waves started to pick up to 1



to 1,5 mt from the north east which put them on our rear quarter.

Mike tried an air stroke and a swim and when he got back in the boat headed off a little nerves. Later on John had a talk to Mike and suggested he paddle fast to pick up stability. Mike lit the after burner and was streaking along out front with no further problems. We all arrived at Carnac having had an easy crossing and a lot of fun. After reporting in to the sea rescue we headed for the eastern side of Garden Island. It was decided to opt for the safest side because of the gale warning. The wind gauge read 25 knots at Carnac.

John and Steve went ahead to take photos and the rest of us surfed over on a lovely wind wave. (I have definitely got a down wind boat) We grouped up on the Island then headed to the southern end in two groups. One out about 1 km out to play in the waves and one along the shore line. We had a designated stop point but Eric was the only one who stopped there and after we all sailed on past hoped back into his kayak muttering under his breath to join us 2 km further up. Playing in the waves its easy to lose track of distance. (That's our excuse ) The next stop was at the end of Garden Island.

At the end of Garden Island two paddlers were getting tired and opted to stop just north of Point Perron to be picked up later. The rest of us headed out around the point into stronger winds and choppy seas. John was up front and just missed the gap in the reef and had to do a quick back paddle to stop himself landing on the reef. Mike was with him, back paddled and turned only the be hit with a huge spilling swell. I doubt if anybody would have survived that in his position, and was left swimming in the water right next to the reef. luckily the waves weren't braking on the reef but more spilling over. Mike left his kayak upside down and used it like a surf board and rode the wash over the reef. Fortunately he was dressed for immersion, complete with booties with a hard sole. He was able to stand on the reef with his kayak to wait for a rescue.

I had seen the gap in the reef and went through with 2 other paddlers and went to the lee of the reef to rescue Mike. There was some confusion outside the

reef with three paddlers being told to go back, meaning to the gap in the reef as they were south of the gap. Communication in those conditions was almost impossible and the three paddlers headed off back around the point to the beach where the two paddlers stopped earlier. I paddled back through the gap to show them the way but was too far away and watched them battling the wind as they headed back. Trying to paddle back into the wind and around the point exhausted the paddlers as the wind was probably around 30 knots and the seas very choppy with some big swells coming through.

I went back to the group in the lee of the reef and we paddled back to where the cars were and sent the trailer to pick up the others. It was a top days paddle in rough conditions, but it did show up some problems with a big group in rough conditions. After the trip and at the meeting the problems were discussed and we will have to use a different system of controlling the group and much more discipline so we don't rely on verbal communication and don't get a splinter group separated from the main group.

Although the conditions were getting quite rough we had plenty of places to stop or shelter through out the day and even if someone went over at the point (the roughest part of the trip) and was not rescued the conditions would have taken them very quickly to the shore. There is more risk in these types of conditions but we did have a good mix of people who had paddled rough conditions quite a lot and people experiencing them for the first time. Controlling the group is still the major problem, as sea kayakers by nature are independent people, but on rough days we will have to get tougher on discipline and that goes for every one including the author. L Allen

## A Dark Nights Paddle

I have paddled on full moons before but never on a dark night so we decided to give it a try. Steve, Amanda and I went to Shoalwater Bay as we all know that area and it's very safe. We headed out just on dark on a 0.5 mt swell. It must have been a high tide because the swells were going over most of the reef and gently moving along the bay. We paddled out to



Seal Island then down to Bird Island. When it got dark we lost the horizon but could see enough to see the swells just as you started to go up and down up and down. Amanda worked for Boat Talk for 4 years and could sit on the bottom of a anchored boat and read a book with out getting sea sick but as soon as it got dark she started feeling sea sick. We decided to tow her into the shore as she was close to throwing up.

The tow was no problem till we were about 20mt from the shore in about 30cm of water when a little wave came from know where and broke on her, knocking her out. Poor Amanda walked to shore wet and feeling very sick with the air temperature 7 degrees. As soon as she hit the beach she started feeling better and a cup of hot coffee had her feeling better. We decided to paddle back to the car close to the shore.

We had not been paddling long when Amanda started to feel very sick again. We then decided to stop but before we got to the shore Amanda was paddling and being sick at the same time. When we landed it was decided that I would paddle back to the car and come back and pick up Amanda and Steve.

I was paddling 100mt off the shore and found the lights from the land were blinding me as the water was in the shadow of the sand hills and inky black. I found it hard to paddle fast as it was the same feeling as trying to run in total darkness. When I got close to the sand bar that goes to Seal Island I could here the waves braking but they sounded like they were huge. I knew this was not possible, but it was incredible how little waves sound on a dark night. As I paddled over the bar little waves hit me from three directions which was quite interesting when you could not see them coming. I would not like to have to take on a large break in these conditions.

I picked up speed after the bar only to be attacked by a killer buoy. All of a sudden this large buoy appeared out of the black right next to the boat and scared the living daylights out of me. I'm sure it had teeth and growled. Then to top it off about 100mt further on the water erupted in front of me when a large bird leapt up and ran across the water to take

off. I must have been a Pelican but I still jumped.

When I picked up Steve and Amanda she could not stop apologising and was taking about motion sickness tablets next time. She had no reason to feel bad as the whole reason for doing these trips is to sort out the problems and gain experience. 10 points though, she was sick, wet, cold, and never complained only apologised. Outstanding Amanda, you can paddle with me any time ( of course Steve would be invited as well). L Allen

## A Stormy Night's Paddle

I am doing a series of night paddles so I can organise some night sea paddles for the club. Saturday night we arrived at Tell's place with rain falling and more storms brewing. We had planned to paddle out to Little Island and then north to Ocean Reef and back.

At Hillary's the wind was blowing at 25 knots from the south west as we headed out. On the way to Little island the wind picked up, there was a storm crossing in front of us and one behind. It was decided to stay closer to the coast as we didn't want to be hit with a bad storm in the dark. The surfing was excellent and the wind picking up. Just north of Pinnaroo Point we stopped and decided to try paddling back. Turning was a major problem. The only way to turn was at the base of a wave hard rudder, put the kayak on its edge, sweep hard into the wave, a short stroke then plant the paddle at the top of the wave twist and sweep with all your mite. Repeat it 10 to 12 times and slowly you come around.

After a short verbal and non verbal communication we decided to land and discuss the next move. Landing was easy, just ferry guide in with the waves. On the beach I made the mistake of un clipping my paddle and putting it on the sand. The paddle took off down the beach with me in hot pursuit. When I caught the paddle I turned to see if the kayak was following. I would love to know what the wind speed was.

We decided to try and paddle back to Hillarys to see if we could. Launching was quite novel. As I dragged



the boat down to the water the wind blew the back around on the sand ! We started horizontal to the beach and as the wave came in you pushed of sideways with your paddle angling into the wind. Then ferry glide through the soup swinging the bow as the waves came to about 80 degrees so the wave pushed you left and the wind swung you back right. The first wave hit me and I was paddling as hard as I could , the second wave hit me then the third. I was ferry gliding down the beach in the break and not penetrating the break. I was wondering if I was going to get off when there was a lull and a surge that helped me clear the brake and start to claw my way out.

I was paddling very hard and hardly moving, the waves were all over the place with the tops being blown off some. Steve went up a particularly steep one and instead of the bow crashing down the back of the wave the wind caught the bow and spun him around. The back of the boat tit the back of the wave with enough force to bend his rudder. The other amazing thing was he stayed upright and paddling though a little surprised he was paddling south one moment then north the next. I have never seen or heard of that hapening before. Then he had the fun of turning round again. The Capella turns very easily normally and we were having real trouble turning, so I would hate to see what it would be like in a boat that does not turn well.

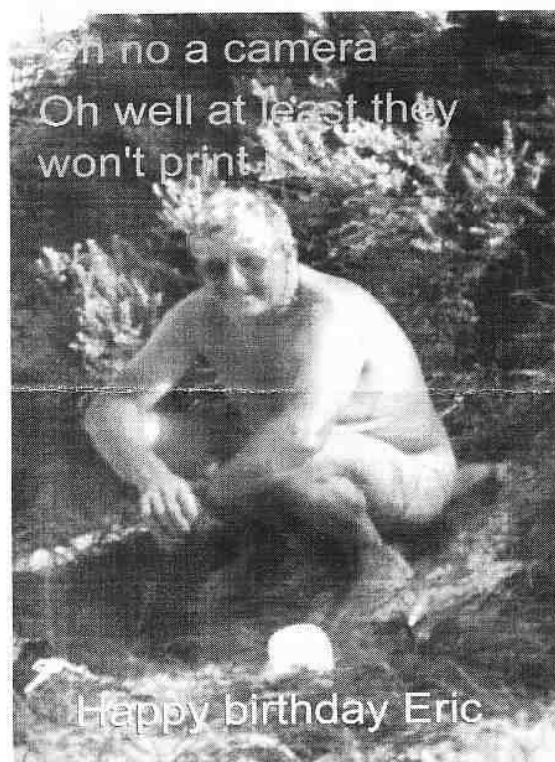
My eyes were stinging and the as the swimming goggles I was using fogged up and I couldn't stop to clear them, so I had to put up with the wind and spray. Tell had the right idea, he used a balaclava with clear safety glasses and they didn't fog up.

Staying together as it got darker was very hard. At one stage I snatched a glance around and could not see them. I stopped for a moment to look back but the wind immediately turned me 90 degrees so I did not have to look back. On about the third or fourth wave we were all up at the same time and I saw the chem sticks we had on our hats about 50mt away. They were paddling my way so I started the job of turning around as they came over. Steve was turned by the wind and Tell who was next to him had to go with him. By the time they had turned back we were 50 to

60 mt apart and in the dark thats a long way.

The wind must have backed off a little as we were making better head way the closer we got to Hillarys. As soon as we were in the harbour the drink bottles were drained as we had been paddling full on for 2 hours with out a drink. To stop for a drink would have risked a capsise as both hands had to grip the paddle tightly to stop the wind twisting it in your hand. A couple of times I had to use my hips quickly as the wind snatched at the feathered blade. In these conditions it's every body for themselves. An assisted rescue may be possible but it would risk injury or two paddlers in the water. In our case it would have been easier to wait till you were blown on the beach. On other night paddles you always get that eerie feeling but on this paddle we were too busy. The lights from Hillarys made seeing the waves easy, especially the white caps. To date this was the best night paddle I have been on. Exillering! L Allen

## Eric's Birthday





On Eric's birthday we had a paddle out to Carnac Island in moderate to rough conditions with a picnic on the Island in the rain and wind. Afterwards we went back to Eric's for a party which was most appreciated by all the paddlers.

Thanks Eric and many more paddles and birthdays.

Navigation...In last month's gear talk on compasses, it was stated that it is possible to compromise with an

## To The Editor

orienteeing compass for chart reading!

I personally find two compasses almost essential for navigation. One permanently mounted on my deck. The other an orienteeing compass to take bearings. The orienteeing compass has the advantage of being used as a chart protractor to quickly plot bearings on to your deck chart and enable you to locate your position on your chart. At least three bearings on fixed charted objects is necessary to get an accurate position. A back bearing may indicate sideways drift but will not give you any indication as to progress to destination.

John Satherley.

**ACAWA..**Sea Kayak WA Inc is approaching it's AGM. With this comes a need to reflect on how the club was formed and it's future direction!

At our first meeting much discussion focussed on the need for insurance and ACAWA affiliation. Although in general, it was agreed the club should be as casual and as informal as possible, the need to be associated with ACAWA was strongly promoted by a few established paddlers. One view was that any experienced group leader would not be prepared to lead groups without the cover and benefits of ACAWA. This was a big factor in voting to affiliate with ACAWA. On reflection this may not have been the ideal course for us! My reasons being 1. None of the so called experienced sea kayakers have come forward to lead groups. 2. No help in any respect in the formation of the club from ACAWA. 3. Communication regarding insurance was not satisfactory, and in fact we still do not have a copy of the policy document! 4. ACAWA seems to be only interested in the competitive side of kayaking, and

wastes money buying equipment that in my opinion should be provided by the persons wishing to partake in a particular discipline. ie. I believe ACAWA owns a fleet of kayaks for kayak polo. Why not provide us all with a sea kayak! Surely if you want to play kayak polo, buy your own boat! 5. ACAWA spends \$20,000 pa on a development officer. Our only contact with the DO was to give us 24 hrs notice of a paddle through a local rowing meet that he had been working on for 5 weeks. Maybe we should have been told earlier, and could have arranged to participate. It seems that the main reason to be with ACAWA is for the insurance. For this we are paying \$30 plus \$15, a total of \$45 a head. Preliminary investigations show our ins. needs could cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500 pa. With a membership of 50 this is \$30 each, a saving of \$15. As membership grows the savings become greater. While this ins. does not cover personal injury it does protect club members from the most likely claims. ie. hitting a swimmer while landing on a beach. As ACAWA's personal injury ins. only comes once all other claims ( Medicare, HBF, third party, etc ) have been pursued. I believe we should give serious thought to all the above and possibly contact other sea kayak groups for their views. If the ins. was done collectively the savings would be greater. The views expressed here are my own personal views and not necessarily those of SKWA Inc. Your response or ideas would be appreciated. John Satherley.

**Reply...** Well it's nice to get letters but now to reply!!! Well, needless to say ACAWA will continue be a talking point for some time. Suffice it to say, there are different views on ACAWA. A bit like unionism, it is often better to be in the system than outside. Members have already voted to stay in ACAWA for the coming year, this situation may change next year, and of course we welcome any constructive debate on ACAWA or any other matters during the year. Keep writing!! Ed...

**Good Paddling! Keep out there! Have fun!**

# Sea Kayaker

## Calendar Aug-Sept 98

Date	Description	km	Safety Gear	Time	Contact
Sun 2/8	Skills practice. North wall, Hillarys. Surf Entries, rolling, towing, etc		PFD 1, Wetsuit, Goggles, helmet, spare dry clothes.	8.00	Neville H
Sun 9/8	Novice paddle. Penguin Island cafe. To Seal Is, Pt John, and back along the Islands	8 km	PFD 1, Bailer, water, lunch, goggles, spare dry clothes.	8.00	John S
Sun 16/8	Ocean Reef Marina to Burns Beach and return	8 km	PFD 1, Flares, Bailer	8.00	John S
Sun 23/8 Thurs 27/8	MAAC to Scarborough Beach and return Club Meeting Nev's 33 Lawley St, Nth Beach	12 km	PFD 1, Flares, Bailer Kokoda Trail Slides. Dampier Photos.	8.00 7 pm	John S
Sun 30/8	Bathers beach (South Mole) Fremantle to Mewstone Rock, carnac Is and return.	18 km	PFD 1, Flares, Bailer, EPIRB, Radio	8.00	Neville H
Sun 6/9	Mindare. Rosslare Prom to Alkimos. Return.	10 km	PFD 1, Flares, Bailer, EPIRB	8.00	John S
Sun 13/9	Skills practice. South Beach, Fremantle		PFD 1, Wetsuit, Goggles, Helmet, spare dry clothes	8.00	Neville H
Fri 18/9	Night Paddle. Rockingham foreshore. Boat ramp Rotary park. The Esplanade. Showers!	8 km	PFD 1, Flares, Bailer, Torch / Light!!	5.30 pm	Ring John S for details.
Sun 20/9	MAAC to little Is. and return.	8 km	PFD 1, Flares, bailer,	8.00	
Sun 27/9	Bathers beach (south mole) Fremantle to Straglers Rocks, mewstone rock, return	20 km	PFD 1, Flares, Bailer, EPIRB, Radio.	8.00	Neville H