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WA Seakayaker



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From The President

One of the things that come out of the Carnac paddle is the need be more organised on the water. Staying together is an issue that has been talked to death, and now needs some action. Briefing before paddles is essential and any paddler who does not want to conform needs to assess whether or not they want to paddle with the club. Infact, it does not matter if it's the club or not, staying with the group is part of team paddling and esential for safety. Safety gear is the other issue and I will be asking people not to paddle if they do not have the required safety gear. A tow rope is part of that mandatory safety gear. The sea was a bit choppy on the Carnac paddle which chalenged a few paddlers and there were some rescues done on the day. The rescues need practicing as they took far too long. In a serious situation time is a problem, as you can be blown onto reef or into dangerous water. Those conditions were ideal for practicing our rescues and improving technique, and all paddlers need to continually practice all skills to maintain a high level of competency as this decreases the risk in any paddle.

ROTTO CAPERS . . .

from the notes of a non-paddling, sea kayaker's off-sider.

Where to begin? SKWA's annual Rotto "away from it all" holiday provided something for everyone in a casual, do-what-you-feel-like atmosphere - and it wasn't all paddling. Even the conversation had its variations. The dinner table discussions became more lively as the week (and the bottle count) went by. Neville was a constant source of humorous entertainment - we missed him when he had to go back to work!

Somehow, (it must be the exceptionally healthy, well balanced personalities of sea kayakers) nine or so people (including three ladies) managed to eat, paddle, sleep-eat-paddle, snore, stomp, cook-paddle-drink-eat, cycle and walk and drink without getting in each other's way. Thank goodness for the outside loo! (Nev was most upset that his "loo with a view" had been changed to a view of a fence! But at the rate the toilet paper disappeared, the view did not really make any difference except perhaps to those practicing meditation!)

About paddling (and here, I had to seek info from John), Tuesday, the day we (John paddling, Pat, Neville and I by ferry) arrived, was a bit on the damp side so having shopped in the rain and eaten lunch under a brolly outside the bakery, we abandoned ourselves to the DOME cafe for coffee and amusements!

The next day, in a strong breeze, the adventurous, serious paddlers took off into wind and water, Pat playing dodgies with a ferry. She "dodged" so well for her first time in a sea-boat that they went and checked out the second island around Phillip Point to Dyer Island and beyond. John took them surfing round the island, then they stopped for a bit of R & R. Gary chewed some chocolate and sorted out his rudder (or was it his steering), Bill stretched his back then they paddled back to Pat bobbing about in the bay. Back in home waters, Pat showed off her nice clean rolls. The lads braved the cold at the end of the day and got into more serious rolling practice under Nev and John's supervision. That evening we joined about 250 primary school children in the Kingstown Barracks Cafe for an

excellent \$6 meal. Even in our separate dining room we felt part of the group - school camp memories!

Thursday was the trip around the island - approx 27 kms. With a stiff north easterly, everyone got into surfing at Cape Vlamingh. Lunch was in a sheltered bay inside Cathedral Rocks after which they paddled along the seaward coast to Parakeet Bay. In the meantime, Nev had rounded up his troops (Caroline, Pat, Barbara and Eric) for a quick bus trip and walk to Georgie Bay where we were lucky enough to just catch the paddlers as they set off after their next break. John's comment as he came into the beach was "they want to make another stop at the coffee shop and Wolfgang wants to go shopping". Little wonder Bill and Wolfgang wanted to go shopping - they timed it right for a some young, feminine distractions - anyone for cycling, fellas?! On the way back, they all did some rolling practice and Dave got his roll. (A quick learner I believe!)

The evening's BBQ with Wolfgang's wonderful coleslaw, his bow-tie and Pat's sarong, was a fitting end-of-stay for those of us leaving next day.

Friday morning John ... "got dragged off" to go to a skills session and had to get wet demonstrating something or other. But it was a truly successful morning with new rollers everywhere - Wolfgang's success was heard at the other end of the island!

Guess whose comments?

"I am rolling by the end of to-day, fishing to-morrow."
"Let's ask Eric why he takes his book when he goes bird spotting?"

In all, a most successful Rotto hideaway. Thanks to Neville for organising the excellent accommodation and time for the club.

water, and then to 10 mt water. In days of big swells, large waves break on the 10mt line and in calmer days, the waves steepen up dramatically along that line.

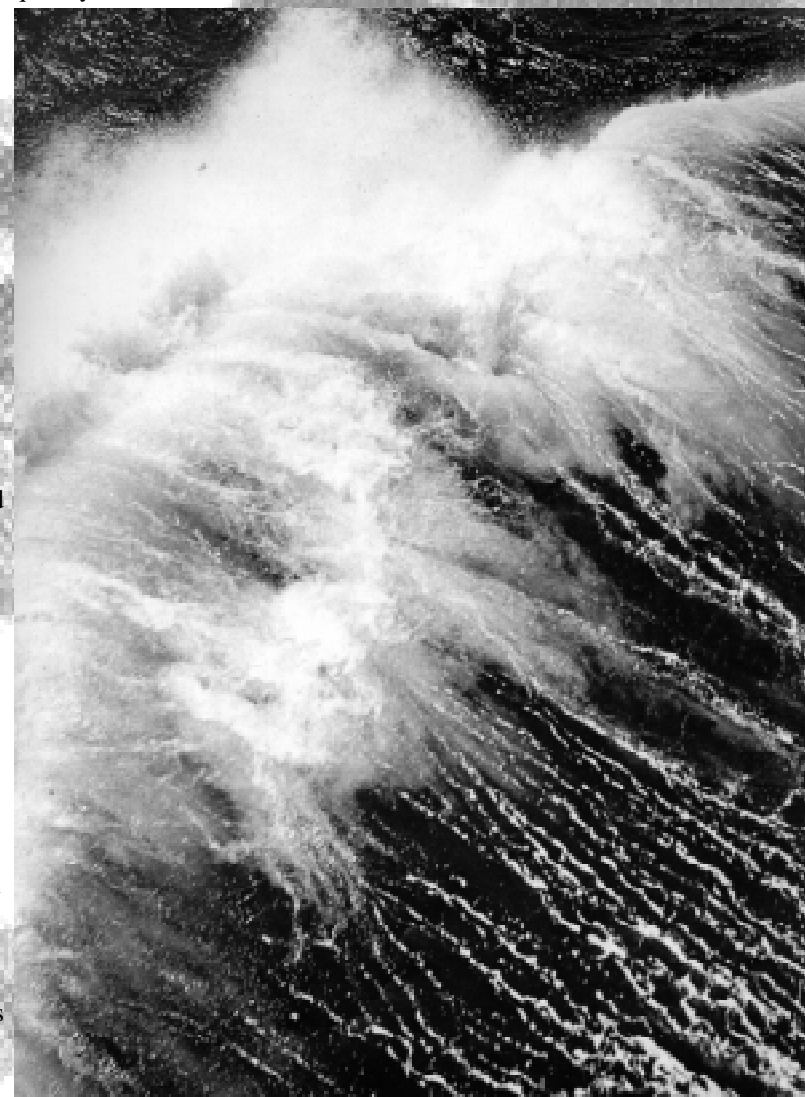
Wave height can also be affected by tides. The wind opposing a tidal current causes very steep waves with the possibility of large white caps. Tides going with the wind, or very strong tides, can flatten wind waves. Don't forget tidal streams can produce a completely different type of wave than wind waves.

This means the sea kayaker needs to know a variety of information. We need to know the wind speed and direction, as this will give you some idea of what the seas will be like, a boating forecast will give you an idea of what the wave height will be in open water. Tide charts will give you some idea of tidal influence however, where possible, use local knowledge of tidal effects as well. With this information, you can predict the wave height and direction you will experience. Remember the fetch as this has a big influence on wave height. As you move away from the coast with an off shore wind, wave height can increase very quickly especially if you have an opposing swell.

It is important to look at the topography of the area you are paddling in. Mountains, headlands and many other features influence the waves we experience. I have found most headlands have rougher seas because of a combination of factors. Usually headlands have shallower water or reef off the point which steepens up the waves. Quite often the land funnels the wind so you have increased winds that also effect the waves and white caps. Wind coming off mountains or large hills can also dramatically effect the local wind speed. The effect Mt Gardener, on our south coast, had on the wind was dramatic. We had at least a 50% increase in wind speed coming off the slope. It affected us for less than 5 km showing how local conditions can differ greatly. Rebound waves off cliff or rock can also dramatically affect local conditions. In deep water I have seen rebound waves to 1.5 mt in moderate seas, extending to 3km off the coast. These waves oppose the onshore waves and pass through each other causing clapitis. These conditions are very hard to paddle in.

For the sea kayaker, understanding waves is vital for your safety. In my experience, up to 25kn winds is paddleable for the experienced sea kayaker however over

this would be pushing the safety factor. The reason I say this is because the conditions I have experienced over 25 kns start to get very difficult unless you are going straight down wind. Paddling into winds over 25kns is very tiring and you do not make very much headway. Over 30kn and you are battling to make any headway at all. This very much restricts where you can paddle - if there are long stretches of cliff or dangerous landings high winds can prove fatal. It is important you obtain experience in a safe place with high winds, with competent people assisting and advising you. To go out in a raging onshore storm with a safe beach at your back, a well set up boat and competent paddle partner is the ideal way to build your experience. Practicing your self and assisted rescues in increasingly rougher conditions is essential if you want to paddle open water safely. *By Les Allen*

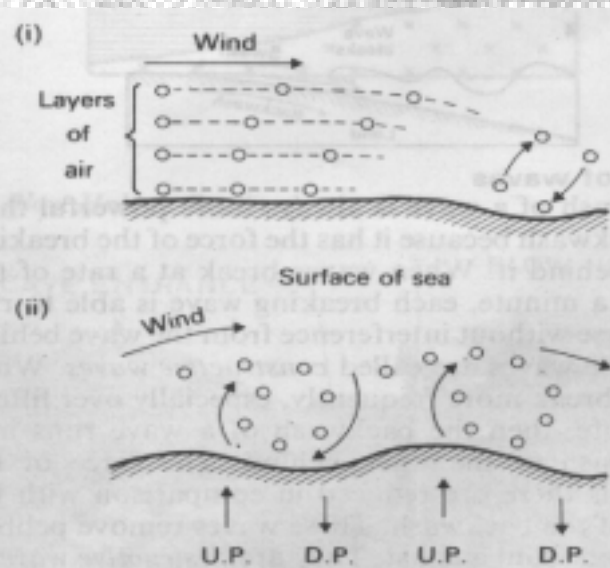


A large sea wave white capping. The white lines in front of the wave are spindrift

Waves

Understanding waves is very important to all sea kayakers as it's this phenomena that has a major influence on our survival. Waves are formed by wind moving across water or water moving at speed. Tidal movement can cause waves from moving water however these are not as common as wind waves. It is important to know the difference as both waves require a totally different paddling technique. We are going to look at wind waves in this article.

As the wind blows over the surface, it exerts a frictional drag on the bottom layer, this layer exerts a drag on the next layer, and so on. The top layer has the least drag exerted on it which means that the layers of air move forward at different speeds. The air tumbles forward and finally develops a circulating motion. This motion exerts downward pressure (D.P.) on the surface at its front, and upward



pressure (U.P.) at its rear. The water does not move forward but in a circular motion back to where it originates. There are three factors which determine

wave size; 1. wind speed, 2. fetch and 3. the length of time the wind has been blowing in one direction. The largest waves reliably recorded were 17mt high and storm waves can travel at 55km per hour.

Waves lose little energy when they travel through deep water and swell may travel thousands of kilometers. Locally produced waves are commonly called "seas" and are the same as swells but have not travelled the same distance.

When the water depth decreases to less than half the wave length (the distance between the wave tops) the wave starts to "feel bottom". As its forward progress begins to be slowed by friction, the restraining influence and upward push of the bottom causes the wave to gradually tilt forward. This gives the classic "saw tooth" look. As it moves forward and the depth is reduced to about 1.3 times the wave height, the upper portion of the wave pitches forward and breaks. The portion of the wave that breaks and is thrown forward, is called the "swash". As it runs up the beach and then starts to wash back it is called "backwash".

White caps are the effect of strong winds blowing the top of the wave causing it to steepen and break. From experience, up to 25kn winds produce white caps that are small and break on top of the wave. This means the wave passes under the white water quickly, stopping the white cap throwing forward too much. These white caps are not too difficult to handle in a sea kayak. Over 25kn and the white caps curl and throw forward the same as a shore break. (See WA Seakayak Sea Conditions) These are much harder to handle in a sea kayak and require a strong brace. Combine that with the effect of shallowing water means that this area is usually the roughest water to paddle in. It is important to know the depth of water you are paddling in to predict the conditions you will be facing. In big seas and deep water the most difficult conditions are going to be while approaching the shore or shallower water. If you see big differences in depth be cautious. There are sections on our coast line where you find 110mt water, down to 40mt

Meetings on the move..

Unfortunately we can't use The Swan Hotel for our meetings so we are going to try a new idea. Once a month we will have a meeting after our Shoalwater paddle. Bring a picnic lunch and we will have a meeting on the grass. If we make this our training paddle and introductory paddle for new members as well, we might be able to get more people at the meeting.

Purpose Built Training

I will try doing some structured training on different skills. The first one will be on surfing. I will have play boats to use and it will be a class style day. The idea is to start with the basics so we don't intimidate anyone and move from there. For people who can surf it will be a opportunity to improve technique

EPIC QUINNS ROCK TO MOORE JOURNEY

By Helier Beardsley

It was a dark, stormy night....but that didn't matter as she stood in front of the roaring log fire slowly, seductively undoing the buttons of her satin blouse one by one until she was only wearing.....oops, wrong magazine.

Actually it was a fine long-weekend Saturday morning when we gathered at Don Kizmet's house to begin our paddle from Quinn's Rock to Moore River, approximately 40km's north. Don, Paula, Wolfgang and myself had decided that a leisurely 2 day paddle was overdue and that the situation had to be rectified. With 4 kayaks and 2 days worth of survival rations (pancake mix, maple syrup, strawberries etc.) and Don's own PSK-B (Personal Survival Kit - Beer) loaded we headed to the launch point. With the waves crashing onto the shore with repetitious monotony, only sheer skill kept us upright as we braved the massive 3 inch surf break and headed north. An easy South Easterly wind and a ½m - 1m South Westerly swell ensured that this was not going to be a back breaking, muscle aching contest between man and the sea, but rather, an opportunity to paddle and observe our marvellous ocean and coastline in relative comfort.

First stop north was the wreck of the Alkimos. After complaining to Wolfgang and telling him to stay downwind from the rest of us, we realised that it was possibly the bird poop that was smelling so much. While exploring the wreck, we were briefly joined by a dolphin. It was a very brief visit and I still claim he was heading upwind of Wolfgang as fast as he could swim. Continuing on, we headed for the Yanchep Lagoon for lunch and ice-cream. The abundant local wildlife kept us entertained as we ate lunch and fortified ourselves for the epic voyage still ahead. A quick dash over the Yanchep Lagoon reef and we were on our way again.

The easy surf/sail/paddle of Day One came to an end as we looked

Duck For Cover Award.....

This months Duck For Cover Award has to go to Neville for his outstanding work at saving the club money. He managed to obtain some envelopes that were a little larger than usual. Then using the trusty old 45c stamp sent out the journals. Unfortunately the postage was more than 45c so the members were charged \$1.20 for additional postage. Well what can one say. Maybe he does not want to be secretary next year, or maybe he likes doing rolls out to sea!!!! Any how a well deserved award. **Just don't do it again.**

for a suitable landing and camping spot north of Yanchep. I could tell you of Hell's Beach, Death Bay and Skeleton Coast, but it was actually more like Peaceful Harbour as we gracefully (mostly) landed for the afternoon. A suitable site was located in the dune's and the task of carrying the gear and kayaks up off the beach began. The beach itself was obviously a popular 4WD and Quad-bike track judging from the number of vehicles travelling back & forth. A bit of exploring and an attempt at fishing preceded dinner and listening to Don tell us how cold and tasty his beer was. With very little city-glow, the stars were out in spectacular display, reminding us exactly where we stand in the overall plan of things. We were all tucked in bed in our jim-jams by 9.30pm and were gently rocked to sleep by the soothing sound of quad-bikes going up and down along the beach.

With the Moore River lighthouse in view as we set off in the morning, Day Two lay before us. Again, conditions were perfect with a tail wind and current pushing us along. With the Moore River lighthouse in view as we set off in the morning, Day Two lay before us. Again, conditions were perfect with a tail wind and current pushing us along. The only incident occurred when Paula snapped a rudder cable. Quick as a flash, Don whipped out his.....sail and the two of them rafted up and sailed along at a respectable pace as Wolfgang & I paddled, sometimes struggling to keep up.

Landing at Moore River was managed with only a minimum number of civilian's being maimed and then it was time to have a nice cuppa while waiting for the transport to arrive. Many thanks must be given to some friends of Don - Bob who drove up in Don's truck, and Keith & Sue who came up in their Jeep to pick us up and bring us back into the civilised world.

Once again, the combination of kayaking and nature combined to produce a marvellous trip along our coast.

The Incredible Journey

Story: Ann Purdy, South West Times

For those of you who were lucky enough to grace the shores of Windy Harbour during the Christmas break, the sight of me sitting on my backside.....AGAIN.....for about a month, may have prompted you to think any number of things really. However, if you thought I was just sitting there doing nothing, you'd be way off the mark.

I was, infact, waiting. I'd heard that three blokes had set off from Esperance in sea kayaks and were heading for Fremantle and fully expected they would drop in. knowing as we do, that the Southern Ocean is considered by some to be more dangerous than the North Sea. I naturally assumed that they must be sick of living, and that there could be a story in it.

The weeks went by, but I'm a persistent bugger, so I waited just in case they did survive. For nineteen grueling days, during which I was only able to slip off for the occasional swim or the food supply go so low I was forced to go fishing, I waited. Then on the 14th of January my persistence paid off when I noticed a couple of tents and three kayaks huddled under a tree on the bullant nest next to the road to the beach.

I hurriedly grabbed the camera and trotted over to introduce myself and find out just what made these guys tick! It was a pleasure to meet 'Tel' Williams – school teacher, Les Allen – Sales Manager for a chemical company and John Dinucci – sea kayak instructor and veteran of 19 Avon Descents, who confessed that he spends a lot of time running round in circles. 'Tel' and Les reckoned John is so tough you could throw him on the ground and he'd bounce, then, pointing out his very slim build, proclaimed that they'd last longer in the water. This brought us to the subject of hypothermia and safety issues. Les was happy to show me all the gear.

Because they had no ground support, everything needed for the trip had to be stored in the boat. Each kayak carried 100kg, which included food, 28 litres of water, flares and smoke canisters, spare paddles, sails, bilge pumps, cooking gear, and a bottle of port. ('Any port in a storm' I said, of which they had many, storms that is). His life jacket was a veritable survival kit, the pockets of which contained 500ml of water, knife, energy food, heliograph – a flash word for a mirror, and an EPIRB I didn't know what that was either –

Emergency Positioning Indicator Radio Beacon. All this plus an immersion suit – John and 'Tel' reckoned they only had glad bags!

I flicked a bullant off my sleeve. "You don't take on a trip like this without preparation. We've been training for twelve months", said Les who was interrupted by 'Tel' explaining that eating a lot was a big part of that preparation. "Fat is good insulation and stored energy – we've needed a lot of that".

I concurred that I was pretty proficient in the eating department as well and had achieved a very respectable energy store which I carry on me at all times.

I was relieved to hear that these chaps were very experienced sea kayakers and had done most of the west coast.

"We always go somewhere different, but is the big one, it's our Mt Everest. The only person who has ever done this coast before was a guy called Paul Caffyn in 1983 – he was paddling in the opposite direction circumnavigating the whole of Australia."

The kayaks looked to be about 4 to 5 metres long, about 70 cm wide and 40 cm high, with foot operated rudders and a couple of hatches. They are top of the range boats – Les and 'Tel' with MIRAGE 580's, the latest in technology and John sporting a Nordkapp (1975 vintage).

"They are a sealed unit once you're in them, but that's ok as you're underwater most of the time, you're drowning anyway!"

I dispatched another bullant which had been climbing one of the tents. "So, what's it like out there?"

"We left Esperance on the 26th of December and usually average about 50 km per day paddling 2 to 3 km off shore and up to 10 km across bays about 50 to 100 metres apart so we don't hit each other. There were huge seas off Fitzgerald National Park and we crash landed on a rocky beach at the 2nd headland past Shelly Beach near Twin Bays." I'll keep that in mind.

"One of the boats was holed so we got the repair kit out (fibreglass and Kevlar) but that was a bit of a disaster, so we fixed it with tape." They chuckled and mumbled something about the millennium bug getting in the repair kit, a bit of an inhouse joke I think, you probably had to be there.

"We had waves the size of that toilet block over there, with white caps on top coming at us, you get a smack in the head with one of those and you know all about it! In one stretch, we had gusts of 45 knots which tears the paddle out of your hands."

I asked what happens during a roll over.

"When you roll, the boat just stays upside down with you in it, and you have to do a fairly difficult manoeuvre with the paddle to bring it up again. I'm still sore form one I had to do to avoid rocks when we crashed landed," said Les. "Once you come in to a beach, you are absolutely committed. You surf in on the waves, flat out and if it's the wrong beach, bad luck!"

I asked how the food supply was holding out.

"We are experts now – 101 ways with

rice and pasta, with a sprinkling of sand – it's just not the same without the sand. You just get so hungry, anything would taste good. It was amazing though, the number of times we'd pull in to a deserted beach and within a few minutes, someone would turn up with a couple of beers or offer of a hot shower. One guy came up with some cooked abalone! We called in to Bremer Bay and Hopetoun for supplies and were made very welcome everywhere, we can't speak highly enough of the hospitality we have been shown on this trip, it was so unexpected. People just seemed to pop up in the most unlikely places."

In Albany, the Sea Kayak Club made us so welcome and really looked after us – in fact we were entertained to death! Restaurants, beautiful food, hot showers and tours around the town. We were blown out by a young bloke called Murray Randall who gave us each a new paddle – prototypes to field test, best sea blade I've ever used."

"The next day we headed off at the usual 4am and paddled for five hours into a westerly, it was hard slog. Got just past the Gap and were not making much progress, it was so discouraging, so we headed back to Albany."

"When we pulled in to Windy, we thought, what a dive, all the weed, wind – no shop, we'd been looking forward to having a steak or bacon and eggs."

My cupboard was pretty bare, but I shot off and grabbed a few beers, that put a smile on their dials, then spotted another bullant heading for bare feet.

"What sort of animals do you see out there?"

"Seals on Chatham Island, not many dolphins, eight or nine sharks off Fitzgerald, lots of birds – great birds! Sooty Shearwaters that zoom in like fighter pilots and do aerobatics. Pacific gulls (oversized sea gulls with a black beak), they fly along side then their legs start going flat out and the land right next to you. Sooty and Pyed Oystercatchers – they're the husband and wife teams – great entertainment. Off Windy we saw a huge fin moving pretty fast – that got the heart rate up a fair bit."

"Tomorrow is our biggest test. We have to get from here to Augusta in one go. It's a 102 km paddle and from our maps and aerial photos, it doesn't look like there is anywhere safe to land so we've got to do it." Considering the wind was blowing a screamer of a north-easterly and the weather forecast put out a storm warning with hail, squalls to 45 knots in storms, swell to 2 metres and seas to 2 metres, I thought the only decent thing for me to do was offer a last supper or something. The boys had their meal organised, but said they'd love a cup of coffee.



By the time they arrived at the hut, I'd found a magnificent bottle of Gloucester Ridge 1998 Chardonnay, and from the back of the fridge, a selection of cheeses and dip which Ros Stevens had fortuitously left behind. Of course this made an impression, and raised Windy

Harbour's profile to great heights in their eyes. I then took photos of these happy seafarers enjoying a little luxury just in case it was indeed their last supper, and in the event of their demise, I would be able to reassure their families that they had been treated with kindness, and were in extremely high spirits the last time I'd seen them.

All that night it blew like buggery, I woke up every now and then thinking they'd surely put it off till tomorrow, no-one would go out in this weather. However, at 4am they did indeed paddle off. I spoke to Collin Crombie, the next day. He said he'd got up early to watch their departure, but only saw them for the first 50 metres before they disappeared into the swell. He drove up to the cliffs but was unable to spot the kayaks, even with binoculars.

I listened to the radio expecting news of sea rescues and disabled craft but heard nothing. Is it just me or has anyone else noticed that the ABC has been broadcasting nothing but bloody cricket for months. Then each hour you get a bit of news, the main thrust of which is cricket! That day I think it was match 39 in the series between Tonga and Outer Morovia with independent umpires from Siberia and Falkland Islands! The only other stations were on short wave – Radio Beijing, a religious program from Iowa and some New Zealand mob debating the whys and wherefores of the "Treaty of Waitangi". It's just a small thing really, but when you're sloggng it down the coast with no power, no shops, no TV, no phone you sometimes feel a bit cut off from the rest of the world. So, when curiosity finally got the better of me, I rang Mum via satellite from the public phone box near the park. She contacted an aunt whose house overlooks Flinders Bay at Augusta – it's now what you know! Apparently, she was horrified and insisted that the conditions were so bad, no-one could possibly have landed, the seas were huge.

A couple of days later I got the message that they had arrived in Augusta, fifteen and a half hours after leaving Windy.

I spoke to 'Tel' Williams on Australia Day and was told they had arrived in Fremantle on Saturday 22nd of January to a wonderful welcome from family and friends.

"The day we left Windy it was pretty hard going and by the time we got level with Black Point, John had hit the wall so we had to rest as best we could so he could regain his strength. We got to Augusta with half an hour to spare which was cutting it a bit fine, we wouldn't be able to see a safe place to land in the dark. John was at the end of his endurance, having difficulty controlling his boat and Les and I weren't far off it. If John's boat had gone over at that time, there wouldn't have been much we could have done. In a situation like that, hypothermia would have got him in twenty minutes."

"We thought the west coast would be a breeze. Rounding the Cape was very hard work, very rough conditions, then all the way up the coast we had the wind against us every day except the last one."

I said I was amazed that the media hadn't reported anything. Theirs had been such an incredible story of courage and strength – pitting themselves and their fragile crafts against the Southern Ocean on the days when even the professional fisherman and women weren't game to go out.

'Tel' said they kept missing the journalists.

"We just never got to the meeting place on time and they couldn't afford to wait around. But I'll tell you what, those southern coastal people that we met, they had a quite different understanding of the ocean, they knew more about what it's like out there, and their hospitality was amazing. That guy at Windy Harbour, he got up at three o'clock in the morning to see us off!"

The west coast was quite different, it's more populated and we found it hard to get a place to land for the night, there are houses everywhere."

I can't help but wonder what it would be like for these intrepid West Australians – John, Les and 'Tel' to settle back into family life, go back to work and get on with the trials and tribulations of existence after their 1,200 km incredible journey.