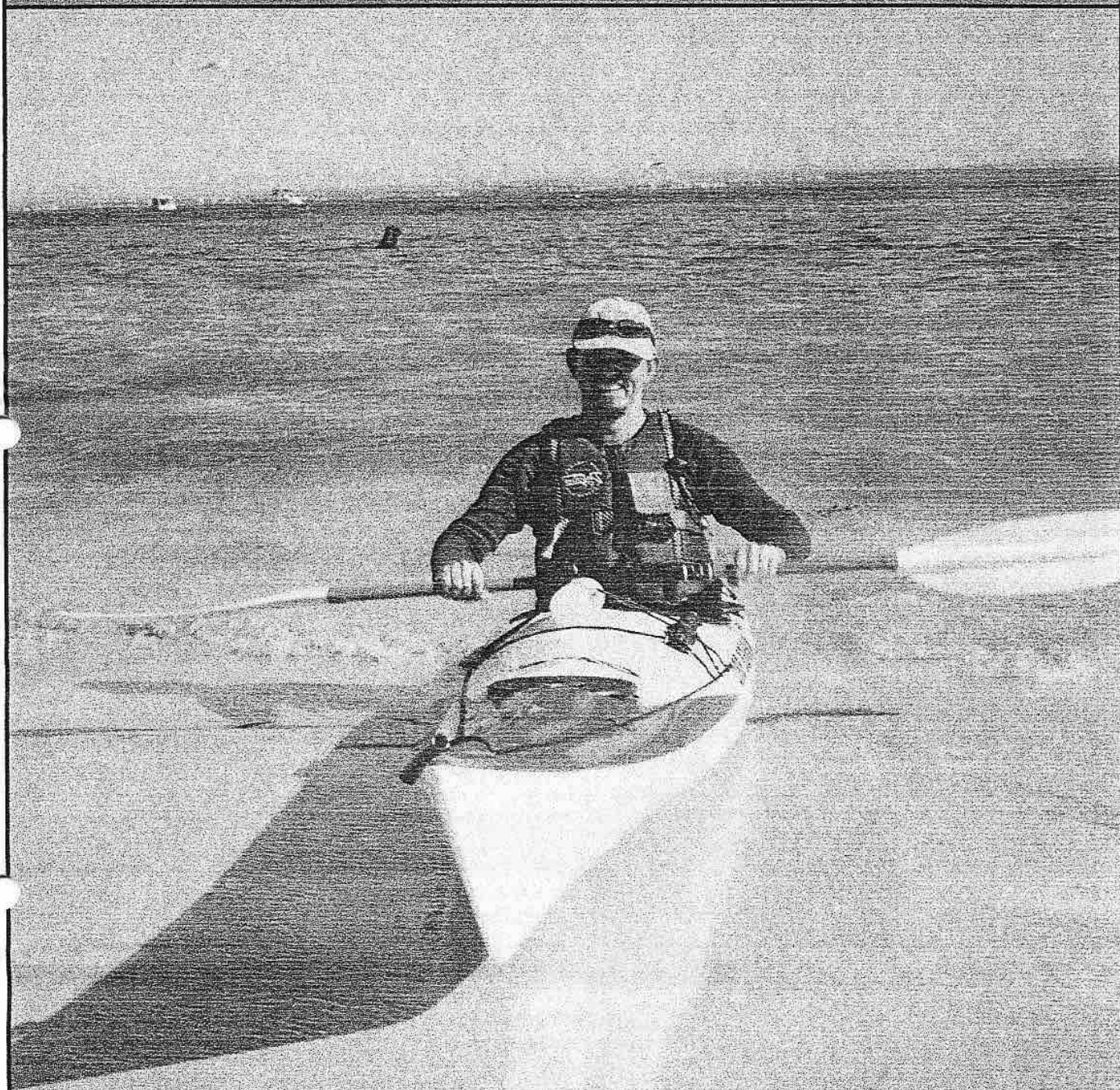


Newsletter of Sea Kayak Club WA Inc. 28 Aurelian St. Palmyra, 6157
Phone Pres. Ian MacGregor 9383 4319 Sec. Eric Pyatt 9339 2952



WA Seakayaker



Issue 32: Sept ~ Oct 2001

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sorry!

Ian MacGregor

This white space is where the President's Report would have been if he had not missed the deadline **and the two extensions** of time he was so generously granted.

A famous artist once said while staring at his blank canvas waiting for inspiration, "Where there's white there's hope!"

Perhaps there is.
Editor

This Issue's Fiercely Contested
DUCK FOR COVER AWARD
Is jointly Won by



Roz and Phil Evans for being the only two paddlers to turn up on Sunday 8th July for the paddle up river from Garratt Rd. Bridge.

Everybody else turned up on Saturday 7th as scheduled on the calendar.

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Ian preparing for a paddle to Garden Island

**Absolute deadline for receipt of material
for next issue of WA Seakayaker :
Midnight (Western Standard Time)
MONDAY 22ND OCTOBER**

COVER PICTURE: Helier Beardsley arrives at Carnac Island



NOTICE BOARD



Annual General Meeting

Don't forget the next meeting on Tuesday 9th October is the AGM. It will be held at 7pm at 28 Aurelian Street Palmyra. Come along and have your say in determining the path the club will take over the next twelve months.

Annual Subscriptions are due by the 30th September and all members will be receiving individual invoices. Only those who are financial will be entitled to vote at the AGM.

A Nomination Form is enclosed for the nomination of office bearers.

Programme of Events

Don't forget to let Eric know if you have any ideas about where you want to go. It's difficult to suit the needs of all members when compiling the programme and any feedback is welcome. Just fill in the enclosed Application to Lead a Paddle Form and return it to Eric.

Congratulations!

To Warren Wilson and John Di Nucci for completing the Avon Descent

From the Editor:

Thank you to all those who have contributed to this newsletter. Short articles of 500—600 words are preferred. Longer articles may have to be shortened at the editor's discretion. Please telephone or email me to discuss any ideas for stories that may be longer.

Sea Kayak the Monte Bellos

A film and slide presentation of the first paddlers to kayak to the Monte Bello Islands.

To be held at University of Western Australia's Social Sciences Theatre

17th October

Presented by Les Allen

Contact Mountain Designs 9322 4774

All ticket prices contribute towards a nominated charitable outdoor organization.

New Members

We would like to welcome four new members:

Paul Fuller
Graeme Lee
Mick McDermott
Brad Sorley

Mid Week Paddles

Any body interested in Tuesday evening paddles please
Phone Les 9456 2129

The Imperfect Wave

The hours tick away and the night seems endless as my mind teases around all the concepts that have trickled through it radiating out like ripples on a pond when a pebble is thrown in and it all seems like the equally interminable round of activity where your body survives on endorphins and the more you do aerobics pump iron swim or cycle the more you crave exercise and your mind refuses to switch off and allow your body to rest and I think of the article on the self perpetuating perfect wave I hadn't quite digested before my copy of New Scientist was shamelessly purloined by another club member with a similar morbid masochistic and possibly self destructive fascination with the forces of the ocean and perhaps its just as well I didn't absorb it in its entirety because its not the type of thing I really need to be contemplating in depth when I've just taken delivery of a real sea kayak as distinct from the pseudo sea kayak I've been paddling for the past twelve months and was just starting to gain confidence with and its really quite irrelevant that scientists still can't agree on how massive waves suddenly appear out of nowhere and send super tankers to the bottom of the ocean with total loss of life because whether it's caused by subaquatic seismic activity or by the meeting of two currents the outcome is the same and it doesn't matter a damn if scientists can use complicated formulae to predict when they are likely to occur if it can do that to a super tanker what will it do to our puny craft and I recall the press release that landed in my email from CSIRO about the circumpolar wave that takes eight years to circle the Antarctic multiplying in size and strength as it goes and I'm convinced the next wave will be the one and as it contacts the Leeuwin current and forms a still more massive wall of water that will crash over my bows sending my flimsy craft spiralling to the bottom of the ocean with all hands because I'm wedged in by thigh braces that were recommended to stop me falling out but wouldn't it have been better to learn to roll before I stop myself from falling out so this may be the last demented rambling you see from the keyboard of this hyperactive insomniac with a seriously bad attitude.

Marian Mayes

Swearing at the Wind.....Again!

(Continued from last issue)

We had landed on Ah Chong Island, had lunch and were heading off to the southern end of the Monty's to find a base camp. As we rounded the island we were confronted with a huge tidal stream. I had never seen anything like it before. We had all heard and read about tidal streams but never seen one. What a hoot! Just like white water river paddling. There were eddies, boils, rapids and this was the ocean. We played, ferry glided, sat in the boils and had a great time. The warnings about the northern end came back to me. I had talked to a person who had done seismic surveys in the Monty's and he told me the northern end had horrific tidal streams as the islands are shaped like a big funnel. He said there was 2mt difference in the water height in spring tides and we would not be able to paddle against them. I now took his warning very seriously.

We set up camp in front of the Conservation And Land Management hut as this area had been heavily desecrated over the years and our camping there would not impact on the pristine areas. The Monty's are low limestone islands that have under cut rocky shoreline with little sandy beaches spaced throughout the islands. They are covered by spinifex (a low spiky grass type of plant) and the occasional acacia thickets or mangrove. Baudin first discovered the islands in 1801 and was discouraged by the seeming barrenness of the country. He took 7.5 tons of Turtle meat off Barrow Island and set fire to it as he left.

"This was only the first act of environmental vandalism... pearler's raped the area of all its shell and introduced cats and black rats...

Then the British tested 3 atomic weapons"

This was the first act of environmental vandalism as unlike the main land, these islands are not fire resistant and fire is a catastrophic event. After Baudin's effort pearler's came next and raped the area of all its pearl shell. Worst of all they introduced cats and black rats to the area. These caused the extinction of the Golden Bandicoot and the Spectacled Hare-wallaby as well as having a major impact on all the other fauna that survived. This of course was out done by the British who set off 3 atomic weapons over a four year period. The millions of fish, insects and birds that died in the initial blast would pale into insignificance to the number who would die from radiation poisoning. After that we found oil and gas so we cleaned up the radiation so we could exploit the oil and gas. Now we discover it's a totally unique area of mega diversity because of its location and the fact there is an overlap of tropical and sub tropical species. Conservation And Land Management have eradicated the cats and are working on upgrading the area to a marine park. At least this is a step in the right direction as there are few places in the world that are like the Monty's. Ironically a lot of the money to do scientific surveys are being funded by the oil companies. It proves that only rich countries can afford good environmental policies.

As we explored the island we found many interesting spots. One of the best spots was this little island that was like a mini volcano. The centre was open and had a lovely little beach you could access via a cave entrance. We spent an hour playing in our very own secret "pirate cave". It was getting late in the afternoon and we had had a top day so we set off wandering back to our campsite. I was out front just doddling along when I got a strange feeling, and out of the corner of my eye saw a big black shape heading for my boat.

"I saw a big black shape heading for my boat - a huge shark passed so close I thought the dorsal fin would hit me."

At about a 45 degree angle a huge hammer head shark passed under my boat. It was as round as a 44 gallon drum and 15ft long. I could have reached down and touched it. I was thinking "Oh my God!" then it turned in its body length and came strait back for my boat. At this point I stopped thinking and my heart was in my mouth. I had stopped paddling and the shark passed so close I thought the dorsal fin would hit the boat. It then turned again and passed at the back of the boat missing my rudder by centimetres only to turn back on my rudder again. After the second pass it disappeared as fast as it arrived. After a second or two I had control over my voice again and called the boys over. John thought it was attracted to the vibrations from my paddle. When it turned back I had stopped paddling, so then the only turbulence was at the back of my rudder. Once again on the second pass the boat was stopped and there was no turbulence so he lost interest. Well that was a good theory but it didn't stop the shark re visiting me that night in my dreams. It was one of those experiences I am glad I've had but don't want again, I'm just not that brave.

We were at the point where we had to make some decisions. Tel's hand was not looking good, the cuts were not healing. The flesh either side of the cuts was white and at the end of each day the cuts were gaping. It was sore the whole time he was paddling. We were due to paddle back and I was not confident his hand could take 5 days of hard paddling. Prior to the trip I did a sailing plan, an emergency rescue plan and an evacuation plan and lodged it with the Water Police. The cas-evac plan was simple. Bristo helicopters service the rigs and are set up for cas-evac so they were happy to get us, for a fee, if someone needed urgent medical attention. The evacuation plan in case of cyclones was much harder. I wanted to get a lift back on the rig tenders. The oil companies don't like tourists, especially crazy ones in sea kayaks. With a lot of hassle they eventually relented and I had all the contacts and they were informed of the plan so it would be easy to organise from the water. I do these for all my trips just so people can't call us irresponsible. This time I was wondering if it was worth the hassle. We carried satellite mobile phones which are magic. In range of mobile services they are normal mobile phones and when you are out of range, snap up the satellite aerial and hey presto communication. I called the manager of the tenders and he agreed if the risk factor was going to increase we should come back on the supply barge next Thursday. Great, we now had another 7 days on the Monty's. We packed up and

Continued page 5

Swearing at the Wind from page 4

headed for the northern end to set up a base camp there. We were into neap tides so it would be ok.

That night we heard there was a cyclone off Darwin which was 2,000km away so we weren't overly worried. Just made a note to keep an eye on it. We camped in a lovely spot on the north western tip of the Monty's. It is the most beautiful end of the islands and there was excellent surf on the seaward side. We made plans to go surfing the next day and then wander over to one of the bomb sites.

"That night the cyclone warning was down to Cape Leveque and heading our way. Now we were worried!"

That night the cyclone warning was down to Cape Leveque and heading our way. Now we were worried. I rang the duty forecaster who said it was going out to sea and they did not expect it to come down the coast. But we still had a cyclone north of us. At 3.am John got up for a pee and listened to the forecast. The warning was still for Cape Leveque and that was still 1000 km away so he went back to sleep. The next morning we had a top time surfing the west end. There was a 2 to 3 mt break along the "U" shaped reef. This meant you could get on the shoulder and provided you cut left you ended up in deep water. We arrived back at camp exhausted and elated. Chatting away we packed up and headed over to the bomb site on Trimouille Island. We arrived about 11.30 and John switched on the radio for a forecast.

I rang the duty forecaster again. He said it was heading down the coast very fast, averaging over 20km per hour. The forecast for the next day was 20 to 30 knot South Easterlies in the morning with possible gales later on.

"We were now 130 km from the coast on low lying islands that offer no protection with a fast moving, strengthening cyclone bearing down on us. OH SHIT!"

We were now 130 km from the coast on low lying islands that offer no protection with a fast moving, strengthening cyclone bearing down on us. OH SHIT. Why does unseasonable weather and wind always follow me! I rang the Dampier Police to let them know where we were and what we were doing. They had our sailing plan and were happy we reported in as I said we would. I think they were a little pissed off though. They just had two sea rescues last week where a crewman fell off a tanker and drowned before they got to him and a yacht had run aground on an island south of us and needed rescuing. Now they had a cyclone heading for an oil field and possibly their own town.

We were over 30 km from Veranus the oil installation that was our evacuation point and we had a 15kn head wind that would probably strengthen. We were looking down the barrel of a long hard paddle into the night. Fortunately as part of my plan I had the coordinates of Veranus in the GPS so we could find it at night without a problem. There was a small pearl farm at the Monty's who knew we were there so we headed there to tell them we were bugging out. As we approached a seaplane was just lifting off. The owner of the farm called us over, as he was very worried about us. They were evacuating immediately and the first plane load had already left. He didn't think we would make Veranus in our sea kayaks and offered to give us a lift as far as he could on his 40ft jet cat. We didn't need a lot of persuading. We lifted the boats up fully loaded onto the deck and were off at 20 knots. The miles were flying by and we were now very sure we would make Veranus that afternoon. He dumped us into the ocean almost there and headed straight back to the farm to set up cyclone moorings before the next evacuation. To say we were grateful is an understatement.

As we approached Veranus a helicopter buzzed us with the pilot gesturing for us to go straight to the loading dock as fast as we could. As we approached there was a rig tender tied up. The captain shouted that he was leaving in 5 minutes and we were to haul our boats over the stern right now. Once again we dragged fully loaded boats on the deck of the huge boat. I was amazed we had the strength to do that actually.

"The helicopter pilot was scheduled to go and winch us from the water. Loosing our boats was not a good thought. Then again nor was loosing our life."

The helicopter pilot popped his head over the rail and said he was glad we made it as he was scheduled in half an hour to go and winch us from the water. Loosing our boats was not a good thought. Then again nor was loosing our life. 5 minutes later the boat left with the captain gunning it up to 14knots. I asked him why the urgency and he informed me he once left it too late and had a horror trip back and would never do that again. Cyclones are just too unpredictable and he was not going to die at sea. I must admit, it was not that long ago 3 ships were lost with all hands in a cyclone just south of here, when it intensified and caught people out.

Our adventure was over, the last 100km back to shore was spent in an air conditioned cabin sipping coffee and eating. We arrived back late that night and I rang the Police to let them know we were safely back on shore. They were actually complimentary and said if everyone did some preparation like us their job would be easy. Next trip, I won't complain about doing sailing plans as they work, and people didn't think we were irresponsible. The next day there were 4mt seas and high winds at the islands so we were glad to be packed up and driving home. This was different to all the other trips I have done, and it was a shame it was cut short, but in hindsight just as exciting and enjoyable. **Les Allen**

GERALDTON KAYAKERS' SHARK BAY TRIP

A rough trip plan was thrown together with help from some not so rough red at a local restaurant half-price pasta night. When the music stopped nine of us were left standing – Jim, Dennis, Anna and I would take four days to paddle from Denham to the tip of Peron Peninsula then down the other side to Monkey Mia, while Jim's wife Amanda & daughter Rochelle and Gary's scaly mates Paul, Phil and English backpacking goddess Jamie drove the vehicles and told the sandflies where to find us. Avon Descent messiah Kerley assured us he'd catch enough fish along the way to feed the masses.

The beachfront caravan park at Denham was the place to be on the first Saturday of the July school holidays. More land and ocean cruisers than I've had tofu dinners recently (blame the wife's diet)! As we rendezvoused that arvo, "dead calm" Roberts' lips were salivating at the sight of the flat, tranquil sea. He should have been warned by the smirk on the face of farmer Phil.

The only decent cold front of winter had tents flapping next morning. Dennis and I pushed off the beach at 11am straight into the 25 knot nor'wester. It was a hard 25 kilometre slog up to Big Lagoon. As another squall passed, I was grateful for the big feller's advice on the safety options that didn't exist if we were struck by lightning.

"I was grateful for advice on the non existent safety options if we were struck by lightning."

We surprised ourselves and the land crew by arriving at the campsite just as they did at 2.45pm. The last 45 minutes had been satisfying paddling with following waves and under sunny sky into and along the lagoon. The previous 90 minutes hadn't! In that last stretch we passed the first mangroves, a squadron of pelicans, one large turtle and several large leaping mullet.

My throbbing elbows and wrists didn't respond well to descriptions of the hour spent by the land crew in Peron Station's hot spring. After a few hours R & R (and helping the fifth member of the Oarsome Foursome – so his wife said – unbog his landcruiser in the "carpark"), we settled down with the sandflies to some serious eating and drinking. The land crew took to Phil's dinghy to not catch tea.

Next morning the water was calm though the sandflies were frantic. All four paddlers crossed to the west side of the beautiful lagoon. Thirsty emus patrolled the beach. Gentle following waves and breeze pushed us happily past stark red cliffs for the next 2 hours. Kay-

aking is much more pleasant when you can hear your companions waffle while cruising along.

While lunching on a sandy spit, Dennis discovered the wreck of the Kormoran. No fuss, no hi-tech gear. After lunch I glided over an old rope, only to discover it was a sea-snake basking on the water. Jim didn't believe me until he passed one later.

"I glided over an old rope, only to discover it was a sea-snake basking on the water"

We charged along at about 8 kilometres per hour until 3pm. By then Anna, in a slower borrowed kayak, started to fade. Even the Mirages were outstripping her (sorry Les, couldn't resist). I'd been fading all day, nursing a sore left wrist. Bottle Bay took two more long hours, and several false alarms, to arrive. The exhaustion of 6 solid hours (over 40 kilometres) on the water was offset by having the company of about a dozen dolphins.

"The exhaustion of 6 hours on the water was offset by the company of a dozen dolphins."

Again just as we beached at the stunning bay, the four wheel drives and Jim's campervan came over the hill. Tents were pitched a few metres above high tide mark, with spectacular views of the limpid dark water and pink sunset. Most of us braved the surprisingly cool water for a refreshing swim. Hospitality was obviously too good at Paul's campfire that night. On leaving, Dennis tried two other tents before stumbling into his own.

Tuesday dawned clear with another light southwester. Perfect! I was still applying ice and bandages to my wrist, not at all sure I'd be able to continue paddling.

The steep beach caused some exciting entries to the water. A push from Dennis had Anna's Capella hurtling through the breakers! After the first 15 minutes on the water my wrist settled down. We enjoyed an easy half-hour paddle to the tip of the Peninsula. Just before we got there, a friendly fisherman pulled alongside to warn of the strong offshore current up there. Staying close to the red cliffs suited us fine. A few holiday-makers were enjoying the sandy beaches at the point as the four kayaks cruised past.

We turned our craft into the wind, keeping well inside the long line of whitecaps. Now for the harder part of our easiest day, about 14 kilometres down to Herald Bight. The steep cliffs on the east side prevented us

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meeting the support crew for lunch as planned. Water and provisions were carried up the first beach to the shelter of stunted wattles.

Approaching Herald Bight, we could see ahead a very long point leading to what looked like an island. Luckily this was tomorrow's challenge, not today's. The Bight was easily identified by two large sheoaks which made for a pleasant campsite.

The earlier finish to the day's work was greatly appreciated. I felt confident my wrist could be nursed through the final day's 30 kilometres. Paul, Phil and Jamie fished in the receding tide long enough for Paul to snare the only catch of the trip – a respectable tailor. Dennis was reminded of his "guarantee" he'd catch fish, and stalked the abundant shovel-nosed sharks in the shallows.

Chef Kerley lobbed a dozen potatoes in alfoil into the coals – and left them there when he and Anna crashed out. He was awake enough to hear the threats to start lobbing them at his tent!

The final day was a busy one, with a five hour paddle (and walk) to Monkey Mia and a vehicle shuttle to Denham, followed by the trip to Nanga Station to camp there. So alarms were set for the ungodly hour of 7am, and we hit the water at 8.45.

We hit the mudflats at the point an hour later, after beating into wind and waves. There was no way of avoiding being there at low tide, but from the charts we didn't expect it so low. A half hour of dragging the kayaks across the flats followed.

"A half hour of dragging the kayaks across the flats followed."

Back in the vessels, we made good time. For an hour our minds were kept on the job by moderate waves hitting us side-on. Then the wind dropped and the day became balmy. We discussed what an ideal trip it was to do with beginners, or carrying all our gear without land support. But this trip was made great by the excellent company and help of the land crew. We think we've got them interested in our next jaunt, from Geraldton to Kalbarri over 3 weekends.

Apart from the sharks and some herons and oystercatchers, the wildlife on the east of the peninsula was sparse. Nearly all of the paddling was in less than two metres of water. The weather had been superb for 3 days, and challenging for the other.

Stroking through the lines of floats of the pearl farm just north of Monkey Mia made us feel like Olympic oarspeople – briefly. My attempts to incite my companions to stand in our kayaks in unison for the landing at Monkey Mia were unsuccessful – though Dennis got to his feet and Anna would have if she'd stopped laughing. Dennis' Southern Raider groans under his weight when he sits, so I thought his legs would go through it and let him walk it onto the beach.

True to form, the pit crew got onto the beach just in time for a warm welcome and celebratory photos. Then most indulged in double icecream cones at the restaurant at the end of the universe. The warm springwater spa at Nanga was bliss that night. We cracked a champagne and toasted a fantastic trip – the first of many.

Gary Nixon

Hillary North Wall

You know, thinking about it now I could have made it a lot easier on myself. I could have taken the route that most men take when they reach mid-life, buy a Harley motorcycle or a sporty looking car, fill the tank and hit the open road, but then that would have been too easy, and far more expensive.

Until about 18 months ago I considered myself to be an able runner. Modest in my efforts, I usually covered from 5 to 6 kilometres every other day, I have always found running a relaxing way of dealing with tension, and of course it also has the added health benefits. Unfortunately during one of these runs I tore a calf muscle that stopped me in my tracks. Combined with knees that require an overhaul, I knew that I would have to put the running shoes on the shelf and find something else to keep my mind, body and sanity intact.

Cycling has always bored me to tears, so that was never

an option. No, what I was looking for was something else, something that would combine sustained effort with a wilderness experience, and so it was that while surfing on the Internet I found what I was looking for.

Sea kayaking seemed to have it all, challenges, thrills and spills - more on the spills later - and the ability to travel with my kit. I love to camp out, the more rugged and isolated the landscape, the better. At least I like the idea of camping out, but as we all know while oil shortages come and go, time always seems to be in short supply. Anyway back to the story.

So what better way to travel than in a self contained sea going 'kombi van', taking my abode in whatever direction I chose to paddle. Scouring the Internet I finally settled on a Pittarak. Why did I choose this boat - well because it looked good - and also because I had read

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quite a few independent reports that favoured this particular design. Apart from the fact that it has an initial stability that would tax the most able sea kayaker, with practice, I felt that I would be OK.

I was determined to be at least competent in staying upright before venturing out with the WA Sea Kayak Club on my first paddle, and so I had already been out on three separate occasions, once in Hillary boat harbour and twice on the Swan River.

On that clear Sunday morning in August I met up with other club members at Hillary north wall. The morning was cool and clear and after various friendly introductions we assisted each other by carrying the boats to the beach, from where it had been determined we would launch. Looking down from above, the sea looked like a pancake while the surf did not appear to look in the least bit intimidating; that is until I sat in the boat and saw the ocean from ground level. It is amazing how a simple change in altitude can turn a 'millpond' into a churning, frothing maelstrom. I felt immediately uneasy, fearing that I had made a monumental error, seeing clearly that I was about to make a fool of myself, and so with assistance I pushed off.

Previous to my launch I had watched three compatriots paddle out through the modest swell with ease. So how hard could it be, I soon found out. As I bore down with my paddle I confirmed that I was not up to the task. Whereas on the river I had felt marginally in control, here I felt like an unwelcome guest. My mind flashed back to all that I had read on the subject of Sea Kayaking and I suddenly knew that no amount of reading could ever make up for my lack of experience.

Wobbling from side to side, overcorrecting as I tried to move forward, and in so doing making little headway, I was tumbled out of the boat like a rag doll into a churning sea. I came up spluttering and cursing, before losing all dignity by being ejected back onto the beach. This was ominous. It was as if Neptune himself was saying that he was not going to let me tame this new sport with ease. "No, No, No" he seemed to say, "I am not letting you out here so easily, you will have to earn your spurs before I will allow a novice like you the joys of my domain." Of course I ignored him.

After removing the water from the boat I collected myself and with good advice attempted another launch with the same results as before. By this time I was thinking seriously about placing an ad in the Quokka magazine. "Wanted Harley Roadster, will swap for one sweet very stable Sea Kayak." One more try, I thought, after all how hard can it be, but I already knew the an-

swer.

After my third attempt at a beach launch it was suggested that I swim out with the boat beyond the swell line and then, with assistance, I could regain and paddle off. Unfortunately the combination of my inexperience and a sea that had already rejected me three times was never going to leave the outcome in doubt.

I donned my fins and swam the boat through the swell and waited for my companions to join me. Upon arriving I listened carefully to instructions and re-entered the craft, but by this time I was feeling distinctly uncomfortable. Before entering I had noticed that the kayak was leaning heavily to starboard. (Only after reaching the beach again did I realise that this was due to the way in which I had packed my water), however at the time I was seriously starting to doubt the seaworthiness of my craft. It really is amazing to me that I could have gotten myself into such a fluster, yet this is what happened. As I became more agitated my body became increasingly tense, which affected my ability to stabilise the boat. So after my release I gained no more than twenty or so metres before I capsized. By this time I was beginning to wonder why the hell had I bothered to get out of bed that morning, yet at some level I was still enjoying myself. However at this point I was also starting to feel guilty for my compatriots who had come out for a pleasant Sunday paddle, not a rescue exercise. Re-entering the craft I immediately fell out again and so it was decided that I would be towed ashore.

My humiliation and misery was complete. Here I was a grown man with my bright shiny new equipment totally dependent on two club members, whom I had only just met that morning, for my safety. Yet there is a lesson in what happened. Past experience counts for naught when you start a new sport, especially a sport that is dependent on gear, personal fitness and so many other outside factors. Yet the unpredictability that I experienced on my first morning's paddle with the club is what attracted me to this sport in the first place. I realise that this is a sport that engenders self-reliance, teamwork and skill, and that these are areas that I need to improve on. So to those of you out there who have had similar experiences, don't give up. If there is one thing that I do know, it is that things worth doing are never easily mastered.

To the club members who assisted me on my first club outing, thanks for your competence, humour and patience. Your attitude will ensure that I will be back soon.

Paul Fuller



Everything
you need...



35 JARRAD ST, COTTESLOE

Phone (08) 9284 3759 Fax (08) 9384 0224

email ken@mainpeak.com.au

Turning A Sea Kayak

Why do I need to be taught to turn a sea kayak? It's easy, just push down the rudder and you turn. Well most times that's all you need to do, but if your kayak is long enough you will one day be caught in strong winds and then turning your boat is not that easy. A simple thunderstorm can cause winds to rise from 20 to 35 knots in seconds. This is not the time to start to learn how to turn in difficult conditions.

There are two types of turning to master. One is when the boat is stalled or stopped. The way to turn a boat in this position is to sweep forward on one side and sweep back on the other. The force turns the hull around the paddler. This is not difficult in calm conditions. The bigger the rocker on your boat the easier it turns. Unfortunately in strong winds this method rarely works. The force of the wind is usually stronger than the turning ability of the sweep.

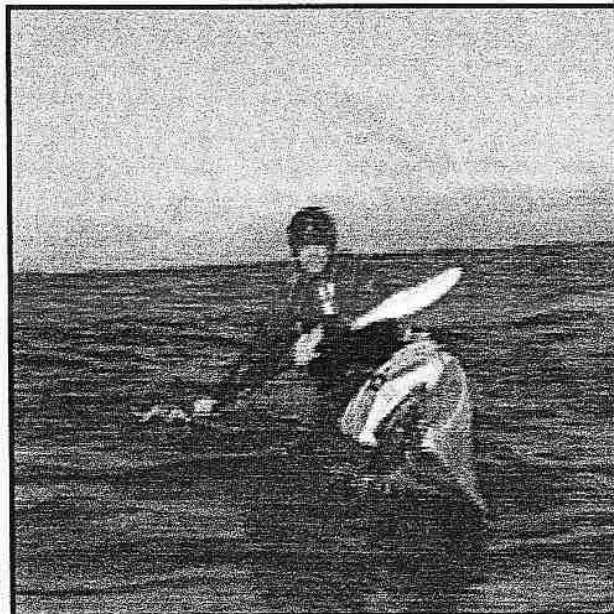
So what do we do to turn in strong winds? First of all you need speed. The speed gives the rudder or the hull the force to turn against the wind. Once you start the boat turning you need to maintain speed to complete the turn. If you have a rudder, turning the rudder will usually be enough. But sometimes even the rudder needs help and what if your rudder is broken?

Leaning your boat is one way of turning. As you lean your boat the hull length on the water line is longer on one side than the other. This forces the boat to turn. In short steep waves quite often your rudder is not in the water and leaning your boat is the easiest way to turn. It is a skill that takes time to learn. If you look at the picture you will see water on the low side of the boat trying to push the front around. To turn the boat left lean to the right. To learn how to lean the boat is simple.

Every time you paddle try doing some sweep strokes and leaning the boat. At first you will feel unstable on a small lean but practice is all it needs.

Once you are leaning the boat effectively there are a few more tips you need. The top of the wave is the place to use the strongest sweep. On the top of the wave the bow and stern of the boat is out of the water making the sweep very effective. You may need to sweep several times on the top of waves as well as maintaining the turn in the troughs of the waves in high winds. This requires a combination of forward strokes, sweeps, rudder and leaning to keep speed and complete the turn. In wind over 25 knots you need 3 times the area to turn your boat so don't turn towards a reef. This is an important skill to master, as it is very unnerving to suddenly find you can't turn your boat.

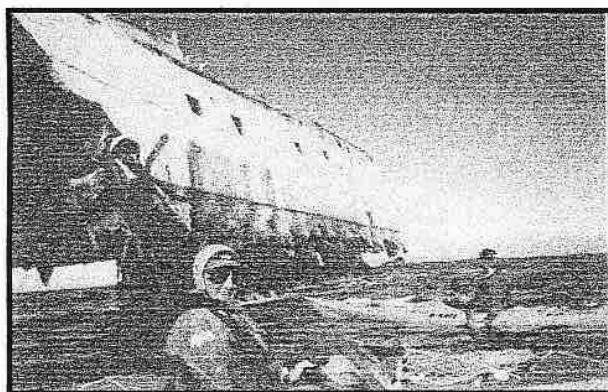
Les Allen



WINTER FLIGHT PATHS

We all seem to find our own way of dealing with winter. Eric remained active till his instincts took control and he joined the flock of twitchers on their annual migration north, while Wolfgang followed one of the European flyways to return to his breeding ground in the Northern Hemisphere. Some members appear to have gone into hibernation and haven't been seen in their usual wetland habitat for several months. Others have defected to become white water enthusiasts while there's water in the Avon.

But while many find alternative activities through winter, those who have remained active on club paddles have been rewarded by some perfect days. Although those who love rough seas, strong winds and big surf would probably disagree with me. Forget the myth about winter being too cold, too rough or too wet! Paddling in the rain is not life threatening in itself and the water temperature when we take that unplanned swim is not that different (or so I keep telling myself) from summer.



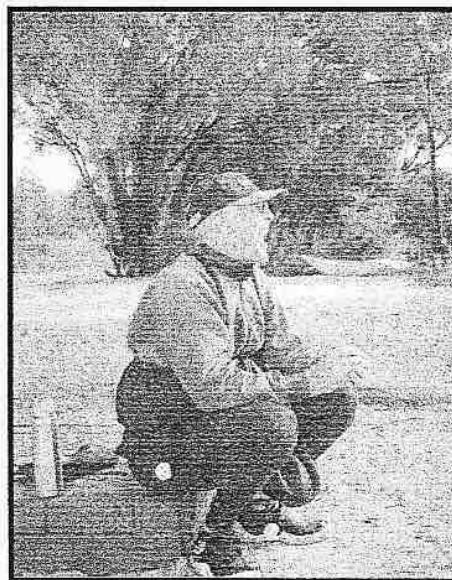
Eric Pyatt and Don Kinzett (above) were two paddlers who took advantage of a perfect day to check out the wreck of the ill-fated Alkimos. The paddle from Quinns was calm and pleasant



Above: A Club group enjoying a sunny winter day on Garden Island before moving on to Carnac.



Above: Helier found a friendly sea lion to play with on Carnac Island



Above: Don Kinzett can see the funny side of most things, even on a rainy paddle in the Canning River on the day we didn't go to Kent Street Weir.



Above: The Sea Kayak Club joined up with Ross and Barry from the Mandurah over 55's for a tour of the estuary and canals

WINTER FLIGHT PATHS (Cont)



Left: Roz and Phil Evans on the beach at Point Peron on one of our Shoalwater Islands Marine Park paddles.

Text and pictures by Marian Mayes

Objects of Association

Have any of you ever paused to wonder what we are all doing floating round in our various little boats week after week? Is there a meaning to it all? According to our constitution for those who have not taken the trouble to read this admittedly long and tedious manuscript (Trust me, I know. I've just retyped the whole 14 pages of it) the purpose is as follows:

3. (1) The objects of the Association are to act, through the club's Newsletter, as a contact point for members' sea kayak activities.
 - To promote and encourage sea kayaking to the general community as an enjoyable, social and environmentally responsible wilderness pursuit.
 - To unite and co-ordinate the activities of members in their sea kayaking activities.
 - To promote safe boating practices, and endeavour to make sure that the Rules and Regulations concerning Sea Kayaking (if any) are complied with.
 - To encourage respect for our environment, and to foster a positive attitude towards the conservation of flora and fauna, and the practice of minimum impact camping.
 - To support environmental study and lobby groups.
 - To act on behalf of members in their relationship with Canoeing WA Inc. and other organisations.
 - To represent sea kayakers in consultations with government departments at all levels.

Marian Mayes

FOLD

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