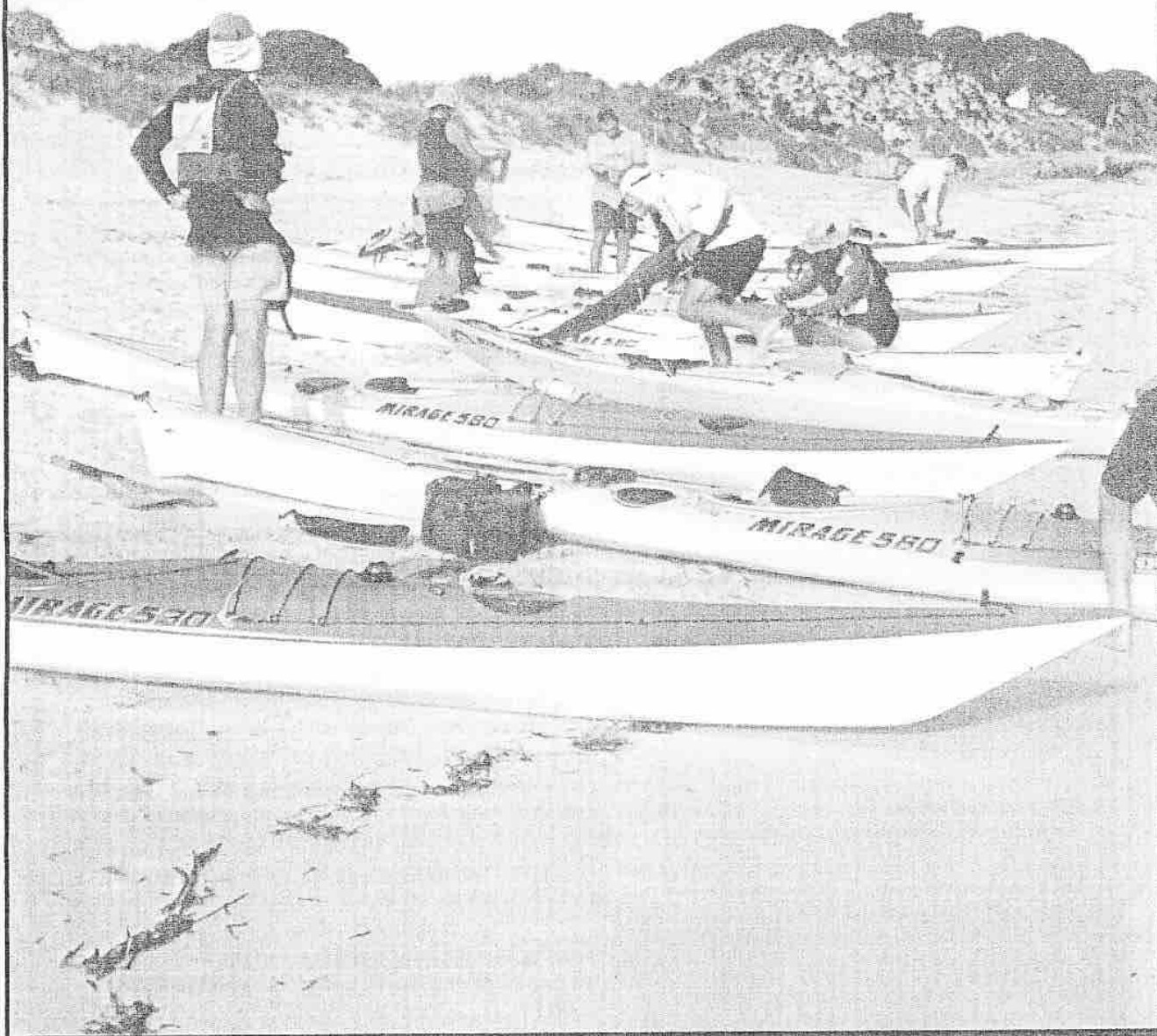


WA Seakayaker



Issue 41: March ~ April 2003



Newsletter of Sea Kayak Club WA Inc. PO Box 366 North Perth 6006
Phone: Pres. Eric Pyatt 9339 2952 Sec. Megan Halvey 9473 0552

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



It is very rewarding for those who are putting in the effort to see how the club is progressing. Gone are the days when Programme Director was on tender-hooks wondering if anyone would turn up on the club paddles. The lowest ebb was when membership was down to fourteen; now we are stable at around the sixty mark. Excursions i.e: long week ends and overnights, are well supported. Our first experiment with a lengthy excursion [11 days] to Ningaloo has a response of fifteen. There is a proposed trip to Dirk Hartog Island, 18th to 27th April, taking in Easter, Anzac and a Weekend. You only need to take off three working days. Tentatively, there are five starters, so let me

know if interested.

Enjoyable Sea Kayaking to all.
Eric.

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Deadline for next issue :

Midnight WST 10th April

Yes, I know that's early but I'm going away and if I don't get it out early, you won't get it at all

Deadline not met, material not published

Definition of Deadline

Line beyond which it is not permitted or possible to go: Time limit

Cover Picture:

Club members prepare to circumnavigate

Rottneest Island

Thomson Bay 8th Feb 2003

Photograph © Marian Dixon



NOTICE BOARD



Welcome to the following new members

Elizabeth Bell	Kevin Piper
Jim Bramley	Brad Reed
Paul Henwood	Lynnette Tapper
Basia Lis	Joanne Turnbull
Laraine Newton	Bill Wheeldon
David Oakley	

Paddle Programme

At the final deadline I have still not set eyes on the current paddle programme so if it's not included in this newsletter phone John Ross on 9592 2432.
Don't blame the editor!

Geraldton Members Agenda

Anybody visiting Geraldton and looking for a paddle
Contact Gary Nixon phone 9938 2802.
Venue St Georges Beach
5 Pm Thursdays and 7.30am Sundays

Perth2Darwin Fundraising Marathon

Huw Kingston from NSW plans to depart from Perth on 9.4.2003 to paddle to Cervantes as the first leg of his kayaking, cycling and hiking trip to Darwin. He would welcome any information on this section and would be happy to have company along the way if there are some sea kayakers free. You can contact him by email: huw@polarismtb.com.au

Proposed Dirk Hartog Trip
18th April—27th April

Members Only

A STRICT LIMIT OF TEN PEOPLE

Only the first 10 to pay \$50 to the treasurer will be accepted.
Contact Eric Pyatt to discuss
Phone 9339 2952

Check the Weather Forecast

[Http://info@oceanoutlook.com.au](http://info@oceanoutlook.com.au)
[Http://www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

Our club web page

[Http://www.canoewa.asn.au/club/skcwa](http://www.canoewa.asn.au/club/skcwa)

Social Events

Does anybody have any ideas about social outings they would like to see on the programme?
If so, contact Mick on 9245 2707

Paddle Programme

Does anybody have any ideas about day paddles or camping trips they would like to see on the programme? You don't have to be the leader, just let John know on 9592 2432

WA Seakayaker Editor's F.A.Q's

Marian Dixon mayesmar@highway1.com.au

Who can contribute? Anybody who is a member and has done anything related to sea kayaking recently. It doesn't have to be heroic or gung ho. It does not have to be an official club trip, nor do all participants have to be club members.

What is acceptable? Any story involving sea kayaking, the natural environment or related activities. All material and photographs should be the original work of the author or if photographs, drawings or quotes are used from another source, then that source should be acknowledged. Ideal length for an article is 1,000- 1,500 words

What is not acceptable? Any article promoting a person or product for profit that is not clearly identified as a paid advertisement. This is a grey area we are working on and any debate is welcome.

When can they contribute? The deadline for the next magazine is always published on page 2 but the earlier I have the material, the better. Photographs if available must be received with the article.

Does the editor have to know you want to contribute? Yes, and the earlier the better. Planning and construction of the next newsletter is under way as soon as or before one is published. I may have filled the space with other material, written about a particular trip myself or asked some other member to write about it. Talk to me first to avoid duplication.

How do I submit material? By email or disk. Word documents in plain format are best. In special circumstances, hand written copy will be accepted but it must be in my hands at least 7 days before the deadline. Photographs in JPEG, original prints or slides.

Never won the duck for cover award? Then tell me if you've done anything stupid (or dob in your mates). Share your/their stupidity with me, I'll understand. I'll publicly shame them, but I'll understand.

A Deadline is Not Dynamic

A Deadline is Definite

This Month's Fiercely Contested
DUCK FOR COVER AWARD
Goes to Neville Holden



Neville Holden on Rottnest Island
 Photograph © Marian Dixon

Neville's propensity for collecting Op-shop "bargains" is legendary. His latest acquisition is a folding helmet that he claims will be handy for protecting his head while surfing. The helmet also protected his head while drinking beer at Rottnest, but from what you may well ask? Silver gulls? Marauding quokkas?

Clearly it gave him temporary protection from Megan because after he took it off she produced a can of whipping cream which she proceeded to spray on Neville's head. Her reason for doing this was unclear but may have had something to do with imbibing Grenache and her own particular specialty i.e. C/S Cowboys.

Helier's reason for jumping up and licking the cream off Neville's head was also unclear. Nev spent the rest of the night sleepless, in mortal fear every time he heard a bed creak that it was Helier coming to lick his head again. He claims it was a gruesome experience and in fact Helier himself in a more sober moment agreed.

So where was the helmet when Neville managed to capsize his boat between two sections of reef earlier that day? Ironically the helmet was not available but Helier was and Neville was soon back in his boat.

Perhaps from this experience, we can in hindsight formulate yet another club by-law. "Every member is master of his/her own ship and therefore re-

sponsible for protecting his/her head in every situation, whether it be from accidental reef contact, Megan's whipped cream or Helier's tongue lashing." Sorry Neville, but I still don't think it's a good look. **Marian**

Kayak Repairs

On a recent trip I had the misfortune to ride a really good wave right into a substantial reef which had only about 10cm of water over it – really speared into it. Having bounced and ground my way clear of the reef on the next two waves, I paddled to shore to inspect the damage.

At the curve of the bow I had smashed all the gelcote away in a 30cm by 2 to 4cm strip. The kevlar was still there but the impact has smashed all the resin from it – it was like a bit of wet rag. The rigidity had gone from the bow. Under each of the bulkheads there were fairly deep, wide gouges in the hull. Where the seat meets the hull was split on the inside and badly gouged on the hull. This was one unhappy paddler.

Who can I get to fix it? Ken at Mainpeak put me onto Keron Hepworth. I phoned Keron and he said he could probably fix it – "Doesn't sound too bad", he said. I was out to his place in High Wycombe in a flash.

The end result is a stronger than ever hull, with heaps of carbon fibre strengthening and a shiny fresh gelcote finish – look out reef!

Should you have a mishap like mine or want to talk modifications or even the lightest ever sea kayak, I would be happy to pass on Keron's number if you care to contact me on 9381 4638.

Warren Wilson

For safety reasons it has been proposed that a list of members be supplied to the local Sea Rescue Group. If any member objects to this information being supplied, please fill in the form below and return by 31st March 2003 to: The Secreatry Sea Kayak Club WA Inc, PO Box 366 North Perth WA 6006.

I DO NOT WANT details of my name, address and telephone numbers to be supplied to the Sea Rescue Service.

(Print name)..... Signature.....



Perth to Geraldton Odyssey

By Warren Wilson & Sandy Robson

Graeme Lee, Sandy Robson, Jason Beachcroft, Warren Wilson

All photographs provided by Sandy Robson

One thing we have found out, is that Graeme Lee is always coming up with good ideas! One such idea was to continue the tradition that Don Kinzett began. Soon we had a group of four adventurers – Warren Wilson, Sandy Robson, Graeme Lee and Jason Beachcroft (from NSW). We all thought it was a fantastic idea. But wait! There's more... Dennis Kerley & Don decided to join us on parts of the trip.

Anyway as time passed, pumps went in, sails went up, kites were purchased, equipment was organised, a trip plan was prepared, charts were laminated, we trained, we trial packed and soon Boxing Day arrived.

Dec 26th - Ocean Reef to North of Two Rocks

The day started at around 7am with the transfer of bags and bags of equipment, food and water down to the waters edge with the kayaks. We had quite a number of well wishers to see us on our way, some of them were astounded at how much you can pack into a small kayak.

Thanks to fellow club members Peter and Mick for leaving a comfortable bed to come down and wish us bon voyage. Lots of

photos and hugs and we were off at 7.50am – with a bit of a struggle in shifting the kayaks from shore to water.

It was a very calm day – only light winds but from the NE. It was great to be on the water and moving toward our goal.

As we moved along it was impossible not to be aware of one of Don's strokes where he releases his paddle and churns through the water with his hands. No, nothing to do with exercise or breaking the monotony of the forward stroke – just keeping the esky and its contents cool.

We stopped about 3 kms short of the Alkimos for a break, then paddled out to look it over. It sure is shrinking. We saw a helicopter on the beach. Must have been someone's lotto dream – to bring them brunch on the beach.

Next stop Yanchep Lagoon. Don and Graeme went up to the kiosk. Don managed a hamburger. It was a bit costly, however, as he lost \$15 on his way back to the beach. Sandy and Jason cooled off in the lagoon with mask and snorkel.

We got to the camp at 4.50pm and onto the first unloading of the kayaks and cooking the evening

meal. On the subject of food it is pretty obvious that some of us have a lot to learn about the options, Sandy and Jason gave us their first demonstration of gourmet kayak cuisine. They had a menu any top restaurant would be proud to display and, amazingly, the ingredients to make it a reality – day after day. Don did his bowl of noodles, just add water menu, but only after dip and crackers washed down with some of his precious cargo. Graeme gave a demonstration of how to create fluffy Deb potato and dried vegetables to accompany his main dish (with his stove perched on a table that he had constructed for the trip). Warren tried to emulate Graeme's style but ended up with some rather dryish looking mash. Of course everyone had a story about the other uses that Deb can be put to, from rat poison to a binder for plaster.

Dec 27th – 6 kms South of Ledge Point

Up at 4.30am to get on the water by 6am (this was undoubtedly Don's influence). In his haste not to be last (to no avail), Warren ended up packing his sunnies in his tent!

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We headed for the lighthouse at Guilderton (Moore River), which is clearly visible from way back at Two Rocks. We made pretty good progress into another light NW wind, arriving at Seabird at around 11am.

The afternoon's paddle was fairly slow, where was that reliable SW breeze we had planned? Don was finding the paddling easy & scouted ahead a bit to see about a suitable camp, which he found in the sand hills some 6 kms south of Ledge Point.

Dec 28th – Nth of Wedge Island

Up at 4.30am and off the beach by 5.50am – another no-rush start. Coming into Lancelin there were quite a few reef breaks, but it wasn't too hard to avoid them. At Lancelin we thanked and said goodbye to Don. It had been great to have him along for our first few days.

Our next break was at Narrow Neck, which is about 14 kms from Lancelin. One of the good things about the trip was that we were able to take regular breaks, usually every 2 to 3 hours. It lifts the spirits and the energy levels to get out and walk around, have a chat and a feed. We always seemed to do better immediately after such rest stops.

The wind had swung a bit to

the south by now so we decided to get the sails up. Given the different performances of sails and kites, we decided to go in pairs – Jason and Sandy with kites and Graeme and Warren with sails. In the case of one pair getting separated from the other, the plan was to meet around the point from Wedge Island. This was one of the many situations where the sails performed much more reliably than the kites, and we did soon become separated.

This section of coast was another with a good frequency of breaking waves. Warren had opportunity to try his recently acquired skill of bracing into rather large waves. Sandy and Jason had a bit of an adventure when an unexpected wave caught them by surprise. Jason had a good play in the surf, while Sandy tried to stay upright, but failed! This was a good learning experience as she capsized with the kite up (it promptly crashed), lost both hat & sunnies and had to extract her legs from entangling kite strings. We all arrived at Wedge feeling energised and ready for further adventures.

We chatted about where to camp. The immediate vicinity seemed unsuitable. We did not see as many 4X4 rev-heads anywhere else on the trip. There were a huge number of vehicles parked on and running along the beach.

Graeme decided to ask the locals for a recommended campsite. We were referred to a beach opposite a small island some 6-7 kms north. The island had a couple of names depending on whose map you referred to – Flat Rock? Target Rock? As we got closer to our intended campsite, we could see the surf rolling into the beach in around 3 or 4 sets of small waves. We were trying to decide where to go in, Sandy preferred the spot we were to further up the coast and with a "follow me", in she went. She made it, so in we all went.

When we got to the apparent campsite we found some very, very large ants – 3 to 4cms and looking as though they owned the territory and were not welcoming of visitors. Jason, despite receiving the first bite, thought that they were only a natural part of the environment so we should just go on and camp there – "they'll go to bed when the sun sets". We voted on it and we wimps won – moved some 75 meters away over the first row of sand hills to a very wind-protected and flat site (with no ants!).

It had been a fairly long day and we were setting camp up at 7pm. Had a small amount of rain that night and slept soundly.

Dec 29th – Hill River

After envisaging a challenging departure, what a joy to find that the waves had dropped down to a few feet high.

We decided to put up the sails/kites. The trouble with the kites continued, Sandy would get her kite up, and Jason's defied everything he did to get it to fly. We found the kites highly frustrating and unpredictable. At times they seemed to crash for no reason and they cost us a lot of time as we tried to get them to work.

Graeme was sitting there bobbing about waiting to get going when a crow flew around Graeme who, when it looked like settling on his sail gave it a gentle nudge with his paddle. Well it must have thought that that was a fairly friendly advance on Graeme's part as it alighted on his rear deck and started a pecking exploration of his rudder lines. It was amazing. We were doing the old cork bobbing on the ocean bit and the thing was slipping around but hanging in there, with an occasional flutter to the foredeck and back. Eventually, just as we were wondering if it might come with us to Cervantes, it must have decided that flying was decidedly more

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Graeme Lee

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pleasant and off it flew, with one last dip to Graeme.

So what would the old seafarers think of that as an omen? For us it was positive, because we had a SW wind at about 10 knots building to 20 later. A great day for sailing.

The first significant landmark for that day was Grey. It comprises a row of shacks (some quite substantial) sitting on the cliff face with others along the beach from the large lagoon where boats were moored. As we came in close to shore the rain started and visibility was down to a few hundred meters. This didn't matter as there were fairly easy conditions along this piece of coast. There were some lovely looking camping areas with the merest hint of waves on the beach – next time perhaps.

After the best fish & chips in the west, we took off from Cervantes, agreeing to camp near Hill River.

This was a busy campsite, there was some space for us, but it was probably the windiest campsite we had on the trip. It was so windy that, despite being close to the water, the only thing we could hear in our tents throughout the night was the wind. Couldn't even hear Graeme snoring.

Dec 30th - Sandy Point

Off to an easy start with a SE wind. When all arrived at Jurien, Jason and Sandy took off to the doctor to have Jason's swollen knee and ankle looked at. He had been suffering for a few days now, continuing without any complaint. He was given some anti-inflammatory tablets.

By the time Jason and Sandy returned, the wind had swung around to the W-SW

We agreed that we had all better stay close together on this leg. We headed out for North Head. The bay was about as rough as the sea got on the whole trip. Eventually we headed a bit closer to the coast, but agreed that we had to keep heading to the point while we had some following sea. Sandy ploughed ahead, charting a great course past the headland to a little

sheltered bay.

There were a couple of elaborate tents/shacks perched right up near the peak – awesome campsite with amazing views.

Once the energy was flowing again we set off at a nice easy pace surfing a few waves until we reached Sandy Point. We met a happy camper there who offered us some home brew or tea and coffee.

That afternoon we spotted a seal playing around in the bay. The camper we had met earlier was snorkeling with it. Sandy was quickly on with her flippers and snorkel and into the water as well. Not a bad way to end the day.

Dec 31st - Leeman

We left our camp around 6.20am. We could see the Green Head water towers, but decided to stay close to the coast to start because of the strong easterly. Green Head is an interesting spot with lots of shallow reef around it.

Graeme noted that some of the locals/holidayers were pretty friendly as we went around the point. Graeme never misses a chance to exchange greetings so he hailed them back.

A little beyond the headland we came across some small rocky islands and some nice looking bays. We headed in over very shallow water. A few scratches further along we got out of our boats and pulled them to shore – lesson: stay out a bit after that point. Still, had we stayed out we would have missed those friendly tourists now racing along the beach to meet us (turned out they were Sandy's folks).

After some treats from their esky, we headed off for Leeman, anticipating showers at the caravan park and meeting our other support crew – Gay, Mandy and Brett.

At Leeman, Sandy's folks met us on the beach right below the Caravan Park. We loaded all the gear onto their 4X4 and dropped it at the two campsites we had. We then had the afternoon to take it easy, shower and sort our gear.

It was New Year's Eve. We



Warren Wilson

joked about going to karaoke at the local club, about Graeme doing a few Neil Diamond numbers and about stealing tent pegs (Warren forgot to pack tent pegs for the support crew). The reality was a really nice meal, a few drinks, good company and an early night for us.

Jan 1st - White Point

In order to get the gear to the beach we were launching at, we had to empty Gay's car and do a couple of car trips. It was great to have family support at Leeman, however, we concluded that any stopover involving a major shift of boats and gear was an effort to avoid.

New Year's Resolution – To have two kites flying simultaneously. (Thanks to Les Allen, Gay had delivered a kite to us at Leeman – replacing Jason's kite that simply would not fly)

This was a good day – with a SW wind by 11am, our whole group was together with both sails and kites (finally) up. We covered a lot of distance.

No sign of Dennis and Anna that day. We later found out that they had waited at White Point, which we were probably a bit short of when we stopped, until 4.30pm. We landed after 5pm.

Jan 2nd - Seven Mile Beach

Sandy started the day unraveling her kite. One of the characteristics of these things seems to be their capacity to tangle up. Jason reckons

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that a swivel might be helpful in avoiding this undesirable outcome.

Not too long before we reached Port Denison we saw another kayaker flying out to meet us. Dennis had arrived.

Port Denison is visible for some time. We had expected to just creep around the point to the beach, but instead we found this extensive flat high reef stretching seemingly forever out from the point.

After a break with our support crew at the Port Denison Caravan Park, our next goal was Flat Rocks. We had originally hoped to make it there that day, however, with the SW wind well up, we decided to go only as far as Seven Mile Beach.

Dennis and Warren opted for the comforts of the Caravan Park while the others set up camp for the night at Seven Mile. This was the (*eerie music*), 'Night of the Crabs!'

Sandy and Jason decided that they would sleep under the hoochie they had erected for shade during the day. Sandy had to beat a hasty retreat from the beach in the middle of the night, as the little white crabs started to chew on her. Graeme woke to find a half dozen trying to unzip his tent to take a taste. Somehow they avoided being eaten alive!

Dennis and Warren managed to get a forecast at around 5pm for the next two days. It looked like we would be in Geraldton the next day! End of journey in sight.

Jan 3rd - Flat Rocks

We had agreed to start at 5am to give ourselves the best chance of making it that day.

On the beach and low and behold an ever so light NW wind. No, can't be - NW was forecast for Saturday not today. They'll swing soon.

We started off inside the reef but it wasn't too long before the waves were running into shore from the reef breaks. So out we

went. The winds strengthened and it soon became apparent that we would not be reaching Geraldton that day - another short day and wait for a good start on Saturday?

How do you know where you are on that bit of coast? There is really only one good landmark, a house perched in the sand hills about 4kms from Flat Rocks.

Once we reached that point we had to decide where to go into the beach. We were faced with a decision between continuing in the hope that there would be an easy entry near where the boats moor, or to take any reasonable break in the reef. We decided on the latter and Dennis tried it out, getting through to the beach easily. Just ride a few waves and there you are in the calm water.

Graeme went next and did the first couple of waves easily and was well toward the calmer water, so in Warren went. His third wave was a good one and he was surfing along merrily until his front end smacked into a flat bit of reef about 15cms out of the water - what a whack.

A little to the north was Graeme, as calm as you like, sitting in his kayak on top of about 50 square meters of reef, with hardly any water crossing it. Before anyone had been able to give assistance he floated off.

Sandy and Jason come on in like champions - no reef for them.

On the beach Warren's kayak was a pretty sick sight. All the gelcoat was missing from the point of impact for about 30 to 40cms. Not only that but the impact had knocked all the resin from the kevlar. The kevlar looked like a bit of sponge and felt just as rigid. Under each bulkhead was a fairly good impact point.

Graeme came to shore with a boat full of water. Our initial thoughts were that he had copped it too. But as he emptied the water it became clear that he incurred only minor nastiness.

In the meantime a bit of calm-

ing talk with Jason, Sandy and Warren decided to duct tape the areas and see how that worked. It did the job.

Warren and Graeme decided that Flat Rocks was the end of their paddle. Sandy and Jason decided that they would wait for better weather and finish the paddle to Geraldton.

As Warren, Graeme and the others departed, the hoochie went up again for a long hot wait on the beach. We were glad of the shade and a good book to occupy the afternoon. Sandy also put up the tent - determined not to have a repeat of the, 'Night of the Crabs!'

Jan 4th - Geraldton

At 4.30am we were disappointed to find a NW wind already blowing. With the next possible landing site 20kms north at Greenough, we decided to wait until later to see what the wind was going to do. By 7am the wind had dropped a little and the swell was very low. We decided to paddle to Greenough and then make further decisions from there.

We were all packed up and on the water at 9am. With very little swell we could easily paddle straight off the beach at Flat Rocks. We made good time to Greenough and with Geraldton now in sight there was no stopping us.

We paddled straight for the lighthouse on Point Moore, around the point and eventually landed at St George's Beach. We tried to come in with both kites up, but Jason's would not fly (typical!)

We had a terrific sense of achievement in completing the journey and in paddling further than we ever had before.

Congratulations to everyone involved and thanks to the many support crews and those that gave freely of information and encouragement for the endeavour.

We got a lot from it.

(End)

Esperance Trip – Cruising along the south coast of WA

By Megan Halvey

Time and distance always seem to be an issue with trying to get away discovering new places with the Sea Kayak and with a 9 day break over New Year the lure of heading just that little bit further south east beckoned. So with boats, maps and charts John and I jumped in the car and headed off to check out the French Connection (well without getting on a plane anyway) of the Recherche Archipelago, the islands off Esperance.

History Lesson

1792 two French frigates L'Esperance and La Recherche sought shelter in the Bay after navigating their way through an archipelago and liked it so much that they decided to spend a few weeks there and as explorers do named the place.

The trip from Perth to Esperance is a good days drive being 726 kms and we found ourselves heading to the sportsground in Esperance for our first night which is used as an overflow camping area during peak holiday periods. We chose to be discreet settling under some trees at the side of the oval unlike some happy campers who had set up their lone camp loo and shower in the middle of the footy field. Some people are born exhibitionists, not sure what they do in footy season!

After setting up camp the first stop was the Rotary Lookout where we got our bearings of the town and gazed out into the wild blue yonder to 20-30 islands sitting directly off the coast. Sea Kayaks seem to have a magnetic attraction to islands and we headed to the Tea House on the foreshore (the old hospital from Wellard – Marian's country) which seemed the logical place to plan our crossing to Woody Island

the next day. Woody Island is approx 18km's off the coast in the great southern ocean and is the only island with reasonable landing access and camp facilities.

The next morning didn't bring the weather that we had hoped for and we contemplated putting the kayaks on the ferry to the island, only to feel if we didn't paddle over we'd be somehow cheating. So it was decided to delay Woody for a day in the hope that the weather would clear and decided to explore the coastline running west from Esperance called The Great Ocean Drive (as opposed to The Great Ocean Road in Victoria). This is a beautiful drive with stunning coastline. Twilight beach was too good to pass by and we offloaded the kayaks for a paddle around the headland and out to some small islands which had a colony of New Zealand sea lions including some very small young pups.

The afternoon was spent in the Esperance Museum which must be one of the best regional museums around with some of the major attractions including whaling boats, trains, trams and parts of sky lab, which was literally a bit of a blast from the past.

The weather wasn't overly favourable the following day so we decided to delay the Woody Island crossing for a few days and headed east into Cape Le Grand National Park which is 56kms east of Esperance. Rugged coastline, more beautiful white sand beaches, crystal clear water and a number of peaks including Frenchman Peak 262m, Mt Le Grand 345m and Mississippi Hill 180m which rise above the mainly flat plains.

History Lesson #2

Cape Le Grand Peak and Na-

tional Park were named after the Officer Le Grand on the Frigate L'Esperance.

As the weather wasn't great we stopped at Lucky Bay for a clam-ber around the rocky headland and met up with a diving group that had flown in from Tokyo specifically to go diving for Leafy Sea Dragons. Leafy's are one of mother nature's best creations as they are not only stunning with their graceful movements and colourful leafy camouflage but the male of the species carries the eggs, most impressive! (see separate piece on Leafys on page 10). Oh, did I mention that the divers were wearing dry suits, hence we didn't venture into the water to see the Leafy's for ourselves – at this point they remain a highlight of a trip to AQUA at Hillarys.

There is a campground at Lucky Bay but being a little close to Esperance space was at a premium, so we travelled along the coast to Duke of Orleans Bay and set up camp for a couple of nights on a grassy patch about 10 metres from the waters edge – very nice. The following days were spent paddling the bay and cruising around headlands and circumnavigation of a large rocky outcrop sitting just off the coast on which we landed and climbed offering a spectacular view back along the bay and out to the seemingly endless islands of the Recherche Archipelago.

Woody Island still beckoned and with the weather easing a little we headed back to Esperance on a mission. After about 7 phone calls to find the right local sea rescue number, so that we could log in (although they didn't seem too interested in who we were and what equipment we had) we set off just

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before noon. Not the best time to be heading off into the south easterly (Esperance's local sea breeze) but it was now or possibly not on this trip. The winds picked up a little more than the forecast had predicted and it was a solid 3 hour paddle into an approx 15-20 knot headwind. This doesn't sound that bad but when there are only 2 of you paddling off into the Great Southern Ocean on a compass bearing the heart seemed to pump just a little faster. Although we had a GPS, maps etc. it's very difficult to see specifically where you are heading for, as there are a number of rocky outcrops in the foreground and other islands in the background. From the perspective on the water it is near impossible to decipher where Woody Island was other than with a compass bearing and GPS.

We finally paddled into the main bay of Woody Island under some spectacular steep rocky cliffs and landed on the only 2 square metres of sand on the island. This exclusive patch seemed to have been claimed by one beach dwelling family intent on sunbaking no matter what the weather and who seemed to view us as some sort of sea serpents who had invaded their space.

We hauled the boats up onto

rocks and made our way up the path to the main building and were greeted by the caretakers, who noticing that we hadn't arrived by ferry (kayaking gear is soo sexy) mentioned that Sea Rescue had phoned them to advise of our pending arrival. After feeling they didn't really want to know anything about us on the Esperance end it was comforting to know that they really do care). The next day we had planned to head back around lunchtime with the kites up to catch the sea breeze but with the breeze in by 10am we decided we best head back while we could. The caretaker offered to call Sea Rescue for us and thanked us for taking the time and effort to log in and out which was nice to hear as you tend to feel you are being more of a pain in the a___. The winds strengthened to 20-25 knots and there seemed to be more bracing than paddling. Thoughts of falling out, kayak sailing off into the distance and waiting for John to rescue me, had me thinking the training for the Rottneest Swim may come in handy.

With more than a little relief we hit the shore at Tanker Jetty and hauled in the kites. Sea lions frequently play and beg for fish scraps from the fish cleaning area on the jetty so after a quick paddle with them we paddled back along the

shore line to the car.

The following day saw us start heading back west into Stokes National Park spending the night at Starvation Bay - too many generators and too many people. The next day saw us enter Fitzgerald National Park that includes some stunning scenery and unique vegetation. After navigating a 'real' 4wd track in my pseudo 4wd we made it to Quoin Head for the night and yet another spectacular spot (that word again) with a beautiful beach, cliffs, caves and even a small river estuary and only a few camp sites - a great spot. With only a couple of days to go before having to get back to the 'real world' we cruised along the coastline towards Albany checking out tourist spots and camp sites for potential future trips. An evening blues concert at Wignalls Winery and a morning stop at the Sandalwood Factory before heading back into Perth bought to a close a memorable break and an insight into a beautiful part of the world that needs more time and exploration.

According to locals the best time for Esperance is around Easter when the winds drop and the temperature hovers around the mid 20's.

(End)

Leafy Sea-Dragon (*Phycodurus equus*)

Contributed by Megan Halvey

Anyone who has seen a leafy sea-dragon (*Phycodurus equus*) on display at Aquarium WA (formally Perth's Underwater World) cannot fail to make the connection between this tiny gossamer-like creature and the dragons of fairy tales.

This rare and vulnerable relative of the sea-horse might be only around 45 centimetres long and live in an element foreign to its fierce mythical cousin, but in appearance it is unmistakably a dragon.

Sea-dragons actually belong to the same family as sea-horses (*Syngnathidae*) but differ in appearance from the latter by possessing leaf-like appendages on their head and body, and having a tail that cannot be coiled up.

Unique to the southern waters of WA and South Australia, the leafy sea-dragon's home is inshore areas of seagrass. Unfortunately these are under increasing threat from pollution and excessive fertiliser run-off.

This is not the only danger faced by the sea-dragon. Although having no known predators amongst the marine world, it has become the target of unscrupulous 'collectors' who have denuded the more accessible seagrass areas of this amazing creature.

In 1991, the Department of Fisheries, concerned by the rapidly decreasing numbers of the leafy sea-dragon, declared it a totally protected species.

The sea-dragon is poorly equipped for fleeing from those who wish to catch it. The outer skin or 'hide' of the sea-dragon is solid, limiting its mobility, and the only way it can propel itself along is through rapidly oscillating its ventral and dorsal fins. (Continued on page 20)

A Dummies' Guide to Making Wheels

By Marian Dixon

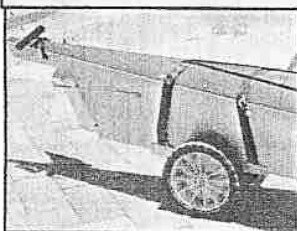


Photo by Les Allen

I suspect I'm really better at making waves than wheels, but after perusing the article "Wheels Ain't Wheels" by Les Allen in the Jan/Feb issue of WA Seakayaker, I was convinced even I could make them.

Now if one were making something simple like a cake, then the obvious first step would be to review and assemble the list of ingredients they always show at the top of recipes and "how to" articles. As there was no such list available, I resorted to conjecture.

Les made the assumption we would all have glass and resin if we had a fibreglass boat. (No, he didn't mention catalyst.) Finding out what was needed and where to obtain it proved to be the most difficult and time consuming part of the whole exercise. So to save others from the frustration of repeated visits to hardware, plumbing, electrical and God-knows-what-else kind of stores, the following information may be useful. There's also an unconfirmed rumour that acetone is used to clean the resin and flow coat off your hands and brush. This didn't work for me.

Ingredients and Other Useful Odds and Ends:

Fibreglass matting	Bunnings
Polyester Resin	Bunnings
Catalyst	Bunnings
Flow coat	Yacht Grot, 57 Queen Victoria St, Fremantle
12mm stainless steel rod - Approx. 22-30 cm to suit your boat and wheels	Yacht Grot
2 stainless steel R pins	Yacht Grot
Straps and plastic clips	Ranger camping
2 wheels	Fallshaw Wheels & Castors 22 Brennan Way Belmont
12mm plastic conduit	Bunnings (In desperation I used a sprinkler riser)
Acetone	Bunnings
Glad wrap	Any supermarket
Disposable latex gloves	Bunnings, chemists or supermarkets
Cheap paint brushes	Bunnings
Quantity of 2.5ml syringes	City Farmers
Containers to mix the resin.	(Disposable plastic picnic dishes worked for me)
Small paint roller	Bunnings
Ice cream container, Hack saw, File, Drill, Vice	

I was unable to extract any useful information from anybody about where to purchase the goodies other than a vague "Any fibre glass shop". That created a problem from the start as most of the shops round here are brick and tile so I decided to start the long and arduous task of tracking down these strange items at Bunnings.

If you've ever visited Bunnings it won't have escaped your notice that this enormous barn has endless aisles stocked with hundreds of gadgets and goobies ranging from screws to wheelbarrows. Finding any particular item carries a high probability of failure, so I was greatly surprised when I located several things on my very first visit. I did however have to return repeatedly before my list was complete.

The aisles are patrolled by various uniformed shop assistants, and their primary function is to dodge anybody who looks like they may need assistance. They're all extremely good at that particular aspect of their job.

I finally managed to corner a virtual assistant in the paint section and fired a question at him before he suspected my intention and dematerialized. Chop strand fibreglass? He looked at me as if I'd just crawled up out of the drain and waved disinterestedly towards some packets containing portions of fibreglass matting. He directed me towards some polyester resin nearby and inadvertently mentioned I would also need catalyst. It would probably be more than his job was worth if his boss knew he had given out this privileged piece of information. The catalyst is cunningly hidden behind the counter in the righteous belief that displaying it would make it too easy for the plebs.

Next, I asked a pimply twelve-year-old attendant if they had stainless steel rod. "Yes Madam. It's in a box in aisle 4," he replied helpfully. I could see some shiny threaded rods, so asked another assistant if they had unthreaded ones and was told they don't carry stainless steel rods at all. Perhaps the child had been overcome by a misguided desire to feel useful, but he'll soon learn that 'useful' is not part of his job description.

(Continued on Page 12)

(Continued from Page 11)

I also purchased some wheels at Bunnings but later abandoned them in favour of another type I bought from Fallshaws in Belmont.

Yacht Grot proved a useful source of stainless steel rod, and the stainless steel R pins. (Yes, they have to be stainless steel even though the how-to article didn't mention it) They also sell resin, catalyst and flow coat.

The PVC pipe was the most difficult item to locate. It shows once again that size does matter, but anyone can claim to have the perfect dimensions. I was told repeatedly at the first half dozen shops that 15mm was the smallest they made. Literally translated that means 15mm was all they stocked and they didn't give a rat's arse anyway. I also found that 15mm in one shop was significantly different from 15mm in another. Some describe it by inside diameter and some by outside and whatever is written on the pipe bears no relationship to the actual measurement. In desperation I used a sprinkler riser as it was the only thing I could find that fitted the axle.

The job itself was relatively straight forward and self explanatory but very fiddly. I learned by trial and error (mostly error) how much catalyst to add to the resin. I'd been told various dilutions from 1 in 10 to 1 in 100. In spite of using a small paint roller, I experienced problems with air bubbles. I attributed this to a little known scientific phenomena I called resinous flatulence.

After completing the mould I painted it with flowcoat as Les suggested and went back 24 hours later to find it hadn't even begun to dry. Yes folks, I was supposed to add catalyst to the flowcoat, but that wasn't mentioned in the step by step instructions. I painted another layer over the top of the first coat using plenty of catalyst and kept my fingers crossed. It did eventually dry.

The finished job is not fancy, nor was it cheap after making allowances for several tanks of petrol in futile pursuit of untraceable objects and buying so many inappropriate items. It was a good exercise in learning about fibreglass. The jury is still out on the best type of wheels to use but I suggest you don't cut the axle to length till you decide what works for you. My axle is 30cm compared with Les's 22cm for the same type of boat.

REST POINT WEEKEND at WALPOLE

By Eric Pyatt

A few days before the long weekend Eric received a call from Robyn Khorshid, to say that the fisherman's track at Broke Inlet was closed due to flooding. The majority of those who had shown interest in the weekend were going to four wheel drive with their families and friends, making it impractical to paddle across the inlet, there being limited camping at Camfield.

Informing John of the situation he phoned around and from the result decided to shift the venue to Rest Point at Walpole. John and Megan decided to withdraw as they had the chance to improve their white water skills on the Collie River, under the instruction of an experienced professional.

Eric arrived about midday at Rest Point Caravan Park and had the most suitable site, closest to the water, set aside. Others arrived mid-afternoon. No time to fit in paddling. Just settled in and prepared the best camp fire you would ever see. A big chunky hollow log, lovingly fed with smaller pieces. Early dinner and drinkies was the order of the day and early to bed for Eric, good boy that he is. The remaining reprobates at 9.30pm were castigated by the manager having received a complaint from a neighbouring

camper about the frivolity, chatter and goings on. Shame! The complaining camper didn't last the weekend.

After a leisurely breakfast, Eric, Mick, Brad and Robyn paddled around the island at the mouth of Deep River and headed for the permanent outlet to the ocean. They went through and out to sea, past the point to sight Saddle Island. The wind was pretty strong, so with Robyn's inexperience on the ocean and Brad concerned with his fitness it was decided to turn round and challenge the re-entry into the inlet. Quite exciting! Eric had the longest surf he's had in his life. Robyn had been told if she went side ways, to lean into the wave and brace; so she did, her rudder not being very effective, she finished out where she started. Second go was very effective, handled it like a true professional.

A rest on the sand bank was welcome, but the wind was a nuisance so it was decided to find a sheltered spot to have morning tea. Next thing you know, it's the mouth of the Frankland River. On enquiring it was said to be eleven kilometres to Nornalup, so that was not on. Having skipped morning tea, a little mudflat was found to plant

(Continued on Page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

return to camp, headwind all the way.

Meantime, family and friends remaining played around the inlet with their sit-on-tops and inflatable dinghy, not wandering too far from the camp. The Gen-eyes arrived early afternoon. Towards evening, a few went for a walk to the beach, a couple of kilometres of track cut into the side of a very steep hill. Anna copped it; having trouble handling heights.

Another big log fire around which was cultivated wonderful fellowship. Things are a bit quieter and mellow tonight. Eric tried to teach all how to save the world, but found people just don't understand. The opposition was astounding.

Leisurely breakfasts are the order of the day. Laraine, Robyn's friend, joined Robyn, Eric, Byron and Marcus to paddle to Nornalup, meeting up with Leanne, Mandy and the three girls at the boat ramp. They drove over in their four wheel drives. The eleven kilometres from the mouth is misleading. It would only be about five. Laraine paddled back straight away, having to meet friends at her holiday home. Leanne, Mandy and Eric paddled on to Monastery Landing, about five kilometres further up the river. Byron and Marcus played with kids in their inflatable. Robyn went for a coffee at the café nearby. Got tired of waiting for the trio to return, so took off on her own. The trip up river was really worthwhile, spectacular! Karris right down to the water's edge.

On the return of the trio and after a bit of lunch, Eric

Byron and Leanne paddled for home, the others returning in the vehicles. In all, Eric covered thirty three kilometres for the day. What a winner with the weather!

The remainder of the group hired a couple of dinghies to show those who were not paddlers the expanse of the two inlets and three rivers. When this adventure was behind them, off to the tree-top walk, the scenic Mt. Frankland and the waterfall. A good day had by all!

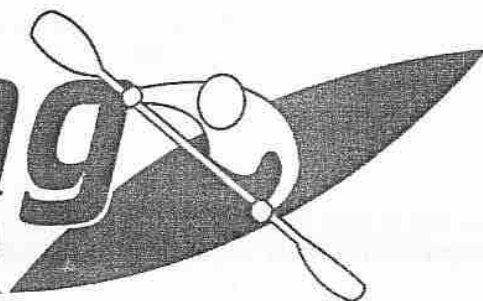
Another spectacular camp fire with all chipping in, gathering firewood, celebrations were on, being the last night. No leisurely breakfast for Eric and Byron. Up at 5.30 am Eric was keen to test out his fishing gear and prowess fishing from the kayak. No luck! So off to the opening to the sea! Giving Byron a bit of experience. It was a bit different from the other day, waves going in all directions making it hard to find a surf. It was pretty choppy outside too! Washing machine stuff!

There were two kayaks next to the jetty at the bottom of the track to the ocean beach where from the top of the hill it is a fantastic view of surf, beach, rock bluffs and islands. It was Brad and Robyn enjoying the walk. Joining forces, all four returned to base. Now, the packing and hit the road all having left by midday. Robyn was staying on with Laraine at her holiday home.

In all, there was sixteen in the group including the three little girls. Five were club members, two are prospects (Good paddlers and female) and the rest family and friends. A wonderful week-end.

(End)

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Rottnest Reconnaissance



By Marian Dixon

The club weekend to Rottnest was an eclectic blend of experiences for different people. The final roll call numbered twelve and we made our way to the island in groups or pairs.

Les, Jim, Neville, Gary, John Di Nucci and I, paddled from near Port Beach on Friday morning. It was a perfect paddle with a mild easterly wind assisting and creating enough surf to keep us amused. The trip over took about 2.5 hours and we landed to investigate the easiest spot for transporting boats and gear to the house at 104 Kingstown Barracks. (Yes it is spelt Kingstown on most places. Sorry Megan!) John didn't plan on staying, so turned round and headed straight back to the mainland.

Our group arrived at Thomson Bay just as Eric, Bill, Lynette, Megan and Robyn were paddling away from the ferry landing; their boats piled high with eskies and other essentials. We all adjourned for coffee on the verandah, enjoy-

ing the ambience of Thomson Bay, while peafowl wandered freely through the restaurant. Then some members tackled the logistics of getting the gear to 104. Les, Gary, Robyn and I went for another paddle to explore some of the bays and beaches. The weather was perfect and the weekend crowds had not yet descended on the island.

The rest of the day was spent in various pursuits, with some visiting the historic settlement, some walking, bird watching or simply enjoying a few beers and a meal.

Rottnest Island is rich in history and culture. It was believed to have separated from the mainland some 7,000 years ago. It has always been significant to Aborigines, and artefacts dating back some 30,000 years have been found on the island.

Its name derived from De Vlamingh's visit in 1696 when he described quokkas as "a kind of rat as big as a common cat" and named the island Rat's Nest. It has under-

gone many changes and been put to many uses, including farming, penal colony, salt harvesting, Pilot Service, Military Training, recreation and tourism. It is now an A class reserve and is rich in unique flora, bird life, reptiles and of course the

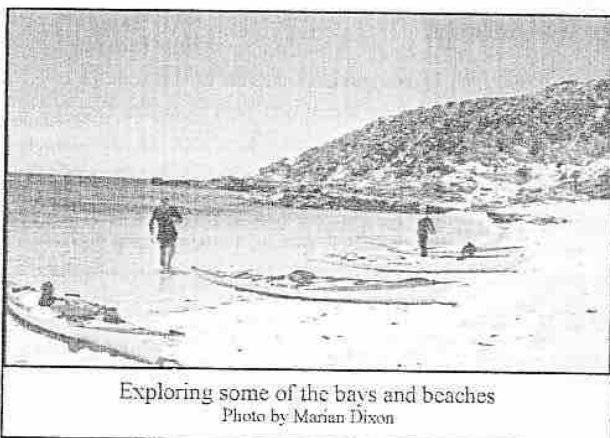
ubiquitous quokkas. Many of the buildings are historic convict constructions.

Many of the quokkas were in poor condition with anaemia and skin problems caused by malnutrition. The plants on the island have decreased nitrogen levels in sum-



A discerning quokka checks out our kayaks

Photo by Marian Dixon



Exploring some of the bays and beaches

Photo by Marian Dixon

mer and the soil is deficient in trace elements including copper.

Later, at number 104 we began to understand other reasons for their poor diet. Although there is a penalty for feeding them, they unashamedly act as scavengers, gormandising on everything that's dropped and in some cases not waiting for it to drop. They jumped on the chairs and table, entered the

(Continued on Page 15)

(Continued from Page 14)

house and rummaged in bags, drank red wine from Eric's glass and lapped spilled beer. I concluded alcoholic dementia could be contributing to both their poor health and unruly behaviour.

Saturday morning saw us all on the water and keen to circumnavigate the 11km long island. Conditions continued to be hot and mild as we set off on a leisurely exploration of the smaller rocky islands and bays. Neville explored a little too close to a reef and ended up taking an unscheduled swim.

On reaching Parker Point, we made the decision to go wide, outside the breaking reef. By that time Les had disappeared, presumably to

"do his own thing" and nobody else knew if it was safe to go inside the reef. Les later reappeared and berated us for going out wide when we could have gone inside the reef and explored the bays, as he had. If only we'd known! He said he'd seen a pod of dolphins surfing a wave.



Some of the group rehydrating back at 104 after circumnavigating Rottneest Island (Left) Neville Holden, Gary Nixon, Eric Pyatt, Robyn Korshid, Les Allen, Bill Reynolds (foreground) Photograph by Marian Dixon

a slow progression of paddling, swimming and snorkelling in several groups. Nobody was in a great hurry to get back. It was hot, flat calm and protected from the sea breeze on that side of the island.

There were boats and people in all the bays, and the cycleway round the island detracted from what could have been a sense of

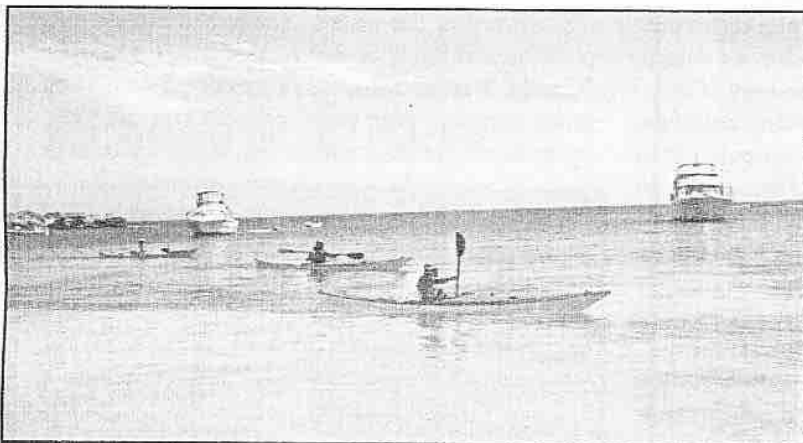
actually prepared salads and sweets for everybody. A dangerous precedent to set with this mob!

In spite of the beverage consumption marked by the growing pile of bottles, cans etc, the revelry ended relatively early and the house lapsed into silence except for the clinking of bottles caused by the insomniac, alcoholic quokkas draining the dregs.

Sunday was once more a day for going our separate ways. The packing was completed and the house tidied by 10. Les, Jim, Gary and Neville paddled back to Hillarys while some caught a ferry. Others stayed for some more paddling and fishing before catching a late afternoon ferry.

In all it was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. The company was excellent and there is no limit to the entertainment available. Whether your pleasure is gained from fishing, snorkelling, bird watching, photography, walking or exploring history and culture there is something here for everybody. The only restraint on our enjoyment was lack of time.

(End)



Circumnavigating Rottneest Island

Photo by Marian Dixon

We aimed to round Cape Vlamingh on the west end before the sea breeze came in and having done that, we stopped to chow down in Eagle Bay. We all welcomed the rest and swam, ate and relaxed until deciding to move on. The rest of the day was

isolation.

Back at 104 we were all tired and sunburned and in need of rehydration. The barbecue was lit and some of the ladies regressed to the period before women were liberated from the kitchen and

Keeping The Boat Straight In A Following Sea

This is a problem for all new paddlers when they graduate to a following sea and it is the question I get asked most. There are a number of factors that come into play with keeping the boat straight in a following sea. The first is the ocean itself. You will always get differences in waves, side waves, steeper waves, pot holes and bumps. All that can be in a two minute period so you have to be flexible. Knowing how to read the conditions is as important as having the skills to turn on a wave. After a while you will get to predict how the wave will affect the boat before it happens. There is unfortunately only one way to get that experience and that is to go out in rough conditions with the aim of trying things, not just surviving.

You need to look at the safety issue here. Going out in the sound with one or two experienced paddlers who are prepared to spend the time helping you will limit the risk. You also need to be prepared to capsize. This is a major hurdle to overcome, as you will not try things and learn quickly if you fear falling in. Overcoming that hurdle will greatly improve your paddling in itself

Turning

When you start paddling you are taught the sweep stroke and told that is how you turn your boat. That is wonderful in flat conditions with no wind. In a following sea it is not so easy. The problem comes from the wave passing under the boat. As it does so, one end or the other is not in the water, so the hull loses most of its water line length and this makes the boat easy to turn. As the wave is usually going faster than the boat it will tend to drag the end that is in the water around so as you tip forward the boat is on an angle to the wave. If you are trying to surf the wave, as you accelerate down the face of it, that small angle at the top increases and next minute you are broach on to the wave cursing.

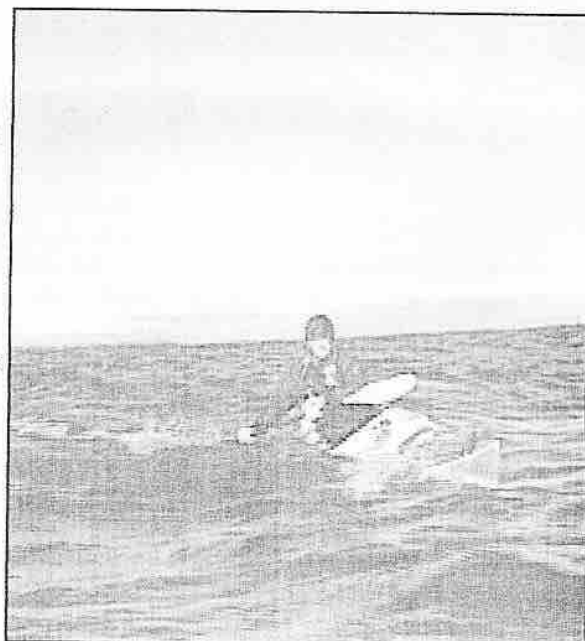
Rudders are out of the water some of the time thus reducing their effect. Also a rudder needs the boat to be going faster than the wave so it can turn. When a wave comes under the boat the rudder has no water flowing past so it does not work. If you are surfing, as you pick up speed down the face of the wave the rudder then starts to work.

To keep the boat straight you need to develop a

combination skill. It is a type of sweep and lean to point your boat in the right direction when the wave crest is right under you. To achieve that you must have the paddle in the water with some purchase on the water. The traditional sweep stroke is too hard to use in this environment and lacks the purchase and balance needed to turn a boat on top of a wave. A wide deep paddle stroke works best. As you put the paddle in the water and start to pull back you need to twist your stomach and lower back to move or hold the boat in the direction you want. Leaning the boat as well helps set the turn up.

To do this effectively you need to fit the boat well. If you are loose in the boat you won't feel the subtle movement till it's too late and then correction is too difficult. The movement we are talking about is small and if you rattle around inside your boat you can't feel those small movements. Also to achieve those subtle moves or to hold your boat in a straight line requires a good fit in the boat. The right size seat and leg braces will really help in these situations. You won't find white water paddlers flopping around in their boat.

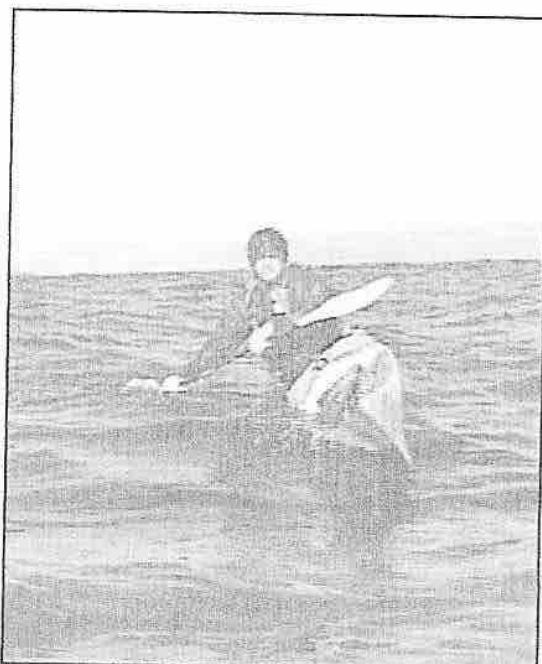
To master these moves you need to be in a steep following sea and try to turn your boat left and right on top of the waves. You are in an unstable position and the boat will react quickly and differently. You need to develop the feel for how much purchase your paddle has so you can only try to move the boat within that limit. Once mas-



tered it is quite easy to do. To start with, time your paddle stroke so that the right hand blade is in the water just in front of the wave crest. As you pull back the stroke twist your stomach to the left and the boat should come off the crest pointing 5 degrees to the left of your heading. Practice left and right turns.

You will also find that waves will try to turn you, on the crest. The next skill is to counter that and keep the boat straight. You can't win all the time but as you get better at predicting the effect the wave will have on you, you will certainly help keep your boat straighter. This new found skill will also enable you to turn easier in strong winds. Les Allen

Les Allen
Will be away during April



"Leaning a boat makes it easier to turn."
Photos supplied by Les Allen

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John Ross in the white water at Collie January Long Weekend.
The water from Wellington Dam can't be used for drinking water due to salinity problems but is used to irrigate the farms on the plains. The release of water throughout the week means that pursuits such as white water kayaking, riding tyre tubes, swimming and fishing for marron in the crystal clear waters can be enjoyed.
Photograph provided by Megan Halvey



I have been a member of Birds Australia, WA Branch for 8 years and participate in their excursions regularly. I have shown a general interest in the coastal birdlife on our kayaking trips, so it has been suggested I write regular articles

on birds to add a bit of interest and value. I will be focussing on sea birds and waders. I enjoy learning about our native bird life and I am pleased to share it with you.

Eric Pyatt

The Silver Gull

Commonly called "Seagulls" which is a term overused for gulls in general, of which there are many species.

The common gulls we see on our beaches and rubbish tips are the "Silver Gull".

One of the most adaptable birds on the coastline.

It is one of the birds that have benefited from European settlement.

Don't feed them!!!!!!

They are overpopulated as it is.

Locally they breed twice a year, Autumn and Spring.

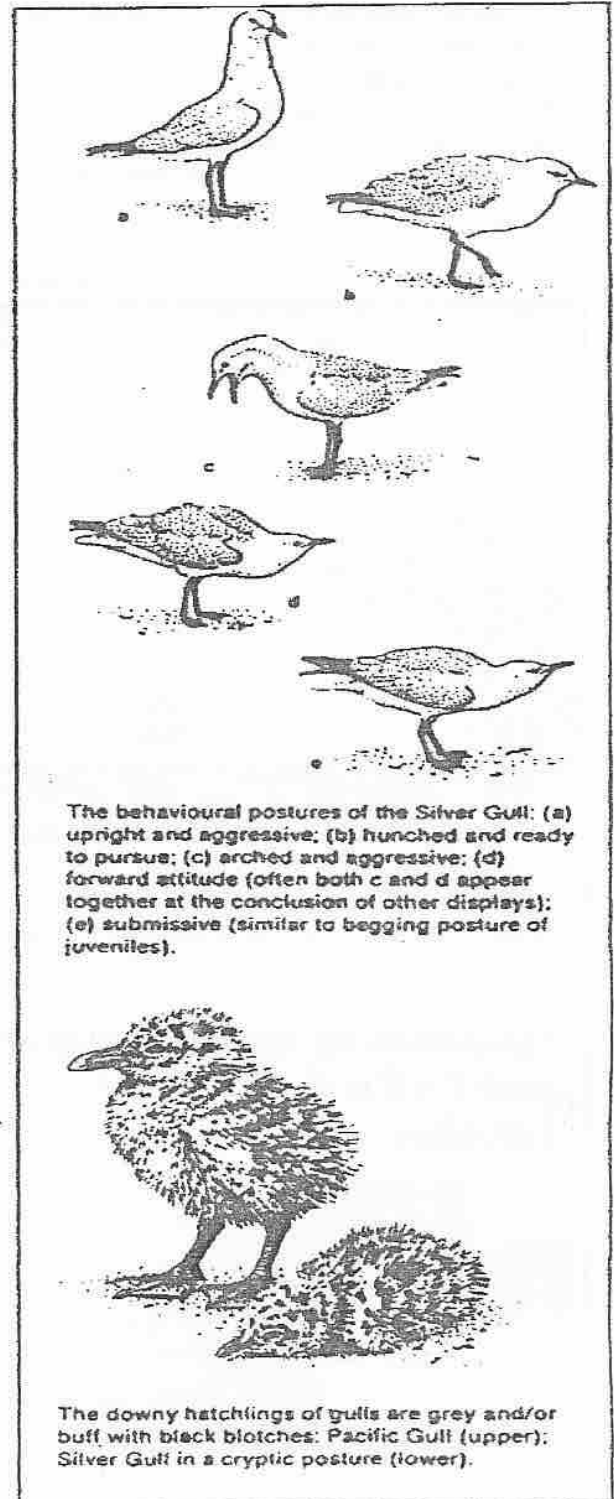
We can see this breeding pattern on Penguin and Carnac Islands in particular.

You may have observed different colouring of the feathers, beak and legs. If you haven't noticed, take a closer look. The differences are due to their stages of development.

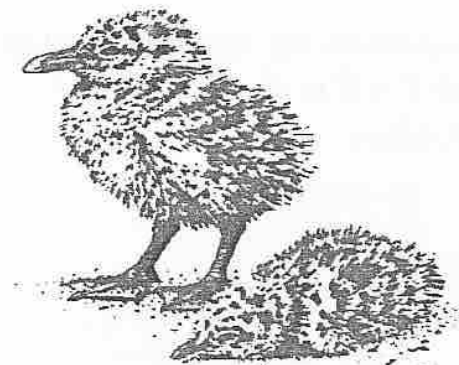
These are:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Juvenile | Body and wings have brown flecks |
| 2. Immature | Black beak and black legs (brown flecks have gone) |
| 3. Mature | Red beak and red legs |

BIRDS



The behavioural postures of the Silver Gull: (a) upright and aggressive; (b) hunched and ready to pursue; (c) arched and aggressive; (d) forward attitude (often both c and d appear together at the conclusion of other displays); (e) submissive (similar to begging posture of juveniles).



The downy hatchlings of gulls are grey and/or buff with black blotches: Pacific Gull (upper); Silver Gull in a cryptic posture (lower).

Drawings from Simpson and Day



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(Continued from page 10)

However, it blends easily with the background and is agile enough to be able to hunt down tiny mysid shrimps or 'sea-lice', its main quarry. For those creatures, the sea-dragon has all the appearance of a mighty hunter.

Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about the leafy sea-dragon is that it is actually the male of the species which gets pregnant and gives birth. During mating, the female lays 100 - 250 eggs onto a special 'brood patch' on the underside of the male's tail, where they are attached and fertilised.

This brood patch, consisting of cups of blood-rich tissue each holding one egg, is especially developed by the male for use during the breeding season of August to the following March. The bright pink eggs become embedded in the cups of the brood patch, receiving oxygen via the cups' blood vessels.

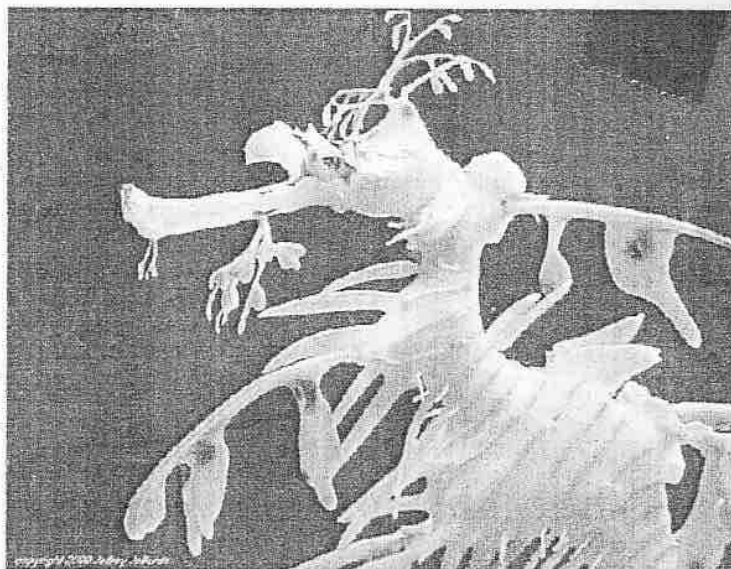
During each breeding season, male leafy sea-dragons will hatch two batches of eggs.

After a period of about four to six weeks from conception, the male 'gives birth' to miniature juvenile versions of sea-dragons. As soon as a baby sea-dragon leaves the safety of its father's tail, it is independent and receives no further help from its parents.

For two to three days after birth, the baby sea-dragons are sustained by their yolk sac. After this, they hunt small zooplankton, such as copepods and rotifers, until large enough to hunt juvenile mysids.

The leafy sea-dragon is one of two species of sea-dragon found in Australia's southern waters. The common or weedy sea-dragon (*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*) is less rare and can be encountered all the way from Port Stephens, New South Wales to Geraldton, WA.

- Leafy sea-dragons are sometimes found dead on the beach, washed up in a clump of seaweed after a storm. Their flotation bladders are very fragile and cannot cope with any sudden changes in water pressure or depth, such as might occur during bad weather.
- Aquarium WA (at Hillarys, Perth, Western Australia) is one of only three aquaria in the world to have legally and successfully kept leafy sea-dragons on display. Any specimens illegally caught by amateurs usually die quickly because of their captor's inability to provide them with the correct live food daily.



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