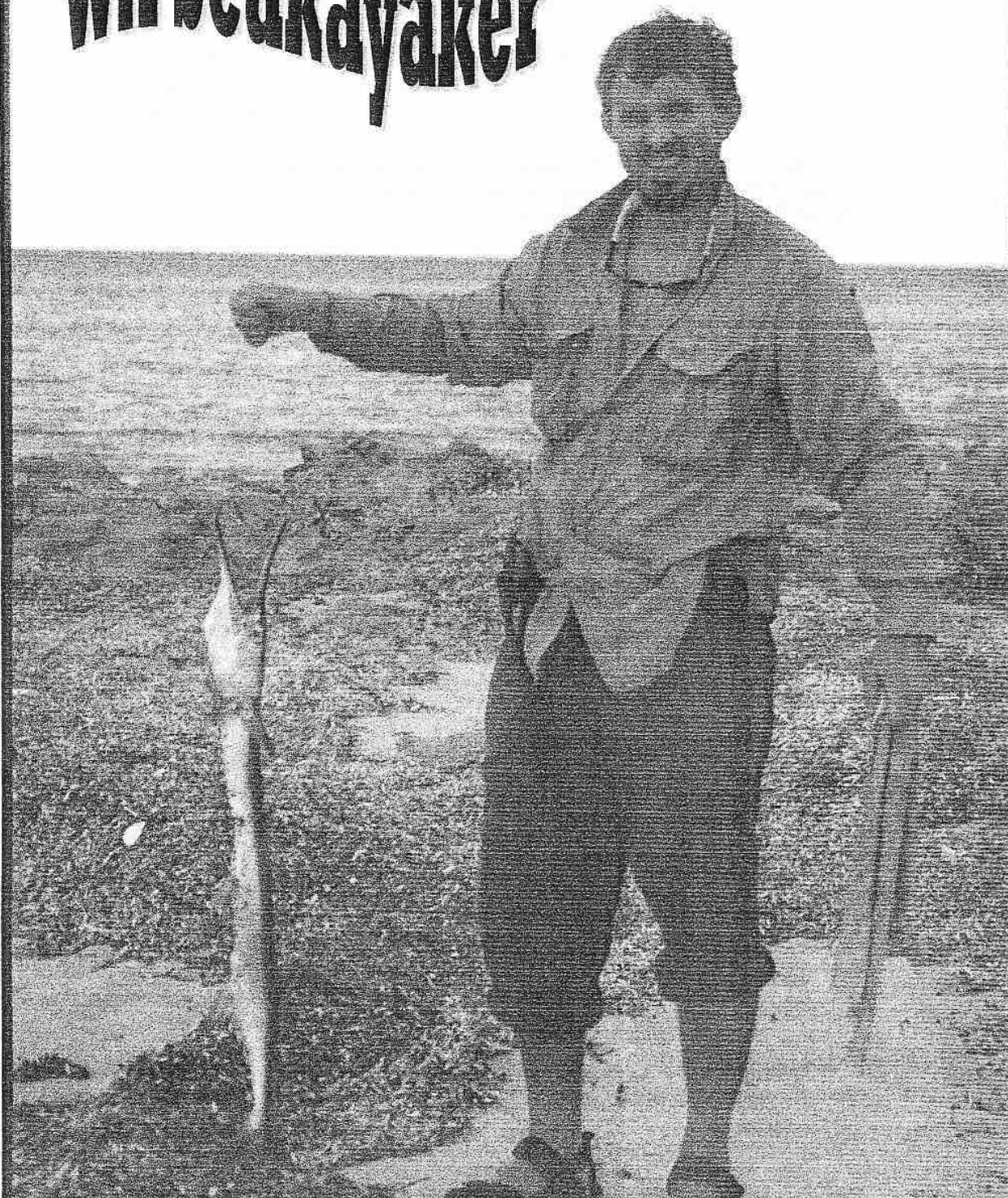


WA Seakayaker



Issue 43: July ~ Aug 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

NOT GROUNDHOG DAY

It's good to see Eric back in his boat, on the water again and looking a lot better for his enforced rest.

The period since the last magazine has been a little chaotic for me and I have been out of touch with the main happenings of the club. I have been trying to deal with the chaos associated with translocating four moggies and myself from a large house with a large shed to a small house with no shed for my "toys". By using the time-honoured mechanism of spraying liberal quantities of feline facial pheromones on everything and ignoring the chaos, the cats and I are beginning to settle in. I'm slowly sorting things out and should soon be able to get on with the business of living, i.e. kayaking.

The Deadline for the newsletter has come and gone without anybody volunteering a President's report, or even a Vice President's report, least of all a doorkeeper's report for that matter. Perhaps that has something to do with it being the winter solstice. But then again perhaps it has nothing whatsoever to do with the winter solstice and everything to do with apathy.

Apart from it being the winter solstice, this day also happens to be the day the first Victoria Cross was won in 1854. It is also the birth date of Charles Horn, the English composer, best known for his song, 'Cherry Ripe', the American playwright, Joseph Kesselring, best known for 'Arsenic and Old Lace', the French novelist Françoise Sagan, the French existentialist Jean Paul Sartre and Benazir Butto, former Prime Minister of Pakistan whose father was executed in 1979.

However, it is not Groundhog Day which passed un-noticed, nor is it Bloom's Day which happens to be on 16th June in case you have been losing sleep pondering the matter ever since you read James Joyce's Ulysses (You did didn't you?). You may be confused as to what all this has to do with sea kayaking. The simple answer is absolutely nothing! The more astute among you will have recognized it as a blatant and transparent space filling strategy by the editor. But it worked even if nobody reads it. Incidentally, on this day in 1813 Wellington defeated Napoleon's brother at the battle of Vitoria. Now how did you ever survive without knowing that?

Marian

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This Month's Fiercely Contested **DUCK FOR COVER AWARD** *Goes to* **Megan Halvey**



After a nice little sleep in we arrived at the beach front at Denham to see our six companions orderly going about packing their kayaks for our forthcoming trip to Dirk Hartog Island. Not wanting to be last packed (who us?) we started our mad panic of trying to stuff all our possessions in our kayaks to last us the next eight days. "Oh boy it stinks of dog p.s around here" Megan said. I did not say anything as I felt rather guilty as I had just done "number ones" twenty metres upwind behind the only available cover on the beach. "God it stinks of dog p.s around here" Megan kept mumbling. Upon giving Megan a cuddle I discovered that it was poor Megan's cap that stunk of dog p.s. It would appear that Megan's male Weimeraner dog "Tuscon" took offence to Megan going away all the time in her kayak and decided to teach her a lesson by p.sing on her cap so she would continually think about him whilst she was away. *Dobbed in and written by John Ross*

Deadline for next issue :
Midnight WST
Friday 22nd August 2003

Cover Picture:
Helier Beardsley with a Long Tom
caught at Shark Bay

Photograph © Marian Dixon



NOTICE BOARD



Welcome to the following new members

*Delton Chen
Roger Lloyd*

Rolling Practice 14/7

We have booked a rolling class for the Sea Kayak Club with Canoeing Down Under on Monday 14th July at Belmont Oasis Aquatic Centre from 7:30pm to 9:00pm. Limited to 9 people cost \$35 + \$3.65 pool entry. Please call Megan to book on 9481 1611 (w) 0411 885 604 (m).

New Membership Forms - Australian Canoeing

Enclosed is the new membership form as required by Canoeing Australia that will take over from our existing membership forms for the remainder of our membership year (31st October 2003). To ensure insurance coverage please complete and send back to Secretary, PO Box 366, North Perth, WA. 6006. in the pre-addressed envelopes enclosed in the newsletter. Although it is in triplicate on the front, you are required to also sign on the back and as it's not in triplicate you will need to sign x 3. Yes it's a pain in the ____ but necessary, and we thank you for your cooperation.

P.S If you were already a member of Swan or Ascot Canoe Clubs before joining the Sea Kayak Club you will be required to fill out the new forms and send them to Swan or Ascot Canoe Club.

Rottneest Weekend November (diary date)

There was some confusion in the last newsletter but we can confirm the date as Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd November. There will be a flyer in the next newsletter with further information.

Entertainment Books

We are currently selling the Entertainment books for \$60 with \$12 from each book sold going to club fundraising (1/2 price & 25% discounts on Restaurants, Cafe's, Hotels & Leisure activities). Please call Megan 9481 1611 (w) 0411 885 604 (m) if interested.



Congratulations!

*To Derek Shaw and wife on the
birth of their son.*

Instructor Courses

Level 1 (Flat water)

Level 2 (White water)

Level 2 (Sea kayak)

Canoeing Western Australia will be conducting the above courses for competent paddlers

Applications close 4.30pm Friday 11th July 2003

ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS TO

*Canoeing Western Australia
P O Box 57 CLAREMONT WA 6910
Phone 9385 8501 Fax 9387 8018
Email canoe@canoewa.asn.au*

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Volunteers Wanted

The Avon Support Unit is searching for volunteers to assist with rescue and recovery of competitors during the Avon Descent on the 2nd and 3rd of August.

*Contact: David Hunt, Event Manager
2003 Summit Homes Avon Descent
Ph: 08 9287 1877, Fx: 08 9383 9922*

PELOROUS SOUND IDYLL

By Roz & Phil Evans

Dour, laconic, taciturn etc all exaggerate the conversational loquacity of Dave!

For 1½ hours we drove through lush countryside and over a precipitous mountain road to reach our starting point in Tennyson Inlet. Conversation was close to non-existent with our friendly guide Dave. So with excited anticipation and now a touch of nervousness we traveled in near silence to our starting point of Duncan Bay.

After loading the Ecobezhig and Puffin Kayaks with our minimalist gear we said goodbye to Dave and set off up the inlet to our first camp at Tawa Bay. It was a gentle 1¼ hr paddle up Tennyson Inlet past steep bush-clad hills.

"The Weka was curious enough to have a taste of our spray decks as well!"

This secluded bay gave us our introduction to the Weka. This flightless scavenger looks like a Kiwi with a short beak. No food was safe from it's beak and it was curious enough to have a taste of our spray decks as well!

We surveyed the rocks and stones that made the beach in this bay and pondered as to the whereabouts of the oysters and mussels that we thought were abundant in this area. Preparing for the night meal provided us with another little surprise – not only had the "garrulous" Dave left out the mugs from our kit, but also had not provided plates or bowls to eat from!!!! Fortunately some previous campers had left a frying pan sans handle on the fire remains so this served as one plate for the rest of the trip. Coffee from the billy was a different experience however.

"They left out the mugs, plates and Bowls from our kit!!!!!"

We awoke to a glorious day. Not a breath of wind and a clear sky. Today was a day we had looked forward to with some trepidation as we had a 10km paddle along the Tawhitinui Reach to Tawero Point. Wind and tide conditions are said to be quite challenging along here more often than not. We left camp at around 9.30am in order to reach the point at slack tide.

Our fears were groundless. The water was like glass!! As no swell reaches these waters and with not even a ghost of a breeze the water was smoother than a baby's bottom. We passed along greenlip mussel farms and saw almost no boat traffic either. Idyllic The point had no current at

all and to top it off we now saw the oysters and mussels we craved. Just around the point we stopped for lunch before we completed the journey to Jacobs Bay. Four hours of paddling for the day and we were ready to set up camp. It was a nice grassy picnic area with a table as well – what luxury. Phil headed out into the sound with fishing line in hand to catch a large cod for tea. Get real mate!! Hardly had the line dropped to the bottom when a cooeeee from the bay confirmed that Roz had done her usual upstaging. By the time Phil paddled back there were three cod on the jetty waiting to be cleaned for dinner.

Jim from Christchurch arrived in his Penguin just before Dusk so a quick reshuffle of space was needed to allow him some room. We like to spread out and act as if we own the place. It was nice to chat with a local before the usual early bed. You also quickly realize how dependent we are on electricity when none is available.

Jim has paddled the Marlborough Sounds a number of times with his family but this time it was a three-day solo to fill in time while work was quiet. Life can be so hard for some people!!

"we gorged ourselves on the oysters and greenlip mussels "

Day three saw us make another mid-morning start. The paddle to Nydia Bay was sure to be a repeat of the day before. Halfway to the bay we rounded a point that had a huge number of white curly shells on the rocks. Needless to say we gorged ourselves on the oysters and harvested greenlip mussels to supplement dinner. Starfish also liked these shellfish and consumed great numbers of them judging by the evidence of all the empty shells.

The next hour to Nydia Bay was with a following wind of around 10 to 15kph. Navigation was easy due to precipitous terrain and multitude of bays of various sizes. It was however, easier to read the shoreline opposite rather than the near one. Distances were underestimated regularly due to the visual effect that 900 to 1500ft tall hills have on the eye. It was only the passage of small craft in the distance that gave some perspective to the grandeur of the place.

Nydia was another spot with a resident Weka so care with the gear again. They are sort of shy but quite prepared to almost walk under your feet to get at food. We had no warning that the water

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supply was not in use at this camp. It was a half-hour walk each way to a holiday "bach" with the name "Slygroves" on the fence. At least the deserted place had a water tank from which we filled our two bottles. On the way there we came across a stream that had a 4ft long eel in it. The eel bit the top of one of the bottles when provoked. Enough to put you off swimming!!!

*"The eel bit the top of one of the
Bottles when provoked"*

The next morning we had the good fortune to be supplied with two flounder for breakfast by a commercial fisherman in a small boat. Once we figured out his accent and what he was saying

that is. Beautiful and sweet when dry fried in the pan and very welcome they were too.

As with all the so-called camping grounds the extent of the facilities is a toilet and usually water from a tank. The area to camp in is very limited and not always very flat. Very basic but this is what a wilderness experience is supposed to be. With 9 foot tides care also needs to be taken with the storage of the Kayaks etc.

We considered paddling to Pippi Beach on the fourth day as it would have been about half way to the finish from Nydia and the name sounded like it was going to be a nice place. After about an hour and a bit of paddling we rounded the point to be faced with a gale in our faces. We paddled in to a bay hoping to pick up a lee shore to cross the kilometre or so to Pippi Beach. Just into the bay there was a guy fishing from a boat moored over the mussel farm (trying to catch the fish that apparently frequent such spots). He reacted very guiltily when we asked him if his boss knew he was there. Gave him a fright as of course he hadn't heard us approach. Gave us a laugh anyway. He confirmed the weather forecast was for South Easterlies at 15 to 20 knots for the rest of the day. We stopped briefly at Pippi Beach (rocks again) for refreshment and decided it was too exposed to stay. So off we go for 1 ¼ hours into the teeth of the wind and wave. Whew - Putunui Point camp was luxury after that. In the lee and in the bush. Quite delightful. And to add to

that the beach was Oyster paradise. The illegal but mandatory fire was set in time to keep us warm when the first rain of our trip was encountered.

The final day was a 1 hour run into a strong headwind again and then a wait to be picked up to go back to civilisation.

Dave stunned the pair of us by talking continuously for the whole journey back to town. We couldn't believe this was the same person!!

Over all this trip was very enjoyable and in absolutely delightful surroundings. The only sour note was the lack of some equipment to make life a bit more livable. We were also disappointed to have not seen one of the areas famous Hector Dolphins (or any other sort of dolphin) nor did we see any seals. Apart from a few birds and the Wekas, we saw a few stingrays and that was all. Not in anyone's control of course but it is frustrating.

*"We were also disappointed to have not
seen the areas famous Hector Dolphins"*

This was a trip we can heartily recommend to anyone. The Marlborough Sounds are located at the top of the South Island of New Zealand and the Pelorous Sound is less traveled and more remote than the Queen Charlotte Sound. We utilized the services of the Sea Kayak Adventure Tours company based in Anikiwa. The company owners were away on holiday when we undertook our trip and Dave (one of their guides) was left to hold the fort. We think he was a bit harassed and hurried when he packed our gear for the trip and hence the lack of a few of the bits and pieces that would have added to our enjoyment. However our email to the proprietors highlighting some of the deficiencies has elicited no response to date.

Our request on booking was that we only wanted to bring sleeping bags and to have all other gear provided. What was ultimately given to us was woefully inadequate and given the lack of response from the company to our comments, we would suggest alternatives be considered for anyone contemplating journeying over there.

A recent study has concluded that the most popular sexual position is doggie style.

This is where the husband sits up in bed and begs for sex while the wife rolls over and plays dead!

Kayaking in Paradise



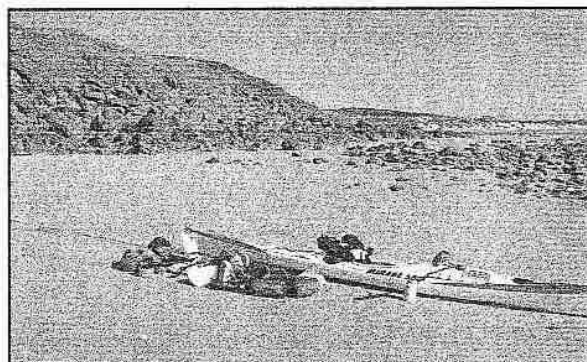
Photographs & Story By Les Allen

Why me? Every time I plan a month long trip a cyclone comes and interrupts it. Even the last week of the Esperance to Perth trip was effected by the tail end of a cyclone giving us horrific head winds and stinging rain. But this time it is not any old cyclone it's one of the biggest ever recorded in the southern hemisphere. A category 5, that's 400 kilometres wide with an eye 80 kilometres wide and winds to 300 kilometres per hour. Needless to say I was not going paddling in that. I put the trip back one day to see where the cyclone was heading and then would make my plans from there. On the Sunday it was 400 kilometres from Dampier and heading for Exmouth. Perfect, I will race up the coast and get above it and from there I should be able to resume my trip. The plan was to paddle from Cape Kerud-eran to Dampier solo, then meet 5 mates in Dampier and continue on to Exmouth. It would mean another section of our quest to paddle the whole coast of WA would be done. I have paddled from Esperance to Kalbarri and Coral Bay to Exmouth with trips out to places like the Montebello Islands 120 km off the coast so far. By doing this section I would have completed about 3,000 of the 5,500 kilometres of the coastline.

"Inigo" of course had other plans. As I drove into Dampier it was on Yellow alert and the cyclone was heading straight for us. Oh great! It was fortunate I know a friend who organised for me to store my kayak in a cyclone proof shed and offered me shelter. I settled down for the night not quite sure what to expect in the morning as the cyclone was due to cross at midday. Fortunately it was down-graded to a category 2 and forecast to further down-grade as it hit the coastline.

The morning showed light rain and 20 knots of wind. The cyclone was going to hit 100 kilometres south at Mardie and had been downgraded further to a 1. At 2.00 I took my video down to the water to see the normally calm bay. The wind was about 40 knots but the water very rough and confused. The circular winds and the islands meant there was no real wave pattern. As waves combined they peaked into a 3 metre random dump. The first 50 mt was white water that every now and again produced foam that was then spat at the land like spittle from a foaming beast. Beyond that, the water was red and it contrasted with the white breaking waves and the grey sky. The forecast was for 5.5 mt seas and looking at the chaos that was normally a sheltered bay I shuddered to think what it would be like in the open ocean. Leaning into the wind and feeling the spray on my face I felt a cold shiver down my back as I thought about heading out for a 12 day solo paddle.

What to do? I could start my trip at Pt Headland and paddle down to Dampier. That would drop off 3 days on my original plan or I could spend the next days visiting all the islands off Dampier and to the north. The rain cut the road south and I was not sure if the road north would be cut with the rising rivers. I also expected a few days of north to southwesterly winds so paddling into it was not appealing. Problem solved I would head off from Dampier the next morning and spend the days wandering around the islands heading north. There are 42 islands and rocks off the Dampier coastline to keep me busy. On the next leg there are over 100 islands between Dampier and Exmouth.

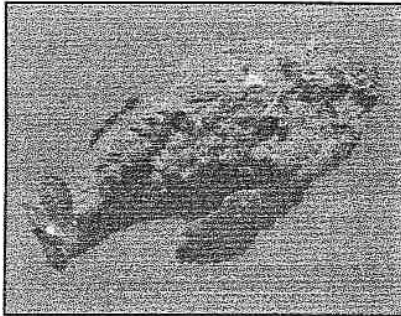


I packed up and hit the water an hour before high tide heading off into a northwesterly wind. The boat was low in the water and felt like lead as I put my first few strokes in. As I got used to the heavy boat I felt more comfortable. The boat

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was holding its speed as it ploughed into the on coming waves. The heavy bow would slice into the wave leaving the top to rush up the deck with the inevitable drenching as it struck my body. After 4 hours of non-stop paddling into the wind I arrived at a white sandy



spit on Enderby Island. I wasn't going to look around, as this would do for the night. The bow of the boat hit solidly running up the sand as I beached. I climbed out feeling a bit stiff as I walked up see what my first nights camp was going to be like. What a surprise. I could not have asked for a nicer place. A red rock cliff of dolerite that was split into rectangular pillars and large boulders offered me some shade and at the base was some flat sand for my tent. To my left the sand formed low sand dunes to the other side of the spit with grassy tussocks on the peaks and wind blown paths between. I settled down to my first night happy with myself and life in general.

The first three days had flown by with the wind in a light to moderate northwesterly pattern. This morning the wind had picked up a bit and was blowing about 15 knots north-westerly, just for a change. There was a small but steep beach dump to get through as I set off. I headed straight north and was happy at the way my body instinctively swivelled at the hip to counter

the pitching and rolling of the boat in the sloppy conditions. The water was steely grey and there was no horizon as the water melded into the grey overcast sky. To my right where the horizon should be there was a curtain of rain that hung from the sky like a mosquito net for the gods.

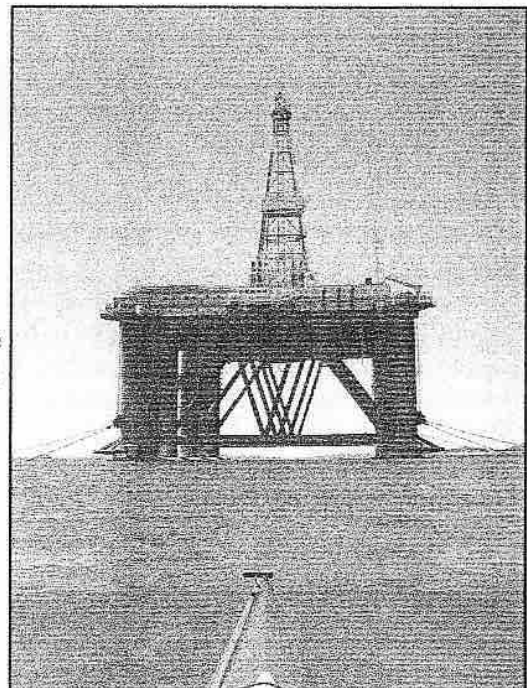
I kept plodding along the rough rocky coast for an hour or so till I came to a small channel between the two islands. The entrance to the channel was a zig-zag with a protruding rocky point on one side and low rocky cliff on the other. From outside the surf break it looked like there was a sandy spit off the rocky point and once over that calm water in the channel. The surf was only about a metre high with a few big sets getting up to one and a half metres. I had just started in and let a big one pass under the boat when from the top of the wave I saw rocks in front of me. "Oh dear" I muttered, or words to that effect. Hard left rudder and leaning the boat I struggled to get it to turn.

The weight was reducing my sprint speed and the boat's reaction. In what seemed an eternity the bow responded and I started rounding off. A small wave went under me giving me the opportunity of turning faster. The next wave was much bigger and going to break. I hit it at a 45 degree angle leaning forward, arms straining as I wrenched the paddle through the water. Up the face went the bow as the wave

steepened to almost vertical. The top started to curl down the side of the boat as I threw my paddle over the peak. The blade bit into the solid water on the back of the wave as the curl tore at the back of my boat, spinning me to 90 degrees. The top of the wave broke in a loud roar at the back of my boat dragging me backward as I flayed at the water with all my strength. All of a sudden I slipped out of the grip of the wave and could start to make headway. Looking up there was a still bigger wave bearing down on me. A grey wall was forming in front of me as I struggled to increase speed. The bow launched sky ward as I hit the wall and all of a sudden I was airborne till the boat smashed down with that sickening smack that only a two hundred kilo kayak hitting the water makes. The bow was sucked under as I braced lightly on the right hand side. As the bow surfaced my paddle blade bit and I was off out of the break zone.

In my struggle to turn I had noticed that further to my left there was sand all the way

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(Continued from page 7)

across the entrance to the channel. I moved over and lined up the sand a little more tentatively. After drifting in and checking the lie of the land I finally committed and surfed a small wave over the sand bar and into calm water.

The entrance to the channel was about 100 metres wide narrowing down to about 50 metres. As I headed in slowly about 20 metres away I saw a head protruding from the water. As my eyes focused on the head they instinctively widened as I recognised a sea snake of the same type that had attacked Tel on the Montebello trip. Without thinking my paddle speed went from a doddle to a full sprint. Heavy boat or not my arms were flying and my muscles protested at the sudden burst of adrenalin inflicted on them. I was doing well over 10km per hour as I snatched a glance back to see if he was following me. My conscience told me there was no snake there and I could slow down but my sub conscience wasn't having any of it and I kept up the thrashing pace for about a hundred metres. By that time my heart was racing and I had no choice but to slow down. I looked back and there was no snake in sight. I paddled on at a more sedate pace. I kept looking back just in case. Three days of sedate pleasure and then 15 minutes of pulsating adrenalin pumping excitement. I love sea kayaking!

The high pitched screech bought me back to reality as I watched a pair of what I thought were Sea Eagles glide over head. I rolled on my side to take in the magnificent curved sandy bay with still blue water contrasting with the red rock cliff stretching out to the headland. One of the eagles slowed, then swooped, hitting the water. It seemed to stall and with massive red wings flapping furiously finally lifted off the water with a silver fish flapping lamely in its talons. It flew over to a small rock ledge marked by streaks of white guano and ripped at the hapless fish with its beak while its mate screeched in protest at not being invited to the feast.

These islands are a harsh environment and their beauty is in their unspoilt ruggedness. In this hostile environment the wild life is abundant. Behind me is a group of rock wallabies that timidly hop from rock to rock with astounding agility. All around the tent are insects of various size and shapes, two sooty oystercatchers strolled the shal-

lows and a group of silver gulls squabbled over some tit bit at the base of the rocks. As I gazed out to sea every now and again fish would leap out of the water leaving swirls of the otherwise still glassy water. The suns golden rays splayed out over the rocks behind me as the shadows crept towards my tent. I finally rolled onto my back and contemplated dinner.

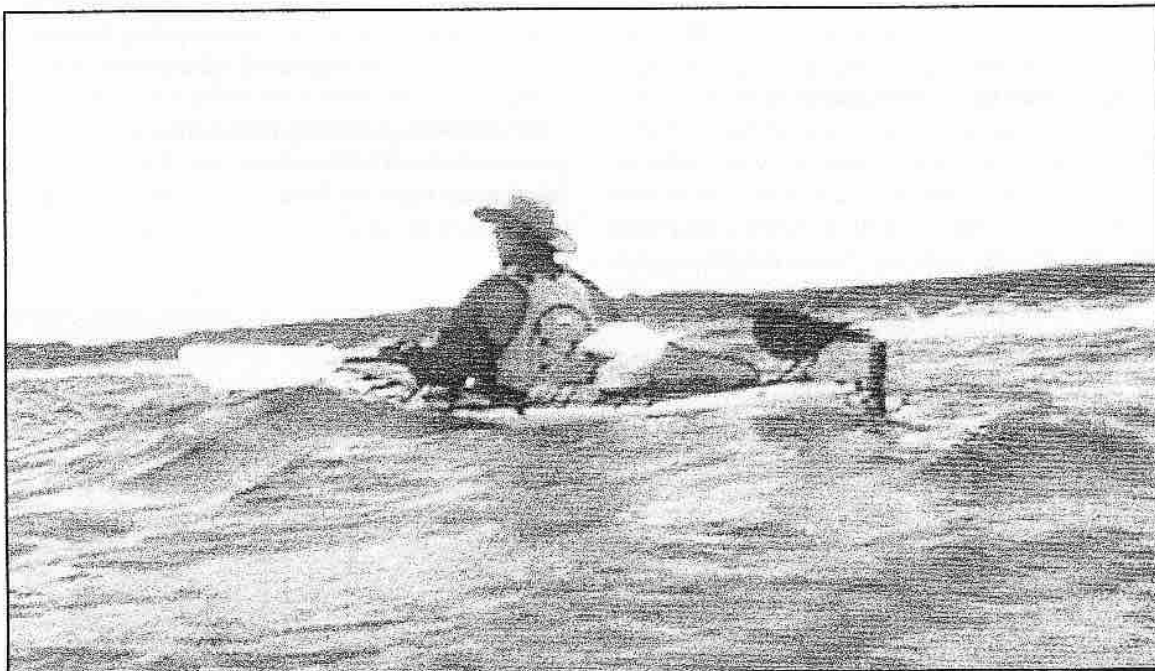
On my second last night I took time to reflect on the trip so far. It had been totally changed from my original plan but now I was glad it had. Paddling down the coast on a mission is a different type of trip to wandering aimlessly through a myriad of islands. The second part of the trip from Dampier to Exmouth will fulfil the conquest, adventure requirement of the trip as island hopping without a destination in mind offers different rewards to this type of trip. It was like going on a retreat when you could ponder life and unwind. Lying under the stars all by yourself with the moon on the water giving it a silvery glow you can't help but feel humble and insignificant. We humans are an arrogant bunch. We have been on this Earth for the blink of an eye yet we believe we have conquered it and that we have a dramatic effect on the universe. What crap! In a few more million years the earth will have dealt with the human plague as it does with every other plague and life will keep ticking along. If we smarten up a bit we may even be here to witness it, if not we will be relegated to dinosaurs' destiny. All those pressing problems back home don't seem all that encompassing out here as you drift off to sleep under a blanket of stars with a soft warm breeze on your cheek.



The Tale of Rodney and the Donkey

A city boy, Rodney, moved to the country and bought a donkey from an old farmer for \$100. The farmer agreed to deliver the donkey the next day.
The next day the farmer drove up and said, "Sorry son, but I have some bad news, the donkey died."
Rodney replied, "Well then, just give me my money back."
The farmer said, "Can't do that. I went and spent it already."
Rodney said, "OK then, at least give me the donkey."
The farmer asked, "What ya gonna do with him?"
Rodney, "I'm going to raffle him off."
Farmer, "You can't raffle off a dead donkey!"
Rodney, "Sure I can. Watch me. I just won't tell anybody he is dead."
A month later the farmer met up with Rodney and asked, "What happened with that dead donkey?"
Rodney, "I raffled him off. I sold 500 tickets at two dollars a piece and made a profit of \$998."
Farmer, "Didn't anyone complain?" Rodney, "Just the guy who won So I gave him his two dollars back."
Rodney grew up and eventually became the chairman of HIH, FAI and OneTel.

Contributed by Jim Bramley



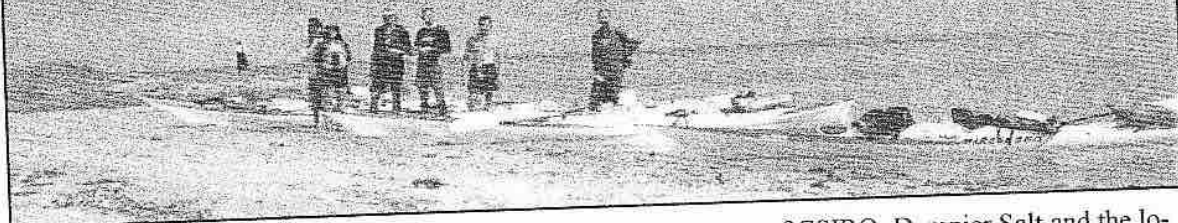
Graeme Lee gets the bird again. (Photograph by Warren Wilson)

A woman was sitting at a bar enjoying an after work cocktail with her girlfriends when an exceptionally tall, handsome, extremely sexy middle-aged man entered. He was so striking that the woman could not take her eyes off him. The young-at-heart man noticed her overly attentive stare and walked directly toward her. (As all men will.) Before she could offer her apologies for so rudely staring, he leaned over and whispered to her, "I'll do anything, absolutely anything, that you want me to do, no matter how kinky, for \$20.00.....on one ! condition." (There are always conditions). Flabbergasted, the woman asked what the condition was. The man replied, "You have to tell me what you want me to do in just three words." (controlling huh?) The woman considered his proposition for a moment, then slowly removed a \$20 bill from her purse, which she pressed into the man's hand along with her address. She looked deeply into his eyes and slowly
....and meaningfully said....

Clean my house."

Dirk Hartog Island Trip

Photos & Story by Marian Dixon



The participants in the Dirk Hartog Island Trip congregated at Denham Seaside Caravan Park on Good Friday. The group consisted of John Ross, Megan Halvey, Bill Reynolds, Jim Roberts, Helier Beardsley, Neville Holden and Marian Dixon.

The staff produced a heavy-duty drill to make holes for the tent pegs and directed us towards the individual unisex bathrooms where there are endless possibilities for the truly imaginative couples wanting private togetherness.

Saturday morning saw us assembled on the beach wondering how the hell we were going to fit all the gear in our kayaks. It was 10 o'clock before we departed on a compass bearing for the invisible Heirisson Prong 20 km away.

Our boats wallowed under the weight of supplies, water and camping gear for eight days. After setting up camp on Heirisson Prong, the fishermen were soon into it. Jim caught a shovelnose shark that he later released and Helier caught several fish before landing a magnificent Long Tom.

They lit a campfire to bake Helier's fish on the coals. Varying amounts of red wine were consumed and copious quantities of bullshit were dispensed. We're all campfire heroes, having been everywhere and done everything faster and better than anyone else. Helier and Neville felt compelled to perform some kind of noisy primitive male bonding ritual round the campfire but declined to repeat it for the camera.

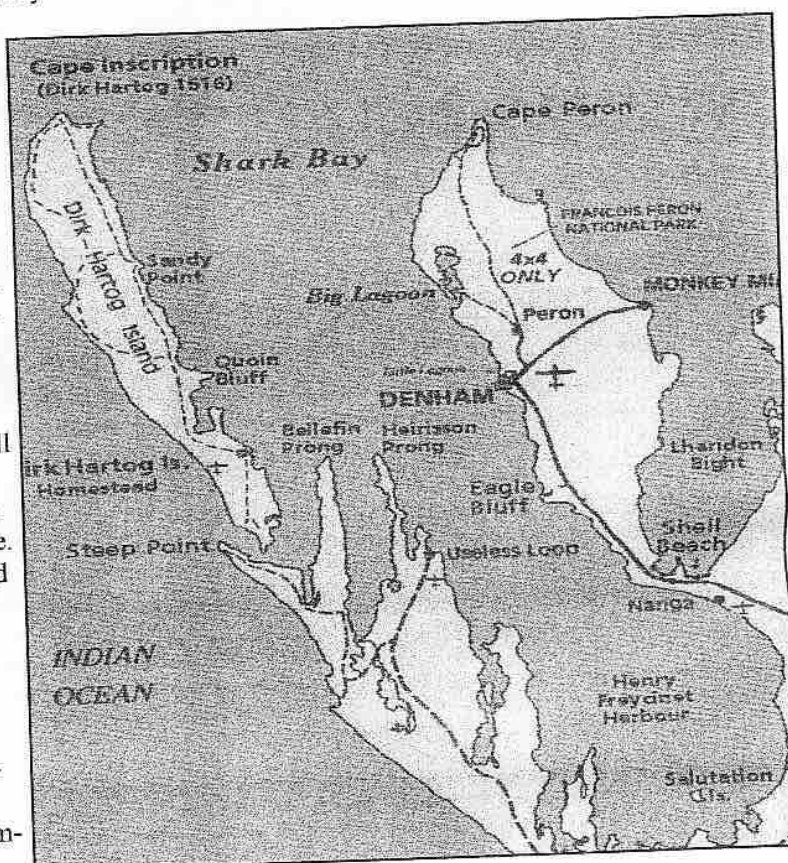
I went for a night walk in the hope of spotting some of the endangered wildlife that has been released on the prong by the com-

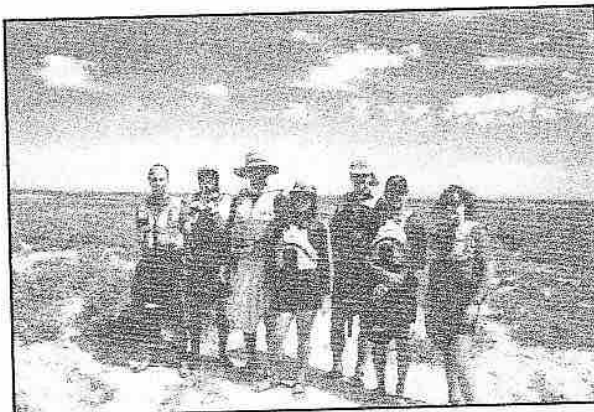
bined efforts of CSIRO, Dampier Salt and the local community at Useless Loop. I caught a brief glimpse of a small hopping creature but after my initial excitement, decided it was probably a rabbit.

Next day we reached our destination on Bellefin Prong by midday and dispersed to fish, walk or paddle. Later in the afternoon, Mick, John and Megan set out to walk across the prong but the scrub in the centre was too thick and they turned back.

The following morning was marked by the auspicious event of John getting out of bed in time to see the sun rise. We headed up Bellefin Prong, round the point and half way down the other side

(Continued on page 11)





On a sandhill surveying Dirk Hartog Island, it's not difficult to see why explorers labeled it barren and desolate.

(Continued from page 10)

before angling across to Dirk Hartog Island. It was a short crossing of about 8 km into a 15 knot wind.

We landed in a small bay and climbed a hill to take photographs. It's not difficult to see why the first explorers described this island as barren and desolate. It's treeless with only low scrub and sand dunes. We confronted the wind again for the 2kms paddle to an excellent camp site.

Next day, six of us set off wearing improvised bush walking gear and inappropriate footwear to walk across the island. Bill, the dedicated follower of fashion started out wearing socks under his sandals. After initially ridiculing him, some of us decided to emulate him to prevent sand chafing under the sandal straps. Perhaps this much-maligned Pommy habit isn't as stupid as it looks.

John had given Mick and Bill a short course in navigation so Mick plotted the course across and Bill was to be in charge of the 'back passage'. The walk emphasized again the desolation of the island. The only living things we saw apart from birds were goats. After a hot 6km walk we hit the beach and hit the water almost simultaneously.

We could see Steep Point and were able to check out the passage through the reef. We walked to Surf Point and saw some really awesome breakers rolling in. It would definitely not be a fun place to try surf landing in a kayak. We dispersed to explore or try unsuccessfully to prize oysters off the rocks.

On the point, Bill and Neville rescued some pseudo fresh vegetables that someone had just thrown out. They planned a communal vegetable and fish curry, hoping Helier would catch some fish.

That night we had another roaring camp fire. Neville and Bill contributed their vegies and He-

lier provided fish which they baked on the coals with curry and spices.

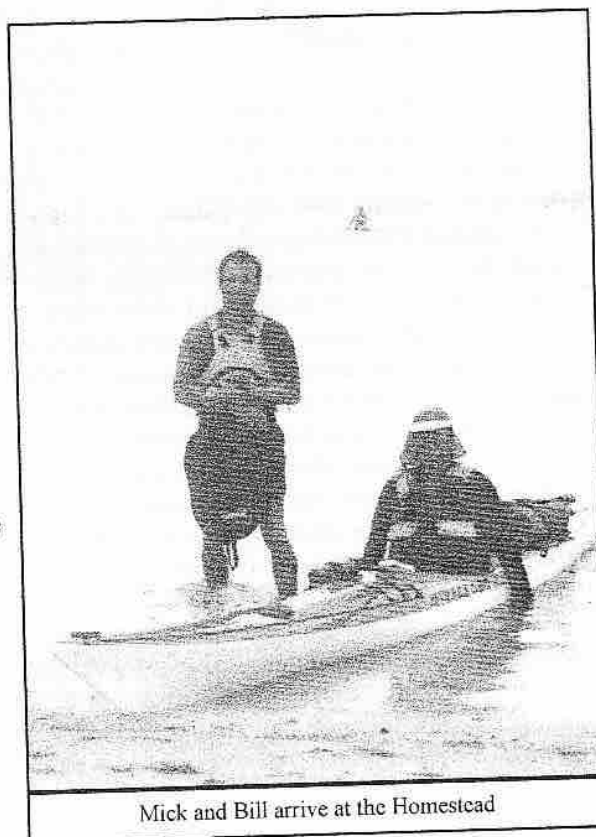
Jim, Neville, Helier and I were on the water at 6.30 next morning. It was magic at daylight with the water like glass and a large pod of dolphins playing at the entrance to our bay. We saw lots of turtles, dolphins and stingrays.

It was very shallow and crystal clear, with fish swimming among the coral and sea grass. We landed on Cape Ransonnet, opposite the Steep Point camping area for breakfast and waited for the others.

Two other kayakers from an Action Outdoors group paddled across from the camping area to talk. We were eventually joined by John, Megan, Bill and Mick and moved off to paddle out through the outer bar of the South Passage to have a close look at the Zuytdorp Cliffs. There was a moderate swell and the rebound waves from the cliffs created mildly sloppy conditions. The cliffs were truly awesome, their magnitude emphasized by the tiny people standing on top.

As we returned, we passed several small groups of kayakers from the Action Outdoors group. Neville and Helier paddled over to a group of girls, mistaking them for the Swedish Under 18 Topless Girls Beach Volley Ball Team and were disappointed. The girls mistook these two ferals

(Continued on page 12)



Mick and Bill arrive at the Homestead

(Continued from page 11)

for pirates who'd come to pillage and plunder and were also disappointed.

We headed up past the tent city at Steep Point and stopped for lunch on the beach in front of the Clough mansion.

The ocean was like glass as we headed back to Dirk Hartog towards the small island marking the entrance to our bay.

Next morning was a no hurry start for everybody, but some more than others. There's only one problem with this camp-site. I've never seen so many mosquitoes! They are tiny suckers and don't just appear at dusk and dawn as I believe is set out in their mozzie constitution. They're there all the bloody time. Hell on wings! So Neville and I hit the water as soon as we were ready to escape their attentions. We started a leisurely paddle towards the homestead, sticking close to the rocky shoreline.

There was a depressingly high number of dead fish floating on the green tinged water. Rookeries for crested terns and cormorants were abundant on the oyster encrusted rocks with occasional ospreys and sea eagles nesting nearby.

Various fish darted about among large clumps of diverse coral. The sea was flat and glassy with a haze over Bellefin Prong in the distance. Thunder clouds began to gather and a south west wind picked up.

After an hour of drifting leisurely over the coral enjoying our surroundings, Helier and Jim caught up. We landed on a beach where there was what appeared to be a mini fish farm. The beach was stacked with disused malodorous grids and march flies and mosquitoes were abundant.

We pushed on to the homestead as planned and some time after we arrived John, Megan, Mick and Bill caught up. We were told at the homestead we couldn't camp there but were welcome to find a small bay away from the tourists. They offered us water from their desalination plant and looked up the weather report on the net for us.

We retraced about 3kms south so we could be closer for our crossing to Bellefin and Heirrisson Prongs the next day. There was a moderate North-easterly wind expected so we planned an early start.

We found a sheltered beach that didn't appear to have a mosquito problem. I was sitting on the beach writing up my diary when a snake slithered across an open patch of sand about a metre from my feet. I decline to put my exclamation in to

print, but those of you who know me well can probably guess what I said. An interesting diversion for the male members of the group who were gathered together talking about blokey things and occasionally bursting out with their pathetic rallying song to the tune of Dixie.

I wish I was in England

I do I do

I'd go down to Trafalgar Square and say to old Lord Nelson

Get f..... Get f.....

You one eye pommy b.....

By this point of the trip I was thoroughly sick of hearing this puerile ditty and hoped I never hear it again but it seemed to keep the children amused by the hour. Later the jokes were more ribald, the laughter louder and the lies more outrageous on this penultimate night. With every movement of my silk sheet that night I imagined the snake was in the sleeping bag with me.

Four of us started at 7am next morning while the others lingered. We paddled into a SE wind on the 6km crossing to Bellefin Prong and had a short break before pushing on to our original camp site on Heirrisson Prong. We reached it by 11am but the other four didn't arrive till mid afternoon as they, swam snorkelled rested etc on the way.

That night we sat around talking with the lights of Denham clearly visible across the water 20kms away. "Sharkey" Reynolds caught a shark by the tail by torchlight. We all went to bed around 8 o'clock after agreeing on an 8am start.

We really did get on the water by 8 o'clock. All of us! There was a south-westerly wind blowing so we had to alter our compass bearing to compensate. In spite of us all agreeing to stick together, we were soon strung out like Brown's cows.

(Continued on page 13)



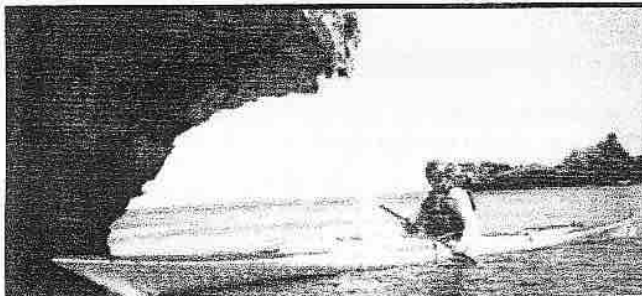
Jim, Megan, John and Bill at Steep Point with the Clough beach shack in the background.

(Continued from page 12)

It was a good crossing and on arrival at Denham we accomplished the unpacking and loading of the boats and gear in record time as we were keen to hit the showers at the caravan park. We all met for a fatty, seriously unhealthy, cholesterol enriched meal at the local fish and chip shop before heading off separately. Another great trip in ideal surroundings with perfect weather and excellent company!



The feral finale photograph: Neville, Mick, Megan, Bill, Helier, Jim, John, Marian



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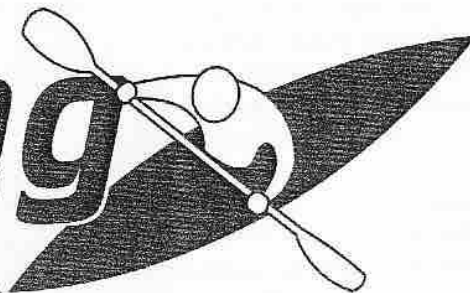
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Morning Poem

I woke early one morning,
The earth lay cool and still
When suddenly a tiny bird
Perched on my window sill,
He sang a song so lovely
So carefree and so gay,
That slowly all my troubles
Began to slip away.
He sang of far off places
Of laughter and of fun,
It seemed his very trilling,
Brought up the morning sun.
I stirred beneath the covers
Crept slowly out of bed,
Then gently shut the window
And crushed his f....head.
I'm not a morning person

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*** Camp Gado Gado ***

The Sauce (per person)

a little garlic and ginger
1 kaffir lime leaf
3tbsp peanut butter
1/2 tsp sweet chilli sauce
1/2 tsp soy/tamari sauce
soy milk, cow milk or water
pinch of cumin & coriander



Fry garlic & ginger in a little oil, add lime leaf and peanut butter, soy/tamari, sweet chilli and ground spices. Add liquid until sauce is pourable (quite a lot). Let sit to develop flavour while vegies cook, and reheat well before serving.

The Rest Of it (per person)

1 boiled egg
1 medium/small spud
same amount of sweet spud
cauli, broc, carrot etc.
noodles (optional)
tofu cubes (optional)
1 spring onion (optional)



Cut vegies in small bits that will cook in the same time. Steam/Boil them with the spud, carrot & sweet spud on the bottom of the trangia bowl. Place veg in bowl, top with sauce, boiled egg & spring onion (optional)

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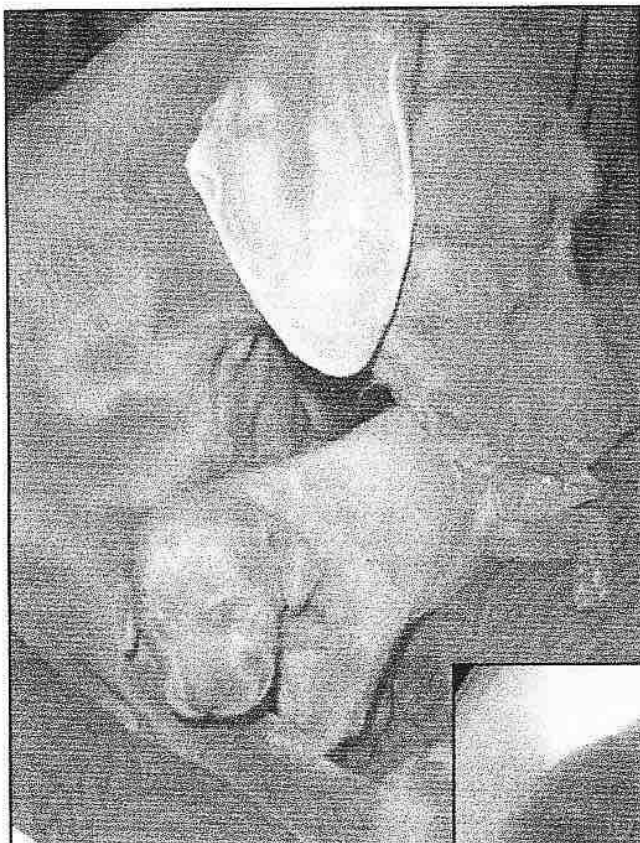
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