

# WA Seakayaker



Jurien Bay long weekend 2007. – Photo by Rod Coogan

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SEA KAYAK CLUB WA INC. – Issue No. 69 February 2008

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Welcome to a new and exciting year for our club. 2008 promises to be one of the best as we have recently had an influx of new members, some making a return to the club and others with varying skill levels. **John Ross** and **Megan Thomas** spent a couple of years up north at Groote and did do some sea kayaking but were a little put off by the large number of crocs. They have introduced **Royd Bussell** to the club as a new member. Also returning are **Jim** and **Dianne Bramley** who are presently sea kayaking in their double in Tasmania. Other new members are **Patrick McDonagh**, **Steve Ball** (presently an Ascot member), and finally two friends of Steve Foreman, **Malcolm Blanch** and **Wayne MacLennan**. This brings the current membership to fifty. The larger numbers in the club mean that the trips are often well patronised .e.g. the Alkimos trip had about ten people. There are also greater numbers of paddlers from the northern suburbs than previously.

Four of our members have gained their Sea Skills certificates recently: **Paul Cooper**, **Steve Foreman**, **Tim Hale** and **Alan Hale**. Well done to those guys on a fantastic effort. Also a huge thanks to the instructors lead by **Phil Evans**. **Bart Huntley** was progressing very well in his assessments but damaged his shoulder. His story is in this newsletter.

We have **Phil Evans**, **Rod Coogan**, **Kevin Piper**, **Les Allen** and **Roger Lloyd** as Sea Instructors. **John Radovich**, **Judy Blight**, **Dave Oakley**, **Graeme Lee** and **Wayne Stocker** are Sea Leaders. As the club is growing we need to add to this list of sea leaders so hopefully some of the newly qualified Sea Skills members will look to progress in this direction. The progression through the ranks is not fast as it takes time to build up the skills and to experience a large variety of weather conditions in local waters and elsewhere.

**Kevin Piper**, **Steve Foreman** and **Martin Burgoyne** are members of the sea kayak club committee and have taken on the role of programme planning. This has certainly spread the load and made it easier for other committee members to concentrate efforts in fewer areas.

Finally, I was interviewed about sea kayaking on Tod's 6PR programme that I never listen to, but I managed to throw in a few positives for our club. How big do we want to become??

If we get too big we will need a full time manager!!

**Judy Blight**

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND OFFICE BEARERS – 2007/08**

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## **NOTICEBOARD**

### **Slide Night**

Martin and Val Burgoyne have their slide night on Saturday 9th February. This should be a fun night with some members sleeping over for exercise (of various sorts) the next day.

### **Social Evening**

There will be a barbeque and get-together for all members (and families) at Kings Park near the Zamia Café starting at 6:30pm on Thursday 20th March. BYO everything, including chairs.

### **Current Expeditions in NZ**

There have been 3 different women circumnavigating the South Island of New Zealand. Freya Hoffmeister from Germany completed her trip in January and was the fastest time ever - her website called Freya underground can be found as a link from Cackle TV which is on our website. There is a great piece of footage of her being helped into a really dumping surf. Barbro Lindmann from Sweden is trying to beat her record at the moment and Justine Curgenvan of This is the Sea fame is attempting it right now with another paddler. Thanks to Kelvin for e-mailing everyone with the addresses.

### **PNG Expedition**

Judy had an e-mail from Andrew Hughes who is doing a sea kayak expedition around Papua New Guinea later this year. It is to be followed by school kids and used as an educational site. Check the address <http://www.expeditionclass.com/>

### **New Zealand Coastbusters 2008**

Sea Kayak Symposium  
Milford (Auckland) & Sullivans Bay  
29 February to 2 March 2008

See details in the November Newsletter (#68), and website [www.coastbusters.org.nz](http://www.coastbusters.org.nz)

## **Whatever You Do.....!** **(A rambling about shoulders)**

Remembrance Day 2007 saw a bunch of the Sea Kayak Club attend a Sea Skills assessment day on the western side of Garden Island. I was one of 5 guys going for the award and was having a great time. The weather was beautiful (although I suspect Les Allen had been hoping for something grottier) and there was no place better to be.

We had been going through some drills and had completed a lengthy tow, some tight manoeuvres in the rock gardens, some rolls and had moved on to have a play in what surf we could find. The idea being that individually we would position ourselves broadside to a recently broken wave and demonstrate our high or low braces whilst bongo surfing. I watched a few of the guys go through the exercise and then it was my turn. "Elbows In.....Elbows In" the mantra was playing in my head. I was in position and watched the breaking wave and its resulting foam and wash head my way. From what I can gather I misjudged the speed of the approaching foam and began my brace early in the water before it. This led to being halfway to capsized when the wave hit and collected my paddle. There was way too much force on my now unprotected shoulder joint (elbows weren't in) which led to an anterior dislocation (the shoulder popped out!).

The odd thing was, while I was sitting in my capsized boat trying to prepare for a recovery roll, that there was absolutely no pain. My left arm simply became completely useless. I instinctively knew that something was wrong but it was not until I had the chance to have a look at the joint that I knew what I had done. It was at this point that I really realised how important all of the rescue and safety training we do is. The guys swung into action and it was a fantastic thing to see. The team got me to shore through the breakers, put my arm in a sling, rehydrated me, put me back in my boat and towed me out to a waiting rescue boat from Rockingham Sea Rescue (summoned by Les on his VHF radio) all in what seemed a blink of an eye. It was about at this stage the pain began and it really ramped up from there. The area around the shoulder goes into muscle spasms as it tries to deal with the injury and it really hurts. I've had a few injuries before, including a large calibre gunshot wound, but the dislocation takes the lead in the pain stakes. However once in hospital they popped it back in and the relief was instantaneous.

One thing I quickly learned about shoulder injuries is that everyone has some story to relate and the info can be pretty confusing. From complete horror stories to injuries that seem no worse than a minor bruise. However once you get to see a specialist and get an MRI out of the way, is when you find out what is really happening. I have been very lucky. My tear in the labral cartilage is not too large and is located at the bottom of the joint. What all that means is that it will heal fine without surgery and that is a real bonus as that would have meant even more time off the water! So far I have worn a sling for 3 to 4 weeks. I have been to that many physio sessions that my physiotherapist has actually taken off on an overseas holiday! There has been swimming and weights and only recently I have been out for quiet paddles on the river. Long story short, even a "best case" dislocation takes a heap of time to

recuperate from. I reckon it will be about 5 months from the time of the accident till when I will feel comfortable and confident enough to get back to sea.

If you are new to this sport, please listen to all that your instructors tell you about minimising the risks to your joints. Take it from me; it is worth putting into practice. If you had asked me prior to the accident, to imagine a scenario in which a dislocation could happen, it would have entailed something like things going wrong whilst surfing on the face of a ten foot dumping wave. The reality for me was that the wave that did the deed wouldn't have upset my 6 year old daughter on her boogie board!

Thanks heaps to all the guys that day and especially Tim Hale who had to put up with all the moaning before hospital. I am positive that the great first aid "in the field" that I received amounted to much less damage in the long run.

See you on the water soon and remember, whatever you do, keep your elbows in!

**Bart Huntley**



Bart and friend prior to the shoulder injury - Photo by Bart Huntley

## Kayak Roll Fundamentals by Roger Lloyd



### **The set up.**

- correct set up before starting to sweep is vital to the success of the roll.
- tuck up to the side of the cockpit, do not push the paddle forward.
- both paddle blades must be out of the water at the set up.
- grip the paddle lightly, particularly at the sweeping blade end.
- the sweeping paddle blade must have a neutral angle with the power face of the blade facing and parallel to the water surface.
- if necessary, check for correct neutral blade angle by -
  - a short fake test sweep, out and back, to test for diving or rising
  - slap the water with the blade.
  - float the blade on the surface of the water.
  - correct the blade angle by familiarity with the paddle shaft hand locator position on the palm or fingers of the controlling hand.

### **Boat rotation.**

- **get the boat upright first**, body and head will follow.
- boat should be fitted with effective knee / thigh braces.
- lift the rolling knee, i.e. the knee on the same side as the roll, as soon as the sweep is started.
- drop the offside knee away from the knee brace if necessary.
- torso rotation during the sweep is an important component of boat rotation.
- keep the head down, looking at the sweeping paddle blade, throughout.
- roll the body up to follow the boat rotation.
- do not lift the head or attempt to sit upright too soon or until boat rotation is complete.

### **The sweep.** (for a right hand roll)

- relax the body.
- maintain a loose grip on the paddle shaft throughout the sweep.
- maintain a neutral sweeping blade angle throughout the stroke.
- look at the paddle blade keeping the head down throughout the stroke.

- at the start of the sweep, lean back away from the side of the kayak simultaneously rotating the torso to the right.
- lift the rolling knee (right knee) to start boat rotation.
- sweep the paddle to the right using body rotation, right arm pushing the blade away from the boat and up towards the water surface.
- the paddle blade must sweep in a wide arc maintaining a neutral blade angle and skimming along or just below the surface of the water without diving or resistance.
- keep the right arm fairly straight and the left elbow tucked into the side of the body, do not punch out with the left hand, do not pull down on the paddle shaft.
- the sweep stroke should not be hurried and must be synchronised with the speed of rotation of the boat. If the sweep is completed before the boat is upright the roll will fail.

### **Finish position.**

- as the boat rotates upright and the sweep is completed, roll the body upright with a firm high brace stroke towards the boat.
- continue to look at the paddle blade throughout, chin on right shoulder.
- at the finish, pull the elbows into the sides of the body, left elbow forwards.
- leaning back slightly at the end of the roll assists boat rotation but it is not good technique, or necessary, to lean right back on the back deck.
- briefly hold the finish position to center the body or take a paddle stroke to establish equilibrium in broken water.

### **Problems.**

- **left hand paddle blade hits the boat during the sweep.**
  - the paddler is not stretching out away from the boat sufficiently.
- **the paddle is pulled down or dives instead of sweeping.**
  - paddler tucks forward instead of to the side during the set up.
  - paddle shaft is being gripped too tightly.
  - the sweeping blade is at a rising angle.
  - the sweeping blade is at a diving angle.
  - the right arm is bent.
  - the left hand is punching forward.
- **the boat does not rotate up by the end of the stroke.**
  - failure to lift the rolling knee.
  - upward pressure on the non rolling knee.
  - paddle sweep is too fast.
  - body is held too rigidly.
  - head is lifted during the stroke.
  - paddle dives or is pulled down.

## Two Weeks with Sandy

by Martin Burgoyne



Now there was an idea! Why don't I join Sandy Robson for part of her south coast adventure? She was planning to paddle from Esperance to Augusta or possibly round to Hamelin Bay. It was to be another piece in her quest to circumnavigate Australia. I didn't really fancy the full trip and living out of a kayak for four weeks, so I suggested going as far as Albany with her. Val would come down and pick me up, and we would then be able to have a short holiday along the south coast. Matt Erkins was also keen to join her though he had decided to do the full trip.

Sandy would be doing the trip anyway, so it was agreed that we would all be self sufficient, which would give us the option of dropping out without upsetting her plans. She had done an immense amount of planning and preparation for it. Her detailed annotated charts, with aerial photographs from *Google Earth* of all possible landing/camp spots, were exceptional and a real learning point for me. We put together emergency service contact details, enlisted the help of a range of friends for food drops, accommodation, and assistance should we need it, and Sandy arranged to check in with Les Allan every evening. Les had also loaned me a sat phone.

Sandy had convinced Matt and me to fit sails to help with some of the longer sections. It was an aspect I had long thought about, and now in hindsight I wish I had fitted one earlier. It adds a whole new dimension to kayaking!



Sandy under sail around Shoal Cape – photo by Martin Burgoyne

We had overheating problems with Matt's car on the way down to Esperance, which made for a longer and slower journey. It knocked a day of the start while he arranged to get it fixed, but it gave us time to log in with the local sea rescue and do some final bits of preparation. We had an early start after a bit of a slog through the camp site



with kayaks and all our gear. We rounded Dempster Head and Observatory Point, paddled past the wind farm on the Ocean Drive and the sparkling white sand dunes of Thirteen Mile Beach and arrived mid afternoon at the secluded and sheltered Butty Harbour Bay. It was a superb spot, unfortunately spoilt by a disgusting, litter filled fishing shack. Matt had had a tough day in the big swell as his boat was feeling particularly unstable. His efforts to keep it upright had put a big weal on his side – he was not at all happy and was talking of dropping out.

Voracious mosquitoes gave us an unpleasant time packing up the next morning. We went out round Butty Head's small off-shore island as the swell through the gap looked rather too large for comfort. The swell and seas were bigger than the previous day and there were a few bombies around to focus the mind, but at least we had a favorable breeze. Sandy and I were able to use our sails, not so Matt who was still really unhappy with the stability of his boat. We were aiming for Quagi Beach which would provide Matt with road access if he did decide to pull out. I had used my pump intermittently all day, but as we approached our destination I was aware of more water splash on my calves. I thought that carrying the large water bag under my legs was acting as a dam, and preventing water that was coming on board getting to the pump. But there was only a couple of kilometers to go so I would look at things once we landed. Sandy overtook me on the last stretch and I struggled to keep up – was I really that tired? Once we landed the reason for my slow speed was obvious - my kayak was full of water. There was water in every hatch, and 'Yes', it had also managed to enter all my dry bags. But it was early afternoon and there was a strategically placed slab of warm rock on the beach to dry things out on. Water had also got into the pump's battery box which had a melt down. Both terminals being totally dissolved in the evil looking liquid dripping out of it!

Matt did decide to pack in, but he still got up with us the next morning to push us off. He eventually managed to engage the help of an eccentric 'grey nomad' to get him back to Esperance. I used two spray decks to stem the water flow into my boat that day, and I also made sure the bung was in the pump outlet. I had been most upset to find that the pump didn't have a one way valve after all!!

The updated morning weather forecast suggested that winds would be favorable, though Sandy did say that she didn't usually paddle in the forecasted 3 meters swells. So it looked as though it was going to be an interesting 40 + km day!! The wind was good and we were able to use our sails to great effect. Though we both found ourselves turning sharply out to sea as we caught the sight of some larger sets coming in – exciting! As we approached Munglinup it took a little while to decide which of the three possible beaches we should land on. The bombies and swell made it difficult to see which was the safest. But we got in OK to a rather narrow beach which prompted us to move the tents as the tide came in.

Next day would be a shorter paddle to Starvation Bay, so we managed a lie in until 5 am! It was an interesting paddle as the chart said UNSURVEYED. Again the swell was big and there were plenty of bombies to focus the mind. We passed by three uncharted islands some with seals on them, and then landed on the fourth for lunch. It even had a sandy beach, but no room for camping. Our sails helped us make a quick passage to Starvation Bay and an excellent camping spot, that we had to ourselves. It had a large fixed table with benches and a 'his and hers' toilet block. This all proved

most welcome as in the end we camped here for three nights. With strong S/SW winds, thunder storms, and 3.5 metre swells forecast over the next few days we stayed put! The evening thunder storms were spectacular but started a number of bush fires that we could clearly see.



Bushfire near Munglinup – photo by Martin Burgoyne

On the fourth day, and with a semi favorable forecast of light S/SW winds in the morning picking up to 20 -25 knots in the afternoon, we decided on a very early start to try and beat the wind to Hopetoun. We were up at 3.30 am and checked the updated forecast – no change, so we decided to go. The light from my headtorch just managed to pick out the reflective strip on Sandy’s boat as we headed out into the quiet gloom, and around the rocky spur of Powell Point.

It was to be a 46 km paddle with only a slim chance of a landing at Mason Bay if we could get in through the swell. Initially we made good progress going wide round Mason Point to miss the bombies and intermittent breakers – only 31 km to go. Around 9.30 the wind picked up, considerably earlier than expected, and it became slow progress. At 10.30 we talked about going back, but decide to try it a little longer. At 10.45 with 15 km left to go we agreed to turn back. Almost immediately Sandy said my rudder looked funny, and as I turned round to look at it, it fell off! She stowed it under the deck lines and we set off again. But oh dear, I could only do three or four forward strokes before I needed a big stern rudder to lever the boat back on course. My boat was weather cocking badly and no amount of lean helped the steering, what’s more the rudder strokes just about almost stopped me. After 2 hours of this we rounded Mason Point – 12 km to go, but my shoulder was really starting to ache, and progress was now painfully slow. I was tired and really concerned about the consequences of capsizing. Sandy was also getting cold as she was constantly having to wait for me.

A fishing boat a couple of kilometers out caught my eye, and I decided to head for it. Despite constant paddle waving and a call on the radio we got no response. Sandy tried to see if a tow would help me, but not really. While it did pull me back on course with a jerk, a few more strokes from me and we had a couple of metres of slack. Now if I hadn't paddled at all, it may have kept things tight. But we were almost at the boat, and soon realized why we had been getting no response. It was an abalone boat and they had a diver down. They kindly agreed to take me and my kayak back to Starvation Bay, once they had done for the day. The diver had quite a surprise when he surfaced to a kayak straddling the rear deck. Sandy paddled back to the bay. We shared our dwindling food supplies that evening and discussed the eventful day.



Sandy on uncharted island west of Powell Point – photo by Martin Burgoyne

Matt picked me up the next morning, but with favorable easterly winds Sandy had a quick paddle to Hopetoun. We watched her progress along the coast and met up at Hopetoun. We had two more days of unfavorable winds and sat around getting increasingly bored. Sandy and I decided to go for Point Ann on the third day, for what would have been a 57 km paddle. We got up at 3.30 am started to pack, and then listened to the updated weather forecast. Stronger 25 knot tailwinds and 2.5 meter swells were now forecast for the afternoon. There would be no turning back, and landing could be exciting to say the least. There were bush fires in Fitzgerald National Park so no vehicle access was allowed and we just might be stranded there. So we decided to go back to bed.

Matt and I came home. We dropped Sandy off at Bremer Bay, where she progressed down as far as Riche Point before getting a lift to Albany. After a few days R&R in Albany she set off westward again.

For an update of her progress check out her website:  
<https://netstorage.penrhos.wa.edu.au/slap/index.html>

## Learning Points

- Laminate and annotate your charts, and topographical maps into manageable A4 double sided sheets. Include *Google Earth* aerial pictures of landing spots round the edge.
- Mosquitoes are voracious at 4.00 am and are attracted to head torches.
  - Get into paddling gear in your tent
  - Eat early morning breakfasts in your tent
  - Pack as many bags as possible in your tent
  - Put insect repellent on all exposed skin
  - Turn off head torch to dismantle your tent and to do the last bit of packing.
- I don't like pre-dawn starts.
- Locktite or superglue rudder pins, which may just come undone. Check each others so you know how they fit together in case you have to put one back in an emergency.
- Paddling without a rudder with a strong following wind blowing over a rear quarter is difficult. Counteracting weather cocking is extremely tiring, and puts a lot of pressure on one set of muscles.
- Towing in a following wind, when the kayak being towed is weather cocking is not productive.
- Remember most electric water pumps don't have a one way valve. Make sure you keep the bung in, even if the outlet is well above water.
- Double dry bag any electrical gear.
- Include spare food for days when you maybe weather bound, and then add at least another day's rations.
- Consider cutting down on the water carried in bags by taking some foods which are already hydrated.
- Water carried in smaller bags makes it easier to distribute weight around your boat as the load decreases.
- Think carefully about what you put in your day hatch. Practice getting into it. Are you able to get at and put on extra clothes if it's cold, or take off and store clothes if it is too hot?
- A sail on your kayak really adds to the pleasure of kayaking. It adds interest, increases speed, and reduces effort.
- Not all fishing boats monitor their radios.
- A 90 degree feather on a paddle really increases headway when paddling in to the wind.
- The southern ocean has BIG swells!

## The Alkimos

by Judy Blight



The Alkimos was a merchant shipping vessel that was built as a part of the US Liberty ship programme during world war 2. It was sold to a Greek shipping company and named Alkimos. The vessel was on a voyage from Jakarta to Bunbury in 1963 when it struck a reef. It was salvaged and towed to Fremantle and underwent repairs. It left Freo under tow but a few hours out of port the tow line gave way. It was filled with water to secure it in place and has gradually been disappearing and now this is all that is left. The vessel is regarded by many as being jinxed, cursed and haunted. The following photos were taken by Helen Cooksey on the trip to the Alkimos on the 20th January.

