



Sandy Robson near Sorong Regency, Indonesia, Feb 2016

(Photo Sandy Robson)

WA SEAKAYAKER

March 2016



Welcome

to the third revived newsletter of the Sea Kayak Club WA.

I have had an overwhelming response to my request for articles and contributions: so much so that I have had to keep some of them back for later issues! I am always looking for contributions so please keep them coming, tell the rest of the club of your paddling experiences or your development as a kayaker. Sharing these stories makes for a richer club. Please send your articles to the secretary SKCWA at info@seakayakwa.org.au.

This edition has a report from club member Sandy Robson, who is currently in New Guinea after having paddled all the way from Germany, retracing the voyage of Oscar Speck.

Pel Turner reflects on his preparation for the Shark Bay trip and offers some wise words. There are trip reports from the weekend paddles and hopefully they will inspire you to join these weekly adventures.

Paul Cooper had a massive turnout to his recent training day which was developed in response to challenges faced by kayakers during last year's Lancelin trip. Richard Lailey offers a participant perspective, recapping the day's activities.

Dave Rowlands recently paddled Esperance to Albany, a distance of 425km. How long would it take to paddle this far? You will be very surprised!

Yvonne Colledge reflects on the Albany Symposium and how it has contributed to her paddling confidence. The symposium is a great way to reinforce and learn new skills as well as meet other paddlers and indulge in all things sea kayaking.

Albany members of SKCWA have many wonderful paddling locations and Chris Fry shares with us one of their adventurous paddles.

Don't forget to visit the web page <http://www.seakayakwa.org.au> which is regularly updated with photos and details of club events. The club's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SKCWA/> is also an immediate way to keep in touch with other club members.

I hope you enjoy the third edition of the magazine,

Andrew

Sandy Robson updates us on her epic kayak journey



Oscar Speck travelled via the islands of Pantar and Alor to Timor and I have done the same in Nov/Dec 2015. From Timor Leste Oskar crossed to Kisar and then continued on to the island of Lakor.

"Here he had an experience that completely altered his travel plans. At night he was attacked by a group of natives and ill-

treated. He was tied up with buffalo hide but managed to wriggle free while they went off to the village to celebrate. That same night he escaped with his boat and reached the island of Sermata, but the first police post where he could report the incident was on the island of Barbar. By this time he couldn't hear anything with his left ear and had to go to Saumlaki on the Tanimbar Islands where there was a mission hospital. Here his ear was examined and he was sent to the Military hospital at Ambon. From there he was sent to the hospital in Surabaya (Java). In Surabaya his ear was operated on and he remained for several months in hospital. The boat and his few possessions remained in Saumlaki. The boat was damaged and from the hospital he had to write again to Pioneer Faltbootwerft for a replacement kayak. One year later he was able to continue his journey from Saumlaki in a new boat." This information is courtesy of the Australian National Maritime Museum, Nancy Jean Steele bequest.

I reached the island of Lakor on December 17th and stopped there in the shelter of a cliff to eat my lunch and get out of the torrential rain for a while. The locals seemed friendly. I was happy because in the morning had spent a couple of hours paddling with a large pod of pilot whales in the channel between Moa and Lakor. I collected some water directly into my bottle as it ran off the cliff above us and dripped down. The local men who sat with me there had been spear fishing with traditional spears. They had a few good size fish. It

was not a great place to camp, so when the storm passed I continued on to Pulau Materialam to camp there the night.

What I found tied up on Pulau Materialam made me sad to the core. Some fishermen were hunting and stockpiling sea turtles under a roughly made Palm frond shelter. The turtles were bound and placed on their backs so that they could not escape. Some had died a long painful death in this position in the midday heat with necks slung awkwardly back. One was alive, one of its eyes had started to hang out. Its other eye opened and looked at me, but I was powerless to assist as releasing such a massive heavy turtle on my own would be too challenging and the wrath of the fishermen would not be something I could handle. I decided that it would be best to report this island as critically needing the attention of a turtle conservation group who speak Indonesian.

It hurt my soul more than anyone could imagine to walk away and leave that turtle that had looked at me. I was so angry inside that I would hardly speak to the fishermen when they returned to the camp that afternoon. They cut up one turtle and shared the meat with some other people camped a bit further along the island.





anchored off Barbar Island to await a weather window for safe passage to Saumlaki. We made Saumlaki on Boxing Day and I have been halted here for almost 2 weeks because my food drop parcel got delayed by the holiday season.

They were butchering another turtle as I paddled out the next morning. Sea turtles are a protected species in Indonesia. These people are hunting and stock piling them to take away and sell to other islanders. This is one reason why you will seldom see a turtle in Indonesian waters.

On December 19th the weather showed me just what monsoon season can be like. The sea state changed dramatically in the open water between the islands. The winds came in at 20-30 knots and the swell rose to up to 4m in the following week. I made it to the island of Sermata in my kayak, but could not proceed further by paddle. I waited a few days in Lelang village until the passenger ferry came through. It was an unpleasant village to stay in because the man hosting me was an alcoholic, addicted to the home-made brew called Sopi - distilled Palm-sugar wine. He started drinking in the morning or early afternoon every day and drank until he vomited and passed out, usually in the company of a large group of men and boys.

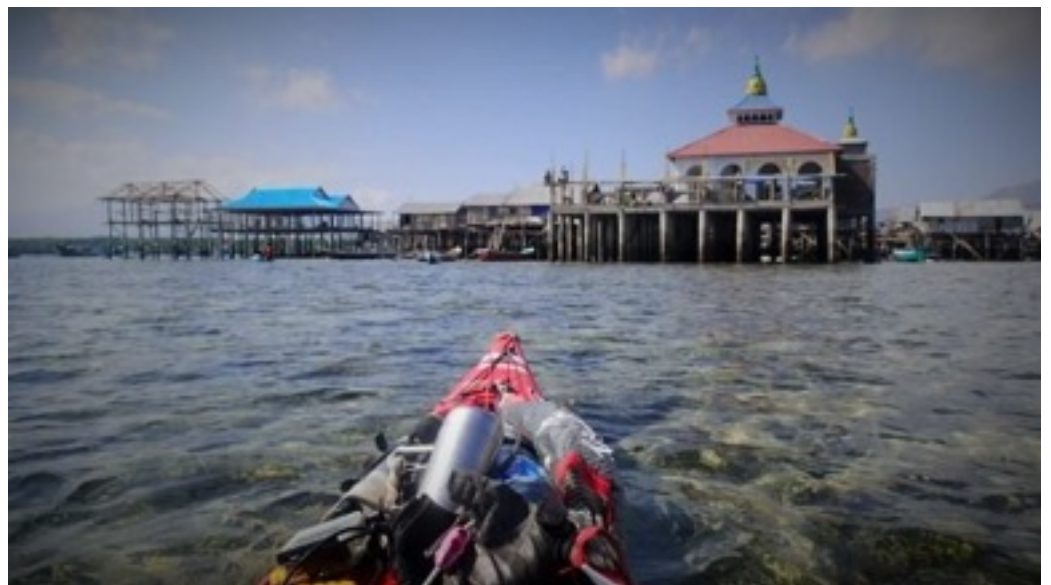
I felt quite unsafe there. I locked myself in the room that I was allocated. I was glad to board the ferry when it came. I am indebted to the help given by some local medical workers and the ferry captain, to hoist my kayak from a fishing boat up onto the ferry deck.

My Christmas Day was spent on the ferry which

I am looking forward to continuing on the Speck route through the Maluku and on to West Papua soon.

The incident involving Oskar Speck on the island of Lakor caused a sensation, both in Java and in Germany. The Dutch government in Indonesia wanted Speck to give up his journey. Despite everything that had happened, Speck was determined to continue on the expedition. The Dutch authorities ruled that he was forbidden to take the route to the south of Papua New Guinea to reach Australia. The inhabitants of that area were considered to be uncivilized. So that is how it came about that Speck paddled north and went around the northern coast of Papua New Guinea to access the Torres Strait. It added a further 6 months to his expedition. I am hoping to be paddling into the Torres Strait in September 2016.

Sandy



Callan's trip was first off the rank for 2016. He chose Fremantle harbour



Keeping clear of a container ship in Fremantle Harbour. (Photo Callan Gault)

East Fremantle to Port Beach and Return

Trip Leader: Callan Gault

Sunday 3 Jan 2016

For the first club trip of 2016, we set off from John Tonkin Park in East Freo, out through Fremantle Harbour, to Port Beach and return; a distance of 18km. We had 11 paddlers in total: Myself (Callan), Paul Cooper, Jo Foley, Linda Glover, Vanessa Clarke, Brian Gilbert, Glen Colledge, Bruce Pilgrim, Austen Mullen, Pel Turner, and Russ Hobbs. There was limited parking at our launch site, so I was nervous to see how many paddlers turned up on the day. Thankfully, we all managed to find a spot. Phew!

Leading up to the day I had watched the Fremantle Harbour website to see if there were to be any planned shipping movements that might foil our plans to proceed through the Harbour. The Harbour was deserted by all but one large container ship on the North Quay, and a CSIRO research vessel on the southern Victoria Quay. The coast was clear so we grouped together, set our radios to channel 12 to monitor harbour operations, and continued through the harbour.

It was a very warm day, and being the holiday season, there was a large number of recreational vessels on the water. The wash from all the big motor boats made the trip through the harbour quite rough. Some of us enjoyed the bumpy ride and managed to surf some of the wash, while others concentrated on staying upright.

Outside of the harbour, the water was calm and Port Beach was about as good as it gets in Perth in summer time. After a bit of a break and a swim to cool off we set off on the return leg. Glen had left his VHF on channel 12 and heard that the container ship in the harbour was setting sail ahead of its planned time. What do they say about the best laid plans?

Sure enough, once back inside the harbour we were greeted by the big old girl making her way out. Fortunately the group had all safely crossed to the other side of the harbour by this time and we were able to stay well clear and snap a few photos. We then made our way back to the launch spot, which was right next door to Zephyr's Café so that we could all enjoy a coffee afterward.

After the trip we found out that there had been sightings of a 3m tiger shark and another 2m unknown shark in the harbour during our paddle. Fortunately they didn't bother us. We were all doing lots of rolls to keep cool - we might not have if we knew they were around!

This was my first trip as sea leader, under the instruction of Paul Cooper. I'd like to thank the group for a great day, and also for following instructions and ensuring an uneventful and safe trip through the harbour. It was a great start to 2016.

Callan



Linda riding some boat wash

(Photo Callan Gault)

Oh what a feeling!

Paul and Richard felt on top of the world after having a blast in strong wind

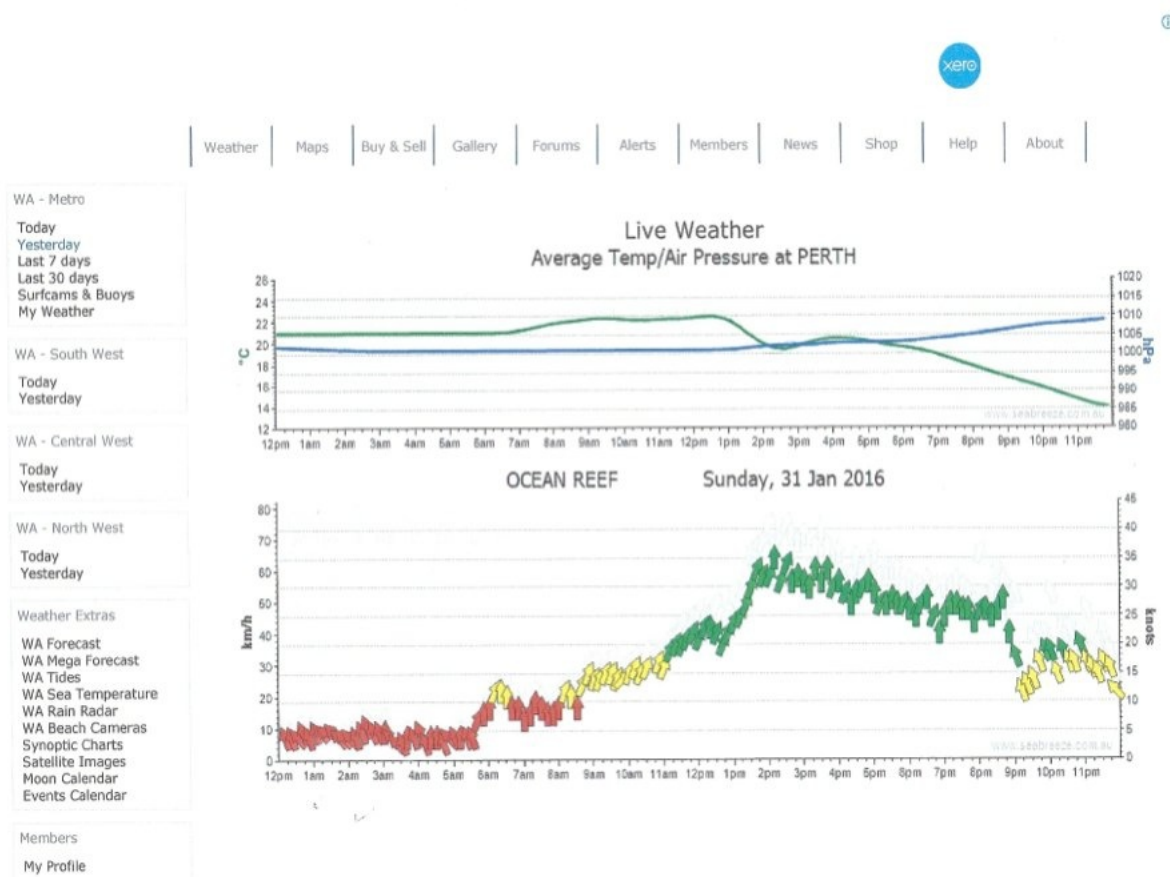
Sunday Arvo Blast – 31 January 2016

By Richard Lailey and Paul Cooper

It was 12.30pm, I had just had lunch and outside the winds were blowing a very respectable 25 knots with a forecast maximum, according to SeaBreeze, of about 30 - peaking at around 2pm. The club paddle had been cancelled and rightly so! The men's final of the Australian Open wasn't due to start until 4.30pm – and I was bored! What to do?

Perth Wind, Wave & Tide Time weather forecasts - seabreeze.com.au

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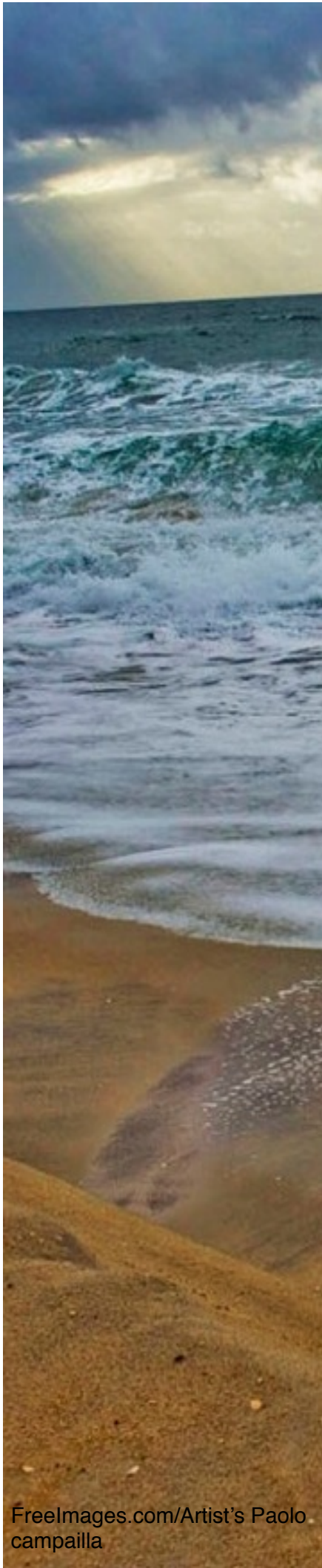


http://www.seabreeze.com.au/graphs/wa_yesterday.asp

1/02/2016

Paul and I had recently talked about “skurfing” a down-winder from Hillarys to Ocean Reef in a strong southerly (as it was this afternoon). I wondered whether I should give him a call and then thought better of it – it wouldn't be fair to put anyone on the spot at such short notice, especially if they'd planned an uninterrupted “lazy Sunday afternoon”. But hang on this is Paul we're talking about! So I made the call and Paul said he would think about it (yeah right)! Twenty minutes later he called me back: “My gear's packed, the boat's on the roof, I've a spare rack for yours - see you at Hillarys in half an hour!”

And that was that! By 1.30pm we were standing at the marina wondering whose stupid idea this was! The marina waters were a swirling mess and the winds were really starting to pick up. We watched the Hillarys Fast Ferry back out (yes, it was actually running), chatted for a while (trying to talk ourselves into doing the car shuffle) and had just decided it would be foolhardy to go out in these conditions, when two cars with surf skis raced past heading for the north wall car park. Were we being wusses?



Paul suggested we head up to the lighthouse to get some perspective. We climbed the tower and peered over the edge. The sea conditions were horrendous, Boy-in-a-Boat Reef was a mass of white water (like a washing machine) and the wind was absolutely howling – I wish I’d brought a camera! We could barely stand – several times we were nearly blown over. Paul produced a hand held anemometer and we took some measurements - instantaneous gusts of between 35 to 45 knots, occasionally reaching 50 and even 55! We then watched in amazement as a kite surfer tracked along the southern wall, past the marina entrance, down to Hillarys Beach and then “reach” all the way down to Pinnaroo Point before disappearing round the corner – unbelievable! Next the Whitfords Sea Rescue boat returned, pushing an enormous cloud of sea spray before it. Two (largish) boats and a kite surfer – a few people were having fun out there – were we now being lazy wusses?

Time to go and see what the surf skiers were up to!

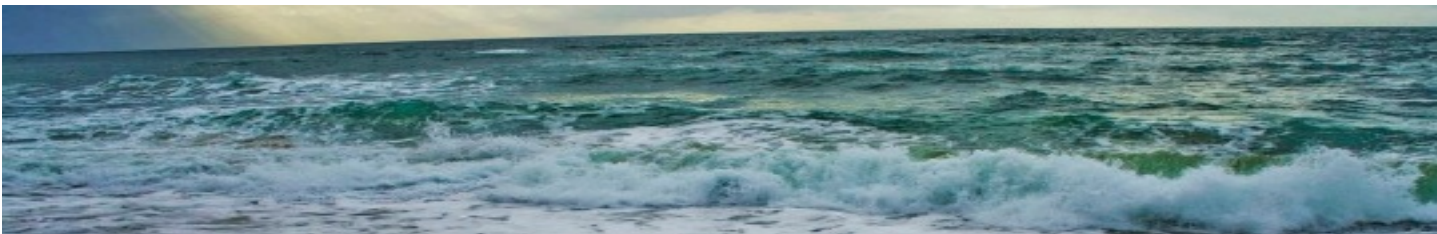
From the fishing platform, we could see they were actually in the water. We watched them paddle out from the beach and along the north wall as far as the marina entrance and skurf back to the beach. They did this twice more before deciding they’d had enough. We decided to head down to the beach ourselves. We asked them what it was like out there and, long story short, “bloody hard work and not a lot of fun”. And they were tired!

We finally decided we were being lazy and rather than be outdone by a couple of surf skiers we unloaded our kayaks (Paul’s an Arctic Raider and mine a Zegul GT) and gave it a go! Well, they were not wrong – it was a pretty tough paddle out to the marina entrance, and then we skurfed back to the beach. We repeated this twice more as they had done, before deciding it was “bloody hard work and not a lot of fun”. And the rides hadn’t been that good!

After we dragged our boats up onto the beach (through the seaweed soup), another surf skier arrived, paddled out to the marina entrance, skurfed all the way down to Pinnaroo Point, paddled back, and then did it again – incredible! This guy really knew what he was doing!

Well, that did it - we were inspired (or perhaps shamed)! As he arrived back, a quick “let’s go” from Paul, and we grabbed our kayaks and did the hard paddle out to the marina entrance. The winds had hardly abated, but we continued on to about halfway to Cow Rocks before finally turning and gunning our boats towards Pinnaroo. No sooner had we started, a huge gust grabbed the end of Paul’s paddle, causing him to lose his grip, sending it “spinning” down the front deck like a rolling pin – he just managed to grab it back before it flew off into the sea!

The waves were far bigger out here, and hell scary, but what an incredible ride! Sometimes we caught two, even three, waves in succession. Mostly it felt like we were on a surf break (without the gut wrenching “break” at the end); the acceleration was unbelievable (if only we’d had a GPS), our boats often nose diving - making us lean back as far as possible and simultaneously trying to keep a straight course (or not so straight in my case)! We were at Pinnaroo within minutes and before we knew it, it was time to pull out and head for home.



Freelimages.com/Artist's Paolo campaila

Paddling back gave us a good work out as we were heading into a strong quartering wind and sea (wind speeds were between 25 and 30 knots, gusting 30 to 35). However, my kayak insisted on paralleling the waves and pointing towards the beach. Even with lots of edging, strong sweep strokes and minimal or no skeg (I had read Andrew's article in the last newsletter) I struggled to point and maintain the boat upwind. Although I was making progress I still found myself heading towards rather than parallel to the beach. Eventually I found it easier (though longer) to paddle directly into the wind and back to the marina entrance before finally turning in towards the beach. By the time I arrived back Paul was already changed and ready for a lift onto his car- I obviously still have a lot to learn! But what a "blast" – who needs drugs when you can get high on this stuff!

At no time during our paddle had we felt in any danger. Before setting out we had fully assessed the situation. We were both good swimmers and knew each others' skill levels, we had agreed to stay close to one another and (in any case) wouldn't be far from the beach, we had full PPE (including helmets), and our boats were fitted with internal bilge pumps. There were no rocks or reefs to worry about and if we capsized (we had reasonably secure rolls) or got hurt, the wind and waves would take us into the beach. Paddling only as far as Pinnaroo had also removed the potential problem of the rocky shore line approach to Ocean Reef Harbour (in case we were forced into a beach landing there).

What did we learn – continued respect for the ocean and rough seas it can produce, the SeaBreeze forecast was pretty accurate and, oh yes, a spare paddle or paddle leash in these conditions would have been a very good idea!

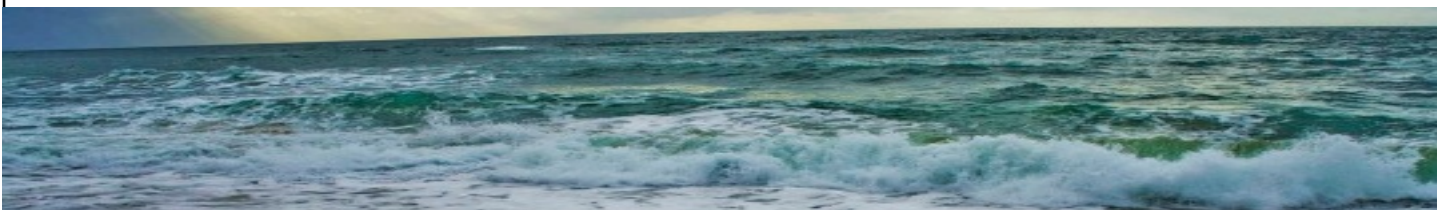
Would we do it again – hell yes! But next time it's either repeat trips to and from Pinnaroo (using a continuous car shuffle), or...we head all the way to Ocean Reef!

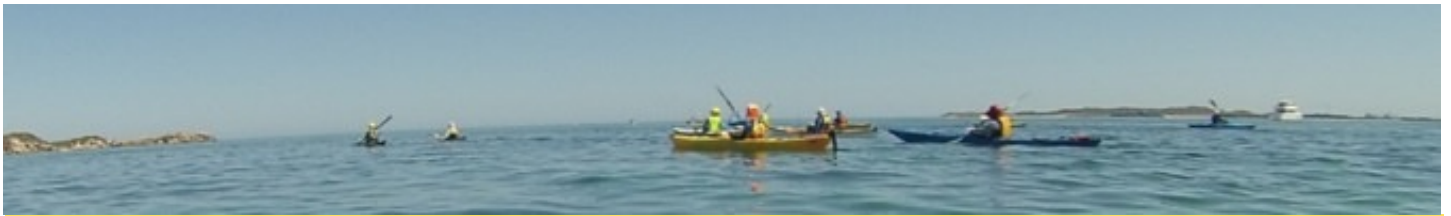
Corollary

Paul and I did in fact return to Hillarys for that down-winder on Friday 12 February, paddling all the way to Ocean Reef this time. We arrived at Hillarys at 2pm and did the car shuffle to Ocean Reef. We left Hillarys Marina at about 3pm (with two paddles each this time - you see, we **are** learning), and arrived at Ocean Reef Marina just after 4pm. Paul's GPS reported a total paddling distance of 8.96 km, a moving average speed of 7.9 km/hr and a maximum speed of 19.4 km/hr!! The trip exceeded all expectations, giving us long rides of up to about 30 seconds. At times we would catch a crest of a wave, then another and another, which made the experience exciting and rewarding. It's amazing how the sea changes with the wind gusts - it's almost like a game, the elements versus the paddler. Down-winders are fun and exciting, but you need to be able to roll and have good bracing skills, plus a quick reflex.

I had problems keeping a straight line once again - my skeg depth is currently set to a maximum of 3 cm to avoid cable kinking when I forget to retract it! Paul stopped several times to wait for me, otherwise he would have gotten there a lot quicker. Conditions were not as severe as they had been on 31 January, with maximum wind speeds of around 20 knots - which turned out to be plenty!!

Perhaps a similar "small group" paddle could be organised for those interested at some stage in the not too distant future!





Kwinana Beach to Pt Peron and return

Trip Leader: Callan Gault

Sunday 7 Feb 2016

For this trip we paddled from the Kwinana wreck at Wells Park (Kwinana Beach) down to Pt Peron and back; a distance of 17km. We had 9 paddlers in total: Paul Cooper, Jo Foley, Vanessa Clarke, Ian Viapree, Russ and Sue Hobbs, Kate Brown, Judy Blight, and myself (Callan).

The weather was HOT with the mercury topping 40°C. The wind was ideal, blowing 5-10 knots from the NE for our trip down and then conveniently swinging SW for the trip home – it made for a very easy days paddling having a slight breeze behind us the whole way.

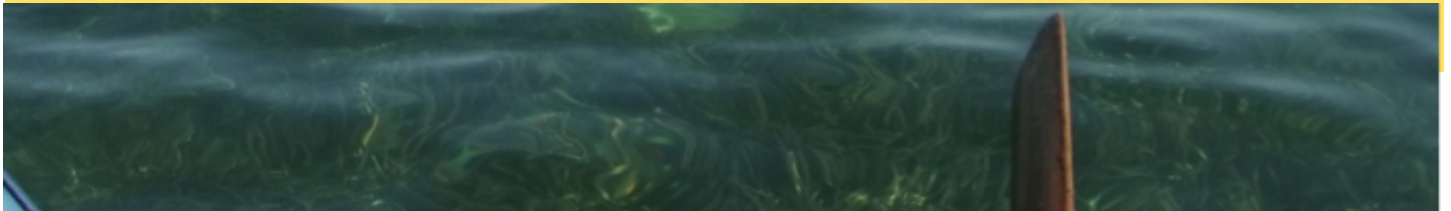
From Wells Park we paddled out around the big blue CBH grain terminal to check out the ship loader and then we cut back in and skirted the coast around Rockingham. The group was moving at a very relaxed pace, so I decided to practice a few rolls while waiting for the tail enders to catch up. I ended up missing several attempts at a storm roll before running out of breath and going for a

swim, much to the amusement of the group. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your point of view, the SD card in my GoPro was full and it had stopped recording moments before my demonstration of how not to do a storm roll! If it's not on camera it never happened right?

Once back in my boat, we continued through the Mangles Bay moorings, under the Garden Island causeway and around Pt Peron for a lunch stop under the blazing sun on the western side of the cape.

For the trip home we made a beeline from the Garden Island causeway across Mangles Bay to the CBH grain terminal to make up some time. On the way we heard a Pan Pan Pan situation unfolding over the VHF radio in which a boat off Mandurah was taking on water – since we weren't in a position to render assistance and with the gentle sea breeze behind us, we surfed some of the small runners that were on offer back to our cars at Wells Park.

Callan



Falcon to Tim's Thicket (south of Dawesville)

Trip Leader: Tony Blake

Saturday 9 January 2016

The club paddle was from Falcon to Tim's Thicket. We had Linda Glover, Royd Bussell, Peter Sellers, Russ Hobbs, Lindsay Joll & myself.

It was the 4th

the weather gods allowed the paddle to go ahead. We had a light breeze from the north, it was quite hot in the morning & the swell was up to 1.5 m with quite a long period.

As we launched from Falcon the largest set for the day rolled through the bay showing its power as a long pitch wave, causing a bit of a stir with the group. We then headed south past Avalon dodging

a few waves along the way & after crossing the Cut & passing Dawesville we spotted a pod of dolphins. On approaching Tim's Thicket we had to assess our route as there were some reasonable waves breaking over the outer reef. All of the group landed safely on the beach & headed for a seat in the sand dunes for some lunch while watching the 4 x 4's trying to avoid getting bogged on the beach. Our view from the beach enabled us to plot a clean path through the breaking waves & reef giving us a clean departure from Tim's Thicket paddling the return leg to Falcon with a light headwind dodging the odd wave on the way.

Tony

Garden Island Alternative



Woodmans Pt- Coogee return
Trip Leader: Rob Macracken
Sunday 22 November 2015

Concurrent with Andrew and his crew's epic paddle around Garden Island (See December 2015 issue), several of us chose a more leisurely option along the coast. We wished Andrew and his group a good trip and departed from Woodman Point with a moderate breeze and beautifully clear skies. I was joined by Paul Cooper, Glen Colledge, and Graham Place. Our leisurely paddle to Coogee Marina or beyond turned quickly into mild exercise as we turned north out of the harbor and into a slight chop and moderate northerly wind. The journey around the point was pleasant and especially interesting when a couple of swimsuit models and a

photographer set up for a photo shoot on the western tip.

After struggling for a while in the open part of Owen Anchorage, we chose to head towards the shore and follow the coast more closely. After regrouping on the north end of Coogee Beach, we decided to go into the marina for coffee and then return, as we had paddled for well over an hour by that point. Sitting on the grass in the shade of local trees on a sunny beautiful day was as enjoyable as the conversations we had. The return was a wind-assisted paddle across open water with an interesting approach to that deceptively hidden marina entrance.

Thanks for joining me guys.

The Albany members are having all kinds of fun!

Chris Fry tells us what they have been getting up to.

Nanarup to Emu Pt. Approx 15.5 km. Brodie and Chris (with Gavin as support crew)

With summer easterlies predominating lately we had been talking about a downwind run for a while - so today was the day. The paddle ended up being mostly about getting off the beach at Nanarup (as the photos show). Gavin wisely decided not to risk re-injuring his shoulder and helped us get underway. Brodie made it on his second attempt and then had to wait a long time for me. Having made a successful trial run before Brodie arrived I wiped out twice on the 'real' attempts before getting out on the third - a success rate of 50%. A highlight for me was

encountering a pod of surfing dolphins as I finally made it out.

Not much to say after that. The sea was pretty lumpy between Nanarup and Boiler Beach where we pulled in for a bite to eat. From there it was downwind with much more uniform waves and I needed my sail to keep up with Brodie who was flying along in his new Epic. We met up with Ian W near Emu Point. He was testing the expedition kayak that he has built and we were given the rundown on all its features. It is VERY impressive. I would have included some pictures but unfortunately the GoPro was full. It was good to meet up with Gavin at the end - waiting very patiently for us at Emu Point beach.

Postcard from Dave



G'day Andrew

back home in

Busselton.

Had a great paddle. Left

Esperance last Thursday (4th Feb)

at 15:30 and arrived Emu Point at 15:30 on

Friday (12 Feb). Paddled 490 klms in 8 days..... Had all

sorts of weather and sea conditions.

It took me almost an hour to paddle out of the harbour in Esperance into wind and chop but then managed to fly the 29 k's to Butty head in 2 hrs..... Once clear of the mainland I picked up large tail swell and tail wind and had the fully loaded Taran (6 days of food, 22 litres of water and camping gear) skimming across the bays.... The swell was that big that every 5th to 6th wave was overtaking and swamping me, fully submerging me and the boat up to my arm pits. I had water pouring in through the top of my spray deck around my sternum.. Was starting to worry about blowing off a hatch cover but the Mighty T kept shedding off water and surging forward...

From there the conditions died down till leaving Hopetoun where I had a rough and windy crossing to Pt Ann. Bremer Bay to Albany turned into a slog with a south westerly picking up in the afternoons.

I camped in some amazing spots along the way with one small island just east of Starvation Bay being the highlight. No dramas or failures along the way. The only one slight problem was the over supply of food I carried.....

Thanks for your help with float plan and mapping.

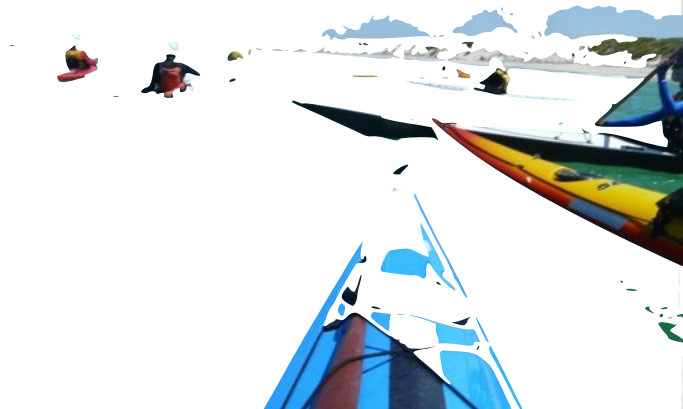
Thanks Dave

Richard Lailey reports on Paul Cooper's Training Day at Hillarys Marina 8 Nov 2015

The turnout for the morning was excellent, with a total of 18 participants in addition to Paul. The Seabreeze forecast for the day was for reasonably light S'ly winds in the morning and a fresh SW'ly sea breeze in the afternoon. With the ocean a balmy 20°C, conditions were near perfect for a training day in which we had all resigned ourselves to getting wet!

The morning commenced at around 9am with a briefing by Paul in which he outlined the plans for the day. Training would be divided into five sessions:

- a) Backward paddling, side draws and forward/reverse sweeps in the marina.
- b) Application of the above skills in real ocean conditions outside and along the north wall of the marina (where there would be some protection from the wind).
- c) Capsize and a self-rescue (of your choice) along the north wall.
- d) Capsize, tow and assisted rescue along the north wall.
- e) Paddle out to Cow Rocks and scurf back to the marina for coffee.



For the north wall drills, we divided into teams of 3; this was done by pulling coloured popsicle sticks from a dry bag which Paul had prepared earlier (that's a lot of popsicles, Paul)!

Paul then explained the rationale behind the drills, which was based on the events of a recent trip to Lancelin in which 3 out of 5 paddlers had capsized while trying to break through heavy surf north of Lancelin Island. The three rescues involved a re-entry and roll, an assisted rescue, and a tow back to the island: two tows in fact, one for the kayak which had taken in water (due to a loose top hatch) and the other for the kayaker.



Events on the Lancelin trip inspired the training for the day

Session 1. The session got underway with everyone heading over to AQWA and backward paddling the last 400m. This was performed with reasonable efficiency, most of us managing to keep a straight (or straightish) line. However, as Paul pointed out, some of us were not properly torso rotating – this not only provides power to your stroke but has two added benefits: firstly you get to see where you're going (thus avoiding collisions with each other, bits of sticking out jetty and passing marine traffic); and

secondly, you protect your neck and shoulder muscles.

We then practiced our side draw strokes (towards and away from the DOT service wharf) and sweep turns. The side draws turned out to be fairly challenging as there was a side wind which caused our kayaks to weathervane. We learned to compensate by adjusting our paddles forward or aft a little, while still keeping them vertical.

Session 2. Next up was putting these techniques to the test in the real ocean. Paddling out of the marina towards the north wall we found a gaggle of yachts occupying our patch – no wonder, Paul had forgotten to book our spot! As it turned out the boats were awaiting starter's orders, and it wasn't long before they were gone.

In our teams we rafted up in our threes and one after the other paddled forward, performed side draws or sweeps, back-paddled, repeated the side draws or sweeps (going the other way this time), and returned to our starting point to complete the circuit. The drill was made more difficult than in the marina by the sea breeze which had decided to come in early and push us towards the beach.

Session 3. Next on the agenda, and again in our teams, we wet-exited and attempted our self-rescues. These ranged from "cowboys" through to paddle float rescues and re-entry and rolls, all with varying degrees of success. Those with electric pumps smugly watched on while others pumped like hell to empty their cockpits!

By now the sea breeze was blowing 13-15 knots and we learned that under these conditions, cowboy rescues can be extremely difficult. I favoured a handroll using an inflated paddle float attached to my arm (previously shown to me by Paul and Ian). In the Lancelin event I had been the bunny who'd needed an assisted rescue (my paddle had broken during my capsize and my spare had broken earlier in the day). This is the self-rescue I should have used but didn't because, at the time, I didn't think of it!

Session 4. For this exercise, and again in our teams, one person wet-exited, the second towed their empty kayak to safety and the third "towed" the rescued person to their kayak. We tried various ways of "hanging on" and found the best way was to grip the stern with two hands and fold your feet up and onto the backdeck (and hang on for dear life). This simulated a situation in which a person comes out of their boat near a shallow reef and needs to be pulled to safety as fast as possible!

Session 5. By now the sea breeze had increased to 17-20 knots, and we ended the morning with a hard paddle out to Cow Rocks and the navaid beyond, and an exhilarating skurf back to the marina. Formal training finished at around 11.45am. This was followed by some rolling, a well earned coffee for 19 tired but very satisfied paddlers, and a full discussion of the morning's events. It was noted that dividing participants into random groups had turned out to be a good "bonding" exercise.

Conclusion. This was an excellent "hands on" training session based on a real event that happened recently on a club trip to Lancelin. The training highlighted the importance of practicing drills not just in sheltered waters (to hone technique) but in real ocean conditions which can rapidly change or deteriorate, and you can easily be caught off guard. In these situations you do not always think rationally or creatively, especially if you are tired or cold; well practised drills help you react quickly, efficiently and calmly, and can prevent potential disasters.

Our thanks to Paul for organising the training, and to everyone who participated, got wet, learned and had fun!

Attendees were: Paul Browne, Craig Bosch, Debbie Erasmus, Jo Foley, Callan Gault, Ian Hollick, Jacki Hollick, Richard Lailey, Antony Mee, Kim Palmer, Graham Place, John Radovich, Pel Turner, Wolfgang Wetzig, Ian Oxwell, Tatiana Oxwell, Jill Sievenpiper and Bruce Pilgrim.

Pel reflects on his recent trip to Shark Bay and the lessons learnt ...

That Sinking Feeling

I always preached to my kids, look after your car and it will look after you. Those words came back to bite me on a recent kayak expedition to Shark Bay in the form of my kayak, not car.

I don't use my Mirage 570 (was 580 but chopped off the cat flap and put on a rudder) often now but keep it for long paddles and expeditions. It had some minor leakage, usually after rolling but nothing obviously serious and the spraydeck is the same age as the 570 but have repaired it a few times, again looked ok. So, not expecting to be paddling in too extreme conditions thought it would be fine for the trip.

We took off from Denham with heavily loaded boats for a 7 day trip early in the morning for the 20km crossing and optimistically hoped the forecast for 12-15knt SSE would have a bit of tailwind for a bit of sail assist but Hewey (the Sea God) laughed and changed it to 15-18knts SSW smashing us with a sloppy 1.5 mtr swell across the decks. The channel across is mostly shallow so created a messy sea with swells close together and lots of whitecaps so the heavy boats were awash constantly.

I began to realise that my rudder was largely ineffective and I was having to do hard left side sweeps to keep the kayak straight. I was also having to pump out the cockpit every 30 mins as the spraydeck was no longer waterproof and water was seeping through. After a rudder check we deduced that the kayak was bow heavy and the rudder was out of the water too much to be effective. 4 hours of hard slogging I was starting to doubt if I was going to make it. We couldn't stop long to rest as we would have been blown out to sea, fatigue then set in with leg cramps. With encouragement from the team we slogged on for 5 hours and made it to Heirisson Prong and a well earned rest for lunch then pushed on to Bellefin Prong for another hour.

On landing and dragging the kayaks up the beach to unpack and set up camp, mine seemed much heavier than it should, and on opening the hatch covers I discovered a lot of water in both front and rear hatches. Taking out the dry? bags found water had worked it's way into nearly everything. All my clothes were soaked, food packs, tent electrics (lamp, radio, torch etc) all dead, even air sealed packets of biscuits had leaked, soggy Ry Vita not yum ! My sanity was saved by a dry sleeping bag and my book for the trip dry and readable, phew!

So next day with all my gear spread across 2 large bushes to dry out, we decided to have a rest day waiting for the wind to drop. Checking my kayak we found a long crack under the coaming of the rear hatch. It would have been sucking in water as the boat flexed. There were no obvious points of leakage for the front hatch figuring it was leaking through the deck fitting bolt holes or under the hatch cover. Some tape was a good temporary fix for the rear leak and fortunately conditions for the rest of the trip were favourable and I had no more problems.

Well the lesson learnt is obvious, keep your kayak and gear well maintained especially for an expedition and it will look after you when things get rough. Another thing learnt was getting your kayak loaded right with the heaviest items close to the middle of the boat. If you are planning an expedition and haven't loaded a kayak before, practise a few times before you go and paddle it loaded as well, there is a big difference in the way it handles. Enjoy your next one.

The 2016 Albany Sea Kayak Symposium was a great success. Yvonne Colledge offers her perspective as a new paddler

My experience of the Sea Kayak Symposium 2016

In 2015, I attended the sea kayak symposium in Albany with my husband, Glen Colledge, who was a member of the Club at the time. I was a green kayaker in a beat up 4.5m Tui and a very slow paddle rate and a major lack of confidence. I parked myself in the Beginners level. When the wind came up on my first ocean paddle I had to be towed back to base. I remember paddling harder than I have ever paddled before, feeling embarrassed, very inadequate... and afraid. Capsizing at the time meant death!

Since the 2015 symposium, I have paddled at least once a week and since September, twice a week. I joined the club, obtained appropriate gear and tried a couple of different kayaks. I completed Intro to Sea Skills with Paul Cooper at Hillarys Harbour.

My speed is still..... slow. I still feel nervous when paddling and assess my skill level as basic. Currently a 12-15km paddle is my limit. I am quite pleased with my rolling progress. I can now confidently execute a float assisted hand roll. Next step is with a paddle and more leg/knee control.

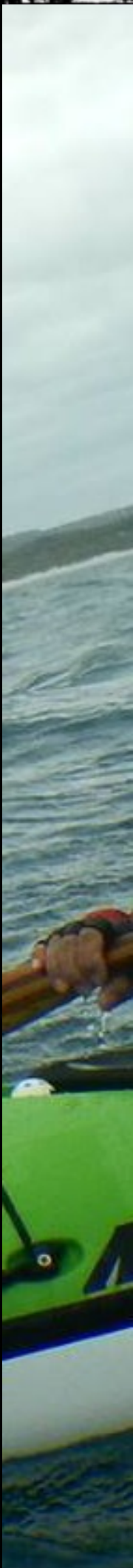
My Tahe Marine Bay Spirit has a skeg without rudder. On the first paddle of the 2016 symposium, I exerted a lot of energy struggling with edging and many sweep strokes to maintain course. The paddle was approximately 16km. I found the conditions challenging, however, I made it!

On the second day, I withdrew from the level 1 paddle, because I just didn't want to struggle. I didn't have the energy and again, I felt inadequate as I quickly lagged behind the group within the first 300m.

On the third day, I traded kayaks with Glen, who has a rudder on his Mirage 530 Sport. I entered the water with trepidation. I was in an unfamiliar kayak, in tsunami like conditions and concerned with lagging behind the group. I suppose if I had known the conditions, I might have withdrawn. However, I followed Gavin's instructions and stayed close in the safety of the group. It was very reassuring to be surrounded by so many competent and encouraging life savers.

Of approximately 25 kayaks, we had just one capsize. The wave was aimed at me apparently! I missed it by a metre. Kevin was quickly set upright by an assigned rescuer. The water was warm which made the prospect of my inevitable capsize more bearable. Images flashed through my mind of my kayak being returned with the lower torso sitting in the cockpit. Too many shark stories!

The tsunami conditions were 2.5m swells with many waves breaking around and under us. A couple of times, my paddle reached into space. A couple of times, I squealed in delight as I crashed into waves. I was focussed on keeping my kayak on track, never taking my eyes off Gavin, watching the waves and staying afloat. My fear level was – on a scale of 1 to 10 – about 5, maybe less because I wasn't thinking about feeling. A couple of times, I laughed hysterically as I nervously realised I was actually prevailing in such conditions. A couple of times, I even prayed to God, promising to be a good girl if allowed to survive.



Lunch near Mutton Bird Island brought relief and relaxation. Fellow club members were very supportive and complementary.

Returning with a following sea and increasing winds, hysteria overcame me again when, after paddling for what felt like just 15 minutes, we were within a few hundred metres of Cosy Corner. I had survived! – 12km of harrowing conditions at my skill level. I put my hands up into the air, yee hawing in delight only to feel the cold water in my cag sleeves sliding down into my armpits.

Yee Haw!

The trip boosted my confidence and triggered an adrenalin rush. I increased my kayaking experience, faced an unexpected challenge and prevailed. I'm feeling rather pleased with myself. "Whatever happened to me since last year?"

And I'm still a baby sea kayaker.

Yvonne Colledge



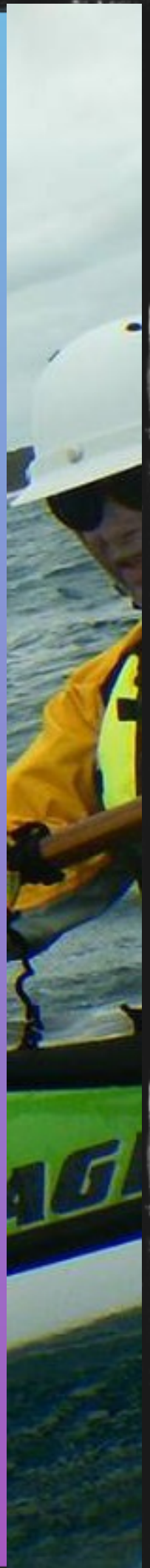
Yvonne heads for home

(Photo Tony Blake)



2016 Sea Kayak Symposium

(Photo Mark Thompson)



Paul Cooper ran a very successful training day with a very good turnout from members

Club Training Day at Hillarys boat harbour

Leader: Paul Cooper

Sunday 17 Jan 2016

I had been planning all week the best way to organize a successful and enjoyable rolling session. Also I was wondering what I would do if the response



Rolling skills

(Photo Pel Turner)

was greater than I had anticipated. The weather was looking great with the temperature sitting on 34 Celsius, perfect for getting wet.

I thought I would head down this Sunday morning early and be ready for the members attending, guess what? I got down at 8.00 and Wolfgang and others were already there. I no sooner had my kayak untied before people were all over the place. This is looking great I thought.

In total we had 28 people turn up for the training, we had Margaret Banks, Jacki and Ian Hollick, Wolfgang Wetzig, Yvonne and Glenn Colledge, Barry Roberts, Bruce Pilgram, Geoff Heasman a new member. Craig Bosch, Debbie Erasmus, Ian Viapree, Steve Forman, Graham Place, Pel Turner, Mat Erkers, Jill Sievenpiper, Kim

Palmer, Glenn Partridge, Yamin Ma, Judy Blight, Jo Foley, Lindsay Joll, Cal Gault, Nifty Jones, Richard Lailey. Hopefully I have not missed anyone out. If I have sorry.

The briefing was held at 9.00 on the lawn with a bit of shade. Firstly I divided the group into two groups, people who could not roll at all or were hit and miss, and in the other group, members that were experienced. I then appointed Judy, Jo and Steve to help me out with group one and in group Two Ian Hollick and Richard did the training, teaching rolling with the paddle under the front deck straps, Re-enter and roll, Rolling on the

opposite side plus the pry. As I said even if you learn one item on the list it is a good day.

In my group with the helpers things worked out very well, Glenn Colledge was helping Bruce and a roll was pulled off, well done. Judy, Jo and Steve were fantastic and without their help group one would not have worked. With a number of people I can see improvements each time they attempt to roll, it may not happen today but it is going to in the near future.

Pel Turner was out of action due to a sore knee but came along

anyway and took photos, thanks Pel that's what I call a valuable club member.

After two hours, group one took a break and headed out of the marina to the beach on the North wall to meet up with group two. On assembling as one group we then headed out to Cow Rocks and then back into the harbour.

This was what I would call a perfect day in all respects, as we all had a great day. Everybody learnt something plus we all had a brilliant day on the water.

Once we all loaded our kayaks onto the cars we went for coffee at Spinnakers.

I would like thank all the people who came along and the club members that helped with the training, you're the greatest.

Paul.



Ka-YAKING and cake

(Photo Pel Turner)



**Woodman Pt to Cliff Head
Trip Leader: Andrew Munyard
Sunday 24 January 2016**

The last trip I led with Linda, Royd and Al was a circumnavigation of Garden Island which turned into a marathon due to a 15knot head wind on the last leg. Getting back to Woodmans Point had taken three hours from the southern end of Garden Island and we were all pretty tired at the end of it. I was suprised then, to see Linda and Royd front up for my next trip. Al didn't show but he's probably somewhere on the other side of the world, holidaying!

This time I got the weather conditions just right; Wolfgang Wetzig, Jo Foley, Pel Turner, Linda Glover, Royd Bussell, Rob MacCraken, Russ Hobbs and I paddled west with a light easterly blowing. The wind continued to die and as it did it got very hot. At the halfway break people were rolling just to keep cool.

Unfortunately the wind was too light for a sail so I joined the others and paddled in beautiful conditions to the island. When we were about 1km from the shore a slight ripple was seen on the waters surface and heralded the beginning of the sea breeze. The breeze cooled us off and we had a pleasant break at the Cliff Head memorial, where trees provided us with some welcome shade.

Jo was looking forward to the return journey as she had not used her new Greenlander in a following sea, so she was keen to see how she and the boat would perform. Pel was in his new chine boat, a change from the Mirage with its rudder, so he was also interested to see how things would go.

As we left the island, the Duyfken sailed past heading north and looked a real sight with her sails set. Cliff Head is the site of the first European settlement in WA and with a bit of imagination the Duyfken allowed you to imagine what it would have been like all those years ago, how excited the settlers must have felt seeing a new ship carrying mail from home.

The wind was not much over 12 knots for our return and it created a poorly defined wind wave. Everyone commented about the difficulties they were having in the short wind generated swell as it was too small to get good surfing going. We made the return journey in good time and as we moved our boats up from the beach we noticed that the sound was a mass of white caps as the wind had strengthened in the short time we made landfall.

This was a very enjoyable paddle with the wind favouring us, making it a great day. You have to love it when the wind is in your favour both ways. I think I might be getting smarter!

The day was completed with a coffee and snacks in good company at the Woodman Point cafe.

