



WA SEA KAYAKER

June 2018

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WA Kayak Symposium. A Kiwi's perspective



Cervantes getaway



A great day out



A great location. Tips for making the most for the 2019 Symposium



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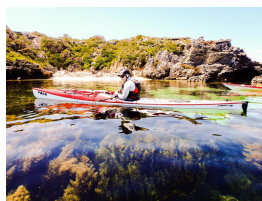
Mark Thompson enjoying a wave

Photo Mark Thompson

East coast Tassie



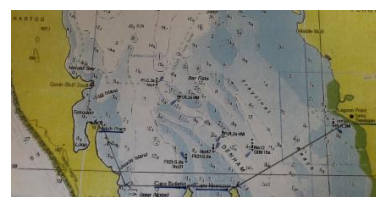
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Welcome to this Edition of

WA Sea Kayaker magazine

I **must** apologise for this late edition of the magazine. I have been busy with a house renovation and time has been hard to find to put the wonderful articles members have contributed together into a magazine. I encourage all members to continue the contributions and discover the writer within, to tell stories of their development as a sea kayaker or their adventures in sea kayaking. Perhaps you do other adventure activities, I would love to hear about it!

Whats Inside?

Paul Caffyn, was a guest speaker at the 2018 Symposium. Paul is a Kiwi and was the first person to paddle around Australia. Paul has written an article for the New Zealand Sea Kayaker magazine about the Symposium in the west and has allowed its reproduction in our magazine.

Richard Lailey reports on the successful club paddle weekend at Cervantes lead by Paul Cooper. These are great club weekends away and a great way to meet members. Are you going to come to the next weekend away?

Les Allen has been having lots of paddling fun over east, he and Jenny have been exploring the east coast of Tasmania with some incredible paddling experiences. To top it off, they joined some Tasmanian paddlers to paddle Macquarie Harbour and search for old ruins of old convict settlement. Catch their story to see if it they were succesful in their search.

Kim Palmer reports on a great paddle. Sometimes the simple things in life are the best!

Linda glover writes on the circumnavigation of Garden Island. This is a big trip of 32km. Find out if the wind came good and allowed sailors to hoist sails to make the last kilometers a bit easier.

The 2018 Sea Kayak Symposium was a great success and Richard Lailey visited Camp Grace before the symposium to check out the wonderful location. If you missed this years, read Richard's article and hopefully you will be inspired to attend Symposium 2019.

Do you have the latest weather information prior to going out for a paddle? Where can you find weather information for trip planning. Kevin Piper has put together a

comprehensive list for you to check out.

The good thing about kayaking is that it is a relatively cheap sport. Geoff Emery finds out that the holiday gods require payment if you are having a good time. Check out his report from Shark Bay.

The south coast can be a tricky place to paddle, weather and swell can work against you to keep you on the beach. Jill Sievenpiper had a week paddling Bremer Bay to Albany. Find out if she had any 'beach days'.

As I said before, Les is having a ball paddling new and exciting coastal passages on the east coast. Les lets us in on the fun with his report on paddling Jervis Bay to Batemans Bay on the NSW southern coast.



The club now has a social media presence with a Viber chat group for Perth paddlers. It will allow sea leaders to communicate changes in the paddling plan and for individuals to organise peer paddles at short notice. If you want to join, get the Viber app on your phone and let Callan know you want in.

Our other social media presence is Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SKCWA/>



Don't forget to visit the Club's web site at <http://www.seakayakwa.asn.au> which is regularly updated with photos and details of club events.

I hope you enjoy the magazine

Andrew

A tip for navigating this magazine

I have used hyperlinks from the Contents page to link to the stories. In Adobe Reader you can get back to the Contents page by using a back function which you can find under VIEW-PAGE NAVIGATION, but if you use windows it is Alt-left arrow and if you use a Mac it is command-left arrow. You may need to strike the key combination a few times if you have read a couple of pages of the magazine. Alternatively, you can use the page thumbnails by clicking on the thing that looks like two pieces of paper in the top left.

Overseas Reports

WA Sea Kayak Fest' 2018 by Paul Caffyn

The 2018 Western Australian Kayak Fest was held at Grace Camp, on the shore of Geographe Bay, near Busseton, some three hours drive south of Perth. Sandy Robson was chief organizer and leaned heavily on myself, and David Winkworth from NSW to attend.

Dave and Paul's Tiki-Tour

As attending the 'Fest' involved three flights for me from Hokitika to Perth, I put a lean on Dave to share the cost of a camper van for a week prior to the kayak fest, to allow some tiki-touring down to Margaret River and out east to Albany - a chance for me to visit some of the landings and overnights from nigh on 36 years ago, during the 1982 Round Australia Kayak Expedition.

In a four berth camper van, we started the tiki-tour from Cape Naturaliste, and slowly worked our way south and then east, driving out to wherever there was access to the coast.

A rugged granite basement ridge topped with a cover of sandy limestone forms that south-west coastline of WA. When the sea level was much lower than now, prevailing winds blew shell grit and sand into colossal dunes, which over about some squillion years turned slowly into limestone. The coastline is just so spectacular with the brick red granite forming the battered shoreline, which is topped by vertical and overhanging cliffs of grey and yellow limestone.

Really strong south-easterly winds prevailed for days, leaving a heavy ground swell and white-flecked ocean. Off Margaret River, one of the best-known surf breaks in the world, the wind was too strong for the board surfers, but perfect for kite surfers. So impressive to see these men and women with their colourful airborne kites, zipping out the back,



Dave hanging onto his hat as we walked down a boardwalk to the beach at the head of Peaceful Bay, Strong south-easterlies blowing.

then slicing up and down on the big surf breaks. Talk about gutsy. I wondered how the surfers could get their kites aloft after getting a thrashing in the white water, but then Dave and I watched a bloke pumping up the leading edges of his 'kite' with a foot pump, thus giving flotation!

After a night in a beach-side caravan park at August, close to Cape Leeuwin, we turned east for Albany, with side trips into Windy Harbour - which lived up to its name - Peaceful Bay, Ocean Beach near Denmark and finally Albany. We swam, walked



The leading marks which boaties (and kayakers) can now line up before entering the narrow reef-guarded channel leading to shore at Peaceful Bay. I wish they had been there in September 1982

the beautiful sheltered beaches and I spent a lot of time just gazing at the big seas, the white-capping chop and pondering how gutsy Freya, Stuart and Jason were in their solo paddling voyages along that exposed coast. At least I had Andy and Lesley as support crew for moral support.

For example it is 63 miles (100 kms) from Augusta to Windy Harbour, the first sheltered lee landing to the east. Reading back through my diaries, I launched at 1:35 am for that wee paddle, spending the first four hours in darkness. Best of all from this recent trip was getting in touch with Ron Stemp, who hosted Andy, Lesley and I at his Windy Harbour holiday cottage. After nigh on 36 years, Ron and his wife still had the postcard we mailed to him at the end of the trip, and his memories of our evening together were a lot sharper than mine.



No need for lawnmowers at the Ocean Beach caravan park.

The WA Sea Kayak Fest

Grace Camp is a 'caravan park', with camping under shade shelter trees by the beach, caravans and bunkhouses. Those paddlers camping had superb views of the bay and a 20 metre stroll to the water's edge. Workshops and lectures were held in a large room adjacent to the kitchen or outside under the trees.



From left, Paul, Sandy Robson (who took the selfie and Dave Winkworth, at the WA Kayak Fest.

Friday evening began with seven paddler pods launching at staggered intervals and heading west for a sunset paddle – an excellent time for getting to know those in your pod, while cruising on a nice calm sea.

After a BYO BBQ, a big projection screen was slung under a tree, and Dave Winkworth presented his Powerpoint (PPT) show on 'How to wrestle a crocodile and other useful skills', a gruesome at times account of how, on a small coral island off the North Queensland coast, he saved his paddling mate from the jaws of a rather large croc.

From Dave's Cape York Expedition article:

And then it happened. Arunas let out a cry - a half scream, half shout. He was on his feet, there was terror in his eyes as he looked at me. The surface around him was froth and foam, the sand all churned up. A big animal had him by the leg. Was it a shark? Was it a croc?

I jumped up and ran out into the water the 10 or so metres to him. Below the surface I could see the outline of this thing. It was a big crocodile, and it was trying to sweep Arunas off his feet in a death-roll.

Arunas stuck his fingers in its nostrils. It didn't let go. He put his hands in the croc's mouth, attempting to prise open the jaws, cutting his hand on a tooth. Still it wouldn't let go, it's teeth firmly embedded in Arunas' right leg. I straddled the croc's back and put my arms around its smooth hard belly and hung on.

Whether it was me on it's back or not, we'll never know - but it did



The outdoor setting for the WA paddle fest, with a home-made West Greenland skin kayak under scrutiny. Far right, behind the ladder is the screen slung from a tree, used for the magic evening PPT presentations.

let go. It shot through so powerfully with barely a flick of its tail, back out onto the reef from where it had come. I felt the curve of the croc's body as it spat me off. THIS was a big hard strong animal.

For more of that story go here:

<https://nswskc.wordpress.com/page/91/>

Prior to Dave's presentation was another good idea for KASK to pick up; this was screening the fest's photo competition digital entries; no need to find a wall to display print copies. Each category had a title shot, then each of the entries rolled through for some 20

seconds. They rolled through continuously, allowing judges to assess their choice for awards, and all those attending to make their own paddler's choice. Each category was assigned a separate judge, including Dave and myself, and this worked really well.

A broad mix of Saturday sessions all required loading kayaks and driving to various destinations to the south-west. Dave joined the 'Eco-Explore Cape Ecology Paddling with Eco Purpose!' paddle, led by Dr Ann Smithson and Sandy Robson. This has to be a first in my view for a kayak fest. Snorkels and masks were required for the underwater transects studying sea-grass and algae densities.

Following late arvo sessions under the trees, Greenland paddle building, simple food dehydration and sea kayak psychology, caterers provided hungry paddlers with pizza made on a trailer mounted wood-fired oven, with a good selection of Aussie beers and wines.

My Saturday PPT show was of the 2008 East Greenland paddle, again in the outdoor venue, after which the prizes for the photo competition were awarded - another lovely evening under the stars.

The Sunday program had the same format, with car shuttling for various



Paddlers preparing to launch for the Friday evening sunset paddle



WA expedition paddler Terry Bolland with Paul at Grace Camp.

paddling options, and afternoon on-land sessions, and afterwards Terry Bolland did a PPT show on a paddle across Canada.

After a few more sessions on the Monday morning, tents were dropped and the site clean up made, and farewells made to new paddling mates. Jointly organized by Paddle WA and Sea Kayak Club WA, it was a wonderful weekend, well organized by Sandy Robson, Paul Browne and Steve Foreman with some good ideas for KASK to pick up for its annual gathering.

Big mobs of thanks from Dave and I to Sandy Robson for enticing us into the hot climes of Western Australia.

And thanks to Dave for accompanying me and driving with our tiki-tour down to that gorgeous southern coast of WA.



Paul with Vicki and Finn McAuley after inscribing a copy of his Aussie book

Sydney - On the Way Home

Dave and I caught a train up to the Blue Mountains on the Tuesday, and spent a wonderful night catching up with Vicki and Finn McAuley. I hadn't seen Vicki since the Invercargill inquest over 10 years ago, and was keen to meet Finn who now at the age of 14 is a rather good rock climber and has been touring overseas to play soccer. Vicki and Finn made us feel like part of the extended McAuley family that evening, and I was pleased to be able to sign one of my Aussie books to them both.

Back in Sydney for the day, we visited the Darling Harbour National Maritime Museum, with a contact from Vicki to allow us to view Andrew's kayak. Unfortunately his kayak was way up high in storage racks, and we could only view from through a re-enforced glass window. Still pretty moving for us both, as we had both paddled with Andrew. In a glass case, we were able to view a replica of *Casper*, the 'housing' or solid fibreglass cover that Andrew pulled over the cockpit at night.



Andrew McAuley's kayak in storage at the Maritime Museum in Sydney

On the red kayak, only one of the two stainless steel rods, which allowed *Casper* to rotate forward, is clearly visible. Dave and I both feel certain that breakage of one of those two rods, three nights earlier, had led to the tragic VHF call for rescue that night off the entrance to Milford Sound.

What really brought home to me the gutsiness of Andrew's Tasman Crossing attempt was the size of his *Mirage* kayak. It looked to me just like a normal single cockpit kayak, and so small in comparison with the *Lot 4*, which is on public display on the ground floor of Shed 7 at the museum. The kayak used by Castrisson and Jones for their paddle across the Tasman.



Paul viewing Lot 4 on the ground floor of the Maritime Museum

Thanks to Paul Caffyn and the Journal of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers for permission to reproduce this article

Cervantes/Jurien Bay Weekend (15 to 17 September, 2017)

Organised by Paul Cooper (written by Richard Lailey)

Paddlers: Margaret Banks, Paul Cooper, John Di Nucci, Jo Foley, Callan Gault, Steve Haddon, Richard Lailey, Austen Mullen, Andrew Munyard, Kim Palmer, Glenn Partridge, Geoff Paull, Pel Turner, Ben Toohey and Wolfgang Wetzig.



Group Photo, Jurien Bay (by Pel Turner)

Well, if there was a single weekend to pick for our sea kayak trip to Cervantes and Jurien Bay, this had to be it. Despite a forecast of rain, there was virtually none! And on a scale of 0 to 12 on the Beaufort Wind Scale, the wind conditions were mostly zero! The weather was idyllic, and could have been mistaken for balmy and subtropical if it hadn't been for the cool nights.

We stayed at the RAC Cervantes Holiday Park which has recently been refurbished with a brand new camp kitchen, activity room and 11 beautiful cabins (with verandas and BBQs), all looking out over a stunning outdoor swimming pool. The onsite Sea Shells Cafe provided breakfasts, snacks, coffee and cakes hand-baked by the local chef, Debbie.

The cost per night for the unpowered sites turned out to be \$31.50 for each of the two nights, which included a 10% group discount arranged by Linda (Glover), and less for those of us who stayed longer. Some enterprising paddlers even made a profit, Paul managing to sell two Greenland paddles during the course of the weekend!

Friday. Geoff was the first to arrive at our designated non-powered camping area on the Thursday night, which he followed up with a short

early morning solo paddle to the three Cervantes Islands on the Friday morning. By the time the rest of us arrived, he was sitting in his chair outside his palatial 2-room Coleman tent, clearly approaching the advanced stages of "veging out". The rest of us arrived in dribs and drabs over the course of the afternoon and evening with our more modest camping gear, Steve arriving well after dark. I always enjoy "setting up" time, when there is an opportunity to walk around and compare camping equipment, and check out the



Morning Fog at our Campsite (by Geoff Paull)

various camper trailers, caravans and motor homes in the park!

John was an unexpected but welcome addition to the team - Paul kindly offering to share his tent site! And just when we thought Geoff had won the prize for best accommodation, Cal arrived with his Jayco Expanda caravan complete with ensuite, and settled into the powered site area.

However, to see how to really camp in style, we joined Jo, Pel, Wolfgang and Margaret for sundowners on the veranda of their very nice 2 bedroom cabin (our thanks to Margaret for plying us with wine)! Later, we all walked down to the local Sea Breeze cafe for fish, pizza and chips, finishing off with a glass of red and a beer back at our camp site, sitting around our imaginary camp fire.

At some point during the evening, Kim said he reckoned the town of Cervantes must have been named after a wreck. As it turns out, there is a plaque at the local Thirsty Point lookout

confirming this: "The town of Cervantes was named after an American whaling ship, the "Cervantes", a 30 m long, two masted, wooden barque which ran aground near the Cervantes Islands on 29 June 1844. It is thought that the whaling ship was named after the famous Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes. The ship was never recovered and is still lying in 2 metres of water. On a calm day the outline of the ship can still be seen."

Saturday. We awoke to an early and raucous avian dawn chorus (under surprisingly foggy skies) before commencing our Saturday morning car shuffle to Jurien Bay. We set off from our local beach at Cervantes at around 9.40 am with Cal offering to lead the paddle as part of his AC instructor's qualification. Unfortunately Pel had to turn back after about half an hour due to a nagging chest infection.

After hugging the coast most of the way, we stopped at our half-way point, Hill River, for a half-hour lunch break. Cal beached first and, despite his perfect landing, was almost devoured by a local dog on his lunchtime walk! This was followed by Andrew and Margaret each perfectly



Waiting in the Surf Break at Boullanger Island (by Geoff Paull)

demonstrating how to side surf into the beach. The rest of us landed pretty well without incident!

The river mouth turned out to be the locals' meeting spot, and we were soon joined by a variety of people ranging from swimmers, dog-walkers and picnickers to fishermen, trail-bikers and 4WD drivers. The second half of the paddle was just about as relaxing as the first, the light winds unfortunately providing little opportunity for those of us with sails. We finally arrived at the



Jo and Austen at the double (by Geoff Paull)

Marina at around 3.00 pm, where Glenn entertained us with a few Greenland rolls. This was a very cruisy day with glassy seas and sunny skies, covering a distance of 26.5 km (as recorded by Paul's GPS).

The evening commenced once again with sundowners on the cabin veranda followed by a very relaxing dinner at the Cervantes Bar and Bistro. Sadly, this was also the night when the Eagles suffered their humiliating grand final qualifying match defeat against the Sydney Giants (125 to 58).

Sunday. The day's paddle commenced at the Jurien Bay Jetty with Andrew offering to lead the paddle as he was also studying for his AC instructor's qualification. Pel was again unfortunately unable to paddle with us, but offered to take some group photos of our departure before heading back to Perth. Our trip began at 9.00 am and, after a brief encounter with some dolphins, we headed out to Favourite Island (3.7 km) for a short landing and exploratory visit. Someone aptly produced some chocolate "Favourites" to share while we explored the island.

We then paddled counter-clockwise round to the back of the island and then headed south towards Boullanger Island (passing its well-known "Spade" along the way), with Ben in his single Mirage and Austen and Jo in their double leading the way. The water was absolutely crystal clear! An executive decision was made to land at Whitlock Island (about 4.5 km from Favourite Island) as the men had spotted 3 bikini-clad "inhabitants" on the beach. We landed on the eastern shore for lunch and to explore the island (no-one produced

any chocolate “Whitlocks” - ouch)! While most of us were dreaming of spending the night on this idyllic “desert” island, Paul and Wolfgang (Richard looking on) attempted to chat up the natives (probably trying to flog them a paddle)! It soon transpired that they were local ladies from the mainland, and were able to point out the names of the various reefs and islands around us.



Boullanger Island and its “spade”, with Whitlock Island and Escape Island in the distance (taken from the internet).

Following a brief surfing opportunity after leaving the island, the wind finally started to get up and we decided to head home via the south-eastern side of Boullanger Island, some of us with our sails up. Another surfing opportunity presented just north of Island Point on the mainland before arriving back at the Jurien Bay Pier at around 12.30 pm, covering a total distance of 15.5 km.

After washing down our boats and gear, we sat by the water and ate pies from the local bakery before heading back to Perth. Geoff and Richard returned to Cervantes for the night, Geoff leaving on Monday morning and Richard staying on for a few more nights to paddle out to the Cervantes Islands and to explore the wild flowers at Mount Lesueur, and the Stockyard Gully Caves and Lake Indoon.

Jurien Bay is one of the windiest places in WA, and yet we “jagged” what can only be described as a wonderfully laid back and enjoyable weekend where conditions were near-perfect; crystal clear seas, stunning turquoise waters, and safe and easy beach landings – it doesn’t get much better than that! In total contrast, the following weekend turned out to be an absolute blockbuster - about as wet and stormy as you can get!

Many thanks to Paul Cooper for setting up the weekend and for organising the amazing weather. Thanks also to Cal and Andrew for leading the paddles, and to Geoff and Pel for the photos. A special thanks to Linda for sorting out the accommodation and for booking our evening meal on the Saturday night, even though she knew she wouldn’t be coming!



Sunset from the Campsite Beach (by Richard Lailey)

The Hidden Jewel Hobart to Bicheno

Les Allen

When you think of paddling Tasmania, people always think Bass Straight, West Coast or Tasman Peninsula but there is a low level hidden jewel in Tassie. It's the Hobart to Bicheno paddle. This paddle doesn't require high level training or exceptional skills. In fact this trip requires no plan and time to see the detail if you want to get the most out of it. Group dynamics in all trips are important and this one in particular needs that laid back slow mentality. We set out for our whole Tassie experience to be like that and to date it certainly has been as we have met some wonderful people from the Southern Tribe of sea kayakers.

Greg the Tassie club president stored our vehicle and looked after us so we could launch at Kingston knowing our gear was safe. Being very well organised professionals Greg only had to do two trips to the beach, which reminds me I still owe him some wine for his help. Maybe I could tell him the wine is in WA and he has to come and visit us to get it ... or maybe not. Anyhow we got away late and headed for the Iron Pot at the mouth of the Derwent before heading north towards Sloping Island. As we turned north we came across seals and penguins, neither of

which I was expecting to find here but hey, it was cute.

After 30 km we could see the beach we wanted to land on but out of nowhere a strong headwind suddenly picked up and built to 20 knots. It wasn't forecast for that direction and strength, but in this area 200mt can mean completely different winds as they funnel around all the high hills and suddenly build up speed in funnels. The last 6 km took over an hour and a half getting us in at 6.30 after a lot of swearing. But all good as it was the perfect beach and we were tucked into the corner. Unfortunately we had no idea about what was lurking in the bush nearby.

Dinner done, we packed all out

food into the boats and headed off to bed. Jen brought in a block of chocolate for an evening snack- Yumm. Then we put the little bit of chocolate left in the side pocket. About midnight we woke to a scratching noise and realised something was trying to dig through our tent. I shot outside to see a possum trying to get through the tent. No problem, I shooed it away and we removed the chocolate from the pocket so all good. Off to sleep. Sometime later Jen woke me again. There was a possum on top of our new \$1200 tent. Well I saw red and leaped out with murderous intent. Possum gloves were now a must have accessory. It leapt from the tent



Sailing through narrow gaps added to the excitement

and scurried away with me after it. I lunged at the possum but it ducked away into the bush, leaving me in the sand looking stupid. I checked the fly with the torch but it appeared to be ok. Well we had rain forecast for the next night so that would be the test. Possums are not my favourite animal and fortunately we had no further incidents.

The next day we headed for Dunalley and had to get to the channel at the tide change so we wouldn't have to push against a 5 knot current. We were running a bit late so we had to really put in some effort. Well that's what we thought. As we turned around the point the wind started picking up so it was up with the sails. Then the wind really started to pick up as we moved down the funnel. Yahoo! 24 knots right behind us. We were flying, three paddle strokes and you're on, flying down these short waves and punching the tops of the waves in front. What a hoot! I love my sail! Once through the channel we headed for the spit and found a beautiful grassy camp site. When you are from WA and used to sand and coastal heath for camping this was luxury. Also the vista, green patchwork hills, turquoise green and silvery grey water with black grey or white white clouds on a blue



blue background was impressive. Polaroid sun glasses do help with the colours but the contrasts were brilliant. What we did notice were these trails in the grass and wondered if they were cattle trails. No, they were wombat trails because as twilight descended all these wombats came wandering down the trail in front of us, heading for the paddocks up the hill. Definitely not endangered here.

Day 3 saw us heading round the spit and cruising down a 10km beach, stopping in a turquoise bay for lunch before rounding Cape Bougainville, where we came across caves, rock gardens and gauntlets. I started cruising through the rock gardens under sail with paddle in one hand and camera in the other. A couple of sneaky bigger waves hit from the right hand side when I was looking through the camera. Refocusing on my surroundings I was off balance trying to brace one handed with my paddle across the deck. If the paddle is across your cockpit you just have to push down so the blade hits both sides of the rim. With a Greenland paddle the blade extended is automatically flat to the water giving a sort of brace if you are tipping that way. It worked enough to stop me going over and I wobbled along till I gained control. The good thing was I got the shot. The big

gauntlet was sucking out at the end to rocks 30cm out of the water. Timing is everything but as I was about to go through a big set came through, curled and dumped on the rocks. Hmm, loaded new carbon boat, did I want to risk it? I saw the opportunity but backed off thinking it was too much risk and then another big set come through settling the argument in my head as it broke most of the way through. What a hoot though. We spent far too long playing in this area and eventually headed off down the coast. We came across a deserted beach near a river



The decision to go through the gap was settled as another big set came through

mouth and as it was getting late we stopped on a beautiful elevated sand platform, which we later learnt was a bird sanctuary. When we walked out to the point we saw lots of hooded plovers. Jen very carefully set out to find a nest as they just lay their eggs in a small hollow on the beach. It didn't take long to find 2 beautiful spotted eggs. We carefully backed off so as not to disturb them and headed back to camp.

The next day was Xmas day but we had a problem. We could not resupply in Orford. We had 2 to 3 days food but were low on water and really needed food for 6 to 7 days. We decided to stay put for the day and head in on Boxing Day. Just by chance I checked the weather and it had changed significantly. We now had 30 knots of north east forecast for the next 2 days. If we stayed put we would get blasted so we decided to pack up and head for Maria Island about 15km away so we could camp in the lee. There was water at the camp site so that problem was solved and we had food for 3 days but that would clean us out completely. About half way across we were hit by a sudden strong headwind. Hunker down and plod on. Eventually we got around the point to Encampment Cove camp ground. Bugger. A rock landing with a 1.5mt earth wall to scramble up. Oh well, not much we could do so I got out early and put some sea weed on the rocks to pull my boat up onto. The bank had rocks embedded in it so it wasn't a major problem getting gear and boats up to the grassy flat ground with some bushes for wind protection. Perfect.

Boxing Day on Maria Island. Hmm, no wind. Oh well we knew enough about Tassie to know that could change in a few minutes so we headed off to see the convict ruins and explore the island. The ruins were great and we could not believe the number of people who lived in that area. The other thing that surprised us was how small the convict cells were. We decided

to walk to the point and came over a small depression only to catch two wombats in an 'amorous embrace'. It was like, do you look away, make a noise or just stand there? We chose to just stand there and when they finished she walked straight up to us and then down her burrow just in front of us. He fluffed around for a while then eventually walked up and down the same burrow. Jen immediately asked, "I wonder how many people have seen wombat sex?" But what surprised me was it was 12.00 midday and they are nocturnal. Maybe they had a big day out like our kids do at night time, and finished off with sex at



midday like some of our kids do at midnight. The mind boggles. To top off our day we saw a Cape Barron Goose and heaps more wombats that evening. What we didn't see was any wind. So much for the forecast.

Of course the next day the wind arrived as promised and it blew 30 knots. We spent the day in the lee walking the beaches. We came across one spot where there were about 30 of the same beautiful shells. Looking up and down the beach I could not find a reason why they were all in the one spot. Also when I looked closely at the shells they were all different. I could not

find one with the same pattern but at first sight they all looked the same. It was kind of enlightening as I was really enjoying taking this trip slow and looking at the detail. We have both laughed at so many little things that I would never have seen in the past as it was always about the goal and not looking around. On this trip, to really enjoy it, you have to look into where you are. Notice the clouds, colours, great vistas and incredible wild life.

5.00am cold and raining. The forecast was for 20 knots of head wind and we had 20km to go to Orford for a resupply and then another 10 km after that. Normally the wind is at its lowest early in the morning which is why we were up at 5.00am. I opened the fly and instantly about 20 mosquitos flew in. We had breakfast in the rain and when I walked to the boats I discovered that the earth bank was now a mud bank. As I climbed down, the rocks we used for grip were getting covered in mud, making them very slippery. Ah well, the joys of sea kayaking in Tassie. It rained the whole time as we packed and then headed off into a grey smudge. When we packed the tent the mosquitos were still inside so I pushed very hard as I rolled it up. Payback. I like kayaking in the rain and was snug in my boat. The surrounding hills were a dark grey smudge on a light grey smudge. As we rounded the headland and headed for Orford the wind was only about 12 knots and with our sails fully reefed felt we were getting some assistance even though



Go or stay? Strong winds were forecast for later that day

we were sailing slightly into a head wind.

About half way to Orford the cloud gave way to sun and a beautiful day. Garry Forrest met us at Orford for a coffee which was nice and we headed 10 km further up the bay to great white beach with grass at the back. There were some people camped there so we popped in to say hi to our new neighbours. They told us it was private property and that their friend knew the owner, not them. We went down to the beach and made camp on the beautiful grass. About sunset a vehicle arrived at our tent with a gruff sounding bloke saying, "Hello, is anyone there?" I climbed out of the tent and asked if he was the owner and shook hands with a stern looking fellow. The best defence is a strong attack so I explained we were from WA paddling the coast and were only staying one night. The stern face disappeared and I got a "Wow, that's awesome! No problem staying the night have a great trip." So far all the Tassie people I've met have been great and very laid back.

The next day we had slight head winds and a coast of bays and little rocky headlands. Bit of a ho-hum day really and ended up at a river mouth where one of the locals explained the people there hate campers and suggested we camp on an island in the middle of the river. Not the best camp site we had had and not the best day we had had, as so far we had been spoilt.

The next morning we had to make a decision. The forecast was BOM gale warning, Willy Weather 24 knots, Windy 27 to 34 knots. The wind graph was vertical from about an hour's time. It was the first time we had westerlies forecast and the next day was head winds. We only had a 24km easterly crossing to Schouten Island so we thought we might get half way before getting smashed. The only problem was the

funnel. The camp site was between two hills with a 1 km wide channel between the island and mainland, that will funnel the wind and the waves as the water also gets shallower. Oh well, won't be too bad !

We headed off with bright sun in our faces and it was really hot as we were dressed for a wet crossing. Then it started raining. The sun was still in our face, just rain from behind. The rain made it nice to paddle and we were happy, then the clouds caught up and it was cold. Not to worry as the rain stopped and it was then humid and warm. Not bad for the first half an hour. The wind started to pick up as did the wind wave and we were off and flying. Yahoooooo- as the wind picked up you didn't even have to paddle to catch some incredible rides. Awesome was the word till the wind started shifting to SW and strengthening. Jen was starting to have trouble with the sail as she is only 60kg and was going



New year eve celebrations, Tasmanian style!

to go over if she didn't put down her sail. The wind just kept increasing. We were most of the way across when the wind started really pumping. Twice I saw the whole white cap on the big sets get completely blown off so the wind gust had to be well over 30 knots. To make matters worse we had to head more across wind to get to the southern shore line of the island. As we got closer the waves started to steepen up. The big sets were only 2.5 to 3 mt max but they were so steep I thought any minute now one was going to curl and dump. Now it was dodge the big white cap. Jen was better at it than me as twice I got caught by the big sets. It was a case of keeping look out and slowing down or speeding up. But some just came from nowhere. I looked right and it was oh shit it's going to break, it's going to break, then a huge white cap would



pitch forward at shoulder height. Throw the paddle through and hold on. The boat would surface like a wobbly submarine and you would fall off the back of the wave. Jen said she saw the big white caps



hit me twice and thought I would go over for sure. I did too, but I didn't tell her that. I just smiled with my "I'm tough grin".

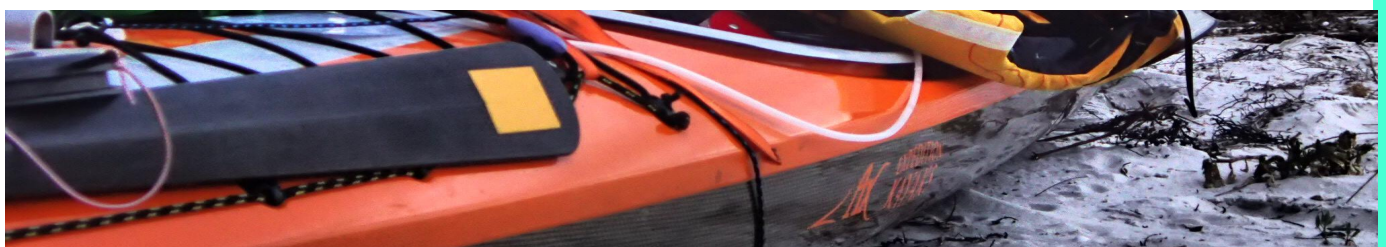
When we got to shore the beach was as good as I remembered it but last time we had it to ourselves whereas this time it was almost full of people. They run a sea taxi from Coles Bay so there were groups of bushwalkers and campers. Mutter mutter, but what could you do? They even have a caretaker who turned out to be a really nice young lady with whom we got on really well.

The next day was New Year's Eve and we climbed Bear Hill which gave us a great view of the coast and Freycinet Peninsular. That night we were invited to join the bushwalkers for New Year's Eve drinks but the guys down the road were really getting into it. Check out the orange man in the tutu. Jen got to see the penguins land at about 10.30 which was a high light for her.

New Years Day 2018. No wind, no swell, and the amazing cliff line. The pictures tell the best story but we played in rock

gardens, caves and could paddle up and touch the base of the cliffs. What a start to the new year. We felt so privileged and the pictures don't give you the feeling of being so close to such high cliffs. To top off the day we had an albatross just about land on top of us and then pose for some pictures. Wow, what a day.

We had 3 great nights on Schouten Island but it was time to head off for Bicheno. We wandered up the peninsular and landed at Friendly Beaches, which, as the name suggests, were quite friendly to us with a very small surf landing. That evening while walking along the beach we were amazed at the number of isopods on the beach. Every beach has macroinvertebrates but this was amazing. Unfortunately 13 days after we started we landed at Bicheno. We had rung the surf club to see if we could leave the boats there and they kindly agreed to open up for us so we could leave the boats and catch a bus for Hobart. By taking it slow we had the time to see it all and what a great trip it turned out to be.



Two Rocks to Yanchep

Kim Palmer



Having led two paddles recently where nothing much happened – we didn't visit exotic places, no one needed rescuing, no equipment was damaged – I thought it would be a waste of time to write a report. But then I thought – did everyone return with smiles? was the company enjoyable? did at least one person get to extend him/herself a bit more? – and the answer was yes to all. To me paddling, like life, is not about the odd big moment, but the sum total of all the small events that weave together to make it such a rewarding pastime. So here goes.

Then, the next weekend, 5 November, Richard L, Brian G, Paul C, Linda G, Royd B, Wolfgang W, Margaret B, Paul R and I did the run from Hillarys to Trigg and return. Keeping close to the coast to shelter from the 20 knot easterly, we made reasonable time to Trigg, but the anticipated wind shift to the south and the fast run home never eventuated, though the sailors seemed to make use of it. It was a pleasure to welcome new club member Paul Robertson to his first club paddle. All in all another good day on the water. May there be many more.

Sunday 29 October five of us, Paul C, Richard L, Margaret B, Glenn P and I set off from Two Rocks Marina with the intent of landing at Yanchep Lagoon and returning. Given the 12 knot southerly and 3 metre swell making a beach landing a tricky proposition, we decided just to push as far as someone decided they had had enough and run back with the waves. The trip back, as expected, was terrific. It was good to see Margaret pushing herself (in safe company) and I got one of my best all time wave rides. The coffee shop overlooking the harbour wasn't that shabby either.

Kim



Enjoying a break at Yanchep lagoon

Garden Island Circumnavigation (31 km) - 22 Oct 2017

by Linda Glover

Paddlers: Paul Browne (Sea Leader), Andrew Munyard, Jill Sievenpiper, Dave Oakley, Steve Haddon, Austen Mullen, Sandy Robson, Des Cook, ~~Royd~~ Bussell and Linda Glover

Weather: Seas: <1m; Swell: SW 1m; Wind: 8kn ESE tending WNW around midday and SW in the mid afternoon.

I still had the pain of the last circumnavigation of Garden Island imprinted in my mind when I decided to sign up for this trip. On that occasion we had to paddle the last 12 km of a 37 km trip back to Woodman Point in a 15kn headwind! Given I hadn't done a decent paddle for 7 months I was feeling a bit hesitant, but with an exceptionally good BOM forecast for the day I couldn't resist.

We departed Palm Beach, Rockingham, around 8.45 am after a few adjustments were made to the footrest in Austen's double kayak to accommodate Sandy. Setting off in a light 8kn ESE we made our way under the causeway to the SW tip of Garden Island. From here we paddled inside the reef, close to shore, for another 5km to the World War II bunker for our morning tea break.

It was absolutely magic paddling along the western side of Garden Island in millpond conditions with crystal clear water. Some of the group enjoyed skirting the small waves/wash near the edge of the shore, whilst others cruised along, chatting and taking photos! Sandy was enjoying the ride in the front of the double.



Paul Browne in a reflective mood, just south of Herring Bay

Photo: Sandy Robson

It was nice just to take in the beauty and serenity of the environment without having to contend with the big swell that frequently rolls in on this side of the island. This is what sea kayaking is all about!

The next stop was Herring Bay where we had lunch at the usual spot by the BBQ. The wind had shifted to a WNW before lunch which was perfect for the remaining 16 km paddle back to Palm Beach, especially for those with sails.



Sailing along the Eastern side of Garden Island

Photo: Des Cook

After rounding the NW tip, we paddled offshore from the eastern side of the island before stopping for our last break, just north of the naval base.

By 3pm the wind had turned to a 10kn SW, perfect for paddling the last few kms back to Palm Beach where the group arrived around 3.15 pm with still enough time for a coffee and cake at the Palm Beach café.

Many thanks to Paul Browne for leading the trip and the others for their camaraderie.

A Whale of a Time in Dunsborough

Richard Lailey
17-24 October 2017



Thursday 18 October. I'm standing on the viewing platform at Sugarloaf Rock looking out at the raw yet beautiful Indian Ocean below me! Next to me is Blair Randford and a photographer with a tripod and camera, and a lens as long as my arm. They are hoping to photograph orcas (or killer whales) which have been seen in the area where, Blair tells me, a pod recently ambushed and killed a humpback whale! I had no idea orcas could be found around here!

Sugarloaf rock is one of the region's many spectacular coastal landforms. It's a towering granite rock that emerges from the Indian Ocean very close to the mainland. Its ocean side is battered by relentless seas and the rock is separated from the coast by just a narrow channel of wild water; the area is home to a variety of wildlife, birds and a resident pod of bottlenose dolphins. The Cape to Cape walk trail also passes through here and it's a pleasant walk south to Yalingup, and an easy 3 km walk north to the Cape Naturaliste lighthouse via a coastal path and boardwalk with plenty of benches to sit on and admire the spectacular views.

Blair then tells me about a sea lion colony just north of Bunker Bay and goes on to talk about the Bremer Canyon Marine "Hot Spot" located about 60 kilometres offshore from Bremer Bay. There was a documentary titled "The Search for the Ocean's Super Predator" by David Riggs and Leighton de Barros which was televised a few years ago, which told us about white pointers and the marine life in the Canyon. Apparently, you can see the biggest aggregation of orcas in the Southern Hemisphere there, as well as sperm whales, pilot whales, beaked whales, sharks, dolphins, tuna, giant oceanic sun fish, seals, sea lions and a wide variety of marine birds. January to February is best for orcas and March to April is

best for sperm whales, so in mid-March you may be lucky to see both!

This biodiversity hot spot exists because of a massive deep sea fuel deposit leaking into the water column. This hydrocarbon pocket under the seabed fertilises a huge area of the surrounding ocean and, over time, sparks a food chain rarely seen anywhere else in the world. There are daily tours run by Naturaliste Charters from Bremer Bay during late January to mid-April. They cost \$385 per person (which also includes your food for the day) and Blair often helps out with these tours. In fact Blair, who is very passionate and knowledgeable about marine life, has an instagram site called Sharky Aerials which has some great footage of whales and sharks.

So, why I am I here? Well, a couple of years ago a book belonging to Paul Cooper was being passed around at coffee after one of our Hillarys peer paddles titled "Kayaking Around Australia" by Andrew Gregory. It's a fantastic book with some stunning photographs and lots of detailed information about places to paddle around Australia, including WA. So, I went straight out and bought myself a copy – and like many books, it gathered dust on my bookshelf until recently I dug it out and found inspiration to come here to paddle with the whales.

Yesterday I drove down from Perth and camped overnight at Camp Grace where I was welcomed by Wendy and Jurien. They have given me tent site 1 which is just a few metres from the beach – it's a cracker of a spot and I can see I'm going to be very happy here for the next 7 days!

After saying goodbye to Blair, on the way back to the car I stop to admire the beautiful lines of parallel waves as they march in from the Indian Ocean and crash hard and frothy in a mass of

Sugarloaf Rock



Nauti-Craft catamaran



Whale watching boat



Bunker Bay



Meelup beach
Entrance to underwater observatory
Bussellton jetty (above)



white water against the rocks at the shore.

I then head out to Cape Naturaliste where there are amazing views, coastal paths and lookouts, and a lighthouse and shop to explore. The grounds are currently undergoing renovations, unfortunately, but the lighthouse and shop are open, and a café should be up and running in 2018, in time for the 2019 Kayak Symposium.

Afterwards I head down to Bunker Bay for a coffee at the beach cafe, and to check out how easy it will be to land my kayak and carry it up to the car park when I paddle from Dunsborough on Saturday. It's about a 100 m walk up from the beach via a wooden boardwalk, so I will need my kayak wheels!

Next stop is Eagle Bay and then Point Piquet, Meelup Beach and Castle Rock – they are all nice spots. At Point Piquet I talk to a group of 4 whale watchers. They are part of an official roster that counts whales every 2 hours all day for the 3 months from September through to October. They will be replaced by another group at midday. I also check out the Dunsborough township and select a launch spot for Saturday. It's pretty shallow here but I should be OK if I take off around HW (about 10.30 am). I also check out the beginning of the coastal cycle path that runs from here to Port Geographe via Camp Grace.

Back at the tent I have lunch and then cycle about 12 km to the (heritage listed) Busselton Jetty along the scenic cycle path. I've been wanting to visit the underwater observatory at the end of the jetty for several years but never got around to it – so now's the time. The ticket costs \$35 which

includes a train trip both ways (the jetty is 1.8 km in length – the longest jetty in the southern hemisphere) so I opt to walk there and catch the train back.

On the way there are information boards, viewing spots above and below the walkway, swim platforms and lots of people fishing. Amazingly I see a sea turtle swimming about 200 m from the jetty, but can't make out what sort it is. It's about a metre in length! At the end of the jetty there are some life size whale murals and a lighthouse light and "selfie" direction dial which is being heavily utilised by tourists, and more information boards giving you a detailed history of the jetty. You can also join an underwater helmet walk tour or a dive and snorkeling tour here.

The underwater observatory tour guide really knows his stuff and takes us down slowly through 5 levels where in places you can still see parts of the original wooden piles. However, due to storms earlier in the week the water has been heavily stirred up and visibility is only a couple of metres. But the organisers have thankfully thought of this, and on the bottom level we are issued with a pair of 3D virtual reality glasses which turn the



Camp Grace beach

observatory into an amazing 3D vista with beautifully clear water, lots of fish, divers (one of them being our tour guide) and even “mermaids”. The views are mesmerising, and we are reluctant to hand them back!

At the end of the tour I ask the guide about the turtle and he reckons it was most likely a loggerhead - apparently there have been other similar reports. It's rare to find them this far south, so it probably drifted here on the Leeuwin Current. I then take the train back to the beach (it travels at about walking speed) and cycle back to my tent against a darkening sky and a strong head wind. Fortunately, I recently followed Paul Cooper and upgraded to an e-bike so this is no problem. In fact, an e-bike really does take the pain out of those 20-25 knot plus headwinds when you cycle back to your kayak before a near-shore solo down-winder!

The camp, which I have so far had virtually to myself, is now overrun with weekend visitors and a team from Channel 9 in their Wicked Camper vans. They are filming for a TV program on budget holiday accommodation in WA and will stay until Sunday morning.

After dinner around a camp fire lit by Jurien, I gaze at the night sky – it's an absolute stunner as it's a new moon, and the Milky Way stars are about as bright as I've ever seen them. We watch for shooting stars but, sadly, no luck! Curiously the Milky Way was named after Hera, the Greek Goddess of Love and Marriage, who as legend would have it, sprayed milk from her breasts across the sky - you really do have to hand it to the Ancient Greeks, they had incredibly vivid imaginations!

Friday 19 October. I decide to take a rest day, as yesterday was pretty full on. It is sunny and warm, and there is no wind. It's a great opportunity to relax, chill out and soak up the local ambience – and to make some progress on my reading book: Shark Bay (through four centuries 1616 to 2000) – A World Heritage Area by Hugh Edwards, another of those amazing books that has been gathering dust on my bookshelf for a number of years. I see a mother duck and her ducklings waddle down to the water's edge and swim in a line along the beach. They are so cute – and I'll be seeing them do this every morning

during my stay!

In the afternoon I decide to take a walk along the beach and I arrive back to find a round lump about 25 cm in diameter under the centre of my tent. I tap and prod it but it but it doesn't move. I scramble underneath the ground sheet and eventually discover it's a bobtail skink. I try prodding and coaxing it with my new Gearlab “Nuka” – ironically this is the first time I've used it. After about half an hour of pushing and shoving, it finally moves and disappears. But an hour later it's back in exactly the same spot, so I decide to place an inverted box over it and walk around it for the time being, thinking that it will eventually move off – right? No wrong!

Saturday 20 October. Another beautiful day with almost no wind, but the night was really cold (as was the previous night). And I recall a few nights some years ago when my wife (Karen) and I stayed here with friends over Easter - the days were warm but the nights were freezing!

I drop my kayak off at Dunsborough, drive up to Bunker Bay and cycle back to my kayak. I meet a very nice couple sitting near my launch site. After chatting to them for a while I find out that they are locals - avid surfers and also Jehovah Witnesses. They give me a brochure on what to do and what you need in the event of a crisis. Crisis – what crisis? Well, for starters, the trees and bush around the area apparently present a huge fire hazard! Testament to this is the fire of 2009 that ripped through 150 hectares of bush land and came within 50 m of the Cape Naturaliste lighthouse and 300 m of the Bunker Bay Resort, the latter requiring the evacuation of 300 guests and 70 staff.

I finally set off at around 11 am and head out to sea, aiming for the whale watching boat (operated by Naturaliste Charters, the same company that runs the Bremer Canyon tours). It turns out they are close to a small group of buoys moored approximately 2.5 km out from Meelup Beach.

I eventually catch up and put my flat earth sail up so that I can be seen more easily. I chat with some of the passengers on the boat and sit back and enjoy the whale show. I follow the boat around for about an hour and eventually it spots another pod of whales some distance away and rushes off for a look before heading back to its launch spot at the

Yacht Club in Dunsborough. I am now left on my own for a couple of hours. It is an amazing feeling, just sitting near the buoys (which I can hang on to) waiting for the whales to pass; rather than wasting effort paddling to them, I try and be smart and wait for them to come to me. I can see them all around me heading south but they don't come to me at all – always passing some distance away, and by the time I paddle to them, they have disappeared.

After a while it dawns on me that these buoys



must mark the location of the HMAS Swan, which the whales would obviously be avoiding – doh! No wonder they weren't passing very close! The Swan, by the way, was a 113 m long by 21 m high destroyer escort that was scuttled in 1997 to create a wreck dive site and an artificial reef. It's now a major dive site which, according to the dive operators, attracts about 15,000 dives every year (that's an average of about 40 dives per day!), and is home to around 100 species of fish.

I move to a spot about 0.5 km closer to the shore and I see some whales pass about 1 km further offshore, and when I move offshore, another pod passes about 1 km inshore. When I stay where I am another pod passes further inshore – well, that's Murphy's Law for you! By now a fresh SE'ly sea breeze has started to come in and I decide to paddle under sail to Bunker Bay. The very short waves provide some surprisingly nice runs and I arrive at the beach at around 4 pm. On the way in

I see some army bunkers built into the cliffs and now see how the bay presumably got its name!

Back at the camp site Jurien gives me a brief tour of the facilities. There are 12 powered tent sites, several caravan sites and 3 onsite cabins (really just old tear drop caravans with annexes) which Jurien is hoping to replace next year with modern cabins with en suites. There are also plans to upgrade the house and office where Jurien and Wendy live. The two dormitories (no dunnies or showers) which can each sleep about 24 people

are immaculate, as are the new camp kitchen and spacious dining room. The outdoor kitchen is functional (with 3 BBQs, a couple of hot plates, a microwave, double sink, fridge and kettle) and is also to be upgraded in the future. There is also a small alfresco area with a couple of picnic tables. The separate ablution block has 3 showers, 3 hand basins and 3 dunnies for the ladies and likewise for the gents.

I ask Jurien about the two groynes at either end of the Camp Grace beach. He

tells me they were built to slow down the erosion of the coast – apparently the beach used to extend out by for more than 200 m at one time!

In the evening I am treated to a spectacular thunderstorm and light show across the whole bay.

Sunday 21 October. Today I decide to launch at Meelup Beach. This is a lovely beach with parking, picnic tables, trees and shade, grassed areas and new toilets and showers. I head out to the HMAS Swan buoys and drift around for a while. The weather is hot and sunny, there is barely a breath of wind and the ocean is like a lake. There are half a dozen or so jet skis and tinnies around, but hardly anyone else, apart from the whale watching boat which seems to be constantly in the background. Conditions are perfect for whale watching, and when I move away from the buoys I am treated to their full

range of antics – round outs, fin slapping, tail slapping, fluke ups, fluke downs, you name it, they're doing it! And the breaching is incredible, some of the juveniles totally clearing the water! It is magical out here just sitting, watching, waiting and enjoying! Eventually there is no one else out here and I have the whole place to myself – it's so quiet and peaceful – I feel as if I am part of the ocean, and I feel so alive!

But I find it impossible to catch these antics on camera as you never know where or when they're going to pop up! Eventually hunger gets the better of me and I head back to the beach to sunbathe and have a bite to eat before driving back to my tent site. The Channel 9 crew have packed up and gone and all is quiet again. But the skink is still there – he hasn't moved an inch. Even when I tap him with my wooden mallet, he still doesn't budge!

After a short siesta I head back to Dunsborough and dine at Occy's, one of the two local tavern/restaurants with alfresco dining and outdoor heaters - the evenings are a bit warmer than before, but still chilly. The staff are very welcoming here and their selection of craft beers is awesome. After a brief tasting it's a close call between the Black IPA and the Espresso Stout – but I opt for the stout - it's an amazing drop, and any of these beers would be hard to find on tap in Perth!

Monday 22 October. Well, after going through my photos on my 10 year old waterproof Olympus, I'm not impressed. Whales can be so hard to photograph, especially from a kayak which never keeps still and is constantly trying to turn! I really need to improve my camera skills (or get myself a GoPro)!

So this morning I decide to book myself on a whale watching tour – and besides, the wind has finally come up, it's cloudy and the sea is a green/grey colour, not the beautiful blue of yesterday. And according to the booking office, the whales don't mind what sort of weather it is!

On the boat I meet our skipper James and mate (and tour guide) Rhett. They are both very knowledgeable, but James has to stay behind the wheel so Rhett keeps us entertained on deck. He is a bundle of laughs and is full of interesting facts and figures and tells us lots of jokes and

anecdotes. He receives a call from the whale watchers at Point Piquet to let us know we've just missed three blue whales passing Bunker Bay - blah!

We are told that the WA humpback population is about 35,000 (one of the largest populations of humpbacks in the world) which means that during September, October and November there would be about 350 whales a day passing through – more in October when traffic is at its peak – that's a helluva lot of whales! Apparently mums and calves often stick around here for a while before their final open ocean push to Antarctica. This provides an opportunity for them all to rest and play, and the calves the chance to fatten up for the cold Antarctic waters.

Rhett informs us that humpbacks can't drink salt water, as is the case with many birds apart from true marine birds such as penguins and albatrosses. So the first thing the whales do when they arrive in Antarctica is go round licking the ice bergs – yeah right, well, not too many of us fell for that one (apparently they get most of their freshwater from the food they eat)!

Humpbacks eat about 1.5 tonnes of krill a day for the 3 months of the year that they are in the



*Just don't drink from the cup!
The Croked Carrot Cafe Myalup*

Antarctic and generally don't eat again until they return from their northern breeding grounds. This means that between them, our WA population potentially swallows about 50,000 tonnes of krill a day – that's 4.5 million tonnes a year! You'd think that at that rate they'd run out of food but apparently this is not the case – quite the opposite, in fact, due to the "whale poop hypothesis". The idea is that the more whales there are, the more whale poop you get, which is rich in iron; this leads to phytoplankton blooms and more food for the krill, which in turn causes huge boosts in krill populations, so more food for the whales and, hey presto, more whales. This is borne out by the fact that when whale populations nearly collapsed back in the mid-1900's, the krill population, instead of expanding, also collapsed - by about 80 percent!

The humpbacks head north from Antarctica towards Derby and Broome around late April/early May. We are told that they mostly swim beyond the continental shelf to avoid the southward flowing Leeuwin Current which passes closer to shore, is about a 100 km wide, and can reach maximum speeds of up to 3 knots between June and August. They swim north because the calves have very little blubber when they are born and need to be in warm water to survive. Coming back they swim nearer to the coast where there are numerous stopping off points, and the Leeuwin Current can assist.

I tell Rhett that I was out here in my sea kayak yesterday. Blimey, he says, was that you? I tell him that I put my sail up even though there was almost no wind as I was concerned that he'd have trouble seeing me. Hell no, he said, with that orange helmet of yours we could see you for miles! Nevertheless, with a black sea kayak, I am very aware of how difficult I can be to see!

On board I meet a couple from Perth who seem to have been just about everywhere – you name it, they've done it. But they are lovely people and yes, you've guessed it, they've done the Bremer Bay Hot Spot tour and reckoned it was brilliant!

Although we do see some whales, they are not as spectacular or as photogenic as yesterday. I manage to get a few shots but I still find them disappointing. I say to Rhett that in these situations I'm never quite sure whether to take

videos or photos. He tells me that he mostly takes videos with his iPhone and then does screen captures to get the best shots – in fact most of the photos on their website were captured in this way. What a great idea! Unfortunately I don't have this facility on my Motorola, so later on I download an app that can do this! For the moment I compromise by setting my travel camera to burst mode!

Rhett also tells us that the blue whales, whose numbers are very much in decline with only about 5% of the original population left, may even become extinct. Rather than follow routine migration patterns, blue whales tend to travel the world and generally spend more time in the open ocean than other whales. Having said that there are four main feeding areas in Australia where they can be observed during the summer (December to April). These are the Perth Canyon off Rottnest Island and three locations off South Australia and Victoria, notably the Duntroon Basin and the Bonney upwelling region. During winter they migrate for breeding but the locations remain largely unknown.

We are finally left to ponder how whales manage to mate, bearing in mind they have no arms or legs to hold on to each other.

On the way back we spot Chris Heyring, inventor and founder of the Nauti-Craft catamaran, test driving his experimental catamaran which has independent hulls for smooth cornering (and better stability for loading and unloading) and pitch and roll damping for a more comfortable ride. Chris, who has lived in Dunsborough for over 30 years, won the Maritime Australian Industry Award in 2017 for his design (see www.nauti-craft.com).

At the end of the tour, which ran for about 2.5 hours, I check out the start of the Cape to Cape track at the northern end of Dunsborough. When I did this walk back in 2014 I started from Cape Naturaliste and walked to Cape Leeuwin over 10 days, hauling out at Prevelly for a couple of days R&R. I still have the section from Dunsborough to Cape Naturaliste to do, but decide to leave it for another time.

Back at the camp a group of 90 young people, mostly women, from YWAM (Youth with a Mission) have arrived to stay for the week. This is

a bit of a surprise for all of us, as we had been expecting only 60! I almost lose my tent spot but, luckily, four of the girls let me share their site for the last night. After chatting with them for a while (they are friendly people – Christian missionaries from all over the world, not here to preach but to relax), I decide it is time to get rid of Bob once and for all. This requires dismantling half my tent! He isn't very pleased at being evicted, so he rears up and refuses to leave. I flick him along the grass with my Nuka for a few metres and one of the YWAM girls, Tracs (Tracey – one of the few aussies in the group) comes to my rescue and shows me how to wedge a stick in his mouth, pick him up behind the neck and carry him off. On the way we pass some girls demonstrating their tightrope skills – one of them, Nadine, shows us how to walk its entire 10 m length twice!

The afternoon is wonderfully calm and the ocean is like a lake once again. Looking out across the bay you feel as if you could paddle to Africa!

I'd promised myself a BBQ this evening but decide

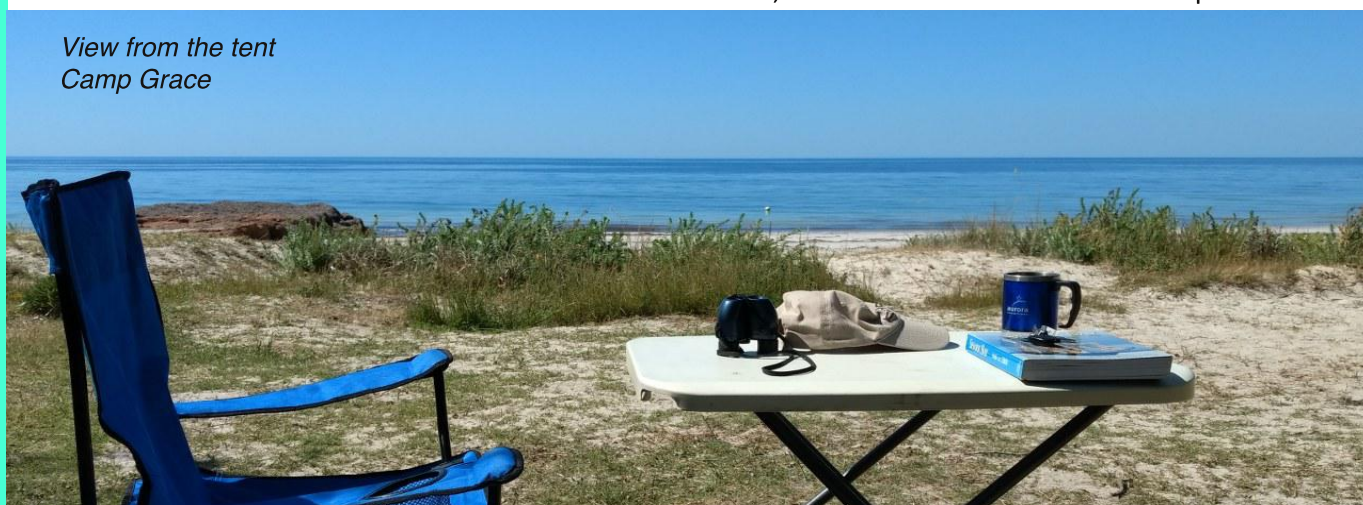
they will be happy to show me around next time I'm up there!

Tuesday 23 October. The next morning is another stunner, hot again with hardly a breath of wind. I am finding it hard to leave, but there is no chance of extending my stay with the camp so full, so it's time to bow out gracefully. And I haven't even checked out the wineries!

After saying goodbye to as many people as I can, including Wendy and Jurien, I reluctantly drive back to Perth via the Bunbury Farmers Market (their fruit, veggies, meat, fish and cheeses are to die for – and cheaper than Coles). I also call in at the Crooked Carrot near Myalup for lunch, where you can buy the most delicious range of homemade pies (Kangaroo and Bush Tomato, Chicken and Anise Myrtle, Venison and Shiraz, Emu and Lemon Myrtle, Beef and Red Wine, Moroccan Lamb and my favourite, Curried Goat)! There is also an amusing sign here (using coffee cups) which leads to the ladies and gents.

Well, what a fantastic week! Camp Grace is a

*View from the tent
Camp Grace*



to give it a miss due to the sheer number of people, and head back to Occy's for another Espresso Stout and some pizza! The lady on the next table was shivering a bit, so I invite her and her husband to share my gas fire. Their names are Scott and Eike and they are keen surfers from Geraldton down here on holiday. Eike is a physio working 2 days a week while Scott is a teacher enjoying a year off as he is in the Teachers' Deferred Salary Scheme where you can take a 20% drop in salary and enjoy a year off every five – what a great idea - some people really have it all worked out! I tell them about our frustrations at finding a decent spot to kayak surf in WA and they suggest St Georges Beach in Geraldton. They say

wonderful budget priced camp site located right on the beach. The ocean here is calm and safe, with wild water for the more ambitious just around the Cape. And there are so many other things you can do here – not just water-based activities like sea kayaking, supping, fishing, swimming, snorkeling and diving (or just lying on the beach), but also some cool walk trails, wineries, breweries, cafes, chocolateries, olive farms, animal parks, spa retreats and a host of other fantastic stuff to do.

It's a perfect spot for our 2019 Kayak Symposium - I can't wait to get back there!

ONLINE WEATHER SITES

Compiled by Kevin Piper

Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) this is the definitive source in a legal case.

Radar gives a coverage of rain, wind and temperature in the area. This can be used to estimate the speed and extent of the oncoming weather and the current situation

<http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/charts/viewer/?IDCODE=IDX0033>

Marine Weather Give a 3 hourly graphic of the expected wind. My favorite site.

<http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/wind.shtml?unit=p0&location=wa-per&tz=AWST>

Wind roses Gives a picture of the wind history of a particular site. Very useful when planning ahead for a future paddle.

<http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/wind.shtml?unit=p0&location=wa-per&tz=AWST>

Interactive Gives a graphic of the movement of weather systems that you are experiencing and can expect.

<http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/charts/viewer/?IDCODE=IDX0033>

“If you are travelling near the coast, stop the car and get out so you can feel the wind. Observe it’s, direction, whitecaps (as a visible guide) and make an estimate of the wind speed. Next observe the clouds (if any) and make an assessment of the weather in say 3 or 4 hours time. Then crank up Sea Breeze and see how you went for the breeze at your location”

Kevin Piper

Seabreeze Gives an expected wind movement over the day. This is a windsurfing site. Best feature is the current wind conditions for a number of locations. Use this to enhance your ability to estimate wind strengths.

<https://www.seabreeze.com.au/weather/wind-forecast/perth>

Willy Weather A comprehensive forecasting tool showing swell height and direction and wind strength, both in the immediate time and projected.

<https://www.willyweather.com.au/wa/perth/perth.html>

Elders Gives a broad picture of conditions in your area.

<http://www.eldersweather.com.au/wa/?d=-1>

ONLINE WEATHER SITES

Weatherzone A comprehensive site for the conditions in your area.

<http://www.weatherzone.com.au/?d=-1>

Wind Guru A comprehensive site giving a good picture of current and immediate future in 3 hour time brackets

<https://www.windguru.cz/72>

New Zealand weather services
expected wind and rain.

gives a 3, 5 and 10 day outlook in 6 hour timeslots with

<http://www.metservice.com/forecast/>

Current conditions

Look up

Look around you

for

water

wind

and

cloud coverage.



Hard Labour

Les Allen

HARD LABOUR shouted the tour guide in his best theatrical voice. In the first 3 minutes the words HARD LABOUR were left ringing in our ears about 20 times so it naturally became the catch cry for our trip and was used at every opportunity to the great mirth of the other paddlers. We were of course on Sarah Island in Macquarie Harbour on day 2 of our 9 day trip. We had landed for lunch and had our gear on the board walk where we were planning to have lunch. Next minute the tour guide arrived, telling us that we needed to move all our gear and ourselves off the board walk because there were 170 tourists arriving any minute. Hmm, what then were we? Obviously we weren't fare paying valued tourists as they had to stay on the board walk while we were relegated to the bush off the board walk. The only other thing that was treated like us were migratory birds that arrived for a short time eating in the bush and moving on with no monetary rewards for the island and to be ignored or at best tolerated. Well in my mind, that puts us above the tourist on the pecking order but obviously not in the tour guide's mind. So we just waved at the tourists as they were hustled by with curious looks on their faces wondering what these strange people were doing eating lunch in the bush that they were not allowed to step in.

For Jen and I this was the start of a wondrous journey into an area we really wanted to see but didn't think was possible. We had looked at Google Earth and it appeared there were no landing sites along the Gordon River which disappointed us, until we saw a trip advertised on the Tassie calendar. "Wow we can do it". Fortunately the southern tribe of sea kayakers received us well and allowed us the opportunity to join 4 local paddlers on this awesome trip. Alan was organising the trip with Tim, Greg and Mike making up the local contingent. At this stage their depth of knowledge and passion for this unique environment was starting to become evident. We were learning things we would never have known if we had done this trip by ourselves.

After we left Sarah Island a great tail wind picked up so we could sail to the mouth of the river and camp on a stony beach. Just prior we had called into a hut and a magical camp site. It was one of those places you would expect to find in a fairy tale book; a little hut under the forest canopy with gnarly tree stumps draped in moss, a spongy floor and awesome creepy feel. Jen and I looked at each other and simultaneously said, "Lord of the Rings." That's what it conjured up in our minds. We called the place Fairy Camp and

were a little disappointed we weren't camping there. We had, contrary to the club philosophy, agreed to just follow the lead of Alan and soak up this new environment as local knowledge was taking us to great places we didn't know existed.

The next day we headed up the famous Gordon River and were now acquainted with our new found friends, even starting to enjoy Greg's jokes. Ok they needed the correct ambiance to be funny



but the jokes, his obsession with orange (a whole other story) and the catch cry of HARD LABOUR was making the group dynamics work really well. Well from Jen's and my perspective, hopefully it was reciprocated. As we moved deeper into the forest the reflections on the dark water were nothing short than amazing.

We landed on a hard landing and as the day was perfect with sunshine and a balmy temperature Mike and Tim went for a swim. Hmm state pride here, so Jen and I decided to go for a swim in the tea-coloured freezing (WA standard) water. It's ok for Jen, she actually likes swimming in cold water but not so nice for me. Unfortunately I needed a bath so it was into the water for a 30 second swim to freshen me up. Ok, so it wasn't that bad but that doesn't mean I won't whinge profusely next time I have to be immersed in cold water.

The boys (Mike and Tim) were searching for something along the bank. Mike and Tim were like two naughty boys off exploring with unbounded energy and Tim's over 5 years older than me! Then they disappeared under the undergrowth. When we came to the spot there was a little creek

where you could pull your boat up to a tree root and climb out to another magical lunch stop under the trees, the moss and damp giving the same foreboding feeling that Fairy Camp had given us. Apparently it was very dry but for we WA people it looked awesome and damp. The Tassie temperate rain forest is unlike anything in WA and so different to the subtropical and tropical rain forest we had previously seen. The thing that struck us most was the silence. Over the next two days we got the feel of this place. Here nothing happens quickly, trees grow for a 1,000 years and the silence conjures in your mind a timeless place, unlike our world of fast and faster pace, heading out of control to our own questionable future. One can't help but think of the great philosophers like Seneca and feel that timeless questioning of what is important and what is not. We fell in love with this ageless landscape and were so grateful to the people who stood their ground to protect the true world heritage environment.

We camped the night near a landing not far from the Franklin River, the site of the "Save the Dam" protests of the 80s, and left the camp set up for a day trip up the Franklin. Jen and I have got into the habit of starting the day slowly, kind of ease into the day after the second cup of tea. Unfortunately our Tassie friends were more energetic in the morning and we were the last to get organised again. I hope it didn't piss them off too much as we made a poor effort at improving. The Frankland, much to our surprise, had a completely different feel. Smaller with higher banks, overhanging rock cliffs, and then rapids. Some we could paddle up but most we had to portage. As we were paddling along we surprised some naked tent campers but not as much as some commercial rafters coming down. They





June 2018



didn't expect to see a carbon sea kayak this far up the Frankland. I should have taken a picture of Audax no 1 shooting grade 1 and 2 rapids and sent it to Rob Mercer. I bet it would have been an unexpected surprise to see his boat in this environment. On the way back down we surprised the naked tent campers further down the river, still naked!!!! Hmm, young love, oh to be young again. As it turned out they arrived at our camp site later that day, this time with clothes on, and camped up the bank from us at the landing near the waterfall.

Now have you ever dreamt of doing something but never expected it to happen? Well that was what the waterfall was for me. Many years ago I saw a picture of a Canadian paddler next to a waterfall and dreamed of doing just that. I expected to have to go to Canada to do that so always assumed it was a pipe dream but hey, here in Tassie was a spectacular waterfall and I could paddle up to it. Now in WA we don't have creeks or any water near the coast line. No trees either, just impenetrable dry heath, so to paddle next to trees, fill your water bottle from little waterfalls, camp under forest canopy and now paddle to a big water fall well that's a dream come true.

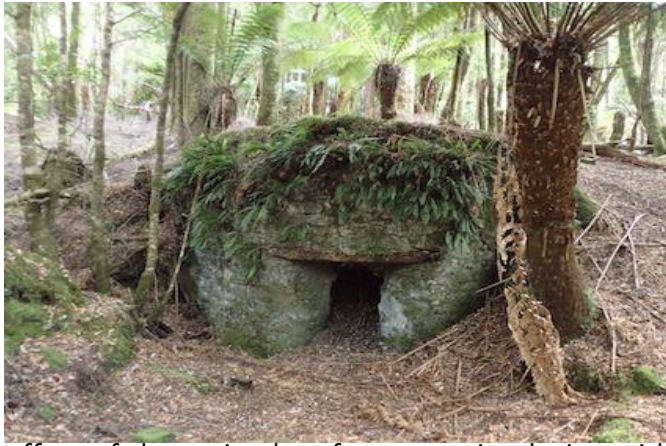
Next day there was a serious tone to the day. We were off to find the lost lime kiln. Bit like Raiders of the lost ark actually. We had a rough idea where it was, I mean the Tassie boys did, we didn't have a clue and just followed along. After a couple of false searches we actually found it, well the Tassie boys did as we were just following along. I was very glad they did find it as I'm not sure we

wouldn't be there with head torches on at midnight if they hadn't, as these boys don't give up a quest easily. This was the start of our history lesson. Quite impressive actually. Imagine you rock up to a new coast line with your sailing ship. 50 to 60 knot gales six weeks at a time (straight from our Sara Island tour guide) 3 metres of rain and impenetrable forest. Hmm, looks like a nice place to stop. A house would be nice so better find some clay for bricks and build a brick kiln to bake them. Now for the mortar. Pop up the river and make a lime kiln to burn limestone for lime. And while you're there make one for burning shells for Calcium Carbonate. Of course you need nails and hinges etc so better make a forge. This along with hand milling timber and we should be done. **HARD LABOUR** folks, that's what it was, **HARD LABOUR!!!!!!** And when you finish build 100 ships so you don't get idle hands. **HARD LABOUR**, that's what you're here for, **HARD LABOUR**, or so said the tour guide, his voice still ringing in my head.

We camped on the right hand side of the river mouth this time and at this stage I thought the history lesson was over. My mistake. Next day we headed for Pillinger or at least what was left of Pillinger. It used to be a thriving town, one of the many on the west coast with copper ore coming from the mine in the hills, a full on brick manufacturing facility, timber, railway line out to the end of the long wharf and over a 1000 people living there. The last train ran in 1925 as the town closed down. Now it's being reclaimed by the forest and apart from some ruins has been completely biodegraded. One can't stop wondering at what time in the future our mega cities will probably suffer the same fate. It's the







effect of those timeless forests again playing with my mind and demonstrating our human frailty as they will inevitably inherit the world again, in their silent splendour.

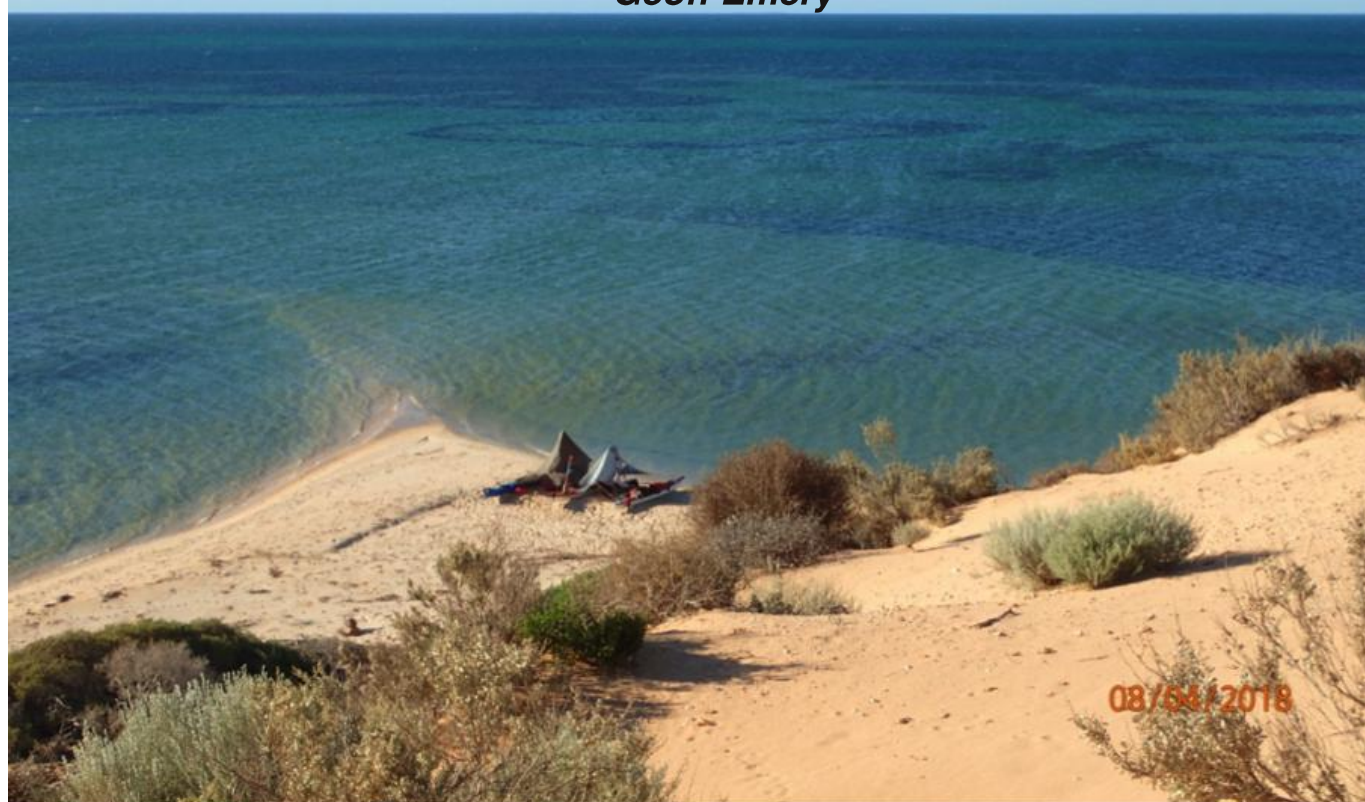
50 knot gales lash this area for weeks at a time, or so the tour guide said, and we were expecting some of that weather to give us HARD LABOUR on the way back as the first week the weather had been perfect. Nope, still perfect weather as we headed back for Hells Gates. We camped in a bay just before the mouth where a walking trail heads over to the west coast. Next day we headed over along the trail. The view when we got there was surprising. It could have been any one of a dozen

places on the south coast of WA. The similarity was surprising as I did not expect such a similar vista. The rocks were slightly different and there was more off shore reef than in WA but like WA you fear the 6mt bank and the king waves that pop up from nowhere. We went for a walk along the beach and Tim had the best find. A sperm whale tooth. Wow I've never seen one before and to hold it was amazing. We also saw an aboriginal midden, probably thousands of years old with shells and bones everywhere. Man, this trip had everything. Stunning scenery, good company, history and an awesome souvenir for Tim to take home, I mean what more could you ask for? For us, the privilege of having a group of locals with amazing local knowledge gave us so much more than we could have got from doing it by ourselves. We finished the trip happy and richer with knowledge of this truly amazing place. Thanks boys.



AN EXPENSIVE WEEK IN PARADISE.

Geoff Emery



Sunshine, turtles, wind, sharks, a hundred kilometres to paddle, big waves, wind, dugongs, dolphins, sunshine, mosquitoes, sharks, a leaky kayak, mosquitoes, wind and sunshine. What's not to like? What could go wrong?

Colin Priest, Richard Jolly and Geoff Emery – that's me – decided to paddle to Dirk Hartog Island from Denham, Shark Bay on Thursday 5th April 2018. After an eight hundred and fifty kilometre, ten-hour drive from Perth, a mere twenty-kilometre paddle west from Denham to Heirisson Prong sounded easy.

We had a good campsite at Denham Seaside Caravan Park where we could carry our kayaks to the beach and they kindly allowed us to park the Hi-Lux and trailer on the site for the week. After the boats were loaded with six days of food, camp gear and thirty kilograms of water per kayak, we checked in with VMR 675 on the radio and hit the water about 0915hr. The wind was SE at 16-17 knots and it was generating a few waves from the eighty kilometre fetch up Freycinet Reach. Our happy band tends to laugh at adversity and so we set off on a bearing of 240 degrees magnetic,

arriving at Cape Heirisson about 1315hr.

It had been a tiring four hours and despite the wind it was hot enough to put up some shade between the kayaks while we rested and recuperated. After shade and sustenance we headed off at 1450hr for Cape Bellefin about 7.0 km due West, arriving about 1615hr. We set up camp on the east side of the second prong and had an early night. I was a bit disappointed that my Epic 18X was taking water through the rear hatch and through my spray-deck!

The next morning we were feeling a bit stiff as we ate breakfast and considered our plan for the day. Originally we were going to paddle NNW direct to Notch Point on Dirk Hartog Island, about 15km away on 330 degrees magnetic. We were using both the GPS and the chart and compass but decided to head due West about 9km toward Dirk Hartog where there appeared to be a promontory pointing north. As a result of not trusting our navigation we hit Dirk Hartog south of Meade Island and the Dirk Hartog Homestead and had to paddle a further 12 km north. Just before Notch Point a shark decided to have a go at the rudder



on my Epic 18X and there was much splashing and thrashing - the shark, that is, not me - but as I mentioned our team just laughs at adversity and so the shark left in disgust.

We had a great camp at Notch Point with a white sand beach, limestone cliffs, and clear green water and of course a few sharks, so cleansing dips were fairly quick. Unfortunately the mosquitoes were so bad in the night I briefly considered throwing myself on the mercy of the sharks. The next morning, as my bladder suggested I should get up, I counted thirty mozzies waiting outside the mesh of my tent for me to make a break for it. I lathered RID all over me before I emerged from the tent, but the mozzies seemed to enjoy the taste of RID flavoured Geoff!

On Saturday, Willy Weather suggested that the wind could soon be blowing up to twenty knots for several days. Our happy band's sense of humour was wearing thin by now and we could only manage a half-hearted chuckle. Colin thought we would be wise to head south to

camp at Tumbledown Point so that we could escape to the prongs and be set up for a dash to Denham. We paddled south for twelve kilometres into a 16-18 knot SSE wind and covered the distance in about three hours and set up camp to listen to the wind.

After breakfast on Sunday we paddled the 9km to Cape Bellefin for a rest stop and then the 7km to Cape Heirisson into the ubiquitous southeast wind blowing about 15-17 knots. Despite the wind we made about 6kph hour and took about 2.5 hours to cover the 16km. We had a great night on Cape Heirisson, with a cupola of stars above us, navigation lights flashing away to our north and





Richard passed me my breakdown paddle from the rear deck and once assembled I left the other two in the raft while I made a fruitless search back along our track. The conditions made it difficult to see a black paddle floating below the surface and eventually I abandoned the search for the Java bound paddle. No longer laughing at adversity we paddled on and made it to Denham after about three and a half hours. Physically and psychologically we were pretty spent. A hot shower,

the glow of Denham over the horizon to the east. The best bit was no mossies!

Monday morning dawned and the wind had dropped, despite Willy Weather's prediction that we were in for 20 knot winds for four or five days. Much as we might enjoy each other's company we weren't keen to spend four nights on Cape Heirisson! We left the beach about 8.30am and although the wind had increased we expected it to drop en-route. We aimed a bit south of 60 degrees to allow the SE wind to push us north and we also had a visual reference with the wind farm and water tank north of Denham. Unfortunately the fetch of the wind with the shallow water gave us waves of about 1.5 metres and at times we had to turn into them to get over before they broke, so course keeping was a challenge.

The conditions meant that we didn't raft up for about two hours and I was a bit concerned about the amount of water sloshing around in my cockpit. As I was on the lee of the raft I popped my deck and mopped out the water as the others ate.

You can imagine my surprise when I saw Richard's paddle sliding past me on the port side and I just managed to grab it and replace it across the deck in front of us. That was when I realised that my paddle was missing too!

No one had seen my expensive black carbon Werner paddle make like a lemming and escape the raft! At that moment I began to wonder if crying at adversity might be a better option!

clean clothes and a couple of low calorie pies later I was a feeling almost human again.

The lessons learnt were check and double-check your gear, as I shouldn't have had such a leaky spray-deck. Put your paddle on the leash when you raft up or designate a "paddle holder"! Use and trust your deck compass and have a GPS as back up. Have a hands free pump as required by W.A. Sea Kayakers! (My new Audax will have one.) That evening as I became more philosophical over a couple of beers, I began to think that if the loss of my paddle was the only crisis in five days it had been a pretty good adventure.

Geoff Emery

12

Bremer Bay to Albany Sea Kayaking Trip by J. Sievenpiiper

Saturday, March 31st to Saturday, April 8th, 2018.

Participants: Chris Fry, Andrew Munyard, Paul Browne, Jill Sievenpiiper

Support Crew: Ian Watkins (weather, wind, waves man), Dianne Fry (accommodation maestro), Jenni Harrison (generous chauffeur)

The seeds for this adventure were sewn last year with Andrew and Paul discussing future paddling trips and choosing this one as a good start. So they contacted various Albany club members, looking for interested participants with that local knowledge edge, and Chris took the bait. Then, late last year, Andrew asked me if I was interested (just after I had quietly bought a second-hand Pace, awaiting its arrival, and hoping for such an invite!). I was very keen and from then on my anxiety kicked in, as did my excitement and determination to go on this trip.

Through emails, Dropbox, paddles and phone calls, a great exchange of information, ideas and analyses took place between Andrew, Chris and Paul in the planning, preparing and finalising of this trip, and Paul's organisation of a Spot tracking device was an added bonus. Throughout the process, I was always included, but remained a quiet but close observer, trying to get my head around paddling in the unfamiliar and intimidating Southern Ocean with its rugged coast and conditions. This was a trip grounded in meticulous planning, constant communications and consideration for others; I learned a great deal from these three guys who constantly conferred as a group, respecting everyone's input into situations and conditions along the way.

Day 1 Saturday March 31st Little Boat Harbour to Stream Beach across Dillon Bay, 9 km, 9:50 am -11:30 am

(Conditions: winds: Southerly 10 – 16 knots, up to 20 offshore, swell: 2.5 – 3 M, weather: overcast, clearing mid-day, ~ 24 C, full moon, waning, sea temp ~ 20 C)



We were finally ready to depart and was I ever glad of today's plan: Due to it being our first day, with our first go at packing and paddling full boats, and to avoid paddling over 25 kms around headlands into strong southerly winds, it was decided to depart from Little Boat Harbour crossing Dillon Bay to Stream Beach. Thank goodness Jenni was there looking over my shoulder saying, "Jill, you won't need that, or that!" Paddling across the bay with the swell beam-on, felt good with all the weight in my boat, especially with all the water (ballast) under my legs, and with the general excitement of getting this trip underway.





Stream Beach - camping alongside a fresh, spring-fed stream



Day 2 Sunday, April 1 Stream Beach to Boat Harbour 45km, Pallinup

(Conditions: light winds: ~5-10 knots NE to SE later, SW swell: ~2.5 M, secondary, SE 1.5 – 2M, weather: overcast, some sun ~ 23 C)

We were up at 5 am, preparing for a long day's paddle ahead, leaving Stream Beach ~ 7:20. This trip had many exciting surf take-offs and landings, all good practice for many Perth paddlers, common for those from Albany. The swell was still large as we headed south into light winds, paddling inside Horatio Island towards Cape Knob. As we approached the Cape, the confused sea and rebound off the rocky cliffs made most of us queasy.



Paul departing Dillon Bay, heading towards Horatio Island

Andrew stopped for a barley sugar to ease his stomach and not long after Paul took two kwells after throwing up; something that made him sleepy – a concern in washing-machine conditions that required full concentration. Andrew made sure we stayed close together, checking on each other, especially during this rough part of the paddle.

Below: Paddling past Horatio Island; right: Cape Knob, above.



By 11:20 am, we made it to Smooth Rocks for an on-water break, and with Paul feeling better and with the rebound behind us, we were glad to be heading west to Boat Harbour, passing beach now. It was comforting to eventually paddle-sail as SE winds later picked up to ~ 13 knots. It was a long day's paddle, over 43 km, and when we reached Boat Harbour, we were a bit disappointed with the crowd and the lack of camping options. The first person to come up to us was a local man asking us what language we spoke (!). We soon found out that he and his wife, local shack owners, had met Freya on her paddle, years before. Different league, mate! Following Chris's local advice, we paddled back a km or so to check out another beach for a quieter camp site. Much better, but still we had that surf landing to negotiate and more than once on this trip, I was grateful for the support given by these guys. After eight hours on the water it was good to stop for many reasons, one being I had the early niggles of chaff and blisters.

Sails up after Smooth Rocks

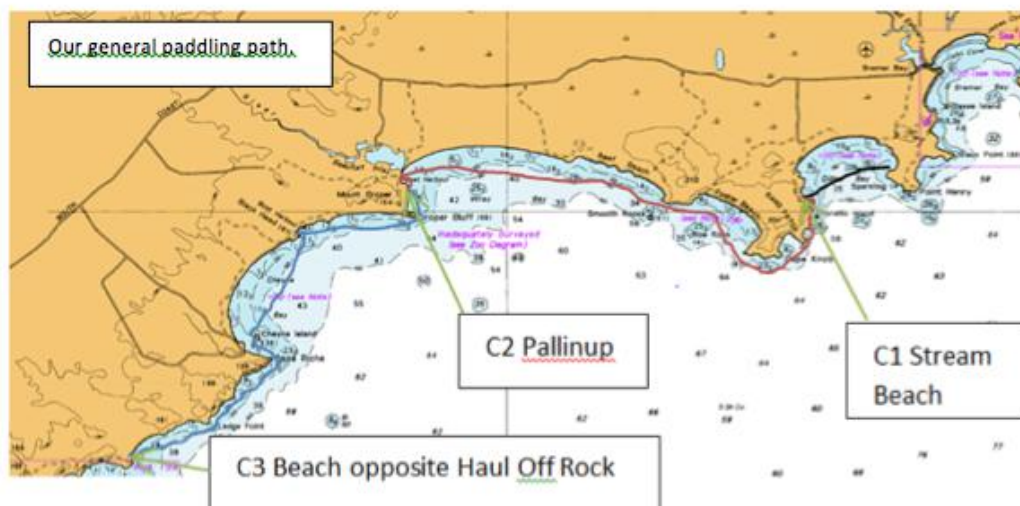


Departing Boat Harbour, Pallinup



Day 3, Monday, April 2nd **Pallinup to Haul Off Rocks 42 km**

(Conditions: light SE winds ~10knots increasing to 20 knots late afternoon, SW swell 2 – 2.5M, secondary, SE 1.5 M, weather: overcast, clearing mid-day ~ 23 C)



My main preoccupation on this trip was the possibility of having a 50km non-stop paddle to Cheyne's Beach. Would I slow everyone down, would I end up in tears, exhausted, would I have to pee in my boat, not wanting to dangle in the sea? And so on... So when we decided to head to Haul Off Rocks, midway through day 3, I was all for it as it would mean a shorter paddle the next day. I had no idea that this would be the most demanding paddle for me, ever (but exhilarating, too!).

With another early start, we paddle-sailed towards Groper Bluff in light winds, but still had a lumpy, rough paddle through rebound off the Bluff. Once past the cliffs, we paddle-sailed again in light NE winds to another Boat Harbour, this one a lovely, NNE facing harbour with a public BBQ and camping area. Here, we had a relaxing morning break and visited with locals before heading off to Cape Riche with a stop on Cheyne Island. The SE wind was picking up 12-15 knots so we had a fun and fast sail (best of the trip) to Cheyne Island, just before Cape Riche, where we lunched on the deceptively calm, turquoise lee-shore.



Boat Harbour (near Black Head)



Chris with Cape Riche in distance



Cheyne Island, NW of Cape Riche

It was decided that we would push on to Haul Off Rocks, west of Cape Riche, and with building winds we would have a good sail. What were we thinking - 18 – 20 knots – downwind?! We bashed into the wind towards the Cape and very soon realised that sailing would be too dangerous as we rounded it, heading west, with strong winds and a steep and fast following sea. The conditions would make turning around to help someone in trouble very difficult. Around this time, as we paddled towards Ledge Point, Andrew informed me that we were paddling through "The Giant's Causeway". Now that was comforting!



Paddling downwind through 'The Giant's Causeway', off Ledge Point.



PB

Once past Ledge Point, Haul Off Rock could be seen in the distance and though the winds were still strong, we had a focus and were moving fast with the following wind and waves. It was late afternoon as we arrived at our next camp and it was clear that this was an exposed beach, posing a treacherous landing. Chris, our local leader, led the way towards the beach, only to get trashed and separated from his boat. Andrew in rescue mode went into the surf-zone, 'landing' and helped Chris retrieve his boat. Paul, a surfer, picked a more protected corner and landed beautifully so I followed, but as I was about to reach shore a rock surfaced in the receding swell so I deliberately rolled, not wanting any more carbon repairs added to the hull of my boat!

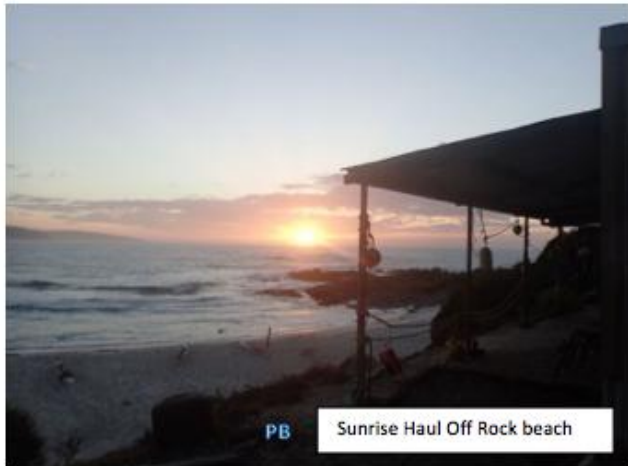


Everyone landed safe ashore!

What a relief to have made it! Once we had changed into dry, warm clothes we enjoyed exploring the fishermen's shack on the hill above the beach and the many scenic outlooks from this area. We were tired and the light was fading fast. It turned out that no one was really hungry – easy comfort food was called for: Paul had nourishing soup while Andrew fine-dined on fruit cake and custard! Cheyne's Beach was 35 km away and the prospect of two nights at the Caravan Park seemed luxurious!

Day 4, Tuesday, April 3rd Haul Off Rocks to Cheyne's Beach 35 km

(Conditions: winds SE ~5 knots 8am, 10-12 knots 11 am, 5-10 knots S midday, SW swell 2 – 2.3M, secondary SSE 1.5M, sunny ~ 22 C)



After a 'sleep in', we had a bright, sunny departure, with seas still rough but calming, and with only light easterly winds. Paul followed the rip alongside the point, leading us off the beach by 8am. We paddled to Haul Off Rock for a closer look and then westward along Hassell Beach towards Cheyne's Beach and the conspicuous Bald Island.



Without a rocky headland to round, it was a rather quiet paddle, but not for long. On this trip I was gaining a better understanding of secondary swell, especially here as it was coming from the SSE, unlike the slower, larger Primary SW swell. Upon asking Andrew about this (a 'Master and Commander' – Russel Crowe – fan), I ended up with a physics - 'amplitude of a wave' lesson, but Andrew soon gave up once my glazed look appeared. Not long after, along came Chris (a self-confessed 'A Beautiful Mind' – Russel Crowe – fan), trying to teach me about Modular Theory with prime numbers – Oh man! Chris gave up very quickly and I avoided Paul and enjoyed the quiet, gentle paddle-sailing over the SW swell on our way to Cheyne's Beach.

Note: The Caravan Park was great as were the managers who picked up and dropped off our gear, and who opened up their take-away van for us!

JS: Yes! We made it! Fish and chips tonight.



Andrew's Cheyne's Beach panorama



Day 6, Thursday, April 5 Cheyne's Beach to Betty's Beach 29km

(Conditions: light SE winds ~5-13 knots by afternoon, SW swell 2 – 2.5M, secondary, SE 1.5 M, weather: mainly overcast, low 20s C)

We departed the calm of Cheyne's Beach, ready for a more relaxed paddle now that the long sections were over and with continuously calming conditions. Chris was keen to show us many of his favourite places on our approach to Albany.

As we paddled by Channel Point with Bald Island to the SSE, and then by Mermaid Point with Twin Islands to the SSW, we found ourselves once again making slow progress through choppy seas with the 2 M SW swell rebounding off more rocky cliffs.

Below: Paul with Bald Island to his left. Right: Andrew and Chris passing Mermaid point.



After three hours, and with easing conditions, we easily entered the shelter of Waychinicup Inlet for lunch – a surprise spot for me – scenic with its surrounding rocky hills, many covered with grass trees; a great location for camping, well-known by locals.

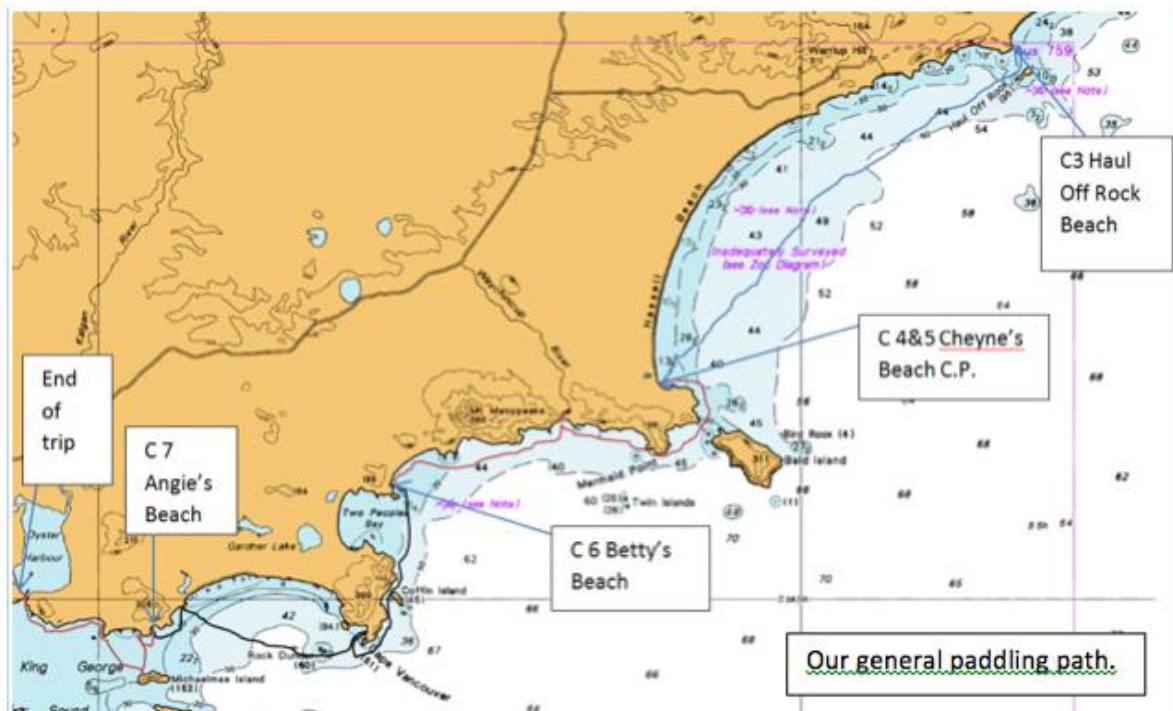


Andrew departing Waychinicup Inlet.



Heading to Betty's Beach campsite.

After our break, we departed the quiet inlet for Betty's Beach about 13 km to the west. We paddled past the rugged, rocky landscape of Mt Manypeaks, and then close to the beach to avoid the reef off of Betty's Beach, on towards our campsite.



We paddle-sailed in 10 knot winds arriving around 2pm, to witness one of the few active salmon fisheries still in progress in this area. Our private beach was sheltered from the friendly fishermen's camp by giant granite boulders and, once again, we had a satisfying view to the east, allowing us to look back from where we had travelled that day.



Salmon fishing off Betty's Beach



Mermaid Point and Twin Islands at sunset

Day 7, Friday, April 6th Betty's Beach to Angie's Beach

(Conditions: wind E~10 knots early, decreasing, then up to ~15 knots NE midday, SW swell 1.5 -2.5 M, seas ~ 1M, overcast, afternoon sun, low 20s C)

Chris's magical scenic tour continued today. We departed Betty's Beach with grey skies and wind from the south east ~10knots. Mermaid Point to the east was disappearing in cloud with signs of rain in the distance, but passing away from us. As we paddled across the wind-chop of Two People's Bay, we watched the many sea birds – gannets and shearwaters, waiting on the water and then taking off on our approach, circling and checking us out, probably watching out for some of the many schools of pilchards that we had paddled by in the area. The water and winds were now calmer as we paddled on the inside of Coffin Island, and we marvelled at its blueness while also on the lookout for Cape fur seals and pups.



Crossing Two People's Bay

We then had yet another rocky headland to round – this time the impressive Cape Vancouver (below). With little wind and dying swell, our paddle was enjoyable, not too rough, and the conditions allowed us to round the Cape and then enter Chris special spot – CBK Beach for a quick snack. We then paddled out to the dramatic-looking Rock Dunder, with its many faces.



At one point, as we passed Rock Dunder, I saw a large wave break ahead with froth and light blue water, telling Andrew I was going to paddle further out. He agreed and we let Chris know, but being a local he happily paddled through it, even stopping for a snack in the middle of the 'zone'! Us Perth paddlers definitely showed caution many times, whereas Chris happily hugged the rocks and thought nothing of rebound.



Paul in 'CBK Cove'.

AM



The Cape Fur seal was glad to get its quiet cove back.



Michaelmas Island in the distance.



AM

After Rock Dunder, we paddle-sailed downwind to another scenic spot – Nanarup Pool (left) for a short break and weather check. We were in King George Sound now, not far from Albany, but wanted one more night out and decided to paddle on in the afternoon sun to our final camp at 'Angie's Beach', a beautiful beach named, sadly, after a young girl's mishap with the ocean.

Below: Paddle-sailing to Nanarup Pool with one of the two boats we encountered on this trip.



Day 8, Saturday, April 7th Final day - Angie's Beach to Emu Point 13km

(Conditions: light winds ~5 - 10 knots swinging NE to W midday, SW swell 1.5 - 2 M, seas ~ 1 M, weather: overcast, afternoon sun, low 20s C)

Our final day - how lucky we had been with the weather and sea conditions on this trip. Chris's words, "Anecdotally, the weather is 'always good' in Albany at Easter..." rang true and we were enjoying his tour of the many special paddling spots that he obviously holds dear.

In light winds and morning sun we explored collapsing beach caves and then paddled out to the only beach on Michaelmas Island before heading to Boiler Beach to meet up with the fun, friendly and impressive Albany paddlers who actively paddle off this coast year round.



Last camp at Angie's Beach.



The Albany paddlers arrive and then the magic slipper was found...



The last leg: Andrew, Paul, Jill and Chris paddle-sailing into Emu Point.
Photo Ian W.



In total, we paddled just over 200 km, in mainly good conditions, at an average speed of 5-6 km per hour. It felt like quite an achievement and a trip that I am pleased to have completed and grateful to have been included in. Thank you, Andrew, Paul and Chris, for all your hard work in planning, organising, leading and making it such an interesting and enjoyable trip. Also, a big thanks to the support crew – Ian for your detailed weather and sea reports; Di for driving and accommodating us and cooking that delicious lamb roast with vegies!; and to Jenni, who generously offered to help with the Bremer Bay car shuffle. And finally, thanks to you, Chris, for joining the trip, and for sharing so much of your Albany paddling knowledge and special places with us.



Photos by JS or otherwise noted by initials

Quotes of the trip: The reassuring 3-way conversation between C, A and P (that I closely followed) went something like:

'...we need to be very clear on what wind we can paddle in taking into consideration everyone's ability....'

'Hi everyone, I also am not 'destination bound'if the weather is against us...'

'I agree...the aim should be enjoyment...and also safety...'

JS: 'What was I thinking?!' (repeated throughout the trip, in reference to over-packing, especially food)

Jarvis Bay to Batemans Bay

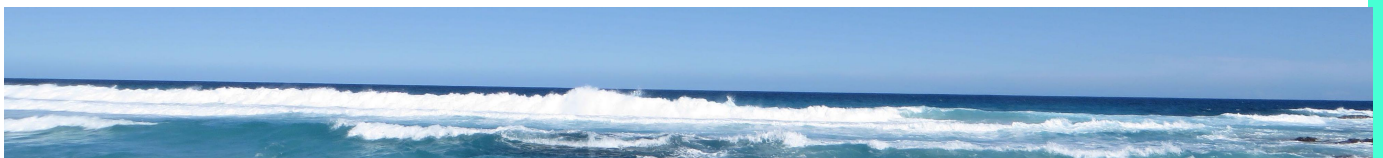
Les Allen

I awoke with a start, foggy from a deep sleep. As my mind was trying to sort out why I was awake the distant roll of thunder echoed through the tent answering my question. I reached for my phone to see the time, 4.00 am. There was also the distinctive wing flap and noise of fruit bats in the trees above the tent. Ms Jenni was now awake and decided to investigate the bats and look for sugar gliders that frequent the park at Jarvis Bay. For a fleeting second I thought about joining her but snuggled down in my sleeping bag and listened to the pitter patter of rain on the tent. We were heading off on our Jarvis Bay to Batemans Bay paddle and the weather was not looking promising. The swell and wind were forecasted to be low but we were on the edge of the area that was forecast to have the 10 out of 10 storm event with huge damaging rain. What was concerning me was the possibility of severe thunderstorms. I had learned the hard way last February to give NSW severe thunderstorms a lot of respect. I was off the cliffs at Bundeena and saw a thunderstorm developing. I ummed and ahed about turning back then thought I would play on the safe side. By the time I had reached the bay Sydney was being smashed with hundreds of

lightning strikes, powerful wind gusts, rain and hail. After sprinting back to my landing site I arrived with lightning crackling all around and hail hit stinging me through my cloths. I'm glad I had my helmet on. As I loaded my kayak I felt the strong wind gusts whipping across the water. These thunderstorms make the ones I experienced in Perth look pathetic and earned a lot of respect, so the thought of being hit on the cliff line south of Jarvis was not appealing.

At 6.00am we were loading the boats with a steel grey sky and I had an eerie ominous feeling as we headed out across the bay. Jarvis Bay is a horseshoe shaped bay cut into high sandstone cliffs about 10km deep and 18km wide with a 3 km entrance and features white "squeaky" sandy beaches. By the time we had reached the headland the sky was blue with dynamic cumulus clouds building huge stacks over the high country inland. Fortunately they would build up and as they moved to the coast dissipate as if they were taunting me. As we headed through the passage between Bowen Island and the headland we had some bumpy rebound and the swell jacked up as we rounded the headland. The conditions calmed down enabling us to get up close and personal to the incredible

number of caves along an interesting sandstone cliff line. The variance in the layers never ceases to amaze me. In one section it was like bricks laid horizontally one way with tall pillars on the top layer. As we reached Steamers Beach there was one section we titled the hanging gardens as there was greenery hanging all over the cliffs with 2 great caves below. I backed into the big cave and heard the cave breathing as the wave motion lifted me up. The mouth was 5 mt wide and about the same high. I love the purple and green plastering in these caves. The wave sucked me deeper as I descended. Some bow rudder to keep me straight and the swoosh of the next wave coming in caused me to throw a small draw stroke to miss the side. As the wave hit the back the rebound pushed me forward so with 2 quick paddle strokes I powered over the incoming wave and cruised out through the mouth again. The photos don't do this area justice as with polarising glasses the water colour was that awesome green and blue with the contrasting grey cliff and green and yellow foliage hanging off the precipices. At one spot the sun shone through a gap in the clouds and reflected on the damp cliff with spectacular results. The picture once again



did not do the scene justice but you can get the idea. In WA we have limestone and granite cliffs which have their own beauty but after 30 years of paddling them the sandstone cliffs were a truly spectacular change.

Steamers Bay was easy to land on as we had a light north easterly swell running. Steamers is a circular beach at the base of a small inlet in the cliff line. Behind the white sandy beach is green bush up the face of steep hills to the height of the cliff line. It was quickly obvious that this beach could be treacherous on a south easterly swell but the forecast was for north easterly over the next few days so we made camp in a truly spectacular spot. The army entertained us with an exercise. They told us the park was closed and that we were not bothering them, just don't take photos, and enjoy the area all by ourselves. A great start to our 5 day paddle.

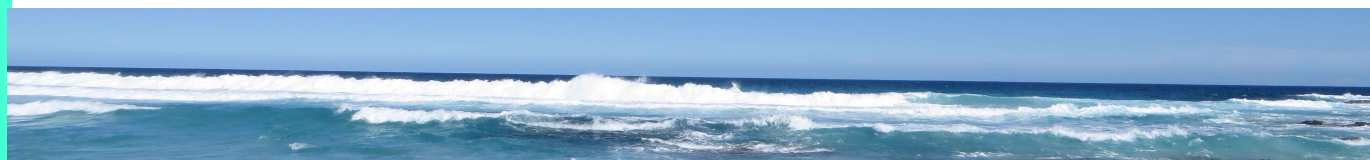
The next day the weather was dead calm just a light head wind so we were able to explore every nook and cranny of the cliff line and following bays. The swell was around 1 mt so we could land anywhere with light surf. Like Steamers the beaches we landed on would not be so easy with a reasonable south easterly swell so we were very lucky. Just before Bendalong we decided to stop in the corner of a small headland. The big sets were 1.5mt so it was just a matter of picking a wave and paddling hard. The stern of the

Audax lifted and the boat powered forward with familiar surge of speed. The bow popped and I shot forward of the wave so it could break behind me. Instead of paddling hard I waited for the swash to catch me turning the boat sideways. A gentle backface support and I bounced toward the white sandy beach to the final crunch as the hull hit sand. To my right was a perfect rock seat with an angled back so we could enjoy a cup of coffee and the ambiance.

As we approached the headland near Bendalong we saw a curious site up ahead. There was a fog line from the beach heading out to sea. On the beach end the sun was shining on the fog producing a horizontal rainbow. I have never seen such a distinct fog line and over my 30 years of paddling had only seen sea fog in Bass Strait and Tassie. We don't get sea fog in WA. It was awesome to pierce the curtain of fog and paddle in 20mt visibility. The other curious thing was the change in water temperature and the presence of a strong current taking us off shore. Knowing we were paddling towards reef and breaking waves but not being able to see them bought back that eerie feeling and Ms Jenni felt a sea monster could rise from the depths at any moment. Then just as abruptly as it started it stopped and we paddled into clear blue skies. WA paddlers would find that really hard to believe but it happened.

That night we camped on Green Island and just after we landed the Mayor of the beach came striding purposefully toward us. He was an older gentleman fully tanned with the regulation surf club budgies on. I was expecting a hard time but when he found out what we were doing gave us the official approval to camp illegally on his beach. Of course the beach telegraph went into overdrive and every person who walked up after the mayor knew who we were and what we were doing, saving us the continuous explanation. In fact the locals were great and the thing that impressed us was how well the beach had been managed. We were paddling through a populated area but you would never know from the water as the beach and bush looked pristine with the houses starting well inland. So far the south coast was very impressive as we had cliffs, bays, rock gardens, caves, headlands and beautiful yellow beaches and this was only day 2.

Day three started with our usual leisurely start and of course perfect weather. Once again perfect beaches, headlands etc. Ms Jenni thought we must be in our own hologram as the weather in NSW has been perfect ever since she arrived. To top the day off we pulled into Ulladulla for coffee and water and as we landed the local school band had set up on the lawn and started playing rock around the clock and a variety of



other appropriate songs for our age. What I could not fathom was how they knew we were going to arrive at that time. You certainly can't question east coast hospitality.

The end of day 3 was on Crampton Island. There is something about camping on islands that is really special. As we sat there drinking our coffee the procession of fishermen struggled passed carrying large amounts of very heavy fishing gear. With stern faces they stumbled and dragged their gear to the perfect vantage spot on the rocks and spent the next half hour sorting a myriad of gear. Just after them came an old bearded skinny bloke in a weather beaten wetsuit holding a mask, flippers, hand spear and a calico bag. About 40 minutes later he came back with his bag full. I struck up a conversation as he was a curious fellow. Turns out he is a long-time local and comes down 2 to 3 time a week to get a feed of fish. And true to form he had 2 fish for dinner. I mentioned the fully equipped fishermen and he just shook his head and headed off. 4 hours later some disgruntled laden fishermen came struggling back having no fish and no bites. Well at least the tackle shop was doing well.

Day 4 and another perfect day. At least there was some wind forecast for the afternoon. More spectacular coast line, perfect weather, no swell, it was almost boring almost. That afternoon we

turned into north Durras and our jaw dropped. Picture the perfect bay with perfect yellow sand, turquoise water, grass on the back of the beach and I kid you not as we both went wow a group of dolphins arched out of the water one at a time. We both cracked up laughing as nobody will believe that one.

We swam, walked and had an elevated grassy site for our tent overlooking the spectacular bay. A young couple came walking, running, skipping down the beach toward us. The young girl was about 19 and this was her first experience camping. She was absolutely bubbling with enthusiasm and couldn't stop talking in an excited state of her first camping experience. It was so nice to talk to her and share that special feeling. The young bloke had a smile from ear to ear as she was quite good looking and I think he was planning to share more than her enthusiasm. Oh to be young again.

You guessed it- another perfect start to the day. This day was a bit different though, as the wind was picking up to 20 to 30 knots by lunch time. We set off with the aim of beating the worst of the wind. This area was mainly cliff and surf beaches to Batemans Bay. With the sails up we set off at a cracking pace. We had a 1 to 1.5mt wind wave and 1.5mt swell all directly behind us, perfect conditions for the Audax and Pace 17. The sail was assisting quite well as I was looking left and right for the

perfect set, put in 4 or 5 power strokes and you were on. The boat would surge forward on the steep wind wave and if you were lucky you could feel the swell building. As the swell overtook the wind wave the paddle was flashing and my muscles bulging to get the speed to pick up the swell. I'm on, the boat surges forward with water peeling off the bow bouncing over wind wave going flat out. Yahoo . The exhilaration of surfing the long pitch fast swells after picking up the wind wave was the highlight and I'm sure we were cracking 20km per hour plus on the right sets. The best bit was we did 15km in 1 hour 20 mins. This is why we bought these boats. Sails combined with sustained high cruising speeds enable us older paddlers to still do good distance without killing ourselves. We rounded reef point and headed to the boat ramp where Keith Oakford drove all the way from Braidwood to Batemans then dropped us off back to Jervis before heading all the way back. Normally I would not have asked such a big favour but the hire car we had booked was not available so Keith really did us a big favour.

I'm not sure NSW paddlers really understand what world class paddling they have on their doorstep. I've been here nine months now and cannot believe the amount of great paddling there is in NSW. All states have great places but few the amount and variety of the NSW central and southern coast line.

