



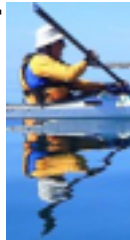
WA Sea Kayaker

November 2018

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W

elcome to this November Edition of WA Sea Kayaker magazine

This magazine would not happen without the contribution of members who are prepared to write stories of their kayaking experiences. I encourage all members to discover the Earnest Hemingway within and to tell their stories of their development as a sea kayaker or their adventures in sea kayaking. So please, help this to be a great club magazine and write down your stories and share them with each other through this medium.

A club trip to Shark Bay in winter was a great way to escape the cold down south. Catch up on what you missed and the fun and camaraderie that is a part of club trips.

Club training days are a great way to learn new skills in a friendly and constructive environment. Lindsay Joll describes the things he learnt when Paul Cooper taught the heel hook kayak rescue. This is a great way to get back into your kayak when capsized and Lindsay will guide you through the technique.

Linda Glover and Royd Bussell have had six months of travelling around up and through the Australian east coast but it was on their return to WA that they had the best kayaking experience. Can you guess the location?

Glen and Yvonne Colledge have also been enjoying being on the road and they have joined in with some club trips of east coast clubs. Glen writes up a great trip they had with the Victorian sea kayakers to Snake Island. Was the island appropriately named? read Glen's report to find out.

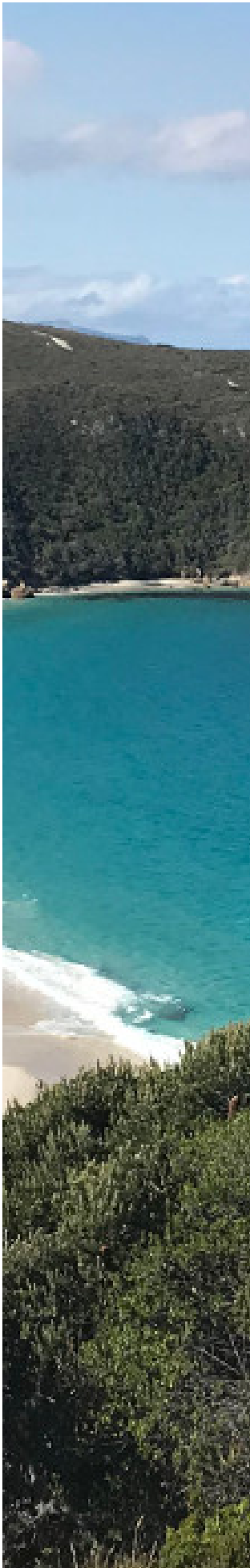
Lindsay Joll has had the trip of a lifetime and paddled spectacular waters in Antarctica. His photos are absolutely stunning and will have all of us booking a trip for next year!

Have you ever contemplated building your own kayak? Clive Dawkins will guide you through the process. Clive describes in words and great photographic detail to tell you how easy it is.

Geoff Emery has decided to explore kayaking well away from Australian shores and even abandoned the southern hemisphere! Geoff and friends decided to go north to Sweden and paddle the Bohuslan Archipelago. Where you ask! You will have to read Geoff's story to find where to find this amazing place.

Lindsay Joll has been experiencing the hot and the cold of kayaking. This story is at opposite ends of the earth to Antarctica. Lindsay has been enjoying some Aegean paddling with spectacular landscapes.

Jenni Harrison has been enjoying paddling in the Whitsundays Islands of



Queensland. Jennys gives us an insight into this wonderful area and gives us some ideas on how a distant west australian can make this paddle a reality.



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 face book at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SKCWA/>

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

This magazine is composed using free open source software called Scribus (<https://www.scribus.net>). It is a desktop publishing program and makes putting the magazine together easier.

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.*

FRONT COVER: Photo Geoff Emery 'Leaving Smogen'

Shark Bay

(28 May – 3 June 2018)

By Richard Lailey and Margaret Banks



Wolfgang Weitz
Photo Geoff Paull

Participants: Margaret Banks, Jo Foley, George Hopkins, Tony Hubbard, Richard Lailey, Lia Overman, Geoff Paull, Bruce Pilgrim, Pel Turner (organiser), Leslie Victor (alias Matt) and Wolfgang Weitzig.

Well, we've arrived! We're sitting on a pristine beach in West Tea Tree Bay, sipping a glass of red around a blazing camp fire beneath the stars. We've just watched a glowing yellow sun sink below the horizon in front of us, and a stunning bright full moon rise behind. What could be better than this! It's Monday 28 May and we are about to start our epic Shark Bay sea kayak experience, with a full week's paddling to look forward to!

Our trip actually began yesterday evening (Sunday 27 May) at the Billabong Roadhouse, about 50

km south of the Shark Bay turn-off, where we all met and stayed the night - some of us in the roadhouse cabins (\$70/night twin share - \$35 pp), the rest of us in the free camping area next door to the right of the roadhouse. On the left of the roadhouse there is a motel, tavern, caravan park, 24 hour petrol and ATM.

Our evening meal at the roadhouse was excellent – with the added advantage of being BYO, so you could bring your own or buy wine and beer next door at the motel if you forgot. In the morning, those of us in tents woke to a heavy dew on our flysheets as there hadn't been a breath of wind all night. The day commenced with a full English breakfast and coffee, and those of us that hadn't brought solar showers treated ourselves to our

last (free!) hot shower.

Spending a few hours here gave us the opportunity to discuss and plan our trip and ponder the wonders of Shark Bay, which happens to be the largest coastal embayment (250 km long by 100 km wide) in Australia, dotted with a few large islands and numerous small ones. Our chart showed typical water depths of up to about 20m in the overall Bay, and up to 12 or 13 m in Freycinet Reach where we were to paddle.

Shark Bay is a World Heritage listed area and well known for its flora, fauna and marine life, not just sharks (mainly tigers, lemons, sandbars and nervous sharks), but also dugongs where apparently there is a population of about 10,000 (approximately 10% of the world population). In addition, Shark Bay has the largest known



*Top to Bottom:
Arriving Tamala Station,
Laughs around the campfire, Margaret
Banks.
Boats loaded and heading North.
George's Hobie Trimaran*

Photos: Geoff Paull

area of seagrass, with seagrass meadows covering over 4,800 square kilometres (which of course is what attracts the dugongs). The general layout of the region is shown in Figure 1.

Shark Bay is also interesting from a tidal perspective! In Hopeless Reach (eg Monkey Mia) the tides are predominantly twice a day, whereas in Freycinet Reach (Denham) they are largely once a day. The difference is due to a phenomenon known as "tidal resonance" caused by the large sill which runs across Hopeless Reach at Faure Island (see paper titled "The Tidal Regime of Shark Bay, WA" by M C Burling, C B Pattiaratchi and G N Ivey, 2002).

Furthermore, in Freycinet Reach the tide arrives at Denham about 1.5 hours after Withnell Point and then takes a further hour to reach Useless Loop. Since our campsite was 40 to 50 km south of Useless Loop, the tides at our location would occur well over an hour (possibly two or more) after the tides at Denham. However, since the mean spring tidal range at Denham is only about a metre (give or take), we were not expecting tides to be a problem.

Monday, 28 May. At 8am we set off in convoy from the Billabong Roadhouse for Tamala Station, Pel leading the way and all of us in 4WD's except for Wolfie in his Nissan X-Trail AWD. Our original intention had been to stay at Carrarang Station but we learned before our trip that it had closed so Pel suggested Tamala as an alternative, which is also an active pastoral station.

We arrived at our West Tea Tree beach campsite around midday after picking up the key, passing through several gates, dropping our tyre pressures to 20-25 psi and travelling along some sections of pretty rough dirt road (see Figure 2). Our total distance travelled from Perth was 776 km. Camping fees were \$17 per night, less if you're a senior. Tea Tree Bay is nicely located too, as it faces north providing protection from the prevailing morning easterlies and afternoon SE to SW southerlies.

We spent the afternoon setting up camp, George and Lia with their Lotus Trooper off-road caravan, Tony (with Matt) in his converted ute, and Geoff in his off-road camper trailer. The rest of us had tents, although Tony and Pel opted to sleep in their vehicles.

Pel brought along a campfire brazier, heaps of firewood (as the site is entirely BYO), and our camp dunny complete with sawn off rubbish bin (seat and lid glued to the top) and privacy shelter. Tony kindly provided the hole!



Figure 2



Figure 1: Greater Shark Bay area



Figure 3 : The planned 3 day paddle

A ring of rocks formed our main fireplace which we lit, sat around and cooked on every evening (Pel and Tony providing camp ovens and heaps of food). A quick look at the weather forecast, obtained holding our mobile phones in crazy positions on top of a pile of a rocks at the end of the beach, showed a generally good forecast with mainly calm sunny days, but strong southerlies expected Thursday afternoon. After some discussion around our campfire, it was decided that seven of us would head out on a 3 day expedition the next day, returning Thursday morning. We would take one satellite phone with us and leave a second, supplied by George, at the base camp. Figure 3 shows our original proposed route, together with a possible side trip into a local inlet, and our

actual route marked in red. The rest (some of whom had nasty winter colds) preferred to remain behind and enjoy some day paddles. After turning in, the night was still and quiet apart from a few screaming wild cats and a visit from an inquisitive fox just before midnight!

Tuesday, 29 May. At 11am, after packing our kayaks, Pel, Bruce, Matt, Jo and Richard set out heading north in their single kayaks with George and Lia in their Hobbie Tandem Islander sailing trimaran (which Tony had towed up from Perth for them) (Figure 3, location 1). The weather was warm and sunny with a clear blue sky and a gentle SSW'ly breeze – a rare opportunity during the trip to use our sails.

Unfortunately, George and Lia's

departure was thwarted by steering problems and they had to turn back a few 100 m from the beach, so we were down to five!

After about an hour, the wind completely died - time to stow away our sails! After passing Wilds Island (location A) and a solitary dolphin, we headed NW towards the coast and, after 15 km or so, chanced upon an unoccupied campsite, sign-posted "Bellotties", where we had lunch (location B). We then paddled a further 10 km up the coast past rocky limestone cliffs and made camp in a secluded bay for the night (location C), Matt pitching his tent on top of a 15-20 m sand dune, the rest of us preferring to camp at ground level (accompanied by a dead goat). Bruce lit a fire and we sat and ate



*Top left: Bellotties Campsite
Top right: Camp life
Above: Sunset at Shark Bay
Right: Campsite at Tamala Station*

Photos: Leslie Victor (alias Matt)

dinner under a perfect full moon. We dubbed this location “Matt’s Turtle Dune Hill” in honour of Matt’s top campsite (with views) and having spotted a turtle, possibly a loggerhead but more likely a “green”, as we landed! Today’s paddling distance: 26 km.

Wednesday, 30 May. We woke to a heavy dew on our tents as there had again been no wind during the night. Unfortunately Jo wasn’t feeling well today, with another one of those nasty winter colds rearing its ugly head. So we

decided to split into two groups, Bruce offering to paddle with Jo back to Bellotties while Pel, Matt and Richard headed north under another clear blue sky and calm sunny weather. We passed more rocky cliffs, crossed a long narrow sandy spit at location 2 and then, powered by a brief NE’ly wind, we sailed on to location D. After crossing another spit and turning the corner into the inlet where we sheltered from the wind, the three of us (at Matt’s suggestion) ran a breathtaking 100 m race (no paddling and no wind) which Pel

somehow won, before lunching on a secluded beach.

The journey back to Bellotties via Matt’s Turtle Dune Hill for afternoon tea was easy and relaxing with virtually no wind. The water was completely flat, like glass, and crystal clear down to the seabed. During these periods you felt as though you were paddling in 3D – a strange feeling and something we’d never experienced before. In Perth, when there is no wind, there always seem to be a few waves or

ripples about! Unfortunately, the marine life was fairly sparse, although we did see some snapper and yellow tail kingfish, and a few shovelnose rays, blue spotted stingrays, and green turtles – but no dugongs or sharks!

Note: Three weeks later, I spoke to a ranger in Monkey Mia about paddling to Faure Island and she told me you can no longer camp there, and warned about the island being a hotspot for large tiger sharks (as there are some deep channels there). A local told me a few days afterwards that the sharks are well fed, so shouldn't pose too much of a threat to sea kayakers. Interestingly, little seems to be known about tiger sharks apart from the fact that they are unpredictable, and that they are seasonal migrants and are only sometimes a residential species, even in Shark Bay (personal communication with Blake Chapman, see also her excellent book titled "Shark Attacks").

We finally arrived at Bellotties Campsite at 4.15pm where Bruce and Jo had already set up camp, and Bruce had lit a fire. A brief tour of the campsite revealed a great setup comprising green artificial turf under a sloping roof, kitchen (with a sign saying "Pinky Polly's Kitchen"), fireplace, picnic table and chairs, and dunny – what luxury! There were also showers and a spot for a genny! Before cooking our evening meal, Matt magically produced a frisby and, with Pel assisting, proceeded to coach the rest of us in the gentle art of frisby throwing. After pitching our tents under the

shelter (some of us didn't even bother with tents) and cooking and eating our evening meal, we told stories around the campfire under another brilliant moon. Today's paddling distance: 30 km.

Thursday, 31 May. After cleaning our campsite to within an inch of its life, and quietly thanking Mr Bellottie and Pinky Polly for their kind hospitality, today was a gentle paddle home via a short morning tea break on yet another secluded beach (location E). If we'd thought the water was clear and glassy yesterday, today was even better! And we were again treated to more turtles and rays, and also dolphins, cormorants, pacific gulls, and lots of goats along the cliff tops. Unfortunately, despite substantial patches of seagrass, we again saw no dugongs. By now we were in radio contact with the base campers who were on the water on the other side of the bay. While Pel and Jo paddled over to find them, Bruce, Matt and Richard drifted further down the coast in a surprisingly strong current to explore the rocky nooks and crannies of Depuch Loop, Bruce and Richard arriving back at the campsite around 2pm just as the winds were starting to blow, Matt returning just after 3pm. Despite threatening clouds and rain squalls in the distance, we luckily avoided any rain during the afternoon.

To find out what the others had been up to while we were away, we asked Margaret!

Day 1 (Tuesday), Tony, Wolfie, Geoff, Margaret

Beautiful sunny day, not much wind and we headed up the

coast toward the islands looking for the inlet. Staying close to the rocks it was an easy paddle with Tony's voice echoing off the cliff face. The bottom was mostly sand with a few clumps of sea grass. We scared up a ray but that was all the sea life we saw.

The inlet was just opposite the first island. We paddled up with a rising tide. It was fairly shallow and we just kept going round bends. We passed a family fishing off the shore then we finally entered the bay. With the island on our right we paddled on looking to circumnavigate the island. Despite the waters getting shallow Geoff and I kept going while the others fell back. I couldn't see the way around and headed back to stay in paddling water. Geoff carried on and landed. He saw the way through but had to portage over the really shallow part. I met up with him on the other side of the island. On a high tide we could possibly have paddled all the way round. Heading back against the tide we started to see the fish coming in to feed. We saw Tony and Wolfie on the beach near the entrance and joined them for a break. Returning we made our way back to base camp.

Day 2 (Wednesday),

We headed in the opposite direction with George accompanying us in the Hobbie. We paddled past all the other campers and rounded the headland into the bay

(Depuch Loop). Again a sandy bottom with a bit more sea grass but not much. There was a bit of a headwind and we were fairly slow keeping an eye on George. Tony and Wolfie got a long way into the bay but not right to the bottom before turning back. Paddling the coast we scared up a small bunch of goats. Before you knew it the scrub was alive with them. I lost count at 30. They all moved off picking up new goats moving inland. Rounding another headland there were more on the beach. Again they moved off picking up the strays. As we came out of the bay we had to push through a bit of a tiderace heading back to camp.

Day 3 (Thursday),

Leaving George to sail his Tri we headed up the coast past the islands right to the tip of the peninsula (Giraud Point). We spotted a lone turtle this time. There were campers on the best beaches and it looked to be a couple of great camping spots. We found an empty section and landed for a break. Heading back we passed the islands on an easy paddle back to camp.

We were expecting the adventurous expedition group back today and back at camp we found the early arrivals had landed and Jo already sipping tea!

The paddling was easy, great weather and even better company. A few wines around the campfire, Tony fed us all with his pot roasts and Geoff

supplied dessert with proper toasted marshmallows perfection!

Friday, 1 June. Today was a fishing day for some and a rest day for others. Pel fitted an outrigger to his Mirage and headed off with Wolfie, Bruce and Geoff. Bruce and Geoff returned with a couple of flathead and a bream which Geoff cooked up later. During the afternoon Matt and Richard finally decided to get wet and compare Greenland and Euroblade rolling techniques. In the evening Matt introduced us to a game called "007 Bang" which kept us amused for about a while, but the game involved memory and coordination and, combined with too much of the amber nectar, we eventually gave up!

Saturday, 2 June. Today, Matt hitched a ride with George and Lia on the Hobbie with kayak in tow, dropping him off around lunchtime at the mouth of the eastern inlet which he spent the rest of the day exploring. Most of the rest of us paddled out for a few hours, Wolfie and Richard paddling to Giraud Point, spotting an osprey on the way out, and then on to Wilds Island for lunch. The campers at Giraud Point looked as though they'd settled in for the long haul, with all sorts of fancy off-roaders and heaps of solar panels! On the way back we spoke to a couple in a tinny who'd caught an enormous snapper, and then stopped again at a small unnamed island for afternoon tea where we watched the seagulls at play and the crested terns splashing and bathing themselves, and feeding on baitfish. When we

arrived back at the base camp, Bruce, who'd decided on a rest day, was finishing off Richard's book "Kayak Across the Atlantic" by Peter Bray, which he'd only started that morning.

Sadly it was now time to start packing for the journey home. The moon was starting to wane, and during the evening the Milky Way stars were out in their glory, and we were able to enjoy some stargazing!

Sunday, 3 June. After breakfast and final packing, we headed off in convoy just after 9am, remembering to increase tyre pressures before we hit the bitumen. While most people drove straight home, George and Lia, and Richard, headed for Denham to continue their holidays.

This was a fantastic week which turned out to be just as much a relaxing holiday as a great paddle. The weather was excellent - in fact the trip would have been a washout if we'd gone the following week as Shark Bay received over 95mm of rain in 5 to 6 hours the following Monday night (4-5 June), which devastated the Shark Bay area for about a week! Our thanks to Wolfie for suggesting Pel bring the trip forward by a week as he was heading off to Europe on the 9th.

Special thanks to Pel for organising the whole trip and for providing the all-important extras - dunny, firewood, brazier and heaps of other stuff. He did an amazing job and how he got it all in his car for the journey up remains a mystery! Our thanks also to Jo for helping in the

planning, to Tony and Geoff (and Pel) for cooking and feeding us (the camp ovens were brilliant), to Geoff for being our camp photographer and providing our outdoor kitchen and shelter, to Bruce for keeping the home fires burning, and Matt for his thermos of herbal tea on the expedition. And a big thank you to everyone for their camaraderie, stories and humour. It was an amazing week, and rumour has it that there may be another trip next year, perhaps to Carrarang Station this time.

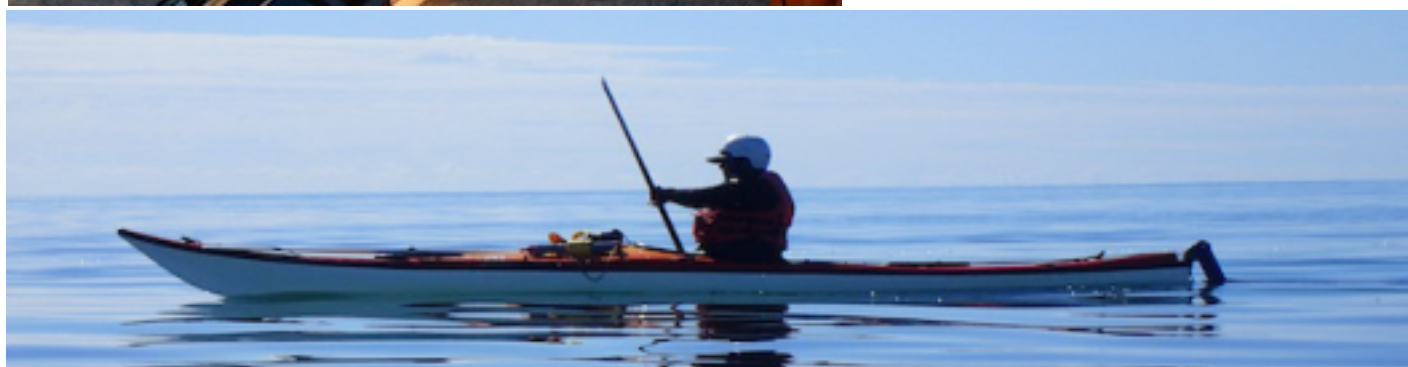
Top right Happy paddlers!

Middle right Richard reflecting on a great day paddling

Middle left: Jo prepares her kayak

Bottom: Margaret paddling in near calm

Photos Geoff Paull



Funny Photos



Paul Cooper demonstrating paddle signals-- Come to me???

Kayak Rescues

Lindsay Joll describes lessons learnt on a SKCWA training day

1. Heel and Hook Rescue (my name: Heel Hook and Corkscrew)

-- **Rescuer** re-assures victim; tells him what is going to happen. Gets victim to move to stern of his kayak but continue to maintain secure contact.

-- **Rescuer** does a T- manouvre and raises victim kayak upside down and drains cockpit. Victim kayak righted (dry cockpit) and brought alongside rescuer kayak – bow to stern or stern to bow (doesn't matter).

-- **Rescuer** holds victim kayak securely (cockpit rim or deck lines). Tips victim kayak towards victim.

-- **Victim** swims up to cockpit area and lies on his back alongside his kayak HEAD TO STERN. Rolls towards his kayak and raises OUTSIDE leg and inserts foot into cockpit and 'hooks' (heel hook) under upper deck - while lying low on rear deck. Grabs rescuer kayak deck lines on adjacent side to gain 'purchase'

-- **Victim** continues to roll into his cockpit, bringing other leg into his cockpit while still facing to the stern and lying low on rear deck (may require 'feeling' the position of the cockpit rim with leg/foot). Rescuer holds victim kayak securely.

-- **When** second leg is inserted in cockpit, victim continues the roll of their body in the same direction ('corkscrew') to face upwards and towards bow.

-- **Rescuer** stabilizes victim and continues to stabilize victim kayak

2. Scoop Rescue

-- **Rescuer** reassures victim and advises scoop rescue. Victim maintains light but secure contact with his kayak in stern area.

-- **Rescuer** gets victim kayak and pulls it alongside his kayak BOW TO BOW. Maintains strong and secure grip on victim kayak on adjacent and offside sides of victim kayak. Tips hull of victim kayak to around 80 degrees to horizontal. Cockpit partially submerged (water in cockpit!).

-- **Victim** moves up kayak, grabs rim and inserts both legs into partially submerged cockpit of his kayak.

-- **On a 'call'** rescuer pushes on adjacent side and pulls on offside of victim kayak while victim 'hip flicks' and lays back on rear deck (lowers C of G/reduces turning moment).

-- **Rescuer** continues to stabilize victim kayak as it will be unstable with water in cockpit.

Lucky Bay to Hellfire Bay return

Cape Le Grande National Park

Royd Bussell & Linda Glover, August 2018



Lucky Bay



Lucky Bay resident

After six months travelling around southern and eastern Australia with camper trailer, sea kayaks, mountain bikes and hiking shoes, we saved the best until last upon arrival at Cape Le Grande National Park in WA, east of Esperance.

It was mid August and we had a nice spell of sunny weather forecast. This spectacular park is characterised by mounded granite terraine, vivid white, squeaky sand beaches and torquoise waters. We stayed at the Lucky Bay campground which has been completely rebuilt and has new amenities including solar-powered hot showers. The site we selected had a view over Lucky Bay and there is beach access for launching kayaks, with 4WD-ing unfortunately still allowed on the beach here.

It was a sunny day with low winds and swell – ideal paddling conditions. After unloading the kayaks on the beach, I quickly rescued the car from sinking in the water-saturated beach sand. We launched from Lucky Bay and commenced paddling around the granite headland towards Thistle Cove. A good sized sea cave is located just around the corner from land view. Higher up on the generally smooth granite cliffs, caves formed from the erosional forces over millenia made for spectacular scenery. On rounding the headland, the white beach and dunes of Thistle Cove came into view. Frenchman Peak formed a dramatic backdrop in the hinterland. Further eastward, Boulder Hill rises above the beach as a large rounded dome. We followed the coast



Cave near Lucky Bay



Thistle Cove



Dolphins in "Boulder Cove"



Paddling to Hellfire Bay

around the next headland, leading to "Boulder Beach", a narrow sandless bay where, the previous day, we had seen eight dolphins circling, jumping and frolicking for hours. The shallow waters allowed us to view the seabed and algae below.

of Hellfire Bay offered the opportunity to land for morning tea. Approaching the beach, we passed a split granite boulder. I got caught by a rebound wave when attempting to land, resulting in a flooded cockpit but I remained upright, backed off and tried again towards the centre of the small beach.

We continued on eastward around a large headland, eventually leading into Hellfire Bay. Although the swell was low, there was still some good whitewater and subsequent runoff as it hit the sloping granite on the headlands. A smaller beach before the main part

On our return paddle, we stopped for a pleasant lunch at the eastern end of Thistle Cove. Upon landing at Lucky Bay, we had completed 18 km and agreed that this was the best paddle of 36 paddles undertaken over the six months of our trip.



Paddling past Boulder Hill



Paddling to Hellfire

WA Sea Kayak Fest 2019

22-25 February – Geographe Bay



Calling all sea kayakers to attend the '2019 Sea Kayak Fest'

The 8th Annual Sea Kayaking Symposium WA

Hosted by Paddle WA & Sea Kayak Club WA.

Registration is now open.

Check out the website

<https://www.seakayakwa.asn.au/wa-sea-kayak-fest-2019/>

more information ?

email: Paul at fest@seakayakwa.asn.au.



ALOHA !

Pel Turner changing craft and having a LOT of fun !



November 2018

Snake Island Expedition

Easter 2018

Glen Colledge

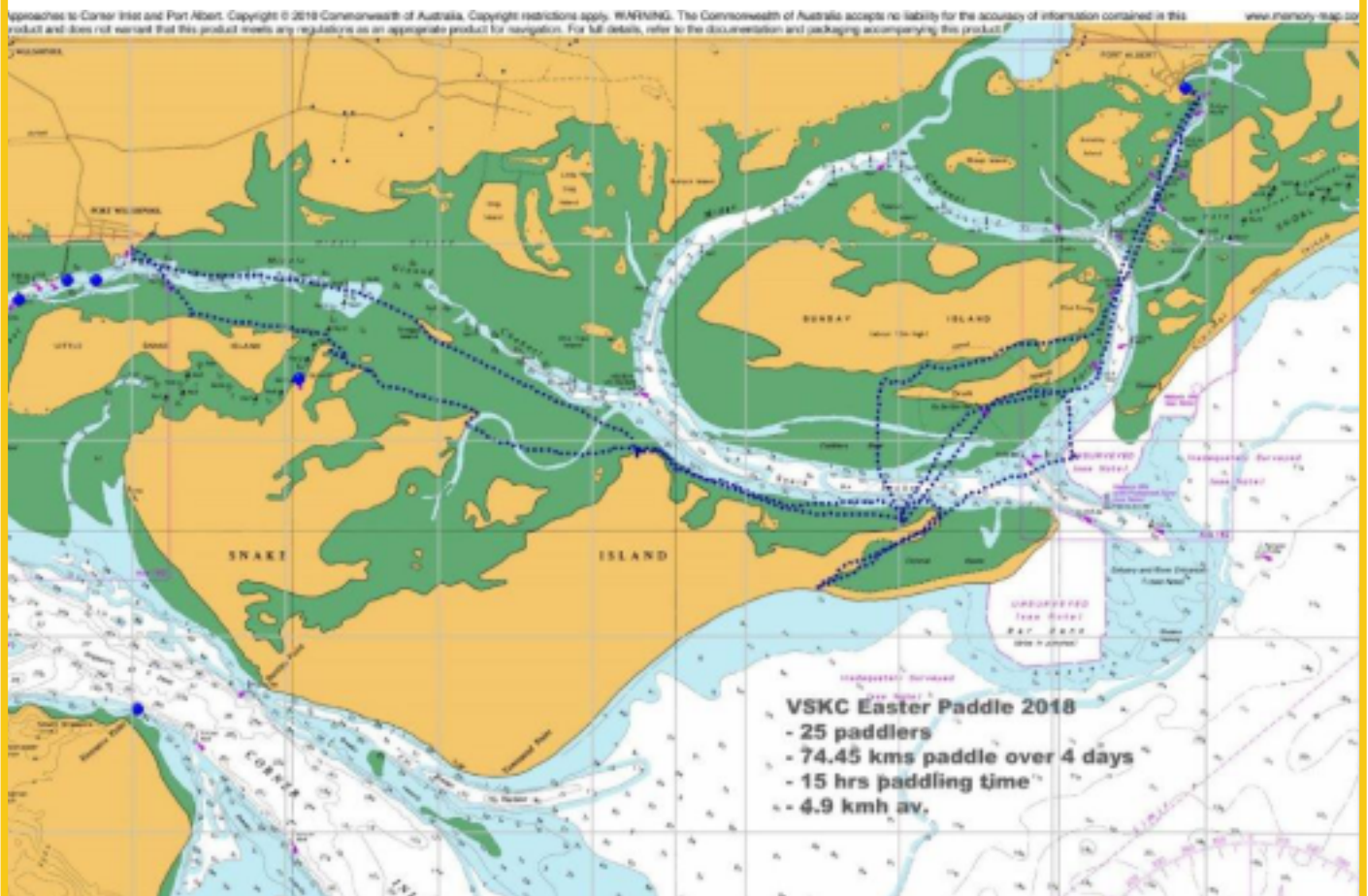
Photos: Glen Colledge

It was with Great Fortune that Yvonne and I, both current SKCWA members, travelling OZZ, opportuned a place for two on the Club's Annual Expedition to Snake Island. A half hour phone conversation with Richard Rawlings a week before the event was enough to have our details happily added to the list of participants.

Twenty four fully loaded kayakers embarked from Port Welshpool at 10.30 am 30 March bound for Snake Island a mere 17 k SE paddle. However, to add interest to the affair the synoptics predicted a tail breeze of 17 knots with gusts of 20 knots admirably mixed with occasional squally rain. A nice start Richard. But we knew all this well in advance, as the data was duly monitored a week before. No surprises

here. The sombre, pre-embarking shore brief was a stern, no bull, "keep together, slowest double kayak leads the pod" There were three double kayaks in the group. One of them being a slinky, black latex and aluminium number, expertly assembled on the beach and captained by Helmet, faithfully crewed by Xufang.

So.... we all knew well in advance, that this leg would be very interesting. Two capsizes on route ensured no one was caught day dreaming. These incidents provided the opportunity for certain members to experience full immersion and implement well practiced rescue techniques. After dealing with these interesting conditions for an hour or so we landed on a very interesting soft beach, populated by fast



approaching, looming large, long dead gnarly old tree trunks. Once again all were given a valuable opportunity to exercise skills such as submerged hazard negotiation, choppy shore break landing, soft sand exits and dealing with early signs of hypothermia. The scene was very mildly reminiscent of the D Day landing of allied troops on the obstacle infested beaches of Normandy. After a very brief stay all safely exited that place and duly landed on Snake Island without further incident. All Kayaks disgorged their contents and camp was made in the quiet protection and soft sigh of the

So..... day three 01 April was once again predicted calm, sunny conditions. All successfully paddled to Port Albert for the obligatory fish and chip lunch, followed by a quick return. About half of the group elected to return via the channel through the mangroves. The receding tide made the journey mildly interesting for most, but a pain in the backside for the doubles as they heaved through the mud. Total distance approx. 20 k Sooo easy.

Day four.....02 April, we all knew well in



surrounding acacias. All kayaks were then secreted in various spots high on the sand bank, safely amongst the bush away from the buffeting wind and the fast approaching high tide.

So..... we all knew that day two, 31 March, would be very calm, sunshine, peaceful and relaxing. Synoptics were true to form which enabled the group to take an early morning very leisurely paddle around the eastern end of the island and a quick Northerly channel crossing, land for lunch and return to base, A total distance of about 16 k....No problem

advance what the return journey would be..... A BLOODY SLOG. The 17k return to Port Welshpool straight into an accurate synoptically predicted 17knot breeze was slow, altogether slow and also not fast. Beach brief was similar to day one, "doubles lead, try and get some protection from the island". Meanwhile, the white caps in the channel were angrily rearing and starting to join with each other in a nasty sort of way. The group left Snake Island at 09.30 am and arrived Port Welshpool as the sun was sinking a 5.20pm. A stop half way for lunch enabled paddlers to refuel and regenerate in preparation for the final push.

During lunch, looking back at where we had just

paddled it seemed there was no problem at all. GoPro footage is the same. Filmed action often looks very tame.

The journey gave some members an excellent opportunity to exercise their towing ability. The thought of those foolhardy Antarctic explorers of yesteryear towing heavy rotten sleds for thousands of kilometres over icy slopes, treacherous crevasses and through blinding blizzards springs to mind.

A few days later and refreshed, efficient Richard emailed all participants photos which only tell of happy faces and a map showing our route which accumulated to approximately 74 kilometres over four days.

All in all a brilliant expedition, experiencing exactly equal easy cruisy versus challenging conditions. Leadership was excellent which catered for a broad experience. Weather prediction was accurate, Camp dynamics and paddle protocol were all efficiently managed. It was encouraging to see radio communication



effectively utilised.

Yvonne and I wholeheartedly thank the members of VSCK for the overwhelming hospitality and the friendship that has been generated through our brief participation.

We both look forward to further interaction during our travels.

Glen Colledge
SKCWA 275



The Snake Island paddlers

Addendum

Some thoughts on interstate club differences and similarities

By Glen Colledge

In addition to my report on Snake Island report Richard Lailey asked me to share a few words on my Sea Kayaking impressions of Victoria and possible contrasts between WA and Victoria.

So at Richard's request, please bear with me as I humbly offer my personal thoughts.

- 1) The club
- 2) Paddling locations
- 3) Perth paddling

- 1) The club.

I see both clubs in Victoria and WA operating very similarly. Clubs are very friendly. Both welcome interstate members and show genuine interest in new starters. I think Vic club is a little more focussed on training. However, during my one year absence, Sandy Robson, in line with Canoeing Australia requirements, has implemented many initiatives designed to train more qualified leaders and improve overall competency.

WA currently has a population of 2 to 3 million and our club has 102 financial members. Victoria's population is 6 to 7 million with club membership of 230 plus. Who knows why membership is such? On

another note, my perception is that the average age of Vic members is a little younger than WA. I don't think we have any 23 year old members!!

SKCWA is broadly divided into 3 groups. 1) Perth/Fremantle 2) Mandurah 3) Albany.

I mixed with the Perth group and regularly had peer group paddles twice a week from Hillarys Boat Harbour. Every Wednesday morning between 6 and 10 of us would paddle out of the harbour for approx. 2 to 3 hours (12-15k) and return to the harbour to practice rolling etc. On Saturday 20 to 25 paddlers would repeat a similar routine. Every Sunday there would be a programmed event for all members with a qualified sea leader in charge. These events were generally an islands paddle or coastal treks usually covering 20 to 30 k. All paddles concluded with a coffee and a hearty kayak yak. The coffee after aspect is a universal thing everywhere. During a typical year trip leaders would undertake expeditions to distant destinations like Shark Bay, Rottnest Island or Ningaloo Reef.

In summary, WA members don't experience the ever present, subliminal temptation of a grand "local" challenge such the Bass Strait

Crossing. Possibly, this prevailing environment can tempt the average kayaker into another realm. During the brief period I have mixed with the VSKC I have paddled with several members who have completed major expeditions. I must admit, that during my short contact with those kayakers the tantalizing seed has been set. Maybe.... one day.... I too, could complete such a feat.

- 2) Paddling locations

Since contacting VSKC 5 weeks ago I have paddled a section of The Barwon River, Joined an expedition to Snake Island, paddled out of Batemans Bay, paddled out of Kennett River and Torquay. These locations are all very different in terms of landforms and degree of difficulty. In Victoria all these locations are easily accessible. To achieve such a variety in WA would necessitate travelling in excess of a thousand kilometres.

The big issue in WA is that it is big. The coast running north of Perth is not nearly as indented with rivers and coves as the East coast. Townships are few and far between. The northern WA coast is generally, barren, low windswept limestone cliffs reefs, sand dunes, sparse fresh water and scrubby vegetation. Further North beyond Broome is really wild country. Crocodiles, high tides,

rugged amazing topography, sparse fresh water supplies and a lack of townships make that part of the country a real challenge. Whilst in direct contrast, South of Perth offers more scope. Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin are fantastic locations. Mainly limestone shoreline around Naturaliste giving way to granite as you travel South towards Cape Leeuwin. In addition Augusta, Albany, Esperance, Lucky Bay, Duke of Orleans Bay are all fantastic locations.

3) Perth paddling

There is plenty of scope in Perth, if you have a month or two to spare. Out of Hillarys Boat Harbour there is a small island 3 kilometres off the coast frequented by sea lions. They are very friendly and playful. They enjoy cavorting with anyone who visits the island. In summer, mid-afternoon, the Fremantle Doctor cools down the coast with a welcoming 20knt SW sea breeze. The Doctor flings

crazy wind surfers high into the clouds and provides thrilling downwind runs for any long straight and narrow sea kayak. Hook up a sail for added buzz. After an exhilarating hour and a half 20k run, land your craft, smash a cold beer, relax, cool down and contentedly watch the sun set in the West. Further South, a 2 hr drive from Perth, hook up with the guys from Mandurah. They'll guide you around the caves, outcrops, rock gardens and introduce you to the playful sea lions of Penguin Island. In summer after The Doctor has died, take a night paddle with the Fremantle crew. That jaunt always completes with a few beers kayak yak and chips. Take a day paddle around the Swan River into the brand new Darling Harbour in the centre of Perth or the upper reaches of Middle Swan check out the wineries along it's banks. Travel 5 hours South of Perth to Albany. Contact the club captain for every sort of paddle imaginable. Flat water, heavy swell, surf, rebound, magnificent scenery,

everything, even a Kalgan River paddle.

In short the West Coast is a different State, of being. On the East Coast I am intrigued by the proximity, density and the huge range of options available. In contrast, the West is generally sparser, drier, hotter and far less populated (WA 2 to 3 million, Vic 6 to 7 million).

However, WA's sense of space, solitude and serenity, often infused with elusive shimmering mirages are all saturated in an immense desert silence. This primeval, natural interaction invariably soothes a certified Sandgroper's soul.

Safe journey.

Glen Colledge
SKCWA 275



Adventures in Antarctica

Lindsay Joll

Photos Lindsay Joll

Kayak guide Matt with an arched iceberg

A trip to Antarctica in January 2012 with Aurora Expeditions provided the opportunity to join the kayak group on that trip. There were 54 passengers on the ice-strengthened Polar Pioneer (a converted former Russian oceanographic research vessel) of which 12 were in the kayak group led by guide Matt Edwards from Southern Sea Ventures

The trip started in Punta Arenas (on the southern tip of Chile) with a charter flight on a BAE 146 to a Chilean base on King George Island in the South Shetlands – about 120km off the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula. There's a 'gravel' (well some kind of stone) runway on the island, which is home to research stations from half-dozen or more different countries, as well as a small Russian Orthodox church attached to the Russian base.

The cruise arrangements were that the *Polar Pioneer* does an extended round trip out of Ushuaia, dropping the outgoing tour group on King George Island to fly back to Punta Arenas, while the

incoming tour group joins the boat there and gets returned 8 days later to Ushuaia. For my wife (who gets badly seasick) missing one trip across the Drake Passage was highly attractive – and it meant that we got to spend more time in Antarctica and less time 'slugging it out' across the Drake Passage.

From King George Island it was an overnight trip across the Bransfield Strait to the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula and into our kayaking activities. All kayakers were provided with a dry suit to be worn with our own warm undergear, head and hand-wear. Gear provided was single and double plastic kayaks and euro blades, along with skirts and buoyancy vests. Kayaks were stored on the (fairly low) back deck and launched into the water through an opening in the gunwales. A Zodiac pulled up alongside the ship provided a (relatively) stable platform for getting into and out of the kayaks.

There were basically morning and afternoon kayak trips each day, except if the ship needed to re-position during part of the day. And

Majestic icebergs



“was it cold?” I hear you say. Well yes and no. It could get quite warm inside the dry suit – but the bodily extremities (feet, hands, nose, ears) were inclined to chill off somewhat; especially the hands with water drips and splashes off the paddles.

I can't remember everywhere that we went (there weren't a lot of signposts!), but while the rest of the tour group went ashore (or steamed around) in Zodiac's to look at (and smell!) penguin colonies and observe other Antarctic wildlife, we paddled around within about a 5 – 8 km radius of the ship's

anchoring position. Sometimes it was a paddle to just look at the majestic scenery or to see penguins swimming (much less smelly), whales passing by, seals on ice floes or just to carve a passage through brash ice. We visited the Argentinian Base Brown research station, the British station at Port Lockroy and were invited ashore in an unscheduled stop at the Chilean Gonzalez Videla Base for a warming drink and to look at their museum.

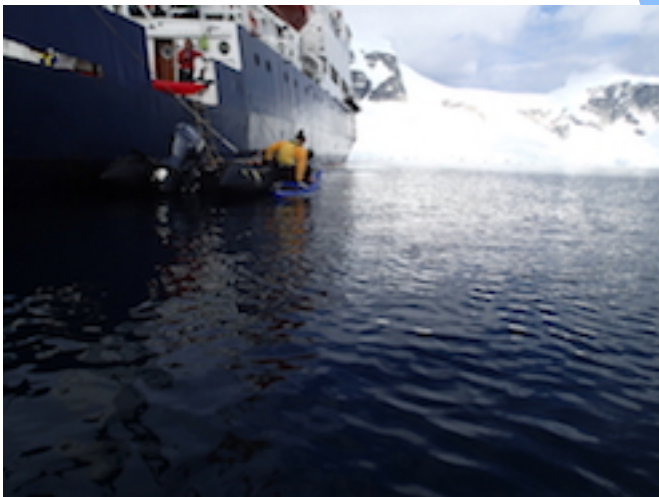
We went ashore at various places and clambered over ice, snow and rocks – and



Lindsay and Wim in their drysuit paddling gear



Portaging a short cut across the snow



Top left clockwise:
The Polar Pioneer amongst the ice
Argentina's Base Brown
Ashore on the black volcanic sands of Deception
island
Paddling the placid waters of Antarctica
Paddling back to the ship at the end of an afternoon
outing
 Climbing into kayaks alongside Polar Pioneer



Twin peaks in the Lemaire Channel



Inquisitive penguin

even got downwind of some penguin colonies (not the best place to be!). Perhaps the most exciting moment was when a large humpback whale surfaced just a few metres away from the kayak that I and my paddling buddy were in. But the real appeal of Antarctica is the 'visuals' – the majestic scenery, the unusual icebergs (but don't get too near – they rollover, without warning) and seeing the physical interplay of wind, water and low

temperature.

On the way back the ship called at Deception Island, a drowned volcanic caldera formerly home to a whaling station (still with remnants of old processing equipment) as well as former research buildings ruined in a volcanic explosion in the 1960s. And then, because the weather on the return trip was pretty benign, the ship did a "sail-by" of Cape Horn. Travelling up the Beagle Passage (named after Charles Darwin's ship) brought us to the 'city at the end of the world', the Argentinian town of Ushuaia.

All I can say about kayaking in Antarctica was that it it's one of the best kayaking trips you can ever do!

Carving a passage through brash ice (the ice goes well with scotch!)



Lindsay and paddling companion Wim with an arched iceberg as backdrop



Penguins swimming toward the kayaks



Penguins on a small ice floe



Doing it tough in Antarctica



A 'heart-stopping moment' when a whale passed close by

Building a Stitch and Glue Sea Kayak.

By Clive Dawkins



Paddling along the Ningaloo Reef in a triple stitch and glue 'Pygmy Kayak' - Osprey design Sea Kayak. We paddled from Ningaloo Station to just north of the Tantabiddi Boat Ramp.

I started building kayaks a long time ago so that I could compete in the Avon Descent. They were fibre glass K1's. They were reasonably cheap to build which didn't make you feel so bad when you destroyed them on the rocks in the Avon River. I therefore gained experience working with resins and fiberglass.

I decided to have a go at building a wooden sea kayak when I was working and completed it on evenings after work on our back verandah. Because working with resins you only have about an hour or two before they set, this type of building suits a part time approach. It was also a work stress release – something to look forward to at the end of a working day. Since building my first wooden stitch and glue kayak – a 'Pygmy Kayak' design called the Coho – High, I have built a triple kayak (pictured above) so that my wife and dog could come and experience the joys of paddling in beautiful places with me. My dog is still indifferent and has at times decided to take faith in her own swimming skills and deserted the boat as soon as she got close enough

to Terra Firma.

I am now in the process of building a more traditional designed sea kayak that should be more suitable to WA ocean conditions. This is the building process that I will mainly refer to in the description below.

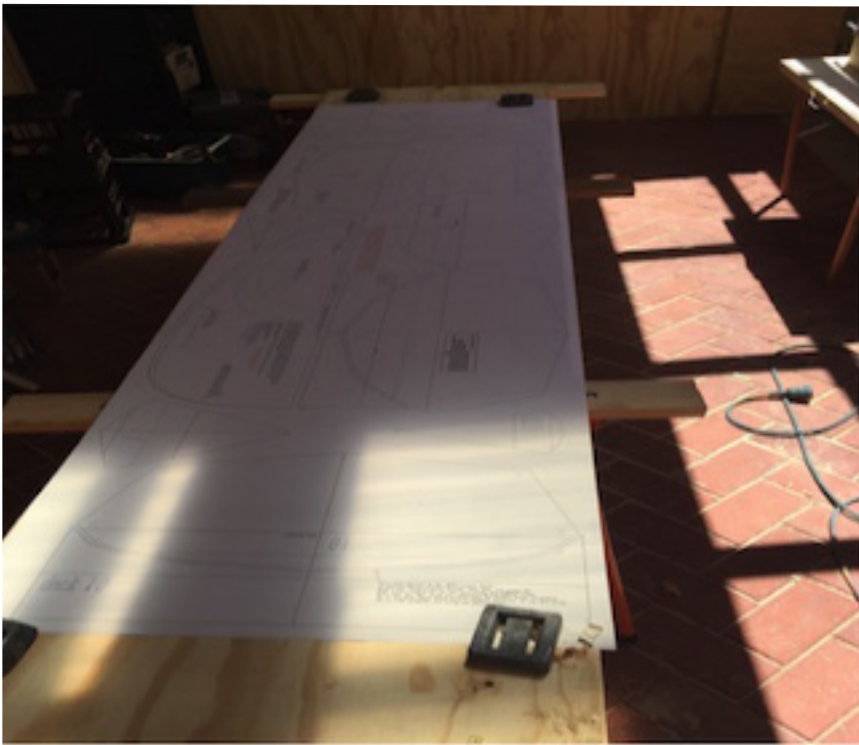
The first decisions to make are finding a 7m by about 2-3 m undercover space to be able to build in. I have used my back verandah and currently using the end of our carport that I have sectioned off from the rest of the carport for security, as the carport is accessible from the street.

As well, you need some basic wood working tools that most people have. I am not an experienced wood worker and do not have fancy tools. A jig saw, an electric drill, an angle grinder and basic hand tools. Then, most importantly, you need to decide on a design and your budget. The cost of materials is about \$2000 - \$2500. That includes the wood, plans,



resins, steering system, glues, sandpaper and various other items. I decided on a 'One Ocean' design called a stitch and glue Cirrus model. It is a design by Vaclav Stejskal who runs One Ocean Kayaks in Massachusetts in the USA. He provided meticulous building construction notes and full sized plans that could be used directly onto the wood. As a result, the Cirrus kayak that I have almost completed is the most true to form that I have made so far. I will not go into construction details, as they are well detailed in the plans and builders' manual that you would purchase from the designer. One thing to mention is that you can often purchase the wood precut from the designer, which would save a lot of work, but the cost of shipping it all out to Australia is prohibitive. I chose to buy the plans and I bought the Okoume marine plywood from a local shipwright in Perth. As a result, I had to cut the plywood panels out myself, which was challenging but there is room for error and you use construction frames that ensure the kayak is aligned and true.





The plans are full sized and you lay them out on the wood to be cut

Cold and wet weather and my wife and I touring around the place have held up the building of this kayak. However, it is a hobby and labour of love something to tinker on when the weather is warm enough for the epoxy to set and I have no other pressing jobs. The finished product will weigh 25kgs. At present it weighs 19 kgs. I have added the hatches, seat, footpegs and rudder plus estimates for the weight of the varnish and paint and this amounts to about 5 kgs. What you end up with is a totally personalized kayak that draws attention wherever you venture. You also get an immensely strong and robust kayak that will outlast most commercially built kayaks.

Anyone who is interested in building a stitch and glue kayak is welcome to contact me for advice.

All the best Clive



Internal frames are used plus external ones so that the kayak shape is accurate.



The hull and deck are stitched together before gluing with an epoxy putty.



You also make the cockpit rim and hatch recesses out of fiberglass or carbon fibre.



Gluing the hatch recesses to the underside of the deck.



The hull and deck both internally and externally are covered in fiberglass.



The hulls are joined together, the recessed deck rigging holes are glassed in and steering cable guides are in place inside the hull.



A lot of tidying up on the external surfaces is still needed – painting strips and cockpit combing, some more epoxy painting and fibreglassing the glued hull and deck joint and varnishing and installing seat (already made), bulkheads (constructed), rudder mounts (ready to bolt in) and rigging.

West Sweden Paddle

Geoff Emery



Leaving Smogen

The Bohuslan Archipelago on the west coast of Sweden has somewhere between two to three thousand granite islands of all shapes and sizes. We were five paddling friends from Perth, who organised a self-guided paddle trip, free camping on the islands. We planned to start at Lysekil in the south and paddle north over twelve days to Stromstad just below the Norwegian border, which was about a hundred kilometres as the crow flies. However not being crows and with a few navigational challenges, we probably got close to doubling that distance.

Richard Jolly had organised to hire plastic Seabird sea kayaks and gear from Marcus Holgersson who runs Skargardsidyllen AB in Grebbestad with his wife Ingela. We were surprised that there were no formal Swedish requirements for flares, P.L.B or VHF radio? Colin Priest had planned our island hopping Nav

Data Sheet and intended camping stops. Geoff Emery, that's me and Colin did all the navigating using map/chart, compass, GPS and creative guessing. We didn't always agree and we didn't always get it right, but we had fun! Gail Priest and Phyll Tiller kept us smiling and motivated, especially when we had rain for nine out of twelve days!

After being dropped by Marcus on Thursday 23/8/18, we loaded our kayaks in light rain and set off for our first campsite on Stora Korno, a few kilometres west. However we ended up camping on Blackhall Island in heavy rain, as it offered more wind protection. Despite the wet night, morale was good as I think we were just pleased to be out paddling after all the planning.

The next day the wind was predicted to be 35kph with gusts to 55kph, so we took a longer more

sheltered route toward Smogen. The wind chill must have numbed both Colin and my brain, as we managed to end up way north of our intended course and by luck more than good navigating found a commercial campsite for the night. The next day got better as the rain eased and we had sunshine for a stop at Smogen. Colin and Gail were still trying to sort out some fuel problems for their Trangia but the rest of us enjoyed the sunshine and 'fika' or coffee and cake. If you take a Trangia to Sweden, who after all invented them, remember the correct Swedish word for methylated spirits is 'T-sprit'. A very kind, Swedish, Good Samaritan drove Colin and Gail some distance to get the right fuel. Unfortunately Marcus had given us the wrong name and apart from not burning, it just about glued the Trangia fuel cap to the reservoir!

Sunday found us paddling north, up the impressive Söte Canal in calm water and sunshine at last!

I began to believe that my gear might actually dry out before the end of the trip. We had lunch on Halsö Island before setting up camp on fabulous Dannemora Island. It had grass, great views over the water and sunshine! Despite a little bit of friction at times, we were all still talking to each other and there had been no dummy spits.

Monday saw us weaving around islands to Fjällbacka to replenish our food and water supply. We were surprised that while landing on the uninhabited islands was easy, the towns didn't

seem to consider kayakers and it often required a bit of searching and ingenuity to land our boats. We enjoyed some 'fika', topped up the water and food and had a short paddle to camp at Portsholmen Island. The camp even had a drop toilet...what luxury! It was a cold windy night and as I snuggled down into my sleeping bag, wearing long john's, thermal top and beanie I wished I'd brought a warmer sleeping bag!

Lunch break. Note toilet.



Civilisation, but nobody's home!



Camp.



Colin, Richard, Gail & Phyll, wet first night at Blackhall Island.

The team, Gail, Colin, Geoff, Phyll & Richard

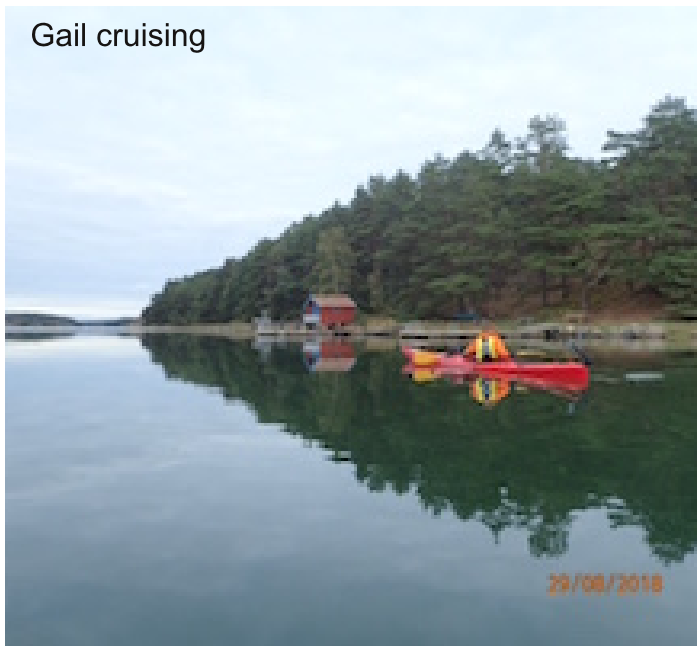


Colin and I were surprised at how difficult the navigation was. At water level the islands blended together and often there seemed to be no gap until you were on top of it. The map/chart was invaluable, even if we had to draw our own lines of latitude and longitude to coincide with our GPS, as Sweden uses a different grid system. On Tuesday we headed north, had lunch on Kaften Island and as the wind was only about 10 knots (or 5m/sec as the Swedes measure it) we decided to head outside and avoid the one kilometre portage at Edsvik. It was a bit lumpy on the outer part of the archipelago, but we made camp at Havsten Island and still had some sunshine to dry the perpetually damp gear!

Over the next few days we weaved around islands heading to Stora Brattskar, south of the national park area of Kosterhavet where we had an excellent camp. The island was amazing with granite ridges sheltering hidden grassy areas, so that you weren't really trying if you couldn't find a campsite out of the wind. The view from the ridges was to die for, with islands everywhere.

Later we paddled north and camped on the north end of Nord Koster, only six kilometres from the Norwegian border and explored on foot. We had a pleasant break at the only restaurant that was open on the south end of Nord Koster, where a channel divides Nord from Syd Koster. We were surprised that in many places it often seemed like everyone had packed up, turned off the lights and gone home after summer, so shops were closed and we had the commercial campsite to ourselves. It was great to have a bit of solitude, but frustrating when you were

Gail cruising



Stora Brattskar.



damp and a bit chilled not to be able to get a hot coffee and a piece of cake! Finding 'fika' became as challenging as finding landing spots in the towns!

On Friday 31/8/18 we left camp early, heading north west with an eighteen knot north east crosswind and waves up to a metre. I took a couple of waves across and through my spray deck so that my dry clothes reverted to their normal state of being wet! Once around the lee side of Nord Koster paddling was easier as we paddled south to circumnavigate Nord and Syd Koster and arrive back at Stora Brattskar on the south east corner. We met a couple of Norwegian kayakers there but soon had our tents up and were mostly out of the wind. I had the dubious distinction of being the only paddler in the group to circumnavigate both Stora Brattskar and Lilla Brattskar, its smaller companion island.

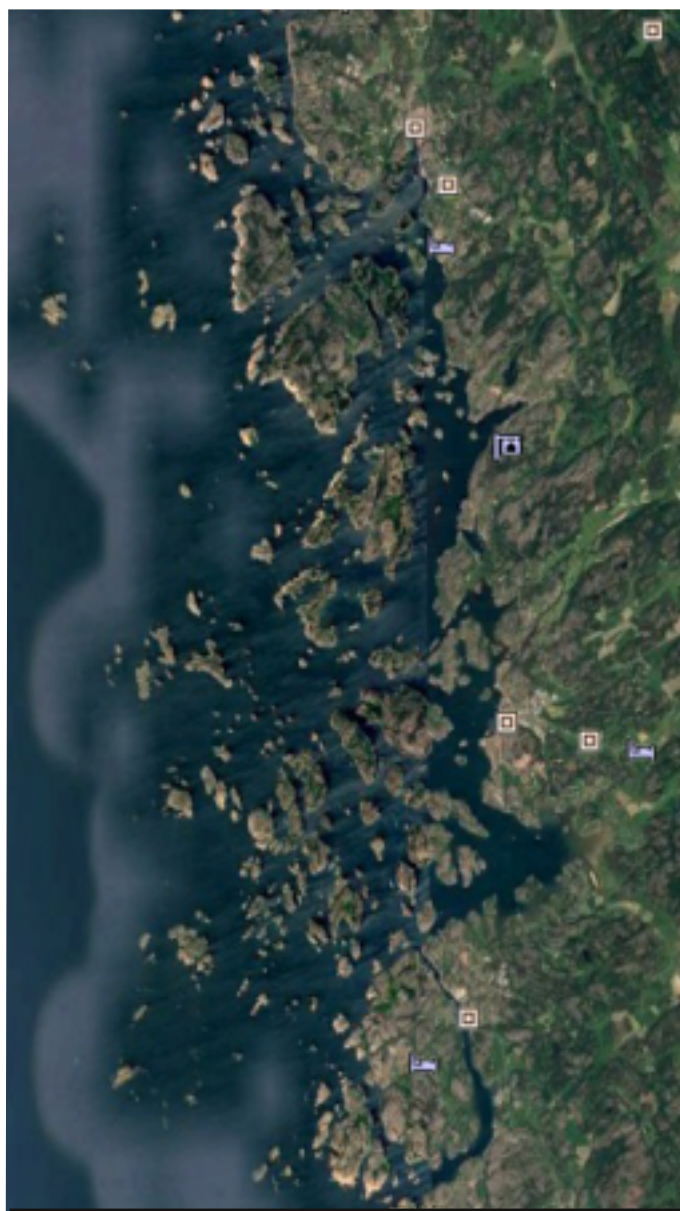
Phyll in culvert.



On Saturday, in light winds we crossed back over the open water to the inner archipelago, aiming for our Stromstad pick up on Monday. The water was calmer closer to the coast and the islands had more trees. Our navigation was pretty good by now, although we had to pull our boats, hand over hand through a couple of culverts at a place where there should have been a bridge. Eventually we made camp at a commercial site, Camp Lagunen about four kilometres south of Stromstad. At last a hot shower, a chance to wash and dry some rank clothes and have a meal that wasn't dehydrated! Hallaleujah!

On Sunday we paddled into Stromstad in lumpy conditions and once again struggled to find somewhere to land. Fortunately the sailing club was fairly deserted and we got permission from a friendly Laser sailor to leave our kayaks stacked on a floating pontoon. Then we headed into town for coffee and cake and wandered about exploring the place. We arranged with Marcus to pick us up at the campsite, rather than having to pack up on Monday and paddle into Stromstad. So Monday night found us back in the Vandrahem or hostel in Grebbestad, feeling warm and clean and satisfied with our adventure.

Looking back at the trip, the islands of the Bohuslan Archipelago were fantastic. The paddling wasn't too hard but the navigation was a challenge and needed maps/charts, compass, GPS and some luck! The best things I bought before the trip were the waterproof Reed cag, shirt, pants and leggings as they all kept



Part of the Archipelago Geoff and friends paddled through

me warm even if I was wet. The best thing I bought in Sweden was my Swedemount sou'wester type of hat that kept me dry and warm despite the rain. In retrospect I should have had a warmer sleeping bag, as I spent a few nights on the cool side of comfortable! However despite rain, wind and grey skies it was a good trip with good paddlers and I'd recommend it.

Geoff Emery

Sea Kayak Instructor

Photo Gallery

*Les and Jenni off the NSW coast at
Jervis Bay*



Sea kayaking

Milos Greece

Lindsay Joll
Photos by Lindsay

In April 2014 I travelled to Milos for 5 days as a side trip on the way to join my wife in Paris. After overnighing in a hotel at Athens airport it was a short (45 minute) trip in an Olympic Airways Dash 8 to Milos. I was booked to join up with 'Sea Kayak Milos', a seakayaking outfit based in the village of Triovasalos on Milos (the site of the discovery of the Venus de Milo), run by Australian Rod Feldtman (a former geologist) and his Greek wife Petrinela. Rod is a highly qualified, BCU-accredited sea kayak coach and leader and his wife runs a small guesthouse which has accommodation for around 12 people and little Kafeneio on the ground floor.

Rod offers a variety of day trips as well as multi-day (including round island) trips. I wasn't there for long enough (or carrying enough gear) to do any of the multi-day trips, but I enjoyed a range of day trips to various points around the coast of Milos. Groups on the day trips were generally made up of those on a similar dedicated kayaking trip, as well as some 'go kayaking for the day' holiday makers.

Gear provided included reasonable single and double plastic kayaks, spay decks, buoyancy vests and euro blades (although I see that they now offer Greenland paddles too). Rod paddled with a Greenland paddle and one day he lent it to me, giving me my first 'taste' of using a Greenland paddle. Breakfast is served in the Kafeneio around 8.30/9 and the 'in house' paddlers work out where they would like to go for the day – based on weather, skill levels and sight-seeing desires.

Trips usually began about 10am, with a short drive towing a trailer-load of kayaks to the chosen launching spot. Rod brings the makings of a pretty yummy sandwich lunch, to be enjoyed after an hour or two of paddling to a point of interest. Most of the day trips I went on were on the north or east side of the island (the lee side in the prevailing weather), but I did a one-day trip on the south side with a group a Danes to an old pirate hideout on the south west corner called Kleftico, where there are



magnificent rock formations. The trip was a bit scary for my skill level at the time, as it involved about a 5km stretch of sheer cliffs each way, with no safe landing point and a moderate swell running. And then a surf landing (first time I'd done one of those) to finish with.

Milos, located in the southwest of the Cyclades group, has a fascinating geology, being primarily volcanic and there is a significant overlay of compressed ash. This makes for areas of harder igneous rocks mixed with quite soft rocks that have been eroded over time, producing some spectacular rock formations with tunnels and arches, as well as sea-caves in undercut cliffs. Having an 'in-house' geologist as a kayaking guide helped to understand the unusual geological formations to be found around the island. There is also an active mining industry on the island, extracting a range of unusual minerals.

There's also a variety of non-kayaking activities for



those seeking to explore other aspects of Milos – all within walking distance of Triovasalos. Apart from some nice Greek restaurants, there's a Roman amphitheatre, ancient catacombs and a good museum. The locals can be pretty interesting too. Being there over Easter I was able to witness the local Easter parade; starting off from the village church and wending its way around the towns - but then gradually turning into unusual display of fireworks related to some long-forgotten feud between two villages involving throwing around crackers as well as detonators and the odd half-stick of dynamite purloined from some of the local mining operations.

Anyway, for anyone thinking of going to Greece (or passing by that way), a trip to Milos is easy to do. Connections from Athens are easy (plane or ferry), you don't need to take any special gear, accommodation can be integrated into the arrangements and there's plenty of interesting sea kayaking to enjoy.

The website is www.seakayakgreece.com.



Top photo: Paddling through an undercut in the soft volcanic ash rock

Bottom right: paddling through caves eroded out of the soft volcanic ash rock

Bottom left: Paddling into the harbour of a little village

Mid left: A welcome sight on any paddle! - Lunch served up



*Top photo: Majestic rock formations at Kleftico
Mid right: A volcanic conglomerate formation
Bottom: Kayaks pulled up on the beach at the old
sulphur mine*



Paddling the Whitsunday Islands



The hardest part about paddling the Whitsunday Islands, for people from Western Australia, is getting a boat-but it can be done, (contact Salty Dog Kayaking in Shute Harbour-mainly plastic Eco Berhzigis) and the reward is worth the effort. After being lucky enough to paddle these islands three years in a row, I am starting to feel as though I know the place very well.

This year Les, Neville Holden (some of you may remember him; he started the WA club years and years ago with Les), Troy (a NSW paddler) and I decided to paddle the islands in June, because it worked better for Les's work and we could go straight after the Queensland Sea Kayak Symposium, which was held on North Keppel Island, a few hundred kilometres south. We were warned June would be windy, and that it was much better to go in August, but we didn't have an option. I'm glad we went when we did, because it was windy, but that made for some awesome sailing fun. The great thing about the Whitsundays is you can virtually go where the wind blows, and with so many

little bays it's usually not hard to find a great camp out of the wind.

A Whitsunday trip starts from Shute Harbour, 1100 km north of Brisbane, or 12 hours drive, though you can also get there by island hopping the 100 kms from Mackay, which will probably be our next trip up this way. Doing it that way gives you very favourable tail winds all the way, and would be wonderful sailing! We arranged to leave our cars at Flametree Caravan Park for the three weeks we were away, though there were cheaper options available, but the \$100 per car also included a lift to and from the drop off point, which made it very convenient. With boats loaded for a three week trip, including 50 litres of water, we paddled a whole 5 kms on the first day, and camped on South Molle Island. With a luxurious three weeks ahead of us, why rush? You have to ease slowly into trip mode-or maybe we were already too much in trip mode after a week in the Keppels. Or maybe we are just getting old and lazy?

The next morning we set off from South Molle and headed east towards Dugong Beach, (in the now infamous Cid Harbour, site of the three recent shark attacks!) but after an hour of paddling with a 15 knot wind on our right shoulder we decided to take advantage of it and headed north instead, aiming for Curlew Beach. Now, here is where experience with tides (not

common amongst WA paddlers) is invaluable, tide charts being very useful in indicating places where you may come unstuck in the between the islands if you don't take tidal flow into consideration. (There are apps which will give you that information.) We were paddling across an outgoing tidal current of about 2 knots, which would have driven us westward had we aimed straight for our new destination, so we aimed for about a kilometre to the east, and arrived pretty much in the right spot. Had we not, it would have been a slog to get back to our beach, both against tide and wind. Curlew Beach was one we hadn't been to before, a sheltered bay on the western edge of a beautiful little inlet, very sheltered from the wind, and no-one else in sight, another advantage of going in June, not July. A paddle up this beautiful inlet revealed a constant change of scene, from hoop pine forest, rocky boulders, mangrove swamps and sandy beaches. We liked it so much we stayed a second night, and spent the next day heading west to explore the stunningly beautiful Nara Inlet, armed with a picnic and a fishing line. Les the hunter decided he would try and catch a fish. He didn't.

I remember thinking Nara Inlet was one of the most beautiful and unique places I've been, because of the unexpected juxtaposition of environments. Above the water it

reminded me a lot of Vancouver Island, believe it or not. The Whitsundays are not sandy islands with palm trees. They are mountainous and covered with pine trees, with granite boulders along the edges, hence the comparison. But what I never expected to see was the view under the water...amazing coral all along the edges of the inlet! It was like someone had taken Canada



and put it on top of the Great Barrier Reef. The water was so clear that we could 'korkel' all the way (kayak snorkel-spread the word-it may be next year's Webster Word of the Year) without getting wet. It was so beautiful to spend time paddling leisurely along and view so much coral just below the surface of the water, which was completely flat because of the shelter provided by the inlet. If you have a look on Google Earth, you can see the reef along the edge of the inlet, also without getting wet! To top it off, when we reached the end of the inlet, which was quite a way, and took us ages because we were so entranced by the coral and travelled very slowly, we were able to climb to an Aboriginal Cave

and see some 9000 year old rock paintings. This place really felt spiritual, and you can imagine what a wonderful home it provided for the original residents, with seafood in abundance and caves for shelter, completely protected from the elements.

After a picnic lunch we headed back, this time stopping to snorkel properly, and that's when the abundance of fish became apparent. For some reason you can never see fish when you korkel, but here they were, an amazing variety and number, all enjoying the protected warm waters, where no cyclones can get to them. And above the water, Canada! A beautiful way to spend a day.

The next day we headed north, psychologically preparing ourselves for the rounding of the top end of Hook Island and the dreaded Pinnacles. We'd done it twice before, we knew what we were in for. The tide, wind and rebound have never failed to test our ability to stay upright, and conditions this year didn't disappoint. At this point on the islands the swell has travelled a long way, and though only 1.5 metres (they don't often get big swell on the east coast, unlike the Great Southern Coastline where 3 metres is an average swell day), when combined with tidal currents, rebound and 25 knot winds, it certainly makes for an interesting

paddle. We had our sails up, having commenced the day in more sheltered waters where sails were a pleasant addition, and, like the proverbial frog in the pot of slowly heating water, ended the paddle the same way, partly because we couldn't have taken our hands off the paddle to let them down, but also because the yeeha factor was just too fun. It makes you appreciate how stable a fully laden kayak is when you are bouncing around on the top of clapotis, easily handling whatever the water throws at you. Having experienced this twice before took away some, though not all, of the fear factor, and made it a more enjoyable experience than my previous two attempts.

This rounding of the north eastern end of Hook Island ends with the passage through the Pinnacles, a 4 metre gap between the rocky shore and a rocky outcrop. With 25 knots at our backs, our sails up and some pretty rough water underneath, we headed through as fast as we could, keeping ahead of the following sea and taking advantage of the waves as we went. The water usually surges through pretty quickly, but once you're through you are in dead flat, clear blue water in a tranquil sheltered bay, with the same feeling you get after a roller coaster slows to a halt; relief, exhilaration and disappointment, because you're glad it's over, but you want to do it all again. A great

way to end a couple of hours of challenging paddling. This used to be the part of a Whitsunday trip that I most feared, but now it's my favourite, though I don't necessarily think that at the time.

For the next hour we paddled leisurely along the north coast of Hook Island, exploring bays, checking out the coral, and enjoying the ambience, before arriving at Steen's Beach on low tide. It looked like a wall of coral would block us from the beach, but Neville knew of a passage that would take us in behind and allow us to land with gel coat intact. A sandy beach, grassy camp spot, and a picnic table, no other paddlers in sight—definitely worth two nights. More brilliant snorkelling, including the discovery of 2 giant clams over a metre in width, and many varieties of amazing fish. Fortunately not all of the coral up here was destroyed during the 2017 cyclones, and we were pleased to see new coral growing where it wasn't last year. We were also surprised to see large empty turtle nests all along the beach, which Neville said had never been here on previous visits. Perhaps a result of rising ocean temperatures?

I said earlier that one advantage of the Whitsundays is that you can virtually paddle where the wind blows. That works until you reach the most northern point on the island...when you have to head

south, which is where the wind usually comes from. We prepared ourselves for the 30 kilometre slog into head winds to get back to the southern end of Hook Island by rising at 4 am in order to paddle during the calmest part of the day. We headed off under a peaceful grey sky, managing to avoid most



of the wind by hugging bays, greeting yachties along the way who had surfaced with their morning coffees, and by the end of the day had reached our destination, where we sheltered from rain for two days, which allowed us to top up our dwindling water supplies.

Although there is no water available on the islands, we usually manage to resupply by asking other campers for any spare water they may have before they leave. Neville is an expert cadger, and trained us well the first year we paddled with him. "Scamper" provides a drop off service for campers wishing to stay on the islands, and provides them with 20 litres of water each, which has to be tipped out before they are picked up, so it's never a problem, but as we were doing

this trip before school holidays we hadn't yet seen any other campers, despite being out for a week by now, and water supplies were getting low, so the rain was a bonus as it poured from our tarps into water containers. Fortunately our camp at Dugong Beach had a table with a roof over it, so the timing was perfect and the rain wasn't too bothersome, though the second night we had to share it with a group of outdoor ed students who also wanted to get out of the rain.

A resupply at Hamilton Island, following a game of 'dodge the harbourmaster' gave us an opportunity for a shower, beer, burgers and phone recharging, and then it was off to Whitehaven Beach, supposedly the most beautiful beach in Australia, or so they tell the tourists as they charge them squillions to spend half a day there. I would never consider a beach covered with hundreds of tourists beautiful, but they seem to like it. It is quite amusing to watch the seaplanes arrive and unload their tourists with a bottle of champagne for an hour of selfie snaps before flying them home again, all for a mere \$350. I love it when they ask how we got there, and we tell them we paddled for free and pay a whole \$6.30 a night to camp there. Rather jealous, some of them. The best part, by 4.00pm all the boats and planes leave, and we have the place to ourselves. Then it is beautiful.

The return journey from Whitehaven a couple of days later was the highlight of the trip as far as paddling went. South easterly winds of 20 to 25 knots blew us back across the bay, with sails up and the current with us all the way. More yeeha! I just wanted to go as fast as I could, but Troy didn't have a rudder and found the side on winds more difficult to manage, so we had to haul in the reins somewhat, a little frustrating. A rudder is a pretty essential piece of equipment if you are in a group, to enable everyone to travel at the same speed, especially with sails up. Another stop at Hamilton Island (the pub food is pretty good) along the way, and then back to South Molle for a couple more nights.

South Molle provided an opportunity for a bit of hiking to Spion Kopf, which gives a great view over the whole Whitsunday group, as does the hike to the top of Whitsunday Peak from Dugong Beach. It was a nice way to say farewell to the islands and spend our last day, before a fast sail back to Shute Harbour in favourable winds the next day.

There are some things that make the Whitsundays an easy place to paddle. Firstly, the fact that you can hire a kayak from Salty Dog means you can do it by flying to Airlie Beach. They will hire boats to anyone, no training required

(Les has occasionally done some capsize drills with newbies who haven't a clue what to do if their boat turns upside down, including a family of four who were setting off to paddle around the Pinnacles). The boats aren't great, big plastic things, but they do the job. Also, the service provided by Scamper, who will transport you and your kayak to any camping spot, means it is easy to take non kayaking partners or children, or easily evacuate the islands if the weather turns extreme. We had to use them our first year when the rangers closed all the beaches due to an approaching very big storm, which dumped 240 mls of rain in 24 hours. If you can avoid school holidays the camp spots are reasonably empty, though I believe August is the busiest time. Some of the campsites are quite small, so you may not always find a spot then. You are supposed to book your campsites before you go at the National Park Office in Shute Harbour, but as long as you have tickets, they are not too fussy if you are not on the beach you said you would be on, as wind is a major determiner of where you can actually get to. Going out of season means you may have to contend with stingers and march flies, so do your research. You may want to consider where and when you snorkel and swim following the recent shark attacks-not a problem for kayaking (so Les assures me, constantly!)

There is also the option of paddling the islands south of Hamilton Island, where you don't need a ticket to camp and there is no Scamper service. That can also mean no people to cadge water from (though there are yachties who may help you out, and creeks if you know where to look). These are great options during peak times, as very few people go there, and we found some amazing places to camp when we paddled those islands last year,



with a greater feeling of remoteness, though they are not far away at all. Watch the wind forecast though, and make sure you'll be able to handle the conditions you may have both there and back-we had some pretty strong winds and fast sailing on our return journey.

Overall, the Whitsundays are definitely worth a look, and can provide an opportunity for extended relaxing paddling and camping, with the added exhilaration of great sailing opportunities. We'll be back, many times I'm sure. Maybe even run into you there one year?