

Sea Trek



Summer 2016/17
Issue 88



www.victoriansseakayak.club



Photo: Ben Flora - Feb 2017 Walkerville

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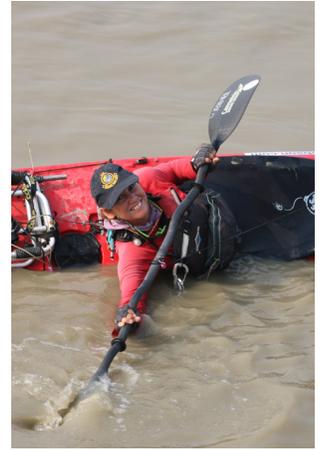
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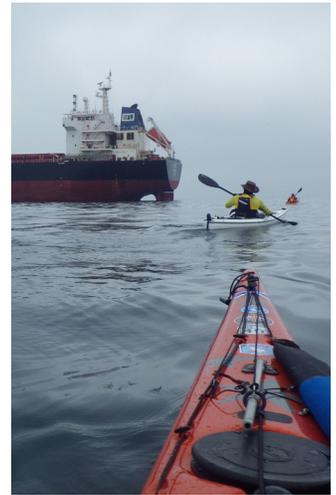


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President's Heads Up

Sea Trek Summer 2017



Welcome to the first issue of *Sea Trek* by new Editor Ben Flora, and the first under the auspices of the club's new committee.

Let me again express my sincere thanks to Bob Fergie, our immediate past Club President. Bob very much reflected his vocation for pastoral care in the leadership he provided to our great club. It is without a doubt that our recent growth as a club and the positive culture we enjoy are both testament to Bob's guidance. The sad passing of club stalwart, Mick MacRobb late last year saw Bob really excel as he orchestrated a fine and memorable tribute to our beloved paddling colleague. Bob, a huge thanks to you and retiring committee members Bronwyn and Greg Skowronski, Brandon Stewart and Helmut Heinze for all your great work.

The new committee has moved quickly to identify our priorities for 2017 and beyond. Arguably, one of the most important is a review of the club's grading system. The Reference Group to consider options in this regard will

be meeting shortly. Members can keep in touch with the committee activities through a regular president's email that I will be issuing after committee meetings.

I mentioned Mick MacRobb above, and many words have been said in memorialising our great mate. He is sorely missed by all, and I am pleased to reinforce previous announcements that we will stepping up our annual photographic competition to strike an award in Mick's honour. A fitting tribute, I am sure all who knew Mick will agree.

The new committee, which comprises of (President) Richard Rawling, (Vice President) Steve Collins, (Treasurer) Mark Stewart, (Secretary) Joe Alberico, (Membership Officer) James Balnaves, (Training Officer) Pete Wilson, (Communications) Laureen Knight, and (Publications) Benjamin Flora), is strongly focused on our club's three core objectives — safety, inclusiveness and adventure. The glue that binds these aspects together in many ways is communication, and we are very pleased with reactions to our Facebook presence and new website.



Please keep the feedback coming so we can continue to improve these things. In particular, please help Ben Flora, our new *Sea Trek* editor, to source interesting stories about paddling and related activities.

Lastly, with summer in full flight, I do hope you have been clicking up the paddling kilometres on interesting waterways. There have been some great paddles running, with many more to come. We have an exciting event on 25 March 2017 with the visit of Sandy Robson to the Club. Sandy will regale us with stories from her stupendous five-year paddle from Germany to Australia. An event not to be missed.

Enjoy this issue of *Sea Trek* as yet another reflection of the great sea paddling community we have and are building here in Victoria. See you on the water somewhere.

Richard Rawling
VSKC President



VSKC
Victorian Sea Kayak Club

Sarah Black and Simon Lehmann sneaking through the tunnel at Bird Rock, Walkerville, Feb 2017.



Cover

Photo: Ben Flora

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Photo: Ben Flora - Dec 2016 Sorrento circuit

Editorial Musings

A new year, a new magazine and a new committee for the Victorian Sea Kayak Club. What a year to look forward to, with plenty of new adventures lined up for all skill levels. Who doesn't like exploring our amazing environment and challenging ourselves in a place where two worlds collide, that of the sea and the land.

With a new editor comes a new look. I am aiming to showcase a series of stories, articles, photos and anything printable from our club members. Remember it needs to be related to sea kayaking! Articles on how to improve your kayak skills and enhance your equipment are always wanted.



There will be plenty of space for some inspiring photography, as you will discover in this edition. Finally, we can't miss the all important club trip reports. (For those submitting reports please aim to keep them to 500 words or less. Ideally accompanied by some photographs, where possible.) For those who are feeling creative, now is your time to get to work and plan or write your next story. For others, sit back, sip your coffee and enjoy the rest of the magazine.

Safe paddling

Ben Flora

Annual General Meeting 2016

Ben Flora

Okay, we are sea kayakers, yes? Well not at our AGM: we became mostly land dwellers and sea viewers due to the crazy wild weather. However, that did not blow our excitement away as we turned to investigate sea kayaking from the viewpoint of land. In fact, we had four paddles in all at this AGM. Considering the weather pattern where the wild wind was out of control and over 30 knots for Saturday and Sunday, we did quite well. Friday started with two training sessions from Rob Mercer from up north and at 1pm an Eagles Nest paddle

set off for the few brave paddlers willing to test the edge of the conditions that were brewing. David Golightly became a life member of the club and his interview follows. Saturday, a group managed to learn some skills by taking a trip up the Powlett River, some conquered the wind and others the cows. The knot workshop was a hit and the Saturday night meal and Red-Eye video winner was all in good stead. Plenty of plonk to share around. Who doesn't love the annual auction and the photo competition which is hotting up?



Photo: Mark Sundin

The AGM was a great weekend of mostly land musings where we simply watched the wrath of King Neptune whipping up high winds and fierce waters.

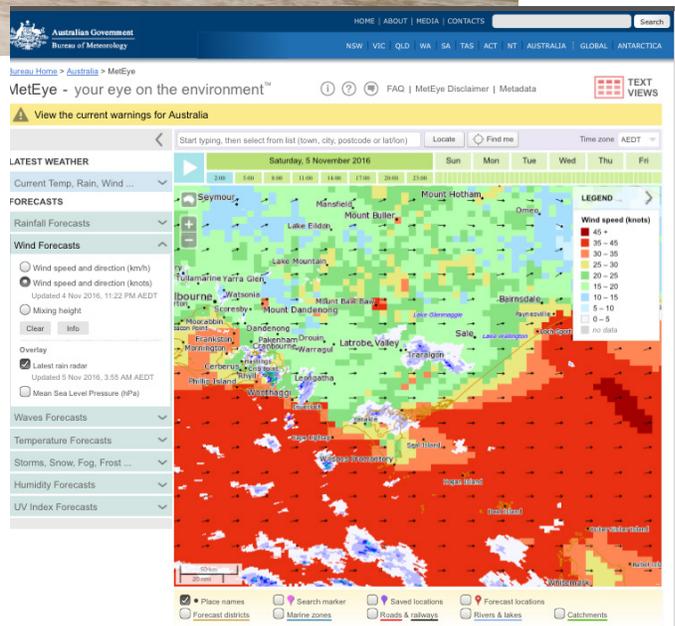




Photo: Ben Flora, Red Eye April 2016

Life Membership at 2016 AGM

Ben Flora and David Golightly

The first Life Membership Award to be made since the committee created a formal set of submission guidelines a couple of years ago was announced at the 2016 AGM, when President Bob Fergie presented David Golightly with his Life Membership Award.

In making the award, Bob thanked nominator Tony Chick and seconder Terry Barry for a most comprehensive and impressive submission. Bob advised that the submission had received unanimous approval from the committee.

When making the award President Bob drew from the submission the various ways in which David had served the club with distinction and in particular referred to the international exposure created from David's two-and-half-year project in organising the Paul Caffyn dedicated plaque and the permanent sea kayak display in Queenscliffe Maritime Museum. The plaque commemorates the 25th Anniversary of Paul's "Dreamtime Voyage" and is located on the headland in Queenscliffe above the beach Paul launched from and where he returned triumphant twelve months later.

Bob recommended that everyone should make the effort to visit the museum which, in addition to Paul Caffyn's kayak and other memorabilia from the first successful 1982 circumnavigation of Australia by sea

kayak, also houses the kayak presented to the VSKC by Freya Hoffmeister, the first woman to paddle all the way around Australia in her year-long voyage. Bob also thanked David for the work he and Peter Treby carried out to coordinate with Freya during her voyage and, in particular, the departure and arrival events and the international and local media exposure achieved for the club and for Freya.

The third kayak on display is the boat used by VSKC Founding President Earl de Blonville on the first successful circumnavigation of Tasmania in 1979 with companion John Brewster.

Photographs from all three expeditions are featured on continuously changing computer screens in the museum.

In closing his award presentation, Bob thanked David for ten years of dedicated service in various roles on the club's committee.



Photo Heather Torbet

Editor: Why did you join and when?

After a long hiatus from paddling, while I was focused on bringing up a family as well as building a career, I returned to paddling in 2004, joined the VSKC and bought a Mirage 530. A few months later, my old 'Scouting' mate Stuart and I completed my second tour of the Whitsunday Islands. The first was in 1973 when my wife Annette and I lived in Queensland and we took our two canvas covered traditionally built Greenland style boats up to Shute Harbour and launched them. We had imported these two kayaks from Scotland when we came to Australia in 1971. I recall that my Aussie mates from my Brisbane office were horrified that we should risk our lives in the shark infested waters of North Queensland — it showed how little they knew of the area in those early days.

The benefits of joining the VSKC were immediate, as prior to the 2004 Whitsunday trip with Stuart, I was able to get contemporary advice from club members about the kayaks that were available in those days as well as modern expedition planning techniques and the like. Coincidentally, while camped on one of the islands in the Whitsundays, Stuart and I were surprised one afternoon with the arrival of Terry and Deb Barry plus John and Annie Woollard, it was a wonderful catch-up as I had only met them once before at my first Canadian Bay club day some months earlier.

Editor: What kept you there for the next decade or so?

Above all I think, the companionship and friendliness of everyone I met in the club, it proved to be a wonderful, challenging but safe environment to continue my long held interest in sea kayaking.

Editor: What do you plan to do next?

Heather and I hope to continue paddling for as long as our health and fitness permits. Nowadays we temper our choice of outings to ensure we are conservative in where and for how far we paddle, although we do plan to get back to the Whitsunday's before long. We also plan to remain connected to the wonderful friends we have been fortunate to make from within the VSKC.

Editor: Do you have a highlight trip?

A great question and as such difficult one to answer as there have been so many highlights both here and overseas. I still recall with very clear and fond memories, my first ever 'real voyage' in a sea kayak. It was in 1968, when my friend Stuart and I set off on a 200 nautical mile trip winding our way up



Photo: Peter Sharp

Scotland's islands and loch indented west coast, this trip above all hooked me into sea kayaking. These were the very, very early days of exploration by sea kayak, at least on Scotland's west coast it was and, in retrospect, I don't think Stuart and I realised at the time just how 'out there' our trip was. By the way, the trip was undertaken in the very boats we had personally built in 1967–1968, interestingly this period preceded any availability of fibreglass sea kayaks. In 1971 we brought these same kayaks to Australia.

Turning to Australian-based paddles, the question is much more difficult to answer, but I guess my two successful journeys around Wilsons Promontory feature high, the first led by Tina Evertze and the second by Terry Barry. They were truly wonderful adventures and the first trip satisfied a long-held ambition to get around the 'Prom' in a 'canoe'! In terms of longer trips, without doubt I can't go past my 2008 journey, again with Stuart, when we set off from Mackay and finished what is referred to as '100 magic Miles' in Airley Beach some two weeks later. It was a sensational trip with many great experiences, including getting up close and personal with a large whale heading south. Finally, I think the most relaxing trip in recent memory was the professionally led, ten-day long, holiday-style paddle in Tonga that Heather and I enjoyed with Terry and Deb Barry, this was a true tropical paradise experience with unrivaled island campsites as well as the cultural exposure to Polynesian island life.

Editor: How long did you serve on the committee?

Ah, an interesting journey that was! I need to retrace my steps to my first VSKC AGM because though the initiative of Peter Costello, Paul Caffyn was persuaded to fly from his hide-hole on the west coast of New Zealand's South Island, to join us as the keynote speaker at Portsea, which was the venue for the AGM at that time. Meeting Paul Caffyn at the 2004 AGM proved to be the start of a long association and, indeed, friendship. A couple of years later, I was paddling past Queenscliffe en route to Point Lonsdale, when I remarked to a club member who was paddling alongside me, that the beach to our right was the site where Paul Caffyn had launched his successful 'Dreamtime Voyage' sojourn around the coast of Australia in 1981–1982. My paddling colleague then posed the perfectly log-

ical question, 'Is there any tangible recognition of that achievement locally?' Unfortunately my answer was, 'No, there wasn't'. Then and there I decided to do something about what to me was a glaring omission in the recording of world achievements in small boat voyages. I felt strongly that some sort of legacy to sea kayaking in our local waters should be created. A few months later and after considerable research and meetings with Queenscliffe City Council, I presented a submission to the committee of the VSKC, led at that time by club stalwart Peter Treby. My submission was based around the construction of a permanent reminder of Paul Caffyn's success in becoming the first to circumnavigate mainland Australia in a sea kayak. The main feature of the plan I presented was a bronze plaque highlighting salient points of the voyage.

Not only was my plan endorsed and supported by the VSKC committee but ... I found myself elected to the committee in the newly created role of Major Projects Coordinator reporting to Peter Treby. Thus began a decade-long period of committee service, initially in the major projects role, then as club secretary and finally as Vice-President. Following a two-and-half-year planning phase, largely driven around Paul Caffyn's availability to come to Australia as well as the need to negotiate the often frustratingly slow decision-making processes of local government, the 'Caffyn' project was completed and a plaque celebrating the 25th anniversary of 'The Dreamtime Voyage' was unveiled by Paul Caffyn in person, who to our delight was accompanied by his two shore support team members from 1982, Lesley Hadley and Andy Woods.

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*Thank you David Golightly
for this insight into the
club and what it means for
you and us*

Wild AGM Pix



Powlett river paddle - photos: Mark Sundin



Mark Thurgood knots workshop - photos: Lauren Knight



Rob Mercer and Mark Sundin training sessions - photos: Mark Sundin



John Evertze beach lessons photos: Ben Flora





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*AGM group picture and
pack your kayak workshop*

Photos: Laureen Knight

2016 AGM Photo Competition Winners



*Flora and Fauna
category winner:*

Kerrie Vogele

Landscape category winner:

Pete Wilson





Maybe it's over there near Tasmania

You might find it if you climb this ladder

Isn't that in the cloud?

I hear VSKC is now on Facebook

Humour category winner:

Ben Flora

Action category winner:

Ben Flora

Start collecting your best shots for the Mick MacRobb Memorial Photographic Award at the 2017 AGM!





Victorian Sea Kayak Club proudly presents

Sandy Robson's

Germany to Australia by Kayak

slide show and talk

Sat 25th March 6.30pm



Photo Nick Hart/Nagombo News



Photo Carolyn Piru

Sandy Robson shares the motivation, grit, determination and hard work that went into her 23000km journey through 20 countries by kayak which she completed in 2016 by reaching Australia.

Mordialloc Sailing Club 12 Bowman St, Aspendale

Booking details:

Early Bird online Try Booking:

<https://www.trybooking.com/OYOX>

VSKC Members \$10 early bird online

Non VSKC Members \$20 early bird online

\$25 door charge on night

Arrive 6.30pm

Presentation 7.45pm - 9.00pm

Q&A, socialise afterwards

Bring a plate of food to share

Sailing club bar open

Sandy holds the World Record for the first person to circumnavigate Sri Lanka by kayak and is the first woman to paddle the coasts of India, Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea. She has battled through strong winds and huge surf, paddled long arduous stretches of remote foreign coast, found herself stuck out overnight in the kayak at sea and ventured beyond fatigue and into the world of hallucinations more than once.

Join us to hear her tell many stories of her kayaking adventures in person.

Xmas Red-Eye



Xmas Red-Eye Paddle

photos:
Nic Faramaz
Ben Flora
Lauren Knight

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Xmas Red-Eye Paddle

photos:
Nic Faramaz
Ben Flora
Lauren Knight

Heaven, Paradise and Eden

Words and images Terry Barry



Photo: Kerrie Vogeles



The group of six met at Mallacoota on Sunday 8 January. Unfortunately one of the group (Kerrie) was suffering from a chest cold and had to withdraw from the paddle but had kindly come along to assist with the shuttle, meaning that we would have all cars waiting at Eden for us and not be required to return to Mallacoota. Thanks heaps for this Kerrie!

Monday 9 January saw five of us (Terry B, Steve C, Graeme T, Derek W & Graeme Q) on the water at 7am.

As we headed out of the Mallacoota lakes towards the ocean, the tide was still flowing in hard; making the first couple of kilometres a bit of a struggle to clear the bar and enter the ocean proper.

Although I had done it a few times it was a few years since I paddled the Nadgee coast, between Mallacoota and Eden. It's called 'The Wilderness Coast' as it is about the only significant piece of coastline left largely untouched by development on the eastern coast of Australia, south of Cairns. So when someone suggested it would be good to paddle the wilderness coast last year, I put this in my mind as a must do this summer.

The plan was to spend five days paddling between Eden & Mallacoota, allowing plenty of time to enjoy and explore the area. I have blasted through once before in two days but five days would allow for a lay day to explore the Nadgee River estuary and really take time to enjoy the coast. A car shuffle would be needed, hence meeting on Sunday for the shuttle, and then paddle the next five days. Direction would be determined by the wind forecast and, as we were in for a few days of southerlies, it was an easy decision to start at Mallacoota and paddle north.



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As we headed towards our first destination, Tullaburnga Island, the sea was quite calm and there was very little wind. A stop on the only small beach at the island was a welcome stretch of the legs and quick snack before heading over to Gabo Island.

As we approached the beach and landing jetty, Graeme Q spotted a large shark, information he relayed to the kids jumping from the jetty; they stopped jumping!

Heaven

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After an early lunch at the beach, we were off again heading around the island to pass by the lighthouse. The wind had now strengthened from the south-west and we paddled into it to reach the top end of the island. The swell was also bigger at about a metre.

Past the light I elected to go through the channel between the island and a large rock in front of the lighthouse. The others had already paddled past and didn't see where I went, causing some concern; however, I was having a great time up close and personal with a large number of seals, eager to check out this strange visitor. When I popped out at the end of the channel I made the group aware of my presence and called them over to where we all spent a bit more time checking out the seals. From there we continued to contour the island, playing with more seals and enjoying the great coastline.

At the northern end of the island we set course for Cape Howe, the border between Victoria and New South Wales.

The Cape is covered in huge sand dunes and is quite spectacular. The coast is mainly sandy beaches with a few reefs here and there. Once around the cape the sandy coastline soon gives way to

a cliff-lined coast and is spectacular. We contoured the coast until reaching our intended camp for the night at Nadgee River.

There are two choices in campsites here. The southern end of the beach, where there is a very sheltered area just behind the primary dunes, or the northern end next to the river mouth, which has views up the river and along the beach and is much more popular. However, as the surf at the northern end was larger than the southern end we elected to go for the southern end.

We set up our tents on the beach, wanting to avoid ticks from the bushes. The beach felt wild and remote. After a wander around, someone suggested we had found heaven, but once the tents were up heavy rain set in and we retreated to the bush shelter and set up a tarp for a communal kitchen.

The rain persisted into the evening, but we were all comfortable and it had stopped by the time we went to bed. Paddle distance for the day was 37 kilometres; we all slept well!

Next morning we woke to a glorious day, except for the nasty shore dump we had to clear. Steve volunteered by way of paper-scissors-rock to be last off

the beach, so with the help of a push and good timing it was one of the easiest surf launches I have had for some time. What a change not to be the last one off the beach! Steve also did well, timing his run perfectly and we were all away.

We only had 18 or so kilometres to the next camp and all day to do it in, so we made the most of great conditions to contour the coastline and enjoy the vast array of cliffs, inlets and bommies and small beaches. To be in such a place on such a fine day was truly wonderful. The feeling of remoteness added to our sense of awe.

We looked for a landing at Newton's beach wanting to stretch the legs, but the shore dump made us think otherwise, so on we paddled to Merrica River, our intended camp.

If you have never been to Merrica River, do yourself a favour... It is one of the best camp spots I have experienced. When the weather was as fine as it was for us it is truly Paradise: warm soft sand, gentle surf beach, unspoilt estuary with aqua blue water that seemed to be teeming with fish, amazing bird life, and a fresh-water spa at the end of the estuary reached by paddling through a stunning gorge. To top it off, we had it all to ourselves.

Naturally, first things first on arrival, we jumped straight into for swim. "Where's the inner tube?" cries GQ. At which point, Steve and Derek appeared from the bush with a giant inflatable dragon and five old men turned into teenagers in an instant. It turned out someone had left a stash to return to with the inflatable dragon, kayak, fishing rod, and some food.



Paradise

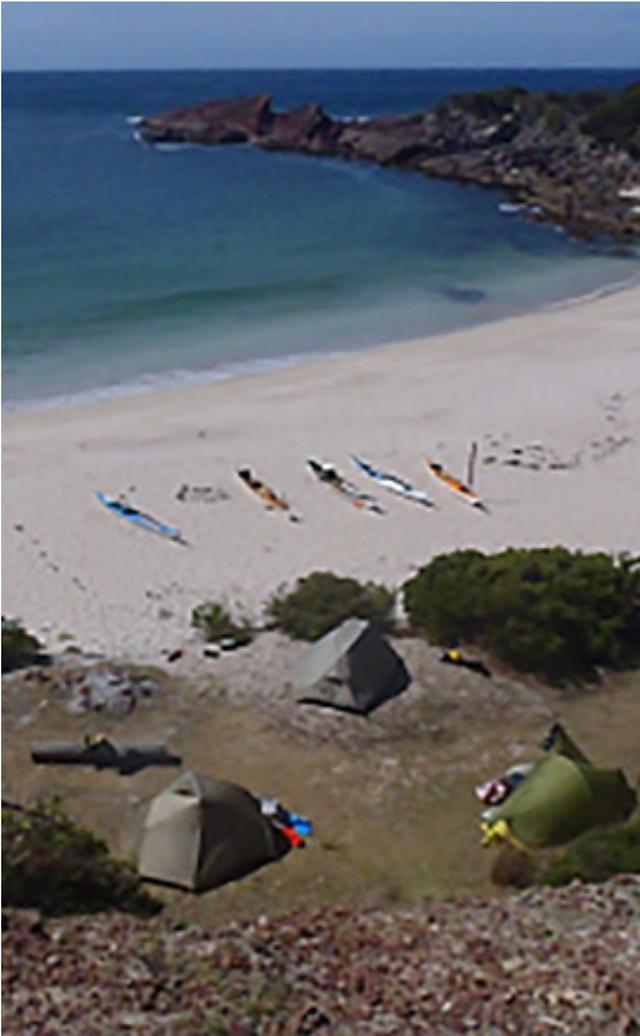
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We didn't want to leave this place and it would have been the perfect spot for our planned lay day, but the weather forecast was for two more days of southerlies followed by 30-knot northerlies on Friday. Not an ideal finish to try paddling into that. We decided it was best that we finish a day early and forgo the lay day.

We paddled away at high tide the next morning and headed across Disaster Bay to Green Cape. Easily identified by the lighthouse. The wind built along with the seas, so by the time we reached Green Cape it was an exhilarating ride.

Once past the Cape we had a lee shore and once again revelled in the chance to contour the coastline to Bittanga-bee, a planned camp spot, but as it was only late morning we elected to paddle on to Mowarry Point instead.



Besides, Bittangabee was full of people and it just didn't feel right after where we had just come from.

After an early lunch we paddled off for Mowarry Point, again we contoured the coast. A couple of pods of dolphins passed by and we did a little rock gardening. You know the old saying: "If you play with fire..." Well, I ended up inspecting the bottom of the ocean (well rocks more like) in a rather nasty spot, but managed a roll and came away with my boat and dignity intact.



On arrival at Mowarry beach there were a few day trippers and it was very hot, but there was no shade at the campsite, so we erected a tarp and settled in. The day trippers soon left and we had the place to ourselves. And what a spot, great swimming and superb views of Eden in the distance. We had done 30-odd kilometres for the day leaving only 15 or so for the morning.

On the last day once again we had superb conditions for contouring the coastline and a bit of rock gardening. We were in no hurry to finish so we really took our time and explored every bit of this great cliff line. Steve came unstuck in gauntlet and found himself swimming in unfriendly waters. A bit of quick thinking on his part and he was soon in a more sheltered spot and put back in the cockpit. On we went past the old whaling lookout of Boyd Tower and into Twofold Bay. We decided to continue our coastal contour and go around to the old whaling station in Kiah then to the finish at Boydtown where Kerrie and our cars awaited.

We packed up and spent the evening nearby at Graeme and Kerrie's, where we enjoyed a shower and few cold beers before a great barbecue dinner.

All up it was a great paddle that I would highly recommend, but a few words of caution. It is a remote coast: you need to be fully self-sufficient, with extra supplies in case of adverse conditions. You can get stuck there for a while (between Mallacoota and Greenglades there are no easy escapes).

It is a Grade-three trip; we had ideal conditions, but there were times when it was a blessing we could rely on each other to stay upright in rebound and chop and not be phased by surf landings and exits.



Saying Goodbye to a Valued Member

by Steve Collins



Farewell | 2016

On Saturday 14 January, our Late and beloved member Mick MacRobb had his final wishes granted in a Viking Funeral with his ashes on the waters of Lake King, in front of his home at Eagle Point, in East Gippsland. A large gathering, consisting of Mick's family and friends, VSKC members and Paynesville Coastguard members, witnessed what was a very apt and fitting final farewell to this remarkable man. It was an experience to be forever etched in our memory.

Mick's ashes were carried out onto the water by a twin-hull craft built by his good mate John Woollard. It was a vessel built from two doors from an old wardrobe, but you would never know it, as it was a work of art, with so much thought, and who knows how many hours of work was spent on constructing this boat! It reflected his love for his Late friend.

The boat was anchored fifty metres off shore and set alight, surrounded by a flotilla of twenty kayakers, one paddled by his



Photo: Mark Sundin



Photo: Mark Sundin

partner Lyn, and a coastguard boat with Mick's parents onboard. It eventually burnt to the waterline, releasing his ashes into the waters of the Gippsland Lakes.

Later, at a gathering in their home, Lyn was presented with the sail that has tributes and farewell messages written on it by VSKC members. She was also presented with a cheque for \$6000 raised through the generosity of VSKC members and others.

It was also a fitting time to announce that we plan to honour and remember our late member and friend, by introducing an annual memorial award. This will be called the 'Mick MacRobb Memorial Photographic Award'. As a keen photographer, Mick had a role in initiating the photography competition at our AGM weekends. This will be a very fitting and lasting tribute to our friend, Mick MacRobb.



Killer Cags

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*Words and image
Sarah Black*

When was the last time you swam 50 metres in your kayaking gear with your boat? When you did your Grade-one club assessment, guide or instructor assessments? Not too hard, push the boat, swim after it, repeat. Even though that breaks all the rules of never leave your boat, people do it to pass assessments. So, maybe twice at the most in your paddling life?

It's not something we often need to do, or ever practice. If we end up in the drink we either expect to rely on someone nearby to assist us back in nice and quickly, we roll up or have some other self-rescue technique.

Let me tell you a story of a near drowning. Yes, a near drowning in our club.

The paddler in question is a competent swimmer, holds a bronze medallion, River Swift Water Rescue qualification and is comfortable swimming in surf and open ocean, and has worked professionally sea kayak guiding and instructing. So to take a hit by a surprise wave breaking on a bommie on a committed coastline shouldn't be too much of a problem. Even when the roll failed (for good reason, I won't discuss here) two people were nearby, it should have been a quick extraction and re-enter and get on with the day. (I'm not going into the details here of why the rescue was bungled, as that is an important story in itself, one with very important lessons to be had.) What is important is why the paddler was unable to swim her boat away from the bommie as instructed by the rescuers and spent 10 minutes in the cold water.

The participant became a victim. The rescuers were unaware of that, assuming the paddler was capable of participating fully in the rescue the entire time. They seemed calm and focused, and they were, but the rescuers failed to ask, "Are you okay?" The answer would have been, "No, I'm not."

It is a well known fact that people usually drown quietly, because they are so focused on simply trying to stay alive.

The victim quickly found she couldn't swim. A lead weight seemed to be holding his/her arms down. She tried and tried and she tired, very, very quickly. To a point where a clear voice assertively and calmly said, "You have two minutes left before complete exhaustion. Do something now or you will die." A voice many near-drowning victims have reported. A frightening moment.

So the victim stopped swimming to save her life.

In the stress of the situation, being unable to swim, and becoming exhausted, her ability to think clearly and de-

cisively began to fade. Things she would normally have done to assist the rescue didn't even occur to her. She had entered survival mode.

In the stress of being unable to swim and trying to listen to the rescuers saying they needed she to get the boat away from the cliffs before they would assist, she did not have the brain space to consider using the waist tow, that people are instructed to use in just such situations — or to use the paddle to paddle/swim out. Things she has practiced in training and seen used successfully in real situations.

Still the rescuers called out for her to push the boat away from the bommie and rocky cliffs. The victim tried to yell to the rescuers to just tow her and the boat out of there, that she couldn't swim. The words were lost. Perhaps never said as water went in.

Finally another kayak was put alongside the victim's kayak. The victim heel hooked into her own cockpit and realised her old trusty cag, with the newly replaced wrist gaskets and neck that didn't close properly, had allowed the arms to fill with water, rendering swimming impossible. Paddling also, was difficult until the water in the cag issue was resolved.

It was only a few minutes later when exhausted, and deciding to return to camp, she started feeling grossly seasick. Never in her life had she felt seasick. Not since she was a baby, had she projectile vomited so violently — a stomach full of water.

Drowning victims nearly always swallow large amounts of air and water.

All other factors aside, with the botched rescue, including the failed roll at the start and victim's assumption that reliable help was metres away, it was ultimately the failure of the cag that nearly took her life.

So can you actually swim in your cag with it done up as you would paddling on a mild day? Perhaps with the neck open?

Maybe we should all add this test to our annual rescue practice, then decide what to do if our cags' arms fill with water.

Under the Sea Wind



We often adventure together, our little friendship group. Consequently we never work out the finer details of the trip until we are in the car on our way. Steve said at the AGM, "When you're planning on heading down to the Prom give me a ring and we can talk. I might run a trip soon."

A few days out from our trip without an idea who was coming and where we were going I got onto Steve. If I used the new website I would have realised there was a trip going to Snake Island/northern Promontory in a few day's time and Steve was running it. We jumped on board and straight away were welcomed and given a plan, "Meet at Port Welshpool 8am for a 9am get-away." Now at this point I wish I had acted on Richard Rawlings packing class advice, "Have your bags packed and ready when you get to the launch site."

In our typical fashion Louise, Claire, Hamish and I sprawled our gear across the grass and started our sorting ritual. Come 8:15am I soon got the message, 9am getaway means arrive at 7:30am, have your boat ready by 8:15am and, if not, hurry up cause the tides going out fast.

At 8:15am on 19 November 2016, the following sea kayakers headed out with the tide: Steve Collins, Sue Collins, Terry Barry, Kathryn Botherway, Tony Chick, Susan Mountford, Brad Mountford, Martin Stone, Gayle Burke, Josh Tucker, Louise Tucker, Claire Mosley and Hamish Macrae.

*Words Josh Tucker
Images Sue Mountford*

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There is a certain excitement in the water as a group begins a journey together. Going through my mind: *D*****d Josh; they said to dress for immersion and on the first day you've decided to wear a cotton long-sleeve. Your wet sleeves serve you right! Are we paddling fast enough? I hope Hamish and Claire are okay back there? I hope it was a good idea to come on this trip...*

I soon realised that it was time to start getting to know the group and enjoying ourselves. What a lovely way to chat, paddling side by side through the waves with a current and wind behind you. Corner Inlet spread out before us, Wilsons Promontory National Park stood tall and strong and our fleet of sea kayaks glided towards Snake Island.

Next memory: Group activity, get all the boats up the sand dune including those bloody doubles so we can start the trek into the Cattlemens' Huts. I found a real sense of keenness among the group to get to know each other, help one another and get the most out of the trip by putting energy into it.

We arrived for lunch and I reckon some tents were up



before I sat down. We all had quite a bit of time before it got dark; some slept, others walked the bush tracks, frolicked along the storm-rummaged coast and later we all sat around the fire watching hog deer and kangaroos enjoy the pasture. We were entertained by the night sky, the sand flies and stories of past trips.

The morning brought calm across the water looking over the Prom. As we reached the rocks below Mt Singapore it was time to focus on the group that we were with and enjoy the time we shared together in this place. To travel close to the edge is truly an amazing way to connect to the place: spotting crabs and rats or scraping rocks and fighting tide.





Tin Mine Cove greeted us with calm waters, two yachts moored and looked quite a paradise. Granite Island loomed out of the distant water. Note to fellow paddlers: the water in the creek tasted pretty horrible, so bring your own water.

Paddling out to Granite Island the Cormorants, Pacific gulls and sooty oyster catchers were not used to visitors, I was more excited to catch my first fish only to find Sue Mountford struggling with a big lure on her shoulder. Maybe the sea taught me a lesson because a few hours later fishing with crabs and pippies that same rod fell off my deck and sunk into the sea. Enough satisfaction came from journeying through these waters, bushwalkers in boats carrying all our gear into semi-remote and beautiful places. We watched the sun go down on the beach.

The last day was a scorcher, due to tides we took our time packing, swimming to cool down. On our way back towards the entrance we paddled through rough tidal water. I pulled up a small salmon from the hand-line trawling out the back with a wobbler lure on, which we cooked for lunch.

We crossed over and headed for Port Welshpool. By the third day we had shared a special time to-

gether as a group. It is often much quieter on the way home; you are tired and the end is near, our minds deep in thought about the trip and planning the future. If I think back to the our group cruising across the waters, I see Steve correcting his skeg boat around tidal flows with a smile on his face; Sue chatting away with a purposeful stroke; Terry out in front leading the way; Kathryn pushing on with determination; Tony steady and strong looking ahead; Susan focused with a smile; Brad cool calm and collected; Martin away singing with the wind; Gayle, paddle held high and powering on; Louise pushing on with a smile and a song; Claire excited by the possibilities; and Hamish strong and aware.

The woman at the Welshpool shop said a big 'great white' stole a 'pinky' from the hook, banged the boat as it came up and gave them 'the eye'. She also said scientists are studying 'five big ones' in shore at the moment. We were all safe and happy. We said goodbye to each other and headed back to our neck of the woods.

Note: this was a great trip with many happenings and experiences from everyone involved. I have focused the writing from a newcomer's perspective and the things that I remember clearly, in doing so I have left out many moments that others would remember to be important things to add in.

Across the Bay

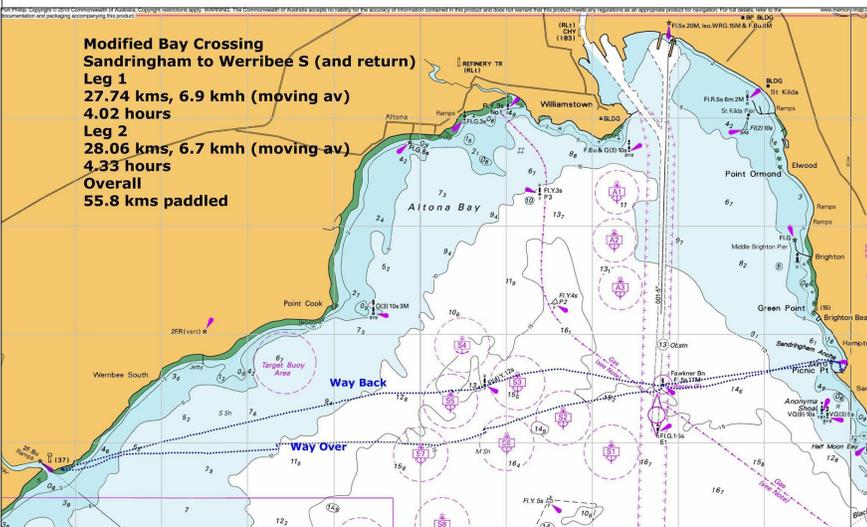


Photos:
Richard Rawling

Photo: David Golightly



map: Richard Rawling



60 km Turkey
Burn off. Across
the bay paddle :
Dec 2016

2016

Congratulations
Peter Newman
Helmut Heinze
Richard Rawling
Peter Costello

for completing the
full distance on
this one

Hat Trick at Walkerville

Walkerville on the South Gippsland coast has always been a popular paddling destination for VSKC members. Between Walkerville South and Cape Liptrap lies a coastline of sublime beauty. Land rising up from the coast is clothed in green scrub and trees, while at sea level the weathered rock formations are sculptured marvels. Bird Rock, off the beach at Walkerville South sets the standard for the rest of the trip to Cape Liptrap, it is a small

usual pre-paddle briefing was given, only this time with a little twist, a hat appeared that contained pieces of paper with each participant's name on one and then Ben Flora the Editor of *Sea Trek* was asked to draw a name out of the hat. This lucky person was given the task of writing up the trip report. (Oh, I do like to win a raffle.)

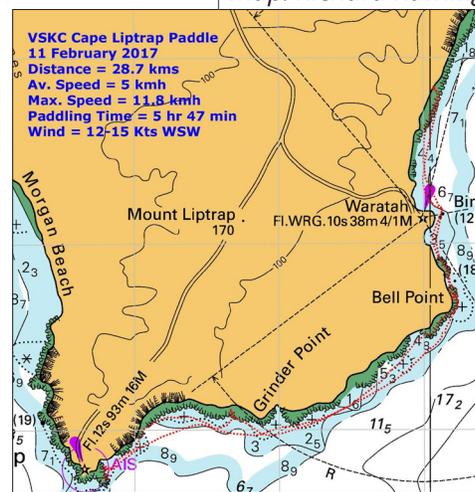
Before we began our journey there was a little apprehension in the

by Steve Collins

photo: Ben Flora



map: Richard Rawling



stack with a hole through its middle that, given enough tide and not too much swell, can be paddled through. At Cape Liptrap the land rises steeply 100 metres up to where it plateaus; there stands a lighthouse warning shipping of the dangers below.

Unsurprisingly, the weekend camp, paddle and surf training event posted and lead by Terry Barry was booked out well in advance. Members began to arrive from early morning on Friday. A small group paddled to Waratah Bay Friday afternoon in search of some surf to play in. By Saturday morning there were 20 paddlers lined up on the beach ready to begin the trip to Cape Liptrap. Terry broke us into three groups, each led by a Grade-three member. The

group, as the forecast was for south-westerlies building in strength to 20 knots over the course of the day, and swell to 1.4 metres. The weather forecast meant that we would become more exposed to the conditions the further we went, as the coast curves around to the northwest. With this in mind we planned to try and make it to Cape Liptrap by midday and turn and head back with a tail wind before it became too strong.

The trip was open to all grades meaning that for some this could be the most challenging paddle that they had been on. It is often difficult to find easy spots where you can get off the water on this trip, so it was important that everyone felt that they

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Cape Liptrap



Wilson's Prom in the background

photos: Joe Alberico

Rocks at Cape Liptrap



were capable of dealing with what could be difficult conditions. Although it was quite windy and some swell was forecasted, the weather did not arrive to thwart our plans to paddle to Cape Liptrap. Most of the group made it to the lighthouse, a following sea and tail wind meant a very enjoyable trip back to the more sheltered water near Walkerville South. Those carrying a GPS informed us that we had covered 28km, which was a decent paddle for most.

Walkerville North Camping Reserve is a great place to camp. We took over the camp kitchen and enjoyed a very sociable evening there, before retiring to rest our weary bodies from the day's activities.

Terry had planned for some surf training at Waratah Bay on Sunday morning, but the weather had really deteriorated. With showers, wind and the occasional squall passing through it did not look good, so he suggested that we head around there and check it out. Although not ideal, it was decided that we give it a go. While some of the more experienced paddles went off to catch waves, Terry, assisted by Sarah Black, ran a surf coaching session for beginners.

We all had a fantastic weekend, and many thanks to Terry Barry for organising and running it.

Lunch on the way back from Cape Liptrap - photo: Ben Flora





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photos: Lauren Knight - Feb 2017 Walkerville



Red-Eye Magic



May the force be with you

photos: Nic Faramaz - sunrise on the Red-Eye



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