

# Sea Trek

Edition # 98

Inside:

**We take a walk around  
Melbourne's bay**

**Keeping warm**

How to dress for on water

**Station Pier**

The history of this famous icon and  
why it's the gateway of Melbourne



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SEATREK  
EDITOR  
GLENN  
WILKINS

Welcome to this edition of Sea Trek. With winter nearly done it still takes some time for the water to warm up and this means dressing for immersion. But what does this really mean? Of course, if we get wet it can be really cold with heat loss from your body happening quickly unless you're dressed for the possibility. With stronger warnings from the BOM about the onset of a third straight La Nina, clothing preparation is important. We'll explore clothing for paddling and how to keep warm.

Peter brings us some observations of living around the bay during COVID and we explore the history of Station Pier.

We have included a new segment this edition called History Repeats, where we dig out a story from a previous edition for you to enjoy.

I would like to make an apology. In the last edition, photography credits were not included. This was an oversight and from this edition forward, credits will be included.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Sea Trek and as always, I welcome any feedback you may have.

Glenn Wilkins



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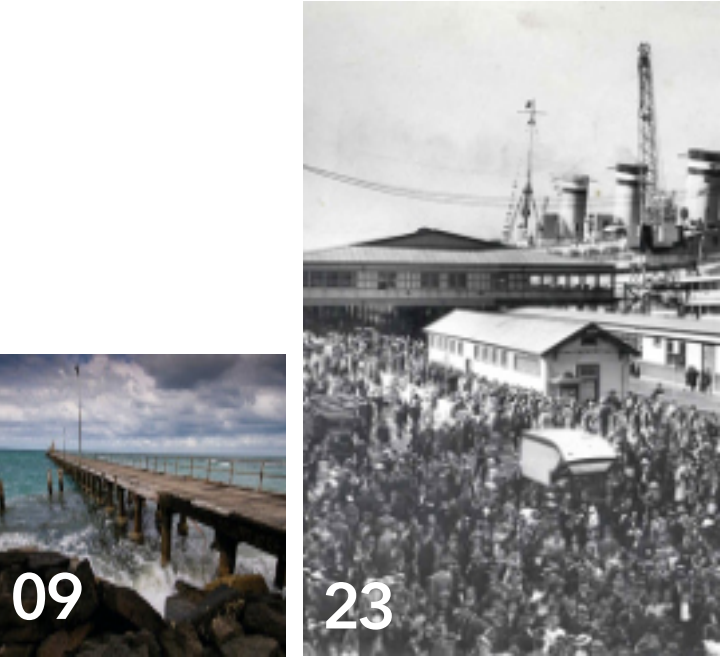
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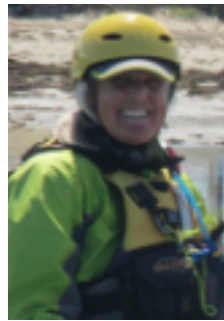
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# President's Update



It's a great time of year for Sea Trek editor, Glenn Wilkins to be focusing on cold weather paddling clothing in this issue.

Members new and old often consider their clothing choices and opt for the set up most suitable for the paddle on the day, anticipating spending more or less time in the water and the conditions. We're all curious about the choices another paddler has made and we often ask questions to see if we can optimise our own comfort for the next paddle.

In other news our insurance premium increased to \$6520 reflecting an increase generally in the cost of insurance.

A lot of new enthusiastic members have joined in the last few months and have bravely completed their Sea Kayak Basics in the cooler waters on the monthly Canadian Bay paddles. We currently have 214 members.

So far, the calendar has been very busy, with over 90 trips on the Bay, Western Port and ocean this year. The Inverloch social weekend in March was a big success. Forty members enjoyed a range of trips, many leaving straight from the beach near the campsite. We've held around 20 training events including rolling nights, and seven people successfully achieved the Intro to Sea Skills award in April 2022.

## Coming up

We've got lots to look forward to, with some big events as well as regular paddles coming up. Training continues with a big training intake weekend at Barwon Heads in October, targeted towards members looking for assessment for the Paddle Australia awards, Intro to Sea Skills and Sea Skills next year. This is a great program where you will have the opportunity to learn new skills, identify areas for improvement and practise over summer in the lovely warm conditions. Look at the Trip Calendar on the website for more details.

Members are looking forward to the Pizza at the Prom weekend in September, and the terrific annual Paddlefest in November at Barwon Heads. The Annual General Meeting will be held online via Zoom on the Monday night after the Paddlefest, 14th of November.

Hope to see you at the Paddlefest!

# The Places we have been

Have you been on a trip you would like to tell everyone about? Share your story to [publishing@vskcorg.au](mailto:publishing@vskcorg.au)



## Sandridge Beach to Altona Beach

Story: Evelyn Feller Photography: Brenton Barnard

As we quickly crossed the shipping lanes at Port Melbourne, I was pleased to have the opportunity to paddle a new section of the coast with the bonus of fine weather after several weeks of wet and gloomy weather. We were heading from Sandridge Beach to the Altona Pier with the opportunity to paddle up Kororoit Creek if the tide permitted.

While the towering concrete installations of the port and the grey bulwarks of the Williamstown dock are

stark, it is interesting to see how the port functions and the sheer size of the ships. We rounded Point Gellibrand which is historically one of the most significant sites in the state's history. The area was the main port in the state before Melbourne and much of the goldrush traffic went through here. There are many historic features here such as the old Port Gellibrand fort which was built as a defence against Russian invasion during the Crimean wars. The Timeball Tower is a fascinating building which was built for ships to adjust their chronometers to determine longitude.

From Point Gellibrand there is extensive housing development along the shoreline with occasional pocket marshes and protected areas like the Jawbone Marine Sanctuary. It is best to paddle some distance from shore to avoid the reefs formed from an ancient basalt flow. We passed a couple of the Williamstown beaches and then after several kilometres because the tide was sufficient, we



manoeuvred our way up the shallow Kororoit Creek estuary into deeper water. Along one bank were a number of cabins and small fishing boats of angling clubs. The opposite bank was covered with mangroves and part of the Altona Coastal Park. While the creek is one of the three most polluted in the Melbourne area, there have been efforts made by groups to revegetate and clean up the creek. The area is known for its birdlife and we saw swans, pelicans, cormorants, various gulls and egrets with dazzling white plumage all enjoying the sunshine. A comment was made about a lone palm tree

standing above the mangroves. This was a remnant of a large racetrack where Phar Lap once raced. We continued on to Altona Beach just around from the pier. It didn't seem like June with groups of dedicated swimmers doing lengths and family groups enjoying the beach. After coffee and lunch to power our return paddle we headed further from shore to follow a more direct line back to Sandridge.

Here Glenn spent time giving some rolling coaching. Thanks to Glenn for leading the trip and giving us the opportunity to experience this interesting part of the coast.



## Snake Island Easter Paddle April 2022 - Newbie perspective

Story/Photography: Shani Marshall

After joining the VSKC in February 2022, I knew I wanted to do the Easter Snake Island trip.

Took a couple of months to source a decent kayak and a bunch of camping gear (eBay specials), but I was soon ready to go!

With the most beautiful sunrise on our drive from Melbourne, and the most peaceful and picturesque water views on our arrival at Port Welshpool, it was a small glimpse of the beauty to come.

We soon had our yaks packed, a quick meet and greet and debrief, and we were on our way. The 20km paddle from Port Welshpool to Snake Island was super smooth with glassy waters assisting our heavy loads. And of course, Richard Rawling had planned the tides and winds just right to ensure a little push from behind.

Arriving at the campsite was a pleasant surprise. For an off-grid camping experience, it was looking very civilised! We found out Steve and Sue Collins had come across the weekend earlier and completed some preparations.

After setting up tents and securing boats, Richard took us on a guided tour of the Island. It was great to

see the beauty of the Island (providing some great photo opportunities) and learn about the area and its surroundings.

The sun was setting and we headed back to camp for dinner.

After a surprisingly great sleep, we headed out to Bass Strait for an ocean paddle. The first 10kms was early morning smooth, then to add some spice, a little surf riding was suggested.

After surf parking on the beach for lunch, we were blessed with the view of a pod of dolphins swimming leisurely by. Would have been good to be out in the waves with them but that will be for another time I'm sure.

The 10km paddle back to camp was choppy and hard but made our dinner and tent sleeping all the sweeter.



The Port Albert paddle weather on day 3 was sublime! Not too hot and not too cold. Smooth glistening waters with jumping fish, resting pelicans on nearby islands, boaters, sailors and Port Albert tourists all enjoying the blissful weather conditions together. This was topped with a serving of deep-fried fish, chips and scallops for lunch – what more could you ask for!

On return to camp, considering the warm water and perfect conditions, we couldn't pass up the opportunity for some kayak rolling practice. Thanks John, Kate and Joe for all your tips.

Final morning, with the yaks repacked and ready to go, was a lovely paddle back to Port Welshpool –

72kms over 4 days, not a bad effort guys and didn't feel hard at all.

Many thanks to Richard Rawling and Steve and Sue Collins for all the work put into the organisation of the camp and the campsite. And thanks everyone for being such great company. I learnt a lot from everyone's wealth of knowledge and experience!

## Mount Marth Beach to Safety Beach

Story/ Photography: Len Davidson



With the cancellation of the annual Cattlemen's Huts trip to Snake Island, Joe Alberico kindly ran a paddle from Mount Martha Beach past the beautiful sea cliffs on to Safety Beach and return.

Fun fact: Back in the 50s, Safety Beach used to be called Shark Bay. According to Wikipedia the area had been a breeding area for Grey Nurse sharks and oddly enough, tourists were reluctant to swim there so they changed the name to Safety Beach. However, with the resulting increase in property prices following the name change, the sharks could no longer afford to buy in the area and moved to more affordable bays in South Australia (<- Len 'fact').

The weather was kind enough to offer a nice day out for paddlers whilst being cold, wet and choppy enough to ensure no sightings of the local breeding colony of jet skiers who, I believe, settled in this region following the same gentrification which forced the sharks out of the property market. Perhaps we



could somehow entice the sharks back? Peter Sharp kindly guided the group on the first leg of the paddle with some rock gardening while Rob Kenyon and Sue Mountford led us back. Lunch was a chilly affair and notably Kevin Rance won the award for best dressed paddler, in the beach volleyball category. The day inspired me to write this short if not entirely educational limerick.

To the cliffs Joe cried, please come-with-us, It's pretty and the clouds'll be cumulus.  
  
But only the brave, Ventured near to the caves.While the rest watched on from the clapotis.  
  
Definition: clapotis (klap-ō-tās) is a non-breaking standing wave pattern, caused by the reflection of waves from a near vertical shoreline such as a steep cliff



**Sorrento Back Beach through the rip**

*Story: Glenn Wilkins Photography: Greg Spiller*

We had an amazing day with Andrew Campbell leading our little group out through the waves at Sorrento back beach. We all made it though the waves successfully and we were on our way to the rip. The surf was really pounding at Portsea Beach with the swell growing as we moved along the coast.  
  
This was a relaxing paddle taking in the spectacular views and anticipating the rip.



We had be well briefed by Andrew on the course we would take around the reef and through the rip. As it turned out, the rip was very calm and we only had to contend with the swirling world pools that are caused by all the reefs in this area. As we made our way into the bay some of us tried to catch some little waves but it just wasn't happening.



The rest of the paddle to Sorrento was relaxing on calm water taking in the millionaires mile and taking in the sights. Thanks Andrews for a fantastic day out.



My Local Patch

Story: Peter Newman



1

When the really strong northerlies are blowing, we sometimes decide that the Cerberus is where we will turn around. Being the masochist that I am, I do like to make the extra effort and get to the "one hour out" point which is the breakwater at **Sandringham Yacht Club**. That entails a paddle past the high Red Bluff cliffs at the northern end of Half Moon Bay. From there to the breakwater is a somewhat mundane paddle past more sandy beaches and battered cliffs. When we get to the breakwater we sit for a bit and do the odd roll or two before venturing back to Ricketts.

1

### Sandringham Yacht Club



2

Further on and we come to **Half Moon Bay**. An old naval monitor vessel – HMAS Cerberus – now serves as a breakwater at the entrance to this bay. We used to paddle out to this as kids and clamber aboard. The vessel sat high and proud back then and it was quite a scramble to get on-board. We used to get inside the boat back then and swim inside from end to end. And it used to make a great diving platform. However, there was a structural collapse during a storm in 1993 and the decks now sit below the water with only the old turrets still exposed. For a long time, there was talk of removing and preserving the vessel, but it's now too late for that. What was once the most modern ironclad monitor afloat (it was built in 1870) is now a rusted hulk which will one day be gone forever.

On the seaward side of the Cerberus there was a timber pier-like structure which we red-eye paddlers called The Gauntlet. It was always a bit of a dare to paddle through The Gauntlet in rough conditions, hoping to not be slammed into one of the pylons by an errant wave. But like the Cerberus itself, The Gauntlet has experienced a partial collapse during some wild weather and that challenge is no longer there for us.

## MY LOCAL PATCH

For those of us lucky enough to live within 5 kilometres of the coast, the ongoing COVID-19 lock downs have given us a new appreciation for what we have close to home.

My local patch starts at Ricketts Point at Beaumaris. Exactly 4.3 kilometres from my home, it has for many years been the starting point for our Saturday morning Red Eye paddles. From there we paddle in a north direction to the breakwater at the Sandringham

3

From Quiet Corner on to **Black Rock Beach** there is a bluestone sea wall which was built after the 1930s depression as a measure to control erosion and cliff slumping. A concrete pedestrian path runs along the top and is a popular promenade during all seasons. The sea wall ends just before the Black Rock Life Saving Club which sits high above the beach. The beach here is another Bayside favourite, due to the reefs being some distance offshore and there being nice deep water for swimming. When I was a kid the beach in front of the LSC used to be lit for night swimming. It used to be the perfect place to go on a hot summer night.

2

### Half Moon Bay

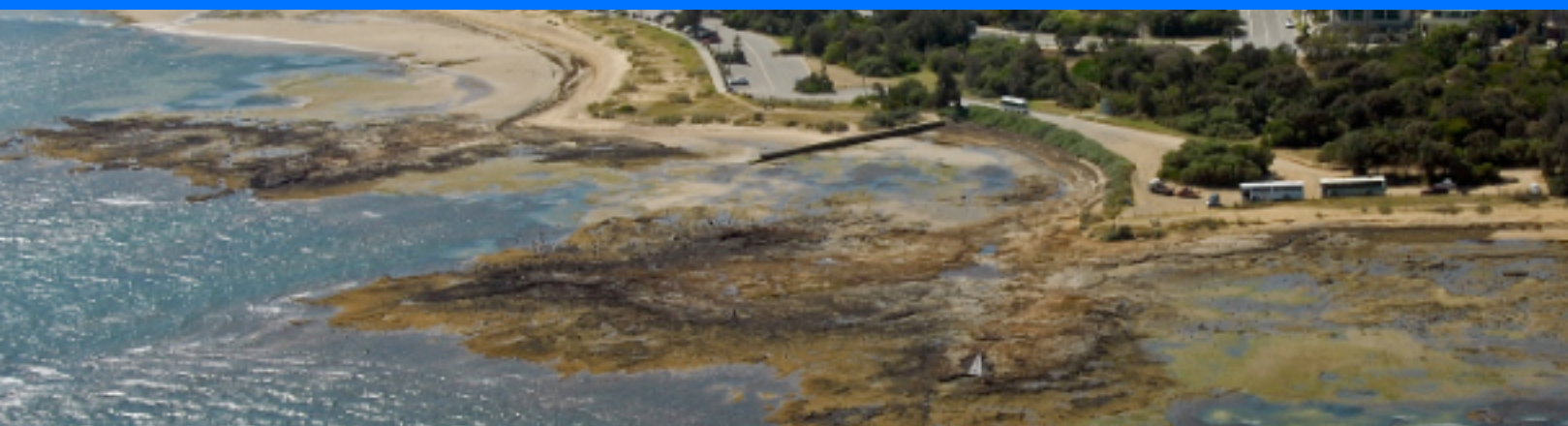
3

### Black Rock



# 4

Back to **Ricketts Point**, and this time we will paddle north. The scenery in this direction is quite different. There are shallow reefs in the first section between Ricketts and Quiet Corner (the northern limit of the Marine Park). These reefs make for great snorkelling and would have been the source of shell fish for the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung people for whom this was once home. Evidence of the original inhabitants still exists here and there. For instance, just above the high tide line at the base of the cliff near Ricketts Point Yacht Club there used to be a small well that the Bunurong people dug to intercept rainwater runoff. However, this small section of cliff has radically changed in my lifetime and I'm not sure if the well still exists. We used to clamber all over this cliff as kids, so we are all partly responsible for the erosion that has occurred.



# 5

**The Beaumaris cliffs** begin at the eastern edge of the Dalgetty Road beach and continue to Table Rock Point before turning in a north-east direction. I really enjoy paddling along the base of these orange sandstone cliffs. Table Rock is a place I spent countless summer days at with my friends as a kid. It was the perfect flat platform for sunbathing between dips. There is a notch or gulch in the cliff where you climbed down to the water using handholds someone long before us cut into the rock. That takes you down to a little ledge at the base of the cliff where you would stand as someone passed down your snorkelling gear. A few swim strokes offshore there is an underwater boulder where you could also stand as you donned your gear, and which was fun to stand on in rough weather as you maintained your balance against the waves. Table Rock used to be the perfect spot for getting a bit of abalone (this is banned now as this area is part of the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary).

Rounding Table Rock and we are now in Beaumaris Bay. On a bit further and we come to the Sea Scouts hut and jetty, just outside of the Marine Park. We need to paddle a little further out here to avoid getting tangled in the lines of the local fishermen. Paddle a bit further along and we come to the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron (BMYS) where we need to keep a watchful eye when paddling in the winter darkness to ensure we don't have any conflicts with the bigger boats.

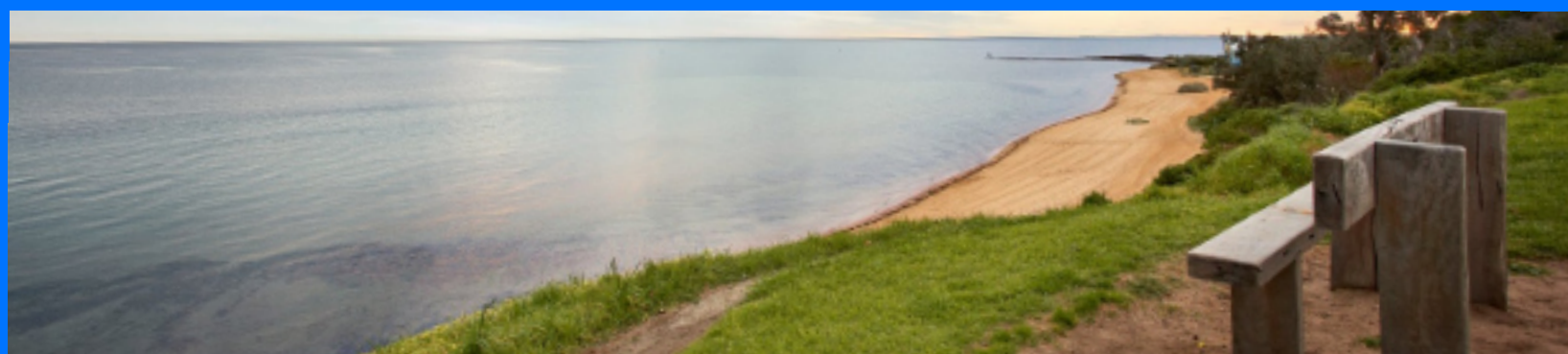
This whole stretch of sandstone cliff extending from Table Rock to the northern end of the cliffs is famous for fossils. Fossils of sharks, whales, rays, birds, marsupials and coral have all been found here. I've never found any myself, but I probably don't have the patience to be a fossil hunter.

The cliffs end at the apex of Beaumaris Bay. From here on it is all sandy beach down to Mordialloc. When a south-westerly blows up there is a bit of surfing fun to be had along here. There is a lump of rock sitting about 30 metres or so off the shore at about the half way mark towards Mordialloc that is always a bit of fun to paddle around in rough conditions.



# 6

The beach at **Watsons Bay** is known by us locals as the Dalgetty Road beach. It was the beach my family always went to when I was a kid and I have always loved it. It used to be framed with sandstone slopes which were so eroded that they had runnels that we would crawl up whenever we got tired of the water. More recently the slopes have been stabilised and grassed over and are now off limits. When you step off the beach here there is a little stretch of waist deep water followed by a rarely exposed sandbank that serious swimmers need to go beyond to access the deeper water. It is the perfect beach for an early morning swim in the hot summer months.





7

Just before the Yacht Squadron, there used to be an old green painted boatshed known as **Keefer's Boatshed**. It was established in the early 1900s by Charles Keefer as a boat hire business and later became a mussel farm before being destroyed by fire in 1984. It was an interesting local landmark that was the subject of many paintings and I was sorry to see it go. There were plans to rebuild it, but this was opposed by local conservation groups

## Keefer's Boatshed

7

8

## Yacht Club

8

**Yacht Club** or in a south-easterly direction to the pier at Mordialloc before turning back after an hour. We choose the direction we paddle according to the wind direction – we prefer to paddle into the wind on the way out and enjoy the wind behind us on the return journey.

I grew up in this area and am very familiar with this stretch of coast. It is not an area that comes to mind when thinking about where I want to go for my next sea kayaking adventure. It is not open water for a start, so all these weekly paddles don't count as trips you need for your Paddle Australia log book. And yet at times I have been out there when the wind is howling and the waves breaking and have found it quite challenging. For 99% of the time though the paddling is easy and the conditions are benign.

Ricketts Point to me has always been a boating kind of beach and a place for snorkelling rather than a swimming beach. Extensive sandbanks appear at low tide, which are ideal for skiffle boarding and ball throwing with the dog. There are lovely banksia-filled picnic areas behind the beach where my wife and I often join friends in summer for a BBQ and drinks, and to watch the setting sun. I think Ricketts Point is the perfect place to start our Saturday morning Red Eye paddles.

My preference is usually to head towards Mordialloc. That takes us initially around the reef at Ricketts Point towards Watkins Bay. I know this reef well from snorkelling here as a kid. In my kayak, I happily ignore the marker posts warning boats away from the reef, although I do occasionally manage to find the odd bommie that I have forgotten about.

When we have returned to Ricketts Point we all like to have a coffee and breakfast at the Ricketts Point Tea House – the perfect place after a paddle to talk about our latest adventures.

I admit my local patch is not too bad to have on your doorstep, and it's been just fantastic to have it during all these extended lock downs.

9

The pier at Mordialloc is our turn-around point. The pier marks the entry to Mordialloc Creek, which if time permits is worth an investigation. Small fishing boats line both sides of the creek, before the creek continues through peaceful parkland until eventually it becomes more drain than creek.

## Mordialloc Pier

9

PETER NEWMAN

Here are a few links to some interesting information about my local patch that I have managed to dig up on the internet:  
[www.bayside.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/beaumaris\\_fossil\\_book\\_museum\\_victoria.pdf](http://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/beaumaris_fossil_book_museum_victoria.pdf)  
[www.scubadoctor.com.au/downloads/snorkeling-Bayside-landscape\\_compressed.pdf](http://www.scubadoctor.com.au/downloads/snorkeling-Bayside-landscape_compressed.pdf)  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMVS\\_Cerberus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMVS_Cerberus)  
[www.bayside.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/coastal\\_trails\\_art.pdf](http://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/coastal_trails_art.pdf)



VICTORIAN SEA KAYAK CLUB



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# Clothing for on-water

This is part of a semi-regular series, Gear and Gadgets, where we ask organisations to provide some non-specific information about some aspect of kayaking.

## Dressing for immersion - Clothing for cold conditions when kayaking

We often hear the expression 'dress for immersion' but what does this mean. At its essence it is a direction to wear clothing that keeps you relatively warm if you go into the water. But this doesn't really tell the whole story, so we spoke to the folk at Canoes Plus about paddling clothing and what we should look for.

**Sea Trek: What are we looking for when it comes to keeping warm?**

**Canoes Plus:** When you're in a sea kayak, you're away from shore so you don't always have the opportunity to take stuff off and put stuff on. You need to check the weather where you are going and how long you're going to be out for. I've always said, 'it doesn't matter how hot you are when you start, it's how cold you are when you finish'. You're going to get wind, you're going to get waves, so generally we always recommend layering and good thermals are important.

**ST: What are we talking about when we talk about thermals?**

**CP:** Thermals start with rashies. It doesn't matter what sort of paddling you do, a rashie will keep the sun off you and help to keep you warm. There are different fabrics, from a nylon mix right through to a 1mm neoprene sports top which will keep you pretty warm. There is also a 2mm neoprene top, which is even warmer but has the advantage of being easier to paddle in than a wetsuit. Ease of movement by

wearing the right paddling gear is important in sea kayaking.



## Dressing with cags

**ST: What about cags and the types you can get.**

**CP:** Let's start with the basic cag. These are great for training purposes as they have a simple neoprene neck and cuffs which keep the wind and water spray off.

We then go a little more up market and they have a cag with a double seal at the bottom. Again, neck and cuffs are neoprene for sealing, and they come in short and long sleeve.

Then we go to something a little heavier, which has a neoprene neck but with a tightener. Neoprene is more comfortable to wear for people. Like a lot of cags, they're a nylon base fabric.

Then we move to a really heavy-duty cag, which has a double neoprene neck, a neoprene cuff with a latex gasket and a double seal on the bottom. This is classed as semi-waterproof and heavy duty. The difference between a semi-dry cag and a drysuit is the neck.

Lastly, we go to a dry top. They have the same material as the heavy-duty cag, but have a latex gasket neck, which stops water coming in and latex in the sleeve as well, and a double seal at the bottom. Latex is the way we keep water out. Often the more expense you go to, the more likely it will be

Gore-Tex based for great durability and breathability.

**ST: Why is a cag good and what sort of cag do you need?**

**CP:** It depends on the weather and what time of year. That's why a lightweight cag can be good on a day of little wind if it's not too cold. If you're going out on a really bad day and the waters really cold, you'll wear a dry cag or a semi-dry cag. If you think you might spend some time in cold water I would suggest a dry cag.

**What's the expected life of a cag?**

**CP:** If you look after it, you should get a couple of years good life out of it. They do wear out and it's the inside lining that wears quickest. Never wear a cag on bare skin because sweat deteriorates the lining quicker than anything. Also, dry it out after paddling and don't leave it in the boot for a week. If it's been in sea water, a rinse with fresh water is good.

## What about wetsuits?

**ST: What are the benefits of wetsuits?**

**CP:** Wetsuits are a cheaper alternative to a drysuit. They will keep you reasonably warm, as warm if not warmer than a drysuit, but they're a lot harder to paddle in. That's their biggest disadvantage, they can be uncomfortable and harder to paddle in.

**ST: If you going to get a wetsuit, should you get a one or two piece?**

**CP:** A Farmer John/Jane is a wetsuit without arms and is probably a better way to go. A full streamer wetsuit is very restrictive so I would look at a Farmer John/Jane. You can also paddle in wetsuit pants and a neoprene top. A wetsuit can be combined with a cag too.







## Drysuits and what you need to know

**ST:** What am I looking for in a drysuit?

**CP:** The purpose of a drysuit is so you don't get wet. It will not keep the cold out, it will keep some out but you still need to wear layers of thermals underneath. Of course, we can still use the same layering that we'd use under our cag. With a drysuit you'll have a sewn in foot so no water gets in there, gaskets on the sleeve, and a gasket on the neck, and a lot of brands have a relief zip which is very important. Drysuits come with gaskets that are latex or neoprene with latex being more waterproof. Drysuits

are breathable to a certain extent but if you work hard enough, you still sweat inside. If you come out in the water it's going to be a lot safer swimming in a drysuit because you won't get as cold as you would otherwise. It's important to think about winter paddling as the water gets down to 8 or 9 degrees. I say to people, just think about how far offshore you're going and what you're wearing.



**ST:** What shoes should I wear to keep warm in colder weather?

**CP:** It depends what other gear you have on. If you have a dry suit on without booties, we would recommend a sock over the feet of the drysuit, then booties because you don't want your drysuit to rub and wear out. One of our best-selling shoes is our water sneaker, as you can walk on rocks, sand or anything really. There are lighter shoes with a lighter sole and a lot of marathon paddlers wear those because they have better control of the rudder. They're really just for going from the boat shed to the beach but not over rocks. The other option is a zip neoprene boot which will keep you a little warmer but I always suggest wearing a sock inside which helps to keep your feet a little

**Canoes Plus** **Kayak SuperStore**  
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We'd like to thank Canoes Plus for spending some time with us and lending some of their expertise for this article



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# History Repeats



Image: Bob Fergie

## Safe Winter Paddling

by Terry Barry-Sea Trek 2009

As I write this we are in the depths of winter, the water temperature is quite low and enjoying a paddle is as much about staying warm as it is about the paddle.

To this end on any club paddle you will see a variety of clothing options worn by club members to keep the winter chills at bay. Hypothermia is a real risk if you are not fully prepared, however drowning happens a lot faster than hypothermia and the end result is the same.

### HOW SAFE IS YOUR WINTER PADDLE GEAR?

A number of very experienced club paddlers have raised concerns over what some members are wearing in an effort to keep warm and dry with little thought or trial to see what happens when they have an unexpected swim, something that happens to the best of us from time to time.

On a recent paddle in surf conditions a club member was separated from his kayak 50 meters from shore in the surf zone. No problem really just a cold and slightly embarrassing swim to the beach. Except that the warm fancy pants he had imported from the UK quickly filled with water from the waist and had very restricted exit from the ankles. The result was an almost complete inability to swim. Luckily for him he washed ashore and waddled up the beach resembling the Michelin Man. If he was a long way off shore maybe he wouldn't have been so lucky. If he had been immersed for some time I doubt that those warm pants would have helped much with preventing hypothermia.

### SO WHAT SHOULD YOU WEAR IN WINTER?

There are many opinions on this.

Some wear thermals underneath a cag and carry dry pants to slip on when out of the boat on land, this



VICTORIAN SEA KAYAK CLUB



system allows you to stay warm in the kayak, swim fairly unrestricted and rely on a quick renter to warm up once back in the kayak. It does not provide much survival time if you are immersed for a lengthy period.

Another option becoming more popular are kayak pants and socks imported from overseas, combined with thermals and a cag. This option seems to be warmer and thus more comfortable. However how many of us have put this stuff to a real test in swimming in surf? Do those tight pants fill with water as in the example given earlier?

Others wear wet suit long johns, wet suits have long proved their ability to keep you warm when wet, add buoyancy, and provide some protection from wind chill. Combined with thermals and a good cag this is a cost effective and safe way to keep warm.

Personally I wear 'dry' pants, and thermals with a cag, however there is a real risk that these could fill with water and act like a pair of waders filled with water. I have also noticed that if I immerse by a wet exit from the kayak the air inside rushes to the ankles and requires an active effort to stop me from bobbing upside down with my legs above the surface. Pretty hard to breath underwater! Once I invert myself the air rushes out the waist band and they are then skin tight and I can swim without too much trouble.

The real point here is that whatever you are wearing make sure you have put it to the test in real conditions. Consider changing your attire to suit where you are paddling. What might be a good option for a social paddle in the bay with others around to help out if you end up in the water may well be a death trap in a surf landing where assistance from others is very limited.

Talk to others before parting with your hard earned cash on expensive imported dry pants and the like, consider where you will be using it. There is a wealth



Image: Denis Clare

of experience within the club, use it to your advantage.

It wasn't long ago that the majority of senior members simply wore extra thermals under standard cag's and nylon dry pants and got through winter with a minimum of discomfort.

Also remember that you lose around 30% of body heat through your head, a good warm hat goes a long way to keeping you warm. Neoprene surf hats are excellent. Always carry spare warm dry clothing in you kayak to enable you to warm up on land at lunch stops and the like, such as a fleece jumper. It is surprising how much difference it makes if you have a japara and dry pants slip on over your gear when stopped to keep out wind chill.

You should also ensure that within a group there is readily available, at sea, spare warm clothing, Fleece jumper, beanie, gloves and poncho to put on any paddler showing signs of hypothermia or incapacitated for any reason. Be aware of the early signs of hypothermia in others and stop and treat quickly. A person suffering from hypothermia usually cannot self identify they have a problem.

Terry Barry  
VSKC Training Co Ordinator 2009

# What's happening around the club

Have you got some news you what to share with our members? Hit us up at [publications@vskc.org.au](mailto:publications@vskc.org.au)



## Paddle Fest announced

"Yes you heard right".... We might get to have a Paddle Fest again this year. It has been booked for 11-13 November with campsites reserved. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet and catch up with other members and of course go on trips in the ocean and river.

Keep this date free in your diary and watch out for more information coming in the near further.

## Marine Radio Licenses

The club recently subsidised members to achieved their VHF Radio License. We had a great turnout for this member event with members having a fun night and learning a lot.





# Who am I?



**Peter Sharp**  
Sea Leader

ST: What's your experience with the VSKC?

PS: I started as a beginner and learnt to kayak and then did quite a few trips with the club, did paddling in surf and I also did the redeye paddle.

ST: What do you like about the club?

PS: I like paddling and meeting new people, everyone in the club is great

ST: How long have you been in the club?

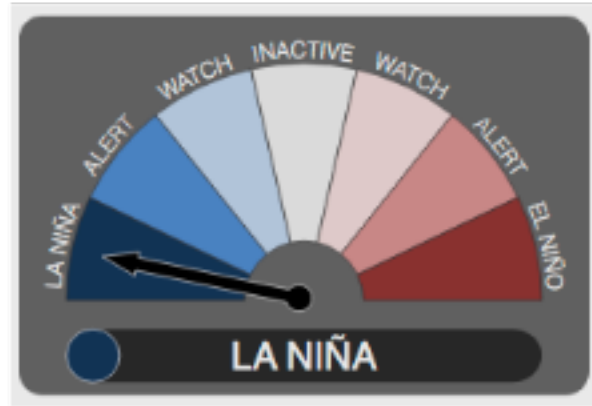
PS: I've been in the club about 18 years now.

ST: What is an experience that stands out in your mind?

PS: Doing some of the longer paddles. In Tasmania along the cliffs of Bruny Island and I have also paddle in Antarctica

ST: What advice do you have for new members?

PS: Get along to as many paddles as you can because the more experience you have the more fun you have.



## 3<sup>rd</sup> La Nina on the way

On 13 September the weather bureau updated the climate outlook for this summer to La Nina.

All the climate drivers for this summer point towards a third summer of rain and cooler weather. Here is the current advice for the BOM.

The ENSO Outlook dial has been raised to LA NIÑA. This follows recent cooling in the central tropical Pacific and model outlooks indicating that cooler than average ocean temperatures will be sustained until at least the end of 2022.

The majority of models predict an easing of the La Niña in early 2023, suggesting a relatively short-lived event; ENSO events typically peak during the southern hemisphere summer and decay during the autumn.

La Niña conditions increase the chance of above average spring and summer rainfall in northern and eastern Australia. When a La Niña and a negative phase of the Indian Ocean Dipole coincide, it further increases the likelihood of above average rainfall over Australia, particularly in the eastern half of the continent.

Bureau climatologists will continue to closely monitor conditions in the tropical Pacific as well as model outlooks for further developments.

HISTORY

# Station Pier, The gateway to Melbourne

*Story and Photography: Glenn Wilkins*

Before planes could travel vast distances from Asia, America, Africa, and Europe, people and goods moved between countries on the shipping lanes of the world. People would spend months at sea eagerly waiting for the first sight of the port where they could step onto land after weeks or even months at sea. Due to its geographic location, Australia, and particularly Melbourne was quite a trip to make. The rip at the end of Port Phillip Bay marked the start of the end of the journey for sea-weary travellers. An hour or so's journey more and they would be at the gateway to beautiful Melbourne, Station Pier.

So let's go back to the beginning and find out how Station Pier started life in Melbourne.

## The building of Station Pier



Station Pier was built in 1854 and was originally known as Railway Pier. A 4.5km railway from Flinders Street to Sandridge Bridge was opened at the same time, taking passengers and goods to the pier. The 1850s saw the boom time of the Victorian gold rush which increased passenger numbers travelling by boat. To accommodate this increase, the pier was extended to 661 meters.



*License: CC BY-SA 4.0*

## The war and war boats

Station Pier played an important part in both wars. In 1899, the first contingent of troops headed off to the Boer War and in 1914, 16 ships left Melbourne for the First World War. 1940 had many troops boarding ships to go to many parts of the world to fight. The pier would also see the return of hospital ships and troops.

HISTORY



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The 1920s saw the biggest update to the pier when it was extended to cope with the increase in passengers after the train line was extended to Port Melbourne. This saw legs made of ironbark and a new deck. Superstructures were built to separate passengers and freight and bring some refinement to the pier.



**Princess Pier**

A second Railway Pier was built in 1914 to cope with the increase in migrants and this pier, to the west of Station Pier, was renamed Princess Pier in 1920. However, after the migration boom slowed and the containerisation of shipping goods took over, the economics of Princess Pier didn't stack up. From this point the pier fell into disrepair and suffered 14 fires which created a hazard. In 2007, work began to restore part of the pier and leave the support posts for the rest. Today this makes for an interesting paddle.

**Passengers to the pier**

Between 1947 and 1970, Victoria had its greatest influx in migration and on many days all 4 berths were taken. Indeed, at times Princess Pier would take the over flow of migrants into the state.

**Station Pier Today**

Today, Station Pier is still used for various types of shipping. As I write this, the Spirit of Tasmania has about a month or so before it moves to a new home port in Geelong. Cruise ships still visit the Port dropping tourists for a day or two stop before

moving on, although this has dropped off over COVID and we wait to see if this pick ups in this respect. Station Pier continues to be a jewel in Melbourne's crown and on a beautiful day is a spectacular place to be around. Perhaps the heyday of Station Pier has passed but it still makes a stunning impact on Melbourne's Port Phillip Bay.

**Kayaking around Station Pier**

In Melbourne, we kayakers are lucky to be able to kayak around Station Pier. On a cloudless day in Summer with a visiting boat docked at the pier, there is nothing better than cruising around the pier and taking in the sights. With free parking, Sandridge Beach is a great base to start your exploration starting with the pylons of the old Princess Pier – paddling through them can be a real treat. Grab a camera for this; great pics can be taken here. You can then paddle over to the start of Station Pier to the fish and chip shop. This is an all-weather stop and offers calm water and stairs where you can jump out if you wish. **WARNING:** Paddling around Station Pier is in a Melbourne Port Zone and you must stay at least 75 metres from the pier at all times. Also, if the Spirit of Tasmania or any other vessel is using the pier, be aware that their thrusters often cause a lot of wash at a significant distance. Also, when crossing the shipping channel from Station Pier, you should cross at the channel markers so you know when you are in and out of the channel. Asides from these important rules, just have fun paddling slowly around the pier and taking in the history.



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Edition Top Three

Each Edition we will award the top three photos with the top three photos of the year awarded in the December addition of the magazine.

1



Greg Spiller

2



Len Davidson

3



Bruce Bates



Brenton Barnard



Derek Wilson



Denis Claire



Denis Claire



# Hey, that's me!

Have you taken a photo that you would like to submit for potential publishing? Send to: [publications@vskc.org.au](mailto:publications@vskc.org.au)



Kath Botherway



Sharni Marshall



Bruce Bates



Kath Botherway



Derek Wilson



Bob Fergie



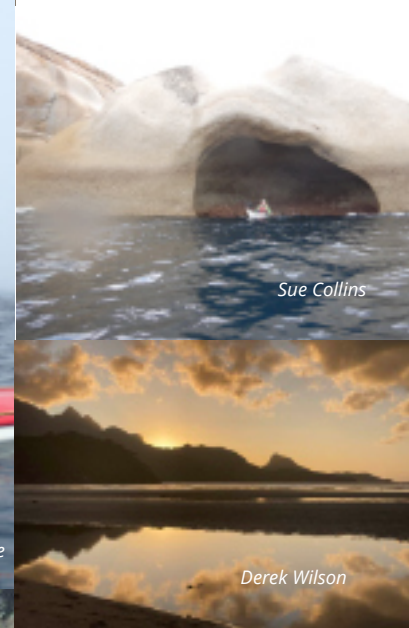
Sue Collins



John Evertze



Denis Claire



Sue Collins

Derek Wilson



Ben Flora



Greg Spiller



Bob Fergie



Bob Fergie



Brenton Barnard



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