

Maria Island November 2009

By Peter Sebbage

Present: Phil “if it lives we can eat it” Barrett, Gavin “no fear” Bye, David “free balling” Chiam, David “remarkable” Hugo, Claye “hot pants” Mace”, Tineka “I want to be alone” Morrison, Peter “I can taste my breakfast” Sebbage, Jo “I’m not listening” Field, Dick “ the quiet Lancastrian” Dwyer, “Bruce “he’s WAY over there” Gilligan



Day 1

The day started with warm humid conditions and a light Northerly breeze. After the obligatory boat carry we were on the water by 10:30am. A team meeting on the water followed where some important ground rules for the trip were set; don't get too far ahead, if you're having problems stop paddling, buddy up with someone, and check behind you from time. Once underway everyone popped their sail to take advantage of the meagre Northerly breeze for some wind assist that was probably more psychological than actual.



The first objective for the day was Point Mauge but because of the Northerly a large proportion of the fleet was dragged of course. Time for plan B; that green patch on the shore looks promising let's go there. The green patch resolved itself into a nice little beach where we put in to stretch our legs. A short walk to inspect Robby's farm followed where a couple of mountain bikers looked surprised to see a bunch of sea kayakers waddle up the road in boat shoes and cags.

Robby's farm is a picturesque 4 room hut set in the remnants of farm paddocks surrounded by the encroaching bush. It has the largest collection of left footed boots in the Southern Hemisphere and is a good place to look for that hard to find spare for your antique push bike.

After lunch we headed south to adventure. The Northerly had died completely so dip and twist was the order of the day. We soon came across a tinny with a couple of guys after abalone and soon after that their mother ship, the good ship "Self Help"? About this time a Southerly wind sprang up which made the last few kilometres to Cape Peron a bit of a slog and it was with some relief that we shot the gap between The Column (aka The Finger) and the Cape into the Glenloth Cliffs.



After rounding the cape the wind died away and low clouds obscured the top of the cliffs giving the resting place of the cutter Glenloth a suitably ominous cast. Whilst rounding Barren Head into Haunted Bay Gav decided to take a short cut and shoot a gap in the rocks barely wide enough to accommodate his paddle. After watching Gav negotiate the fearsome surge induced drop with aplomb the rest of the group sensibly decided that discretion was the better part of valour and took the long way round.

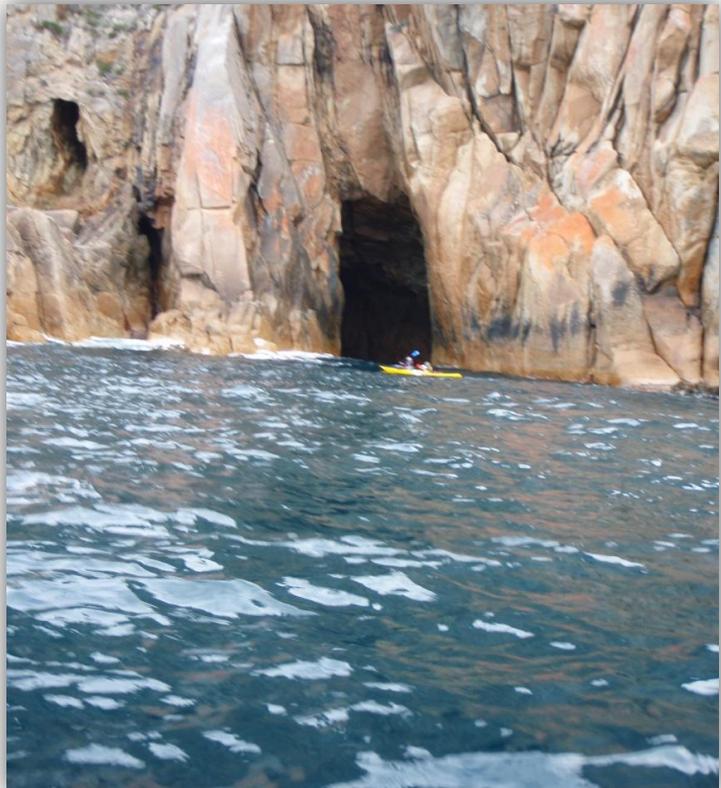


Haunted Bay proved to be a good campsite with a nice pebbly beach surrounded by the steep wooded hills of Southern Maria. The evening passed very pleasantly with good food and wine and we were serenaded to sleep by the dulcet tones of the resident fairy penguins doing their acapella version of “I’ve got love in my tummy and it’s all for you”

Day 2

The day started with overcast skies and calm conditions. The party split into two groups, one to reconnoitre the rest of Haunted Bay, the other to explore “Remarkable Dave’s Cave”. Meeting up again at the head of the bay we set off for Whalers Cove hugging the coast and shooting the gaps between rocks where the opportunity presented itself.

Soon Dave Hugo, Phil and Gav soon spotted another sea cave that looked promising and went in for a closer look. With Phil guarding the entrance, Dave and Gav ventured inside, with Gav typically going “that just a little bit further”. Gav’s white water skills were tested as the surge and backwash pushed him around and rocks emerged from the swell and then were covered again, however he emerged triumphant but a bit whiter than normal a few minutes later.



Approaching Riedle Bay another opportunity for daring do presented itself in the form of breaking reef wave about 50m off the rocky shore. The more manly members of the group decided to strut their stuff by surfing the wave. It looked like Gav had finally bitten of more than he could chew when he was trashed by a large breaker and he and the boat parted company. However a professional rescue was soon organised by Claye and Phil and both paddler and boat were dragged soggy but unbowed from their encounter. Gav even managed to hang onto his hat.

After the excitement a South Easterly pushed us into Trigonía Corner where Dave Hugo hooked a nice cocky salmon. The group paddled along the breakers in Riedle Bay where I tried a spot of surfing, losing my hat for the second time at the same beach.

The group then set off in the freshening South Easter to arrive at Whalers Cove for lunch. After lunch the group again split in two, one setting off to climb Perpendicular Mountain the other to try and emulate Dave's earlier success and catch some fish for supper. Both groups achieved their goal; the mountaineers bagging their peak and the fishermen expending the least amount of energy possible whilst looking vaguely productive. Claye actually caught 4 fish in a quiet corner but was erroneously told that they "were no good" and chucked them back. Luckily Phil picked some mussels of some nearby rocks and an impromptu fish supper was had that night.



Day 3

A bright sunny day greeted our intrepid group of paddlers. After a lazy breakfast where some had scrambled eggs and others had to make do with porridge with a few nuts chucked in (and I thought that leadership was supposed to have its privileges) we set off in the morning sun. Some of the more foolish members of the group decided that their boats were a bit too warm and stood up in their cockpits to cool their overactive nether regions. After this silliness was over we made our way down past Elephants Bight onto the beach.



At the beach another surf school started up with some good rides mixed in with a few wipe outs. After a while Phil and Claye decided to show how it was done and proved waves are fun surfing forwards or backwards. Then came the inevitable portage across the isthmus.

After the portage a light easterly wind pushed us over to Point Lesueur for a quick lunch stop and then onwards to Rheban. Soon after shore the wind more or less died away completely and it was time to suck it up and push on. Arriving at Rheban around 2pm it was time to prove that old kayaker saying, "every trip starts and ends with a carry". About 20 minutes after arriving back at Rheban a moderate Easterly of about 15-20 knots sprang up which would have pushed us over from Maria Island with no effort at all, proving that the Weather Gods do indeed have a sense of humour. A mint slice thoughtfully provided by Dave Chiam officially ended the trip.