

Report on the Murrumbidgee Kayaking Camp

12th February 2016 to 19th February 2016

Original Concepts

In an endeavour to find a new locality to hold a kayaking camp I found out that NSW has many interesting canoe trails. After a careful study of all of these trails I chose the Murrumbidgee Canoe Trail commencing at Jugiong and finishing at Wagga Wagga as meeting the best one that met the requirements I was seeking. These requirements were safety, difficulty of the paddle, length of paddle (approx 5 days), and the logistics required to carry out the paddle.

Originally I wanted to fly all paddlers from Brisbane to Canberra, hire a bus in Canberra to provide transport for the duration, then hire kayaks to paddle the river and on completion return to Canberra to fly back to Brisbane. This never happened.

The Trip

What happened was that we all made our own travel arrangements to Jugiong to arrive there on the afternoon of 12th February. Transport was arranged to transport kayaks to and from the Murrumbidgee for those who had no other way to get their kayaks there. On arrival we gathered at the Jugiong Motor Inn to meet each other, have a meal together and spend the first night there. It was arranged that we would leave all our vehicles at the Motor Inn except for the support vehicle (Sue Alcock's) and kayak trailer.

It was decided that the driving responsibility would be rotated as the paddlers paddled downriver. The kayak trailer would also transport all the camping gear needed for the trip for all the paddlers.

Murrumbidgee Trip Paddling and Driving Schedule

	Day 1 Sat. 13-Feb	Day 2 Sun. 14-Feb	Day 3 Mon. 15-Feb	Day 4 Tue 16-Feb	Day 5 Wed. 17-Feb	Day 6 Thu. 18-Feb
Sue Alcock	D & D	P & P	P	P	D	P
Jim Blyth	P & P	D & P	P	P	P	P
Ray Findlay	P & P	P & P	P	P	P	P
Charlie Fuller	P & P	P & P	P	P	P & D	P
Derek Heap	P & P	P & D	P	P	P	P
Margaret Heap	P & D	P & P	P	P	P	P
Rick Heap	P & P	P & P	P	P	P	P
Max Locke	P & P	P & P	D	P	P	P
Bruce Nicholson	P & P	P & P	P	P	P	D
Bob Whiting	P & P	P & P	P	D	P	P

Notes: P= Paddled & D= Driving.

Where there was a changeover it was done at the lunch break.

For the day to day and trip report also refer to the report compiled by Bruce Nicholson and posted on the Club's website.

Day 1 Jugiong to Gobarralong Bridge TSR - 35.0kms taking 4hr 47m

I lead the first day because of my experience in moving water. There were incidents, especially at the first set of rapids when many tried to go through the rapid together, no problem though as a short talk followed and incidents were few and far between for the rest of the trip. Yes, there were tip outs for various reasons however there were no injuries to personnel or damage to gear. Before the paddle commenced we decided upon where the lunch spot was as it had to be accessible by our support vehicle so as we could change drivers. The location chosen was Cooinines Homestead. At Gobarralong Bridge site there was an excellent kayak landing area and we had no problems setting up camp for the night.

Day 2 Gobarralong Bridge TSR to Gundagai Caravan Park - 31.4kms taking 4hr 4m

No problems with packing up the campsite and getting on the water. Another good days paddling, especially with a good flowing river with not too many surprises for us, maybe overhanging branches or the occasional submerged tree. The lunch site was chosen about midway for the planned day's journey where road and river were side by side. Kayak landing here was a bit more difficult as the landing area was small, the river had a good flow and there were 9 kayaks to land. At the Gundagai Caravan Park I discovered there was a misunderstanding between me and the management on the date of our arrival and as a result there was only had 2 cabins available for us. Bob and Bruce pitched their tents for the night. The evening meal was had at the local Chinese restaurant.

Day 3 Gundagai Caravan Park to Lime Kilns TSR - 26.0kms taking 3hr 20m

Because of the shorter distance scheduled for today's paddle we did not arrange to have a lunch break and planned paddle/driver changeover. The paddle was uneventful as all paddlers were beginning to master the moving river conditions and were aware of possible hazards they might strike. Lime Kilns was also a difficult landing area in that the banks were steep and the number of stopping spots were very small in area and limited. After the day's paddle was completed a car shuttle was done and all the vehicles were transferred from Jugiong to Wagga Wagga in readiness for our arrival there.

Day 4 Lime Kilns TSR to Wantabadgery Reserve - 27.7kms taking 3hr 37m

Similar to day 3 the shorter distance scheduled meant that we did not arrange to have a lunch break and planned paddle/driver changeover. Another beautiful and easy day paddling down the river. The landing site at Wantabadgery has a good wide boat ramp. The Reserve has a large camping area complete with toilets.

Day 5 Wantabadgery Reserve to Oura Beach Reserve - 42.1kms taking 5hr 00m

Another wonderful days paddle with a change of drivers at lunchtime. It did take a little time for the paddlers and driver to meet up for the changeover as Sue's vehicle had a flat battery and then the location instruction were misinterpreted by the morning driver. Thanks for the radios we took or we would still be looking for each other. Oura Beach has another excellent landing ramp and camping site.

Day 6 Oura Beach Reserve to Wagga Wagga- 26.3kms taking 3hr 15m

A good mornings paddle into Wagga Wagga to finish the paddle on a excellent sandy beach to be met by Bruce, who was the driver for the last day, with a bottle of champagne. No problems were encountered with today's paddle but as was the case there was yet another tip out. To finalise the trip a very good evening meal was had at the local RSL.

General

Finance wise a deposit of \$200 per person was asked for and this turned out to be the final cost once we excluded the costs that would have been incurred if we had airfares, bus and kayak hire. below are photos of some of the landing sites used on the trip.



Jugiong Launching Site



Gundagai Launching Site



Lime Kilns Launching Site



Wantabadgery Launching Site



Oura Beach Launching Site



Wagga Wagga Beach Landing