

NOOSA RIVER CAMP - MAY 2018



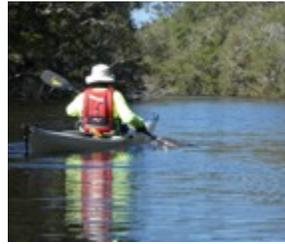
By Lynn Albury and Bruce Nicholson

Nine eager paddlers arrived at Boreen Point to experience calm clear waters promising an enjoyable crossing of Lake Cootharaba. We set our sights on the Cooloola Sandpatch in the distance and made a leisurely passage identifying various landmarks along the coast. The reflections of the boats and paddlers on the calm waters were a photographers delight!



For Terry and Lynn this was our first experience of a kayak journey including camping and we were looking forward to what lay ahead for us. We made an easy crossing and arrived at Fig Tree Point for our morning tea break. As we entered the narrow river some were surprised to note that there were no water lilies chocking the river as on previous trips. In fact, the water was at a high level mainly because of the

recent rains in the area. This also had an impact on the colour of the water that is usually stained a very dark black – now it was a brown black.



Progressing further up river we were delighted with the reflections of the trees and sky. We saw numerous water birds and could hear the elusive bush birds hiding in the flowering tea trees, banksias and palms that lined the rivers course. We realised that in many sections of the Noosa River with steep



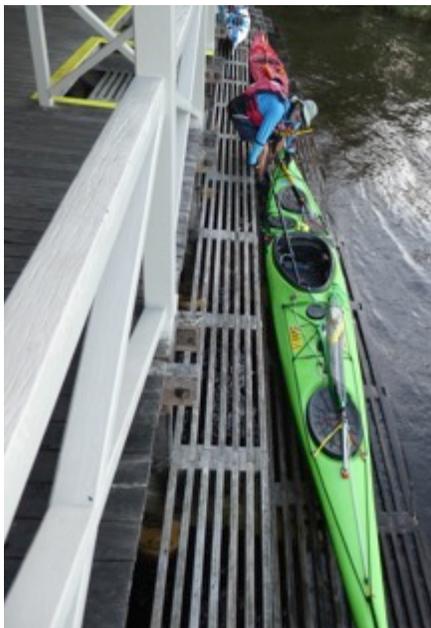
banks, mooring is very difficult. Our leader Bruce suggested we head straight for camp 3, our overnight stop, for our lunch break. We all disembarked with assistance and kayaks were carried up the path giving us access to our equipment. We all had our priorities - some to eat lunch and others to set up camp. Terry and Lynn had a new tent and had an audience impressed that it went up so easily. We had a lengthy afternoon ahead with Bruce and Jim tackling the 12 km hike to the fabulous Cooloola Sandpatch, a huge sand blow with extensive views over the coast, Di taking the river walk to campsite 1 while others took time to read or rest. Those who did not walk enjoyed happy hour on the river wharf, and this was followed by dinner and an early night. The temperature dropped and we took refuge in our tents.



Most of us rose before dawn as we prepared to leave the campsite by 8am. We had to reverse the process of the previous day and

walk our kayaks down the path and into the water. We continued upstream to Campsite 5 but were unable to land because of the high water level. Bruce, Di and George, the four-day trippers, planned to continue along the river to site 15 and at this point the rest of us farewelled them. Dave, our leader for the three-day trippers, suggested we head back to a landing site opposite Harry's hut, for our first break. Then we continued on to Fig Tree for a lunch break. We were surprised to meet kayaks and canoes of backpackers heading upstream, some on a day trip and others to camp. Many were from overseas and were thoroughly enjoying the beauty of our country. It made us appreciate the fact that we live in this beautiful part of the world.

During our lunch break at Fig Tree Point, Dave suggested that we continue on the paddle and travel along Kin Kin Creek, instead of leaving the paddle along the creek until the following morning because stronger winds of up to 25knots were predicted for late morning the following day. Dave thought an early get away would help us cross Lake Cootharaba before the winds got too strong. The paddle along Kin Kin Creek was different to the Noosa River as it was narrower with a rainforest feel to it.



We had booked into Fig Tree Point for the night and after the usual preparations settled in for an early night. Our sleep was interrupted a few times during the evening. Besides the wash of the water at our mooring and the pounding of surf along the coastline, we all woke at 8pm to the sound of a mobile phone and later in the evening to the pumping up of an air mattress. Unfortunately, Jim's air mattress

developed a hole on his second night and he experienced a difficult night on the hard ground.

Early the following morning we rose eager to get organised and on the water. We could see the waters change from calm to ripples and by the time Dave, Barrie, Graeme, Jim, Terry and Lynn departed shortly after 7 am the wind was gaining strength. After an hour and a half of paddling into a stiff breeze, we beached at Boreen Point. With cars packed and kayaks cleaned we retreated to the local coffee shop.



We are grateful to Bruce for his organization and preparations for the camp. Thanks to Dave who guided us during the second part of the trip. It was a great first experience of camping from our kayaks for Terry and Lynn and we look forward to many more opportunities in the future.



The four-day paddlers, (Di, George & Bruce) farewelled the others at camp site 5 and headed to camp 8 for morning tea. Whilst not the best of landing sites, the manoeuvre was successfully accomplished and a leisurely morning tea was followed by an inspection of the camping area before progressing on.

Prior to reaching Campsite 15, we diverted to port to investigate a small creek. After about 10 minutes of paddling we broke through some reeds to find ourselves in a lake surrounded by reeds. A very pleasant surprise! We then detoured to starboard to explore yet another creek which normally you can't navigate. Given the river was higher than normal, we were able to easily enter and were surprised at how far it was navigable, being able to follow it for some considerable distance. Turning did prove to be a challenge for Di & George but Bruce, who managed to fight his way a little further upstream, found a pond for an easy return.

Soon after we reached the lovely Camp Site 15, unloaded and set up camp. When all organised for the night, we again hit the water and progressed further up the Noosa until stopped by fallen trees. This was slightly further up than any of us had previously been. The floods earlier this year have certainly cleaned the river up somewhat.



We then left the Noosa and entered Teewah Creek. Due to the recent rain, the creek was running quite hard which made paddling up it rather tricky, especially getting around the tight turns. As soon as the front of the kayak nosed out into the bend the water pressure sent the kayak in the wrong direction, so we had some hairy moments. Di was the first to say enough, worried that her lighter boat may sustain some damage. George also gave way to the elements soon after but Bruce continued until stopped by fallen trees. Regardless, it was further up than any of us have previously managed. The return trip was even more exhilarating with the speed of the water pushing us and the sun preventing us from seeing the snags in a timely manner, a few bumps were par for the course. Bruce had a couple of challenging moments when his stern got caught under a bank rendering his rudder useless for the rest of his return. It was no surprise then when he was forced against a large log and very much stuck; time and patience being the necessary ingredients to enable an extraction from the predicament.



We arrived back to camp in time for a quick swim prior to happy hour and dinner. An early night followed.

An early start on Wednesday morning allowed for an easy paddle back to Figtree with breaks for morning tea at Campsite 4 and lunch opposite Harry's Hut. We were set up reasonably early for the evening although Di was somewhat apprehensive after encountering a large snake near her digs. She didn't go anywhere without her torch after that! A lovely evening of reminiscing our younger days was followed by a good nights sleep.

Thursday heralded an early start and we were fed, packed and paddling in Kin Kin Creek by 7.30am. The cloud cleared at about 8am and with the sun, the creek presented in all its glory. This has to be one of the most delightful paddles anywhere with the birds, flowers and old forest timbers all reflected magnificently in the creek despite the dirty water from the recent rain. Again we were able to go further up than any of us had previously been, with Bruce making it all the way to the old dam wall.

After morning tea at the Ranger Station we headed across the lake into the eyes of a strong South-easterly wind, which meant no talking and strong paddling. Consequently we were somewhat wet from spray on arriving back at Boreen point at about midday but totally relaxed and in great spirits from a wonderful four days.

