

"The Dreamtime Voyage - Around Australia Kayak Odyssey"

25th Anniversary Edition

By Paul Caffyn

Reviewed by Ruth Henderson

Most book reviews rave about the book, and end with a piece on the author – but in this instance both are a bit different: long out of print, the book is a special 25th Anniversary Edition and the ‘young man’ who made that incredible journey around Australia is still clocking up the miles and knocking off coastlines!

Muhammad Ali he is not, but if there was a World Heavyweight Championship for long distance expedition kayaking Paul Caffyn would be like Ali, not just considered, but lauded and recognised as the greatest heavyweight kayaker of all time.

It wouldn't matter whether the competition was for paddling the most miles in a year, or a decade or a lifetime – Paul Caffyn would still hold the world title, uncontested!

Paddling became a serious passion for Paul in 1977 and his first epic paddle was around the South Island. In the next decade he ticked off the North Island, and Stewart Island, Great Britain, Australia, and Japan notching up 25,000 miles (40,000 kms); the biggest feat being the Australian circumnavigation – a 9,420 mile 360 day epic! Since 1983 there have been at least six attempts to emulate this journey but none was successful until Freya Hoffmeister completed a solo trip in 2009.

In 1991 Paul completed over several northern summers an unsupported solo, arduous 4,700 mile kayak trip around the coastline of Alaska from Prince Rupert to Inuvik, then in 1994 he teamed up with Conrad Edwards for a further seven expeditions. These included paddling around New Caledonia, Malaya to Thailand, and over four northern summers the west and east coasts of Greenland.

Unlike Muhammad Ali, Paul Caffyn, is rather reticent about beating his own drum or chest. But thankfully he has written about his New Zealand and Australian circumnavigations, and given others a chance to be inspired by him and for his peers to sing his praises in print.

This is what John Dowd, author of "Sea kayaking – A manual for long distance touring"

said about the man after he completed the first kayak circumnavigation of Australia in December 1982. "Amongst sea kayakers, Paul Caffyn is almost in a class of his own. For the longest time after he finished his awesome solo circumnavigation of Australia, the silence was deafening. Few of his peers knew the significance of what he had done, and perhaps those who understood felt lost in his shadow. Not only is Paul's Australian adventure a pinnacle for sea kayaking, it should eventually be recognised as one of the great small voyages of recent history along with those of Slocum, Shackleton and Franz Romer."

Tsunami Ranger co-founder Eric Soares, an extreme ocean rock gardening kayaker, in "Confessions of a Wave Warrior", his latest book, rates Paul as "the greatest living sea kayaker."

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But Paul, as self-deprecating as ever, says in the preface to this 25th Edition "For me, it has never been about setting records, but setting goals, tangible goals that would give me focus and something to strive towards achieving. I am fighting tooth and nail against the aging process and have had to scale down the size of some trips, and what I can achieve in a day's paddling. Long gone are the 50 milers of the Aussie trip or the 60 milers of the Japan trip. Now I am grateful for 20 mile days and a 30 miler is indeed cause for two evening tinctures of medicinal whisky." For those of you brought up in a decimal age – multiply by 1.6 to get kilometres e.g. 50 miles x 1.6 = 80 kms!

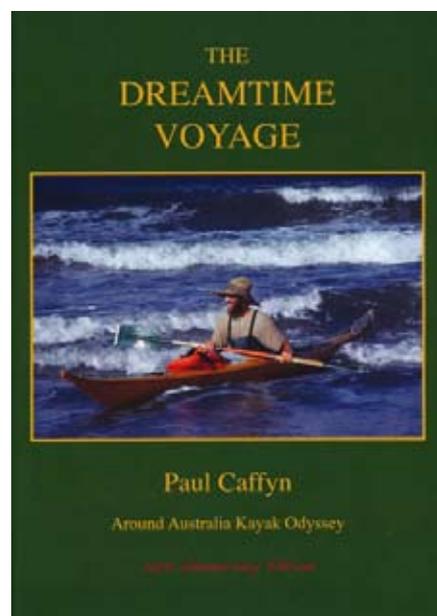
Paul works quietly and tirelessly for sea kayaking as publications and safety officer for KASK, the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayaking, and in educating and inspiring others to extend themselves saying "It is essential that we encourage young and old folk into facing challenges and undertaking adventures – not just 30 second adrenalin-pumping adventures but long duration, week or

month long adventures, that require focussed research, training and execution. We need to encourage a new generation of goal setters, who can experience the tremendous sense of achievement that is felt at the end of a successful adventure, the experience of pitting themselves against stressful physical conditions and the immense sense of pride and satisfaction that comes at the end of successfully completing a bloody good trip."

Whether you are currently an armchair adventurer, weekend warrior or 'round tuit' expedition paddler you will enjoy "The Dreamtime Voyage." This 25th edition includes a write up of the poignant re-enactment of Paul's arrival at Queenscliffe, Victoria and his kayak Lagauli's ceremonial hand-over to the Queenscliffe Maritime Museum in 2008.

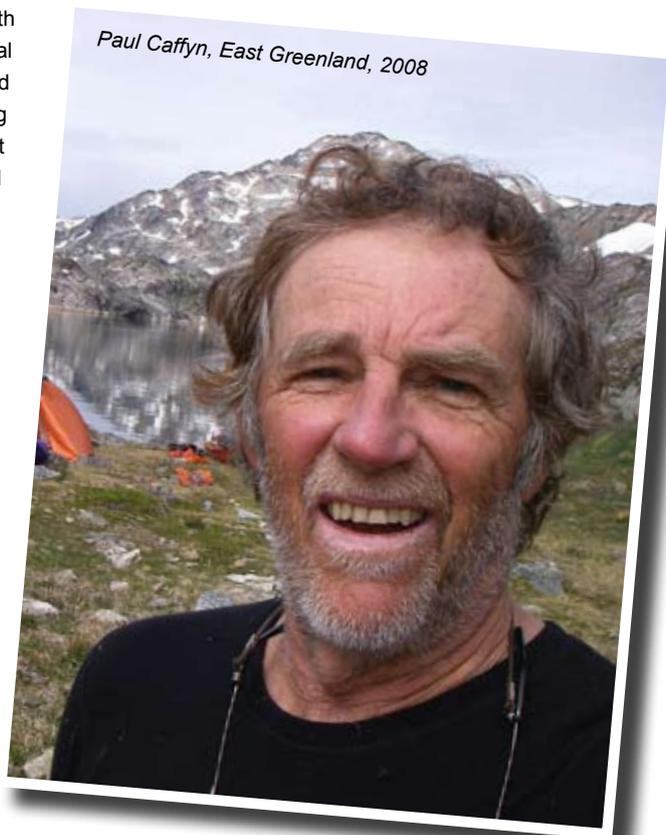
Cordelia Chu has done a wonderful job of enhancing the original photos resulting in better colour rendition, contrast, balance and sharpness.

Paul is a good author, writing in an easily read style. Chapter by chapter, kayaking from one milestone to the next you'll be led along an often nail-biting, stomach churning, sleep deprived journey. Snippets of history, geology and nature study add to the interest and make this book more than just one



man's adventure. With the often very personal accounts of the pains and strains and laughter along the way you'll feel that you have been invited into the story, allowed to join in. And that is Paul's wish – to inspire others to participate, to adventure, to be bold.

Perhaps it is time to turn your dream into reality, to dance your own dance, to fight your own battle, to "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."



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 on this or the limited print run, casebound edition.

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KASK publishes a 200 page sea kayaking handbook which is just \$15 to members: the handbook contains all you need to know about sea kayaking: techniques and skills, resources, equipment, places to go etc.

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