

**Subtitle: *The History of Lane Cove River Kayakers  
and its Adventurous Members***

Author: Justin Paine and 17 Other Kayakers

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Publisher: author

Contents: 271 pp, maps, colour images, Cover: soft cover

Size: 210 x 148 mm

Cost Aust \$26

Availability: see review

Review: Paul Caffyn

There are very few kayaking anthologies (paddling story collections) published in Australasia, and bummer for the rest of the world. Back in 2011, Ian Beasley-self-published a delightful, well researched 'collection of words and images' in *Kayak*, with chapters assigned to broad esoteric groupings: *Living, Seeking, Challenging, Competing, Defending*, wrapped up with a comprehensive bibliography. Very short, one to three page, chapters with excellent illustrations, delving into the full gamut of paddling from historical with the Arctic Inuit and Rob Roy kayaks to competitive racing, with the defensive section including the folboat operations *Jaywick* (Singapore) and *Frankton* (Gironde Estuary). For a thumbnail evocative insight into the history and various aspects of world paddling, it is a wee treasure.

Ian Beasley set a very high benchmark in terms of his research, writing and selected images, but they were mostly short (superb) stories, drawn from historical archives, books and websites.

In 2019, NSW paddler Justin Paine published the first of his three anthologies. *The Spirit of Kayaking* (2019), *Gone Paddling* (2020) and a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition with his delightful delve into what drives Aussie paddlers was published in 2024.

Justin's delightful anthologies are focussed mainly on Australian paddlers, especially members of the Lane Cove River Kayak Club delving into what Australian paddlers have achieved in Oz and those who have ventured outside Aussie waters.

In his first 2019 anthology *Spirit of Kayaking*, Justin Paine wrote:

*'How do you define this abstract quality? For me, it starts with the simple joy of being out on the water in a small self-propelled boat, up close to nature. From there you can go in an almost infinite number of directions, and it is how you go about this that defines the spirit in you. It can take you in a continuing voyage of exploration and discovery – discovery of yourself and of people and places. It can be as contradictory as the camaraderie of being in a team or the solitude of paddling alone. As the competitiveness of racing or the tranquillity of a meandering paddle on a small stream. As demanding as expeditions taking years to complete or as relaxing as slipping away for half an hour at lunchtime.'*

If I was asked to explain why I go kayaking, 'tis a rather good explanation for me.

Although all three books include much about that four letter word which I don't like with respect to sea kayaking, I was still drawn into the stories of 'race' motivation and enthusiasm for racing; in South Africa, Britain, NZ and Canada/Alaska. Justin nicely balances epic overnight races, pain and tiredness, sweat, insects and overtiredness with stories from the those wonderful folk who support the racers, both physically with food, fluid and shoulder massages, and the essential moral support.

Justin's first edition of *Gone Paddling* assembled 33 stories, with much from his home club members on racing but a delightful mix of short stories ranging from the Antarctic to the Arctic.

This new 2<sup>nd</sup> edition kicks off with Richard Barnes crossing of the Tasman Sea from initial concept, to building his superlong kayak, the first launch from Sydney and rescue via a yacht for a tow into Port Stephens, then a second attempt launching from Hobart and arriving at Riverton on the South Island of NZ after 65 days on 18 February 2023. A well written account with good illustrations and photos, marred only by the misspelling of Andrew McAuley's surname.

This is followed by the first edition stories and yarns, which are a delight to delve into, from paddling in Antarctica to racing on the Yukon River, concluding with five fascinating technical chapters, delving

into kayak weight versus speed, rudders and how to use them and 'Why paddling in shallow waters sucks'.

Justin Paine has assembled a superb mix of very readable paddling stories, highlighting how much the Lane Cove River Kayak Club members have achieved paddling in Australasia and overseas. In some ways, when these stories are combined with those in *The Spirit of Kayaking*, the books provide a brief history of racing and sea kayaking in Australia. The books are well illustrated throughout, mostly colour throughout with a thumbnail pics of each chapter author.

*Gone Paddling* and *The Spirit of Kayaking* (both cost Aust. \$26) can be ordered by emailing your name + postal address to [gonepaddling@lcrk.org.au](mailto:gonepaddling@lcrk.org.au) - you will be provided details for an EFT payment (in Australia) or Paypal payment (overseas)

Postage cost: Aust. \$13 for NZ orders and Aust. \$15 for UK orders.