



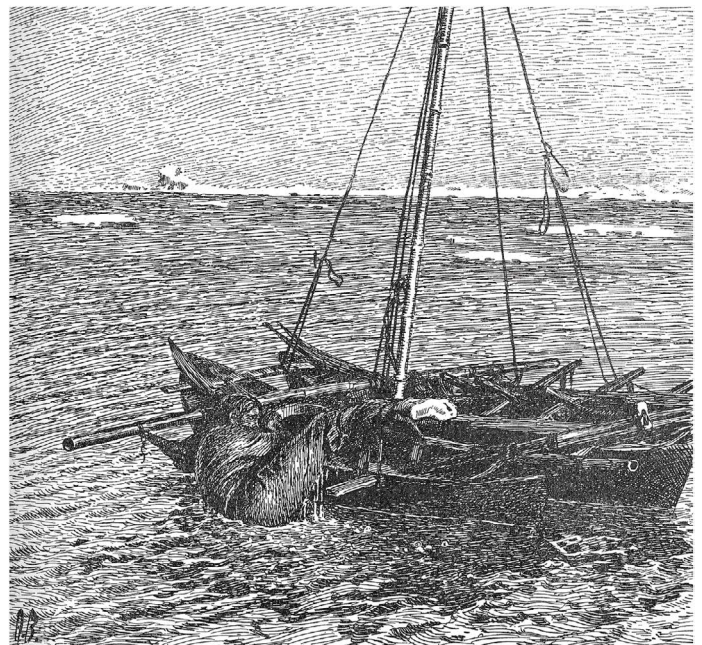
Conrad Edwards

Paul Caffyn by the Gino Watkins Memorial Cross in Lake Fjord, 2007.

Fridtjof Nansen

When Fridtjof Nansen and Hjalmar Johannsen finally reached solid rock on Franz Josef Land after a failed mission from the ice bound *Fram*, to be the first to reach the North Pole, they still had their bamboo framed, sailcloth covered kayaks.

On 12th June 1896 the Norwegians were sailing their kayaks rafted together and landed to climb onto an ice hummock to figure where they were. A ski stock was jammed into the ice with a strap cut from walrus hide used to tether the raft. When scanning the horizon, Johannsen caught sight of the kayak raft drifting offshore. In a really gutsy



Sketch from *Vo1 1 of Farthest North* by Fridtjof Nansen, 1897)
An artist's recreation of Nansen endeavouring to climb onto his errant kayak raft.

move, Nansen stripped off outer clothing and swam through the icy water until he caught up with the raft. By then he was so cold Fridtjof had barely the movement in his frozen extremities to climb into a cockpit, let alone slowly paddle back to meet Johannsen on the ice edge.

All their hunting and camping kit was on the two rafted kayaks, not even a penknife with them onshore. In this frozen wasteland of Franz Josef Land, although it was mid northern summer, with no food or shelter it would have been a slow cold death for both of them.

Lessons learned (knowing stuff)

There are so many 'secret squirrel' stories of paddlers losing contact with their kayaks. 'Tis rather embarrassing to have your kayak drift offshore during a pee stop or not to tether your boat overnight and find the beach empty next morning, so many stories!

The essence of this story is no matter how tired or exhausted you are after landing, no matter where you land, on sea, ice or on land, ensure you tether your kayak to accommodate high tide levels, storm surges and tsunamis.


Paul Caffyn

Paul Caffyn Klassic Kayaking Books

Now available in England, both the Australian and South Island books. Sadly, the exorbitant cost of overseas postage has killed off mailing these A4 size books from NZ.


However, an old work colleague, Mick, loads up his hand luggage after he visits NZ annually. He has already sold out of the recent 2nd edition of the Stewart Island book but the two classics are available in England from: paulskayakbooksuk@gmail.com

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