

# Advanced Sea Kayak Club

AN INTERNATIONAL SEA CANOEING CLUB OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED  
IN THIS ASPECT OF CANOEING



# NEWSLETTER

## AIMS

1. PROMOTION OF SEA CANOEING
2. COMMUNICATION
3. ORGANISATION OF EVENTS AND CONFERENCES
4. SAFETY AND COACHING

Secretary:- John J. Ramwell.  
32, Glebe Road,  
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Cambs.  
PE18 0DG.

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NEWSPAPER

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DECEMBER, 1981.

John J. Ramwell,  
4, Wavell Garth,  
Sandal,  
Wakefield,  
West Yorks.

Tel No Wakefield(0924) 255791

FROM ME (EDITORIAL)

Before introducing this Newsletter No 28 - a few personal notes.

First may I wish you all a Happy Christmas and some good canoeing in 1982.

Secondly, could I trouble you to alter your address book or make a note on the back of a cigarette packet of my new address as above. (We moved a fortnight ago) If you have recently written to my old address - never mind as the Post Office are forwarding mail on to me.

Now this Newsletter - again I have not been able to include the expedition report on our recent Alaskan Expedition, - you have my promise that it will appear in the next 'Letter' due out early in the New Year.

The 4th. National Sea Canoeing Symposium has been well subscribed to and the indications are it will be a success. Again a full report will appear in the next 'Letter'.

Appearing in this Newsletter is the usual batch of correspondence, Exped. reports and information, both useful and/or interesting (at least in my opinion!!)

A.S.K.C. SHOPPING LIST

- ASKC Ties £2.50 each inc. p & p.
- ASKC Stickers 30 pence each inc. p & p.
- ASKC Letter headed paper @ 5p per sheet (orders in multiples of 10 only)
- 3rd. National Sea Canoeing Symposium Report @ 75 pence inc. p & p.
- ASKC 'T' shirts small/medium/large/X large @ £3.30 each inc. p & p.
- ASKC Sweat Shirts small/medium/large/X large @ £6.00 each inc. p & p.
- ASKC woollen sweaters (order from Sharon Rowe - see previous Newsletters) @ £11 each.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1982. The 1982 subscription (£3.00) can be paid as soon as you like and I have provided a form for this purpose. Those of you who have joined recently (within the last couple of months), though you have received all the 1981 Newsletters, are invited to remit only £2.00 for next years subscription.

I shall only print sufficient Newsletters to go out to paid up members when I run off the next edition ( I need to keep costs down as much as possible) and so to ensure your copy early in the new year, do let me have your sub. very soon.

\_\_\_\_\_ please tear off \_\_\_\_\_

and send to John Ramwell, 4, Wavell Garth, Sandal, Wakefield, W.Yorks.

APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP TO A.S.K.C. 1982 £3.00

NAME.....	DATE.....
ADDRESS.....	AMOUNT ENCLOSED.....
.....	Make cheques payable to the A.S.K.C.
.....	
.....	

NOTE

This is your Newsletter.....you are paying for it. It's success or otherwise depends on your contributions; so please let me hear from you with your news, views, opinions and expedition reports. Any item of gear you find particularly useless or useful....let's be hearing about it. We are reaching almost 400 committed sea canoeists.

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A WEEKS SEA CANOEING JULY 24th. to JULY 30th. 1982

At the Anwoth Camp site, Gatehouse of Fleet, Kirkcudbrightshire, SCOTLAND.

More a holiday than a course, though there will be some coaching, sea proficiency assessments (if required) and led expeditions (day and night) with talks on sea canoeing related subjects.

This is the 5th. biennial course and is timed to coincide with the Gatehouse Gala Week (fun for all the family while the canoeists are on the water)

Self catering with a grand barbecue on the final evening.

Cost £7.00 per canoeist ( to pay for instructors expenses and the barbecue)  
make cheques payable to the Advanced Sea Kayak Club and send to me John  
Ramwell, 32, Glebe Road, West Perry, Huntingdon, Cambs.

Closing date....when the course is full, and if previous experience is anything  
to go by, this should not be far away.....so hurry!

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CORRESPONDENCE

From Ed van Rossum, Netherlands.

Dear John,

.....

The request of Tony Watton about DENMARK makes me wonder if my (limited) knowledge of Danish waters would be a topic for the symposium, say 10 minutes or so. I did a 110 naut. mile solo trip among the islands but did more extensive sailing there previously and read up about the area. The Danes themselves did not seem to do much open water canoeing, and appeared surprised at my moderate crossings.

Dutch coast: it took the Council of Westvoorne (south of Hook) two months to confirm their permission to use the beach for our week with Nigel L. Now I hear from a solo surf canoeist that he indeed has been sent away from some busier beaches occasionally, but usually finds a quieter spot to launch, so the bureaucrats are not always as fierce as they sound. It is of course sensible not to provoke them by surfing in between a crowd of bathers, but again most campings are a little way inland.....so where are you to leave your loaded canoe! Coastal campings tend tend to be full too in summer, and not interested in one day customers. 'Wild' camping or spending the night in the dunes is heavily fines (if discovered)

Gerard Diependaal was with me in the norther estuaries when we were hit by a thunder squall, maybe windforce 8, and he turned tail, which split our party and lost us our tide. Only years later did he tell me it was not he but his boat that decided it. Some owners here have cut back the skeglike bit on their Nordkapps. I have some ideas on skegs, keeping course and lessening drift, based on some knowledge of sailing boat design and behaviour; and contact with German and Swedish kayak builders. Would you like an article about it? (YES PLEASE, Ed.)

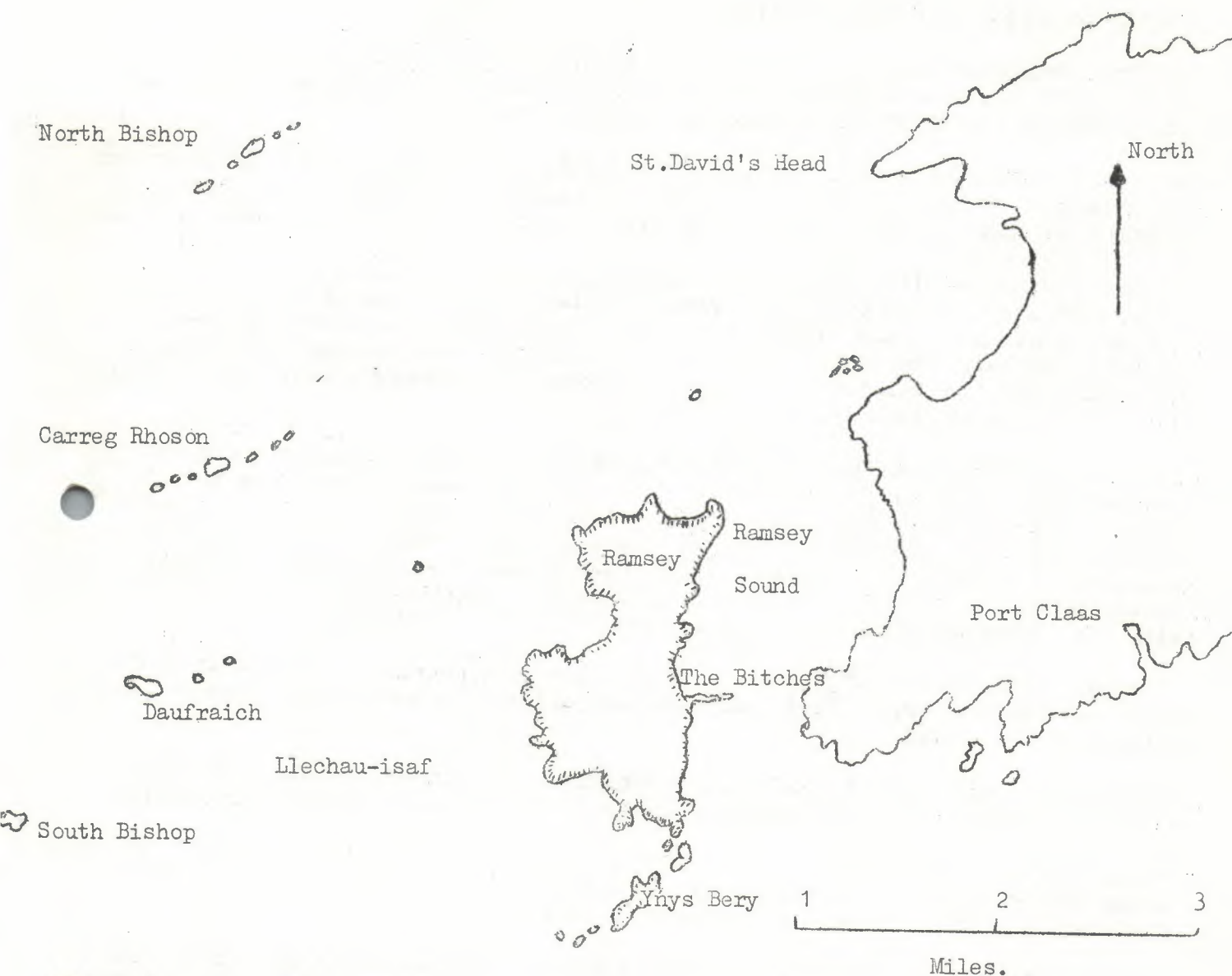
Portugal : does Alan Byde and prospective paddlers realise the water on the West coast is very cold (I don't trust the tourist office figures - they may be valid for the south coast round St. Vincent) compared with the summer air; due to water from deep down surfacing there? No Mediterranean bath water!! I know, it nearly got me on an innocent swim off the beach a  $\frac{1}{2}$  century ago when I was that much younger. I should like neoprene or other isolation there, at least for the trunk. May we hear of their trip, if already made?

Use and condense what you like for the Newsletter. And last but not least, it is marvellously thick and varied, from all over!

Does this answer your request "keep in touch"?

Sincerely,  
Ed van Rossum

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Paul's 1100 clattered down the hill to Porth Claas, its characteristic cries announcing its return long before it came into view.

Paul's face suggested that his meeting with the Coastguard had not been favourable. "North 5 to 6....he doesn't advise it".

Sure enough, the puffy white clouds were jogging past beneath an ultra blue sky. Porth Claas seemed very sheltered.

A lengthy discussion followed concerning our planned trip out from Port Claas across Ramsey Sound and then over to South Bishop light house and on up, passing between the Clerks, to North Bishop. Though only 15 miles, both Ramsey Sound and the area around the Bishops and Clerks were noted for their tide races and overfalls. One thing was clear, if we did go the trip would be a bit bumpy.

Eventually it was agreed that we would paddle as far as Ramsey Sound to check on the conditions...playing the rest of the trip by ear. Paul didn't seem too keen as a result of the Coastguard's advice about a trip to South Bishop, but he was quickly won over to the idea of a trip to Ramsey.

Running to canoeing time (+ 30 minutes after planned departure time) our kayaks slipped into the still waters of the harbour and then headed out towards the Sound.

Just as we had suspected Ramsey Sound was almost flat, the north going stream having just begun. Approaching Foel-fawr, I passed the spot where some months previously I'd been chased by a snorting bull seal, angry at my proximity to a female seal. This time only a few young seals bobbed up to the surface intent upon following our craft until more interesting and edible distractions caught their attention.

Off the south end of Ramsey a north west stream was running. Between exploring some of the superb sea caves which exist around the island, we were able to practice our ferry glides between Ynyscantwr.

"Let's go around Ynys Bery" suggested Julian.

Puffins, Guillemots and seals greeted us. Around a jagged cliff drifted South Bishop light house as if sailing northwards. The long white finger nails marking the overfalls off Llechau-isaf could be clearly seen.

Like moths attracted to it's light, we decided to set off. Already the north stream was running. Nearing South Bishop we hit the first of the overfalls of about 2 or 3 feet causing little bother apart from the odd wave which would wash over us.

We found ourselves slightly north of the Bishop and after a quick stop in an eddy we slipped south around the light house. Sheltered from the north wind we stopped. Julian, in his haste, had earlier forgotten to have a pee, but there was no-where to land! Out with the magic 5 pints bottle. "Is that what you use" asked Julian bemused. For five minutes he sat in deep thought but without result and he finally decided to grin and bear it.

From South Bishop we headed up towards Daufraich expecting to encounter a north east stream as reported in the Pilot. Instead it was running north west towards Ireland. By now our kayaks had been swung into a ferry glide, a task which was becoming more and more difficult as we were swept north west. We would have to paddle hard to reach the island of Daufraich. Nearing the island the overfalls increased. To be back amongst large overfalls felt exhilarating. Visual contact with each other was minimal and rescues would have been difficult.

Nearing the island the overfalls eased off a bit allowing us to regroup. It would have been far too easy to 'put your head down and go' forgetting about the other members of the party.

A few brief words about Julian's superb support stroke in the overfalls and then back into smaller 3-4 foot overfalls, and on up to our lunch stop at North Bishop.

"Where can we land?" I asked. Paul pointed to a rock in the distance; adding almost as an after-thought ".....but it was a calm day". Julian's thought about relieving himself had returned and his face fell upon hearing Paul.

Leaving the overfalls behind us we slipped behind North Bishop to shelter beneath the jagged rocks. Despite a careful search the only potential landing spot seemed to be at the side of a group of seals who were basking in the sun. As we approached they slipped into the water leaving one seal lying flat on its back fast asleep.

Feeling a sense of urgency Julian soon got it to move. "Wake up you silly bugger" he shouted. Like a canoeist woken from his after paddle snooze, the seal sat up with a start, looked around and then bounced into the sea.

The swell had returned and the risk of damaging our kayaks forced a reluctant decision to lunch afloat. Determined to 'do it', Julian reached for the 5 pints bottle; and a few minutes of deep concentration, then the smile of success.

It was now time for lunch. Sea canoeists at lunch often produce a wide range of tasty delights, some stranger than others. Out of Paul's canoe appeared a tin, a lid opener, a fork, and finally a tin of sardines. Despite the condition Paul excited his taste buds munching his precious sardines. Being more traditional I marched into my two-handed sized door stop sandwich while Julian attacked an assortment of goodies.

Over lunch we discussed our plan of action. We had planned to wait one and half hours for the tide to turn south, but this was now impossible. We therefore faced two possibilities; either to stay afloat in the shelter of North Bishop or to attempt a mile and half ferry glide across to the northern end of Ramsey.....or if we missed Ramsey, St. David's Head. Rather than get bored and cold, the latter course was chosen and we cautiously edged our kayaks out into the main stream.

With the wind on our stern we found that we were making progress towards Ramsey. Our transit on South Bishop slipping in and out of view behind the islands and reefs. The effect of wind against tide was clearly in evidence, large overfalls with white foam cascading off their crests.

Julian would occasionally race past down a wave stern ruddering frantically avoiding a collision with me. Sensing some good photography I moved ahead and swung my Nordkapp broadside on. A few hasty shots of Julian with my Nikonos, then a shout.... Paul was hurtling towards me!! I grabbed his bow, pushing it away from me. 'Splat' I was in, and without my paddle.

Surrounded by white bubbles, blue water and silence, time slowed down and thoughts casually drifted through my head. "...hmm.....this feels nice.....warmer than I thought .....wonder what Paul thinks....hell!, where's my paddle!"

Then I remembered that the paddle and leash were over the up-turned hull of my kayak, and though elasticated, it would demand some sorting out. "...what about air...."

My head bobbed up. Paul's stern was just in view; I reached out grabbing hold of his spare paddles to complete an Eskimo rescue.

Paul and Julian looked relieved at the thought of not having to attempt a deep sea rescue.

After checking that nothing had been lost, we headed on towards the northern shore of Ramsey and calmer waters. Entering the Sound we hitched a ride with the eddy which runs down to the Bitches...a thin peninsula of rocks stretching out from the island and interspersed by gulleys; the stream in the Sound was now slack.

We slipped back to the mainland and headed along the coast to Porth Claas, once again in the shelter of the cliffs.

upon landing we spotted the Coastguard landrover parked beside Paul's car. Carrying our kayaks up the beach, we walked past. The Coastgaurd was busy talking to a fisherman. Paul reported our safe return. A quick radio call and he returned to his conversation.

The clouds still jogged past and Paul's car disappeared up the hill, its sound following after it.

Derek Hairon.  
Ackaless, Pontac, St. Clement, Jersey.

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CORRESPONDENCE

From Kevin Mansell, Jersey, Channel Islands.

Dear John

.....

During the summer I spent a few weeks canoeing in the Baltic and I had an amazing encounter with a German person in the Danish town of Nysted. We had an evening paddle around the town and when we landed a German gentleman and his wife,, who both appeared to be in their 60's came up to the canoes. When the mansaw the Nordkapp written on my canoe he went quite wild, for want of a better word. After he had calmed down it became apparant that he had paddled around Nordkapp in a two man folding canoe in 1936. He left from Hammerfest and landed in Porsargefjiord. We spent the rest of the evening talking in his ceravan and we listened with awe as he described how in the last war he had smuggled letters from Germany to Denmark across the Fehman Belt, a crossing of 12 miles.

I hope to write a full article for future newsletters about the canoeing trip and about Kurt Behnke and his canoeing.

Best wishes  
Kevin Mansell.

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From the Daily Telegraph, Thursday, 16th. July, 1981

'BEST' BEACHES FULLY POLLUTED SAYS REPORT.

Many of Britain's favourite beaches, including some known for "safe bathing" are in a filthy condition seriously polluted with human excrement, says a report published today.

The report, in the NEW SCIENTIST, says that 190 of the 633 beaches sampled were at risk from sewage pollution.

In fact, Britain has only 25 beaches which meet the standards of cleanliness laid down by the E.E.C. to qualify as a 'Eurobeach'.

A prime candidate for the title of 'Britain's most polluted beach' was New Brighton on Merseyside. "Faecal matter, contraceptives, fat balls, sewer scum and household waste litter the once popular sandt shoreline," says the rept.

Swansea Bay has been ruined by raw sewage, industrial discharge and heavy lead mercury pollution, while spectacular bacteria counts were recorded at Bridlington where untreatedsewage was dumped at low water marks.

Eastbourne, Pevensey Bay and Hastings were all 'black spots' with high bacteria counts. Brighton's sewage came ashore at Saltdean.

From Margate to Dover, sewage from 500,000 people was discharged into the sea at close to low water mark.

The report cites American medical research work showing that people who swim in polluted waters have a higher than usual risk of vomiting, diarrhoea, nausea, fever and stomach aches. Other diseases such as Polio and paratyphoid might also be transmitted.

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From Dick Richards, Regional Controller, H.M.Coastgaurds.

I must mention one problem which has occurred twice in this Region in the last fortnight; the finding of empty canoes at sea by vessels. One was recovered and, as it belonged to a surf club, was marked so that, after some effort, the Club was contacted and was able to confirm that it had been lost and abandoned and that no-one was missing.

In the other case the canoe bore no markings and the situation became complicated when initial enquiries revealed two sea canoeists touring in the area. This resulted in considerable search effort and investigation before the two were located (safe) and unconnected with the empty boat and paddle, with no-one reported missing the search could be ended with caution. It would be helpful if we could encourage sea canoeists and clubs to advise the appropriate MRCC/SC of any canoes that are abandoned or lost together with a description and a last known position, This could be very useful to H.M.Coastguard in avoiding search action which would have to be taken if any doubt exists.

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Note from the 'Ed'.

A step further than this might be the encouragement of sea canoeists to 'label' their kayaks on a permanent basis to assist in identifying ownership in situations described above.. This procedure might also prevent loss by theft and aid recovery of stolen craft.

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COURSES

CANOE SURFING COURSE 27th-29th November, 1981

A weekend residential course led by Raymond Rowe of Plus y Brenin to cover practical aspects of SURF CANOEING

Details from Courtland Centre (CA), Nr. Kingsbridge, South Devon. Tel. Loddiswell 227.

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B.C.U. Senior Instructor (INLAND) Training and Assessment Course at Offord on the River Ouse, Huntingdon, Cambs. Staffed by Ian Bourn and Keith Maslen and staged by the Huntingdon Canoe Club....over the weekend of 16/17/18 October, 1981. Send cheque (payable to Hunts. Canoe Club) for £5.00 to me, John J.Ramwell.

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The following is an extract (source unknown) sent to me by Raymond Rowe. I hope that you find it as interesting as I did.

"In 1928 Captain Romer proposed to go alone in a collapsible boat with only an auxiliary sail, and to windward rather than from west to east to cross the Atlantic,

He left Lisbon on the 28th. March sitting up in his 'Deutscher Sport' - seated from the first to the last of the paddle strokes that would mark his wake, his legs festering in the close dampness of the hull. After a few days at sea the kayak, which was supposed to have a certain minimum buoyancy at the price of some added discomfort, was torn by a big wave; the cloth gave and let the sea into the sitting compartment, turning it into a big salt water bath where his prepacked provisions floated about in their supposedly water-tight wrappings. The leak continued and added dangerously to the weight of the provisions, fresh water and sails, some 1,500 pounds in all. He had to bail without being able to move, bending double to scoop a little water from between his legs. In this state he could not hope to get a night's or even an hour's sleep, but he managed somehow to come to terms with the sea; he dozed in the troughs of the waves and when he felt that he was on their crests corrected his course with a touch of the helm, bailed, and then dozed again for a few seconds. That did not stop him from being overturned by one breaking wave, and once again he was swamped, still, he kept his health and after four nights and three days without any real sleep he put into the Canaries. In Germany they were relieved, but nobody thought that he would go on with the project.

On the 2nd. June Romer set out again with three months of sailing ahead of him. As Merrien says in his excellent book on single handed sailing (Les Navigateurs Solitaires, DEMOEL), three months of sitting, always sitting, and unable to move, unable to stretch out or bend his legs, straighten his back or properly fulfil the simplest human need. Three months with the lower half of his body soaked, as bad with the deck cover on as without it, his kayak becoming an unwholesome vapour bath, a hotbed; without the deck cover the rain and the sea came in, but no fresh air. The upper half of his body was baked under the fierce tropical sun which burnt his neck, his arms and even his head, for after the first month he had lost the last of his hats. One danger always haunted him - that sunstroke would drive him mad.

Three months without ever really sleeping or lying down, unable to turn round, unable ever to relax completely, for if his kayak were to broach it would capsize even in a moderate sea. Also very nearly three months without anything hot to eat or drink, for as happened to Harbo and Samuelson and to Gerbault, his paraffin stove gave him trouble and in a kayak that sort of accident could be fatal. For what little cooking he was able to do Romer used to put the stove between his legs, and one day when it had burst into flames he had to fling it overboard to avoid being burnt alive.

Three months of exacting toil, shaken and tossed about by every wave while he tied himself in knots trying to bail out the boat, exasperated by the incessant flapping of the canvass.

They were also months of fear, for he was constantly assailed by sharks, swordfish, porpoises and whales that rubbed themselves against the fragile canvass hull or browsed the weed that covered it. A special device had to be fitted to warn that they were present; it was useless in fact because he could do nothing to defend himself anyway and it only became an added torture to his nerves. To keep his enemies at bay he would beat on an empty tin, or at night flash his torch, but then the flying fish attracted by the light flew straight into his face.

One day a big shark accompanied by three little ones attacked the boat: Romer fired at them without effect. Enraged, the biggest shark swam towards him and diving at the last moment struck the bottom of the kayak with its back, so hard that he felt the boat lift and saw the thin fabric yield under the impact. It seemed in no mood to forego a promising meal and so dived again. Seizing the first thing that came to hand, the jackstaff of his American ensign, he struck the beast with it as it swam past. In the ensuing scuffle the flag unfurled in the sunlight, the shark reared out of the water, dived again and was seen no more. "The American Colours triumph all along the line", one reporter later said with a straight face.

Romer did not go mad, but the salt ate into his skin and his body was covered with painful sores. The trade winds and the sun hardened the crust of salt and his hair was white with it until the tropical rains washed it away; but he could not even get up to take advantage of that and his legs were always steeped in a brine bath. He had said that he would get to the Antilles by the end of August and in fact he reached St. Thomas, one of the most northerly islands of the group, on the 31st. August after eighty-eight days at sea like a 'floating mummy' - the most superhuman ordeal, perhaps

even more terrible than Aln Bombard's similar journey, that any man has ever voluntarily undergone. His face under a three months' beard like Robinson Crusoe's, he staggered ashore but collapsed on the quay. He was taken to a hotel, and slept like a log for forty-eight hours.

When he awoke everybody in the island knew his story. They would have celebrated the occasion but the sores which healed on the upper part of his body got no better on his thighs, which were swollen and inflamed from the salt water, and he had to spend several weeks in hospital. Governor Evans handed him the decoration which had been specially created for Lindbergh, the first pilot to fly the Atlantic alone.

After some delay before the American authorities could get his papers in order, Romer left St. Thomas for New York early in October, which is already dangerously late in the season. Days went by. It is 1,500 miles from St. Thomas to New York and 1,200 to Cape Hatteras, which he would have to pass close in and where he should have been sighted within a month at the latest. By mid November there was still no news. Early in December a severe hurricane swept precisely along his route. If by any chance Romer was still alive this must without doubt have sealed his fate, and in fact he was never seen again.

Thus Romer had failed, or had only partially succeeded in a demonstration that had cost him his life. In 1952 it was a Frenchman who was to attempt to prove what Romer, for all his bravery, had not been able to prove.

Doctor Alain Bombard's purpose was almost the same as Romer's: to show that a shipwrecked mariner could survive in the Atlantic if he had the right sort of boat and above all if he knew how to live off the sea itself. The conception was even wilder than Romer's for he meant to put to sea for three months without any supplies, not even fresh water; he claimed that enough fluid could be pressed from fish to make up for a lack of both water and sugars. He even found two companions to fall in with his idea, but one of them soon changed his mind. He was put off by the mere sight of 'l'Heretique' in which he was to cross the ocean. With a beam of 1.9 metres she was wider than Romer's 'Deutscher Sport', but most of the width was taken up by the two cylindrical floats joined together in a V, and she was shorter than 'Deutscher Sport', less than 5 metres overall. There was no real shelter for the crew and her only sail was a bit of stuff carried on what could hardly be called a mast.

Bombard put to sea on the 25th. May 1952 with only one other companion for the voyage. This may have made 'l'Heretique' a little less uncomfortable but the absence of the Dutchmen left them with only the bare minimum of contact with the rest of the world.

When they left Monaco early that morning the press was well represented, sure or almost sure that they were taking the last ever photographs of the two voluntary castaways. The two hoped to reach Florida in three months. If they succeed it is almost certain that every ship and aircraft flying over the sea will be equipped with a 'Bombard Boat'. For their sustenance the castaways are relying on what fish they can catch and on the plankton they can scoop from the sea surface with a net. The plankton, which is the only diet of whales, is made up of microscopic animals and algae very rich in calories and vitamins. Dr. Bombard, after months of experiments in the laboratory, is convinced that sea water is drinkable if mixed with the juices that can be extracted from fish with an orange squeezer. In fact 'l'Heretique' does carry one small case of concentrated food and a container of fresh water, but these are sealed and they have sworn not to touch them except in dire emergency. Dr. Bombard considers the first leg from Monaco to Gibraltar the most dangerous as the Mediterranean, being a land locked sea, is poorer in fish than the Atlantic.

In fact the first stage did not bring them to Gibraltar but to Minorca in the Balearic Islands, and it took Bombard and Palmer seventeen days to get there. For Palmer that experience was enough and he too gave up, leaving Bombard with nobody to play chess with. He reached the Atlantic a few days later and soon afterwards, when he was thought to be lost somewhere off the coast of Morocco, put quitey into Casablanca. After recuperating there he set off again and reached the Canaries on 3rd, September, four months after he had left Monaco. Except when ashore he had lived off what he could get from the sea, but it was not until 20th. October that he left on the longest stage of the voyage, intending to let himself drift as far as the Antiles; with 'l'Heretique' there could be no question of deliberate navigation.

Bombard grew gradually weaker during the voyage. His weight at the start had been 69 kilos, and he had soon lost 10 kilos and then another 5; as the days went by this well built man was down to only 50 kilos. The thirty foot waves did not worry him so much as did Amelia, the affectionate whale who repeatedly failed to overturn the boat. But what worried him most was the risk of a puncture, for although the

the inflatable had watertight compartments he was always afraid of them getting torn; every shark was a menace and he had only a whistle to keep them away. He found this less effective than good smacks with a paddle and these he applied liberally when there were many sharks about. He even allowed himself the pleasure of photographing them if they were around 30 feet in length.

All the same Bomhard reached Barbados, on the verge of exhaustion, on the 23rd. December, having covered a distance of almost 7,000 kilometres without breaking into his emergency rations. He weighed only 48 kilos and for sixty-five days he had kept alive, as he had said he would, entirely on fish, plankton and fish juices extracted with a contrivance of his own invention. Before he set out the possibility of a castaway surviving at sea without food had always been considered a fantasy. After this astonishing seven months voyage he had proved his point.

On his return Bombard became a well known figure in France. His name henceforth associated with the subject of survival, ensuring the success of the inflatable boat in which he had made the voyage.

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NOTICES

The British Schools Exploring Society. 50th. Anniversary Expedition. 1982

In July and August of 1982, the Society will field its 50th. Anniversary Expedition to the island of Angmagssalik, off King Frederik VI coast on the east of Greenland - the world's largest island - and almost on the Arctic Circle - an area first explored in 1932 by Gino Watkins expedition. The 1982 Anniversary Expedition will combine scientific research with adventurous training over seven weeks for 70 young men and women. It will form the first stage of a two year continuous programme of research and exploration, linked by a small and separately constituted wintering party, and will provide a larger and more complete experience in exploration and outdoor education than any other venture currently open to young men and women in Britain. Part of the Society field work will be developed in co-operation with Copenhagen University within the programme of the International Geophysical Year, and further joint research projects are envisaged for 1983.

The above is taken from a brochure issued by the British Schools Exploring Society which goes on to elaborate on their proposed expedition. I received this brochure accompanied by the following letter.....

Dear Mr. Ramwell,

I noted your name and address in the recent edition of the Journal of Adventure Education. I have enclosed a copy of our brochure which was sent to schools as it is possible that you would like to know about this Society's Golden Jubilee expedition, which will contain a kayaking phase to commemorate the death of Gino Watkins in Eastern Greenland in the year of our foundation. Our Vice President was one of the two young R/F pilots supporting the British Arctic Air Route Expedition, so we have a direct link to Watkins and also to Courtauld, whose ice-cap trek we are also intending to re-enact.

Perhaps we could insert a small item in your Newsletter, which might attract POTENTIAL LEADERS. I would be happy to furnish further details.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,  
Peter F. Steer,  
Executive Director,  
Royal Geographical Society,  
1, Kensington Gore,  
LONDON,  
SW7 2AR.

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FOR SALE

UMNAK sea kayak....£120 o.n.o. It is fully fitted out with hatches, pump and deck lines and is opaque yellow.  
Contact George Langton, 42, Beverley Road, NEW FERRY.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

From Bernd Chilian, Hamburg.

Dear John,

Here is my comment on the letters of Frank Goodman and Derek Hutchinson as well as to John Dowd's book:

### Thoughts to Original Kayaks.

Derek explained that a 'kayak' is a hunter's boat. Frank underlined it by giving the fine example of the young Inuit Eskimo who had never sat in a kayak before but could paddle and come back with a seal behind the boat.

All this shows clearly that the Inuit always use the kayak for short distances, they carry only the hunting equipment, and if they had to stay away from home or if they had to go out in the open sea, then it was only for concrete hunting intentions. Incidentally this can be read in nearly all books on Inuit life.

So the boat was fast and 'tippy'. It is also true that if an Inuit capsized he usually lost his life because he could not roll (and naturally also due to the water temperature, and being unable to swim, etc.). You can read as much literature as you wish but you will not get the confirmation of the two points, viz. where the Kayak type comes from and whether the Inuit were able to roll.

My personal opinion is that some tribes, e.g. the Canadian Inuits who were also caribou hunters and needed very fast boats, could do the rolling, and others like many Greenlanders could not.

The-so-called Eskimo kayak can have only one specific design known to all of us. But a kayak may have other designs; e.g. in the Oslo museum you can see a kayak sewn by Fridtjof Nansen and Ronald Amundsen which has just the Klepper-kayak-design which Derek Hutchinson does not accept as a kayak.

Very sorry, Derek, but the name-plate really does say Kayak, and I personally trust the two explorers decision. By the way, in the book of Fridtjof Nansen you can read that the kayaks had been developed from the Canadian Canoes. All kayaks have a closed deck with the cockpit being closed by the occupant. Inuit have never used spray-decks. This is a modern invention.

Summary: The original kayak was not built for sea canoeing.

It was not built for expeditions.

It was not built for rolling.

We have to differentiate between Eskimo kayaks and the other types of kayaks.

### Thoughts to Modern Kayaks

Modern kayaks appear in many different designs, construction and size. Scientists have discovered that the optimal length for a kayak on tidal water should be from 4.5 metres to 6 metres which is due to the distance between the tidal waves, (The more waves you get under your keel the easier you will travel).

My personal experience is that the optimal size for a standard expedition kayak is 5 metres long and not less than 58 cms. wide. The expedition Eskimo kayak should not be shorter than 5.30 metres and 58 cms wide due to the acute ends.

As to all other arguments pro and con John Dowd, pro and con rudders, I have to say that I see no real arguments but different philosophies:

1. Eskimo kayak
2. Standard kayak
3. With rudder or without.

If I would discuss each of it I would have found as many followers as disagreement. So I will report on my own experiences on all three philosophies and leave it open to everyone to choose his own philosophy and with it his own type of boat and his own way of paddling.

On one expedition (Maelstrom, Lofoten, North Norway) I had used a standard kayak: 5 metres long, 60 cms. wide, acute ends, no compartments, no hatches, no pump, but with a rudder. I stowed provisions for three weeks; 10 litres of water (normal consumption for a week), fishing equipment (rod, lines, pilkers), a bucket containing 5 litres - as it is very dangerous often to climb down to the water level at low tide due to the sea weed), a little boat cart (for all over land transport), radio, camera, films, etc., thermo tent, polar sleeping bag, air mattress, camp stove, fuel container (4 litres), pots, clothes, 10 sea charts, sea pilot, emergency equipment (flares, etc.), repair kit, first aid kit, etc., spare paddles.

Well, this year I tried to get all this in and on to an Iceflow Expedition kayak

(same trial I did with a Nordkapp and a Vyneck). The result was I had to carry two bags on the rear deck, I could stow only 6 litres of fuel, no polar bag, (only a normal down sleeping bag for comfortable sleep up to 5 degrees C.), food for only 10 days, 5 sea charts and no Pilot. So I really wonder how the great sea kayak expeditioners will carry their equipment if each boat has to be an independant unit due to safety reasons (and only things not being of vital necessity may be shared like the boat cart, bucket, etc.).

Incidently, although I am not an over anxious person I would never roll with a kayak carrying on the rear deck important equipment. Thus I would never go out with my boat in unpredictable weather conditions, nor would you, I'm sure! The risk would be of losing your clothes, tent, or even sleeping bag. So why I am not allowed to take a Klepper ~~kayak~~ in these circumstances in which I cannot roll, but being unsinkable, and will carry all my baggage inside. Isn't that the same? What did you say, the Speed?.

O.K., back to the afore mentioned expedition on which we had to cross a 17 mile channel. The wind force was only 3, northeasterly while our course was north west. It took 3 hours and I felt quite fresh. The other two guys arrived half an hour later and were fully fed up. They said they had feared never to reach the land again.

This year I did a similar trip together with the best German sea canoeist at the West Coast of Norway, both of us in an Iceflow.

● had the same weather condition, NE force 3 and NW course over 10 miles. It was not possible to hold this course for more than a minute, then the boat turned up wind and went parallel to the waves. It really took so much power to get the boat on the right angle to the waves. You could lean and turn the boat on the right or left side, nothing would happen.

So I must ask; what is safer, to use the paddling for the forward movement, and only for that (naturally not in rough conditions in which you must stabilize the boat), or to need the power to hold the course, or better try to get near the required course? If your boat is equiped with a rudder you would steer just with a little toe-tip (that is what you think under such conditions as mentioned above). That is what both of us felt, my friend had a lot of experience with boats without rudders. He was for many years the North German Champion in kayak racing. Moreover I would like to point out that since I use a kayak without a rudder I cannot follow up compass courses precisely anymore. This is a great disadvantage and presents a high risk in my estimation.

The stability of the rudder should be mentioned as well. In eight years I only broke it twice, and it was my fault both occasions because I was too lazy to renew them as necessary. I could see before I started that the rudder blade was rotten.

● ll, I said, it was my fault. I had more leakages in my boat during that time. And on each trip since half a year problems with my hatches and its covers. So, if you ask me, I will say: Better without hatches but never without rudder. Please let me stress that our rudder constructions in Germany are much stronger than yours and really safer (I didn't say that because I'm a German, I buy and use equipment from all over the world).

Thus the sea canoeist without rudder has to follow the boat's course while the man with the rudder equipment follows up his compass course and will thus paddle the shortest distance. In the end he will have the same speed like the Eskimo kayaks or, and that is what I know and regret to say, be much faster, under certain conditions.

If you compare your Eskimo sea kayak with a standard sea kayak on the sea you will easily discover that the Eskimo kayak will plunge into the waves while the standard kayak will cut the waves and go over them. Plunging means starting again, and to start paddling means more energy. Furthermore you will get wetter in an Eskimo kayak; although both boats have the same height above the water (I have to mention this because with a standard sea kayak I do not mean the standard kayaks with too much bouyancy). May I also say that our valuable hatches work like a shower if the waves break directly over the bow.

Well, the hatches - I am really not sure whether they really are an advantage. With my standard kayak I always used an aluminium suit case in which all food for breakfast and lunch was stowed, and now I have to run ten times to the boat to get out the food, or I have to pack every morning two plastic bags with food and coffee, etc., for breakfast. And honestly, do you store at home trousers, cheese, underwear, bread, sausages.....all mixed up together, and maybe the petrol container above it all!! It is perculiar for me, and very often I think of the good times and my aluminium suitcase.....

Yeah, the compartments.....this year when we reached the land we tried to carry my

boat on to the rocks. It was so damned heavy that we could hardly carry it, but finally we succeeded. Then I opened up the rear hatch, and what did I see?, water..no baggage at first glance, however, there was water. I had got a leak. The result was that I could bury my 80Kstg radio and half of my food because I had stowed my gear water-proofed. Previously in my standard kayak I had felt a leakage immediately because the water would have run into my shoes. So, what is better? Compartments with every risk of possible leakages and 8 containers for breakfast in the morning and a pell-mell stowed compartment? I have not yet made up my mind. But if I had to stow water-proof again, which will mean to minimize space of compartment, then I would prefer personally a standard kayak.

As to the pump, I have to communicate that I have got many problems with it. I once nearly drowned when in a very high tide race the hose disconnected from the pump outlet and the water came in. Since that time I glued the tape over the pump outlet and will only open it in the case of need. In view of the foot pump I must say that in a fully laden kayak with equipment under my knees I always had problems to go inside or even worse to go outside without effecting (damaging) the hose and the metal pump-inlet. Moreover I found out that the hand pump on the rear deck is very dangerous to use. For this reason I installed my hand pump aside, in front of me. I situated myself in the kayak on land and simulated paddling and I found by that way a pump position which did not interfere (no contacts to the knees, no disturbance to paddling, even not in exhausted movements of paddling) and is easy to use. The hose was installed that way that I still can stow the same gear I had without the pump.

Summary and personal conclusions.

1. The best sea kayak and best suitable for expeditions is a standard sea kayak (i.e. Lettman - Atlantik I; I mentioned it because it is known in England too. In Germany there are a lot of competitors, and I want the emphasis on the measurements of this type, another suitable boat is the Klepper kayak, even equipped with a sail.)
2. The kayak always should have a stable rudder (important for safety is to save power and to be able to follow up your compass course precisely).
3. The Eskimo kayak is a challenge for every sea canoeist with certain disadvantages (speed, getting wet, space) in view of the standard sea kayak.

Note: I did not say anything to the speed being indicated by Frank and Derek. Although that what counts for me is to reach my destination no matter how long it takes me. I am pretty sure that nobody on a real expedition without any human help, outside in the wilderness will drive a Porsche, but will be glad to come through with an old mule...or are your boats built to compete in races?. Then, hopefully no-one will do the next circumnavigation of England in a racing kayak (what is possible under certain weather conditions). Instead of being proud of the speed, you should be proud of the behaviour of the boats in rough water conditions. The same stands also for the Klepper kayak which once in the beginning saved my life when I was out at night at 7 to 8 wind force and I managed to reach a small island in safety.

Kind regards.  
Bernd Chilian.

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CORRESPONDENCE

From Verney Cresswell, Republic Seychelles.

Dear John,

I have been away from the main island for some time so I have only just read your letter and A.S.K.C news.

Thank you very much for including my request in the letters section. I am praying that maybe some kind individual or club will help in setting up sea canoeing in Seychelles.

Your programme seems as full as ever. I hope the weather was reasonable for the trip to Mull. I do miss that part of the world with its stark beauty, even though it is so different to the lush tropical vegetation of these islands.

Your summer expedition to Alaska sounds very interesting indeed. I know it will be no picnic, Maybe I will read about it in the future editions of the Newsletter.

I did a thirty mile trip recently in flat calm seas with no wind and a merciless sun down. It took about seven hours and two litres of water with the dehydration powder mixed in. I did not encounter any problems on the trip but I always keep my eyes on the sea about me in case of tell-tale fins. A few dolphins came close, but then went away.

Weather still perfect here, day temperature 85 degrees F.; night 72 degrees F.

All the best,  
Verney Cresswell.

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From Derek Hairon, Exmouth. (Member of the Jersey Canoe Club)

Dear John,

Hope things are OK. Enclosed is an article I put together about a trip out to the Bishops and Clerks down in Pembrokeshire where I've been working for the summer. Done a few nice trips since we last met, Shomer, Shotholm, Caldy Island, and over the last week the N. Cornwall coast from Hartland Point to Lands End. Had hoped to do the Scilly Isles and Lundy but the weather not too good - bad visibility and no camping on Lundy.

On the subject of the Advanced..... I got mine in South Wales. It all went fairly straight forward, though I think that one or two people were very lucky in that the weather was good. It would have been interesting to see them react had they been off Start Point.

As a passing note, one thing I have noticed in my paddles around is the general lack of experience of many sea canoeists in respect of trips away from land. It is something which I was rather surprised about and is strange given that in the absense of islands and reefs to paddle to - there are lots of buoys just waiting to be captured and of course they have the added advantage of being excellent navigation tests.

On a different tack, my last article provoked a letter expressing surprise at our lack of seal encounters in Ireland and around the coast. This is easily answered :- 1. seals are very rare in the Channel Isles. 2. In Ireland we were doing mainly point to point runs and as a result we paddled along a very limited amount of coastline.

Finally, do you have any members in the Exeter/Devon region?

Regards,  
Derek Hairon.

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From Ed van Rossum, Holland.

Dear John,

.....

2. Many local councils forbid boating from the beach or require a licence, presumably for the safety of bathers. So trips along the North Sea coast would be fairly difficult or expensive (fines!) The estuaries in the north and south (Waddenzes) are still free to my knowledge, but those north of East Schelde are dammed, so not tidal. A uniform regulation for the sea coast appears to be considered, and we try to influence it through the Union (NKCB)

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Sincerely,  
Ed van Rossum..

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CORRESPONDENCE

From Alan Bye, Co. Durham

Dear John,

Thanks for the latest issue of the Newsletter. The item on Beaufort wind speeds was most interesting, and reminded me of several odd tricks that wind can play. Here follows three such episodes.

1. Not long ago you published an item from me about a trip off the Great Orme, where I found a 'nodal lane' of quiet but terrifying water. I didn't mention that on that occasion, I had just made up my mind to continue forwards along the wildly tilting lane of level water when the most shattering noise made itself heard above the tumult of the crashing waves and the wind shrieking through the helmet slots. That continuous drone of the wind in the helmet can be very tiring. It sounded like jet planes at fifty feet coming suddenly from behind the hill where my house lies. (They do this often; it always makes me jump.)  
"Jesus Christ!" I said, and I don't use blasphemy for effect, it is what one tends to say when such an awful noise is heard suddenly. Its like a hearing wrecking itself in a fast turning machine, like one imagines sky demons must do when descending to rip and rend. Remember I was under some mental stress already. The force six rising eight wind was hitting the face of the Orme and sending off spinning whorls or air, 'williwaws' as Slocum called them, vortices of noises and violence, ripping down onto the sea surface and cutting circular patches such as a low hovering helicopter would do. These sudden howling blasts were repeated many times in the four or five minutes I spent in that unusual place.
2. Not far away and five years later, on the Conway Estuary, opposite Deganwy, I was leading a group of coaching people who attended a coaching meeting at Betws y Coed, (in February 1971 it was I think.) The wind was very strong, force eight without doubt, but we decided to go down the right side of the estuary on the lee side of centre and ride the short choppy seas despite the strength of the wind. Point being that any capsizes would finish within a minute or two washed up on Deganwy shore. I suppose force six would be about right at that stage. We then crossed to the opposite shore and tried to make progress back up the estuary, being hard on the windward shore or weather side. This is an area of mud and sand flats, gently undulating, and open to the howling force nine which by now had developed from the north west. Being compelled to abandon any attempt at normal progress, we sat on the sand and talked, trying to salvage some useful lesson from the hurtling sand and grit laden air. So we decided to try out our whistles on our B.S.3595 lifejackets. One was detailed off to walk upwind, stoop and shamle would be a better description. If the wind was blowing what it was at 2 metres high here, dear knows what it was doing at 10 metres above our patch of mud and sand. The rest of us huddled in a clump with whistles in our mouths. The walker was to raise his hand each time he heard our whistles, and to walk directly up wind. Amongst our five whistlers, we arranged to blow on command. We blew a good dozen times, but our patient responded only twice, and by the time he had gone fifteen feet directly upwind from us, the length of the longest kayak there, he was no longer able to hear us. Memo: if searching for a patient in windy conditions, please do it downwind of the estimated position.
3. On that occasion we re-launched at the site of the 'whistle stop' and among our number was a lightly built wiry white water type. He weighed about  $9\frac{1}{2}$  stone, or 135 lbs. approx. His kayak was a lightweight slalom kayak, of the type intermediate between the old high volume and low volume type. He had just got in, and was starting to paddle off with his large area 'Manchester' blades, feathered of course, when the wind blew even more strongly, and getting under his upwind, uplifted blade hoisted him violently upwards and over. I saw every moment. He lurched upwards about a foot and turned over and landed (or watered) back on his downwind shoulder in the shallow water. At one time there must have been about a foot of clear air under him. He released his grasp on his paddle as he flipped up and over. He had to fight to regain control of his kayak which was trying to flail about, all the time balancing on his underwater hand which still grasped the paddle shaft.  
Memo: I always use a pair of eskimo replica blades when at sea, for choice now. Unfeathered based on the drawing that Geoff Blackford produced in 'Canoeing' around 1967. Mine were made by Collars of Oxford, I still have them and they arouse disbelief in most who see them, uncertainty in those who try them, and complete confidence in he who owns them.

ALAN BYDE.

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