

# Advanced Sea Kayak Club

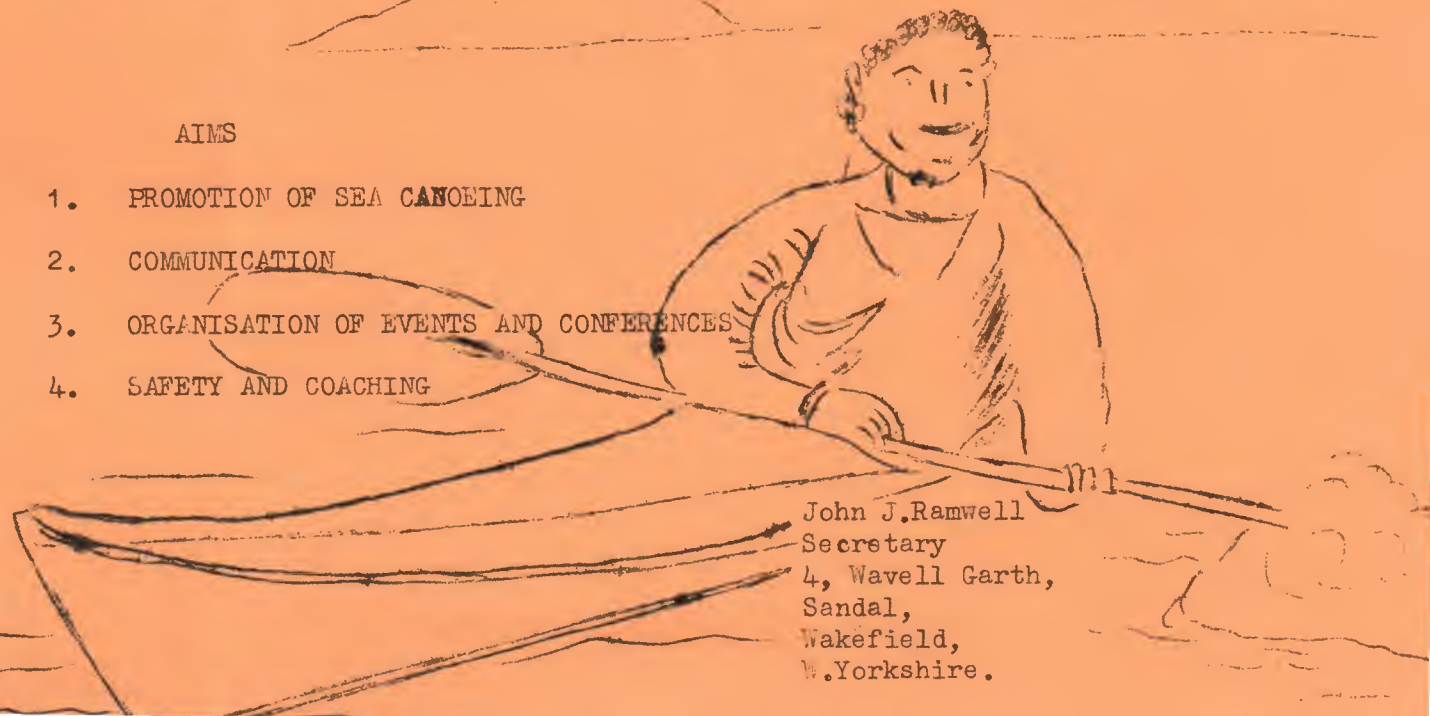
AN INTERNATIONAL SEA CANOEING CLUB OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED  
IN THIS ASPECT OF CANOEING



## NEWSLETTER

### AIMS

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



John J. Ramwell  
Secretary  
4, Wavell Garth,  
Sandal,  
Wakefield,  
W. Yorkshire.

FROM ME (EDITORIAL)

We start the year with one of the largest membership lists I have ever yet published. There has been an 80% renewal and I am continually taking on new members.

We had the most successful years ever at the Crystal Palace Canoe Exhibition, taking on more new members and renewals on each day than I normally do over the whole weekend.

News of the ASKC has reached America. Every day I receive applications to join from the States. Though a few have been sea canoeing for quite some time there are many Americans who are discovering the freedom and enjoyment of sea canoeing for the first time, and greedy for information, they, like so many of you out there, are finding the ASKC and this Newsletter of some use. As I've said so many times before, this 'letter can only be as good as the contributions I receive from yourselves...so keep them coming.

I hope you make good use of the membership list I have included. I only send out one list and it always goes out at this time of the year, - so unfortunately late joiners miss the advantage of having their names included. Nevertheless the list will allow you the opportunity to contact other members who either live close to you or live in an area you intend to visit.

This Newsletter is a bumper issue, containing much of interest (well! in my opinion!) I've taken articles from many different sources, published a few letters and included a few items exclusive to the ASKC. If you recognise any of the items included in this 'letter as having been 'poached' from other publications....I make no apologies... it'll do you good to read them twice!

By now you will have no doubt heard how successful the Sea Canoeing Symposium was last December at Calshot. If you want your copy of the Symposium Report it will cost you 75 Pence inc. postage.

It has been suggested that I have some ASKC Christmas cards printed for this coming Christmas; accordingly I now invite designs. I would be very grateful. I suggest that they want to be humorous, seasonal and have a sea canoeing theme. Come on and let's see how imaginative you can be. The owner of the design selected will receive free 1983 ASKC membership and a supply of cards for his own use.

Take Care. Untill the next Newsletter.....Good Paddling...and don't forget that report of your exped. for this Newsletter.

J.J.R.

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A.S.K.C. SHOP.

- ASKC Ties @ £2.50 each inc. p.& p.
- ASKC Stickers 4 30 pence each inc. p.& p.
- ASKC Letter headed paper @ 5p per sheet (orders in multiples of 10 please)
- 3rd. National Sea Canoeing Symposium Report @ 75 pence each inc. p.& p.
- 4th. National Sea Canoeing Symposium Report @ 75 pence each 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 in all sizes @ £11.00 : available only from Sharon Rowe at Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig, N.Wales.

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EVENT Sponsored paddle in aid of "Cancer and Leukeamia in Children" is scheduled for 13th. June, 1982. The paddle is from Plymouth to the Eddystone Lighthouse and back. If you fancy this trip out into the English Channel and at the same time doing good by being there...then contact Jeff. Bladon at Police House, Clovelly, Devon, EX39 5RE. Jeff is looking for 100 sea canoeists for this undertaking. I'll see you there.

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'Poached' from the 'Journal of Adventure Education'.

### MOTHERSHIP EARTH.

John sped ahead, paddling like fury, blades flashing and splashing in the sun until he flagged, leaned back, and let the current take his canoe quietly past the family of swans.

He leaned right back until he was almost lying on the back deck of his canoe. He looked up at the sky and the trees swimming past him, the buzzard wheeling high overhead.

I came alongside. "John?" "S'great!" he said with a big sunny grin.

Later, we all landed on a grassy bank and shared our picnic, played a game of 'Bulldof' between the thistles and copwpat, and dropped down beside the river. We watched the hover flies dancing over the steaming canoes and lifejackets, and flicked twigs into the winding Wye.

"I wonder why it's called the Wye?" (Paul)

"Yea; Why the Wye?" (John)

"Why not!" (Paul)

" 'Ere, Mr. 'Art, why does it all go away?"

This was a serious question. John really didn't know. He was eleven years old and had a high I.Q., but he really didn't know. I hid my surprise.

"Because it's flowing downhill, John".

"Well, where's it all going then?"

"Well eventually to the sea."

"Oh!"

It was not until a week later, when we had returned from our Welsh Adventure Journey and told stories a dozen times over, that I realised just how it came to be that a bright eleven year old boy could live so long and yet not really understand a river. John was talking about his home in Tottenham. He lived in a 'High Rise' and didn't go out much. On his way to school, every day, he crossed the canal bridge and dropped bits of paper in, but they did not move!

Canals don't flow!

Canals don't go anywhere. John's story was not unusual - to some degree all of the children were remote from the natural world. They were without experience, without understanding - there's no room for nature in the city.

They enjoyed being in the country, hiding in the woods, making camps with broken branches and dustbin liners, lighting fires, throwing stones at bottles and cans, carving their names in the bark of trees.

But they didn't understand....

"Careful, don't break that tree". "Why not?"

Don't leave rubbish in the woods." "Why not?"

"The rubbish kills small animals." "Like mice? Who needs mice?"

When I was a child I too lived in the City, but every weekend I used to cycle with my friends to Epping. I lived in the city, but I had a forest inside my head. Our children had no forest inside their heads.

So that's where it all started....with a realisation of the children's need followed by assessment of the kinds of attitudes we had to build for them. They needed to understand that:

We need the natural world.

The natural world is exciting, fascinating, beautiful....

The natural world is complex.

All natural things are interrelated.

If we change one thing, it all changes.

The world is small and finite.

Nature can easily be destroyed.

We are in control.

It is up to you and me to look after it.

They needed to understand the whole system - how everything relates.

Then they would know the answers to their questions; "Why not?" and "Who needs mice?"

We approached the task in dozens of ways but one game played with the older juniors seemed to bring it all together:

Imagine a space ship, travelling at high speed for a thousand years through the vastness and emptiness of space, alone without contact.

Design it, what would you need? How would you.....?It can be as big as you like. You can start the journey with anything you like on board, but remember - you can't get more supplies anywhere, anytime! You will have just what you take with you.

They played in pairs and reported back to the group. Questions came from other children, "What about dead people?" "What about sewage?" ....Can't afford to throw it away!" Back to design....."Can we take a forest?" "How can we recycle water?" "We'd better take some of every type of animals and plant".

Gradually they were inventing a closed ecosystem of increasing complexity. We need plants to give oxygen, water to grow plants - oxygen cycle, water cycle, weather cycle, recycling systems, conservation of raw materials, skilled people to help keep us healthy and safe, an education system so that the next generation knows how to control the spaceship, a non-polluting transport system to get around, shelters, food cycles, decay and growth .... it was several days before the children realised:

"HEY! WE'VE INVENTED THE EARTH!!"

It came like a revelation! They had had a glimpse of the whole system, of where everything fitted into place, of the interdependence, the smallness and delicacy of our little world. They understood that they were in control and could destroy the whole thing very quickly by upsetting the balances.

We called the invention: MOTHERSHIP EARTH.

And then it took off! Attitudes were changing.

The whole school became involved in different aspects of the project which seemed to colour every dimension of school life. The children now have an almost spiritual reverence for the woods and the fields and the shrubs and the pond. They are highly critical of anyone who drops litter in the woods or on the field. They escorted a lonely hedgehog down half of the field and returned him safely to the woods. They rescued an injured bat. They would be disgusted at anyone who killed a spider, and they lecture their parents on recycling rubbish and pouring whale oil into car engines.

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It must be true that, without exception, sea canoeists are acutely concerned for our environment and for this reason I make no apologies for including this article in our Newsletter. Ed.



The last weekend of January, 1982 found me engaged in my usual winter occupation of speculating about the type of outdoor activity the weather might allow. I wanted to have a good tramp in the Lakeland Fells but on Saturday the cloud base was so low that even the birds were grounded and visibility so poor that even the sighted bats were on sonar. A walk round Glasson Dock and district seemed to offer the best chance of interest combined with exercise.

On Sunday morning, with optimism unquenched, I got out of bed fairly early only to be faced with similar conditions. Whatever the weather was doing on the Fylde coast I knew it would be doing it even more in the Lake District so Fell walking was out. Even the thought of a paddle on one of the Lakes raised few feelings of enthusiasm in the prevailing conditions.

Towards lunch time, just as it seemed gloom was universal, the sky began to lighten. A check outside disclosed a mild feeling in the air and a lightish breeze from the west. The time of high water I knew was 3.15 pm A paddle was on. Clothing, safety equipment and other necessities were in their usual state of readiness. Together with lunch, hot drink and spare food. On the van went the Huntsman and I was away to the beach at Starr Gate. There, on the open coast, the sea was moderate, but even so, sufficient to keep one rather damp. Fine for summer but not really what I wanted in January. Without wasting time on indecision I made a rapid transfer to Lytham. Here on the Estuary there was only a gentle swell and the sun was beginning to come out.

A feature at Lytham which is most attractive to the comfort loving canoeist is the Fishermans Jetty. This wooden erection goes out into the Estuary on a gentle slope, the decking only a foot or two above the mud. The lower end begins to cover a little after high tide. To launch a canoe all you have to do is walk down the jetty until you reach the water, put the boat down and get in with the boat resting on the boards in a couple of inches of water. A gentle shove with the palms of the hands ensures an elegant departure. No dirty feet, no fuss, and no embarrassing entry problems in front of the gallery.

On the water all was peace and solitude. The only sailors I could see were displayed in armchairs in the front window of the Cruising Club. Although the tide was flooding I decided to paddle west against the current. Keeping in the slacker water close to the shore the Huntsman made good progress and soon we were at Granny's Bay entertaining the large numbers of people who had flocked there in their cars to view the coastal scene. At this spot on any reasonable day, and especially at weekends, all parking spaces facing the sea are filled but only a small proportion of the people ever get out of their vehicles.

Continuing along the sea wall around Fairhaven Lake a wide berth was necessary to avoid the lines of sea anglers fishing off the top. One line was an incredible distance out and I can only think he had used the tide to drift it there. Approaching St. Annes I eyed the crowds of Dunlins, Oyster Catchers, Gulls, etc., that frequent the sand banks on this coast.

It was now time to turn back so as to arrive at Lytham before the ebb tide started. Now I kept nearer to the deep water channel and although the tide was slowing down we were back at the Lifeboat House and the jetty in quick time. It was just High Water and I could spend another hour and a quarter and still get back comfortably before my luxury landing spot dried out. I decided to follow the creek up to the old Lytham Dock. The waterway, broad at high tide, ran between sand banks newly colonised with coarse grasses and rapidly turning into marsh. The Gulls I could hear calling were perched not on high cliffs but on the roof of the Land Registry Office past which I was gliding. Lytham Windmill had already gone out of sight astern.

In a mile or so I was at the old dock creek. This has now been tidied up and turned into a marina for cruising yachts with slipway and hard. There are now many fine boats to be admired on the hard at this season, but some wintering in the water alongside stages.



I had not progressed far along the impressive line before I was cheerily hailed by a mariner who was evidently spending his Sunday attending to his boat, a modern Ocean Cruiser. There were no uneasy silences during the ensuing chat. It was about boats. The fact that his boat displaced several tons and had cost tens of thousands of pounds whereas mine could be lifted with one hand and had cost only hundreds was not allowed to influence the chat. The tone was man to man, skipper to skipper. In answer to his queries I explained that my boat was designed to run straight in a seaway but would be of little use on a river where rock dodging is the order of the day. It appeared his boat too had a long keel and did not go about so easily as the craft moored next to her which had a shorter keel. So, finding common ground, a pleasant quarter of an hour was passed ending with an offer of a lift if we ever met at sea. I might take him up on that!

After a careful calculation of time and tide I decided I had just time to go up the creek which is the outfall of the Liggard Brook. The waterway again is lined with boats of all sorts. Having reached the tidal gates and turned around I received the rather unwelcome attention of a noisy Boxer dog. He followed me along the bank barking and it didn't take him long to work out that if he wanted to catch me he would have to get ahead and swim out on an interception course. Several times he positioned himself ahead barking menacingly but on each occasion his fear of the cold water got the better of his desire to sink his teeth into me. Finally, he could see that if he didn't take his chance I would be on broader waters and beyond his reach. He plunged. Only too obviously he recognised his dreadful mistake within seconds of entering the water and without swimming a stroke in my direction made a rapid exit and departure from the scene to the accompaniment of my almost uncontrollable laughter which, incidentally, nearly caused me to capsize.

Passing the staging where the fast and sleek Pilot Boats used to tie up I felt regret at their departure now Preston Dock is closed.

All afternoon I had seen nobody on the water except on boats tied up in the creeks. Now, approaching me, were two professional fishermen motoring up the creek. It was obvious that my presence was providing interest on what, to them, may have been a rather ordinary day. Smiling broadly they both waved vigorously as they passed. They seemed to be amused about something. Was it my red woolly hat pulled down over the ears or was it the unusual idea of something like an Eskimo coming down their creek as they came in from the sea?

Back at the jetty the ebb tide was flowing across at right angles to the length. In these conditions the technique for getting back on board is rather like landing an aircraft in a cross wind. You make a curving approach from down tide and line up with the length of the jetty. Tidal drift is then corrected by proceeding somewhat crabwise. Nearly at the last second when you are about to touch down you straighten her up. If all goes well you will be slap in the middle of the deck and if you want to sit quiet for a few moments admiring the scenery while the tide drops you won't even get your feet wet.

And that was it. Maybe not quite like Crinan to the Dorus Mor or a paddle up the Sound of Kerrera but not bad for a winter afternoon within a mile or two of home.

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CORRESPONDENCE

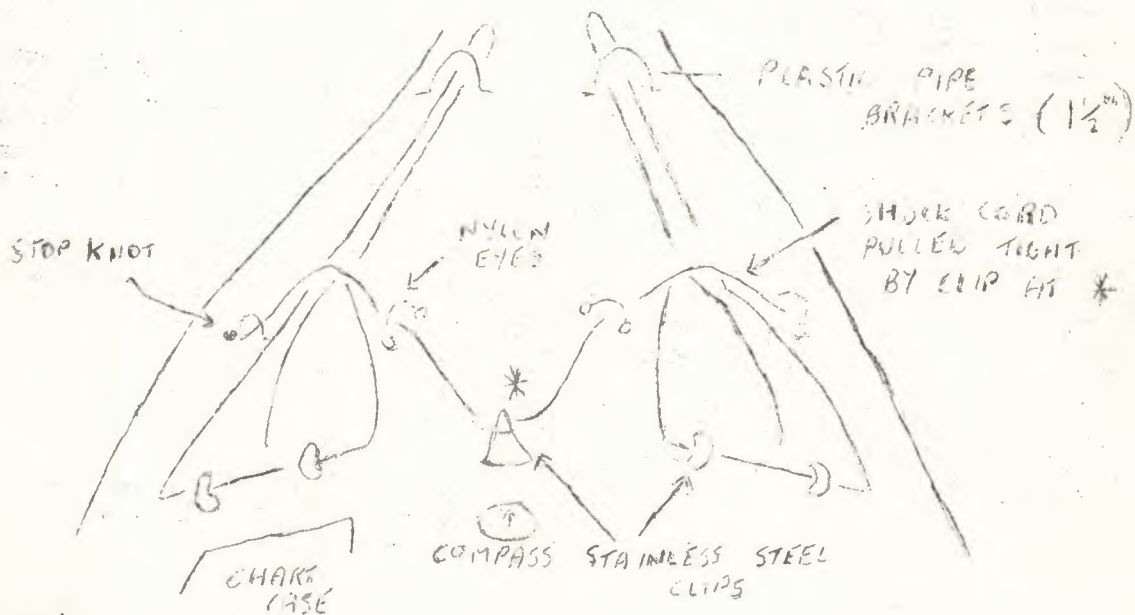
From Dave Mitchell, Reading, Berkshire.

Dear John,

I note with interest Peter Carter's description of spare paddle stowage, although I am not too sure about the need for the 'T' grip- better rolling technique with the outward hand controlling the half blade by splaying the fingers over the back of it works well. I would also guess that the need for spare paddles is most often to clip them together and then give them to someone else (who may well have their's lashed inextricably under a mass of luggage!)

I have done the half paddle roll as a trick (and to satisfy certain examiners!!) but I wonder how many have done it in realyanger? Even so it is nice to know the paddles are there ready - so how to fix them. I carry mine on the front deck where the blades sit flat above my shins. The shafts fit into plastic pipe brackets (they must be rigid for these forward fittings cannot be reached). Stainless steel clips grip the tips of the paddles and they are held tight by the quick release shock cord as shown. To release a blade I unclip the shock cord from the central hook, push the blade slightly away and then pull it out towards me through the now loose cord. This arrangement has suited me well for five years but I must admit that the front deck of my ply kayak was partly designed around the ancient spoon bladed racing Kleppers that repose on it!

Here is a cockpit view with the arrangement drawn out of scale for clarity.



To work properly the shock cord must pass over the blades where they widen to about 3 inches and not over the shaft. This keeps them firmly back against the steel clips. The central release clip must be placed about 10 inches aft of the nylon eyes. The eyes are within reach of the cockpit so that the cord can be lifted to put the blade back. When fixed the split end of the shaft goes about 4 inches forward of the pipe brackets. The brackets are light but have not broken yet, although keen helpers need to be discouraged from using the paddles to lift the canoe!

Lastly, why don't I not use the rear deck? Because it carries thermos, paraflores, repair and emergency kit, lunch, first aid, towline and cleat and any other gubbins I happen to want en route like camera, crash hat, tea and supper! Also reaching forward is a logical place to start and roll? I wonder

if I shall ever need to do it?

To those asking the inevitable question - No, I do not skin my knuckles on the steel clips.

Yours sincerely, Good Paddling.

Dave Mitchell.

P.S. Super Newsletter! Keep up the good work and my full support for Liz Savage from a fellow soloist. I have discovered the most dangerous aspect of solo sea work by the way - driving to the coast to do it!

Safety code for soloists - 'Less than three is only me; but I know my limitations!'

Thought: 'Coaching is going solo - with the added handicap of looking after other people as well!!'

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Poached from the Ass. of North Atlantic Kayakers Newsletter No.1, 1981.

#### TIPS AND TECHNIQUES.

For those of you who have been enjoying the big swell and strong winds brought on by about 2 weeks of low pressure systems moving through our region in Mid-November, you might have longed for a rudder after a long one-armed paddling stint with the wind on your beam. Any boat will have its stern acted upon by the beam wind and the bow will be forced upwind. This occurs for all boats to a greater or lesser degree, even the long, thin, straight-tracking West Greenland designs if they don't have the modified hull with keel. The tendency is to immediately think about adding a removable skeg or advising new paddlers to buy a ruddered boat. I'm a member of the rudderless school (you can make of this what you will!) and have tried to work on paddling techniques as a better solution. What has developed is the "one-knee hang". Because of the curve of the hull's waterline, a boat that is tilted to port or starboard will carve a slightly curved track through the water in a direction opposite to the tilt direction. Flatwater racers do this to help their ruddered kayaks around the bouy for the return run and those boats are designed to run very straight. The "one-knee hang" derives from my departure from the usual bracing posture of both knees against the deck. By bracing only one knee, say the left, and straightening somewhat the right leg, the boat lists slightly to starboard and tends to curve to the left as I paddle straight ahead with a strong wind blowing on my starboard beam. This also allows both me and the boat to lean slightly into the wind, presenting the right positional attitude to the seas which are hitting me abeam. (Basic ocean paddling: lean into the winds/waves). I can further aid this beam crossing by extending my paddle to starboard to give me more leverage on that side. The result of all this is a comfortable straight track and proper balance for what otherwise can be a real pain in the shoulder.

So, the next time you're out and the one armed paddling gets you, try a one-knee hang. I recently did this for a 14 mile trip between Damariscotta River and John's Bay on a day with 35 knot winds gusting to 40, and proved myself the value of innovative paddling skills.

Good paddling to you.

L.Kenneth Fink, Jr., Walpole, Maine, U.S.A.

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#### WANTED

ANUS ACUTA SEA KAYAK. Contact David Wolfe, c/o Brockwood Park School,  
Bramdean, Hants, SO24 0LQ  
(Phone Bramdean (096 279) 228)

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CORRESPONDENCE.

From Winston Shaw, Sea Venture Kayak Tours, Bar Harbor, Maine, U.S.A.

Dear Mr, Ramwell,

Having recently learned of the existance of your organization, I am writing to apply for membership. While I obviously won't be able to attend meetings, I understand that you publish an excellent newsletter and would very much enjoy receiving it as well as establishing contact with your group through the mails.

My own love of the sea goes back some 25 years during which time I progressed from rowing prams and various sailing craft to sea kayaks 7 years ago. Since first experiencing the joys of self propelled travel in my first kayak (the Bummler model put out by Klepper) I've been actively exploring various sections of the north-eastern United States coastline. Two years back I founded a small company - Sea/Venture Kayak Tours - here on Mt. Desert Island in hopes of spreading the gospel so to speak. Though I'm not getting rich as a paddling instructor and tour guide, I do enjoy the work a great deal and bit by bit am aquainting others with the pleasures of sea kayaking.

Maine in general and Mt. Desert Island in particular offers some rather spectacular touring ground for the ocean paddler to explore. The State of Maine alone consists of roughly 2,600 miles of rugged coastline. Numerous beautiful bays and estuaries pierce the magnificent headlands, the coastal waters are liberally dotted with in excess of 2,000 pristine islands....many of which are open to camping and exploration on foot. The entire area is also wonderfully rich in avian, animal and sea life and one could well spend one's entire life without exhausting touring possibilities. Sea and Tidal conditions can be on the rough side but I suspect that they are in general somewhat less challenging than conditions off the coast of Britain.

While growing rapidly, sea kayaking here in eastern North America is far less developed than I understand is the case in England. Boats and equipment available to the white water paddler far exceed that available to the American ocean paddler in both quality and quantity. Several enterprising fellows have begun importing gear from the U.K. and having purchased a kayak manufactured by Frank Goodman of Valley Canoe I've been quite pleased with the quality of craftsmanship and design. Subsequently I'm most interested in learning of other ocean touring gear available from the U.K.

I'm even more interested in learning about the techniques performed and perfected by your countrymen during the many ambitious and successful sea expeditions launched from your shores. Having a nodding acquaintainship with several of these voyages I hunger for more details.

If at all possible I would greatly appreciate your advising me of the availability of the literature listed below:

1. Jersey Canoe Club circumnavigation of Ireland - by Franco Ferrero and Derek Hairon.
2. The British Pacific-Alaskan Expedition - by Colin Mortlock/Barry Smith.
3. Elephant Island: An Antartic Expedition - by Chris Furse.
4. Report of the 1977 North Wales Kayak Expedition to N.W.Greenland.
5. Circumnavigation of Ireland Kayak Expedition by Mark Harrison.
6. Report of the Sea Touring Symposium, Newman College/Calshot.

For my part I would be most willing to provide any information of interest to you or other members pertaining to my general area. Additionally, should any of your members be planning a visit to the U.S.A. I would enjoy corresponding with them as well as joining them for a paddle should they wind up in my area.

Look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convienience - till then, good paddling.

Sincerely,  
Winston Shaw.

Winston Shaw.



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'Oh Lord, the sea is so big and my boat is so small.'

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'We pray thee O Lord, not that wrecks should happen, but if that any wteck should happen, Thou will guide them to the Scilly Isles for the benefit of the inhabitants.'

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SHOULD LONE CANOEISTS BE BANNED?

Do solo canoeists cause undue SAR problems?

The following quotes are taken from an article with this same heading appearing in a recent edition of 'Coastguard'

"The hard choice which has to be made is whether one should listen to the understandably emotional requests to look for one person, and thereby risk a weakened effort for a really serious situation which might occur at any time for a larger ship or aircraft in distress."

"There has been an unfortunate impression created recently in the press that these (Emergency Locator Beacons) are almost as good as carrying a radio capable of transmitting on the official marine distress frequencies. Unfortunately this is highly misleading. Trans-Atlantic aircraft do not cross the Atlantic at regular intervals. There are two distinct 'waves' when there is a rush of traffic and at the rest of the time traffic is spasmodic. Another factor is that aircraft pilots are not required to listen on the air distress frequencies, Unlike marine distress frequencies, they are solely for distress, and are activated when a particular aircraft is in distress. The ELT Beacons carried for use in liferrafts or lifejackets are solely for the purpose of fixing a position accurately during an air search. This pre-disposes that the initial datum position was established by some other means. It would be fair to say that anyone transmitting on an ELT Beacon in mid ocean would be very unlikely to be heard by anyone except an aircraft who happened to be in the right spot at the right time and had the distress frequency on at the time. To those that say that aircraft should listen, we would say, aircraft are properly more concerned with their own safety with maybe hundreds of passengers on board. Their radios are being used in that function rather than listening for people who cross the Atlantic or attempt to do single handed crossings."

"The second conclusion which may be drawn is that solo activity at sea has already got out of hand in terms of the undue SAR effort which has to be deployed when something goes wrong. The account in the October edition of the COastguard of rescues during the single handed Observers Trans-Atlantic Race, illustrates the point.

One interesting fact appears to have escaped most peoples notice. It is that all these single handed voyages start either from European Countries, - mostly UK - and from Canada. None start from the United States. This is because the United States Coast Guard has the statutory authority to declare and intended activity at sea 'a manifestly unsafe voyage'. This means that the due processes of law enforcement would be applied to any individual who diregarded the polite warning which is usually given.

It is understood that the main basis for taking this action is that any person declaring his/her intention of crossing the Atlantic Ocean single handed would clearly be in contravention of Rule 5 of the 1972 International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea. In case there is any doubt, Rule 5 reads:

'Lookout'. Every vessel shall AT ALL times maintain a proper lookout bysight and hearingas well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the risk of collision'. It should be noted that the wording of this rule is unequivocal. There is no mention of any exceptions such as 'in shipping lanes' and the assumption must therefore be made that sometimes the single hander must be asleep and therefore not keeping a 'proper lookout'. Indeed many of them have openly admitted in public that they do not think that Rule 5 applies to them. It does.



If following the excellent example of the United States is not possible, perhaps a quicker method would be to require individuals or sponsors to cover the cost of search and rescue operations by giving a large indemnity. The matters raised are not new. Many attempts have been made to denigrate and criticise those who dare to raise them. The comments made are serious and are in the well known Coastguard category of 'prevention rather than cure' ".

SHOULD WE PREVENT SOLO CANOEING IN PEOPLE'S OWN INTERESTS, OR IS THIS A DENIAL OF PERSONAL FREEDOM? What do you think?

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#### CORRESPONDENCE

From Franco Ferrero, Jersey Canoe Club.  
Dear John,

read with interest your last newsletter and noticed an article by Derek Hairon concerning seal sightings. I'd like to point out that Derek is correct on both counts. In 1978 we didn't see seals that often; however in 1979 I returned to Ireland with a French Expedition and we spent 3 weeks exploring an area that had taken 5 days to canoe the previous year when our only goal was to get round Ireland. Sightings of seals in the Channel Isles are rare. They are known to breed off Ushant, the exact location is kept secret to protect the colony. There are encouraging signs though. My brother Stephen, his wife and Tony Watton spent 2 weeks on a reef canoeing, (It's a vast reef) and sighted individual seal every day. Also fishermen claim that they breed on a nearby reef earlier in the season. I won't divulge locations as I hope that if they are left alone they may set up a proper breeding colony.

Franco Ferrero.

P.S. When I went round Brittany in 1980 with Dinan Canoe Club we didn't see a single seal!

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#### LANCASHIRE AND WESTERN SEA FISHERIES JOINT COMMITTEE INFORMATION SHEET. ALGAL BLOOMS.

Periodically concern is expressed by members of the public that the surface of the sea look 'abnormal' in one way or another. The various reports commonly describe the surface of the sea as being discoloured, stained, phosphorescent, frothy, streaky or oily. Whilst pollution in its many forms can produce such effects, often the appearance of the sea is caused quite naturally by what are termed algal blooms. Blooms tend to occur more frequently in summer and autumn when the sea is relatively warm.

Apart from the familiar seaweeds of coastal waters marine algae also exist freely as microscopic, single celled plants. In this form they drift with the currents utilizing carbon dioxide, water and sunlight to produce organic matter, as all plants do, in a process called photosynthesis. They are the first link in the marine food chain and in this sense are equivalent to the terrestrial grasses.

As every gardener knows plants grow better with the addition of fertilizers. Fertilizers provide the necessary nutrients such as phosphates, nitrates, etc., which are essential for their healthy growth. Under favourable conditions therefore, the free-floating algae multiply or bloom to such an extent as to impart a distinct colouration to the sea. Favourable conditions for such blooms to develop invariably mean an extended period of calm, sunny weather, together with a plentiful supply of nutrients. The importance of nutrients is reflected in the fact that reports of discoloured water are often associated with areas of upwelling and increased land run-off near rivers and estuaries.

Depending on algal species, blooms impart different hues to the water. In a special case where the water turns a brown or rust-red colour, often as a result of a particular species known as dinoflagellates, the term 'red-tide' has become popular. When red tides eventually die (as they must) oxygen levels in the water fall due to bacterial action; also certain noxious dinoflagellates release toxins into the water. It is generally believed that either the low oxygen content, or the poisonous substances, or both are responsible for the

mass mortalities of marine life frequently accompanying such outbreaks. In turning specifically to the east Irish Sea region, experience has shown that the most likely area of experience discoloured water is Liverpool Bay due to the influence of the polluted (nutrients-laden) River Mersey.

There are three main species of algae that regularly achieve concentrations sufficiently dense to discolour the surface of the sea, although there are others having a similar potential. Once again experience has shown that it is often possible to provide an 'educated guess' as to a particular species' identification following a detailed description of an incident.

In conclusion discoloured water in the sea is often the result of naturally occurring algal blooms which can, however, be excessively stimulated, to the detriment of other marine life, by man's activities.

All sightings of discoloured sea water should therefore be reported to the:

Lancashire and Western Sea Fisheries Joint Committee,  
University of Lancashire,  
Bailrigg,  
Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 4XY.  
Telephone (0524) 68745.

Further information on the occurrence of algal blooms or water quality in general of the East Irish Sea can be obtained from the above address

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#### CORRESPONDENCE

From O.B.Loch Eil to H.M.Coastguard.

We are in the process of purchasing a small hand held VHF transceiver for our sea canoeing expeditions. It must be capable of working on channels 16, 67 and 6 and also be waterproof. We are also researching the types of radio distress beacons available that will be heard by local coastal traffic/Coastguard.

From the Coastguards to Loch Eil.

For between £300/350 Frank Cody Electronics of Staines Middx. can provide a four channel 1½/2 watt marine VHF portable which is claimed to be waterproof. This Service is interested and is putting one under test very soon. If you have a normal portable, Messrs LS Developments Ltd of Worthing will fit a waterproof case with external controls for around £120.

So far the only possible 'marine frequency' locator beacons were made by Callbuoy and I understand that these are no longer available. The Locat Beacons all operate on aircraft frequencies which are not monitored by shipping or H.M.Coastguard - these types of ERIRB's do give considerable cover 'providing there are aircraft in the vicinity monitoring 121.5 and 243 Mhz. One firm which is dealing in a continental 'marine frequency beacon' is Messrs Radcomm of Louth, Peterborough; I believe the name is 'Jolytron' but so far we have had no information or trial reports on it.

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## FOR THOSE IN PERIL ON THE SEA

If you still live in an ark, the chances are that you also think the Coastguards are dedicated men who sit in isolated lookouts gazing diligently out to sea. Well, there is no doubt that they are diligent people, but they have long since given up relying on their eyes. In fact they have given up a lot of their original responsibilities to become a forward thinking service equipped for the twentieth century and playing a role as useful and effective for the supertanker as for the sea canoeist.

The Service was founded in 1822 to 'guard' the coast against smugglers and the pirating of wrecks and lookouts were based at almost every accessible bay and beach. It became clear over the ensuing years, however, that these lookouts could act in a safety role to those who were legitimately at sea; and in the course of time, radios replaced telescopes, landrovers replaced horses, and teams of experienced personnel in well equipped control centres replaced the lone men in their lookouts.

The Service is now the responsibility of the Marine Division of the Department of Trade (neither the Royal National Lifeboat Institution nor Trinity House as commonly supposed) and ranks along side the Police, Ambulance and Fire Brigade as a 999 emergency service. The popular belief that coastguard officers are all retired or failed naval officers is also a myth: the service is staffed by experts in the field of coastal and maritime safety and rescue, and also carries total national responsibility for the initiation of and co-ordination of all civil cliff, beach and sea rescue, often for up to hundreds of miles from our coast. This co-ordination may involve Royal Air Force and Royal Navy Search and Rescue Units, Lifeboats, merchant and fishing vessels, and cliff rescue and beach life guard teams.

For operational purposes, the country has been divided into six regions, each under the control of a 'Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre' (MRCC). These are situated at Dover, Falmouth, Swansea, Yarmouth, Clyde and Aberdeen and each has a number of sub-centres (MRSC) to help cover its area of responsibility.

Statistics have shown that less than 2% of all incidents passing through the hands of the coastguard are the result of him being the first to see the incident and the majority of these incidents are subsequently reported by a third party. The other 98% are first reported by the casualty, other mariners or the public at large. Hardly surprising, therefore, that the coastguard relies on the spoken word for his information, transmitted via either telephone lines (known as land lines) or radio. An important feature of his radio communication is the VHF Marine Band, providing a range of up to 60 miles where conditions are favourable. By the careful siting of remote aerials, the coastguard has radio cover in this band for almost the entire coastline - the only exceptions being a few remote and steep sided bays.

In the last twenty years, there has been an increase in leisure time and with it has come an increase in the number of small boats afloat; many manned by inadequately trained 'crews' with inadequate equipment. Until recently the coastguard had considered sea canoeists along with these people, feeling that our small boats were no match for the unrelenting sea and warning us against undertaking even the most humble venture.

U.K. sea canoeists did not remain idle during this time, so developing their skills and equipment that we now lead the world in our sport. The coastguard has not been slow to notice and we now enjoy a good working relationship, even though the occasional 'cowboy' canoeist sets us back a step or two.

From this working relationship has come a code, and the coastguard has an expectation that a sea canoeist will:

1. only go to sea if properly experienced and equipped either
2. use a reliable shore based contact (agent) who can raise the alarm when the

party is overdue.

or

3. notify the appropriate MRCC/MRSC of the nature and intentions of the party as well as clear the activity as finished.
4. report the description of any boats washed off the beach or otherwise lost at sea.

The experience required in 1. will naturally depend on the nature of the journey as well as the prevailing sea and weather conditions, but the inventory of equipment must include:

- lifejacket or buoyancy aid
- clothing to provide against wind, rain/spray and immersion
- flares both to attract attention and pinpoint location
- a detailed plan of primary, secondary and escape routes.

Point 2. can work well. The agent must know the exact intentions and limitations of the group, and must neither be inclined to panic as the overdue time gets closer, nor wander off home halfway through the day tired of waiting. When the alarm needs to be raised, the agent must be able to supply the coastguards with full details of the party and its plan. It is often the search for this information that wastes so much valuable rescue time.

Point 3. requires some judgement. A surfing party would not be expected to notify anyone, nor would a touring group staying within the confines of a bay or beach. In both cases involving the coastguards could be deemed to be trivial. Extremes of weather, however, (particularly if off shore winds were involved) could change trivial into vital. The question of reporting when an activity is over should be common sense, but it is amazing how many groups come off the water elated at the success of the trip, not giving a second thought to the coastguard who is by now busy radioing boats in the area for details of your last known position.

Point 4. is common sense again, but many a search has been launched after finding an abandoned kayak only to discover (after much wasted time and money) that its owner is safely tucked up in bed after a good day's paddling. A paddler is of course free to use most sea areas without reference to anyone, and he may consider it 'beneath him' to use an agent or contact the coastguard or may just not want to bother anyone. Equally, a coastguard cannot force a sea canoeist to make contact. Being a professional, he is a busy man but can always find time for those who take the sea seriously. He will happily provide information about the weather and local conditions, and will be pleased to keep a watchful eye and ear whilst you are afloat. The Duty Officer may not, however, be a small boat man and may neither understand your sport nor condone your intentions.

Relations with the coastguards are therefore a question of both discretion and communication. DISCRETION being the interpretation of all prevailing circumstances and conditions. COMMUNICATIONS being an interaction of people and equipment: not only a canoeist communicates with the coastguard, but also the coastguard's communication with his many contacts on the coast and at sea perhaps to report your last known position or the exact location of a sighted flare.

The most useful form of modern coastal communication has to be the marine band radio, and I believe the sea canoeist should give serious thought to using it. CB sounds like a good idea, but it has limitations. The coastguard does not have it, neither does military and merchant shipping. Its use is restricted to canoeists keeping in touch with each other or in touch with their agent. As yet waterproof sets are not readily available. VHF Marine Band, however, is carried by every coastguard, every coast radio station, every military and merchant vessel and many pleasure craft; and the Calling and Safety Channel (16) is monitored by all of them whenever the ship/station is manned. A portable set can give a canoeist several miles range and can ensure a large number of ears along much of the U.K. coastline. The sets need to be licenced, as does the operator, but the cost and the inconvenience of the formalities are outweighed by the contribution made to the safety of the party.

Sea canoeing is represented within the structure of the B.C.U by the Sea Touring



Committee (STC), a sub-committee of the Access Coaching and Recreation Management Committee (ACRMC). Close contact is maintained with H.M.Coastguard at this level through Dick Richards, sea canoeist as well as Regional Controller for the Swansea Region of the Service. Reporting to him on the canoeing side are a number of regional liaison officers - active paddlers who not only know the coastline of their respective regions, but who are also prepared to liaise on questions of safety and act as 'expert witnesses' in the event of any incident.

Finally I make mention of the Advanced Sea Kayak Club (ASKC) - a large body of sea canoeists who through meetings and newsletters exchange ideas and monitor the 'state of the art' of the sport. If you are a sea canoeist, join this Club and meet and enjoy the benefits of being associated with the wealth of experience and knowledge within its ranks. In the meantime, you might remember 'ASKC' before you next launch at sea unannounced:

A = ask about local conditions

S = say what you intend doing

K = keep monitoring your progress

C = clear when you return safely

And remember, you may know a lot about sea canoeing, but the coastguard knows a lot about the sea.

#### Coastguard Liaison Officers

Dick Richards.....Nationwide and Swansea Region. Hon. Tres. to STC  
Ron Moore .....Falmouth Region  
John Ramwell .....Yarmouth Region. Chairman of STC  
Neil Shave .....Dover Region.  
David Shaw .....Clyde and Aberdeen Region.

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#### SEA CANOEISTS DO IT ALONE!

How Boring!

Especially when you stop and think  
That housewives do it at the sink,  
That pop-stars do it with a beat,  
That soldiers do it on their feet.

But some are moved to paddle clear  
Of beach and bay, of groyne and pier;  
To find some peace, to find they're free,  
To roam at will across the sea.

The one who solos often fits  
His boat with all the latest bits -  
With pumps and bulkheads, paddles spare,  
With decklines, towropes, compass, flare.

A boat that's long, a course that's true,  
A design that's old, a sport that's new,  
But this same loner often loathes  
To wear the right canoeing clothes:

/The clothing that will help him float  
/If he is parted from his boat,  
/It's all too often one will find  
/It strapped to deck or left behind.

/If epic strikes as strike it will,  
/Could it be conquered just by skill,  
/Or would our loner need some help  
/To free him from the tangled kelp?

/So soloists please spare a thought  
/Whilst wearing all the gear you ought -  
/Consider all the risks you take,  
/Reflect on all the rules you break.

/Balance the pleasure that you get,  
/Against the example that you set:  
/For codes of safety still decree,  
/That less than three there should never be.

by Neil Shave.

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From the "Paddlers World", the journal of the I.L.R.C.C.

Paul Caffyn...Circumnavigation of Australia.

This is a journey of some 9,000 miles and he plans to complete it in about eighteen months. The latest news is that he has pushed off on December 28th. He and Thon Turbett have gone into two independent units of the same expedition to meet pragmatic requirements as conditions impose. They have encountered only the expected teething problems and scare moments, encountering clapotis off Jarvis Bay. I look forward to hearing more about their progress.

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Picked up at the recent Canoe Exhibition....the following paper. I have not as yet had chance to follow it up myself but I intend to do so soon. You may wish to follow it up yourself.....I'd be grateful to know if you do.

#### ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ESKIMO KAYAKS?

Interest in Eskimo kayaks is growing. And for good reason, - it could benefit sea canoeing generally and revive traditional kayaking. "Are you interested in Eskimo Kayaks?" proposes the formation of a kayak research group (krg). It sees members taking a friendly interest in each other's work and sharing the results as far as possible. Full participation in a newsletter is designed to keep everyone in contact. It is argued that individual efforts will not be enough to ensure the valid development of the kayak tradition. The essential point is that what we do is not as important as the way we do it. For example, building semi-replicas is not likely to succeed unless the set patterns are worked out by a group with some tribal identity. It is said that we should look at kayaks the way the old master-builders looked at them and then go on to begin a new golden age of kayaking using all our modern advantages.

If you are in general agreement, please write with S.A.E. to :  
Krg, 52, Churnwood Road, Colchester, Essex. State your views. Tell us if you think a krg to be a practical proposition. Give an outline of your kayak research so far and indicate your particular interests and skills. Although they would like to contribute to a newsletter the authors of AYIEK cannot run a krg. Thus the priority is for people who can. If your best skill is management then you might be the one person who could hold the krg together. Ditto membership secretary and the newsletter team. The main problem is finding the right sort of mortar to put between the building blocks that already exist. We will write back.

Further copies of AYIEK will be available from the above address, post free at 90 pence each,

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#### COURSES

At Outward Bound Loch Eil, Achdaluie, Fort William, Invernesshire, PH33 7NN.

Scottish Sea Touring....aimed at paddlers with some experience who are fairly fit and keen to take part in a four or five day trip along the beautiful west coast of Scotland and camping overnight on remote islands. Initial instruction will take place at Loch Eil for the first day or two and during the evenings we will plan the trip with you according to prevailing winds and tides. All equipment is provided and will be carried in watertight bulkhead compartments built into our fleet of modern sea kayaks.

Dates: 12th. June to 19th. June. 1982  
19th. June to 26th. June. 1982

Price; £90 + VAT

Details from the the Warden at Outward Bound Loch Eil, address as above.  
Tel. Corpach 039 77 320.

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Captain John Crawford prepared his report on a research and development project on sea canoeing in Scandanavian waters as long ago as September, 1981, and though I received my copy of this report, it was only recently that I was encouraged to read it thoroughly in order to prepare this review. I wish now that I had spent more time reading it properly in the first place.

At first glance John's 22 page presentation with the title "Offshore Sea Canoeing" is a modest production, written in such a factual manner that you really need to be a sea canoeist to understand whar lies behind such paragraphs as: "Initially I crossed the Norwegian in-bound shipping lane then the out-bound lane seven miles offshore and made visual contact with Homborsund Light House. At 0600 I was back in the shipping lane and as the wind had picked up to a northerly force 3 it looked as though a sprint, or as much of a sprint as is possible after 21 hours paddling, was in order. This was set in motion, but did not prevent my being carried out to sea so that by 0630 I was back in the in-bound lane. Clearly I was in a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  - 4 knot current which, working in conjunction with the wind, was going to prevent my making a landing for some hours."

For those considering long open water crossings, a read of John's Report is well worth while. He looks, albeit briefly, at the ethics of solo sea canoeing and most of his own marathon expeditions are so undertaken. Consequently he requires his equipment and skills to be of a high order and his writings on both these aspects of sea canoeing explore all the important features. He particularly elaborates on his sea anchor and on his outrigger (consisting of half a paddle and a lifejacket) and it occurs to me that he writes from real experience having put both items to the test himself.

I was interested in his comments on his hand held radio direction finder (D.F.). It appears he found it an important navigational aid as well as a psychological boost each time he picked up a radio signal which told him he was heading in the right direction and that land was not far over the horizon. These small D.F. sets have been available for some time and it seems to me that we could well be making more use of them than we currently do.

John has also made short notes on other items of equipment such as compass, foot pump, back rest, dress, etc.

On the subject of skills John discusses two good methods of deep water rescue techniques, and includes diagrams to back up his written explanations. Both his methods, which are aimed at the solo paddler, require the use of a life jacket. Unless you are carrying two, i.e. one to wear and one spare, I gather one must make use of the worn life jacket. This means removing the jacket and this worries me a little. Normally when not coaching, I carry my one and only jacket on the rear deck and wear immediately the going gets rough. If I am to follow John's method I am faced with a choice of continuing to wear it with the obvious advantages or using it to assist a self rescue (obviously I must have failed to roll) and bear with the attendant risks involved. Perhaps the answer is an effective hand pump and even one of Alan Bydes cockpit liners.

It is difficult to provide useful comment on John Crawfords sea canoeing exploits without sounding boringly factual for John's own accounts of his kayak trips are far from boring but do amount to the bare facts only. I can say with some conviction that his trips are quite remarkable. As a sea canoeist myself I am able to read between the lines as it were, to understand the real adventure lying behind his written words.... "At 1430 the Danish coast had slipped over the horizon and as the Swedish coast would not be in sight for some hours I settled down to push over before there was any change in the weather."

John tells us about three major sea canoeing expeditions he had recently undertaken solo and he is honest enough to explain on how two out of the three trips he was picked up (not rescued) by passing trawlers. When one considers that all three trips were in the region of 50 miles each, all undertaken

in the North Sea and all done solo, I for one cannot help but wonder whether he was not very fortunate that the trawlers were available when he required them most!!

Finally I will quickly comment on John's useful two pages of medical notes in which he explores the use of sleeping pills, seasickness tablets, saturated skin, the effects of salt and sunblindness. His notes on these and other topics are short but meaningful. Again I feel he obtains most of his information not from other people or from books, but from his own experience.

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ISLE OF WIGHT TIME TRIAL SATURDAY 26th. JUNE, 1982.

AN EVENT FOR THE EXPERIENCED CANOEIST WANTING A NEW CHALLENGE

55 MILES AROUND THE ISLAND IN A DAY. SPONSORED BY STRAND GLASSFIBRE LTD., ORGANISED BY THE ISLE OF WIGHT KAYAK CLUB.

General information.

Waverley Park Camp Site, Old Road, East Cowes.

The site accepts tents, caravans and campers, i.e. Dormobiles.

No dogs please. The facilities include showers, shop, swimming pool, games room, etc. The lower end of the site has access to the sea and the start line at East Cowes, so launching should be no problem. Fee £1.00 per person per night.

On site caravans and flatlets are also available; contact the operators direct on Cowes 293452 for further information.

Ferries

'Phone British Rail Sealink at Portsmouth 27744

at Lymington (0590) 73301

Red Funnel Steamers at Southampton (0703) 26211

Book early as it is the start of the season and the ferries get very full very quickly. For those who are energetic or just broke you can paddle across: Calshot/Cowes 3 miles; OR Portsmouth/Cowes 9 miles.

Closing date for this Time Trail is MONDAY JUNE 21st.

Rules extracts of....

1. all competitors to assist each other in emergency.
2. Entry restricted to those 18 years of age and over.
3. competitors must show evidence of competency.
4. must use single sea kayaks only.
5. must have necessary sea going equipment, e.g. flares, repair kit, etc.
6. approved buoyancy/life jacket must be WORN throughout.
7. The start and finish line will be markers on EAST COWES PARADE.  
Start time 0500 hrs. Saturday 26th. June, 1982
8. there will be a number of checkpoints on route...not obliged to stop unless red safety flag is flying.  
there will be a free 'get you home' service for those who drop out.

.....Application form.....  
I wish to enter the Isle of Wight Time Trail and enclose the entry fee of £3.00  
Cheques payable to I.O.W.T.T.. I agree to abide by the rules and accept the  
decision of the organiser.

NAME..... B.C.U. No. ....

ADDRESS.....

BOAT.....DECK COLOUR.....HULL COLOUR.....

Isle of Wight Time Trail correspondence to:- Buzz Austin, I, Miller Close,  
Parkhurst, Isle of Wight, PO30 5PS.  
Tel. 527084.



A.S.K.C. MEMBERSHIP LIST AS AT MARCH, 1982,

Adrian Allsop  
13, Mill Lane, Iffley, Oxford.

Tony Abrams,  
6, Briar Close, Alverstoke, Gosport, Hants.

Paul Archer,  
32, Belmont Road, Portswood, Southampton, Hants.

Mark Attenburrow,  
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Buzz Austin,  
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Maurice Adams,  
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