

NEWSLETTER

OF
THE

Advanced Sea Kayak Club

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



AIMS

1. Promotion of Sea Canoeing
2. Communication
3. Organisation of events and conferences
4. Safety and Coaching

Editor and Secretary:-
John J. Ramwell
4, Wavell Garth
Sandal,
Wakefield,
W. Yorkshire.
United Kingdom

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

From Me (Editorial)

Well, it's all over, Christmas that is, and we now look forward to Spring and Summer, and sun, light breezes and fair tides. Hey Ho!

This is the 'Canoe Exhibition' edition and many of you will have collected your Newsletter from the A.S.K.C. stand (anything to save postage). Many renew or join over this event at our stand and so once I have all the names and addresses collected I shall publish the annual membership list and this will go out with the next (APRIL) Newsletter.

We are due to stage the next SEA CANOEING SYMPOSIUM this year. This has always been a successful and popular event and the A.S.K.C., together with the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee, will be organising it, which in effect means me! SO, if you can help me get this conference off the ground for the 5th time then I would be grateful. I am looking for a suitable venue in the Midlands, handy to motorways where can be found food, accommodation, lecture hall and bar sufficient to cater for up to 50/60. I am also looking for your ideas on the content of this years Symposium; what theme we should adopt; which speakers, what format, what subject matter. All suggestions and ideas to me as soon as you like. It's YOUR Symposium. I can only lay on what you want if I know - so tell me!

Now to introduce this 'bumper' Newsletter (it's 2 pages thicker than usual) Often, when I receive material for the Letter I don't get chance to read it through 'till I actually come to type it out. John Chamberlin's "THE LAST DITCH" was no exception and I sat with typewriter and away I went. As his story unfolded I became more excited and found myself typing flat out in order to find out what happened. At least you'll be able to read it straight off - none the less, I know you will find it just as enthralling as I did.

Laurie Ford makes his expedition sound so casual but as sea canoeists yourselves, you'll realise his crossing of BASS STRAIT was some feat. I know the Wilson's Promontory area having paddled there in 1980. I remember my report explaining how rapidly and viciously the weather changed from hour to hour, so this whole sea area is totally unpredictable and Laurie Ford succeeded where many others have failed before him

'WHY I PULLED THE PIN ON THE LOCAT' is an old - but true - story and well worth the re-telling. It was confined to the 'Canoe Camper' in the first instance but deserves wider circulation as, apart from the obvious lessons to be learnt, it is an exciting tale in it's own right.

I know you will enjoy Duncan Richard's diary extracts written whilst canoeing S.E. Alaska and the letter from Hendoux Kory to Frank Goodman is a classic.

There is quite a bit of news from the States with a report on their recent Sea Symposium (they're all doing it!) and a long article from WILL NORDBY entitled PACIFIC COAST PERSPECTIVE. It seems our American brothers are taking to sea canoeing and we watch with interest the development of this activity in their Country. It would be great if we could arrange an exchange scheme through the A.S.K.C. whereby members swapped homes for a few weeks. If you are interested in such a scheme, let me know and I will follow it up.

Alan Bye on spray decks and Paul Caffyn on his circumnavigation of Australia together with letters, notices and snippets of information make up this, the 34th. Newsletter.

May 1983 be a good year for you all. Until the 35th. Letter or until I hear from you,
GOOD PADDLING 'Nanuk'

THE LAST DITCH an account of a sea canoeing trip, one Saturday early in December by John E. Chamberlin.

We beached just before 4.00 pm in fading daylight and immediately Don Charlesworth and Richard Flegg found a route up the cliff to the road and set off to Holyhead for the cars, hoping to hitch a lift. John Gaze had gone in search of a telephone at one of the farms he had spotted on the way in. It took a full half hour for the six of us remaining to carry the nine canoes, paddles and kit up the cliff and a quarter of a mile to the road. By then it was fully dark and we sat down in the ditch to wait, shattered.

John returned and sank down beside us, "I was just too late, The Coastguard had already sent out the Landrover to search for us at likely landing places. He said he'd radio our position to the driver."

So there we sat at the beginning of our Saturday night out. All except for Bill Bailey, 'sperm whale' to his friends, who was pacing up and down the road. Six paces, turn, six paces, turn, like a convict in 'solitary' measuring his cell and dreaming inexorably of that seventh step.

We had been up late on the Friday night at the hotel in Betws y Coed discussing the trip, it was a sort of training exercise for the other members of the group. Bill, Roger Hoe and I had laid out all the reference literature and left them to plan it, assuming full responsibility for Saturday's activities on the water. I had nominated Richard, Ted Taylor and Chris Timms as group leaders. They agreed and selected Chris as overall leader.

As I sat in my wet kit, tired and beginning to feel the cold, I pondered whether the trip might have ended differently - successfully - if we had told them of the one flaw in their plan, but we had'nt.

The first half had gone well, out from Soldiers Point in Holyhead Bay, through the overfalls off North Stack, and using the tide race, round towards South Stack light-house. The water had been rough enough to keep the adrenalin flowing but nothing that anyone could'nt cope with, considering the experience of the party.

Halfway back across Gogarth Bay I had mentioned my apprehension to Roger and asked him to lead the others into North Stack cave for a rest and empty, while I had a tentative look through the gap. My doubts were substantiated. The tide was rushing out of Holyhead Bay, from right to left as I watched and having a stand-up fight with the in-going swells. The waves that won through smashed against the jagged rocks with a crash like thunder, only to rush out to sea again and join a fresh argument. The overfalls were working with the full flow of the ebbing tide and stretched out for half a mile in broken rows of great standing waves, surging back and forth in some drunken dance. One minute green, the tops would then break and tumble down. It was totally unpredictable whether one moment you would be on a glassy wave front or be attacked by a mass of growling white water, just as if someone had turned the sea upside down.

I paddled back round into the cave, untied my flask and had a coffee with Roger, "It's doing at least seven knots". I beckoned Chris and Bill over. If we do manage to get back, it'll be a struggle. Sorry to muck up your trip Chris but here's what we want you to do".

Back on the water Chris gathered us together and explained 'his' plans. "Roger and John C will go first and try to make it round into the bay against the tide. It is flowing quite strongly so we'll wait and see if they succeed before any of us follow and then only in pairs. Bill and I will go last. The idea is to hug the cliffs until hitting the current and then paddle really hard, heading for the slower water. Be very careful of being surfed on to the rocks. O.K. Roger?"

We went out through the gap to the right, hugging the rocks for as long as it was safely possible and then struck out into the current. Minutes pass like seconds in situations like that. It's flat, so you dig deeper. Next second you brace, as a

thousand gallons of water takes it's own time in deciding whether or not to tap you on the shoulder. A quick surf but no time to enjoy it because the previous wave is on it's way back out intent on a second go at us. I was told later that Roger had been surfed right across my rear deck by one wave, his bow missing my back by inches and I thought he was yards away all the time.

We reached the smoother water. Everything is relative. I looked at the cliffs to check progress. They were going the wrong way. Roger was just behind away to my right and we were both being swept backwards out to sea. I shouted at Roger to turn round and head back for the gap. It was more enjoyable in that direction and lasted all of ten seconds.

Incredulous stares met us; "Why did you turn back? You'd almost made it". I think it was Don.

"We don't stand a chance against that. You can't even see the fast bit from here". Roger confirmed it.

The erudite John Gaze, "I wondered why I was catching you up so fast".

You'll have to take our word for it, no one else got to where we were. Remember, it isn't sufficient for a few of us to make it, all of us have to. One capsized followed by a failed roll and two of us are involved in a rescue. So in fifteen minutes, three of us are two miles out to sea from the most westerly point of Anglesey, with one bloke very cold and wet and possible not looking forward to another go at it. O.K.?"

No questions. "Right, listen, it's a good exercise for us now, only for real. You three leaders and everyone else discuss the alternatives and choose one. It's now 3 o'clock. One hour of daylight left. The Coastguards are expecting us by 3.30 pm. That tide will be running until six. Bill, Roger and I are going a few yards away to talk about sex while you think about it. Don't be too long".

Robin Rhodes asked, "Can we borrow your map?" I threw them the map.

Gogarth Bay is one mile wide and on a calm day in the summer the beauty of the scene, solitude and majesty of the towering cliffs are to be soaked up and enjoyed. But in winter when a trip isn't going well, then the air and water are colder; there's a time limit and the sky is cloudy, the whole place becomes sinister. The cliffs are darker and seem to lean out over the sea. There are only three ways in or out, North Stack, South Stack or across to Ireland. Up is impossible unless your name is Joe Brown, you don't play the guitar and haven't got a canoe to carry. North Stack was out, Ireland was too far, so South Stack it had to be. Gogarth had suddenly become very evil.

When we rafted together I said to Bill and Roger, "You can both have a say but I'll tell you what I think. It's twenty minutes to South Stack, straight through the gap with the current and then another twenty minutes to the far beach in Abraham's Bosom. Ernie Phillips assures me that it's possible to land there in an emergency. The two drivers get off straight away for the cars and to phone Holyhead. The rest of us get the tackle up the cliffs before it's too dark." They both agreed.

We paddled back to the others and they had come up with the same general scheme, having dismissed the idea of landing on the lighthouse rock as too dangerous and of dubious advantage anyway. Bill expressed the importance of maintaining a steady paddling rhythm and we set off from North Stack. Twenty one minutes later Roger and I were through the gap and we drifted, resting temporarily while the party re-grouped.

Chris and Richard were the last through and they were arguing heatedly. We gathered around us as Richard said, "Chris reckons he saw a shark outside South Stack. It's daft at this time of year!"

"Did you, Chris?" I asked, "Why so certain it was a shark?"

"Because of the tail. I'm not bloody joking, John, I saw it and it wasn't particularly small!"

A general debate ensued on whether it was possible and the anatomical features of various large sea creatures were described, but it could have gone on for ages so I interrupted; "It's not far away now anyway. Bill, you and Ted lead the way round the coast. Chris, you and Roger bring up the rear with me".

As the others set off I asked Roger and Chris to unwrap their hand flares. While they did so I unpacked the Miniflare gun and screwed in a cartridge. Roger looked a little sceptical but I said, "You've seen them here before and nearly everybody today has commented on the warmth of the water. Is it still so daft?"

The last time Roger had seen one in North Wales it had surfaced a yard from his boat. George had told him it was a dolphin, to save him dirtying his trunks, and did'nt let on until after we had landed.

We followed the others and had'nt gone fifty yards before Chris yelled, "There!" Roger and I looked to where he pointed. He'd seen it all right. The stocky dorsal and narrower tail fins were almost a canoe-length apart, all the time. They belonged to the same creature and it was at least eighteen feet long.

The party in front had stopped and we were all gazing in the same direction. We caught them up and Richard looked at Chris but said nothing. The apology was implicit. Without thinking we had all eased nearer to the cliffs. Such is the security of a vertical slab of rock. Everything is relative.

The fish had turned towards us and was stationary about thirty yards away. We were rafted up in three groups, transfixed as it's tail slowly sank and it's great head came out of the water.

John Gaze, detectably not as cool, as usual, muttered an obscenity and said quietly, "I don't believe it. It's too fantastic."

Fantastic was'nt the adjective most of us had in mind at that moment but there again John read more books than the rest of us.

He continued, after a few moments reference to some mental encyclopedia, "Don't laugh, but I think it's a Blue Pointer, the one they call the Great White".

Nobody laughed.

Absolute silence, except for drips from paddle blades. The cliffs became even more oppressive.

Ted murmured, "The bloody brute's staring at us," his voice fraying a little at the edges. He had the least stable boat. He was right too. Deep in their murky sockets the malevolence of it's eyes sent chills through all of us.

It opened it's mouth. One of us could have paddled straight in. John Gaze did'nt have to explain about the seven rows of saw-edged teeth, each tooth two inches across, or that when one is broken they all move up and a new tooth bud is formed at the back. But he did.

The fish slid back under the surface, sending out circles of ripples indicating the exact spot like a bulls eye on some enormous target.

A seagull let out a piercing shriek, Ted wobbled slightly and Bill completely filled his wet suit trousers!

Roger tried to speak. It came out strongly on the third attempt. "There's only half an hour of light at the most. Set off in close pairs and if it surfaces near us again raft up immediately. Move!"

It worked, they moved off. The front pair were'nt paddling too slowly but it was interesting to note that their hands did'nt go in the water. Roger and I were last. We spent more time looking backwards than forwards.

Five minutes later the beach was sighted, only a quarter of a mile away. The tension had eased perceptibly when it happened, completely without warning. Robin and Alan were in the middle pair of the ten of us when it struck, straight from underneath, like a polaris missile. It lifted Alan and his boat nearly ten feet clear of the water before the massive jaws snapped shut around the cockpit section. It's white body glowed in the failing light as it crashed over sideways, taking Alan underneath with it, smashing both ends of the canoe clean off.

Just under the surface it's whole body writhed and thrashed turning the rows of teeth into so many giant saws, tearing flesh and bone apart. The sea turned red and was littered with fragments of the boat.

Alan had only come on the weekend to go fishing. Why the hell had we persuaded him to borrow a boat and come on the trip?

The turmoil ceased as abruptly as it had started. We were only four hundred yards from the safety of the beach but nobody moved. No one had rafted. Then there were nine, all staring at one spot.

It's head broke surface again. John Gaze didn't have to tell us that in the stomach of one caught off Australia they had found half a sheep, an outboard motor, a tattooed human arm, six tins of peas and a nongy. But he did.

Don fell on to Ted's front deck and was violently sick.

The three foot mouth opened again revealing a torn anorack jammed in it's teeth. It was motionless in the water, pointed snout nearly vertical as though waiting for it's trainer to throw it a ball to balance.

Roger struck his hand-flare and as the head swivelled towards us, not ten feet away, he threw it straight into it's mouth. Next second I released the trigger on the flare gun but the brute moved. I too had aimed for the mouth but, as it turned, the fireball smashed deep into it's left eye socket. It would burn violently there for at least fifteen seconds. The frenzy was instantaneous.

As the shark dived, it's huge tail broke surface near Richard, capsizing him. He rolled up again so quickly there was a hole in the water where he had been.

Bruce must have swallowed the handflare whole, at the start of it's twenty seconds burn because, not half a minute later, there was a mass burst of smoke filled bubbles about forty yards away. The abdominal explosion had ripped it apart. The sea turned red yet again and a chewed fragment of Alan's life jacket bobbed to the surface. We all raced for the shore, only paddles blades and sterns in the water.

John Gaze returned from the farmhouse, "The Coastguard asked if it was O.K. to alter the details of the trip to 'nine' canoeists set out. He says it'll mess up his statistics if the two figures don't tally".

Bill Bailey was shaking me hard, "Wake up you dozy sod. Alan arrived in Robin's car, along with the Coastguard Landrover. Come and help us get some boats tied on".

I jumped up and ran to the car, "Alan!"

"What's the matter?" he asked surprised.

"Nothing, nothing at all". I touched his arm without him noticing.

"How did the fishing go?"

"I caught half an eel".

"How can you catch half an eel?"

"Well, I didn't actually catch it. The bloke next to me caught it and gave me half".

We tied the three canoes on the roof rack and Ted, Roger, Robin and Alan set off for Betws' and the hotel. Roger was to telephone and explain that we would be late.

Chris, John Gaze and sat down again. The 'sperm whale' resumed pacing. Five minutes past five.

"They must have got lost".

We were cold, wet and had run out of jokes.
A silent period.

Chris stood up, "Is'nt it a bastard? Half past five on a Saturday night and stuck in a ditch at the side of the road in the most westerly part of Anglesey!"

The 'sperm whale' stopped pacing and burst out laughing. Through the barkness we could see his whole body wobbling like an erectile liquorice jelly.

They returned just after five thirty, guided by the Coastguard Landrover - they had'nt got a lift ...and Don had driven over the eel.

SAFETY AT EVENTS.

A paper agreed by the B.C.U. Safety Panel.

Canoeing is a 'risk' activity, and white water canoeing in particular can never be totally safe. Respect and admiration is due to those who, knowing what they are at, push back the frontiers of feasibility by tackling ever harder grades of water; or choose to explore in wild and lonely places; or undertake solo paddling, be it in one of these contexts, or simply to find their own level of selffulfilment.

We do not agree with those who regard the occasional inevitable loss of life in these circumstances as disastrous for the sport, nor for those who choose these outlets - knowing what they are at - are acting in an irresponsible manner. Far from it. They are keeping alive - in fact they are furthering - the essential spirit in man to advance against the elements.

We are, however, faced with a dilemma. We all want and demand "freedom". In reality, however, if the exercise of that "freedom" causes us harm, a growing number of people then want to apportion blame. Some would seek recompense against those who permitted or set up the activity. The media joins in this process with great gusto. In consequence incidents are distorted beyond recognition, and the dividing line between freedom of action, and responsible provision, becomes difficult to define.

Numerous examples of this process can be cited, particularly with regard to increasing legislation.

Canoeing has an inherent risk factor. For some reason we attract hysterical press reaction out of all proportion for the very low incidence of actual fatalities within the sport. The difficulty for the Union, as the Governing Body, is to tread the border zone of taking all reasonable precautions, yet retaining the adventurous nature of those aspects of the sport which carry an element of danger.

Our order of priority in deciding whether action of any kind should be taken, is presumably:

1. That no one should lose their life or be seriously injured, if this could have been avoided through the implementation of simple warnings or safeguards.
2. That unnecessary adverse publicity should not accrue to the sport, hastening the day when further restrictive legislation may be applied, or giving excuse to those who would even now use any reason to bar our activity.
3. That where reasonably possible, grounds for a claim that would invoke our insurance policy be avoided, in order to ensure the continuance of this benefit as a final compensation to an injured party, at a reasonable cost to the membership.

CROSS (ENGLISH) CHANNEL RESTRICTIONS.

The situation is unchanged although the Mitterand Government's Maritime Authority has new officials and is generally more helpful.

That authority maintains that kayaks cruising the 'Pas de Calais' are a danger to themselves and merchant shipping and the Authority will not therefore allow cross channel paddling.

However, several groups, heavily supported by large escort vessels have crossed the Channel since the restrictions were first enforced upon the Jersey group in 1979. The basis on which they have not been stopped would seem to be that they are regarded as 'tenders' to the larger vessels and remain close to them. It is likely that small groups of unescorted kayaks have also slipped across by launching and landing where 'les Gendarmes' are less vigilant. Surveillance is mostly of holiday beaches where sailboards are used.

300 metre rule.

Representations by the French Federation Canoe Kayak (F.F.C.K.) and CK/MER supported by the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee are now producing good relations between the new breed of French Sea Kayakists and Maritime Authorities and a relaxation of this rule to extend to one mile (Sailboards are already permitted out to one mile) is to be officially announced shortly. This relaxation will only apply to paddlers who satisfy sea going standards (B.C.U. Sea Proficiency Kayak and equipment specifications more or less). Further relaxations in the rule are hoped for in due course..

CK/MER

This association of sea canoeists is now well supported and officially recognised as the French Authority for sea kayaking. Now in it's second year, it circulates a newsletter, liaises with other French groups or similar interests and organises an annual 'get together', (St. Malo - 8/9/10 October, 1982).

Syllabuses for Sea Kayak Awards are currently under consideration.

CANOE KAYAK/MER REUNION 9 & 10 OCTOBER, 1982

Organised by Guy Ogez, Secretary to the CK/MER. This was the second reunion of the French version of the A.S.K.C./ Sea Touring Committee.

A large group of English paddlers attended; including Greg Littleddyke, Brian Sheen of the C o C L G with a team of three from Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue Unit, Frank Goodman (Valley Canoe), Dave Patrick (P.& H.), Dave Evans (Calshot) and five less well known paddlers and family. All travelled on Brittany Ferries paying 60 hour return prices for car and persons (two in a car @ £30.00 each: canoes travelled as motorcycles which go free at off peak periods).

We were welcomed at St. Malo by French friends, pitched camp at the nearby hilltop campsite and prepared C o C L G's demonstrations and sea canoeing expeditions to run at the same time.

A full afternoon on C o C L G techniques was watched closely by staff from the French Lifesaving (S N S M) who are planning to set up a parallel organisation, while a large flotilla of sea canoeists were organised into manageable groups by Loic Bourdon and about 50 kayaks had a short enjoyable day trip including a real life rescue. To follow this we were pointed in the direction of the walled city to a Mayor's reception. This was held in a medieval fortress delightfully preserved with tapestries, wood fire and cannon ball decor and suitably marked by speeches of welcome from the French and a faltering response in bad french from myself helped along with a delightful wine and dainty biscuits.

To follow this took some doing but a film of the August 'Tour de Bretagne'

featuring sea kayakists in various states of dress and undress certainly did the job. This excitement was soon turned to snores as I then gave a 'Francais - La Securite' lecture!. A buffet supper in a hastily erected marquee on the quayside with ample wine and good humour sent us to bed in good shape.

08.00 hrs saw us on our way to the superb St. Malo swimming pool where Loic Bourdon, Pascal Bourdon, the Corps team and myself demonstrated state of the art rescue techniques.

An enourmous group of sea kayaks now got itself organised and many groups met up outside the harbour to be filmed in an enourmous raft circle for a film sequence before departing on various day expeditions to the islands and beaches in the area. This coast is perfect for sea canoeing with numerous places to visit.

After our return many paddlers went home leaving a hard core to attend the A.G.M. of CK/MER and a cous-cous dinner in a local Algerian style restaurant. Not cheap and the concensus of English opinion was that cous-cous is anacquired taste not really worth acquiring.

Next morning a quick burst around local shops for cheap wine and cheese and we then battled out through a force 7 back home on the ferry.

The large number of sea kayaks and enthusiasts at this event only one and half years after setting up CK/MER reflects the tremendous growth of sea canoeing in France. There is an improvement in the understanding between sea kayakists and the French 'Ministere de la Mer' and relaxation of the Beach Craft' rule to a new limit of one and the authorities acceptance of cross Channel trips by a few VERY HEAVILY ESCORTED PROPERLY AUTHORISED canoe groups bodes well for the future of our sport in France.

Much of the weekend was recorded on French and English video and 16 mm film and I hope some of this and an English version of 'South Brittany Tour' will become available in England.

John Kuysler, Calshot.

Ed's note in Newsletter No. 32 I published a letter from Joe Lamb, Australia. I said at the time that I did'nt understand it. In future I will only publish material that I DO understand as Joe's letter has led to 'umbrage'

From the South Australian Canoeing Association Inc.
To the Editor, A.S.K.C.

Dear Sir,

This Association notes with some umbrage that an excerpt from it's official records has been used in your pages by Joe Lamb in support of what we consider is a petty, personal vendetta. (A.S.K.C. Newsletter No. 32)

We regard this letter as offensive and defamatory; totally unwarranted and irrelevant. S.A.C.A. Inc. entirely dissociates itself from the published remarks.

We call upon Joe Lamb to apologise to you and the unnamed persons referred to in his letter, and to submit a simple worded and rational explanation of the (now disbanded) Australian Nordkapp Association, and Frank Goodman's role in it, so that all the confusion surrounding them may be dispelled.

S.A.C.A. Inc. regrets, Sir, that your pages have been unwittingly used for the publication of libellous comment.

Yours faithfully,

L.B.Chidlow, President
P. Carter, Secretary General.

MILL POND CONDITIONS INDEED!

An account by Laurie Ford of his solo crossing of Bass Strait between mainland Australia and Tasmania, 1982

As you all know, Flinders Is. and the rest of the Furneaux Group have been done before by such notables as Gus and Granny, and this area is surely among the best in the world for extended sea trips. It combines remoteness, beauty, unpredictable weather, tide races, abundant sea food, and a very friendly population. A Bass Strait crossing is a logical extension of a trip to this area, but with 30 mile open crossing to small islands is a challenge that needs a good deal of careful planning and preparation, plus appropriate knowledge and experience.

I have never once started one of these long crossings without wondering where I might possibly end up if things really came unstuck - but in 3½ weeks had no real trouble at all. The Saturday I left Little Musselroe Bay was also the start of the Tasmanian Catamaran Championships at Bridport, just around the corner in Bass Strait. Their first race was shortened considerably but still only three managed to finish. The rest of the day, and Sunday, were cancelled altogether - they won't sail in winds over 25 knots. I set a straight course for the end of Cape Barren Island, but ended up at Preservation Island (due to the 35 kn westerly) where I had lunch before battling up the coast to camp near Key Island. Sunday I left late and fought my way round to the southern end of Flinders, dodging masses of white water off the end of Cape Barren Island. From here on the weather started to improve and I traversed the full length of Flinders the next day, paddling the last 7 hours, arriving at Killecrankie at 3.00 am. During that day I ran into Justin and Diane at Whitmark - holidaying for a week or so - and saw Cecily briefly as she flew back to Tassie after a few days with her brother Alf at Killecrankie. Alf found me asleep on the beach and offered the use of a hot shower and a caravan which I gratefully accepted.

As you can see from the map, going from Tas. to Wilsons Promitury involves travelling west about 60 miles, against the prevailing westerlies. Coming the other way is much easier as you can allow the winds to blow you 60 miles to the east and still get where you want to. With the thought of Jim and Flan still fresh in my mind, plus the disappearance of the Charleston, and many other dramas in this area I set off at 5.00 am to cross to Deal Island (or more correctly the Kent Group). This was a long hard slog with little to see except Graggy Island and Wrights Rock. Deal Island loomed a little closer each hour till eventually I am 30 metres offshore from a possible camp site. However I continued on to Murray Passage and ran between the islands to Erith Island where a dinghy load of girls came out to greet me. The island is used by a couple of large groups during the Christmas break and is a real little paradise. I spent a day here while a strong wind warning was current, and delighted I was to spend half an hour in the water in the company of a dolphin that just swam around where ever you went - Oh, for a beach ball to play with! Erith has a very sheltered anchorage used by visiting yachts and fishing boats and I could have easily spent a week or so here. Deal Island has its own museum which I intended to look in at on the return voyage, and I left Erith at 2.00 am to take advantage of a good forecast, arriving at Hogan Island at 7.30 am. This is a small island with a lighthouse, and leased by Alf to run cattle on.

Had a short breather here then went on across to the Prom., but only after a complete mental and physical 'block' for about an hour right in the middle of nowhere. It's a hell of a feeling just barely being in sight of land knowing there is still a minimum of 6 hours paddling to arrive at your destination, and I just sat there for a while taking stock of the situation. However the wind and tide turned in my direction and I sailed in under the Prom. Lighthouse late in the afternoon and camped in Oberon Bay just after dark - I had arrived! Did another two miles next morning and booked into the Park. This is a great caravan park and although it caters for thousands every day, it is so set out that you are not aware of the crowds at all.

Here I met Steve and Ray from Sydney as arranged and spent a pleasant week bush-walking and canoeing 'till the rest arrived from Victoria and South Australia.

VICTORIA

N



W

E

S

Wilson's Prom.

Glennie Group

Answer Island

Hogan Is.

Erith Is.

Deal Is.

Wrights Rk.

BASS

Curtis Is.

Pyramid

STRAIT

Flinders Island

Cape Barren Is

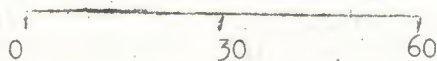
Clarke Is.

Swan Is.

Little Musselroe Bay

TASMANIA

Nautical Miles



Steve and I did a bit of Sea Proficiency testing over the weekend, culminating in a trip out to Answer Island where we discovered a huge seal colony with hundreds of seal pups.

The temperature had been on the 40's most of the stay in Victoria, but was due to change the Monday I left - a cold front coming up from the S.W. I took advantage of a strong N.E. to sail down the Prom. and out into Bass Strait but then was becalmed for the rest of the day, and forced to paddle. My return course was via Curtis Island, intending to stop at Deal Island overnight, but my plans changed to make use of the approaching storm and I continued on a course to take me west of Flinders Island. 18 hours after leaving Victoria, at 0200 hours the next day the S... change came through with a vengeance, and it was over 10 hours later before I landed on Flinders Island - 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours at sea!

One of the local fishermen had been out laying pots a couple of hours before I arrived, and he told me later on that it was the first time in his life he has ever been scared enough to put a lifejacket on - and for a Bass Strait fisherman to wear a lifejacket is unbelievable - MILL POND conditions indeed!!

I left a couple of days later in the same conditions to continue my trip back to Tasmania. On Clarke Island I met up with Andrew Rust and Peter Newman, both of whom had been doing a trip in the area with Earle, but was aborted due to the conditions. We had a very pleasant trip back to Tasmania, spending a night on Swan Island with the Lighthouse keeper.

One peculiar thing happened on the long overnight paddle to Flinders Island - there I was bowling along before huge seas and strong winds, constantly showered with spray whipping off the water, only to find myself starting to doze. I have had this experience before on other long overnight paddles but they were in much calmer conditions. I would have expected the conditions to keep me awake this time but was constantly waking up to find I had already executed a perfectly good support stroke. This worried me for a while but I kept the sail up, knowing that it is dead easy to get back in the LONGBOAT after a capsize, and emptying out is just a matter of flicking a switch on deck - about two minutes for a completely full cockpit.

As for Earle's request for a canoe radio - it's old stuff. The Derwent Canoe Club's magazine of March '78 gives a report by Dave McInnes of a trip we did to the South Coast of Tasmania (in recorded winds at Maatsuyker Island of 30 knots). I had a car radio under the seat on my North Sea Tourer and an aerial in the middle of the rear deck. This was set in place and was fully waterproof and was used for over a year 'till I took it out to attempt to convert it to receive the Coastal Radio Stations. It's still on my workshop bench waiting to be completed and reinstalled.

Taken from ANORAK No. 6

SEAWORTHINESS

"Seaworthiness" is defined by Webster's new international (2nd ed.) as "fit for a sea voyage; able to stand stormy weather in safety." It is most often thought of as a quality, as in: "my new sea cucumber is very sea worthy". But it is also a process deriving from interaction, over time, of an intelligent paddler, her equipment, and the sea. Some kayak designers seem to approach this subject with the assumption that the boat won't get much help from the paddler when the going gets rough; the paddler will rig a sea anchor, crawl down inside the boat, and fall back on prayer, meditation or magic. Whence come boats that are wide, roomy, and bouyant so that these traditional big-boat tactics are possible. Barring interference from rogue waves, a lee shore, or insanity, the paddler should survive to tell the tale. The other approach is to assume that the paddler will and must actively strive against the storm. Now the boat must be one that can be effectively paddled and easily rolled; long, low and narrow is the result; giving up comfort, dryness and capacity in favour of some less tangible qualities that fall under the heading of "high performance". If this chap has the stamina to keep paddling, bracing, rolling until he reaches shelter, then he too will bore the pub crowd with his tale.

The action of small boats in rough seas is such that once a certain tactical approach to stormy weather has been facilitated by the designer, his design tends to make that approach mandatory. In other words, you would not want to and should not try to cope with a storm in an Aeriuss the same way you would in a Nordkapp. But in either case, whether you choose an active or passive approach to seaworthiness, you must be ready for a possible encounter with nasty conditions before you ever leave the harbour.

J.C.C.

From David Zimmerly, Artic Ethnologist, National Museum of Man, Canada.

I would like to clear up two misconceptions regarding the narrow Eskimo paddles.

1. Eskimo paddles are not narrow because of lack of materials. They were highly skilled at scarfing and laminating, had glues available (dried blood mixed with saliva) and, except for extreme northern Baffin Island, had a fair access to good wood. No, the blades were narrow to keep dripping noise low so as to better approach sea mammals and for a number of other reasons. The Copper Eskimo were the only group that used wide spoon-shaped blades on their paddles (blade c. 6"X 16"). Ivory edging and tips on Baffin Island and Greenland paddles was for use in new ice conditions.
2. Canadian East Artic paddles were very long, often 12', and for normal unhurried paddling were used with very shallow strokes. The centre of the paddle was touching the upwardly raked cockpit coaming which acted as a fulcrum to make paddling less tiring over long distances. The paddle moved back and forth across the coaming in a sort of figure '8'.
3. I am told that long distance paddling with a feathered paddle causes 'kayakers wrist', a malady akin to tennis elbow and that may be the reason the Eskimos never developed this sort of paddle.

A few notes of interest: Annorak (anurak) is the Inuit word for clothing - a generic term. Anorak (anurak) is the word for wind. The doubling of the consonant, called consonant gemination in linguistics, is not important in English for distinguishing word difference, but in Inuktitut, it is very important. The leading letters of Association of North Atlantic Kayakers (anak) spell another Inuit word shit!

ANGLESEY SCHOOL OF SEA CANOEING, TREARDUR BAY, ANGLESEY, N.WALES.

This school of sea canoeing is run by Nigel Dennis, Leader of the first circumnavigation of Great Britain by sea kayak. It is a great venue, only yards away from the sea, offering many other facilities.

Here is an excerpt from Nigel's Handout:

"Anglesey is an island off the North Wales coast. It offers some of the best sea canoeing to be had in Gt. Britain. There are sandy beaches with rocky coves, headlands, sea arches, caves and islands to explore and the school is in close proximity to the sea. Courses are offered all the year round for groups of up to twenty four on a self catering basis at £58.50 per head per week.

We also offer self catering dormitory accommodation for groups who wish to carry out their own activities. A small room is available for use as a lab. for groups taking part in field study courses.

Cost of dormitory accommodation per head per night:

5 to 10 @ £3.50/ 10 to 15 @ £3.00/15 to 20 @ £2.75/20 to 25 @ £2.50 "

For further details write to Nigel Dennis, Trearddur School, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey, Gwynedd. Telephone 0407 860201.

The following is taken from the 'Canoe Camper', Winter 1980.
Many thanks to John Drew for sending it to me.

WHY I PULLED THE PIN ON THE LOCAT.

Foreward: The epic recorded below is published for the sole reason of warning other sea canoeists, so that they may avoid making the same mistakes. Ian McA-Hewlings is an extremely proficient canoeist, yet he came within an ace of losing his life. "It had a happy ending" he says, but had it? Certainly there was no loss of life, but the incident reduced men to tears, there were sleepless nights and the loss of equipment costing hundreds of pounds, not to mention the cost of the rescue operation and the risks taken by men of the rescue services, to whom we are extremely grateful.

The members involved did a great deal that was right, they are to be commended for answering the call for help and entering a sea of which they were admittedly scared, to assist their friends, but several mistakes were made. I leave you to make your own judgement as to what they were in the hope that it may not happen again to members of our club.

Dennis G. Lees.

This account of a very nasty sea incident is given from my own viewpoint; others in the group may have seen it differently. I hope that I have given detail of the attempt to rescue a fellow canoeist in difficulty for others to learn from our unfortunate experience. It is with this in mind I put pen to paper. Most epics seem to start very innocently, with those involved having the best intentions. However, human error and changing conditions play a part in the end result. In the interests of those involved, I have not mentioned the names of the members of the group.

We arrived in South Wales on Saturday 2nd. August, for our family summer holiday. We camped with a Canoe Camping Club group near Tenby. For the first few days the weather was bad, wet and with very strong winds. By Tuesday we had not been in a canoe and the group was getting restless. On Wednesday it was agreed that we should find a bay with high cliffs to shelter us from the S.W. winds, force 5 to 6. Barafundle Bay, near Stackpole Head was chosen.

A mixed ability family group of some 11 paddlers launched at Stackpole Quay and ventured out into the Bay. The sea was irregular and lumpy, but not too difficult. I felt that all members of the group could handle the sea conditions in the bay area; a greater hazard was the wind, which was squally and making patterns on the water surface. I suggested we should make our way to the shelter in the lee of the cliffs. Here, we were well protected and all were enjoying their first short sea trip of the holiday. The cliffs offered some excellent scenery, with rock arches and caves. Barafundle beach was passed, and we decided to follow the cliffs round to near Stackpole Head and then return to the land party for a picnic on the beach.

As we approached Stackpole Head I was paddling with three of the less well experienced of the group; the others, a little ahead of us, were looking at the big sea just off the headland. It was a wind against tide situation, forming regular but very big waves, occasionally breaking on the top. It was interesting to watch. Some of the younger and the more experienced of the party started to edge their way into the big stuff to get a better taste of it. Most very quickly retreated to the lee of the cliffs, two paddlers however, went further.

I immediately realised that there was danger, so I asked those I was with to 'stay-put' while I went and asked the adventurers to return to the group. I was soon with one of them and he turned at once towards safety: the other was further out, and in a canoe he had not paddled before. I shouted to him that we should keep the group together and he turned and started towards the others. It was a big following sea not easy to handle and as he was surged forward by a big wave he was capsized. He attempted to roll and though usually a very strong paddler and roller, he failed, possibly due to the strange boat. I called the nearest paddler back to assist and battled my way back to my colleague in the water. As I approached he shouted, "there is'nt any buoyancy in the front".

It took only seconds for us all to realise that we had a potentially very serious situation. We had a large expedition type sea kayak, with no bulkheads or buoyancy in the front, although it did have a rear bulkhead. The amount of water in it made a normal rescue quite impossible, and although the other paddler put a line on it in an attempt to save the canoe, it was obvious it had to be abandoned.

Meanwhile, I had my colleague in the water, hanging on to the toggle at the back of my boat. With me paddling with maximum effort, and him swimming hard towards the safe area behind the headland, we soon found the effort futile against the tidal drift away from the head; after ten to fifteen minutes we were both getting very tired. There was no way we could get to the others. I waved to someone on the cliff top, hoping to draw attention to our difficulty. They seemed so near at the time, and yet so far away.

Next we were hit by a big one and I went over. I attempted to roll and due either to my colleague on the back of the boat, or my own tiredness at that moment, I failed and had to 'bale out'. We now had two in the water and one in his boat. I shouted for more help. We also sent off flares. Three brave paddlers came back into the heavy sea in answer to my call; two of them my own sons. Unknown to me at the time, one of my Nottingham Kayak Club friends who has assessed the situation from the shelter behind the cliff, paddled off to alert the Coastguard. Later we were to be very grateful for his prompt action.

As the extra help arrived we began to split up. The chap in the water was hanging on to another canoe and I, with assistance from one of my sons, climbed back into my canoe and pumped it dry. While we were rafted up I decided to activate the LOCAT by pulling out the pin. This was quickly done and I checked that it was transmitting by looking at the neon indicator at the bottom of the unit - it was on. I was just about ready to paddle off when we were hit by an almighty big wave which lifted us both up and dropped us upside down. In the turmoil of water and canoes I found that I had no paddles; I had to 'bale out'. I had been using a "wrist to paddle" strap which I had disconnected earlier, it had seemed in the way for the rescue attempt. It was a grave mistake.

My son vigorously rolled up and came to help me. I climbed back into my boat for the second time. By now I was getting more tired and we were drifting well away from Stackpole Head and away from the other four. Two of them were taking it in turns to tow their "man in the water" towards the coastline west of the headland. Four of five flares had been used by now and visibility was much worse. My son, realising that I was getting tired shouted for one of the others to come and join us. I was sitting in a boat full of water, too exhausted to pump it out, and he was hanging on to me in a rafted position. I had also been trying to join my spare paddles together but the joint was too tight and I was unsuccessful in the turmoil. In those conditions it proved almost impossible to perform what should be the simplest task.

I was now inbetween my son and the paddler who had come to our assistance. We stayed rafted up for some time and then another big wave broke over the top of us. With my boat full of water, I was snatched from the others and thrown out again. I don't know how, but the others managed to stay afloat. They had been pushed some distance away from me and returned to my assistance. This time I stayed in the water and for a while was able to hang on to the deck line of my canoe on one side, and my two colleagues on the other. At about this time I noticed the Coastguard Landrover on the hazy and distant cliff top. It was a very reassuring sight.

The two groups of three had now drifted well apart, the other group caught in a tidal eddy were making good progress towards the coastline and easier water conditions. Our own group seemed to be in the main tidal flow towards St. Goven's Head, and the sea, if anything, was getting bigger. It was not long before I was shivering uncontrollably and soon had to abandon my sea kayak. It was to be the last I was ever to see of it. I had been very reluctant to let it go for sentimental reasons. It had taken me on many superb sea trips around the coast of Britain, and only a few weeks before it had taken me safely on a circumnavigation of the

Isle of Mull, including Iona and Staffa.

However, the real loss was to hit me later, as at the moment I was rather preoccupied with staying alive and hanging on to the other two. Rafted together, we just drifted, battered by the wind and heaved up and down by the sea which was quite frequently breaking over us. My son was a tower of strength and seemed well in control. Unfortunately the other chap was tiring and beginning to feel sea sick. It seemed an endless time. My grip was occasionally slipping. I was getting very tired and after a period of moaning about the situation and not a few short and very strong words I went quiet. The others shouted at me to hang on.

Then the sound of the helicopter, and out of the gloom it came, straight for us. It was homing in on the LOCAT signal, using the direction-finding equipment fitted to a Sea King. It hovered and roared above us. Down came the rescue crew man and grabbed me, up and into the helicopter I went. I was bundled into a corner and had a blanket thrown over me; off he went for the others. In seconds we were all out of the water, the canoes left to a merciless sea. The helicopter circled towards the cliffs and guided by the Coastguard located the other group and picked up the man in the water. From the time he capsized he had been in the water well over an hour; myself just under an hour. I was to learn afterwards that the two lads who had worked so hard to tow their man to safety paddled away flat out as soon as he was lifted, saying that there was no way they were going to lose their boats. They were to land safely at Broadhaven Beach.

The helicopter landed on the cliff top and dropped us off. I was more or less carried to the Coastguard's Landrover - my legs would not work. One of the R.A.F. crew men insisted that the LOCAT signal was stopped, but the magnetic pin could not be found. He shouted, "smash it" and before my hazy eyes the valuable LOCAT was unceremoniously chopped in half by a Coastguard using a spade. I was bundled into the landrover with my water logged colleague. Also inside was my N.K.C. friend who had originally alerted the Coastguard. It was very reassuring to see him, and he more or less held me sitting upright as we were all driven at breakneck speed bouncing away from the cliff top over rough ground. The driver, a young volunteer Coastguard, was thoroughly enjoying the excitement. We rendezvoused with an ambulance, were transferred and soon in hospital.

I was kept in for observation overnight. They considered that I was suffering from hypothermia and, as the Inian Doctor put it, I was 'living in a tent', so could not be discharged that night. My colleague, whom I had originally attempted to rescue, although spending longer in the water, was in better condition than me. This was possibly due to better natural coverage - about four stones worth! He was also, I am reluctant to admit, a younger man. He was collected that night. However, I was one up on him, I had the attention of nurses - they were wonderful - but that's another story!

Well, for some afterthoughts. We later met the Coastguards and they proved most understanding and helpful. They even apologised that the canoes had not been recovered. Apparently the Tenby lifeboat had been launched as an additional backup in case the helicopter had difficulty in the poor visibility. It had arrived in the area about half an hour after we had been fished out and they were good enough to do a few circuits looking for the canoes, but without success. As they gave us the two halves of our LOCAT back, they confirmed that if we had not had it things could have been very different. Apparently when we were picked up our group could not be seen from the cliff top, even though binoculars were employed, due to the poor visibility, and a search could have taken some time. The LOCAT had probably saved our lives. They were quite concerned about its condition and hoped that it could be repaired successfully.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the N.K.C. committee for their far sighted decision to purchase a LOCAT radio distress beacon. I feel that without it I may very well not have been here to give this account. If anyone has any doubts as to the usefulness of these little units, let them talk to the survivors, or to the R.A.F. Search and Rescue boys. I would like also to thank all the rescue services, the police and other persons who assisted to bring this nasty incident to a happy ending.

Ian McA-Hewlings. B.C.U. Instructor.

During the summer of this year Duncan Richards successfully completed a solo Expedition to Alaska. In my view his was a fantastic expedition of no mean achievement. For a relative new-comer to the sport of sea canoeing and himself only of tender years he has astounded us all who know the full details of his trip to Alaska.

Here follows various extracts from Duncans' diary which really 'undersell' the full account of his expedition but which, none the less, will give you some idea of his exploits.

SOLO CIRCUMNAVIGATION BARANOF/CHICHAGOF ISLANDS S.E. ALASKA 1982

The following are extracts from my daily log for the 28 days the journey lasted. I flew to Vancouver; bused and ferried my way to Sitka on Baranof Island, and set off laden with 6 weeks supplies on the 15th. July.

15th. July (25 miles)

Sitka - Gornoi Island. S.E. 3 - 4, rain, poor visibility - paddling into five foot swell, misty, wet and cold. Poor campsite, paddled 25 miles but feeling a bit low.

16th. July (10 miles)

Gornoi Island - Aspid Cape S.E. 4-5 later 6 - 7, rain, low cloud, sea rough. Paddled 10 miles, big swell, found myself 4 miles out when wind increased, sea picked up and I got swamped by large breaking wave. Took two hours to get ashore and find a bay suitable to land in. Quite shaken.

17th. July

S.E. 4 - 5, sea rough, stayed in tent. Rained

18th. July (25 miles)

Aspid Cape - Point Launder. S.W. 4 - 5 later 6. Rain. Big sea but paddled on cautiously. Hit by squall on six mile crossing, capsized and rolled up twice, got ashore, slept in bivvy bag for two hours, very shaken. Feeling lonely and frightened.

19th. July

Too rough to paddle, still recovering from yesterday.

20th. July (30 miles)

N.W. 2 - 3, stopped raining at last, sun came out. Good day, life once again worth living. Big, intimidating swell, was sea sick just after lunch but quite cheerful.

21st. July

S.W. 5 - 6, gusting 7, showers. Sea again rough, once again morale drops, feeling lonely, unable to paddle in prevailing conditions. Tent swamped by high tide last night, really feel like giving up.

22nd. July (15 miles)

Puffin Bay - Port Alexander. W 3 4, later 5 - 6. Just made it round corner to Port Alexander as wind and sea picked up. Cape Omnany shrouded in fog but paddled into sun and calm water in Chatham Strait. Very pleased, singing and chattering happily away to myself.

23rd. July

Rest. Due to journey so far taking three times as long as planned already, have decided with reluctance, to curtail trip to circumnavigation of just Baranof and Chichagof Islands.

24th. July (30 miles)

Calm, later N. 2 - 3. Sunny, glorious day, could'nt think of anywhere else I'd rather be.

25th. July (2 miles)

N.E. 5 - 6. Took an hour of hard work, with tide, to make two miles. Put into small un-named bay.

26th. July

27th. July

28th. July

Wind abated, paddled to Warm Springs Bay, hard day, glad to be making miles again. Some beautiful scenery

29th. July - rest.

30th. July (43 miles)

Calm, overcast, rain. Only planned a 30 mile day but campsite covered in bear

tracks, did'nt find another bay for 13 miles.

31st. July (36 miles)

Calm, later W. 4 - 5. Good day, although found quartering sea hard work. Saw first whale today, paddled hard but could'nt catch it.

1st. August (24 miles)

N.W. 4 - 5, showers. A bit lumpy and wet. Paddled into Indian town of Hoonah. Very tired but happy.

2nd. August

Rest - interesting to meet and talk with people again, feel awkward and prefer own company.

3rd. August (42 miles)

Calm, later W. 2 - 3. Paddled round most northerly point of trip and onto the edge of a school of humpback whales, one came a bit too close but did'nt upset the kayak too much. Later threatened by 10 ft. Bull sea lion, used paddle in his face and moved hurriedly on.

4th. August (22 miles)

W. 2 - 3. Fog. Rained so heavily today it was exhilarating; watched sea otters playing in kelp beds. Enjoyable day.

5th. August (26 miles)

Calm, overcast, showers. Paddled through school of grey whales to White Sulphur Springs; had a two hour hot mineral bath on arrival.

6th. August)

7th. August) S. S.W. 5 - 6 occ 7, stormbound, seas big and breaking

8th. August)

9th. August (35 miles)

S. 2 - 3, overcast, showers. Very hard day, hot springs must have drained all my strength! Big swell on Khay Peninsular, made me feel very small and vulnerable..

10th. August (30 miles)

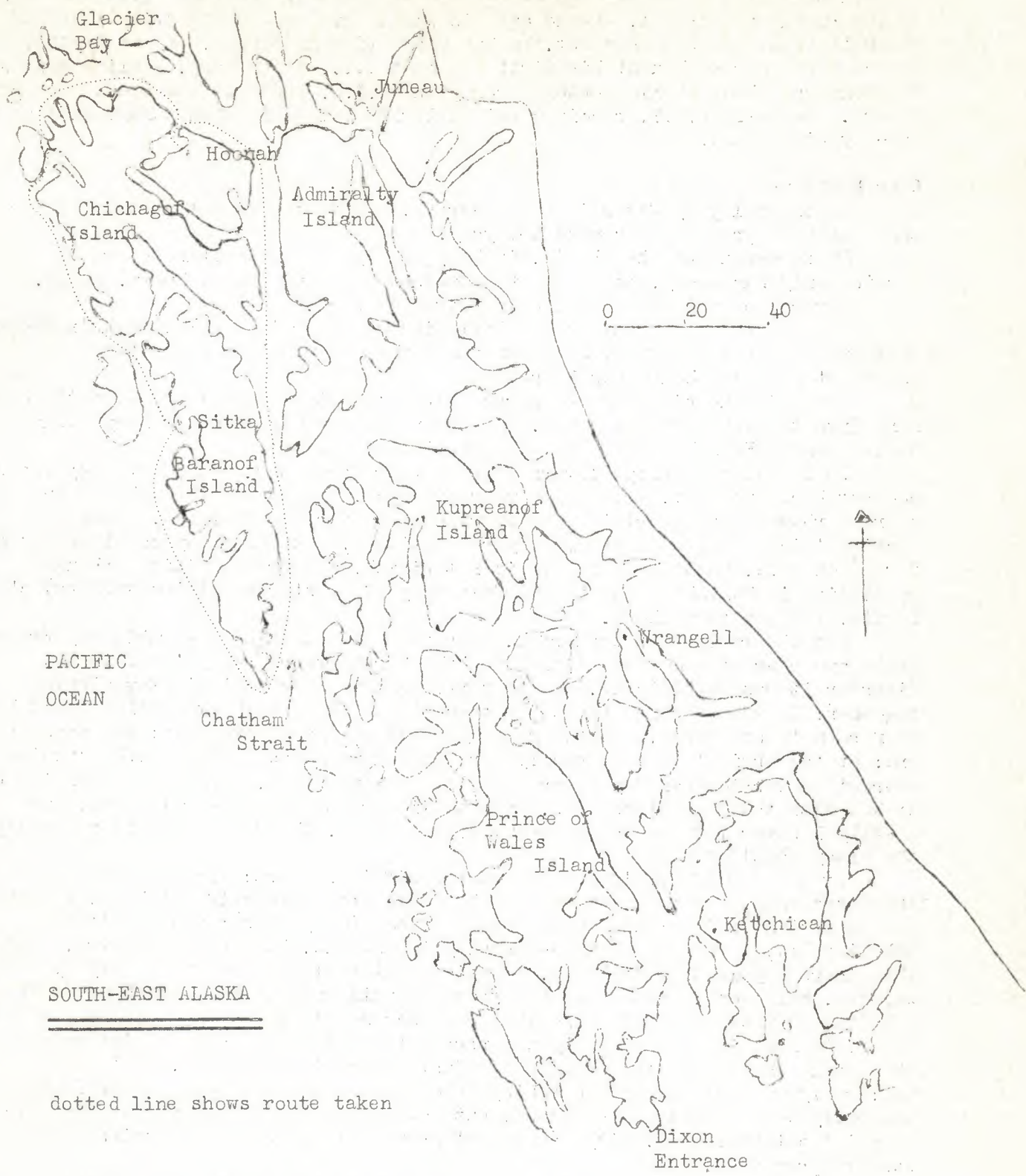
W. 1 - 2, overcast, showers. Bears moved my kayak last night, sat in tent clutching smoke flare but they left without damaging kayak or me. Left early; sea gorgeous, feel great.

11th. August (28 miles)

S. 3 - 4. Return to Sitka. Hot shower, big meal. Strange seeing so many people again; cars seems so loud and smelly; very sad the trip is over but left with an immense feeling of satisfaction and elation.

The journey lasted 28 days, during which I paddled 468 miles in eighteen days to circumnavigate Baranof and Chichagof Islands, South East Alaska. Lasting memories include the huge swell on the Pacific, glaciers and snow covered mountains; the stillness and peace of dusk on Chatham Strait; the whales; the bear; icy water, baking sun, rain and a month of self discovery. My sincere thanks must go to Colin Mortlock whose kayak I used and without whom the trip would not have been possible or successful, John Ramwell for his advice and Derek Hutchinson for all his help, advice and, most of all, friendship.

Duncan Richards



PACIFIC
OCEAN

SOUTH-EAST ALASKA

dotted line shows route taken

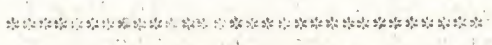
CEUFAD

The house magazine of the Welsh Canoeing Association.

Roger Hayward recently sent me a copy of this magazine. It is very well produced and certainly worth subscribing toit has an excellent sea canoeing section.

Cost of subscription is 4 @ £3.75 6 @ £5.00 8 @ £6.00

Write to R.Hayward at Pen y Bont, Corwen, Clwyd, Gwyned.



Hendoux Kory is a Frenchman who at the age of 65 still continues his career as an international acrobat, and he and his wife (his anchorman) still tour the caberets of Europe with his act. In his spare time he canoes, and at Crystal Palace last year he bought his first sea boat a Nordkapp. Earlier this summer he broke the wheel on his portage trolley and V.C.P. sent him a new one free of charge. Recently V.C.P. received this delightful letter which surely sums up the saa-kayaking scene:

Dear Monsieur Goodmann,

So the hollyday fever is over (sorry), try to be serious just a bet and make money to prepared for next hollyday.

Thank again for the wheele, tuch my deeply. I was thinking everyone was working only for money, cheerfull to realized some one can be human. Thank.

I received the steel band + the Tyga tie lock.

I hade hade also (but at the last minute) order 'one spray deck in Neoprene' that one I do not received. So I confirmed the order. 'You send it to my permanent address Chouze sur Loire.

You join the bill for the spray deck + the steel band + the Tyga tie + two more Tyga tie You join the envoy. And I send You an Euro check (on my German bank because on my French bank I have only nationals checks).

So I make the Rallye International of Bretagne Sud. Great for many years I doe not hade such Joy, I loose 20 years at once. Unfortunately, midle of June I start a rheumathismes crisis, and my right shoulder was very bad, so my Wife was macking twice a day massage with Hydro cortisone, and the bloody shoulder was good for a bet more, actually still it is not finish, tomorrow I visit a rheuma specialist in Munich (ready to run fast away if he starts talking surgery) c'est la vie, les petits malhews.

But the rallye was wonderful. Organised in a complete anarchic way French style byOur Great Commodore Jean Lutz 'the MarkBrothers rallye' all in the disorder it was magnificent. Wee thightly keep to 'regle d'or' stay always together: So wee wherent always together in an area of about 6 miles (must have enaf room to paddling). Wee wherent about 31 Jollys cracks ones: Wee loose no one: at the arrival we have nearly more cars thsn Kayaks, (Ours Wifes knowing us wherent so worrie than day after days it was more wifes, mine was always looking at Sea with the long glass view, with the immersion sack under the arm, but nastily I never let her the opportunity to use it, She was condemned to massage the bloody shoulder.

It was 3 Nordkapp 'Guy Ogez and his Wife' and mine: incontestable they where the bests ones, for the rest about half Feuillettes and half Catchiky. I thank God to having choice Your (on the good advice of Guy Ogez): because it is unbelievable, seem to be founda-mentally impossible, but the awfull tru, most of the others Kayaks wherent leaky, I notice most of them wherent leaky by the welding, hull/deck: one was so bad that wee pull out the band witch cover the welding, that was so badly done than wee used nearly 2 pounds of polyester with fiber, to make it approximately waterproof the Catchiky, that one ist scandalous, the bundle whom cover the welding ist just a textil band gumed, that the electrician use: rafly we can said that katchiky make an appropriate copy of Your Nordkapp undoubtly wee recognised the shape, but their finish the copy because the realization ist catastrophale. pity You cannot protect Yours products against thieses bandits procedees.

Anyways be happy, when the press Fotogbaphers wherent making fotos of Ours boats it was automatically one Nordkapp they were choicing.

Other mater:

My Wife ist a bet feedup to make the rescue car, and with a little push I think I may pull Her to the active kayaking.

Now I masterized the roll (so about 80%): but I realized and that make my so happy, than the Nordkapp ist, when get used to it, verry stable: Wee have to face wind force 4 to 5, with waves about 0.90 to 1.20 metres (without white horse) and I was feeling confortable (I was noticing the others ones even with more confirmateds kayakistes than wheres starting to be not so at ease), maybe: just because they were to slight, they miss few Kgs (I like to know Your opinion about). And Wee have to make a landing in surf and I was very proud because I never capsizes, probably the good shape of the hull, anyway the others ones wherent in panic, and I was negotiating quietly my landing in surf, and never have the feeling that I was close to loose the kontroll of my direction.

(Of course I am not so beegener as I said, about 45 years ago I was having fun with my folding kayak, on the strand call Cote des Basques, between Biarritz and St. Jean de Luz, in that time wee doesnt know what was surfing, but wee where jumping on a wave about 400 or even more from the shore and I realized than that was surf, so I was a good surfer, but I never think after so many years I will remeber that technic, so its probably like the bicycle You don't forget).

So now I dream at other rallyes: I hear next year the Britains organized a cross chanel, so wy not, if the rhuema dont hother my to much and if I have time to make a proper training. I will like (I dont know in solo or in Bi).

I intend to make a good training, in the lake of Konstanz 'Bodensee' because wee work in Friedischaven in January 83 and it will be a good opportunity.

Can You advice my about clothing equipment, to face cold weather: I read it is a new material Gortex, for the Suits, Your advice would be precious.

What date 'the Crystal Palace Exhibition' If I am not far away I will like to came (I think I badly contaminated by the Sea Kayak virus).

To hear from You cordially remain

Yours sincerely,
Hendroux Kory.

NEWS FROM CALSHOT

Paddlers will be interested to know that John Aberdein, the Head of Canoeing is now returning to Scotland to teach in the Orkney Islands and John Kuysler has been promoted to take his place.

A very full programme of canoeing, boardsailing, sailing and multi-activity courses are detailed in the 1983 Brochure of Britain's major sea canoeing centre. Canoe courses range from beginner to advanced and run from May to October and several special events have been planned for 1983.

May 7 Sea canoeing exhibition. A chance to try and to buy kayaks and equipment.

Whitsun A ten day French white water trip to canoe in the Massif Central.

For improver or expert. Proficiency tests can be taken. 28 July - 5 June

Early August Brittany sea canoeing. A ten day sea kayak tour of S.W. Brittany in association with French sea kayakists. Proficiency tests can be taken. 30 July - 7 August.

Late Augsut Norway sea kayaking. Ten days. A self-sufficient sea kayak exped. from Bergen to Stavanger through the spectacular fiord and island seascape. Ferry from and to Newcastle. 20 - 28 August.

Details of all courses including surfing, welsh whitewater and Round the Isle of Wight weekends are available free from: The Director, Calshot Activities Centre, Calshot, Southampton, SO4 1BR. Tel. Fawley (0703) 892077.

EXTRA

Members of the B.C.U. coaching scheme wishing to gain experience may like to volunteer their services during weekend courses. Instructors should apply with available dates to the Centre.

From Noel Flynn, Ballincollig, Co. Cork, Eire.

Dear John,

While reading Paul Caffyn's book, 'Obscured by Waves' last month, I noted the long handle on his Nordkapp's bilge pump and it occurred to me that possibly many people, using the rear mounted and relatively short handled "Chimp" to pump out a flooded kayak, might find themselves wishing for a ball and socket joint at the elbow, as leverage is limited and the action somewhat unnatural to the arm. Those who tried Peter Carter's Canadian-type spare paddle (Newsletter No. 29) might be interested to know that the 30 cm loom extension (with 'T' grip) makes a neat extension to the "Chimp" handle also. The pump handle fits snugly into the aluminium loom, the 'T' grip is comfortable, the leverage greater and one is working in front of oneself rather than behind one's back.

Needless to say, if the 'T' grip extension fulfills it's original role (forgive the pun!) correctly, this secondary function becomes, fortunately, redundant. ***** Best wishes. Noel Flynn. *****

Frank Goodman attended the recent first American Sea Canoeing Symposium held at Maine on the east coast of the States. I asked him for a report on this event for the A.S.K.C. - here it is. I am sure you will enjoy it as much as I.

SEA SYMPOSIUM, MAINE - AUGUST 1982.

Forest soils, though formed from leaf mould of a million trees in a million years are still fragile. Flood or drought can easily expose the bedrock that lies beneath them, and in Maine, where gouging glaciers once carved into the low mountains, the dark grey schists and rusty granites push through the thin soil wherever a steep gradient or a rushing river have kept the forest at bay.

The sea-level contour exposes this rocky under-lay even more clearly, for thousands of miles it traces out tortuous channels, circumnavigates a myriad islands, pushes deep inland where the valleys have been inundated, yet always, throughout its length, the ancient rocks are exposed. A skein of gleaming buoys mark the lobster-pots that necklace the coast - a sure indication that the clean, scoured rocks move out under water and into the Atlantic.

Endless miles of inlets, headlands and coves - a mouth-watering prospect for any sea canoeist, and a perfect setting for the first Sea Symposium in the U.S.A. The cherry on top of this splendid cake was that I'd been invited there as guest speaker.

The venue was the hydrology department of the University of Maine, whose buildings, adapted from an old wooden farmstead, overlooked the Damariscotta River, and provided, not only a lecture room, but wooded parkland for a barbeque and a jetty for launching and viewing kayaks.

Friday brought people from the state of Maine, other New England states, south from Florida and the Appalachians, west from Washington and still further north from British Columbia.

I need'nt have worried! The same excitement, the same enthusiasm, the same sillouettes as people explained how they had paddled and braced into the wave that creamed them! Even the manufacturing scene was the same; small companies with owner designers developing their own craft to suit the waves of the oceans and the hips of their customers.

Well of course, it was'nt just the same. There were people looking at sea canoeing for the first time, more than you would find at a British symposium which are more heavily populated with aficionados. The Americans take their sea canoeing in a more relaxed style than we do; more a result of the quieter sea conditions they encounter, than of intent, I guess. We talked about kayak design, safety, navigation and camping, but here in the U.S. the wilderness is a closer companion than it can ever be in our over-crowded island; and talk of the hunting and fishing that was possible from a canoe was much in evidence, not to mention the digging of clams!

But it was the testing of canoes that took precedence over everything. The sun sparkled on the tide pushing gently up river and over it the kayaks moved novices wobbled tentatively as experienced paddlers powered past, and an odd stop-watch clicked as, with American thoroughness, turning times and speeds were checked.

We dined out in the woods at a lobster clambake on Saturday night - all specially laid on for the canoeists. This good living is reflected to some extent in the kayaks they paddle. I was amazed to find that the Nordkapp, biggish by our standards, was a mere dwarf alongside the American designs. This emphasised the more sheltered aspect of their canoeing; no lifting these boats away from an exposed landing spot! It would be essential to find a quiet cove in which to land and unload all the goodies for the evening feast! The two-hundred pound

loading we'd consider reasonable for a self-contained month-long expedition would be about right for "Le American Weekend", but I liked the idea immensley!

A hot Sunday gave more hours for trying out the boats and also for a demonstration of rescue techniques something quite new to many of the paddlers. I'd practised with two of the local canoeists beforehand, so we made it look far too easy in the calm, warm water with empty boats. Once we'd convinced them that HI and T rescues were the answer, we loaded our boats with 200 lbs of sandbags and proved they were'nt, resorting to deck pumps to clear out our water-logged boats.

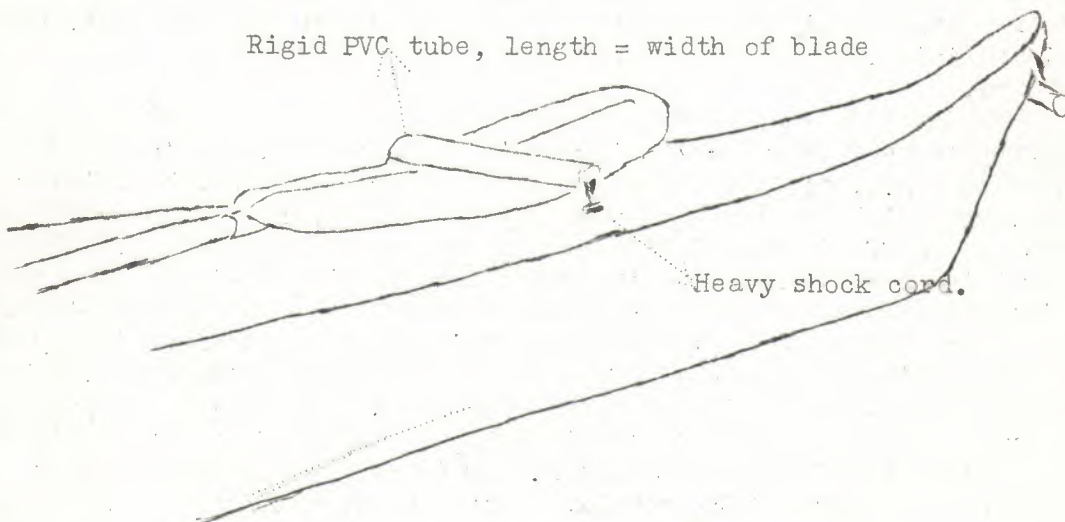
Groups were invited to sign up for afternoon trips, from beginners to advanced, but even the advanced trip was made under perfect conditions, with just a whisper of a swell moving in from the Atlantic and a handful of seals to slither off rocks as a side-show.

The doughnuts had all been eaten; coffee drunk; stories told. Long journeys lay ahead for many people as the first farewells were called across the car-park to new-made friends. Tyres scrunshed in gravel and the lowering sun glinted on kayaks disappearing through the trees. I noticed that one or two leaves had turned red. Autumn falls suddenly in Maine.

From Peter Carter, South Australia. Our Australian 'agent'. (Incidentally - while I remember - would those of you in Australia wishing to renew membership to the A.S.K.C. please do so to Peter at 28, Rowells Rd., Lockleys, S. Australia)

Dear John

.....was a bit surprised to find my spare paddle system described in the June issue of CANOEING. Funny that Mike Clark should choose that item, it was my other article in that issue of the SEA CANOEIST that stirred things up. Have sent him a drawing of the revised system, which uses a piece of plastic pipe to hold the blade end. Makes restowing almost easy.



From Dick Sturmer, 294, Wilhelmshaven, Ubbostr. 8. West Germany.

Dear John,

.....I have special knowledge of the south island of Denmark, the coastline from Gothenborg to Oslo in Sweden, the south Skargaarden coastline of Stokholm and Aaland where I spend a third of my holidays. I go by kayak from Turku through Kokar via Mariehamn. These are the best places for kayaking in Europe and also the most beautiful.

As most of you know Paul Caffyn is currently circumnavigating Australia. Here is his latest progress report dated 12th. November, 1982 and posted from Ceduna, S. Australia.

Dear John,

At the 8,427 mile mark (statute type miles) with about 800 to go. I think I wrote last from Darwin. From there did a month around the Kimberlies with two food dumps down to Broome. It's one of the most isolated, remote parts of Australia. For 12 days I never saw a soul, no boat, aboriginals! But very enjoyable. The crux of that stage was crossing King Sound where the tidal range is up to 11.2 metres! The tidal race created by this massive tide turns even the large State Ships (cargo vessels) in 360° circles as they pass through Sunday Strait. I worked slack water mid-strait and made Broome 3 days later. After Broome there was 80 mile beach. I renamed it '80 mile wide beach'. At worst the tide goes out 8 miles from the high water mark. One morning I spent $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours carrying canoe and gear to the water's edge, and that was half tide!!! After that I worked 12 hour cycles, paddling from H.W. to L.W. On the overcast nights with extremely poor visual horizons the worst was the small sharks bumping into the canoe! Took a lot of getting used to. The water is very discoloured - 1 to 2 inches of visibility in the inter-tidal zone.

There is'nt much swell on that northern coast, but from North West Cape, heading south for Perth, I started hitting huge Indian Ocean swell. One of the major cruxes of the whole trip was the 130 mile long Zurydorp Cliffs, limestone cliffs up to 150 metres high. There is one tenuous landing in a shallow bay called False Entrance, 23 miles from the start of the cliffs. On a 2 metre swell I flailed in between sets onto a shelving reef. Why this section of cliffs worried me so much was because: 1. the prevailing swell, 2. ground tide (current) and 3. wind were all against me. I walked out of the cliffs just south of False Entrance, the cliffs are 20 to 30 metres high - the limestone is flat on top, where 60 metres inland there is a sandy beach and barrier of huge limestone boulders swept into a boulder track! If you can imagine the size and force of seas that break up cliffs 20-30 metres and throw them on top, 60 metres inland. I felt sick in the guts and nearly went home. I did have the option of reversing the direction of paddling over the 106 mile stint to Kalbarri - but it would'nt have been aesthetically right - so waited a day for a good forecast. Launched in an incredible land mist rolling offshore (viz. 50m) and 36 hours later landed at Kalbarri.

From there to Perth was a 'breeze' in comparison, but the south coast, from Cape Leeuwein (S.W. tip western Australia) to here, life has been interesting. Big seas, incredible amounts of windy days and the BIGHT. There are two sections of limestone cliffs in the Bight, the Baxter Cliffs of 100 miles, and the Nullabar Cliffs of 113 miles. Both are continuous sheer cliffs with big southern swell into the base of cliffs. The Baxter Cliffs took 25 hours but I was caught in an unexpected violent storm of an electrical nature. It lasted only 30 minutes but it was at night, off the cliffs, overcast sky - so pitch black. I have never encountered such ferocity in wind squalls before. For 15 minutes I braced on the blades from side to side, while the Nordkapp surfed in front of the chop. The air was filled with flying white water. But it abated so quickly as it hit, but left me expecting more of the squalls during the night. Fortunately it was the only one.

Then came the one I had been dreading - the 130 mile Euila to Head of the Bight Cliffs (Nullabar). But I managed to get a little closer to the start of the cliffs to reduce the distance to 113 miles. It's dry county - flat, arid sand dunes, hot, flies. I set off with an offshore N.E. blowing and reached Head of the Bight $32\frac{1}{2}$ hours later. 20 hours was into easterly headwinds and I was knackered at the end of it!

There's still plenty of mean waters before Melbourne but I'm confident of being back before Christmas, all up an average over $10\frac{1}{2}$ months since leaving Melbourne is 26.2 miles per day, and on paddling days, 36 miles per day.

Cheers for now. Paul Caffyn.

PACIFIC COAST PERSPECTIVE

by Will Nordby, San Anselmo, CA., U.S.A.

The signs are unmistakable: clubs, newsletter, articles, guide books, photo contests, symposium gurus, commercial tour guides, expeditions, equipment, centres, regattas, etc. The U.S. and Canada are experiencing the first phases of kayakmania. One can only wonder about its ultimate popularity.

For those of us who knew the joy of uncluttered waterways, it is a time of mild apprehension. On the one hand, with more attention being focused on the sport of sea kayaking, both kayak design and touring equipment will ultimately improve. But, on the other hand, will the quality of the experience remain the same with more people on the water? I don't think so.

I began my kayaking in the early '70s in the area of Vancouver Island, B.C. At that time few people were travelling by kayak. Whenever our group visited Indian villages we would be regarded as a novelty. A special affinity would develop after initial suspicions were allayed. The Indians sensed in us a respect for their way of life unlike the occasional yachtsman who motored in bringing the city with him.

Particularly gratifying were those instances where we were the first kayakers to visit a village. Nothing ruins the enchantment of kayak travel more than to be told other kayakers have been in a place before you. Now, with more people using kayaks, it seems inevitable those enchanting moments will occur less and less.

Further evidence of the expanding awareness of sea kayaking manifested itself October 30th. in the form of the first annual Angel Island Kayak Regatta sponsored by Bob Licht, owner of the newly established Sea Trek Centre in Sausalito, California.

Bob, a long time wilderness guide, was motivated to establish his kayak centre after observing the kayaking activities in the Pacific Northwest. He has modelled Sea Trek after John Dowd's store in Vancouver and providing sales, rentals, instruction and guided trips around San Francisco Bay, the immediate coast and the Sea of Cortez in Mexico. His kayak centre represents the first major store south of Seattle specialising in sea and ocean kayaking.

The Angel Island race drew over 100 kayakers and friends to the first ever Bay Area event. Among the sixty entrants, twentyfive different makes of kayaks were represented in the six classifications of singles, doubles and masters.

Both the novice and experienced paddlers shared a common starting line for the Le Mans style departure along their respective 4 and 10 mile courses. The overall winner crossed the finish line in 1:28:28. He was Olympic racer John Weed in a silver-grey Lieser King down-river kayak. His homestretch sprint was encouraged by an unexpected source. As he was stroking along about two miles from completion, John detected a movement off to his side. Could it be someone making a bid to making a bid to pass? Not quite, glancing over he saw what appeared to be a six foot shark surfacing and then veering away showing it's white belly. The growing fatigue John felt disappeared as adrenalin slammed into his system. No one passed him. The "shark" was later determined to be a surprised sturgeon.

Second place winner was Tim Taylor piloting his Odyssey Surf Ski to a 1:35:20 finish. Andrew Fluegelman was third moving his Eddyline Heron over the line at 1:41:10.

In doubles, the powerhouse mixed team of Connie and Steve Sinclair posted 1:42:10 to beat the Men's duo of Jack Trombley and Jim Katz with a 1:43:34 effort. After the race Sea Trek provided hot showers, a barbeque, beer, live music and the environment for good conversation.

THE SPRAY DECK by Alan byde

What is a spraydeck? The first noted sporting use of a splash sheet is one made of mackintosh (rubberised cotton sheet) on a Rob Roy canoe around 1865. It kept the wet off one's knees, as drops splashed down from the paddle tips and shaft, and from the passing waves. It didn't fit tightly from cockpit rim to rim, but was tucked over the legs and knees and thighs. Water could still splash into the cockpit. This was no problem as the cockpit was a wooden well inside the hull and deck. It was the first of the pods and liners and kept the wet out of the rest of the craft. Rushton in America, circa 1875-1906 mentions a British (or rather English) paddler of a Rob Roy type kayak being unable to re-enter in a race held in the States in the 1880s. One would suppose that such a re-entry was possible, unaided from deep water. They didn't roll them then so it must have been possible to clamber aboard a water filled cockpit in a kayak and be able to maintain control.

Since the 1960s it has been necessary to keep all water out of every kayak used in competition or for sport on white water, on rivers or surf. Some used two s/ds, in order to keep the water from squirting into the kayak. If the kayak filled and it could (and most still can) then it was not possible to re-enter without assistance, unlike those sporting paddlers eighty to a hundred years earlier. Therefore tightly stretched s/ds with a strong elastic are in demand by w/w paddlers. Superior materials are used, just to keep the water out of the kayak, a trick which had been learned and forgotten within the previous hundred years.

In other words, you only find a s/d essential if your kayak can fill with water.

Twice in my canoeing life I have been trapped by the pressure difference created by a spraydeck that has seized on to the cockpit rim. In neither case did I have a panic strap with which to rip it off. On each occasion I found that I CAN hold my breath for a minute whilst being buffeted by raging water. It was either that or die!

In more words the s/d is a confession or a failure; it is a potential death trap; it needs tuition and skill to use it properly; it wears out rapidly and is a monument to our sporting forgettury.

Have I panned the s/d enough? Do I need to remind you that I designed, built and patented the cockpit liner and the cockpit pod? It was only after reading 'Rushton and His Times in American Canoeing' very recently that I recognised that all I have done is to pursue in modern materials what was a wooden walled parallel a hundred years ago.

What is a spraydeck? It is made of flexible material of varying thickness, it attaches around the paddler by an elastic waistband and around the cockpit rim by an elastic or draw cord. It sags between body and rim and traps a puddle of water which wets one's back and drips through onto one's shorts. It is a flexible centre to a rigid deck. It covers the lap of the paddler over his/her spread out thighs. Between them there is a volume of unused space under the deck.

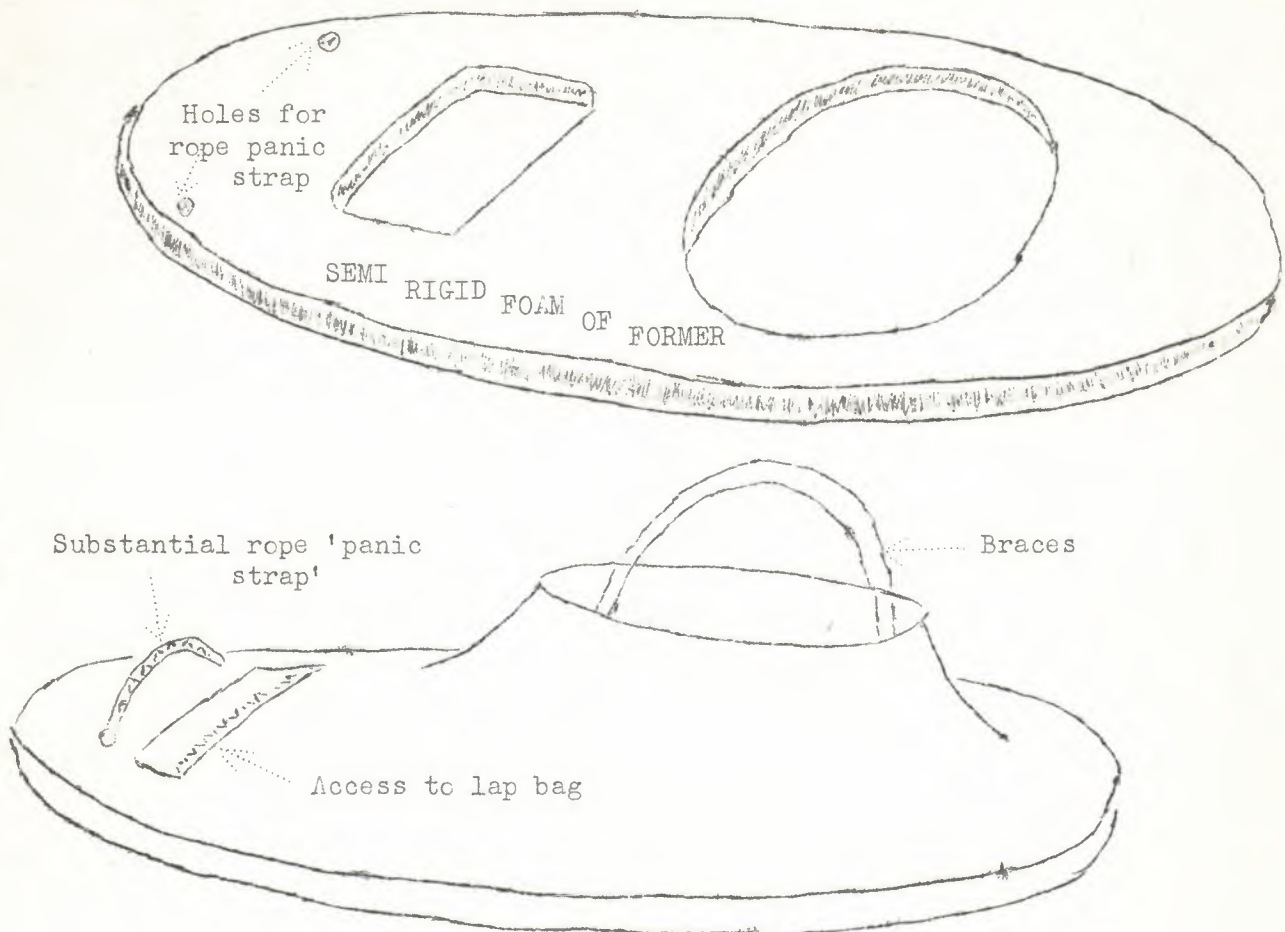
Putting on a s/d takes time; it is necessary first to roll the back of the elastic over the back of the cockpit, and then to stretch the front over the front of the cockpit, taking care that the panic strap is outside and that the back doesn't at once spring off - which it often does! Then one can roll the sides down over the rim and it is then on.

IDEA. Suppose the s/d was a rigid sheet of GRP material or foam, say polyethylene about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, semi-rigid? It would hold the fabric of the deck cover out in line with the cockpit rim. The attachment and seal between these two decks would be a flexible elasticated cuff all round which would roll down and snap onto the rim. No problem with stretching on - no puddling - though probably costly.

IDEA. Suppose the volume between the thighs which is sometimes occupied by buoyancy material were to be used to put day necessities like food and drink and a camera? A pouch to be made to hang under the spraydeck, access through a

velcro fastened flap on the deck. During exit from the canoe it comes out with you and if watertight, performs the function of a buoyancy chamber which then rides up around the chest as the s/d buoyancy systems do. It would dangle rather heavily across the thighs when walking about the beach.

IDEA. Suppose we do without them?



Nick Padwick,
Quarry House
Colwinston,
Cowbridge,
S.Glam.

THE INTERNATIONAL KAYAK EXPEDITION TO SHETLAND
AN EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

Roger Davis,
32, Burley Place,
St. Athan,
Barry,
S.Glam.

During July a four man team, all members of the internationally based Advanced Sea Kayak Club, got together to attempt to circumnavigate the Shetland Isles. Two of the four succeeded, they were from South Wales. Jochen Leppert from Luenburg in West Germany and Mick O'Connell from Cumbria, who was the organising brain behind the expedition, unfortunately were unable to complete the whole trip which tested Roger Davis, currently based at R.A.F. St. Athan and Nick Padwick from Colwinston, S. Glam., to the limit. Neither had surfed down forty foot sea swells before, dealt with such powerful reflected waves nor met a situation where just about every major hazard to canoeing was present at the same time - six and half hours of almost gale force winds, very cold torrential rain, heaving beam seas, half a mile visibility, and a very tired paddler on an 18 mile crossing from Britain's remotest inhabited island back to the Shetland mainland.

None of us have experience such incredible scenery, fantastic caves and a wealth of wildlife which surpasses the imagination. Shetland held a major surprise every day of our three week trip, whether it be of the type which gets the adrenalin going, the enormous power and changing mood of the sea, the magnificent scenery and wild-life of the fascination of the local people, their customs, history and way of life.

We have built up lectures from the mass of slides and information we collected. For further information contact Nick Padwick or Roger Davis, address as above.