

ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB NEWSLETTER

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

MEMBERSHIP

COSTS : £3.00 per annum

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ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER No. 37

JUNE 1983.

J.J.R. (Nanuk)
4, Wavell Garth,
Sandal, Wakefield,
W. Yorkshire, England.

FROM ME (EDITORIAL)

500 members - and still growing. This is the state of the ASKC. Not that I'm complaining - far from it. I am delighted that our Club continues to mushroom like this. What is it that attracts so many of us to the sea (a badge and a day trip to Skegness for the most original answer!); is it that we are a nation of mariners with salt water in our tubes or simply that we just like messing about in boats? Whatever, it is true that our specific interest in canoeing is catching on and is doing so world wide.

I suppose some of the articles in the ASKC Newsletter answer the above question for us, - take, for example, "A Family Adventure in Canada" in this edition.

What has really pleased me over the years I have watched sea kayaking grow in popularity is the way we have professionally and safely approached our sport. In terms of equipment, knowledge and skill we have carefully progressed so that today we are rapidly being recognised by others as a responsible group of sports men and women. Our relationship with H.M. Coastguard is excellent (we won them over years ago). Generally speaking, and with encouragement from the B.C.U. we have taken time out to learn about our chosen environment. There are books specifically written, there is a B.C.U Specialist Committee, there are courses, Papers, symposiums. And it is not just the obvious subjects like safety at sea, weather, navigation, etc that we concentrate on. Sea kayaking opens up a whole new world of discovery and information - but here I am preaching to the converted - well, at least you will understand what I'm on about!

All the preceding leads me to the main point, viz: the expense of running the ASKC. I am being faced with the option of discarding good material as we can only afford to send out five newsletters per year (as it is, I am sending out six) in return for the £3 sub. If the ASKC is to reflect the upsurge in the interest in sea canoeing I need to get out more newsletters. Bearing in mind, also, the increasing costs of paper/ink/postage/etc and that any increase will be the first for five years I have decided to up the annual subscription from £3 per year for all no matter where you lived to £4.00 per year for residents in the United Kingdom and £6.00 per year all others. This will be as from January 1984 and will be for a guaranteed six 'letters per year with the odd extra one thrown in if funds allow.

I hope you enjoy your Newsletters. I get a great deal of satisfaction from putting it all together. Should you get the same from reading it and contributing towards it, then I guess we all win!

Good Paddling
'Nanuk'

A.S.K.C. SHOP

ASKC stickers @ 30 pence each
ASKC letterheaded paper @ 5 pence per sheet (orders in multiples of 10)
4th. National Sea Canoeing Symposium Report @ 50 pence each
Report on the 1981 Circumnavigation of Nunivak, Alaska @ 75 pence each
Information Paper on Tides and Buoyage @ 45 pence each
Safety and the Sea Canoeist - a Paper by H.M.Coastguard @ 45 pence each.
ASKC T shirts, small/medium/large/X large @ £3.50 each
ASKC sweat shirts, small/medium/large/X large @ £6.00 each
ASKC sweaters, hand made, woollen @ £11. Send to Mrs. S.Rowe, Siabod Cottage,
Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig, Gwynedd stating chest size.

HAVE YOU RESERVED YOUR PLACE ON THE 1983 SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM AT ULLSWATER
CLOSING DATE OCTOBER 1st. 1983. DON'T LEAVE IT TOO LATE.

When you try to picture the Director of The National Mountaineering Centre, you probably think of a dynamic, imaginative, intelligent, seen it all, done it all type of person. A sort of cross between Margaret Thatcher and Superman. Well - you'd be right and you might be forgiven for thinking that the man's father would have reached that stage in life when his most energetic moments would be giving his grandchildren a hard game of draughts. This time you would be wrong.

Joe Barry is past 65 and this summer he decided that he would crack one of his ambitions; to paddle his canoe to his old home town. The fact that the Irish Sea impinged upon this objective did'nt deter him in the slightest.

The journey took him from the Point of Ayr across the Firth of Clyde to Arran, across Kilbrannon Sound to the Mull of Kintyre and then to Rathlin and Northern Ireland. He then paddled around the North coast to Lough Foyle and up this to Londonderry and his home town of Strabane.

Having successfully completed this with his son John, Joe made the return journey - solo - and in a completely unfamiliar kayak.

I'm sure you will agree that considering his age and small amount of sea paddling experience, this was an out-standing trip. The following is his own account of one day of that trip.

Raymond Rowe.

4th. Day - Southend to Rathlin

The gods were surely with us for we awoke yet again to marvellous weather and breakfasted in sunshine already warm. During the cooking John disappeared and I looked up to see him emerge from the sea - 'harry starkers' as he would put it. Startled, I looked round to see if any females were in sight, particularly for the German family camping nearby which had at least one female in the party. It was a relief to see none.

I borrowed a mirror from the German family. We shaved, lunched, made unhurried preparation and at fine minutes to two set out for Ireland. All this time the sun shone from a cloudless sky and the outlook for our channel crossing seemed good.

The plan was to paddle along the Southern end of the Mull to the extreme South Western corner, then to strike out across the North Channel. By my reckoning we would enjoy the assistance of the third, fourth and fifth hours of the strong West running ebb to arrive in Rathlin Sound during the two hours of slack water when the notorious narrow might be in an amiable mood. The plan had been approved by no less an authority than Ray Rowe who had himself done the crossing both ways and though it was an exciting prospect, it held no particular terror. All the same I had the feeling that we would be somehow provoking the gods of the North Channel were we to continue with buoyancy aids on the decks where they had stayed for days and I suggested to John that we wore them. Again he let me have my way so we landed among the Mull rocks to put them on and it was as well we did so for we hit, almost immediately, an area of turbulence which tossed us around for the next five minutes before we came again to smooth water. Those five minutes were for me slightly intimidating at that moment of commitment to the crux of our route but they also showed me that John's balance in the Nordkapp was every bit as good as mine in the Baidarka.

Now we could see Ireland and Rathlin too. We had a bearing for each but needing neither struck out for Erin's Isle. It was a grand sight.

Across that same short stretch of sea the Scots had long ago set out from Ireland in their currachs or their coracles, from the Dalriada of their old homeland to the Dalriada of their new homeland, to much of which they gave their language and to all of which they gave their name - to Scotland.

They must have been familiar with this view as must the unruly monk, Columbia, of the same race who followed a couple of centuries later, heading the returning tide of Christian civilisation to pagan Britain. Of the craft in which they crossed, some must have been less seaworthy than ours and they would perforce have been as wary of wind and wave, of weather and the play of tides as we must be.

Back and forth through that same narrow strait the Vikings in their Longships would have voyaged from their kingdom in the Western Isles to their kingdoms in Cumbria or the Isle of Man, to refuge in Strangford Lough or to the settlements at Dublin or Wexford and to eventual defeat by Brian Boru.

Yonder Robert the Bruce, looking out as we looked, saw Rathlin as a refuge from the army of English Edward and in a cave in that same Rathlin, so the story goes, was inspired by the spider. This way, later, came his brother, Edward, to a brief and fatal venture in kingship of the warring Irish.

Across this same strait in this same direction must have sailed those fewer Scots who, reversing the route of their encestors made their homes in Antrim and, later, the lowlanders who settlrd the North of Ireland in the early part of the 17th. Century to leave their indelible mark on the speech and character of the Ulster Scots. Here, since the dawn of history, these British Isles, speaking the same languages, were destined by geography to have contact and consanguinity, feud and filiation.

Twleve miles from the Mull of Kintyre to Fair Head in Antrim, the shortest crossing, or fifteen to Rathlin were never much of a barrier to our ancestors and quite a few canoe crossings had been done in recent years. Yet unlike the English Channel these fewer miles are daily visited by formidable tidalstreams and these are at times complicated by stormy weather. Nor in contrast to the other channel has any swimmer so far made the shorter crossing, though some strong lad, judging his time well, will surely swim it one day soon - if some strong lass does'nt do it first! And he or she won't have to worry much about shipping for this channel is not a busy seaway. As we started out there were no craft in sight.

Now by our fourth day, sensitive to every catspaw, we were alerted more than once by a breeze which pushed up a few wavelets and menaced more, but each time faded to let us peacefully and pleasurably pursue our passage. I tried to count the miles by counting the quarter hours. They passed smoothly as we paddled and chatted, making patently good progress, aware of no difficulty, until at the completion of the seventh mile by my watch we stopped for tea.

Mr. Howard Jeffs, owner of the Nordkapp John paddled, is a do-it-yourself enthusiast. His canoe had every refinement imaginable, including one which particularly appealed to us. Under the foredeck, just above and between the paddler's knees, he had fitted a tubular compartment which comfortably took a flask and the paddler's lunch and, as he put it, made good use of wasted space. When we had rafted, John produced flask and tea, poured two cups and then two more and there, side by side in mid channel, in view of Scotland and Ireland but of no human except ourselves, we enjoyed afternoon tea in the best tradition, in unique circumstances and congenial company. Just to sit there with my son, holding each others canoe and drinking tea like a pair of ridiculously happy schoolboys was a pleasure beyond words - one which I will not easily forget.

John put away the flask and we paddled on, keeping an easy rhythm, and by the evidence of our eyes, drawing nearer to the Irish coast. Knocklayd in Antrim was clearly in sight as Ray Rowe had forecast and all went well with us.

For a period a great big friendly swell crossed our path at right angles to our course, apparantly moving in the mysterious way of the sea in a Northerly direction, rising and falling but with no horizontal force. John was about seventy yards off to the north of me at the time and I watched fascinated as he sank bit by bit from my sight so that I lost first the canoe then the torso smoothly sinking, then the head and finally the farewell wave of a paddle blade. For a long moment the North Channel had swallowed my son. Then little by little it gave him back. Firstly, as though to signal his re-appearance, flashed past the onward urging paddle. A clear second later the dark head showed, then came the shoulders, the trunk and at length, the whole canoe rose from the depths, all for a moment riding high along a crest as though airbourne, before disappearing again as before.

Only at this stage did we decide whether to land on the island or the mainland and the suggestion to go for Rathlin was mine. Offered for no better reason than the island had the more romantic appeal. John agreed. At that time both seemed within easy reach, no more than an hours paddle at the most. Then, when we were already west of Fairhead with perhaps two miles to go for either alternative, things went wrong. From easy movement and obvious progress, we slowed to the point at which we made no noticeable headway at all. The mainland to the left held us at the same unchanging angle and Rathlin kept its distance however hard we paddled. The awful truth dawned on us. We had somehow missed the tide and were fighting the flood.

My reckoning must have been very wrong for there should have been plenty of time to make the crossing in those three hours of ebb plus two of slack water and now we were in serious difficulty. To force the passage to Church Bay where we intended to land would be impossible. To make for the mainland would be to cross the main strength of the flood, so also out of the question. To ease paddling while one thought things out was to be swept back towards Scotland or southwards down the Irish Sea. In my minds eye loomed large the big black arrows denoting the full force of that strong tide on the chart and they curved in that direction. Perhaps, I thought, if we were to slant northwards up the straight eastern coast of Rathlin, we would miss the full force of the stream and avoid a head on fight. Again John did'nt disagree. Indeed, there was no choice.

To say that we paddled this new line in desperation is maybe to exaggerate but I paddled in a mood somewhere between determination and desperation and the area inbetween was hazy. Failure to make land would at least mean an extra couple of hours at sea. John was always just ahead waiting for me. My carefully practised rhythm was not strong enough to make headway against the stream. I moved up a gear or two and hoped I could keep going.

It was a good fight, a hard fight, and as in all good fights the outcome was in doubt until near the end. Glances at the mainland were not encouraging. No slight change of aspect ever gave any hint of progress. The rocky shore ahead seemed to come nearer only by inches. Away to our right, to the north, stood the lighthouse on the north east corner of Rathlin and as the islands straight eastern shore runs slightly north easterly from Rue Point, this lighthouse is the islands' most easterly point. For a while - for a long time - my greatest ambition, my one consuming ambition, was to draw level with that lighthouse and when at length that had been labouriously achieved, to be inside or west of it. And in the end we did it. And when we had done that I knew we could do the rest. And we did; paddled right up to the Rathlin rocks. We were in Ireland.

Then it struck me that we could only be at the most half an hour's paddle from Church Bay, that Church Bay had a good landing place as well as a shop

and almost certainly a site where a tent might be pitched, while the shore we faced had none of these assets. Could'nt we just hug the island, sneak round Rue Point, I suggested, into the amenities of the Bay. There was no noticeable current where we lay just off the east coast rocks. Rue Point is at the end of a narrow headland and by keeping close to it I thought we could miss the full force of the tide. John agreed that the fight had been fought and that we might as well finish where we meant to finish. "It's all over bar the shouting", said he. He should have remembered the reverses which always followed my optimistic forecasts.

John had almost reached the Point and was perhaps forty yards ahead of me when I saw his canoe shoot violently sideways for the greater part of that distance as though caught in a giant eddy of a fast river. At the same time I noticed some disturbance around him but thought it just the tide bouncing off the headland, a handicap soon surmounted to give us entry to Church Bay. Had I my wits about me I might have acted differently but I just kept going until moments later I made that same swift glissade to join him in water which seemed to have abjured all the rules of behaviour which usually govern that element. For a little longer we tried to keep course for Church Bay but John shouted, "We're being swept away", and we were very plainly were. We'd been close to the rocks of Rue Point but with every moment were now carried further from them into the turbulence. Shouting we agreed to make for the shore a little way back in the direction we'd come. John, fighting hard, made it and I fighting harder made it some distance behind him, back through a heavy sea. This time I'd gone through all the gears into overdrive before, much relieved, we landed on the rocks and carried the canoes ashore. I had difficulty in keeping balance on the boulders during the portage. This time there HAD been a touch of desperation in the struggle.

If I'd been alone I would have sat down then to recover my strength and gather my wits, for both were in need of rest, but John was as energetic as ever, his strength unabated, his mind clear and focusing on our situation. He immediately suggested changing into dry clothing, walking to Church Bay to eat and returning later to pitch the tent. There was no water near our landing place so no hope of cooking there anyway. As with John thought tends to blend into immediate action, we were soon on the way and, meeting a man on a tractor, asked him how far we had to go. "Maybe about a mile," he said. He had a countryman's unhurried and untroubled attitude to accuracy. One noticed the "maybe". I told John about Irish miles and indeed this one turned out to be rather longer than the standard measure.

John strode across Rathlin as if he were about to take the place by storm and could'nt wait to start. His father trotted tiredly behind, well aware that the son, unaware of dad's fatigue, would slow or stop if the hint were given. As we walked on we could see a coaster passing through the Sound in the direction we had been paddling and would travel tomorrow. It barely made headway against the tide stream and its slow movement was marked by a bow wave such as might be associated with a battleship at high speed. That was an awesome current.

The pub was closed. We were directed to the shop. The shop was closed. Rathlin has but one of each. We saw a 'Guest House' sign and while John phoned home from the kiosk outside it, I knocked at the door.

"Do you serve meals?", said I. "I do", said the lady who opened the door, "but not at this time of the day." "We've just come off the sea," said I, "paddled from Scotland and are very hungry." Perhaps she took pity on me. "Well I'll make you a fry," said she and she did - and much more.

While John was still phoning she produced, at my request, a jug of water of which I immediately downed two glasses. Then she produced that generous fry up meal sometimes associated with the north of Ireland and a pot of tea to go with it. She could never have had two hungrier or more appreciative guests.

When she heard our story and our plan for the night, and had voiced a remark or two on the subject of foolhardiness, she offered to let us sleep in the caravan behind the house so that we would be saved the trek back to the canoes and the bother of camping. When it also transpired that we could have breakfast from her we could have cheered Mrs. McCurdy - well John could, mine would have been a heart-felt croak.

While we eat John, with no fatigue, searched through my type written tide notes to find that the dates attached to the days in those notes did not match the dates of our paddling days! I looked as though I had had the wrong pages of the tide tables typed, probably the following months - and to my shame, had marred good planning by bad detail, given what should have been a fair but unremarkable paddle far too much drama demanding far too much effort for far too long - particularly for me. I thought I'd made it far more memorable too, but I left that unsaid.

Mrs. McCurdy gave us a leaflet on Rathlin. Among historical notes and points of interest about the island was one describing Slough na More, a submerged rock just off Rue Point, which at periods of the tide was "a place of whirlpools and eddies." We found the description apt. I remembered that in my preparation for the journey I'd read of Slough na More and its dangers. The name had stayed in my head but I'd forgotten its position. I left that fact unspoken too!

Mrs. McCurdy took us to the caravan behind the house, gave us bed coverings and offered to call us in the morning. For some minutes while John was engaged elsewhere I lay down to feel that delicious easing of all the limbs that rest gives after tiredness, a blessed cessation of effort. I could have slept instantly. But John was for a stroll to Rathlin's pub, by then open, and a pleasant little stroll it was. There I drank a pint of shandy and realised that, in little more than an hour, I'd had two glasses of water, four cups of tea and that pint - all with no feelings of discomfort - surely the biggest liquid intake of my life. It had indeed been a remarkable day.

We walked back to the caravan. I don't remember much about the walk. When I reached the horizontal I was asleep.

PANFORTE DI SILNA

Try this energy-packed deelyshus chocolate treat on your next canoe-camping trip:

125 g (4 oz) roasted almonds)
" " hazelnuts) or a packet of mixed nuts

60 g (2 oz) glace apricots (can use dried apricots)
" " " pineapple
" " mixed peel

2/3 cup of plain flour
2 tablespoons of cocoa
1 teaspoon of cinnamon
60 g (2 oz) dark chocolate
1/3 rd cup of sugar
1/2 a cup of honey

Chop nuts roughly, also apricots, pineapple and peel. Mix in sifted flour, cocoa and cinnamon.

Grease an 8" round cake tin and line with greased foil. Melt chocolate in top of double boiler. Melt sugar and honey in a separate pot. Simmer on low to dissolve sugar. Boil, then simmer for 5 minutes - till soft ball forms in glass of cold water. Add syrup and melted chocolate to dry ingredients. Mix. Spread quickly into tin. Moderate over, 35 minutes. Cool in tin. Turn out and wrap in foil for 1 day. Sift icing sugar over.

C. Butorac. Tasmania.

OCEAN KAYAKING - A FAMILY ADVENTURE

Canada.

The surf sucked at the kayaks. Let go, then reflects white fury on the jagged reef. Lorna and Lana's kayak, just feet away in the thick soupy fog, seemed more like a ghost ship suspended in the mist than a real boat. Gradually the turbulent waters changed to large, undulating ground swells and the sound of the surf retreated. This was the ocean's road sign telling us we were moving out into Gilliam Channel. Now the thick fog would bring a new threat; the possibility of being run over by an ocean-going vessel.

"Do you want to kill the kids?"

The question that was put to us before we left for our two week adventure crept into my mind. The thought had no right being there. This was the twelfth day out and neither our nine year old son, Guy, or our eleven year old daughter, Lana, were near death. Consulting the chart and compass, I made a small rudder adjustment to keep us out of the main traffic channel and let my mind drift back to the beginning of the trip.

It was a warm, sunny day when we boarded the Uchuck III out of Gold River. Soon we were sailing up the Muchalet Inlet, past Bligh Island to our destination, Kendrick Inlet.

The story of John Kendrick, for whom the inlet was named, may not be in our local school texts, but is interesting because of the unusual way in which he met his death. John Kendrick, an American seaman who sailed from Boston, was killed by a British ball, accidentally fired while saluting him.

Disembarking at Stoltz Logging, we bade farewell to our newly-made friends, Dan and Bruno, and the crew of the Uchuck. With barely enough time to reach the northwest tip of Strange Island and set up camp before dark, we hoisted our jibs and were off.

Snuggling into our sleeping bags that night, after two months of planning and outfitting gave us a great feeling of excitement and satisfaction that we were on our way at last.

"Dad, it's time to get up. I think I see the sunrise." Peeping through the tent flap brought me face to face with a large moon; my fluorescent dial read 3.00 am. "No Guy, it's not time to get up." The comfort of the sleeping bag was paramount in my mind.

"It's light now, Dad. Let's start fishing." My eyes blinked open. 5.00 am. Yes, it was light. "Give me another half hour."

"Aw Dad, I want to fish."

"Put your life jacket on and fish off the rock, but don't wander away."

5.15 am. "Dad, wake up. Can I build the breakfast fire?" Guy was an experienced camper, he knew how to select the dry driftwood and build a safe, contained fire.

"Yes Guy, but be careful. The hospital is a long way away."

5.25 am. "Dad, Dad, an eagle just caught a fish, but it was too big and he had to let it go."

6.00 am. "Dad, I've got a snag. Could you help me get it off?"

Lorna and Lana started to snigger. The enthusiasm of a nine year old boy could not be ignored any longer.

When we crawled out of the tent we became part of a very memorable scene. The golden rays of the sun and the deep blue of the sky were the background for a small family of four sharing the earth with a large bald eagle perched less than 28 yards (25 m) away. Small fish leapt into the air, oblivious to the eagle; shellfish and delicate seaweed shared the inter-tidal zone with a blue heron, which by all appearances had turned to stone. Had all creatures taken time off on their endless pursuit of each other?

Slap! Kee Kee Kee! Leaping salmon and a noisy kingfisher broke the spell. Soon the aroma of frying bacon and eggs, toasting rye bread and steaming cups of hot coffee brought every body to the fireside. After breakfast we packed the kayaks and tidied up the campsite, so the next people could feel that, maybe, they were the first to have ever camped there. It's a special feeling.

We spent three days sailing and paddling on the scenic, protected waters of Tahsis Inlet, Hecate Channel and Esperanza Inlet. We chose the protected waters for the shake down segment of the trip before venturing out onto the open ocean.

Every year as our children grow older, we re-assess our family's capabilities, strength, endurance, judgement and general health. The adult and the child must communicate and work well with each other. The sea does not respect the rights of children, women or even zealous fathers. Judgement can be harsh.

"Hoist the jib." "Lower the lee boards." "Watch the rock with the barnacles on it." "Throw a line over, a salmon just cleared the water ahead of us." It may sound a little regimented but, in fact, these commands were sprinkled liberally with care free fun.

Four large killer whales, just feet from the kayaks, brought a direct question from Guy, "Will they bite our kayaks?" Assuring him that we had never heard of it happening did little for our own belief until the distances between us grew a little more respectful.

Finally we were ready for the open water. One overcast day, we turned the corner at Steamer Point and looked straight out to Gillam Channel. Soon rain began to drop from the grey surly sky and the wind freshened. Lorna spotted a beach with a possible camp site and with the storm building, no-one needed convincing as to which course we should set.

Fighting the wind and the rain, we pitched the tent, unloaded the kayaks and started a fire. Even with our rain gear on we could feel the cold and the penetrating moisture laden air.

"Hey, look at the totem pole." Glancing up from her hot cup of soup, Lana had spotted a very old totem near our camp. The moss covered shoulders and bushy, salal crown blended well with the background of alder and salmon berry. With mute indifference to the four intruders, the totem, with its many weathered faces, looked past us out to sea. We had, unknowingly, picked a sacred place to camp and, at present, there was little we could do about it.

By noon the elements had driven us into the tent and our warm sleeping bags. Lorna read native legends from Son of Raven, Son of Deer by George Clutesi and our imaginations soon ran wild.

When darkness crept in to quiet the reading, we lay listening to the noisy competition of the surf, wind and rain. At times you could imagine voices calling out. Were they, the ancients, complaining of our presence? Just before dawn, the sound of silence woke us. The stars were out, the weather had broken. A quick breakfast, a few pictures, kayaks stowed and we were on our way. (After the trip, when looking at our slides, we discovered the 36 exposure roll of film containing that segment of the trip was lost. Maybe the burial ground was not a good place to camp!)

Centre Island, Rosa Island, Nutchatlitz, we were now free of the inlet's steep shorelines. In the mornings, before the prevailing westerly set in, large ground swells would gently raise and lower the kayaks, conveying the feeling that we were in the hands of a friendly giant. Near reefs or islets, however, the swells turned into thundering, hissing surf - an ominous warning one should not take too lightly.

We approached the small, unnamed, rocky islets from the leeward side, gliding smoothly up their sandy beaches on the backs of breaking waves, sometimes camping overnight or sometimes just making a quick reconnaissance or taking a lunch break.

Small deer, seemingly content and well fed, would ghost in and out of thick foliage; however, following them through the undergrowth was next to impossible.

When we asked the children where they would like to spend the remaining four days, Lana and Guy pointed North to Catala Island. On the chart Catala was appealing - large enough for days of exploring and beach combing. Play was important to the children, the last eight days had been packed to the brim and they wanted a little time to themselves.

Paddling northwest to Catala on smooth green swells, Lorna and Guy would disappear up to their shoulders, then rise to the sky; I grew dizzy trying to focus the camera on them.

We decided to camp on the windward side of the island and chose a large, sandy beach where the surf appeared less turbulent than elsewhere in the island. Catala was the true bonus of the trip. After spending the day exploring, we found a large tide pool for our afternoon swim. Lana quickly asserted herself as the endurance champ of the pool, while Guy and I declared it 'no contest' and decided to serve fish for our supper.

Within hours of landing, we discovered wolf tracks over ours. Although we crossed paths many times, we were never to see our timid neighbours.

After supper on the last night, we swapped stories with a lone commercial fisherman who had anchored behind the island and walked the beach to our camp. There were tales of caves, strange rocky formations, a large rock arch, Guy's bloody encounter with a barnacle-dash covered rock and a large pile of bounty from beachcombing - it seemed so much had happened in two short weeks.

Suddenly a small, fog shrouded orange sun appeared and jolted me back to the present. We were breaking out of the fog bank right on course. A beautiful sunny day lay ahead as we sailed back down Esperanza Inlet towards the pre-arranged pick up point where we board the Uchuck the next day. Lana hooked a nice salmon that morning and won the family salmon contest for the second year in a row. Guy and I conceded defeat and vowed to get even next year.

No, we were not trying to kill our children. We wanted a family experience that was a little more ambitious and much more rewarding than the average outdoor holiday. It's all there for the experienced, outdoors orientated family who choose the proper equipment and plan their trip well.

Following on from the last article, "Ocean Kayaking - A Family Adventure" the writer, Henry McKintock finishes off with a few words on the planning of family kayaking holidays.

ESSENTIAL GEAR

There are many opinions as to what is essential on a kayak expedition and what is not. Remember that this is a family adventure; the needs of a child are different to those of an adult. The macho parent who is going to launch a trip with the barest of provisions and an untested boat, to teach the kids to rough it, may be in for big trouble.

Children cool off faster than adults so they need good rain gear to cut off the wind and shed the spray.

Kayaks should be very forgiving and seaworthy with positive buoyancy. We have a Klepper Aerius II and a Folbot. Our Folbot has been modified to meet the higher Klepper standard. Carry a patching kit. Make sure your spray shirt does not leak.

Always carry a few days 'extra food'; you may be unable to leave a campsite because of bad weather. Carry water at all times; some of the outer islands are dry.

Safety gear is most important - flares, charts, compass, distress flag, waterproof match container, sunglasses, tide manual, rain gear, a two-way radio (optional) and carry the best first aid kit you can afford and have the skill to use it. Remember your sleeping bag must stay dry.

If you or the children suffer from earaches, allergies, etc., seek advice from your doctor as to what medication you ought to carry. Carry an old pair of running shoes that you can wear in the salt water to save your feet from barnacle cuts.

Bring a flashlight and spare batteries; you may have to make a night passage.

Make a list of where and how to contact help in case of a serious accident

While a log book may not be considered essential, a well kept record of your trip will prove indispensable when planning future trips.

If you are already a backpacker or an experienced woodsman, you have a big advantage; but, if your outdoor experience is nil., don't go ocean kayaking without someone along who is experienced.

PACKING FOR FAMILY KAYAKING

The daily task of loading and unloading your kayak with 3 or 4 hundred pounds of gear is easy enough for adults, however, for an adult and a child, surf, tide and barnacles, decrees special planning.

First of all, limit the weight of all the stuff bags so that your child can handle them standing, sitting or kneeling. Remember, your camp may be quite a distance from the launch area and moving the gear to the beach must be considered part of the stowing process.

The stuff bags we use are black plastic garbage bags (Ed's note, DCH would fail them for this!) inside nylon or cotton bags (approx 15 by 30 inches). Use a strong tie string to bring the ends of the plastic and cloth bags together so that the bags are water-tight. The size of the bags will be determined, to some extent, by the shape and space available in your kayak.

To save the endless, "Hey, Mom, Dad, where is this or that?" or to save you the parent, from yelling at the children to find something, label the bags.

Each of our two kayaks, one a Folbot and the other a Klepper Aerius II, is a sign to carry certain provisions and it remains that way for the whole trip. This is important, in case one boat is damaged or lost, or if they become seperated. This does not mean that you have one tent, one axe, etc. in each boat; it means that one boat will carry the tent and the other the fly so that if one boat is lost, you still have a shelter. With this in mind, we mark the bags "F" or "K" - Folbot or Klepper - so that when the gear is moved from the campsite to the beach, it can be piled in two piles and is easily identified. Along with "F" or "K" mark, each bag has a number corresponding to a compartment with the kayak that has the same number. For example, K1 is stowed in a space of the Klepper marked K1, we also list the contents of each bag on the bag itself. The reason is obvious when you think of looking through twelve identical white bags for something you need in a hurry.

Now that you have organised your gear, the loading can be done quickly and correctly with a minimum of talk. Weight distribution has been worked out ahead so that your kayak is always in trim after each loading.

The first time you try to load a kayak off a barnacled, rocky beach with an ebbing tide and an onshore wind, you will appreciate the significance of good planning. You and your child will be able to load your kayak in ten to fifteen minutes, be on your way, and still be on speaking terms.

Remember your child cannot be expected to lift the weight that you can, or read your mind. If you allow for the needs of the younger members of the family, things will go smoothly.

HOW TO CONSTRUCT A D.B. HATCH IN YOUR KAYAK

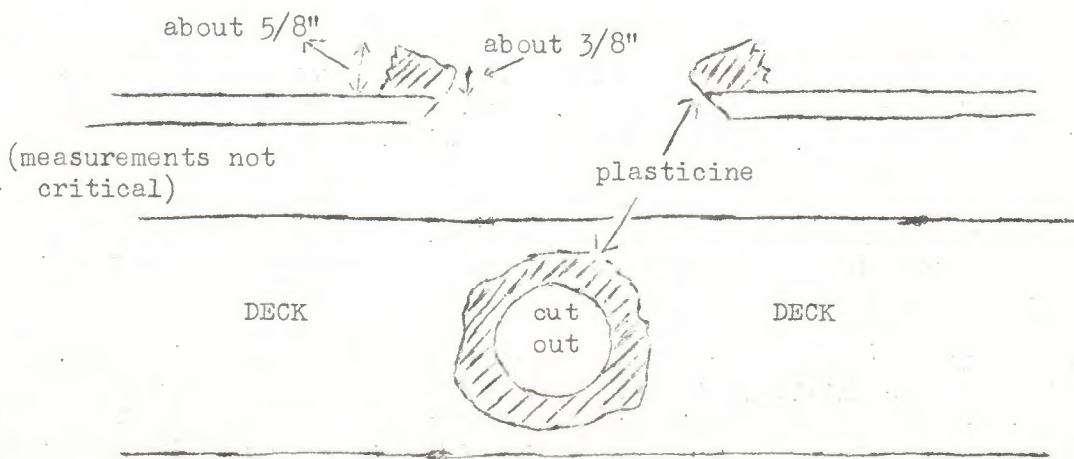
Use a compass or protractor and draw a 30 cm circle where you want your hatch. Cut out with a jig-saw.



Chamfer underside to give rounded surface for C.S.M.



Use plasticine to mould shape of lip. It does'nt have to be perfect but you will improve with practive.

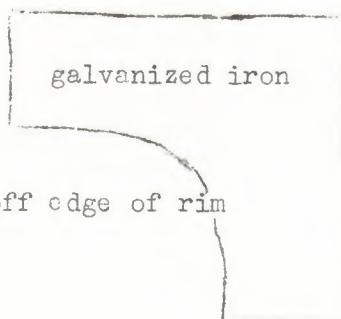


Smear with release agent, taking care not to get any on inside of deck. Gel with colour to match deck. Hang kayak on edge from ceiling and cut C.S.M. strips about $\frac{1}{2}$ circumference long and two to three inches wide. Cut a few nicks along each side to help it fall into place



Chopped Strand Mat.

Wet out inside and out and lay up a 3 to 4 oz lip on bottom side of hatch. As it goes off trim around, about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. Turn kayak over and do other side. Trim off. To finish off neatly I have a piece of galvanized iron to fit under lip to protect the deck, and use small surform tool to smooth the edges.



use sandpaper to round off edge of rim

cloth tape on bottom side to protect deck.

D,B, Hatches are being built to this standard size in Tasmania (where deck space permits) to facilitate carrying of spare covers. Otherwise you will need a spare cover for every different shape and size on a trip. It is better if a blackout is used in the mould when the kayak is being built, to give a recessed area for the front hatch, but most of ours are above deck and throw up very little spray when the deck is awash



They have been in use since 1979 and beat anything else for cheapness and effectiveness. They fit any shape deck - it doesn't matter if deck isn't flat. There are over 40 of these hatches in use in Tasmania.

L.Ford.

VINYL HATCH COVERS

MATERIALS

Medium upholstery vinyl with jersey backing
Strong thread, as used by sailmakers, etc.
7 mm Shock cord ($1\frac{1}{3}$ times circumference of hatch)
Scraps of ripstop nylon for reinforcing.
Chisel pointed machine needle suitable for threading
Vinyl foot for machine is a help.

CONSTRUCTION

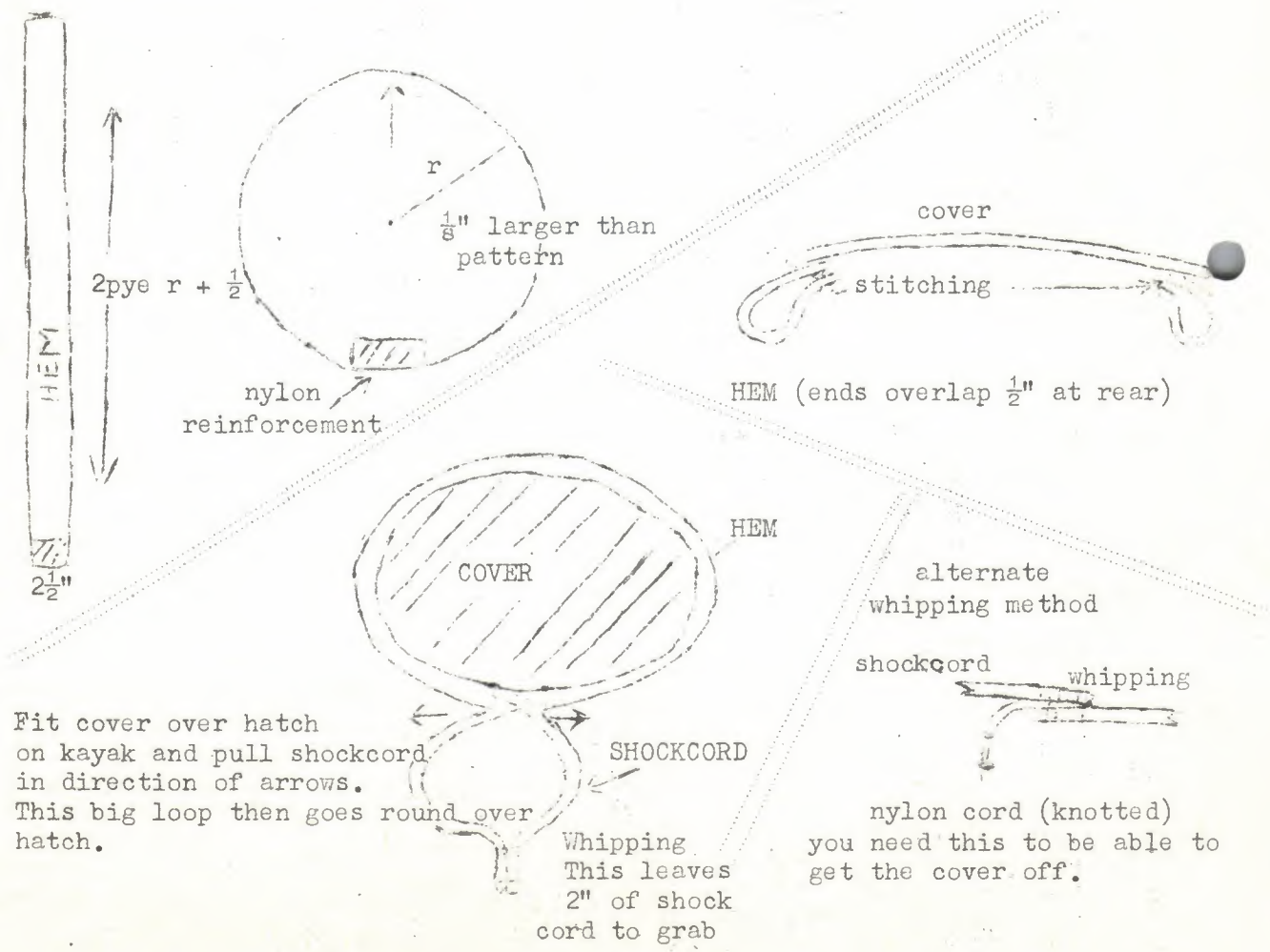
Make pattern on paper by pressing paper over hatch rim firmly, trace crease line with pencil. Cut $\frac{1}{8}$ inch outside line. Mark on pattern 'Front' or 'Rear' and arrow to indicate front side of cover.
Place pattern on wrong side of vinyl, allowing for long straight hem piece to be cut across the stretchiest side of piece of vinyl. Mark pattern onto vinyl, adding 'Front' or 'Rear' and arrow front edge.
Measure out long straight hem piece as long as circumference of pattern. Hem piece should be about $2\frac{1}{2}$ " wide. This allows $\frac{3}{4}$ " as pocket for shockcord, and $\frac{1}{2}$ " underlay to protect edge of cover from wear on rim of hatch. (All of this is double thickness of course)

Tape a small double piece of ripstop nylon onto back side of underside of cover to reinforce area where hem openings meet. Stitch a $\frac{1}{2}$ " double thickness of ripstop nylon across one end of hem piece, on wrong side. On right side of hem piece mark with pencil a line $\frac{1}{2}$ " in from left long side right down length of strip or stick piece of sellotape $\frac{3}{4}$ " to right of needle on machine. Now fold strip in half lengthways and hold the first 12 inches of it folded with a peg, which you keep sliding down as you sew. Place reinforced end at about the middle of the piece of ripstop nylon reinforcing on cover, and start to stitch through cover and folded hem, very near edge of cover ($\frac{1}{8}$ " and $\frac{3}{4}$ " in from folded edge of hem strip).

After the first inch begin to stretch the hem piece at the same time as you gently ease in the edge of cover. This requires two hands, - left pulling from behind needle, whilst right both pulls hem piece to stretch it, as well as the finger easing in edge of cover. Sew only short distances at a time, as you need to move right hand back constantly.

When you eventually reach to within 2" of end, stop sewing, cut threads and remove work from machine. Measure exactly how much more hem strip you will use and cut, allowing a $\frac{1}{2}$ " overlap, place another reinforcing strip $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide and double thickness across cut end (on underside) and stitch it in place. Now resume stitching hem in place, and be sure to stitch a couple of times over the overlap area, which is difficult as machines don't easily sew through so much material.

Sometimes you may have to carefully sew by hand through the holes made by machine. Thread shockcord through hem, after wrapping cut end of shockcord with sellotape to make it slide easily. Whip together free ends of shockcord very tightly with strong cord, which encloses the end of a 4" length of heavier cord, which hangs free as a pull cord. When hatch cover is in place on canoe, the shockcord is pulled tight and the surplus loop is slipped around under the lip of the hatch. This enables easy release.



Fit cover over hatch on kayak and pull shockcord in direction of arrows. This big loop then goes round over hatch.

nylon cord (knotted) you need this to be able to get the cover off.


In the last edition of the ASKC Newsletter I published Les Quilty's 'GENERAL SAFETY QUIZ' Here are the answers.

SECTION A

1. i) 0015 ii) 0625 iii) 1355 iv) 1750
2. i) within 6 hrs ii) 6 to 12 hrs iii) More than 12 hrs.
3. i) orange smoke ii) white 4 star rocket flare.
4. Every two weeks
5. It interprets all abbreviations used on Admiralty Charts
6. i) Chart datum ii) Mean high water springs iii) Estimated time of arrival iv) British Summer Time
7. i) Red ii) CAN iii) Red iv) Any rhythm.
8. i) One prolonged blast ii) Within two minutes.
9. Dial 999 and ask for H.M.Coastguards.
10. Any three from the answer given below to Q 20, Section C

SECTION B

1. i) Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre ii) Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre.
An example of each from the following:

MRCC's	MRSC's		
Aberdeen	Shetland	Humber	Hartland
Yarmouth	Pentland	Thames	Milford Haven
Dover	Wick	Shoreham	Holyhead
Falmouth	Moray	Solent	Liverpool
Swansea	Forth	Portland	Ramsey
Clyde	Tyne	Brixham	Belfast
	Tees	Oban	Stornoway
2. i) Mean Lower High Water ii) Mean Higher Low Water iii) Lowest Astronomical Tide iv) Mean Sea Level
3. A secretion of fluid into the lungs some hours after a person has been rescued and has been successfully resuscitated from drowning. (Therefore always hospitalise casualty)
4. Rock drying 2.4 metres above chart datum.
5. A light where duration of light and darkness are equal.
6. Large Automatic Navigational Buoy
7. i) Yellow-black-yellow (horizontally) ii)  iii) White
iv) either QkFl(9)15secs or VQkFl(9)10secs
8. Aground
9. A cable
10. Any seven from answer to Q 20 Section C but excluding those already given to Q 10 Section A

SECTION C

1. Morse letter 'K' (_ . _) every 15 seconds (a white light)
2. i) Neap tides ii) Highest Astronomical Tide iii) duration of mean rise
3. i) a D.R. is a Dead Reckoning position with nothing allowed for wind or tide
ii) An E.P. is an estimated position with allowances for wind and tide calculated. $DR = \dots$ $EP = \dots$
4. When the sun is 6° below the horizon.
5. Nets have caught on an obstruction.
6. $3^{\circ}W$
7. Veering
8. i) Weekly ii) they are free
9. Indefinitely - as long as it kept dry.
10. i) Very large crude carrier ii) Roll-on Roll-off vessel iii) Lighter
aboard ship iv) Liquid Propane Gas tanker.
11. A line drawn on a chart to illustrate where the stated Variation is a constant factor
12. Red + Black (horizontally) ii) Two black spheres iii) White iv) FlGp2
13. 2 X ML - HT of H.W.
14. i) Sound ii) Estuary iii) Roads iv) Haven v) Creek
15. i) I am engaging stern propulsion ii) You are standing into danger
iii) I require assistance iv) I require medical assistance v) Man overboard
16. The reflection on the clouds when the light is still below the horizon.
17. i) Cirrus ii) Cumulus iii) Altocumulus iv) Cumulonimbus

- 18. i) Greenwich Hour Angle ii) Declination iii) Local Hour Angle
 iv) True Zenith Distance v) Universal Time (The new name for G.M.T.)
- 19. Mean High Water Springs.
- 20. i) A gun or other explosive signal fired at intervals of about a minute
 ii) Continuous sounding with any fog-signalling apparatus
 iii) Rockets or shells, throwing red stars fired one at a time at short intervals
 iv) SOS (···—···) in morse code
 v) "Mayday" spoken on radio telephone
 vi) Interco flag N C
 vii) A signal consisting of a square flag having above or below it a ball or anything resembling a ball.
 viii) Flames on the vessel (as from a burning oil barrel)
 ix) A rocket parachute flare or hand flare showing a red light.
 x) Orange coloured smoke signal
 xi) slowly and repeatedly raising and lowering arms outstretched to each side.
 xii) The radiotelegraph alarm signal
 xiii) The radiotelephone alarm signal
 xiv) Signals transmitted by emergency-indicating radio beacon.

Dave Summers has completed the circumnavigation of Britain

A passage from his diary, written just north of Brora, gives an insight into why such a trip is worth undertaking:

"The time is now 11 pm; here I sit beside a warm driftwood fire, my back resting on two fishboxes (fortunately washed ashore in their hundreds). The night air is so still that I have a lighted candle at my shoulder on the boxes to augment the light of the comforting fire and the half-moon playing hide and seek as the shadowy clouds float softly northwards. The surf just behind me has eased to a regular soothing wash; the crackle of the fire is harmoniously joined by the curlew calling its plaintive serenade in a fancifully ascending trill..... a salutation to the end of the day. Over my right shoulder the tree-lined ridge fades to oblivion in the diminishing silhouette; to my left the profiled face of the bright half-moon reigns supreme over the tiny state and the intermittent flash of Tarbet Ness across the sea to the south. I do not feel lonely in my solitude. I feel privileged and content to be sustained by the warmth of the fire, comforted by the familiarity of the land and thankful to be allowed a charted course over a moody, ever-changing sea. Earth, Fire and Water are my friends tonight. I'm cradled by their unique gifts. I pronounce my profound love for all three elements in this magical combination that has given me a very special kind of true happiness. My senses are soothed and quenched by these basic elements, so wonderfully natural in composition. I am at one with the world as it really is a sadness floods over me as I realise this beautiful moment will not last for ever. Tiredness pervades, the fire grows dim, the night becomes colder and darker"

KITE POWER

Experimenters in America have decided that the optimum kite for towing kayaks on open water is the Jalbert J15 available from Jalbert Aerology Laboratories Inc. Boca Raton, Florida 33421, U.S.A. Used on the end of a hundred metres of 70 - 90kg braided nylon twine, the 1.4 metre square rip-stop nylon wing can use winds which may not be so effective on a sail at water level. It is found practical to steer up to 25° either side of the wind using a rudder or paddle. At times the wind might be too strong to haul the kite in at the end of a run and then it needs to be released or cut free and be picked up when it falls into the water as the line goes slack. Its other uses are described as being a warning device for other shipping and a sea anchor when dropped into the water.

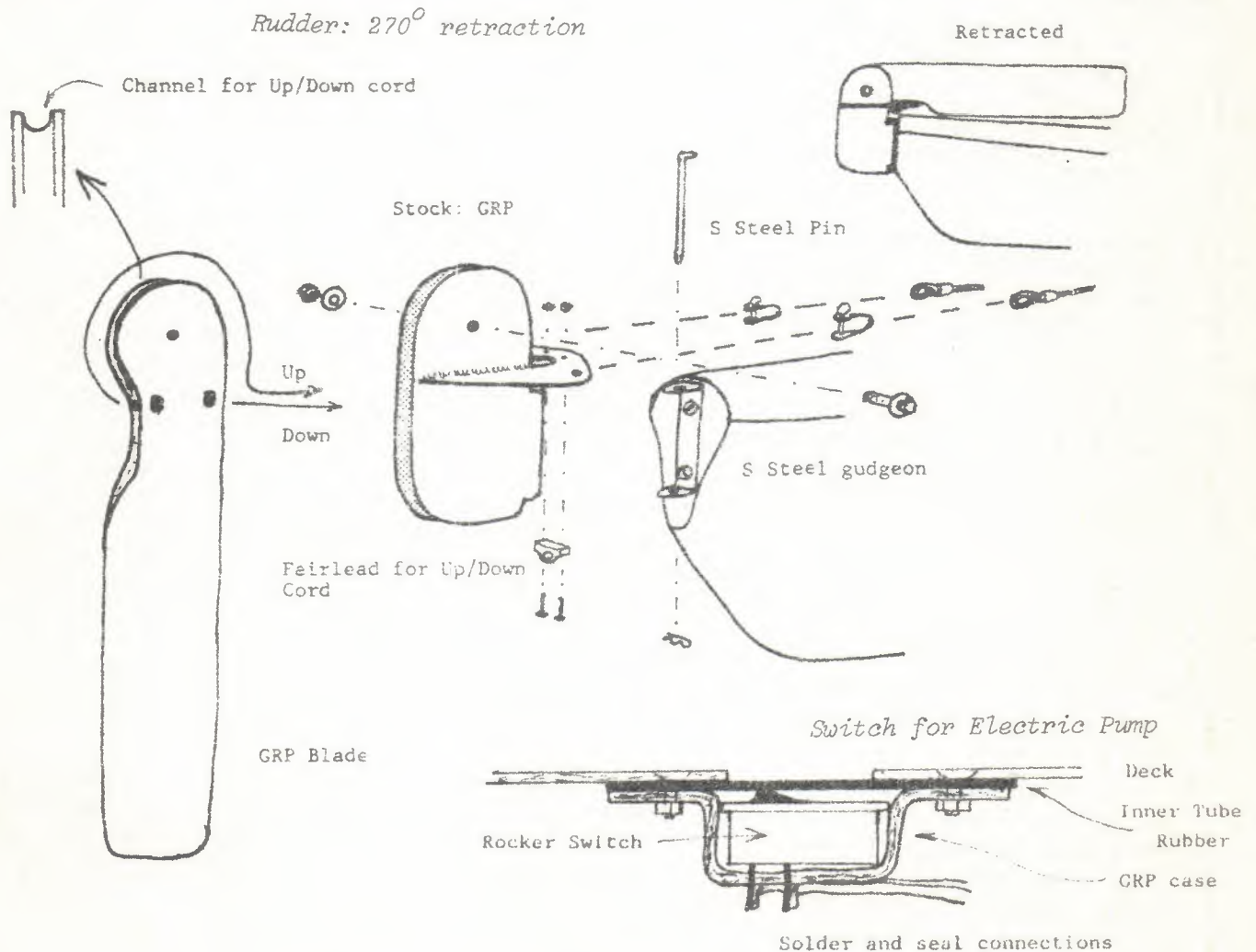
MARITIME RADIO REORGANISED British Telecom has announced the reorganisation of its marine radio services to make greater use of the latest technology, by converting all but two of their maritime radio stations to remote control. The two manned control stations will be located at Stonehaven Radion, Aberdeen and the long range receiving centre at Burnham on Sea in Somerset.

Tasmanian Technicalities

I recently spent a week or so in Tasmania, and participated in an expedition to Three Hummock Island ($40^{\circ} 26' S$ $144^{\circ} 53' E$). Sea Canoeing in Tasmania has developed more or less independently from that elsewhere, and has equipment and ideas that are different, and of interest and value to all sea canoeists.

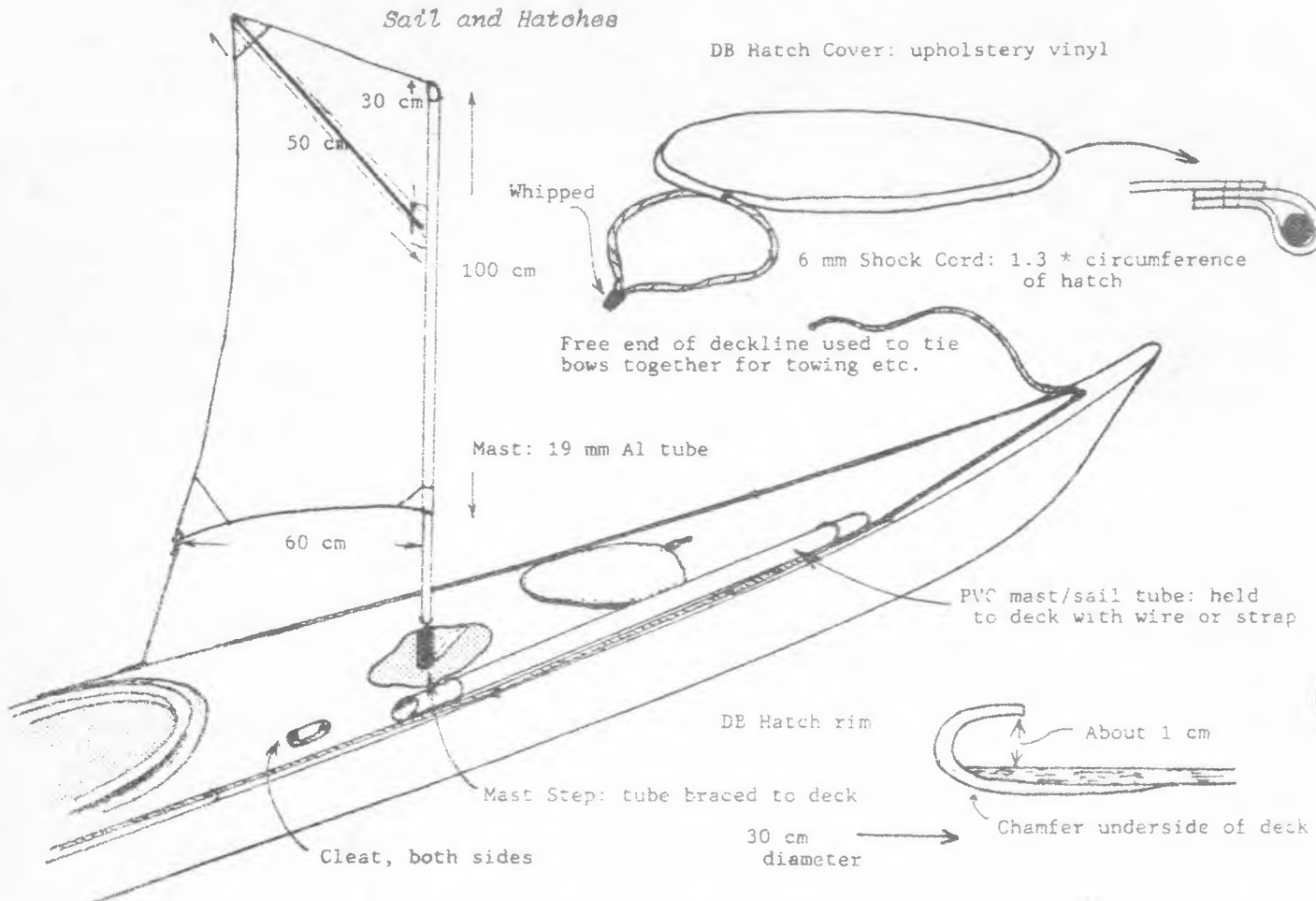
The most common boat used is perhaps the *North Sea Towner*, readily available and apparently well suited to the conditions. Indigenous designs are the *Greenlander*, a large and angular but fast and capacious boat, and the *Sea Leopard*, originally designed as a surf ski. There are also the *NST* derived *Longboat*, the *Greenlander II*, and a double sea kayak about 7 m long. The *Greenlander II* might be taken for an English design if seen in isolation, but it is noticeably larger in comparison, very stable, and may well become popular throughout Australia. Six of the doubles will be touring Greek islands in the northern Spring.

I had often wondered about the Tasmanian emphasis on rudders; after paddling in their conditions I can understand why. The diagram shows how it is put together, with parts in grp where possible, and it's controlled by a conventional tiller bar on the footrest. Is all the complexity worth the trouble? If you're just out for a quiet afternoon paddle, no, but if you plan to spend long hours paddling in all sorts of conditions, definitely yes.



Sails are carried on many boats and make progress downwind fast and easy; Laurie Ford's *Longboat* was running in 15 kn winds faster than I could paddle. Compared with yachting practice the rig is very simple, crude even. But it must meet special criteria: one handed setting up and stowing and minimal interference with paddling and rolling. It's a sort of spritsail rig, with a batten as the sprit. Some use a light boom which helps reduce the twist inherent in such a sail, and other sail shapes are being experimented with. Mast, sail and all roll up and are stowed in a tube on the deck. Could it be made to work upwind? Yes, with lee or centre boards, but what do you want, a sail assisted kayak or a paddle assisted mini yacht?

Sail and Hatches



The standard hatch in Tasmania is another local invention, known as the DB hatch (D for Paul Davis who had the original idea, B for Cecily Butorac who makes the covers). Again, the main features are shown on the diagram. Key to the system is the double loop of shock cord which wedges in to make an effective seal. The rim is made by cutting the hole in the deck (30 cm diam. so that any cover will fit any boat), chamfering the underside then forming the rim over a modelling clay form. The cover itself must be reinforced at the ends of the hem, where the shock cord exits, to prevent splitting.

Have you ever succeeded in pumping your boat dry with a hand pump while stabilising it with the other hand in nasty conditions? Why bother to try, when an electric pump can do the job no hands? The standard pump is the *Rule 400*, the battery either a 12 v motorcycle battery (cheaper, but needing care with caps and vent) or a totally sealed type (more expensive, but needing less attention) attached to the aft bulkhead. It helps if you can see the outlet without turning round, and if it is high on the deck it usually does not need a plug or valve. I've drawn a variant of my own switch arrangement. A battery charge should last for months of occasional use, and with electricity on board, why not navigation and compass lights?

Tasmanian craft are without some things that others might consider essential, items such as flares and spare paddles. The reasons are quite pragmatic; when are they ever of use? In many parts of Australia flares would never be seen, and in 12 years of paddling at sea I have only ever used a spare paddle for digging holes. Broken your paddle? Continue on one blade and repair it later. Lost it? Someone else in the group will retrieve it. If a spare is carried, perhaps one in a large group, it is carried internally, so as not to clutter the deck. Tasmanian decks are largely bare, except for the all round deck line and sail tube, in distinct contrast to the bazaar stall appearance of boats from elsewhere.

Tasmanian equipment and exploits have received little publicity, but the equipment and the reasoning behind it, deserves to be better known. To some it will appear radical, blasphemous even, but it all works, and works well.

Peter J. Carter

CORRESPONDENCE

From John Chamberlin, Derby.

Dear John,

I think the Newsletter does the job you set out to do. Do you remember the one I used to do? Yours now is very reminiscent of that. My comments, if you were inviting them, are to keep it as it is, keep your own workload manageable, and keep canoeing! If you move to a more 'sophisticated journal' the workload may be in competition with your own canoeing. You would have to increase the price and would almost certainly lose members. I think that is a sad reality. You do a good job, motivated by your own enthusiasm. Keep it manageable; to repeat; keep canoeing, keep in touch with the sport, and keep communicating! You don't need a glossy magazine. "Sea Canoeing - A Special Kind Of Freedom". You provide an excellent vehicle for communication between active participants in an adventure sport providing a forum for this risk activity. We don't need a vehicle for the beaurocratic clap-trap that finds its way into the glossies - leave that to them. I'm not a purist (I don't think) and I'm sorry if I sound cynical, but they're my opinions on your dilemma! Print them if you want to provoke discussion on what other readers/members want. You have my thanks for what you do.

Yours in deep water,
John Chamberlin.

From Nick Padwick, South Glamorgan.

Dear John,

I am getting to the stage where I expect a Newsletter each day with two on Saturdays!! Your typewriter must be red hot and your two fingers (or is it three these days?) worn to the bone! Many thanks, Jchn, for all your efforts.

I am enclosing my deposit for the Symposium and also confirming that I would be pleased to give one of the several lectures on our Shetland Circumnavigation.

In the past I have made many comments on the subject of Alan Byde's Safety Cockpit (Pod) and how it makes what could be an epic into a passing incident. I get somewhat sickened by those who give the idea lip service and by manufacturers, one in particular who should know better, who tell Alan that he should put "his money where his mouth is". Any sea kayak not fitted in this way when swamped after an exit has had to be made becomes unstable and even unmanageable unless pumped almost completely dry. If it is loaded and conditions are rough, it can be extremely difficult to roll or to re-enter at all even for the experienced. If the paddler is inexperienced even in relatively calm waters then

"Why I Pulled the Pin on the Locat" (Newsletter No. 34) and "Canoeists Capsize" (Newsletter No 36) are both prime examples of epics where equipment was lost and lives saved by good luck, skill of the rescue services and others and a kindly God, and could have been prevented before they started if the boats had been fitted with the Safety Cockpit. All you have to do is turn the boat over, get back in and paddle to safety. You don't get tired struggling, you don't get cold in the sea, the boat can't sink, you don't spend time pumping whilst possibly being washed onto rocks or into deeper trouble.

With the greater increase in sea canoeing, which itself implies a greater number of less experienced paddlers, it is only a question of time before the paddlers time or luck runs out, deaths occur and the sport starts to get a bad name. The solution is there, manufacturers - where are you? Are you really doing things to the benefit of your customers? - or your pockets and convenience? Where there is a will, there is a way and it is not that expensive.

Here are just four examples of what could have been epics experienced over the last five or six years. For those who don't know, I paddle a Sea Tiger with a Safety Cockpit.

1. Pembroke coast - St. Bride's Bay - six days of severe Westerly gales - seventh day Force 4 - short swell (5ft) with reflected waves from cliffs - about

$\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile out - 3 to 4 miles from suitable landing and had been on the water in difficult conditions for almost two hours. Party consisted of two Inland S.I.s in slalom boats, myself and an experienced paddler trying out a Baidarka. Suddenly and without warning and with no attempt to stop himself, over goes the Baidarka. No attempt to roll, just got out. And all this in spite of regular checks that everyone was OK; no way was he to be persuaded to get back into that boat. Mentally he had given up. In that state and in those conditions we were not going to get him out of the water with any rescue techniques which form part of the normal teaching. Thank God for the Cockpit Liner. Holding his hand I rolled over my boat and got out so that I was one side of the boat, his arm was over the upturned hull and he was the other side of the boat. I then rolled the boat over bringing him out of the water with it so that he was now lying across the deck of my boat. The slalom boats formed a raft and he was put into my boat. The Cockpit was one third full of water. It all took two to three minutes. After his boat was retrieved I got into that. It took 15 to 20 minutes. We all got soaked pumping it out. Even then I had a very uncomfortable and unstable ride back to the landing point. The patient was fine and left us standing. Safety Cockpits make for simple rescues - you are back in your boat before a problem starts. Others would still be scratching their heads wondering what to do.

2. Myself doing my Advanced Sea Proficiency in the Bristol Channel. Very fast stream 5 to 6 knots kicking up 5 to 6 foot standing waves which we were cutting across. We were in this type of water for three quarters of an hour. I could not understand why I was finding life as difficult as I was. Somehow I couldn't keep up even with Nordkapps which normally struggle more than I do in this sort of water. A friend in the same boat as mine seemed quite happy. (For those who don't know the design of a boat fitted with a Safety Cockpit there are no bulkheads, the hull is one compartment from bow to stern with only the closely fitting cockpit area being physically separated. The hull is pumped out - not the cockpit) I started to pump much water. Things were easier, the boat was absolutely stable but wallowing more heavily. I kept going out of the heavy water, paddled hard from some four miles trying to keep up, then landed.

To this day the examiners did not know I had one quarter inch diameter hole which had developed unknown in the bows and that the boat was one third full of water. The internal pressure created in the hull by the cockpit configuration (a topic I shall not go into here) had prevented the boat becoming any more waterlogged. Imagine what would have happened with a boat fitted with bulkheads. One end would have gone down - no way of sorting that out in those conditions. Tidal stream would have taken the party way out to sea whilst attempts were made at a rescue. This time the epic did not even occur and only myself and one other knew of the reason for the problem, even under test conditions.

3. Myself and a less experienced paddler in a Nordkapp - dirty short sea force 5 to 6 onshore wind - close to shelving shore, relatively small surf. Cold water - November. Nordkapp overturns - fails to roll and exits. Ten to fifteen minutes to get back in. Boat unstable and after five minutes, over again. Patient now cold. I rescued him and got him back to shore and safety and then had a hell of a job getting the waterlogged boat back. With a cockpit he would not have got so cold so quickly; he could have paddled himself back or even if the whole procedure had had to be gone through, at least the tow would have been simple just an empty boat and it wouldn't have mattered whether it were upside down or the right way up - it turned over during the course of the tow.

4. Finally the Shetland circumnavigation. At this stage there were three of us. Two in Nordkapps and myself. The first hour and quarter were spent in an easy but powerful 10 to 15 ft. rolling swell as we paddled across a large bay. Then we fit the effects of a headland with a long section of high cliffs to follow and an island about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile offshore. The swell was striking the cliffs at forty-five degrees and causing a very complex reflected wave situation. This combination reared up into at least a 40 ft massive roller coaster - well over twice the length of a Nordkapp - which was continually changing its format. Very exciting, very exacting, highly stimulating and requiring great concentration. We had had two and a half hours of this and were in a section where the size of the swell had reduced to some 25 ft but the wind had risen to Force 5 or so and it was starting to get cooler. Suddenly there was a lapse in this constant concentration and one of the Nordkapps went over. A heavy, fully laden boat with a relatively tired occupant

in those conditions is very difficult to roll. Alas, an exit. It took twenty minutes of very hard work to recover the situation before we were able to carry on. During this time we cursed the appalling design of the pump position. You have to be a chinese contortioist to reach it. As you pump you bark your fingers on the deck - your cold knuckles become bruised and painful. The exhaust from the pump send water straight up in to the air and once there, it is anybody's. It goes down your neck, soaks and chills the rescuers and finishes up filling everyone else's boat and no way can you completely empty the victim's cockpit. Ten minutes later with this unstable boat, we had the same performance again. More swearing, more bruised knuckles, more soaking - then, to hell with the pump, get bailing. Another twenty minutes, we had two unstable Nordkapps and myself with half a cockpit full of water. The three of us were tired and the cold was creeping in. It took some twenty minutes of determined paddling to get to calm water. Fortunatley, we had been well to sea at the start of the episode and the time we had spent on the rescues had not meant that we had drifted quite to the bottom of the inhospitable cliffs. One more capsize and the dangers of that mighty sea on those cliffs would have been too horrific to contemplate. Again - Oh! for the cockpit! A quick re-entry, a stable boat. Forty wasted minutes of cold, severe danger, which left us with wet clothes to carry on with on the next day and took a lot of the excitement out of the magnificent day we had enjoyed. It also left us all with the feeling 'You can't keep all the fan'ifull ideas about pumping each other's boats out, undoing a resuers spraydeck in the process and jeopardising him, or lifting boats out of the water over one another to empty them and the many other ludicrous techniques of re-entry and pumping out yourself that are talked about and taught! In calm waters and as a basic teaching - Yes, this is fine. But when the chips are down, and with the more experincedthe greater the severity before they are down, there is no substitute for a quick method of getting out of danger and in a stable craft. The boat's speed is of less consequence. Getting there is the important factor.

Water is a great leveller and the colder it is the more it is such. The more active you are in water the faster the cold gets through to you. The fitter you are generally the thinner you are and with a faster flowing blood stream the faster you will get cold. The cold saps your strength rapidly; physical exertion does also but not to the same extent. Waterlogged craft are heavy and sap the energy of rescuers and victims alike. Loaded boats are heavier again and can more easily damage each other, particularly with a cockpit full of water. Heaving seas and winds compound the whole problem. We are all human and none of us can escape the affects of cold, tiredness and reduced strength. The most important factor for all who put to sea in kayaks is the ability to combat heavy seas and to perform reliably fast rescues which require stable, not the fastest craft, which will not become waterlogged. Patients must be in the water for the minimum time possible.

John Dowd and Alan Bye are right and to the manufacturers I put the heartfelt plea - remember many, if not most, of your customers have limited experience, particularly at sea; each has a life which is as precious as yours. They also wish to enjoy the sport and the experiences which we enjoy and when you sell each kayak ask yourself "Am I really providing a craft which is as reasonably safe as knowledge and technology will allow or could he/she jeopardise his/her life in it?"

Alan Bye has, to my knowledge, offered to help any manufacturer, the major ones in particular, to determine how these cockpits can be fitted in their boats. To those who have experienced how epics can suddenly catch up with you, I ask them to live again the situations and to question, if possible, whether they would have been such epics with the facilities of the cockpit.

Let us have fewer epics and more passing incidents. Happy paddling,

Cheers, Nick Padwick.

Brief revival of a very old argument

Why is there such a purist attitude by so many sea canoists in this Country over rudders on sea kayaks? There is such a thing as evolution. The Eskimo never covered the distances we attempt today. Having paddled an aging Atlantic with rudder in a variety of seas, I am convinced the advantages far outweigh any disadvantages.

(Taken from Spring edition of CoDe)

From Duncan R. Winning, Largs, Ayrshire.

Dear Mr. Ramwell,

Your Newsletter No. 35 caught me by surprise; I had meant to write about Alan Byde's spray deck article in Newsletter No. 34.

Anyway, here goes. In John MacGregor's book, "Rob Roy on the Baltic", published in 1867, he describes his 'apron' as having wooden sides which his knees braced against and the front could be held down with "India rubber cord" "run through the hemmed end". It could also be fastened round the back of the paddler in rough waves. This apron, from the details in the book, was clearly meant to keep water out of the cockpit, not just off the legs, etc.

MacGregor also states that "a watertight compartment may be made by an after bulkhead" - seems nothing is new!

In "Canoe and Boat Handling", published in New York in 1889 by Forest & Stream, there is an example shown with an elaborate arrangement of a telescopic tube with wire cross members to support the apron from collapsing in waves and to shed water more easily; again elastic is used to hold the edges in place.

My long-time canoeing partner, Joe Reid, adopted a different approach to the problem in his last four sea touring kayaks over a period of about fifteen years. Joe, who died suddenly on his sixtieth birthday three years ago, started sea canoeing when he was fourteen and was still active at sea canoeing at the time of his death. He was, in my opinion, one of, if not the, most experienced sea canoeist of his generation in this Country.

His solution was to attach the spray sheet permanently to the boat and render the joint watertight.

Instead of the older type of upright coaming or the more modern horizontal flanged type the cockpit shape was cut in the deck about 1" oversize all round (we used plywood 'Gantock' sea touring singles).

This opening was reinforced by a plywood doubler on the underside which projected inwards from the cut out by about 1", i.e. back to the basic cockpit shape, - see Fig. 4.

Spray sheet material a bit heavier than normal was cut as shown in Fig. 1. Length DEF was equal to the cockpit circumference. AD and CF each equalled the height of upstand required for the body. EB was the distance from the front of the cockpit to the canoeists waist plus the length of the upstand. Edges AD and CF were sewn together and the edge DEF tacked down to the doubler as shown in Fig. 4, and the joint covered with tape to make it watertight.

Before entry, the material would be rolled down all round the cockpit and could be left like that in fair weather, the roll making quite an efficient breakwater. To close up, the upstand was lifted up under the armpits and the part "B" lifted up in front. The sides between B and the upstand would be brought together as shown in Fig. 3 and the whole lot flattened down along the cockpit before being tucked up under the elastic waist of our "Klepper" canoeing anoraks which are, unfortunately, no longer available.

This arrangement would have collapsed with a breaking sea if it was not for the "deck piece" used in conjunction with this spray sheet. It was made of thin plywood laminated to a camber for strength and water shedding and sat on the edge of the doubler below the spray sheet as shown in Fig. 4. The final feature was a generous hand hole for access to the side pockets which could be used in quite rough seas without taking water as the hole would be protected by the folds of the spray sheet during the operation, not like the elastic cockpit edge fitting common on current designs.

While this arrangement will not suit everybody, indeed I do not use it myself, I can vouch that Joe normally stepped ashore dry as a bone at the end of

the day's paddle, even on trips such as the Pentland Firth, Shetland, Orkney, Norway, etc., and his only special clothing concession to canoeing was his anorak.

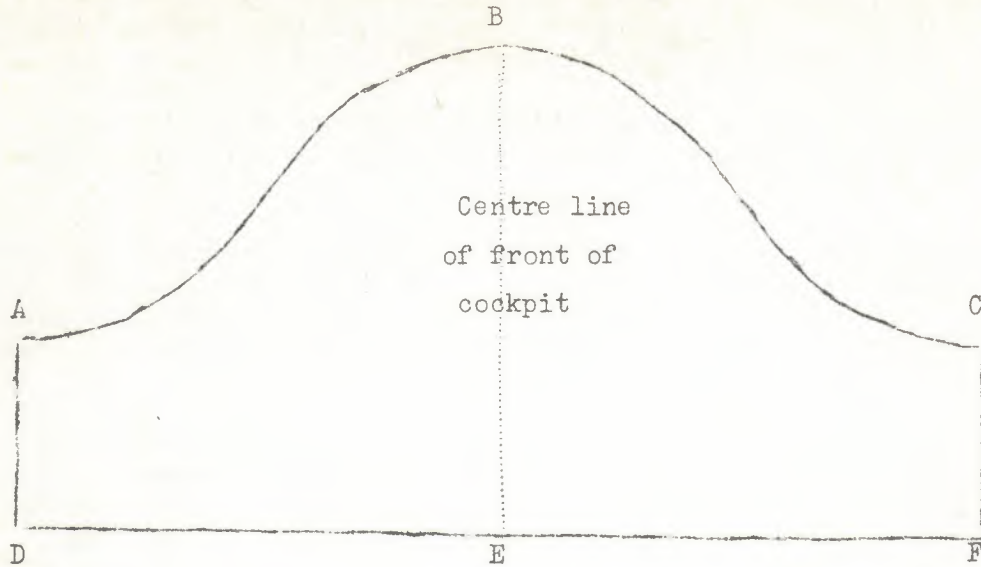


Fig. 1

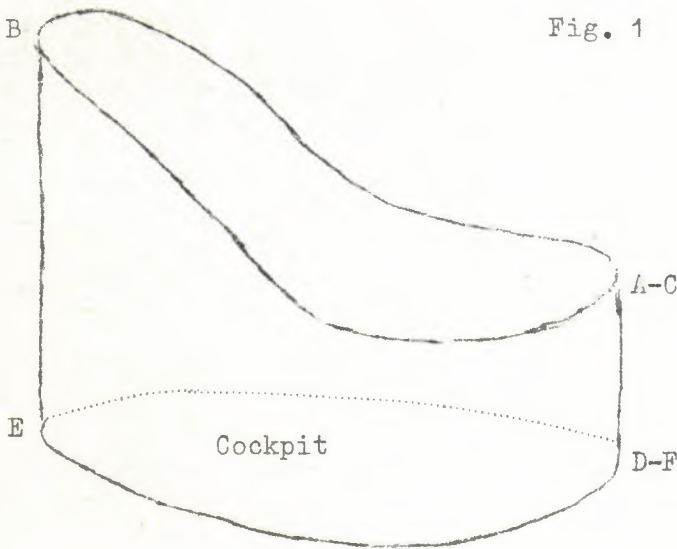


Fig. 2

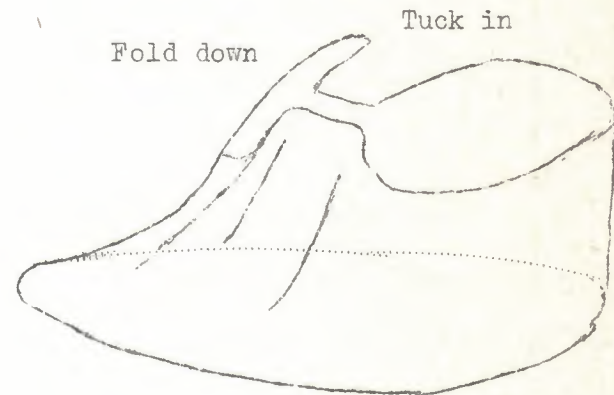


Fig 3

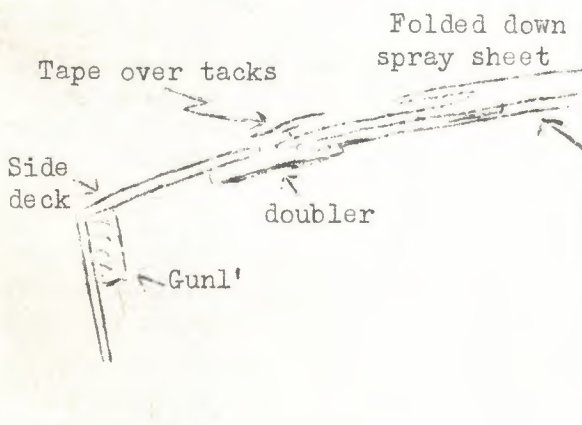


Fig. 4

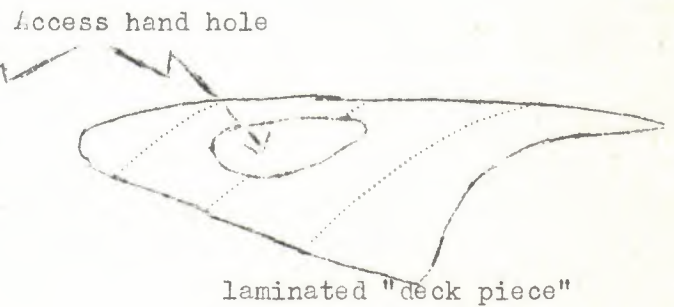


Fig. 5

Yours sincerely,
Duncan R. Winning.

5th. INTERNATIONAL SEA CANOEING SYMPOSIUM

ULLSWATER OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL

12 & 13th. NOVEMBER, 1983

HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR YOUR PLACE YET?

ISLE OF WIGHT TIME TRIAL '83.

On the 16th. July the Isle of Wight Kayak Club are staging the third I.O.W. TIME TRIAL; some readers may have taken part in a previous event and others may have wondered what it is all about when they saw the 'ad' in last years A.S.K.C. Newsletter.

There has been recent correspondence about 'racing' sea kayaks and the old "sea kayakists don't race" argument is trotted out as the reason no-one competes in sea kayaks.

I believe that the 'racing sea boats' doesn't exist yet because there are no events designed to create a demand for such a kayak and that individuals who canoe at sea would not want to get involved in a pile of rules about lengths, weights or widths, etc. 'That's our Special Kind of Freedom' (to quote the slogan), the freedom from arbitrary rules.

Another reason is probably financial, most of the popular sea kayaks are designed to carry a substantial load in order to support a paddler who wants to 'exped'. Most sea paddlers have only one canoe to do all his trips on the sea; the idea of a light sea boat only suitable for fast day trips just is not economic.

When the I.O.W. Kayak Club kicked the idea of a one day event around in 1981, we did our best to overcome the obvious problems. Our initial idea was to avoid the word RACE in the title and thereby overcome the phobias of the non-racing canoeist. We then made the rules as simple and we hoped, acceptable as possible.

One paddler, one sea boat, once round the Island. The boat was to be rigged to Sea Prof. standard and lifejackets to be worn at all times. You can stop for lunch or to admire the scenery. For safety's sake we substituted an eighteen or thirty mile Solent course when the winds exceeds force 4; after all, we don't know how good the competitors are and we don't want any accidents.

The full course is approx 55 statute miles and the start time is chosen to ensure the average paddler never has the tide against them and is usually helping considerably. The 'average' canoeist (whoever that is!) can expect to get round in 12 to 13 hours. Rather like marathon running we hope that it is the finishing that is important and not the coming first.

Because of booking problems on the ferry most competitors leave their cars on the mainland and paddle across on Friday evening - camp in the site opposite the start line and return to the mainland Sunday lunchtime.

You might ask just how seriously do entrants 'race' during the Time Trial and how much is it a long day trip around the Island without the hassle of back-up and support. All I can say is that only five out of the eighty entrants we have had were interested in setting up a record time (and even they realised that the tides were not ideal!!).

If you are curious to take part in something that is a little different in a beautiful part of the country - send in the entry form or phone for more details. Don't worry if you're not up to the full distance as we intend to run the 18/30 mile Solent Course at the same time and that is open to juniors as well.

ORGANISER: Mrs M. Austin, 22, Coronation Road, Cowes, I.O.W. Tel: 0983 291673

BRAINTREE CANOEING CLUB ANNOUNCE - GREAT SEA RACE.

Date - Sunday 3rd. July '83.

At - Marine Parade Steps, Walton on the Naze, Essex, 200 yds north of pier.

Fee - £1 per seat.

Safety - this is an informal fun race. There will be no escort boats. Experienced sea canoeists only.

Details - from Lionel Goddard, Leys Farm, Thorpe le Soken, Clacton (861291)

Classes - Sea boats and K1s all together - doubles 30 min handicap, slaloms 15 minutes start.
