

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

Details from Secretary:

John J. Ramwell

4, Wavell Garth, Sandal, Wakefield, W. Yorkshire, WF2 6JP

ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER No. 38

SEPTEMBER, 1983

J.J.Ramwell.
4, Wavell Garth,
Sandal, Wakefield,
W. Yorkshire, WF2 6JP

EDITORIAL.

For most of us, holidays are over and it's back to work or school. In my case it's back to work after spending six fantastic weeks kayaking round East Greenland. I am currently writing a report on our adventures and I shall publish a shortened version in this Newsletter next time out. Suffice to say that we (Mike Twiggs & Geoff McGladdery and I) enjoyed a marvellous canoeing experience.

I hope you find this Newsletter up to standard. As usual our thanks are due to the contributors. How about you? - if you got your sea kayak wet this year, tell us about it!!

The next item on our calendar is the SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM. Due to be held at Ullswater Outward Bound School over the weekend of the 12/13 November. You should already have an application form, but just in case you've mislaid it I have included another one at the foot of this page. REMEMBER- CLOSING DATE : OCTOBER 1st.

It is coming up for renewal time again. As I mentioned in the last Newsletter I have had to up the annual subscription to £4.00 per year and £6.00 per year for non U.K. residents. I did my best to justify this increase when I wrote about it in July; all I need to say here is that the A.S.K.C. is a non-profit making concern wishing to maintain it's standards and our accounts are always open to scrutiny. Even though renewals not due 'till January next year I have enclosed a renewal form.

That's all for now. Until the next Newsletter.

Best wishes

Nanuk.

*****Return to J.J.Ramwell*****
4, Wavell Garth, Sandal, Wakefield, W.Yorks.

APPLICATION TO ATTEND THE 5th. INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM, 1983

I wish to attend the 5th. International Sea Kayaking Symposium at Ullswater Outward Bound School over the weekend of the 12/13 November, 1983

I understand that if this application is accepted I will receive a programme and joining instructions.

Please find £.....(minimum deposit £10) as my deposit; the balance of £.....(total cost £25) being payable over the weekend 12/13 November.

NAME.....Signed.....
ADDRESS.....

.....

Dear John,

Please find enclosed one article on a 'failed trip', as requested. I hope that you are able to print it, even though I expect we will be the butt of much criticism and some harsh comment. Sea canoeing, like life, is made up of experiences. We only tend to report the successes, but we learn from them all.

Yours, in deep water,
John Chamberlin, Derby. 19/2/83

'MAY DAY' - A TRIP THAT WENT WRONG 1st. MAY, 1982

Huddled in the lee of the Coastguard hut on Moelfre Head, we looked across a protesting sea and could just discern the gap that was Puffin Island Sound. On a calm sunny day that lovely little island (I've never seen the rats!) presents a good sea excursion from the cafe at Penmon but today, if we set off, it would mean the naughty bit was over and we could then expect some shelter from the NW 8/9 that was creating an angry sinusoidal horizon directly out to sea. We had driven over the night before, knowing the forecast but hoping it wouldn't be as bad. It was. You can't win them all, we'd been lucky before. The intention for the weekend had been to canoe around the Lleyn from Caernarfon to Porth Madog over the 2-3 days of the May Day Bank Holiday. We needed that length of time on the water and a paddle of about that distance to measure our progress in training towards a 50 plus miles crossing planned for the following month. Also Bill Bailey and I needed time at sea in our new P & H Icefloes to further adjust them to our differing frames.

Overnight we had enjoyed the superb hospitality of Steve and Jan' Baker at Llanfair P.G. The breakfast call to R.A.F. Valley confirmed the previous evening's forecast and we had decided, rather over-optimistically, that if the gale was more W than N we might be afforded enough shelter to do the 25 miles from Moelfre to Caernarfon. Slack water high at the Swellies was nominally 3.30 pm, when the stream would turn westward taking us towards Aber Menai. To allow a lunch break meant we should be afloat no later than 11.00 am, if we went. We were still contrasting the mill pond inside Moelfre Bay to the heavy goods traffic in the fast lane of the Belfast to Great Ormes Head trunk route, when we saw the part-time Coastguard approaching. He asked us in - it had been rather difficult reading the anemometer upside down through an overhanging window. 40+ knots meant we were going to have a hairy time in Moelfre cafe agreeing the best reasons why we had'nt gone. He kindly telephoned a colleague at Penmon for an on the spot report. Conveyed to us was the description of a heavily breaking sea in an arc, radiused on the lighthouse, from Dinmor Point to Puffin Island. It all added up to 'NO', or something shorter, but we were desperate to get some time on the water and, thanking the Coastguard for his help, we left to get changed.

Our landman was Tony Parnham, who was to inform Holyhead of our details as we left. On the water, in the flat calm of the Bay we took a few photo's of the group, not knowing they were nearly our last. The cameras were a Minolta Weathermatic A, 110 colour; and a Fujica HD -S, 35 mm, B & W. The Minolta was just held under a deck bungy and tossed from boat to boat (they float well) as required, whilst I had the Fujica round my neck, secured at front with a chest harness.

Like driving abroad, we left the 'lay by' at Moelfre, headed just south of east and eased our way down the slip-road and into the inside lane of this oceanic autobahn. Tony's instructions were to make sure we left, without turning back, and then aim for the east end of Red Wharf Bay where we would attempt some sort of rendezvous, to let him know whether we intended to land or carry on to Penmon.

As soon as we felt the full force of the wind on our backs we realised there was no going back, but we could have made for Benllech if we'd really wanted. At that time there didn't seem much point.

We moved into the middle lane.

Bill commented he was a little too high in the boat, making him a bit tippy. At 15 stones I'd have been worried too. We rafted to try and remove the foam he'd added to the seat. We could'nt. For some minutes forward progress strokes had been largely replaced by stearage and support strokes and if we'd had his spray deck off for long he'd have been testing his bulkheads. He decided on status quo ante, not happy, but you make these decisions on the information available at the time. Wisdom only comes later. After about half an hour we had done about two miles and were the same distance from the shore at Benllech. The sea was almost manageable. Sea Canoeing - 'A special kind of freedom'. Only two people in the world knew where we were and only one of them could possibly see us - the aging Coastguard using his high powered binoculars. He had'nt known us an hour earlier but was old enough to have met cranks before and possessed of sufficient sagacity to write an impartial report afterwards. Tony, by now, would be in the car and totally out of sight. We were on our own, and on our way. It was good to be back.

The boats were handling okay; Robin Rhodes was in a Trylon Sea Hawke. No bulkheads, no problems - yet! The Icefloes held direction well but on a trip like this had too little load to attain maximum stability. But again - no problems.

Shouted conversation gave way to concentration and thought.

"Were we enjoying it?"

"Pass".

I managed a quick photo' without aiming; just letting go with one hand and a quick press of the button with the camera pointing dead ahead, hopefully, at chest level.

The sky was low level heavy looking grotty cotton wool, travelling at speed. The coastline was just a silhouette, black and unrecognisable in any detail. The four of us were'nt very happy; Robin, me, Bill and God (Bill told us after. A true friend would have told us before!!)

We began to scan the coastline, not for Tony but for the village of Pentrellwyn where he'd be aiming for. Imperceptibly the heading had veered towards this east end of Red Wharf.

We were now in the outside lane amongst the heavy goods vehicles. The sea was big and behind us; (mental note for Dave Patrick to offer optional wing mirrors). No exaggerations needed - not massive, just big, difficult following sea. The real problem was, it seemed, to be getting bigger. With a force 8/9 gale and a fetch of over 75 miles we should have expected it to be big. Should'nt we?

From the land, you could'nt see what the sea was like where we were. From the land you could'nt see us. From where we were, we knew what the sea was like. From where we were, you could'nt step on to the land and review the situation. I felt it was time to be heading in. Penmon and Puffin Island were still five miles away, but from that distance we could make out the confusion in the area of the Sound.

Robin is confidant, competent and reliable. Bill is cool enough, an excellent swimmer and talks to big G. every day. I have a wife, two children and a Citroen Dyane to support.

I still could'nt see the village.

I was in front and started to head in a bit to try and pick out more detail (I need glasses for driving) The intention here was to keep our options open; land if necessary, or continue, whilst making visual contact with Tony to indicate that, and that we were okay.

The east end of Red Wharf runs due east to west and, with a north west gale, the waves lost little in refraction to break at a shallow angle to the very gently shelving beach. With enough creamers out at sea, these factors meant that there were no unbroken waves within half a mile of the shore and the bigger ones became unstable much further out. Since this was the area we were approaching it meant we were likely to become unstable also. I was in front and we were spread to avoid collisions, but in touch. Concentration forwards scanning a dark coastline above a spummy horizon, was in direct competition with concentration rearwards on what was coming. The inevitable compromise was to look forwards, listen and feel

astern, with an occasional confirmatory glance.

Despite the waves' audible warnings, giving notice of the need to stern rudder, more and more we were being picked up and surfed against our will, requiring energetic hanging draw strokes if the top fell off and broached us. I was beginning to learn the major differences in handling characteristics between a small-skegged slalom boat, which I'd been using for years, and the almost straight-keeled Icefloe. There had'nt been much opportunity to appreciate this factor on the Erewash Canal the week before! It was becoming increasingly more difficult to push back through the waves. Broaching more often, we hung in, waiting to be dropped as the swells reformed. The wind kept pushing them over. After all, we were still outside the main break-line - were'nt we? Not entirely.

Robin and Bill were behind me, to the right I think. I was picked up again. Ever had that feeling? The bow was a bit left of square on, so right stern rudder again, trying also to back off and through the wave. Not this time. I had'nt been concentrating enough on where I was. The bigger waves were 'fœeling' the bottom further out. This was a bigger wave. I was putting a great deal of effort into that motionless paddle stroke. I was pushing harder than I ever remembered doing before.

Still maintaining the boat almost square, it dug in - like a red hot scalpel sliding down ice. I was pushing like hell on the right, trying to control blade angle with a straight left arm. The wavelength shortened and the face steepened. A glance right, slightly over my shoulder, showed the wave was still green. Left it was breaking. The white mass came crashing down. Still I tried to stay square, and slow down, pushing with all my strength, (I'm only a little lad!) Crack! God snapped his fingers.

It was quite restful, even, for the first few seconds, but the ride was very bumpy and the roar in my ears was overpowering. I had to hang there, upside down, and wait for the wave to drop me. At the instnt of the capsize I had automatically swung my paddles onto my best side for rolling. The trouble was, it was the wrong side for the way I was going. 'Should I change? No! Wait!'

The water was icy. We had had a long hard winter. The sea was very cold and I did'nt own a wet suit at the time. I had'nt intended to capsize. I had'nt done for years - outside surf that was. The white water tore at the boat so I braced my legs apart to stay in. Hanging underneath, holding my breath, I waited for it to drop me. Body drag would see to that. I only have a little body! I could'nt wait any longer. No time now to swop sides; one roll needed, one really good strike out might do it. I put as much effort into it as I could, along with years of technique. It was a copy-book screw roll stroke. It had absolutely no effect. I did'nt even start to come up. I had no idea why.

Very short of breath, the spray cover off at the first pull and I came out of the boat. Pythagorus once said that "... if you put a 16+ ft. sea kayak at 45° on a wave, if you can still see both ends and water beyond, and your name is'nt Jesus, you've got a problem". When you bear in mind that a ten foot wave breaks in about thirteen feet of water; at 5' 8" I was well out of my depth, and a long way from shore.

I managed to grab the boat, still inverted, and tried to keep it that way for buoyancy. If I lost it, I too would be lost. Being new to me, I did'nt know it well yet, which way round even, where things were. I had my right arm in the cockpit, holding on to the seat as hard as I could, as the next creamer engulfed me. We came through it, colder, the boat meant life.

I saw Bill and Robin some way out, both disappearing over a huge swell. They dare'nt approach me from seaward for fear of lancing me. Anyone for kebabs! It seemed hopeless. I was so cold I could hardly breath. Some of it was probably shock but I undid the lifejacket cord anyway, I had to breath. Robin worked his way round, down wind of me. It seemed to take ages. When level he shouted, "Are

you alright?"

"No", I shouted back, not thinking. I wasn't injured, "Yes, but very cold", I shouted in correction, shaking in the water as the icy vice closed tighter round my body.

Still outside the main break-line, after some minutes, he came up from the land and windward side, grabbed my boat and righted it. With bulkheads, only the centre section was full. He clung on tight as I climbed on the front, clambering over the bow with my back to seaward. Coming aboard from that end I had to turn round before I could get in. Robin held on as I turned and slid in, and then saw the reasons for the sudden capsize and failed roll. Floating in the water to seaward was my paddle - in two pieces. It had snapped whilst I was trying to brace the boat and stay square, instantly depriving me of support. Because I hadn't known this, I had tried to roll with fresh air, since the paddle shaft then ended about half an inch after it went through my tenacious right hand. If I had swapped sides, I would still have had a blade on that side, even though I would still have had problems when, and if, I'd surfaced. Of greater concern at that time, though, was where they were floating. Robin and I were parallel, together and slightly to the right of square to the on-coming waves. Robin to the left of me, we gripped each other's boats tighter and watched the broken portions of the paddle rise majestically up the face of a large, steep cresting wave. The last time I had seen anything like that was in an early scene of the 'Poisoned Adventure'. The sight of it ensured that I would never again be a customer for laxatives. We lowered our heads as the bows rose. The boats slid back down the steep face, sterns digging in. The upper portion pushed the bows higher, towards the vertical. No chance!

We were looped backwards and, because we weren't dead square on, Robin's boat went straight over the top of mine, to end up on the other side. Out of my boat again, when the thunder died I looked up through the murky water and could see light beyond two long silhouettes and a tangle of lines. It really was cold, this couldn't go on much longer. As I pulled my head clear of the water between the two ends, I saw Robin half over, clinging on to my upturned kayak for support. He had lost his paddle and the spraydeck was off. His boat didn't have bulkheads so it was quite full of water. Cold and getting a bit weary, I tried to help him right himself by holding the two kayaks together, so he could push up on mine. Once up, we put his cover back on and righted mine again. For the second time I climbed back in. Robin had been over but had not spent much time underneath, having pulled himself up on my boat. He also had a wet suit on which helped. Attempts at emptying him with my pump were abandoned as it meant having both spraydecks off and the waves put it back faster than we could pump it out.

Robin suggested we roped the boats together. I asked him if he liked sex and travel. I didn't mean to be unfriendly, but I didn't fancy trying to swim up between two tied boats and get more tangled than last time. I pulled out one half of my spare paddle on the rear deck and with the shaft behind my neck turned both kayaks to face seaward, back paddling on the left. We made a tight raft with our remaining arms and managed to avoid looping again, whilst trying to ease our way shorewards between the waves.

All these events had taken some time, and I had not seen Bill at all for a while. I expressed concern to Robin and neither of us could see him anywhere. This looked really dodgy. We were hardly able to make any guarantees to ourselves, let alone render help to anyone else. He was nowhere to be seen. We had no wet suit or buoyancy aid! Somewhere, out there, he was swimming. (Please God, look after Bill. Tell him not to let go!!)

Boy, was I cold. It seemed like ages before we made it to shallow water. My hands were white, my body shaking and when I tried to speak, even short words were difficult. Robin jumped out and stood up, I fell out and stood up. We picked up his boat and emptied it manually, hands hardly able to grip, and shattered. As Robin got in and put his spraydeck on, I got the other half of my spare paddle and joined it up. He pushed off to look for Bill, downwind of us. I walked and

stumbled through the shallows in the same direction, scanning for any sign. Nothing! Then, there he was, walking in about waist deep, no sign of the boat. Incredibly pleased and grateful, I somehow thought to take a photograph and, amazingly I had not lost the Fujica. I managed to control my shakes and take a picture. Then I lurched to meet him and ask how he was, "Cold, John, bloody cold!" He'd been in for quite a while. Robin went after his boat.

All, this time Tony, from a hill above the village, had seen the situation through binoculars and driven down to the beach. In Robin's Ford 2 Litre Mk IV company beach buggy, he came across the sand like Starsky. It wasn't over yet. This was a bank holiday weekend and one of Anglesey's most popular beaches. Normally it would have been packed, but you don't get many sun-bathers with a gale blowing. We were, at least, in early exposure. Tony reached us, jumped out and told us to get behind the car out of the wind. We did, while he undid the boot to get at some clothes. Bill grabbed his and ran off up the beach, muttering something about "cold" and a "hut". In the distance was a small building, grey and uninviting, but to Bill it meant shelter.

Tony tried to stop him but in Bill's other sport as second row No. 8, he is used to picking up things and running, so Tony erred on the side of caution and let him go. Instead he bundled me into the back of the car and threw a sleeping bag over me. I tried to say "coffee", but it came out in about 27 syllables. He got the message, eventually found a flask and poured half a cup out. I tried to hold it with both hands, to warm them as much as anything else, but nearly threw it all over the car. I could'nt stop shaking, so Tony held it also.

Robin returned having beached Bill's boat, got in the back with me and had a drink. I held his hand and thanked him. I really meant it. I'm not queer, honest ducky.

Gradually we improved and Tony drove us as near as he could to where Bill had gone - it was a public loo. He was inside so we took him a coffee, got the clothes from the car and joined him. For the first time in what seemed like a very long while, things began to look a little better. I really began to believe that I would'nt now die, not that day anyway! Bill was beginning to feel the same, but it had been very, very close. If we'd gone over once more; if Robin had come out of his boat too; if Bill had'nt been such a good swimmer; if Tony had'nt been there, or had not seen us; etc. We were very lucky; not skilful, experienced, capable or competent - just very lucky, and we knew it!

In the melee we had lost a few things; flares, paddles, hats, etc. so when dressed we loaded the boats, then Bill and I started a beach comb while Tony and Robin went to phone the Coastguard. After some while scouring the shoreline we had found a flare, along with Bill's and Robin's hats, but not mine. Now that was sad. It had been knitted by someone very special, with loving care and I protested against leaving without it. I had not worn it at sea before, I thought it might bring me luck. In a way, it probably had, and I wanted to find it! They didn't understand. They would'nt, would they?

Back in the car, Tony took us up above the village to where he had been when he spotted us. He said he remembered counting the boats, ".....one yellow one, one orange one and one white one. White one! We have'nt got a white one!" He pointed, saying we were about four miles out when I'd gone over. With the O.S. map we proved to him that that was quite impossible, but it showed us also, how far out we really had been. A few photographs to mark the spot and then off to Bangor to find a guest house. On the way somebody remarked on the significance of the date - May 1st. May Day.

It was two hours after we'd landed that the blood flowed back into my toes and I felt completely warm again.

The memory of that wave will stay with me for life; but the hat is gone for ever. I'm sorry.

Poached from CoDe, No. 5 Spring '83.

"With reference to Lt. J.R.Crawford's article about a cockpit canopy, how does one magic the canopy into existence when required? I certainly would not like to paddle all day in a cross wind with a canopy such as the one described lashed on to the afterdeck of the kayak. It seems almost inconceivable that anyone would, on the onset of a storm attempt to ride it out by trapping oneself inside a glassfibre canopy, sea anchor or no sea anchor.

I have on occasions produced a small umbrella, which, if nothing else, creates a little light relief during a long wet trip!

Over the years I have examined many sea kayaks. One question which still remains unanswered is why, with technology which puts men on the moon can we not design an economic, efficient hatch cover which actually stops water entering the sealed compartments?

Perhaps because otherwise poly bag manufacturers would be out of business!

??????????

An Electric Bilge Pump for the Nordkapp

On most sea kayaks you can have either a foot pump or a hand pump, or both, but neither do the job effectively. I have yet to meet the man whose foot pump, with the passing of time, has not sprung a leak or fell apart at an inopportune moment. The hand pump, in my opinion, is a potentially dangerous piece of equipment. Fine, in a nice calm estuary, you do your underwater re-entry, roll up and pump away, then off you go, convinced that kind of single handed rescue will work in anger. Have you ever tried pumping a waterlogged kayak out with one hand on your paddle, breached to a minimum of a force four sea?

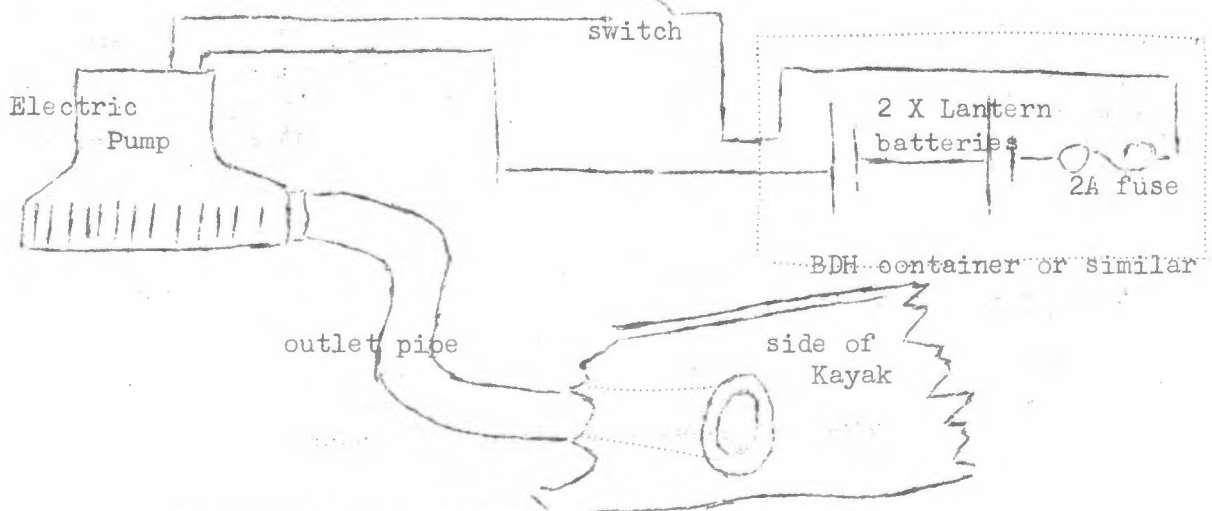
The conditions which would have dragged the unfortunate paddler from his kayak, or at least filled the cockpit with water in the first place, would certainly not allow him to play at single handed support strokes while he operated a pump.

A solution costs about £12 in the shape of a 12 volt submersible bilge pump, obtainable from any large boat chandler. It is held in place by a pair of glassed-in elasticated straps against the hull, immediately in front of the seat. Cable and outlet pipe are held out of the way by a velcro strap, easily released if the pump is needed to empty someone else. The soft plastic pipe I used squeezed neatly inside the existing outlet connector. The electric cable divides, one wire goes to a waterproof single pole switch (in the event of it shorting out the pump would merely be set running - a sort of accidental water-sensor!) The switch is fitted behind the cockpit, the toggle on the outside of the deck.

The other wire, plus the other wire from the switch, go through a waterproof 'O' ring sleeve in the bottom of a BDH. This again is held in place with glassed straps. The cable is designed for underwater use, being round in section and covered in soft rubber, so as to make a good seal.

The BDH contains an in-line 2 amp fuse plus two 6V lantern dry cell batteries wired in series. The switch, cable and ring seal came from Greenaway and Morris (Camera Housings) of Swindon. A cheap, in fact free alternative to a BDH was found in the shape of a chlorine tablet container, obtainable from your local friendly swimming pool manager!

Meanwhile, having glassed up the hole left by the handpump, I must decide what I shall fit in the deck space now available!



THE LIFELIGHT

New from MARINE WHOLESale is the Lifelight, an optical emergency signal for personnel at sea.

Manufactured in Sweden, the Lifelight represents a new concept in personnel safety by providing a visible signal in a remarkably compact unit, over a long distance for attracting attention when in distress.

This new safety light is robust and fully waterproof and can be carried in the pocket of a lifejacket/buoyancy jacket. It fits very well into the pocket of the Expedition Buoyancy Jacket. Not much bigger than a cigarette packet, the Lifelight measures 125 X 75 X 40 mm and weighs just under 140 grams. It is powered by a 9 Valkaline battery and will emit emergency flashing signals for a minimum of 48 hours at a frequency of 40 flashes per minute. The light is spread in all directions, even vertically, and when used in the sea the light is reflected against the water so that it can be seen from a long distance.

The operation of this innovative safety device, which has the approval of the Norwegian Maritime Authorities, is extremely simple. The Lifelight, which meets British Standards, is attached to a lifejacket pocket or an accessible pocket in an outer coat by means of a lanyard. Attached to a second lanyard is a magnetic metal shield which slots in next to the light at the top of the unit, to protect it when not in use. When the Lifelight is removed from the pocket and the secondary lanyard is pulled, the magnetic switch operates the light which then starts flashing automatically.

The Lifelight contains no moving parts which can be exposed to wear. Its body is designed to ensure that it floats upright and remains in that position allowing maximum signalling power. It is shock resistant and extremely reliable.

Available from Marine Wholesale, 5, St. Botolph St. London, EC3A 7DT.

HERE FOLLOWS THE TRANSLATION OF THE CURRENT FRENCH MARITIME REGULATIONS REGARDING SEA KAYAKING IN FRENCH WATERS.

The Sea Kayak is a sporting boat as distinct from a ship or a beach craft. They may navigate in daylight up to 1853 metres (1 mile) from the nearest accessible coast.

All paddlers must fully understand and follow the international and local regulations to prevent collisions on the sea.

Kayakists must keep out of the way of and not inconvenience professional seamen. Sea Kayaks must be more than 0.5 metres wide and 4 metres long, of rigid construction, decked and provided with a watertight spraydeck and toggle or an equivalent towing point.

Inflatable kayaks are Beachcraft.

A buoyancy aid or lifejacket to the standards of the Marine Ministry or F.F.C.K. must be carried.

If a dossier giving details of the kayakists, their equipment and the proposed journey is submitted to the Marine Ministry, special permission to paddle outside the one mile limit may be given. This should be done via the F.F.C.K.

Beyond one mile the minimum equipment will include a spare paddle per person, a pump or baler, toggle or towing fitting and a fixed or sighting compass.

The Ministry considers that these new regulations are extremely liberal and relies upon the responsible attitude of sea kayakists who are sportsmen experimenting with a new sport.

The regulations leave the responsibility for safety with the individual who must inform themselves of safety practices.

The sea is dangerous and therefore requires suitable precautions..

It is recommended that the lifejacket or buoyancy aid is worn at all times; that there is an adequate reserve of warm clothing and that all the above equipment is carried on all trips.

Sea kayakists must be fully conversant with rescue and first aid techniques for individuals and groups.

French address: French Federation Canoe Kayak,
87, Quai de la Marne,
94340,
Joinville Le Pont,
FRANCE

Translated from an article by C.M./Mer in Canoe Kayak, January 1983.

CORRESPONDENCE

From Bruce Kitney, New York, U.S.A.

Dear John,

I've greatly enjoyed the ASKC Newsletter for the past year (I've been borrowing one from a friend) but I feel it's time to pay my own way.

This summer Ken Fink (of Walpole, ME) and I took a most interesting trip along the coast of Labrador, paddling about 500 kilometres south from Hopedale to Cartwright in 15 days. Outstanding scenery and wildlife (puffins, shearwaters, whales, bears, etc). The weather in mid July was excellent, and except for the long drive through the maritime provinces of Canada and across Newfoundland, the trip was relaxed. We travelled from Newfoundland to Hopedale by ferry and steamer, and costs were surprisingly low. Both Ken and I paddled Nordkapps and had no equipment difficulties whatsoever. For someone living in the eastern U.S. or Canada, or for a Brit. with a cheap enough airfare, Labrador is a near perfect combination of the remote and accessible. If it would be of interest I'd be happy to send off more complete information about our trip with details of access and costs to anyone who writes.

Ken and I were back in time for the AnOrAk sponsored Sea Kayaking Symposium held in mid-August in Maine (by now I'm sure you will have had a full report). I've not seen the like of it in the U.S. -- something like a minor version of your Crystal Palace show I should expect. Most major U.S. manufacturers and characters like John Dowd added spice. Frank Goodman more than capably represented British paddlers.

This summer I hope to take some short trips on the Great Lakes - closer to me than the ocean, and not inconsequential bodies of water in their own right. Next summer I'd like to paddle the western coast of Iceland; know anyone who has experier there? (Ed: yes I do, try Geoff Hunter, 1, Ockley Cottage, Ockley Lane, Hawkhurst, Kent - or Nigel Foster at Plas y Deri, Caernarfon, Gwynedd - both paddled round Iceland some years ago)

Thanks for your efforts in creating the ASKC - maybe we'll have the chance to paddle together yet.

Bruce Kitney.

-oOo- -oOo-

From Richard Waldbart, Tampa, Florida, U.S.A.

Dear John,

Noticed in the February '83 Newsletter, mention of a Home Swap. How about a Hosted Visit instead? In that way, visitors could have the advantage of someone who is paddling 'home waters'. The same folks could reverse later in the year or the following year.

A specific trip I have in mind could work like this: I usually paddle a week trip in our Everglades in January (the only time for this far south!). I would be willing to host a small group (2 or 3), pick them up at the airport, pop cold beers into hot hands at the first opportunity, etc.

We could paddle together for a week, then several options could be discussed:

i) head for home, ii) elect to stay another week or two with me helping with re-provisioning and pick up later, or iii) head off on their own for distant parts of the U.S.A.

Hopefully, new friendships will be formed and a similar excursion to your side could be arranged. Let me hear from you.

Rick Waldbart.

P.S. Met a fellow from U.K. - Jim Hargreaves (Capel Curig) in Santiago, Chile in '82. We were both part of groups finishing the Bio Bio. (Ed's note- do we know Jim Hargreaves!

-oOo-

-oOo-

CANOEING ON THE THAMES (Taken from B.C.U. South Region Bulletin No.6)

The Tidal Thames is not in the Southern Region but it offers some unusual canoeing experiences. There have been some instances of the irresponsible few getting into difficulty either with the water or with other traffic. Anyone thinking of taking a group on the tideway would do well to check with the PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY well in advance of setting off. The person to contact is: The Director of Marine Operations, Port of London Authority, Thames House, Gallions Entrance, London, E16. Negotiating the Thames Barrier can be a memorable experience. The rule, as usual, is to keep to the right. In otherwords, go through the southernmost available span when going east and the northernmost when going west. Above all, observe any instructions from official P.L.A. launches. The crews are friendly and helpful - it pays to take their advice.

From Pascal Bourdon, Guingamp, France.

CATCHIKY

In the last Newsletter you published a Frenchman's letter (Hendroux Kory). I would like to give some explanations about the "bandits procedures" we used to build "Catchiky".

The story began in Dinan when Jersey Canoe Club came over several years ago to paddle on rivers. After that Yvon Odion, my brother Loic and myself - we dreamed of paddling on the sea.....we went to Jersey to see how they did it and were amazed to hear how they visited islands so far away from Jersey! So Loic bought an Eskimo (A.Feuillette's kayak). We tried it and it seemed very good for canoeing along the shore but we found it wasn't voluminous enough to carry much gear, and maybe a little hard to keep straight in a side wind, and when surfing the front end tends to dive. Then, in Jersey, we bought a Sea Hawk mould but we found it wasn't a great improvement.

Because we were short of money to buy three or four kayaks and it wasn't possible to find an appropriate mould to build ourselves, we thought it would be cheaper to design one: we didn't know at that time that it would be so difficult and expensive!!

We wanted something voluminous enough to carry all camping gear - quite stable because most of us were beginners.....of course to design it we start from what we saw and had tried and Yvon worked on our kayak every evening (sometimes nights) and I at weekends during at least eight months. It cost far more money than to have bought three well finished Nordkapps. But at the end we succeeded in building something by ourselves, we were proud enough of it. I suppose Frank Goodman is as good a designer enough to see it's not a Nordkapp at all!! We made a mould and made three kayaks and had to try them on the sea.

By chance a friend from Jersey, Franco Ferrero, wanted to learn French. We decided to go to Ireland to do both (linguistics and canoeing) because at that time the French law for canoeing was too restrictive. At first we tried them on large lakes. Franco said they didn't seem too bad and so we went on the sea. It didn't work too bad. He taught us to read maps, to fit gear - many thanks to him.

Back in France we had to modify many little things on the deck, to cut a great part off the lee board and to change the seat. All was ready the following year (1980) to plan a Brittany Tour during August.

After that many friends wanted to build a Catchiky. Because it wasn't our trade and because Loic and Yvon wanted to see as many people as possible in a kayak on the sea at the cheapest price - he asked a fibre glass factory to take on the job. But they were accustomed to building tanks, casings for motorbikes - not kayaks. It was very difficult to explain to them that a badly finished seat or a badly sandpapered inside for example, could be very dangerous. Anyway, many kayaks were brought, mainly by Youth Hostels and sailing school, and more and more people were getting interested in sea canoeing. Dominique Bounjois, the boss of the fibre glass factory, is trying to improve the quality. I think he will succeed soon, but to build as good a quality as VCP for example, takes a lot of experience.

Each time a Catchiky is sold Dominique gives about £10 to an association that Loic founded to develop the discovery of sea and shore - walking, riding, paddling, sailing in small boats. It was started only at the beginning of last year.

That's all the bandit story. In France there are at least 2 models of sea kayaks, both quite different: Eskimo and the Catchiky. I hope that there will be others before too long. We don't want to know whether they are better or worse than this or that canoe - that's not sufficient. But you can help us by saying what is good and bad in them. By this way, maybe, we can improve them or someone will design a better one. It's the only way to develop sea canoeing in our Country and for you to find many friends when you come here to paddle.

Yours sincerely,
Pascal Bourdon.

From Jerry Welch, Akron, Ohio, U.S.A.
Dear John, (Nanuk)

Just a quick note to let you know I've formed ERIE ANorAK, - Great Lakes version of Jim Chute's ANorAK in Maine.

Also, I've just placed an order for a Nordkapp from Posidon Kayaks Duports (also in Maine) can't wait to get my new boat.
etc.

Good paddling,

Jerry Welch, c/o Erie Anorak.

A WEEKEND OF GREAT INSIGHTS by Phillip Teece.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE INTERNATIONAL OCEAN KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM - VICTORIA
BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA. APRIL 1st TO 4th. 1983

'International' turned out to be an apt description of this exciting event, whose 160 participants and speakers gathered from Canada, the United States, Great Britain, New Zealand and (in one case) from as far afield as Norway. Jointly sponsored by the Pacific Canoe Base, the University of Victoria and the Ocean Kayaking Association of B.C., the Symposium took place partly at the University and partly on the waters of nearby Cadboro Bay, with a concluding group paddling among the islands near Sidney, B.C.

The Guest Speakers:

It can probably be asserted without fear of dissent that Victoria has never before played host to so illustrious a gathering of world-class ocean kayakers. Derek Hutchinson opened the Symposium with the highly amusing style of presentation that we have come to expect from him; Derek also contributed several film lectures, including his superb "Kayaks to Prince William Sound," the account of a paddle (in four Ice Flow sea kayaks and one Baidarka) along three hundred miles of Alaska's contorted coastline, and conducted a highly instructive pool session on advanced handling and rescue techniques.

Frank Goodman's talk on concepts of design initiated much excellent discussion (there was keen interest in his experimental findings on the effects of shape, windage, weight, etc. on canoe speeds). Later in the Symposium Frank presented a stunning slide-lecture on his expedition with a small fleet of Nordkapps through the ice-choked seas of Baffin Island.

In spite of having his wallet and passport stolen at San Francisco, en route to Victoria from New Zealand, Paul Caffyn managed to arrive in high spirits; his slide presentation included the story of his mind-boggling 9,500 mile circumnavigation of Australia, his circuit of Great Britain (I loved the musical background!) and the segment of his famous New Zealand voyage that covered Fiordland and the South Island west coast. The audience literally gasped in dismay when Paul described and illustrated some of his surf landings - "airborne" in a fully laden Nordkapp.

Vancouver deep-water expert, John Dowd, talked on the subject of long open water crossings, stressing the special navigational and physiological hazards that must be planned for, like those multi-day runs he has undertaken in the Caribbean. John and Lee Moyer (Seattle designer and inventor of the widely used "stirrup rescue" technique) used the very high level of audience response to John's ideas as a basis for one of the weekend's liveliest discussions.

Barry Smith, who is currently living in Victoria and completing graduate studies at the University, is noted as one of the participants in the British Cape Horn Expedition. In a presentation that set an interestingly different pace, Barry examined the philosophy of sea kayaking. His comments on positive values such as physical accomplishment and spiritual well-being, and on some negative aspects such as excessive competitiveness and ego-building, provoked a stimulating exchange of viewpoints among the participants. Using his magnificent collection of slides from West Coast paddling trips, John Ince also explored some of the philosophical considerations of kayaking. John's principal focus was on the discovery of incidental pleasures like wild food gathering, hot tubbing and contact with native cultures during trips along the coast. The Symposium as a whole was ably orchestrated by master of ceremonies Vic Lindal of B.C.'s Recreation and Sports Branch.

Insights and Ideas

All who attended the Symposium remarked on the variety and sheer number of ideas that arose out of the weekend. The facts, comments and opinions that emerged during the conference would easily fill a book; it is impossible to summarise them here in a few sentences. A random selection of points raised include the following:

- Weight of ocean touring boats: It is worth adding weight to create a

robust kayak. A weight difference to 10 pounds means a speed difference detectable only by 'electronic timing',

- Expedition speeds: regardless of individual athletic prowess, a touring group will travel at the speed that is comfortable to it's weakest member, perhaps under three knots. ("The weakest paddler is the strongest!")

- Safety: A competent ocean paddler plans (and is equipped) for self sufficiency and self rescue, but uses prudence in order to avoid the circumstances that call upon either self-rescue or outside help.

- B.C. coastal landings: kayakers should be aware that visits to native Indian lands and sites must be arranged by means of diplomatic approaches to the relevant band authorities.

- Ecological considerations: in our rapidly increasing numbers, we ocean kayakers have a growing ecological significance. 'No-trace' camping and cautious, considerate invasion of wildlife areas (such as colonies of sea lions) are imperative.

-Ocean kayaking in general: it is fun: this was a point of unanimous agreement, as reflected in the prevailing mood of the Symposium.

Practical Sessions

The Symposium offered considerable "hands-on" experience with kayaks. During one afternoon session, devoted to examination of a wide variety of personal boats in the sea at Cadboro Bay, some individuals test-paddled as many as a dozen separate designs. The designers themselves were an entertaining sight as they took their first sceptical trips in each other's boats. During a three-hour practice and demonstration meeting at the University's McKinnon Pool, Derek Hutchinson displayed paddling techniques that made the intricacies of boat-handing look like a gracefull ballet performance. A highlight was rescue that Derek staged, complete with simulated waves and flying spray. The concluding trip among the coastal islands near Sidney was led by OKABC president, Stephanie Steel, with Derek Hutchinson, Paul Caffyn, Keith Nelson and Fred Potter. Twentyfive kayakers took part in this day long tour, which even included a real-life rescue.

Concluding Comments

My personal feeling that this was an outstanding event was clearly reflected in the remarks I overheard all round me, both during the Symposium and in the days following that memorable weekend. It was a very full and varied programme, beautifully planned and excitingly presented. Although many of the audience took detailed written notes, I recorded the continuous outpouring of information and ideas in memory. Most OKABC members will agree, I think, that the memory will last, as a record of perhaps our Association's richest and most unforgettable gathering ever.

Philip Teece

CALSHOT'S THIRD SEA CANOEING EXHIBITION

The huge Sports Hall and outside exhibition areas of Calshot Activities Centre were again host to this event in conjunction with the Annual Secondhand Small Boat Sale on May 8th, 1983.

5,500 people visited the Exhibition to try, buy or discuss nautical equipment. The 'try a canoe' session held on the adjacent sea was again very popular. In addition to Calshot's large fleet of specialist sea kayaks, the trade supplied trailers full of kayaks for the public to look at and paddle. A flare demonstration by Camper and Nicholson was of special interest to sea canoeists.

Specialist Sea Canoes being tried included: Anas Acuta, Vyneck, Lindisfarne, Nordkapp (various versions), Dawn Treader, Explorer, Iceflow, Weekender, Islander (part of a new fleet purchased by Calshot), Meridean, Huntsman, Sea King Mk. 1 and 2 (a smaller version), Umnak, Sea Tiger (Alan Bydes latest version), Anas Acuta Chick and various touring kayaks with skegs.

Paddlers who missed this event and wish to try different kayaks do not have to wait a year for the next Exhibition as Calshot's comprehensive fleet is available

to Calshot's canoe course members and individuals or clubs can book 'try-it' sessions or days through John Kuyser, Head of Canoeing.

Canoe Exhibitors included:

Byde Design - P & H Fibreglass - Valley Canoe Products - Val Nightingale - D & S Marine - Wye Kayaks - Alternative surf Brookbank Canoes - Trylon - Ayelco - Solent Canoe Club - Harishok - Beans.

The day was also the occasion of the 2nd. B.C.U. Southern Region Canoe Polo Championships in which 20 teams competed to a very high standard. The Championship was won by Bere Forest Canoe Polo Club who again hold the Cup. Excellent prizes of canoeing gear were presented by D & S Marine, Alternative Surf Brookbank Canoes, White Water Sports, Beans and Trylon.

Sent in by Brian Lamb, Acting Deputy Director

QUOTE TO PONDER

"In trying to slip quietly around on the waters on this planet, you take a slender form that the wind and waves won't notice; you blend into the interface of water and air by cunningly adopting their lightness and quickness of movement; with small wings and little strain you move with the wind." Quote is from George Dyson from the book 'The Starship and the Canoe' by Ken Brower. George has written a book (not published yet) about Aleut kayaks and his designs. (I'm guessing as to actual content) Hope to hear more from him soon.

CLASSIC BOOK

"The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America" by Adney and Chapelle (Smithsonian Institute, 1964) is surely a classic worth searching out. Although out of print at present, the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association (P.O.Box 5634, Madison, Wisconsin 53705) hopes to secure a supply of the books in the future. There is much one could learn by studying this excellent book. See it at your library!

The following is taken from the Editorial of the June '83 CANOEIST.

Over the last few years some very exciting canoeing expeditions have taken place. For daring and courage or for simply reaching inaccessible parts of the globe the best of them can rank with anything else that has been achieved in the way of journeys of exploration and adventure. The fact that media recognition has not been forthcoming can be put down to the ignorance of the dangers on the part of the media and our failure to educate the media. Certainly, tremendous achievements have gone unrecognised by the world at large, and continue to do so.

These journeys around the globe have taken place against a background of economic decline and the resourcefulness of people able to prepare for such expeditions on severely limited budgets has to be admired. However, we are starting to see a disturbing trend where greater reliance is being placed on the generosity of local people who are often very much poorer than their guests.

Perhaps the epitomy of these developments was the distasteful case of a canoeist who recently set out on a journey with some basic foodstuffs in his boat. Each night he went seeking hospitality, as he put it, and was usually provided with food, a bed and safety which he would have lacked camping on the river bank. After six weeks his food was unopened and he had spent just £2. His hosts were struggling on the poverty line. It will be only a matter of time before local villagers begin to equate canoeists with scroungers and the normal code of conduct which requires them to be friendly to strangers will deteriorate to what we are more used to.

HANNES LINDEMANN'S classic book, "ALONE AT SEA", is being reprinted. Originally published in 1958, is now part of a collection titled - "GREAT VOYAGES IN SMALL BOATS". Solo Transatlantic put out by John DeGraff Inc., Clinton Corners, New York 12514. (Distributed by International Marine, Camden, Maine, 04843) This is Lindemann's story of 2 Atlantic crossings, one in a dugout canoe in 1955 and the other in a 17ft folding boat in 1956. It adds up to some good reading.

V.C.P. are busy running trials on a new sea rudder.

There has been on-going dialogue on the pros and cons of rudders for sea boats for long enough; the general feeling being that rudders would be fine if they could be relied on.

Since nothing available seemed robust enough, it was decided to design for simplicity and strength. Stimulated by Paul Caffyn's trip around Australia where Paul had fitted a rudder to his Nordkapp at the half-way stage, it was decided to develop this idea, since Paul said, "It's a beaut!!"

The result is a very robust aluminium alloy pivot with a glassfibre hydrodynamically designed blade that can be turned back onto the deck of the canoe when not required. A simple pedal control works the rudder via heavy stainless steel wire taped to the decklines - thus avoiding any unnecessary puncturing of the aft hatch compartment. Another feature of the rudder is its depth - well below the keel-line -- giving excellent control even when the stern itself is lifted clear of the water. Of special interest is the method of fastening the rudder to the boat.....it should fit most types of kayak, including those with the traditional upswept eskimo stern.

The accent has been on robust reliability and the trials are proceeding satisfactorily. All being well, the production rudder will be available by the end of July, 1983.

EXPLORING THE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

The Annual Conference of the National Association for Outdoor Education
Doncaster Institute, 7th - 9th. October, 1983

Adventure experience or field study, a journey or a camp, a city farm or wilderness, personal development or group relationships; the variety of approaches to the outdoor environment for educational purposes is rapidly growing as its potential is put to full use. Some of these techniques have become new movements, Life Skills, Acclimatisation; others have infiltrated the activity of schools, centres, youth groups, I.T. groups, youth training schemes, management training courses and more.

All of them have one aim in common: to encourage an awareness of and love for the natural environment and to promote a caring attitude to its enjoyment. The recent British response to the World Conservation Strategy stressed the importance of education in creating a respect for the planet and a greater understanding of ecological principles if its health is to be ensured.

This conference is bringing together many examples of outdoor exploration and putting them on show. It will be a chance to see how others work and explore new methods in new environment. Various support agencies will also be present to explain how they can help.

Further details and application forms for the conference can be obtained from:
Mr. M.Eaves, National Advice and Information Centre, D.M.I.H.E.,
High Melton, Doncaster, Yorkshire.

Attendance is open to all.

HELP!!

Daniel Summers of 14, Neva Road, Bitterne Park, Southampton (Tel 559080) is looking for fellow paddlers. If you want to paddle the south coast or you live near by give him a ring

IDEA!!

Jonathan Iles suggests that the A.S.K.C. own a pool of the more expensive and sophisticated equipment occasionally used by sea canoeistse.g. rescue beacons, marine radios, R.D.F.s, flares. If there is sufficient interest in setting this up I need to know about it. Let me have your opinions and suggestions as to how best to set it up in the first place.

From Derek Hutchinson.

Dear John,

I just thought I would relate a delightful little tale to you and although you may have heard it, I know that this newsletter gets around the world now and I'm sure other members of the ASKC will be interested.

It seems that as one of Russias many satalites was travelling on its lonely way high above the earth, it picked up a distress signal from somewhere over Northern Britain. From the satellite, the signal was picked up by the French Naval Base at Toulouse. These gentlemen immediately relayed the signal to Scotlands Marine Maritime Rescue Centre at Pitreavie. With the co-ordinates available, they were in a position to decide what kind of rescue craft to deploy. R.A.F. Boulmer, the home of S.A.R., 202 Squadron, 'A' Flight, scrambled a Sea King Helicopter.

In the early morning light the rescue helicopter finished up hovering over a housing estate on the outskirts of Glasgow. The aircraft was landed on the nearest available piece of open ground and with the assistance of the local constabulary, the origins of the distress signal were pinpointed as emitting from a block of flats.

At 6.00am the 'rescuers' knocked on one of the doors. In answer to their questions, a sleepy man admitted that, yes! he was the owner of a distress beacon. It was a LOCAT, he said, and he owned one because he had a yacht. He explained that the beacon was on top of his wardrobe because it didn't work. The delinquent LOCAT was duly discovered where the man said it would be, but unfortunately it was in anything but an enfeebled condition. It lay in its box broadcasting it's urgent signal into the ether with great exuberance!

As we all rolled about on the pub floor laughing at this, someone said that he had heard the sequel to the story.....seemingly the police had traced the serial number of the beacon and discovered that it had been pinched from an oil rig!

If this amusing little tale does nothing else, it will have made the manufacturers of this particular beacon happy. The only advert I can think of that is in any way comparable was the one used by Rolex some years ago.....seems some fellow lost a Rolex off his wrist while skin diving just before the war. He recovered it when the war was over and all it required to return it to its former glory was a clean up.

I'll be out in San Francisco this summer, doing the odd lecture and a bit of coaching and I hope to get amongst the killer whales of British Columbia. Only hope someone feeds them before I get there!!

Yours sincerely,
Derek.

From Rune Sundmark, Lulea, Sweden.

Dear Nanuk,

Reading the membership list I see that there are a few from Sweden and Norway who are taking an interest in sea canoeing.

At the beginning of September we are staging a course in sea and coastal canoeing. This course may well be the first of its kind in Sweden. Our experience is limited though some of us have been paddling round the Lofoton Islands and in our archipelago outside Norrbotten in the upper Baltic. We shall probably start out from the Kalix area for a weekend. The great feature of our waters is that there is no high and low water effect, waters are fairly shallow and the isles mostly flat.

Our course will be on the 2-3-4 September this year. We can offer nice and interesting paddling along our coast from Haparanda down to Pitea which is about 200 km distance.

I like your bulletin as its contents now encompass stuff from more parts of the world - still I would like to have more quality as to its outer appearance, even if it would cost more. Could there be more technical suggestions with sketches. It is not always easy to follow the suggestions as currently stated.

SAFEGUARDING THE SEAFARER

A description of how, after four and half centuries of services to mariners, Trinity House continues its traditional role.

Trinity House is a very British institution. The name is household but people generally do not know much about it. It is vaguely understood that it has something to do with seafarers, lighthouses and the pilotage of ships. I decided to investigate further and to this end contacted Trinity House Headquarters near Tower Bridge and its main workshop situated on a cold and windy site by the Thames at Blackwall.

First of all, looking at the historical background I discovered that the present Trinity House organisation developed from a semi-religious association of 'shipmen' and mariners' involved in pilotage on the Thames, which existed in the 15th. century and maintained a Hall and Almshouses in Deptford.

In 1514, this body petitioned King Henry VIII and was granted a Royal Charter which authorised, "our true and faithful subjects, Shipmen and Mariners in honour of the most Blessed Trinitie to begyn of new and erecte and establish a Guild or Brotherhood.....", the main objects of which were the safety and progress of navigation and the welfare of seamen and their dependants. Four and a half centuries later these are still the objectives.

WORLDWIDE REPUTATION

The organisation has, of course, developed and expanded enormously. Now known as Trinity House, it is unique as a maritime organisation and a prestigious corporation with a world wide reputation. It is the General Lighthouse Authority for England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar responsible for lighthouses, light vessels, buoys and beacons round the coastlines of these areas.

It is also the Principal Pilotage Authority in the United Kingdom with responsibility for the Port of London and about 40 other ports around our coast.

Furthermore, it maintains the charitable traditions of the old "Guild of Shipmen and Mariners" and provides for the relief of mariners and their dependants in financial distress.

The day to day affairs of the Corporation are controlled by a Board of ten members who have long experience of command in either the Merchant Navy or the Royal Navy. There is, of course, a large staff of administrative and technical staff. As a corporate body Trinity House still holds on to its traditional titles, although they are now reserved mainly for ceremonial occasions. The Members of the Corporation are divided into two categories: Elder Brethern and Younger Bretheren.

There are about 300 of the latter who incidentally need not be all that young. They are chosen from Master Mariners or Senior Naval Officers of high professional distinction. From this group, members of the Board are appointed. They rejoice in the life title of Elder Brother of Trinity House. Some honorary Elder Brothers are selected by invitation in recognition of distinguished service to the nation. For instance, Ted Heath and Harold Wilson are Elder Brothers.

LIGHT AND SOUND

I went to Trinity House Headquarters, which faces the Tower of London, to meet the Engineer in Chief, Ian Clingan, who has been a member of the Trinity House team for over 30 years. His department has the ultimate responsibility for the general maintainance and upkeep of lighthouses, light vessels and all fixed and floating seamarks such as buoys and beacons which provide visual audible and electronic guidance to vessels navigating in the coastal waters. They unclude 93 lighthouses, manned and unmanned, 21 light vessels on station, and nearly 700 buoys and beacons - two thirds of which are lighted.

The basic job of keeping all these devices in working order is carried out from the main workshops at Blackwall. For practical reasons the English and Welsh coastlines are divided into three areas -- roughly the East, South and West Coasts, which are under the charge of Superintendents who depend on the Blackwall workshops

for advice and assistance. Blackwall, in fact, is finally responsible for all mechanical and electrical repair and maintainance work.

If anything goes wrong with a lighthouse, a light ship or a buoy the local Superintendent must take action and if the problem cannot be solved quickly by local action, Blackwall is informed. Very often a solution can be worked out in direct discussion with the man of the spot, such as a lighthouse keeper.

INTO ACTION WITH SPEED

The basic all important principle is that the light on any type of station must continue to show at full strength from its correct position and flash precisely at its predetermined time. If anything occurs which interupts this then the whole complex engineering machinery of Trinity House can very speedily be brought into action.

Skilled men, mechanics, engineers, electronic experts in the area are transported to the trouble spot at a moments notice. If necessary, skilled personnel will be despatched without delay from London. Trinity House vessels or suitable local vessels will be used to convey men and any necessary equipment and if necessary, and available, a helicopter will be brought into action. The main thing is that the light will be back in normal operation at the earliest possible moment.

And it should be realised that these crisis can occur in gale or hurricane conditions when the strain on men and vessels can be extreme. But whatever the conditions the job is done with the quiet efficiency which is in the tradition of Trinity House.

Trinity House maintains a fleet of lighthouse tenders for dealing with such emergencies and for the interchange of the crews of offshore lighthouses and light ships. These vessels of about 1,500 tons are specially built and equipped for servicing all types of navigational aids round the coast. They also tow the light vessels to and from station. They haul out and replace buoys and beacons which are damaged or due for repair or overhaul. This can be a very tricky job in bad weather.

STRANGE SHAPES AND COLOURS

The workshop site in Blackwall is a fascinating place. It is situated on a point of land where the River Lee runs into the Thames. It is here that all the buoys and beacons eventually arrive for repair and renovation. Huge buoys are stacked around. Out of their element they look odd with their strange shapes and colours mostly rusted and showing signs of battering by rough seas and collision with vessels.

The spacious workshops are well equipped with a wide array of up to date complicated equipment to cope with the extraordinary range of technical, mechanical and electronic work that must be done. For quite apart from work on buoys and beacons they must cope with repairs and maintainance of engines, generators and the various complex mechanical devices which function on light ships and lighthouses. Oddly enough, I was particuuarly impressed by the flasher shop where dozens of acetylene lamps being tested were flashing on and off at predetermined intervals. Incidentally the staff in this shop are known as flashers!

The wide variety of jobs done can be gauged by the remarkable range of craftsmen employed. They include radio and electronic technicians, fitters, turners, platers, sheet metal workers, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, riggers, carpernters and so on. The total staff in the Engineer in Chief's department is just over 300. Practically all the supervisory work is done by trades officers though there are also some scientists engaged on research.

Though Trinity House is an ancient foundation it lives very much in the present and has its eyes on the future. With the expertise of its professional and scientific staff it keeps abreast of scientific and technological advances. Lighthouses and light ships are being continually modernised to improve their efficiency and to provide better conditions for their crews.

There is a steady progress towards automatic or semi-automatic operation and an increasing number of lighthouses are now operated by remote control. The light vessel too with its expensive manpower and maintainance requirements has been, at some stations, replaced by what is called a Lanby (Large Automatic Navigational Buoy). The circular base of the Lanby is about 40 ft., and it carries a slim central pillar which holds the lantern 40 ft above the water level. Apart from light and automatic fog signals it carries a considerable amount of electronic aids to navigation and is capable of running for sim months or more without attention.

The effectiveness of buoys has improved enormously since the first unlighted ones were used over 300 years ago. Most of them carry lights, burning acetylene gas and many carry sound devices such as bells, whistles, small electronic fog signals and radar reflectors which can be identified on a ship's radar.

Seen from a distance, buoys don't appear very large. Seeing them on land in the Blackwall works they are enormous. A typical buoy I saw there had a cylindrical body of $\frac{3}{8}$ " steel 18 ft in diameter and about 10 ft high. On the top was a steel superstructure 17 ft high of latticed steel. On top of this was a 2 ft high lantern with the daymark on top of that. (The shape and design of daymarks vary and each has its specific significance to mariners - see ASKC Paper on Tides and Buoyage)

It was quite astonishing to discover that these elaborate aids to navigation placed round the coasts specifically to direct and guide mariners are freuently damaged by ships colliding with them. I saw one huge buoy which had been practically destroyed after being run down by a German naval vessel. I wonder how the captain explained away this incident to his superiors!

Trinity House is a public corporation operating under Royal Charter. Its employeecs are not civil servants though their pay and conditions are closely linked with those in the civil service.

*****oo00oo*****

Here follows an extract from Joan Busby's letter to me recently. Joan is a guest speaker at our forthcoming Sea Kayaking Symposium this November. I though that this extract would give you some idea as to what Joan's activities consist of, and by so doing, whet your appetite for the Symposium. see you there!!

"I have some super expeditions lined up - with the usual groups, plus one new companion, Monty Alford, introduced by Liz, with whom I canoed the Pelly in '84. We plan a combination trip - two-man Klepper kayak into big mountain area (probably Logan in the Yukon), build an igloo, then climb some Alpine peaks. How better to spend two weeks? I begin in Alaska, with a canoe trip on a big river in central Alaska, with Stu Ashley (civil engineer) and his wife (water consultant from the Artic Enviroment and Information Data Centre, Un. of Ak) Stu has bought a 3 man Grumann since he knows I shall be hooked for years yet - it was Stu who did the Copper with me in 1980. We have not made an absolutely firm decision about the specific river, but it will be a glacial one! (3 mm wet suit to the fore!) I then have two exploratory mountaineering expeditions with Joe and Suzi. The first is a Zodiac power boat trip into Harriman Fiord, near Prince of Wales Sound, for which Joe has specially re-inforced the prow. We hope to see the usual killer whales and humpbacks, besides sea otters (delightful) and seals. From Harriman Fiord we hope to climb a big Alpine peak, whose glacier rises straight from the sea! Joe has had his beady eye on it for some time and says it is challenging. I can imagine no more interesting companion than Joe; he is head of Physical Sciences at Alaska University and a mountain bush pilot as well. He has led many mountaineering expeditions in the Logan area, whilst with Charley Houston's high altitude research medical team, and has a store of good stories. Our second trip begins with a short fly-in to Whiteout Glacier in the Chugachs, where there are several 1sts which need 'knocking off'.....

I then fly off to the Yukon (Whitehorse) - of better still, cadge a lift down the Alaska Freeway, sharing the gas. It is at this juncture that I have my fortnight with Monty Alford - igloo and all. I have never built one and shall enjoy the

experience (Guinness Book of Records..... 64 year old builds igloo and lives in it)..... and then I hope to do either another river with Liz or a mountain trip with Liz and Jurg, her husband. They are both taking surveying jobs this summer so it is a case of getting an extended weekend off - 5 or 6 days. I have also been invited to do some instruction in fencing at the newly formed Whitehorse Club, where I hope to pick up the odd dollar! Actually, although it has been offered, I don't feel I could take money off them; I have made such super friends out there.

About the 10th. September I return to Fairbanks where I'm climbing and kayaking with Everett again. We plan to ski into the Harding Icefield, hauling plastic sleds! It is superbly situated on a narrow peninsula jutting out into the Gulf of Ak - and there are more 1sts crying out to be knocked off! It is a unique area with superb Alpine and sea scenery combined. Finally, we hope to kayak either the Noatak or the Kobuk- if we can afford the fly-in and the fly-out. If we can't we'll do the Porcupine or the Jonjek. By then there'll be termination dust - graphic description for first winter dustings of snow - and it will be bloody cold north of the Arctic Circle.

If I'm still in one piece after that it will be a miracle! Somewhere amongst all that I shall be seeing Kevin and Becky - probably no time for a kayak trip! I shall be disappointed if I don't see a barren ground grizzly on the Arctic river trip. I've seen four big Alaskan brownies, between 10 and 11 ft - salmon fishers - and I'll be interested to differentiate - from a distance of course - with a 135 mm lens!

Do you still want me for your Ullswater weekend; or have you enough without me? I won't be hurt if you wish me to stand down - I note that you have some very good folk lined up.

Yours aye,
Joan Busby.

From Nigel Dennis, Anglesey School of Sea Canoeing.

Dear John,

.....In May, Martin Rickard and Martin Eccles travelled across Ireland to Galway with the Anglesey School of Sea Canoeing on our two week West Coast of Ireland expedition. After the two weeks we left the pair at Dogart having all rounded Achill Head. Our nine-day paddle from Galway to Doogart had been an exciting and scenic trip and owing to the poor weather conditions, the expeditioners had paddled in all sea conditions - with the exception of sea fog. If this weather had been anything to go by, then the two lads would have had quite a slog on their hands to reach the North Coast.

On the 18th. June we received a telephone call from Martin Rickard saying that they were one day from Dublin and needed a food dump. The two expedition members were found in good shape and in excellent spirits but were looking forward to the day when they could foreget sea canoeing for a while and do some climbing! They have since passed the half way mark and all is well.

Robby Mack, a paddler who is attempting a solo circumnavigation of Great Britain called into the School on 16th. June. Robby set out from London and was 62 days into his expedition when he arrived at Holyhead. His average daily milage had been 15 to 20 miles per day but he intended to step this up and he should be now somewhere on the West Coast of Scotland. I'm sure we all wish these two expeditions the very best of luck.

All the best,
Nigel Dennis.

CLOSING DATE FOR THE SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM - 1st. OCTOBER, 1983