

Advanced Sea Kayak Club

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

NEWSLETTER

AIMS

1. Promotion of sea canoeing
2. Communication between sea canoeists
3. Organisation of events and conferences
4. Safety and coaching



Secretary & Editor:
John J. Ramwell
4, Wavell Garth,
Sandal,
Wakefield,
W. Yorkshire,
WF2 6JP

EDITORIAL

Now that most renewals are in for 1985 and now that I have had chance to recover from the Canoe Exhibition last month, here is the 1985 directory of members.

I was so pleased with the new A.S.K.C. letter headed paper that I have enclosed one sheet. No prizes for guessing who the subject in the picture is!

Three experienced sea canoeists set off recently from the north east coast. They simply left their car and paddled over the horizon, not to be seen again for three days. Meanwhile, the police see the abandoned car and hear stories of canoeists paddling to their doom and they put two together. They break into the car, remove the valuables and leave instructions that the owner report to the near by police station.

Later, much later in fact, they contact H.M. Coastguards. The Coastguards are familiar with sea canoeists and their activities and they do not over react. They simply arrange look outs and request an exercising helicopter to keep an eye open for three canoeists (the heli. did not adopt a rescue role). The helicopter does make visual contact with our three intrepid canoeists and reports same to H.M. Coastguards.

Once ashore, the canoeists become aware of the concern shown by the police and they attend the local station to have their wrists slapped. Perhaps you may agree that this should be the end of the matter.

But no, the local papers carry the story and mention irresponsible canoeists who risk would-be rescuers etc. etc.

As a consequence to all this the canoeists concerned (very responsibly in my view) convene a meeting between local canoeists and the Coastguards.

I was invited to this meeting. All the foregoing emerged, plus the fascinating revelation that the police have jurisdiction over life and property for up to three miles off shore.

There was no dissention at our meeting. The Coastguard representative was reasonable, understanding and obviously well informed (it was interesting to hear Dick Richards being mentioned quite frequently).

The problem seems to have been with the police and the press.

The police for not working closer with the Coastguards and the press for sensationalism (again!).

It seems we, having convinced the Coastguards we are safe and responsible, have now got to start again with the police!

For the record I recommended that as a general rule we should, and we should encourage others, to always inform the Coastguards of our plans, even when these plans are open ended; but that in the final analysis the decision to tell or not tell the Coastguards should be left to the canoeists themselves.

What do you think?

* * * * *

A.S.K.C. SHOP

- ASKC ties @ £2.50
- ASKC stickers @ 30 pence
- ASKC letter headed paper @ 50 pence per 10 sheets,
- 4th National Sea Canoeing Symposium Report @ 75 pence
- 5th International Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ £2.50
- H.M. Coastguards Paper on Safety @ 75 pence
- Expedition Report on Circumnavigation Nunivak, Alaska @ 75 pence
- Angmaggsallik Around Britain by Geoff Hunter @ £3.00
- Information Sheet on Tides and Bouyage @ 75 pence
- ASKC Tee shirts (yellow or black) in small/medium/large/X large @ £4.00
- ASKC Sweat shirts (yellow or black) in small/medium/large/X large @ £7.00
- American Sea Canoeing Tee shirts light blue, small/medium/large/X large @ £6.00

all prices include post and package.

A.S.K.C. cloth badge from Dave Greet, 14 Ditton Court, Widey, Crowngill, Plymouth.
@ £1.80 each

In my view the following chapter taken from Frank Spencer Chapman's book, NORTHERN LIGHTS makes fascinating reading. I'm sure you will agree.

Just to give you the background, this book is about Gino Watkins' Arctic Air-route expedition in 1930/31 when he and his team visiting East Greenland to carry out the appropriate research, including a crossing of the Polar Icecap and an incredible boat journey along the east coast.

THE ART OF KAYAKING

In winter there are many ways of hunting seals. You can shoot them in the open water or in leads among the ice, or you can set nets from them, or harpoon them at their breathing-holes. When the spring sun warms the air, the seals enlarge their breathing-holes and crawl out on to the ice to bask in the sun; then you can stalk them, hiding behind a white screen or, if you follow Stefansson's method, by pretending you are a seal yourself and emulating all its movements. But in the summer, when seals are more plentiful, there is only one way of hunting them, and that is from a kayak. And as the seal is more essential to the Eskimos than manna was to the Israelites in the wilderness, they have reached a high level of efficiency not only in the handling of the kayak but in the design of the craft itself and all its equipment.

The kayak is used everywhere in the Arctic from East Greenland to Siberia, but in a variety of forms. In places where the sea is completely frozen all the year, except for a few months in the summer, the Eskimos may be very skilful dog-drivers but are naturally not very accomplished kayakers. This applies to the Polar Eskimos from Cape York in the north west of Greenland, who use a ponderous sort of kayak chiefly for walrus-hunting. At the opposite extreme are our Angmagssalik Eskimos, who use a kayak in almost every month of the year and are probably the most accomplished kayakers in the world. Perhaps the Eskimo from south-west Greenland, where there is little pack-ice and consequently rougher sea, were more skilful at handling a kayak forty or fifty years ago, but now the West Coast is comparatively civilised and the motor-boat has largely taken the place of the kayak. (this is now the case on the East coast, Ed). At any rate, those of us who visited Holstensborg, Julianhaab and Ivigtut, found that the standard was very much lower there than in Sermilik Fjord.

The kayak of the Angmagssalik Eskimo is not only a wonder of efficiency, but a veritable artistic triumph. It is the perfect canoe. Each detail has evolved till it has reached perfection. The kayak, like a racehorse, is a thing of infinite beauty. When the 'Quest' first reached Greenland, we saw the natives in their kayaks throwing their harpoons with consummate grace; and later we saw them, dressed in waterproof coats, rolling the kayak right over in the water. They fell over one side, and with a dexterous movement of the paddle appeared again on the other. We appreciated then that the skills of this, as a trick, but it was not until we had had personal experience that we realised the importance, indeed the necessity, of being able to perform this strange evolution.

Watkins realised that it would be impossible for us to hunt seals in the summer unless we learnt to use a kayak. Furthermore, should we succeed in this, we would be able to support ourselves on journeys along the coast, instead of having to carry a vast amount of food and impedimenta. Europeans had learnt to go in a kayak before; in fact Nansen and Johansen had depended on them in that memorable journey to Franz Josef Land after the 'Fram' had been frozen into the North Pole Ocean. But it was generally thought impossible that a European could learn to hunt seals from a kayak, or to roll it in the Eskimo fashion.

In the summer and autumn of the year we arrived we were too busy to think much about kayaking, but as soon as we were assembled again for the winter months we set about getting kayaks made. Unfortunately there was no communication with Angmagssalik by now, and we could not get enough wood. In some parts of the Arctic whalebone is used for the framework of the kayak, but at Angmagssalik there is always plenty of driftwood. Pine trees get swept down the great rivers of Siberia, and following the Arctic drift, possibly within a few miles of the North Pole itself, are eventually seen by the watchful Eskimo floating about among the pack, great white tree-trunks 10 or 15 yards long.

We found it quite impossible to get into the native's kayaks. The Eskimo has small, rather undeveloped legs which bend backward in the most phenomenal way. Most of the young men could not only touch their toes with their whole palm, but walk along on all fours without bending the knees. Indeed, they could get into kayaks which were only 5 or 6 inches deep.

Watkins and Lemon got their kayaks made during the winter, but there was then little time to use them, and although Watkins learnt to paddle his along, he waited till spring to learn how to hunt. And by then most of the rest of us had had our kayaks made. The natives, working outside their tents in the sunshine, did not take long to build them once they had got the necessary wood and skins. The framework is about 18 feet long and consists of five laths of wood longitudinally, and fifteen or sixteen transverse ribs, making the kayak less than 2 feet wide in the middle. These are most carefully cut out (with a pocket knife, of course) and are steamed over the cooking-pots and then bent to the required shape. The various parts are cunningly spliced together, and held in place by wooden pegs. The extremities, where the keel and two side pieces meet, are a work of art. Skins of the large bearded seal are preferred, but only one or two of the most skilful hunters had their kayaks covered with these. Most of them had to use skins of bladder-nosed seals or even of the Greenland seal. Kayaks covered with these have to be re-skinned each year, but the bearded seal-skin will last two or three

The skins are allowed to putrify till the hair and grain of the skin can be easily scraped off. The smell of the skin is then most nauseating, yet the natives eagerly gobble up any of the trimmings. Two skins are usually enough, and they are put on wet and pulled as tight as possible before sewing, so that when dry the skins are as tight as a drum. Sinew is used for the stitching, which is done in two rows about half an inch apart, so that the finished kayak is completely waterproof after it has been treated with boiled seal-oil. Coat after coat of this is rubbed in till the skin will absorb no more, and the last layer forms a coat of shiny, sticky varnish. A wooden ring, which will just fit over the hips, is fixed to the frame and supports the seal-skin on a row of small bone pegs on its inner side. During the construction a few loops of stout seal-skin have been built in to hold the various hunting instruments. The most important of these are three parallel thongs, joined together by four ivory ornaments just in front of the hole. These are to hold the paddle while one is getting in, thus giving the kayak a certain stability, on the principle of an outrigger. At first most of us found it quite impossible to get into the kayaks; we would get our feet in and then heave as hard as we could on the seal-skin thongs; but our knee-caps always seemed too large.

To begin with we got in on land, which was hard enough, and were then lifted into the water while our instructors still held on to the stern. At first it felt most unsafe, very like trying to ride a bicycle for the first time. You wobbled one way, and then went too far over the other way trying to correct your balance, and finally lost it completely. The paddle laid flat on the water steadied you a little, but it was all most precarious, and purely a matter of balance. After a bit we could gingerly paddle along, being very careful round corners, and staring fixedly straight in front, for the least turn of the head started a wobble.

The native kayak deck was almost flush with the water, but ours, unfortunately, which were so much higher, had several inches of freeboard. This made them even more unsteady. After learning the first stages the next thing to do was to gain confidence, and to do this we went for quite long trips with the natives, while they looked after us most carefully, never letting us go far from them, and helping us get in and out. When hunting or travelling in the fjords, a small circular apron is worn which comes up almost to the armpits and fits tightly over the kayak ring, so that in a rough or choppy sea, small waves can wash over the deck without wetting the man or getting inside the kayak.

The kayak has to be light and streamlined so that it can travel fast and easily, yet it often has to be carried over land from one fjord to another if the ice is impassible round the intervening point. It has to be flat-bottomed because one

often has to run out in it on to new ice, and wriggle across still in the kayak, taking to the water on the far side. When you are in a kayak you have perpetually to balance it. If you relax you capsize at once. With experience, of course, you learn to balance it unconsciously.

Often during the vicissitudes of seal hunting the craft is upset. One kind of seal, the larger bladder-nosed seal, has the nasty habit, when wounded, of attacking the kayak under the water and biting lumps out of it. Then when the kayak has turned turtle and the hunter hangs helpless underneath, the bladder-nose has him at its mercy. It is easy, too, for some part of the hunting gear to get caught up as the harpooned seal makes its last convulsive rush for freedom. In the rough seas of winter the kayak is always liable to capsize when caught in a sudden gale, whereas in summer the ice-bbergs, eroded by the warm surface-layer of the sea, are continually breaking up or rolling over, and many an experienced hunter has been overturned by the waves this has produced.

When the kayak turns upside down its occupant would drown, if the Eskimo had not evolved a special method by which he can go over on one side of his kayak, remain for a moment completely upside down, and then with a dexterous movement of his paddle come up again on the other side. To do this he wears a waterproof coat made of seal-skin with the hair removed, and specially prepared. This coat fits tightly on the bevelled wooden ring round the kayak hole, by an adjustable seal-skin thong which is sewn into a loop on the coat. A similar thong is tied tightly round the face and wrists, so that when the kayak is upside down the only part that gets wet is the front of the face. Not a drop of water can penetrate the skilful double sinew stitching of the kayak coat. Double thumbed gloves are worn so that when the palm gets sodden the glove can be turned round on the other hand.

We had seen the Eskimo "rolling" of course, and like most skilfully performed acrobatic feats, it looked easy, though we knew it would take some time to learn. The leader thought that if the natives could do it, we should be able to imitate them after a certain amount of practice. Watkins actually learnt to do it several weeks before the rest of us, but though he could usually perform it, he was not exactly certain what the movement was.

I remember very well when I started my first lessons. Three days after I first got into a kayak I went in a single day about ten miles down Sermilik Fjord on the way to Angmagssalik, and being rather pleased with myself, thought I was ready to learn to roll. When we got to Angmagssalik the local schoolmaster and the wireless operator's assistant, who were about the best kayakers, came to "pick up", while all the inhabitant lined the shore to watch the fun. Putting on the waterproof coat was an uncomfortable beginning. The natives have well-covered cheekbones, but with our bony faces the thong has to be pulled so tight to keep the water out that it is almost preferable to get wet. I got into my kayak and felt even more uncertain than usual. Watkins performed first. He rolled several times, but often he only just came up; he was making some slight mistake. An Eskimo then gave a demonstration. He lay on the surface of the water supporting himself there as long as he liked by paddling to and fro, then got up again by pressing downwards with the paddle. Later he went right over, stopped on the surface as he came up again, and then got right up. After that he rolled his kayak without using the paddle, but with the harpoon throw-stick, a flat piece of wood 18 inches long and narrower than the paddle. Watkins tried this, but failed. When he stuck upside down two natives paddled up close on each side and Watkins pulled himself up by holding on to the other kayaks.

Then it was my turn. I had rehearsed the movement carefully on land. If I rolled by falling over towards the left, I must keep my left hand (holding the extreme end of the paddle) right down, almost touching the kayak deck. With my right arm held well down the paddle, I was to make a big sweep over my left shoulder and above my head. If I cut the stroke, or if I raised my left hand, I would fail to come up.

I got into the right position for starting, and feeling quite petrified, let

myself slip over into the icy water. Once underneath, it all seemed so odd that I made a dash at the stroke, cut my swing, lifted my left hand and was quite surprised when nothing happened. I dropped the paddle, put a frantic hand up on each side of my kayak, and watched the slim bows of the other kayaks coming slowly alongside. I grasped them and soon breathed the air again. I tried this several times, but though I once got my head above water I slipped back again. Then, as we were all rather cold, the session was closed.

Later, when the water got a bit warmer, we practised this among ourselves for hour after hour at the base. Watkins became very skilful. Although it is essential that a hunter should learn to roll a kayak if he wants to feel safe when hunting alone, it is typical of the improvident, happy-go-lucky outlook of the Eskimo that only about one in four of the hunters do so. In spite of the fact that about a quarter of their deaths occur while hunting, they just do not bother to learn. Of course it is quite possible in an encounter with a seal for the hunter to lose his paddle, so a few of the natives - about half a dozen in the whole Angmagssalik district - have learnt to roll the kayak with the one hand alone. This looked quite impossible at first, but after several weeks of practice, Watkins actually learnt to do this too. When the natives were practising rolling with a throw-stick, and with the hand alone, they used to hold the paddle on the other hand in readiness. Often you would see a native try with his hand, get half-way up, then slip back; there would be a few seconds pause, then he would try with the throw-stick, only to fail again. Eventually he would come up, beaming with joy, using the paddle, having been underneath for the best part of a minute. We would practise going along a full speed and then capsizing. It was often difficult to get the paddle into the correct position, and this was very good practice for the real thing, when one would have no chance to think about it before capsizing. As well as the ordinary method, the more skilful natives had a great many "trick" rolls. A few could roll the kayak keeping the paddle behind the neck all the time, while one or two held the paddle right against the bottom of the kayak during the roll. Once you are quite certain that you can always come up using the standard method, you can, of course, go on practising "stunts" for hours on end. But very few of us got this feeling of absolute confidence. Once in a while something would go wrong and for some reason we would fail to come up, and have to be rescued. Eleven of us had kayaks built, and seven learnt how to roll, but Watkins was the only one who learnt to do it with the throw-stick or the hand alone.

Towards the end of the expedition, Cozens got D'Aeth to take a cinema picture of a concerted roll for the film he was making. Six of us joined up in a diamond formation: Watkins, Cozens and Hampton in front; Rymill, Lemon and myself in the rear. The first time Cozens said "One - two - three, go," and we all came up successfully. He thought that this was too good to be true, so we tried again. Next time I was'n't quite ready, and I went over without having got my paddle in the right position. I came two-thirds of the way up, but fell back again. I changed the position of my hands on the paddle and made another attempt. Again I came two-thirds of the way up and slipped back. I dropped my paddle and frantically waved my hands. It is rather difficult to paddle directly sideways and the man next to me was still trying to reach me when a native who had been watching at the front came at full speed zigzagging through the other kayaks, and pulled me out.

Having learnt the most essential part of kayaking, and having got a lot of fun out of it, we set to work on the more serious work of hunting seals. The most important instrument for seal-hunting is the harpoon. Forty years ago, before the rifle was introduced at Angmagssalik, all seals were secured with this weapon. The wooden shaft terminates in a square piece of ivory to which a tapered ivory rod 6 or 7 inches long is cleverly hinged with a bit of seal-skin line. An arrow-shaped metal point riveted into a barbed ivory head fits over the thin end of the ivory rod and is attached to a long seal-skin thong about 40 feet long.

When the harpoon hits the seal, the barbed head turns sideways in the animal, the ivory rod "breaks" to take up the shock of the impact, and then together with the main shaft floats clear, leaving the seal attached to the line. Normally the

line, which is most carefully cut in spirals from a bearded-seal-skin, is coiled up on a wooden tray on the kayak deck. The other end of this line goes to a float behind the hunter's back. This float is the complete skin of a seal, with the hair removed and all the orifices carefully bound up. The harpoon is thrown with a short piece of wood - the throw-stick - which merely acts as a lever and remains in the hand after the harpoon has been launched. The harpoon lies on the right-hand side of the kayak, with the throw-stick uppermost ready to be grasped. The latter is grooved each side to fit the thumb and fingers, and often ornamented in relief with carved ivory figures of seals and imaginary animals. When the hunter throws the harpoon he lifts it by the throw-stick, which is held to the shaft with two ivory pegs, and slowly draws it backwards so that his right hand is just behind his head, then he hurls it forward. The Eskimo's aim is amazingly accurate, and to keep it so they are continually practising. If a man goes out in his kayak to catch cod or collect seaweed, he will throw his harpoon every few minutes as he paddles along. When practising, of course, the harpoon is not loaded. The metal barb is put on the tray with the rest of the line.

The rifle is kept in a waterproof cover which is attached to the bows. The butt is ready to hand underneath the tray for the line. In front of the hunter, or near the bows of the kayak, is a white cloth screen so that when he hides behind it the seal merely sees what he thinks is a lump of ice. Parallel to the rifle on the left side of the kayak is the bird spear with a metal barbed point. This is used for catching Eider Ducks or Guillemots, especially in winter when they are loath to fly. Half-way down the shaft are three large bear-bone prongs barbed on the inner side, the idea being that if the central spear misses the birds, its head may get caught between the shaft and one of the prongs. An Eskimo told me that one cold winter he got fifty Black Guillemots in a single morning when they were huddled together in an open pool among the ice. On the back of the kayak a lance and bladder dart are sometimes carried. The lance has a metal unbarbed head, and is used for killing bears, and for finishing off seals if they have only been wounded with the harpoon. When it comes up to breathe, being unable to go far dragging the float, the hunter approaches and throws the lance, which falls out easily and can be picked up and thrown again.

The bladder dart has a small float (made of the gullet of a large gull) attached to the shaft, and a metal point with a large barb. It is used for catching small fjord seals. As well as all this a rifle rest is usually carried on the back of the kayak.

I went out hunting for the first time at the end of June when seals were fairly plentiful. There was a heavy swell on the sea, and the icebergs were swaying up and down in a most disturbing way. Each kind of seal seems to behave differently at every season of the year, and very great experience is needed before the right tactics are invariably followed. On this occasion, after an hour of touring about and waiting for a seal, we suddenly saw a black head and body appear far in front. The natives said it was a young Greenland seal going on a journey, and would appear next time well to the left of our course. While the seal is up the natives remain motionless, but the moment it dives they start to paddle furiously in the direction where they expect it to re-appear. When going at full speed the natives take long powerful strokes, each time sliding the paddle along in their hands to get the maximum power. They go so fast that the back of the kayak is almost forced under water. When the Eskimo got what he judged to be the right distance, he stopped and waited. Suddenly the seal appeared only 20 or 30 yards ahead. It saw us at once, so the native got out his rifle and shot, hitting the seal in the head. Had the seal not seen us the hunter would have crouched low behind his screen and tried to get within harpooning distance, without using the rifle at all. As it was, he pushed the rifle back into the case, and with a few quick strokes reached the seal before it started to sink. Had the seal shown signs of sinking at once, or had it been only wounded, he would have harpooned it too. The next thing he did was to take some sharp bone pegs from his kayak deck and plug the wound so that no blood would escape. Then, as it was a small seal, he steadied his kayak against mine which was alongside and lifted the carcass out of the water and put it on the back of his kayak just behind the float.

Soon after this we saw a huge black head appear out of the water. It was a Bladder Nosed seal, the "devourer", as the Eskimos call it. The natives approached it, but just before we got within range it dived, showing all its body as it curled over, and none of us saw where it came up again. The small Fjord seal dives for about five minutes, but the big Bladder-Nose usually stays under for twenty minutes.

As well as the four or five different kinds of seals the Narwhal and Walrus are also hunted from the kayak. The Narwhal is a small grey, round-snouted whale about 14 feet long, which has a single spiral tusk of ivory in front that may be as much as half the length of the animal. The walrus is rare so far down the East Coast and is exceptionally fierce when wounded. Both the animals are particularly prized for their ivory, which is invaluable to the Eskimo as it is used for all artistic purposes as well as in most cases where we would use metal. The soft skin and blubber of the Narwhal is also a very great delicacy, and as only about a dozen are obtained each year, it is a great event when a hunter is lucky enough to catch one.

At the end of July I was staying at a settlement called Ikatek at the mouth of Sermilik Fjord. One day I went out hunting with four of the natives and instead of taking my harpoon and line, I took with me a 16 mm cinematograph camera. We left the settlement and made for the open sea. As there was not very much ice about just then there was a long heavy swell, but it was hot and cloudless this day. We went out about 6 miles from the land, chasing several seals on the way, but each time they re-appeared out of range and eluded us. There was not much other life about: a few small Arctic Terns flew past us, and once a Long-tailed Skua flapped along further out to sea. Suddenly there was a disturbance in the water, and a large grey-brown body broke the surface of the water, arched over and disappeared. I could see as the Eskimos swung their kayaks round that it was something unusual, and when they excitedly whispered "kreaydewar" (Narwhal) I was so thrilled that I nearly capsized. We all went flat out towards the land, straining every sinew. Soon the Narwhal appeared to one side, came up three times and disappeared again. We changed our course, and paddled as if possessed, taking great long strokes that hurled the light kayaks through the water. He came up again, this time swinging round as if to cross Sermilik, and we altered our course accordingly. This went on for more than an hour.

Luckily I was almost 20 yards behind and at each turn could gain a little by cutting the corners, otherwise I should have been left far behind. At last the leading hunter was just behind the Narwhal when he came up again. The native manoeuvred to get in such a position that the Narwhal was about 10 feet from him and thirty degrees out to the right. Next time it appeared the hunter hurled his harpoon and hastily threw the float overboard. The beast disappeared, dragging the float down after him. Both were below for several minutes. At last the float bobbed up, and the hunter, who had spread out waiting for it, rushed to the place. Soon the Narwhal appeared beside the float. Another harpoon was hurled and this time two floats were dragged down, but not for long. After a few seconds the great animal appeared and thrashed crimson on the surface. The harpoon point had found its mark.

The natives were all so excited that they started to shout and sing with joy as they crowded round to examine the blunt grey carcass with its two fins sticking out on each side like tiny wings, and its shapely tail which lay horizontal to its body, proving it to be a true whale. Normally the Narwhal would start to sink soon after death, and it would be impossible for a kayak to tow it home. Two kayaks were therefore brought alongside with the dead Narwhal between. A paddle was put across the kayaks, making them both stable. Then one man took out a knife and cut a small hole in the Narwhal's back. Next, working with a wooden peg, he made a space between the blubber and flesh of the Narwhal. With his hand on the paddle he then leant down and put his lips to the hole which he had cut, blew the Narwhal up as one does a balloon, and hastily inserted a wooden peg before the air could escape. After that the four hunters harnessed themselves to the dead Narwhal and started to paddle for home.

DROWNING AND NEAR DROWNING - FACT AND FICTION

'Extract taken from an article by Dr. M.G. Harries, Lecturer in Medicine, Guys Hospital, London.'

GOING DOWN FOR THE THIRD TIME

The report of the working party on water safety states that most who drown are in fact able to swim. Observation of those in imminent danger of drowning shows a clear pattern, the survivor is facing the shore and usually elects to swim the breast stroke, a vigorous bobbing of the head is seen. Drowning begins when the victim stops swimming and lasts only a few seconds. Once breathing rhythm is lost and a breath is taken under water the victim does not surface.

BRAIN DAMAGE IN FIVE MINUTES

In cardiac arrest due to coronary artery disease blood flow to the brain stops immediately, breathing stops seconds later. In drowning breathing stops first, it is not known how long the heart continues to beat after breathing ceases, but analysis of cardiographic records of victims of drowning shows that there is a heart beat in 50% of cases brought into hospitals. Also, due to a lowering of body temperature by immersion, the brain is protected against hypoxia (shortage of oxygen) by induced hypothermia. It is a fact that victims of near drowning have escaped serious brain damage after recovery from up to forty minutes submersion.

INHALING FRESH WATER IS MORE LETHAL THAN SALT

Two thirds of all deaths from drowning in Britain occur following immersion in fresh water. The remaining third drown in salt water. It has been proven that there is no recognisable physiological difference between drowning in fresh water to drowning in salt water. Pathological results have failed to show in 300 victims of near drowning an appreciable difference in their blood electrolyte levels. Therefore the only reason why more people drown in fresh water than salt water is that our inland waters, lakes and rivers are unguarded and that more coastal resorts now employ professional lifeguards. Not all those that drown inhale water. Captain Fuller showed that 16 victims out of 77 (21%) had dry lungs. Inhalation of fresh or salt water leads to lung damage which in turn leads to pulmonary oedema or secondary drowning. Secondary drowning may develop an hour or more after primary drowning so that all near drowning victims must be taken to the hospital for investigation irrespective of how well they feel.

NO PULSE AND DILATED PUPILS MEANS DEATH

Few patients who reach the mortuary with fixed dilated pupils ever recover, but it is important to know the circumstances of death. A Norwegian child who was pulseless with fixed dilated pupils was successfully resuscitated after spending forty minutes below the water. It has also been known that hypothermia victims have fully recovered after four hours of circulatory arrest.

C.P.R. - DOES IT WORK?

Enthusiastic citizens and bystanders have now completed CPR training. In Seattle (U.S.A.) more than 175,000 people have been trained. In Wakefield we have now trained 1,500 people. In Seattle 43% of all heart attack victims survived. The temptation to rush victims to hospital before any resuscitation measures can be given should be resisted. According to Dr. Ruben and his wife drainage of lungs is a waste of time, C.P.R. should be started immediately. Rough handling of the hypothermia victims may cause ventricular fibrillation and for this reason the 'sternal thump' should not be given.

It is well to remember that recovery from near drowning has occurred on many occasions when the position looked hopeless. It is not known how long it is possible to survive submersion without suffering brain damage, but certainly it is at least forty minutes. Never give up hope and remember C.P.R. does save lives.



"If you meet a
drowned person
do not touch
them unless
they are dead
walk them about
until they are
dead."

ERRORS IN NAVIGATION by David Saunders of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

The author graduated from Cambridge University in 1970 and now works at the BBC, producing mathematics television programmes, his work has led him into several other mathematics problems and topics. He has recently been involved with the use of computer graphics to teach dynamic concepts in probability and statistics, and has shown examples of his work at meetings of the Royal Statistical Society.

NAVIGATION - the art of finding one's position at sea - is one of the most vital arts of sailing, not only for ocean-going vessels but also for small boats which always remain in coastal waters. In fact, the navigator of any boat near to a coast line will need to be particularly vigilant about his position to avoid running into shallow water. Several electronic navigation aids using radio beacons or satellites have come on the market in recent years, but although these are excellent devices they tend to be very expensive. Thus, many small boats still rely on the traditional method of using accurately calibrated 'hand-bearing' compass and plotting the bearings so obtained on an Admiralty chart.

This traditional method uses prominent landmarks with fixed positions. A typical landmark might be a lighthouse, a tall building, or even a buoy - any clearly visible object which is marked on the chart will do. By sighting the compass at several such landmarks, the (clockwise) angle between magnetic north and each of them can be found. Then, by drawing a line on a chart from each object at the corresponding inclination to magnetic north, one finds the location of the boat at the point where the lines cross. Difficulties arise, however, because all measurements are subject to error. Although modern hand-bearing compasses are accurate to within a degree, such accuracy can only be obtained when standing still. Anyone who has sailed in a boat in even moderately rough seas will appreciate that the unpredictable rocking motion is liable to introduce much larger errors into each reading, of the order of five degrees or even more. When accurate positioning is needed, some technique must be used to reduce the effect of this error.

A standard technique for taking account of measurement errors has been developed over the years. It is to take bearings not on two fixed objects but on three. If all three bearings were accurate, then the three lines drawn on the chart would all meet at a single point - the position of the boat. Typically, however, the inevitable measurement errors mean that the three lines will not meet at a point but instead will form a triangle, as shown in Fig.1. The conventional belief is that this triangle gives an idea of the uncertainty of the measurements and that we cannot be more precise than to say that the true position of the boat will be somewhere within it.

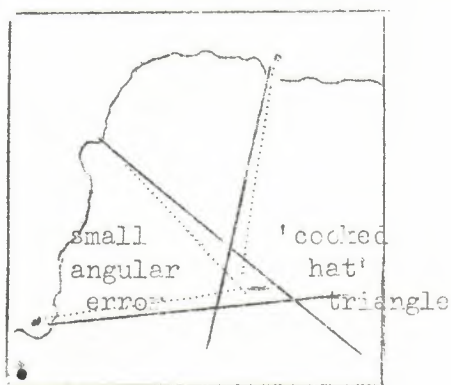


Figure 1

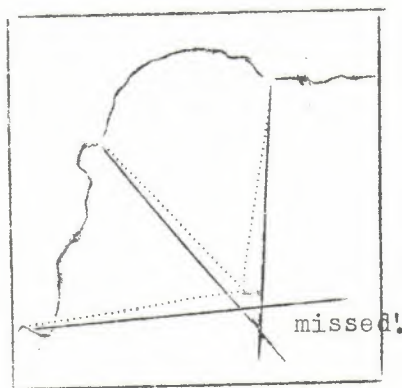


Figure 2

Incidentally, this triangle is known in nautical jargon as the 'cocked hat'. The question is, however, whether this conventional belief is correct.

Now, given the situation shown in Fig. 1, the cocked hat certainly does contain the true position of the boat. But: is this always so? Figure 2 shows why the conventional belief is too optimistic. The true position of the boat can quite easily be outside the cocked hat. Whereas this possibility is now well understood in nautical circles, it is less well known that the accuracy of the cocked hat can

actually be quantified using statistical ideas.

Making an inference about a measurement subject to a random error is a common problem in statistics. The simplest case involves a one-dimensional measurement, where the quantity being measured can be represented by a real number. Although the true value of the quantity is unknown, we can make a set of measurements, where each measurement is independent and subject to a random error. We can then try to infer the true value of the quantity. There is much statistical literature explaining how to construct a 'confidence interval', a range of possible values likely to contain the true value, from a set of measurements. A numerical confidence level, such as 95%, is attached to the interval, and this is interpreted in the following sense: if we perform the set of measurements not once but a large number of times, and thus obtain a large number of intervals, then in the long run 95% of those intervals will contain the true value. Since 'relative frequency over a long run' is a way of approximating PROBABILITY, we can say that the probability that intervals constructed by this procedure contain the unknown value is 0.95. In general, for a given confidence level, the procedure for constructing the confidence interval from the set of measurements will depend on the way the errors are distributed, that is, on the probabilities that the error takes particular sets of values.

A similar idea can be applied to measurements in two dimensions. Again, if the true value is unknown, then a set of measurements can be taken - but this time a confidence REGION would be constructed instead of a confidence interval. For (say) a 95% confidence region, the probability that regions generated by the chosen procedure actually contain the true value must be 0.95. Just as in the one-dimensional case, for a given confidence level, the way the region is constructed from the set of measurements will generally depend on the way the errors are distributed. However, the calculations involved will obviously be more complicated in two dimensions.

How do these ideas apply to the 'cocked hat' triangle? The triangle is generated by a predetermined procedure from measurements with random errors, and so can be considered a confidence region. We can therefore ask: what is the confidence level of the region? In other words, what is the probability that triangles generated by this procedure contain the true, unknown position of the boat? From the remarks above, it might be imagined that the answer would depend on the distribution of the errors, and in any event would be difficult to calculate. However, if we assume a very simple model for the errors, it turns out that the calculations are very straightforward for this particular method of constructing a confidence region.

The argument runs like this. The question of whether the triangle contains the true position depends on the relationship of that true position to the three lines forming the triangle. The distance of the point from each line is irrelevant; the only relevant factor is whether the point is on one side of the line or the other. We can express this in terms of the sign of the error in the corresponding angular measurement - that is, whether the angular error is clockwise or anticlockwise. We ignore the chance of absolutely no error at all, assuming that the probability that this event happens, is 0.

The example shown in Figure 3 will make this clear. Since each of the three angular errors can be either clockwise or anticlockwise, there are eight possible cases. We can see, if we inspect the diagram, that the triangle will contain the point only when all three errors are clockwise or all three errors are anticlockwise. If, and this is the simple model for the errors, the compass is UNBIASED in the sense that clockwise and anticlockwise errors are equally likely, we can then calculate the probability that the triangle contains the point. The probability of a clockwise error on any one measurement is a half, and since the three measurements are independent we can find the probability of three clockwise errors by multiplying the three individual probabilities, giving one eighth. In the same way, the probability of three anticlockwise errors is also one eighth, and since these two cases are mutually exclusive we can add their probabilities to give a total probability of one quarter that the triangle will contain the point. In other words, the triangle is only 25 per cent confidence region for the position. Note, however, that the triangle may, in this model, be large or small depending on the

size of the errors, which we have not taken into account.

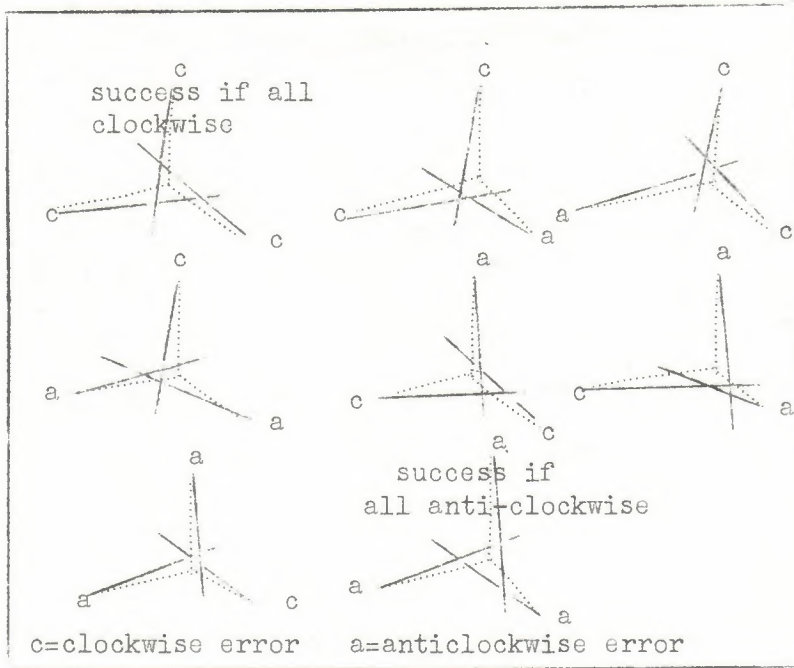
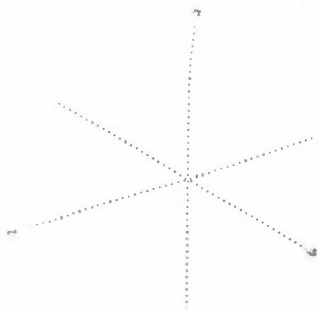


Figure 3

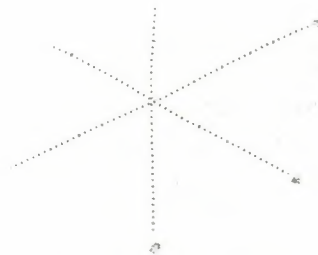
Of course it is always dangerous to argue from diagrams, and we could ask whether the particular configuration of points shown in Fig. 3 affects the result. Discerning readers will already have noticed that, in Fig. 1, the triangle contained the true point but that two errors were clockwise and one anticlockwise. In fact the configuration of the points does not affect the end result, and we can see this by observing first that SMALL changes in the relative positions of the three landmarks and the boat can have no effect on the argument. A 'topological' change in the configuration only occurs when, if we change those relative positions, two of the lines in the diagram coincide, and therefore the triangle disappears from one side of a line and reappears on the other. It turns out that there are only two possible configurations which are 'topologically distinct', and they are shown in Fig. 4.

At the true position, the three landmarks span more than 180°

At the true position, the three landmarks span less than 180°



All three errors must be in the same direction



The errors in the outer two bearings must be in the same direction, and the error in the middle bearing must be in the opposite direction

Figure 4.

We have already examined the first of these, where the three landmarks span an angle of more than 180 degrees at the true position. In an obvious sense, the three landmarks are opposite one another. The other possible configuration is when the three landmarks span less than 180 degrees, and in this case we can clearly refer to one of the landmarks as the middle landmark. By examining the eight different

possibilities for the error direction in this second case, we find that the triangle contains the true position only when both outer bearing errors are in the same direction and the error in the middle bearing is in the opposite direction, again two cases out of eight. So in both the possible configurations we have found two cases out of eight when the triangle contains the true position, and we can confirm our claim that the 'cocked hat' triangle is only a 25 per cent confidence region.

We can not compare this mathematical result with the conventional nautical belief. It certainly is'nt true that the cocked hat always contains the true position of the boat, and we have now found that over a long period this only happens 25 per cent of the time - not a very comforting thought. Furthermore, if the size of the errors is large, the cocked hat will itself be too large to give an accurate navigational position for the boat. So, if we had to offer the navigator some advice, perhaps the most appropriate would be: 'If your cocked hat ever gets close to danger areas then watch out, for the technique is less accurate than you think!'

A new sea canoeing magazine called SEA KAYAKER has recently been reviewed in the CANOEIST, here it is:

SEA KAYAKER, edited by John Dowd, 6050 Seaview Ave., Seattle, WA 98107, U.S.A.
270 mm X 240 mm - 50 pages Two dollars 50 a copy or 12 dollars 50 per year.

This Spring saw the launch of a sea kayaking quarterly centred on the British Columbia/Washington area, edited by the inveterate John Dowd. Sea paddlers as a breed tend to be more outspoken in their opinions than most and John certainly features amongst the leaders and will be seen this way by British paddlers who are used to allowing for more severe conditions than are usually met on North America's west coast. In his first edition John keeps a surprisingly low profile and promises to attempt to include both sides of arguments alongside each other in future issues.

The first issue is well presented although most of the content relates to the editors home area. Historical aspects feature strongly, together with natural history, navigation, tendonitis and a long interview recalling an extended trip in Northern Canada. Trade pages have a number of K2s for sea use, one of John's hobby horses. Safety is prominent and Derek Hutchinson relates an incident in which he was involved some years ago. He ends "As I write, I have before me a breakdown of all the sea kayak incidents which came to the notice of H.M. Coastguards during 1982. These have only now been published...." Our issue in which Dick Richards discussed the ten most significant of these 23 incidents was on sale at Crystal Palace in February 1983, before which we could hardly be expected to publish the 1982 figures.

If you are an enthusiast who enjoys Tasmania's SEA CANOEIST then you are bound to appreciate this new up-market journal from N America although it will probably be too specialised for many British sea paddlers.

Taken from the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, December 9, 1984

MARINE 'PARKS' SHELVED

Plans to establish seven official marine nature reserves off the British coast have been shelved by the Nature Conservancy Council in the face of strong opposition from fishermen. All the sites are regarded as scientifically important for their fish and underwater plant life.

The Nature Conservancy Council has decided that it does not have the power to overrule local sea fisheries committees, which are opposed to restrictions on commercial fishing, although it is responsible for setting up marine reserves under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Of the seven sites earmarked for full protection under the law, two are off the Isles of Scilly and the Island of Lundy, three are near the Welsh coast, in the Menai Strait, the Bardsey and Llyn Peninsula and at Skomer, and two are in Scotland at Loch Sween, Argyll, and St. Abbs Head in Berwickshire.

This Expedition was the result of many hours of day-dreaming spent by Jon while working in the Devon area and then later at Outward Bound Wales. Circumstances presented themselves and the summer of 1984 seemed to be the right time to abandon our jobs and fulfill his dreams. Maggie joined us, and so after much organisation we departed from the Humber Bridge on Sunday 15 April, 1984. The decision to do the circumnavigation in a clockwise direction was largely due to the weather, assuming it would get warmer in the South earlier and that the prevailing winds should help to a greater extent travelling this way round. Having done no specific training for the trip, we decided to encounter the isolated waters of Scotland after we had gained stamina and experience.

Maggie bought the Anas Acita specifically for the trip, Jon possessed an Umnak but decided that I could paddle that, and with the money his parents gave us for a wedding present, supposedly to buy a double bed, we purchased a Nordkapp HM instead! Each kayak weighed approximately 200 pounds when loaded, and remained so for the duration of the trip. Our land backup was in the form of phoning Outward Bound Wales, Aberdovey, to report our press and receive any messages they had for us. As a group we were generally self-sufficient for about ten days, apart from water and the charging of our radio batteries. Carrying tents, sleeping bags, cookers, fuel etc enabled us to stop as and when we desired throughout the trip, although if friends or Life-boat Stations were in the vicinity we generally made ourselves known and took the situation from there. As a result we spent about 60% of the nights under canvass and the remainder with a roof over our heads - varying from that of a 3-star hotel to peoples homes, to R.N.L.I. crew rooms or Coastguard Stations.

It only took us a few weeks to realise that Jon's initial idea of paddling about 15 miles a day close to the shoreline and having stops as and when we felt like it, was unrealistic if we were going to be successful in getting round the whole country before the winter set in. As a result, the atmosphere of the expedition changed slightly from that of a holiday to a discipline. When the weather was good we paddled longer hours, and as our stamina and experience increased we put on the water in more demanding conditions. Raising money for the R.N.L.I. by personally going round pubs was entertaining, to say the least, but tiring, and consequently we either concentrated on collecting or paddling, rarely did we manage to combine the two, although the time of the tides affected our daily routine considerably.

Moving the kayaks to a suitable camping spot was extremely strenuous. We eventually devised a system whereby Jon would carry the lightest end of the craft, and Maggie and I would share the weight of the heavier end by using a carrying strap between us. Obviously if we spotted a trailer or some easier means, we opted for that. Lifting the kayaks especially first thing in the morning often caused us to strain our backs. On reflection it would be well worth inventing a collapsable set of wheels for this purpose.

Twentyfive companies agreed to sponsor our expedition in one way or another. No one actually donated money, but we were supplied with food, clothing and equipment. In case of emergency we were well equipped as a result of sponsorship, although most of this kit was on loan for the duration of the trip. Fortunately we never got into difficulty. We did find the radio in it's waterproof case extremely useful, especially for keeping in touch with the Coastguard, as we often landed in remote areas many miles from a telephone.

Paddling down the East coast in reasonable conditions was a steady warm up, negotiating the Donna Nook firing range and meeting hundreds of seals. On the fourth day we crossed the Wash. My first ever major crossing and the conditions were not ideal. Five hours of paddling, using the buoys to find our way, we passed over many turbulent stretches of water caused by the underlying sand banks. Within sight of Hunstanton the wind picked up and that, combined with the now outgoing tide, demanded us to paddle even harder if we were actually going to make land. We did make it, but landed two miles east of Hunstanton so the press had to come to us instead of us going to them! We made good progress down to the Thames just avoiding the drying out of the extensive mud banks of the River Crouch. The cockle fishermen at Leigh-on-Sea told us that we were mad, and that crossing the Thames would result in us being

swamped. Despite poor visibility we had no problems, in fact it was flat calm.

Stormy weather held us at bay for seven days at the beginning of May, and then we carried on. Dover Harbour was an interesting proposition, we managed to cross the first entrance inbetween ferries and were well on our way towards the second, when the Pilot Boat arrived. Apparently he had come to accompany us in order that we would be picked up on radar. Within five minutes a ferry and the car carrying hovercraft passed just behind our kayaks leaving the three of us wind blown and wet from the spray!

The weather improved and we made good progress towards Calshot where we fitted a VCP rudder to the Umnak, hoping that this would prevent it from turning into the wind so easily. The rudder proved to be a great success and enabled me to paddle at a constant rate even in difficult seas, rarely having to correct the boat with a paddle stroke at all.

The coastline in the vicinity of Swanage proved quite difficult on the day we encountered it. A strong wind combined with a three to four foot swell made conditions off the headlands demanding, and of course landings were limited due to the nature of the shoreline. Crossing Plymouth Sound we met the Atlantic swell for the first time; this combined with the smell of diesel from a passing frigate caused me to feel sea sick. Fortunately this was the only time that any of us experienced this unpleasant sensation. Rounding the Lizard at 8 o'clock at night is probably not advisable especially when you decide to go between the rocks in a big rolling swell. However we did manage to pick a safe route through the breaking waves, but then had to paddle for a further hour and a half before we reached the safety of Port Moullion Harbour, just as it was getting dark.

Night paddling was something we did very little of, mainly because it is quite tiring navigating unknown waters in darkness. We saw phosphorescence, and also noticed how sounds were amplified by the darkness, especially the surf. As a result of Maggie knowing the area, we did cross Southampton Water in the dark.

Land's End proved no real problem, but the swells of the following week created big surf on the Cornish beaches and so we picked our way from harbour to harbour. Going into Newquay with a big swell and thick fog was quite nerve-racking. The authorities on land were more relieved to see us emerge out of the fog than we realised at the time!

Crossing the Bristol Channel was the next big obstacle, fortunately we caught it just right, on the lowest of neaps. We set off from Lynmouth and landed three and a half hours later at Atlantic College near St. Donats Head, just in time because the wind was increasing, steadily reaching Force 6-7 after we landed.

The winds came from the North West as we paddled out of the Bristol Channel, consequently they deterred our progress somewhat. We reached our home port of Aberdovey on 5 July. The weather was perfect, sunshine and a flat calm sea, local boats decked with bunting met us and escorted us over the non-existent bar to the Wharf, where crowds of friends and interested well-wishers met us. We had a two day break here, doing all the necessary things like washing, shopping and reinforcing the hulls of the kayaks. Leaving was psychologically difficult but our progress was boosted by a following wind and we made Harlech that day.

Local fishermen helped us to time our passage through the various Welsh 'Sounds', Bardsey proved to be the most turbulent. We met Nigel Dennis at Trearddur Bay and quizzed about the waters yet to come.

The crossing of the uncharted Solway Firth was to be a far bigger obstacle than the vast sand banks of Morcombe Bay. Unsettled weather with poor visibility caused us to be stormbound at Maryport for three days. We eventually crossed the Firth and landed at Kirkcudbright on 30 July.

A few days delaywhile a storm passed and then we paddled continuously for twenty days through the Western Isles and along the North coast of Scotland to Scrabster. We often covered 30 to 40 miles a day, using two tides paddling for nine hours a day.

The conditions were ideal, generally flat calm with a slight wind. Spurred on by the thought that we had to get through the Pentland Firth before the weather broke, we whizzed past a lot of the best scenery and only stopped to take pictures of sea otters, dolphins, porpoises, a whale and of course the impressive cliffs of Cape Wrath. Bill, the Cox of Scribster Lifeboat, discussed the timing of our trip through the inner sound with us and we almost got it exactly right. When turning the corner of Duncansby Head we realised that the sun would be setting within an hour and we still had to get to the safety of Skirsa on the northern side of Freshwick Bay. What we had not realised was that this particular bay acted like a huge back eddy and we eventually ended up paddling against the outgoing water in the dark. Stepping onto dry land that night was a great relief, we had conquered the piece of water that everybody had been talking about since we had set off in April.

Unsettled weather delayed our progress down the East coast of Scotland, but by making the effort to pack up camp and put on the water even for an hour's paddling we managed to get away from the harsh waters of the north before September arrived. The tiny village of Hopeman on the Moray Firth became home for three days while a storm passed through. Despite warnings from local canoeists we found the locals - especially the retired fishermen - more than helpful, their hospitality was tremendous. We left Hopeman and made good progress down to Aberdeen where, fortunately for us, the dock strike was on. The harbour entrance produces some interesting swells in bad weather and we were glad to be able to choose our line of attack without having to consider other shipping.

We had already negotiated the stretch of water from St. Andrews around Fife Ness to Crail in three hours and were considering what the possibility was of carrying on across the Firth of Forth. A six foot swell was in evidence but only a Force 3 wind, so after the Coastguard in North Berwick pronounced the harbour safe to enter by kayak, we set off from Crail. A submarine surfaced behind us and then with ten miles to go, the fog descended reducing visibility to half a mile. Paddling towards nothing was quite frightening, however Bass Rock eventually emerged out of the gloom and the harbour of North Berwick.

Despite the big swells and strong westerly winds, within eleven days of consecutive paddling we reached Saltburn. Big tides produced huge surf here, and we were prevented from leaving for four days. Our stay in Saltburn was made far more enjoyable when we met the Raspin family, and 'so-near-yet-so-far' became the saying of the week. Twenty food parcels had been delivered around the country to various friends on our behalf in April, unpacking the last one on a beach near Scarborough brought back memories of the organising and preparation which had started a year previously. The last night of the expedition was spent at Spurn Point with the R.N.L.I. and the Coastguard Station providing hospitality. Twentyseven miles to the Humber Bridge took a little longer than we expected with a S.E. Force 4 blowing a two foot swell Pupils from Mallet Lambert School in Hull with their teacher, Pete Stevenson (he incidentally taught Jon to canoe in 1979) accompanied us on the final part of the journey. Disappointingly the conditions deteriorated and for the sake of meeting the press on time we had to abandon the escort and head for the bridge alone. The Coastguard let off a maroon at 1.55 pm on Wednesday 3 October 1984 to signal our return to the Humber Bridge, having successfully completed a circumnavigation of mainland Britain by kayak.

All three of us enjoyed the experience and, yes, we did have our up's and down's; but we managed to pull each other through the difficult times. The expedition lasted for 172 days and we covered 2,430 nautical miles in 670 paddling hours, giving an average speed of 3½ knots.

LIST OF COMPANIES WHO SPONSORED THE EXPEDITION

Beddgelert Woodcraft/Buitoni Foods/Brooke Bond Oxo Ltd/Camera Care Systems/Damart/Emtrad/Field & Trek/Genesis Screen Prints/Henri Lloyd/Imray, Laurie, Norie & Wilson/Kodak/Lendal Products Ltd/Lockwoods Foods/Nikon/Outward Bound Equipment/Pains Wessex Schermuly/Reeds Almanac/Securicor Granley Systems Ltd/South Midlands Communications/Stevens-Lefield Ltd/Tog 24/TOR Outdoor Pursuits/U B Biscuits/Valley Canoe Products/Wild Water, Chris Hawkesworth/Wipers Kendal Mint Cake.

Members of the Expedition: John Moore - Dawn Moore - Maggie Anat.

I thought that the following letter and my reply might be of interest to you. Should you be willing to contribute, or even disagree with, my letter, please let me hear from you.

From Charley Fiala, P.O. Box 3878, Ketchum, Idaho 83340, U.S.A.

.....I'm currently writing a book that has a chapter on water sports. Sea kayaking and canoeing are a major part of my manuscript. Can you assist me by providing literature or names of literature that carries the history of canoeing in England or wherever. If you could give me a rundown on the history of your club, I'd certainly make an accurate reporting.

My reply:
Dear Charley,

.....As for the history of the A.S.K.C. It was first formed, with it's present title, by a small group of enthusiasts in London back in 1974 by two people, Martyn Barker and Dave Elmore. In 1976 they handed the Club over to me to continue. I took it over with a dozen members or so. The original idea of the Club was to bring together the few people then interested in sea canoeing for small trips and expeditions. My first major sea crossing was with the A.S.K.C. before I took it over. We crossed the Bristol Channel calling at Lundy Island, encountering thick fog en route!

Of course, the interest in sea canoeing has grown rapidly over the past 15 years or so and the A.S.K.C. has grown accordingly.

There is no need to tell you that the origins of sea canoeing go back centuries when the Arctic Eskimos used their very fine hunting kayaks to find food. It is difficult to say when sea canoeing took a grip in this country. There is good evidence that the Scots were paddling their lathe and canvass canoes out from the West Coast of Scotland and then sailing them back to the shore using the S.W. prevailing winds during the intervening War years.

Certainly the North East of England took to sea canoeing about 20 years or so ago. They pioneered in that they designed specialised equipment - kayaks, paddles, buoyancy jackets, etc. and then embarked on some interesting expeditions (including a crossing of the North Sea) and coastal trips. There are the magnificent Farne Islands in that part of the world with fast tides, overfalls and eddies that, even today, make the area a mecca for sea canoeists. Names that spring to mind when we talk of this pioneering in the North East are Chris Jowsey, Derek Hutchinson, Dave Helliwell, Lofty Wright, Chris Hare, and of course many more.

Over the last 15 years or so many other things have occurred to spur on the interest in sea canoeing. Visits to the home of sea canoeing in the Arctic where we have learnt a great deal from both observation and reading of the literature; we have written our own books on sea canoeing covering every subject allied to the activity of sea canoeing, for example, navigation, meteorology, lore of the sea, safety and so on.

Over the past ten years we have staged symposiums when we have brought together many paddlers to listen to specialists in all sorts of allied subjects as well as many from our own ranks who had, by necessity in the early days, learnt by hard experience.

On top of this we established a specialist committee of the British Canoe Union to administer sea canoeing on a more official basis. I know that the last thing sea canoeists want is to be 'administered' or to be organised. We have not attempted, ever, to do this. We have merely set out to protect the interests of sea canoeists by improving the attitude of the general public, and in particular, H.M. Coastguards, towards sea canoeing. We have made available much information to encourage safety and awareness and we monitor the coaching awards relevant to sea canoeing. Lately we have been very involved in access problems as there are Government bodies and Nature Conservancy bodies who would restrict our use of certain coastal areas and islands.

I hope that the forgoing has been of some use to you. Don't hesitate to write for further information.

J.J.R.

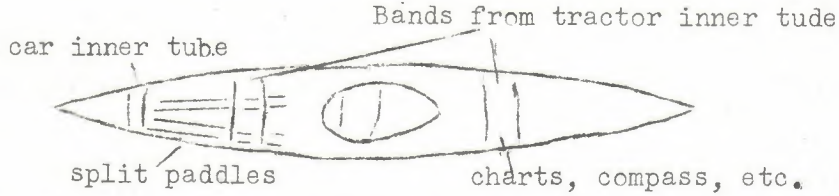
The following is taken from the New Year 85 edition of CoDe:

DECKLINES WITHOUT HOLES IN YOUR DECKS.

Recently, whilst preparing for a S.I. (Sea) course, I came across a problem. Having just bought a plastic boat, I was loathe to drill holes and fit deck lines for carrying split paddles, charts, etc.

However, when packing up a primus stove I noticed that the tin was secured with a band cut from a car inner tube.

Why not get a tractor inner tube and use a similar band around the whole boat, I thought. The diagram below shows the configuration.



I have not given this system extensive testing, but initially it appears to work well. Performance is not noticeably inhibited. The other major factor is the saving in cost and time. I acquired an inner tube from a local tyre specialist for nothing. There was sufficient rubber to equip a fleet of ten boats, plus it took only half an hour to cut and fit the required number. Being a river canoeist predominantly, this appears to be the solution to my problem. I can have uncluttered clean decks on rivers, yet use the same boat with deck lines on the sea.

I feel sure that this idea can be further refined, perhaps incorporating grab lines as well.

Any comments, suggestions - let's be hearing them.

John Deighton, Newbury, Berks.

TRADE NEWS

SEA HUNTER

After months of rumours, McNulty Seaglass announces the Sea Hunter, their 18 foot passage-maker/expedition boat.

Following on from the success of the Huntsman, with kayaks in use from Norway to the Falklands, McNulty Seaglass combined their experience in sea kayaks with computer aided design techniques to produce a boat for the paddler who wants to go a little bit further.

Sophisticated hull design makes the Sea Hunter fast and sea-kindly, very stable yet it rolls well and is easy to handle in cross winds. In keeping with its long distance role the Sea Hunter can carry a payload of over 135 kg including paddler.

The Sea Hunter has already attracted orders from the U.S.A. and Norway and looks set to add to the success of the 16 foot Huntsman, which remains in production.

For further details write: McNulty Seaglass, Corstorphine Town, Commercial Road, South Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE33 1RZ

THE LITTLE KAYAK BOOK by John Brand

The Little Kayak Book, £7.50 including post and pack., until 1st May, 1986. Five surveys of museum kayaks to help along the interest in the aboriginal models.

Available direct from John Brand, Bramble Tye, Stanway Green, Colchester, Essex, CO3 5RA

The A.S.K.C. weekend at Nigel Deniss's School of Sea Canoeing

For details see last edition of A.S.K.C. newsletter. Closing date Oct. 1st.

One of the privileges of being editor of this newsletter is that I decide what goes into it. What follows has little to do with sea kayaking as such and I make no apologies for this. I discovered the article in 'Adventure Education' and because I liked it I am repeating it here so there!

WHY CHILDREN NEED OUTDOOR EDUCATION AS PART OF THEIR ORDINARY CURRICULUM

Today, and everyday, forty thousand children die from starvation. Few, if any of these children live in Britain. However, my experience of working in a British primary school led me to realise that this world physical hunger is the sign of a much deeper hunger in our society and in the world generally. We know we are frustrated and filled with longing but we have become so deadened that we are no longer aware that the source of our nourishment is all around us in the trees and flowers, the animals and birds, the rocks and streams and oceans, in the earth beneath our feet.

The children I taught lived with all the stress and problems of poor urban existence - in blocks of flats with access to concrete and tarmac rather than nature. More than 40% came from single parent families. Most of the families had such low incomes that this contributed to their stressful lives. Many of the children spent more time watching T.V. than they did in school, and some stayed up late watching horror movies. I was aware that some of the children suffered physical, emotional and mental cruelty or violence.

In view of their 'deprivation' and sometimes disturbed behaviour, the question I kept asking myself was: 'How can I bring right relationships into these children's lives, and into the classroom?' I understand right relationships to be the sense of caring, co-operation and sharing between people, and extending this relationship to the animal, plant and mineral life streams. This is, for me, an education for peace. I found that the main key, to answer this question, was to bring the children into contact with nature. Such opportunities draw out of the children his or her own true nature. It is this connection with the source of life that nourishes and heals their spirit, that gives them the sense of wholeness they so desperately need. They become more relaxed and get on better with each other as a result of this contact.

Although in certain ways, the quality of their lives was poor, they were open and imaginative children (being left to run wild does have advantages), and their sensitivity was coloured with a raw vulnerability.

These 9 or 10 year old children ranged in intelligence and ability from those who could not spell their name, to others who continually amazed me with their perceptions, innate wisdom and quick thinking.

It was the experience I was privileged to share with these children that convinced me that contact with nature and its exploration, should become a vital aspect of the school curriculum.

A girl in my class who had a special love for plants brought in an apple tree she had grown from seed in a glass jar. We potted it up and the seedling grew and developed its few leaves. One day, in the middle of a maths lesson, she suddenly appeared at my side.

'Smell the leaves Miss!' she exclaimed, 'Mmmmmmmmm, they're so beautiful'. Indeed, I could smell their greenness, and I felt very small as I wondered how she would feel walking in an orchard surrounded by apple blossom and spring birdsong, when these small leaves had filled her with such joy and appreciation.

Another day, I took four children with me after school to the education college where I had to do some photocopying. The college has a lovely old garden and after doing the photocopying, we went to visit it. The reaction of these children as we approached and entered the garden surprised me. They behaved as though they were stepping on to a strange and wonderful planet. They danced spontaneously on the lawn, smelt the wall flowers and looked at everything in detail, glorying in the beauty of it all. They climbed the great holm oaks and marvelled at the peeling eucalyptus tree with its long silvery leaves. I realised that something I loved and accepted as normal - a garden - was, for them, strange and unknown. It was indeed like stepping on to another planet, except that planet was our earth and when we do SEE it is alive, we

begin to realise just how beautiful and special is our natural world. We leant over the parapet in the garden and looked down at the housing estate where they lived. 'It looks like another world'.

They started talking about how they should like to see the world with trees and flowers, gardens and woods for everyone. Yet surely it is our birthright that we should ALL be able to enjoy and share in nature, the real out-doors?

Each term we focused on growing different plants, as well as taking care of a stock of house plants. The children were free to water the plants when needed and sometimes it was very helpful for a child to be able to take time to do this, as a breathing space from some pressure. However, I did not find that the children used this as a way of avoiding something else. One term, we concentrated on grains, we were learning about milling and baking bread.

I had a large winnowing basket filled with grains and pulses and at any free moment, there were always one or two children dreamily running their hands through the grain.

What has this to do with outdoor education you may ask. The point is, that although they were already 9 or 10, these children had had so little sensory experience - experience that often comes through natural activity like playing on the beach, climbing trees, falling into a stream, helping on a farm, feeding the ducks, riding on a horse, climbing a hill and staring at the view, or flying a kite, picking flowers, planting cabbages, building a fence, watching the moon reflected on the sea, going fishing.

In the classroom the pressure is on to start measuring, analysing, quantifying in formal directed experiments as soon as possible. Children are natural scientists and will do this anyway with any new discovery they make. There are some very good new science courses that respond to this exploring spirit in children. However, in working with earth (rocks, fossils and stone) again I found that these children suffered from inadequate outdoor experience. When asked to make the soil moist in preparation for bulb planting, for example, there were a few children who refused, at first, to mix the earth with their bare hands. I am sure that these children were the ones who were told not to touch soil because it would dirty them. Once over their initial fears they gloried in the opportunity simply to FEEL the earth.

One boy had never been to the beach until he was six, and yet lived a twenty minute walk from the sea! The mother of a friend of his eventually took him and stood in awe as she watched him experience for the first time in his life the sea and sand. Is it then surprising as a nine year old, he had difficulties in maths when asked to think abstractly, that is to work out sums as a result of measuring the mass of different amounts of sand. He and others like him, still needed TIME to play with sand. The implications for remedial teaching are enormous. How many slow learners had limited or inadequate outdoor experience, let alone education in their early life?

There is an aspect of outdoor education that requires imagination more than money and skill. But it does require opportunity, and we as teachers, have the responsibility to make these opportunities available. I am not a skilled mountaineer or canoeist, for example, but as a teacher I can build a bridge between the classroom and specialised outdoor education through sharing nature with children inside and outside the classroom. It is common to hear 'the parents' being blamed for the problem of delinquent and unhappy disaffected youth. But if a parent has never had any experience of, for example, trees in their own life, and therefore no awareness of 'tree' as a living force in the world, how can that parent be blamed for not taking their child to the park of local woodlot and introducing their child to trees?

INDEX FOR 1984 ASKC NEWSLETTERS compiled by Eric Totty is available from me. Just send a stamped and addressed envelope and I will send it off to you. I would like to have sent it out but it runs to three pages and many of you will have indexed your own copies or will have disposed of them by now. Hopefully I can get Eric to provide this service each year. He actually talked himself into it this year as he suggested it was a good idea, I agreed and asked him to go ahead!

THE LITTLE KAYAK BOOK by John Brand.

John Brand, Bramble Tye, Stanway Green, Colchester, Essex, CO3 5RA

0 9510075 0 5 November, 1984 350mm X 140mm 48 pages £6.50 until May 31st, then £7.50.

John Brand's interest in research into kayak shapes will have been noticed from his recent extensive contributions to this newsletter. His involvement with the subject spans well over twenty years. In the early 60's he joined Brian Skillings project 'Eskimo' which attempted to measure and classify museum kayaks which were being scrapped at the rate of two a year through neglect. An association with Charles Ranshaw began and a regular correspondence with John Heath was to result in John becoming one of our leading authorities on kayak research.

While John is particularly interested in measuring the shapes of these boats with great accuracy and trying to ascertain their true shapes before being allowed to deform over museum supports for many years, his enthusiasm goes much further with a wish to have replicas built in modern materials for water testing, something which generally seems not to have been considered by other researchers. Having tested and evaluated replicas, he then hopes to extrapolate the designs to evolve new shapes to lead us to a second kayak age. (He uses the term kayak for the sea kayak shape, referring to all other shapes as canoes, regardless of the way they are paddled.)

The book is not light reading. It is a careful study presented as a scientific paper with precise drawings and meticulous freehand sketches, intended to be used as working drawings. Tables of dimensions are included, all accurate to the nearest millimetre. The style is precise and clear and John's profound respect for his subject shines through, not the small candle he was trying to light to dispel the darkness over this subject in Britain.

He features five kayaks in detail, S.W. Greenland, S. Central W. Greenland, Alaskan, Baffin Island and Aleutian, three stored in England and two in Denmark. Particularly significant are the Hull kayak of 1613, the oldest known kayak, and the British Museum's model, considered by John to be the most important kayak in existence, with which he explains the Aleutian kayak's strange bifid stem. Paddles and fixtures and fittings are included although it has not been possible to examine the insides of two of the kayaks because of the risk of causing damage in the process.

Despite the unusually tall format of this book to allow the drawings to be included, the price is high because of the small circulation such a specialist interest book is likely to achieve. Presumably it was the price which dictated against inclusion of photographs which would have been welcome. The lack of conclusions is noticeable too, but these cannot be drawn until researchers have built replicas of the boats to test out.

This is the first volume in an area of research which will continue. For those interested in the reasons for the shapes of kayaks it will be a significant reference volume, giving background information for the sequels which must surely come.

It was a brave decision to publish in this format and John deserves the support of all interested in kayak research.

5th International Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ £2.00 (special price to members)

Only a few copies left. This is a fairly hefty document which goes in to all sorts of detail on expeditioning by kayak and really ought to have a place in your book shelf.

I also have a limited supply of Tee shirts from the States with an interesting sea kayaking design on the front. They are available from me at £6.00, state your size - small/medium/large/X large.
