

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



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The following is taken from 'Sea Canoeing', the house magazine of the Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club.

AN ASPECT OF SEA RESCUE by Paul Davis.

One bleak and overcast day late in July my companion and I were making our return to Rheban from Chinaman's Bay on Maria Island. The weather for the last two days had been superb with zephyrs from the north-west only ruffling the mirror calmness of the sea. There had been an overnight change and 25 knot winds were blowing out of the south-east, gusting occasionally up to 35.

Our plan had been to paddle southward while on the lee of the island then, when conditions became more exposed, head across the seas south-westward until such time as we were upwind of our destination whereupon we would turn and run with the seas to journey's end.

When out of the protection of South Maria the full force of wind and wave was upon us. The steep seas typical of Mercury Passage were occasionally breaking, more than occasionally the further westward we paddled. By and by we changed course and rafted together for a relaxing 'sail' downwind, the waves buffeting first the bow and then the stern of our canoes. Along came one swaggering curling wave after another, then a particularly harmless looking one came under us gently, lifted and dumped our 'raft' cleanly upside down in the sea. We finally separated, I rolled upright and found my friend had abandoned the attempt. What of fancy calm-weather rescues now? Well, what better time to experiment

With much difficulty I turned and paddled up into the seas towards the stricken canoe, attempting to position for a 'T' configuration rescue. The conditions were too severe and I stood a good chance of stoving the bow of my boat through the seat and/or bottom of the other while lifting the capsized boat over my bows, not to mention the risk of injury to the swimmer. I also felt that the canoe to be rescued may be tossed down the deck of my own and cause me injury so I opted to pull alongside the upturned craft and handle it from there. The method I used then became obvious, it goes as follows:

Assuming both boats are lying side by side, bow to bow,

1. The rescuer holds fast to the capsized boat by its decklines (or coaming) near its cockpit.
2. The swimmer positions himself at the stern between the two boats, keeping an eye out for any waves which may throw the boats together.
3. With a firm grip on his boat and with his legs fending off the rescuers boat, the swimmer puts his weight on his rear deck and attempts to submerge it, thus lifting the bow slightly.
4. The swimmer works his way up the rear deck towards the cockpit of his canoe, all the time keeping his weight on the top and his legs forcing the sterns further and further apart. The rescuer is all the while maintaining a close grip on the cockpit. By this action the somewhat uplifted bow of the capsized canoe is swung above and across the bow of the rescuers boat.
5. The rescuer assists the movement of the capsized boat into the 'X' position thereby draining its cockpit of water.
6. When the removal of water is complete the boat is righted, slipped back into the water and braced by the rescuer, the swimmer climbs aboard and once again the status of paddler.

In my case it was necessary to follow this procedure quickly due to the threats from oncoming seas. It was performed beam on to the seas with the empty boat on the weather side.

And so, with this exciting turn of events we continued on our way the wiser, enjoying thoroughly the exhilaration of wave after diving wave toward the homeward shore.

Paul was in a Greenlander 2, the rescued boat was a North Sea Tourer. Both were fitted with front and rear bulkheads)

AN ESKIMOS STYLE PADDLE - HOW TO BUILD ONE
by Adrian Dean.

This is my paddle. I don't claim any originality for the idea. I think the Greenland Eskimos would be about a thousand years in front! I guess you might like to make one just for a conversation piece but you will find that with a bit of use you will use it in preference to the conventional slalom blade.

With a blade some 300 - 400 mm longer than the one you are used to, you need to paddle with a much flatter style and slower ratings. It is much lighter than a slalom style paddle because the taper starts much closer to the handle; this loss of strength through thinness is compensated for by the increased width higher up, close to the hand. The elongated thinness makes an extremely springy, lively paddle which is very easy on the wrists and arms.

Rolling is very easy, the area being equal to or greater than the slalom blade. Because the blades have no front or back faces, they are not left or right handed.

In windy conditions they are much easier to use, but it is harder to accelerate and high supports in surf are more difficult.

Whatever your reasons for making one, it is worth the effort.

The materials you will need are:

Oregon Pine, spar quality	2,500 X 40 X 40mm, 1 off
King William Pine	800 X 35 X 30mm, 4 off
Blackwood veneer strips	100 X 40 X 3mm, 8 off
Blackwood dowels	40 X 3mm diam. 20 off
Small pack 'Epiglue' wood epoxy	
1 litre spar varnish	

Tools:

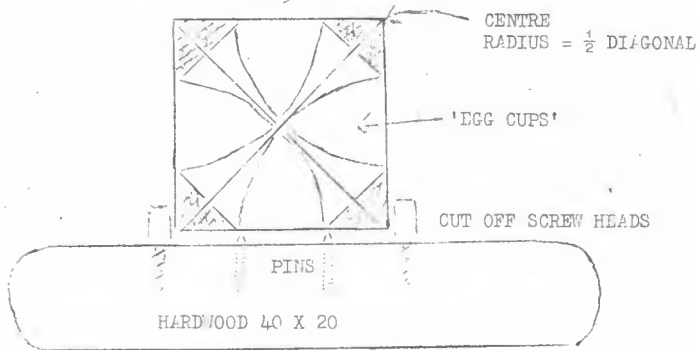
Trying plane	Try square	Brush
Smoother	Dowel plate	Cork block
Resp	Hammer	File
G-cramps	Sand-paper: 80 grit, 120 grit, 180 grit.	
Few lengths of car-tube, pirelli rubber, or shock rubber		

This description is for blades at 90° but they were traditionally made flat. Mine had the initial edges planed with a fine degree of twist so that the blades are only offset 80° , this has proved an excellent arrangement. The flat ones are of course easier to stow.

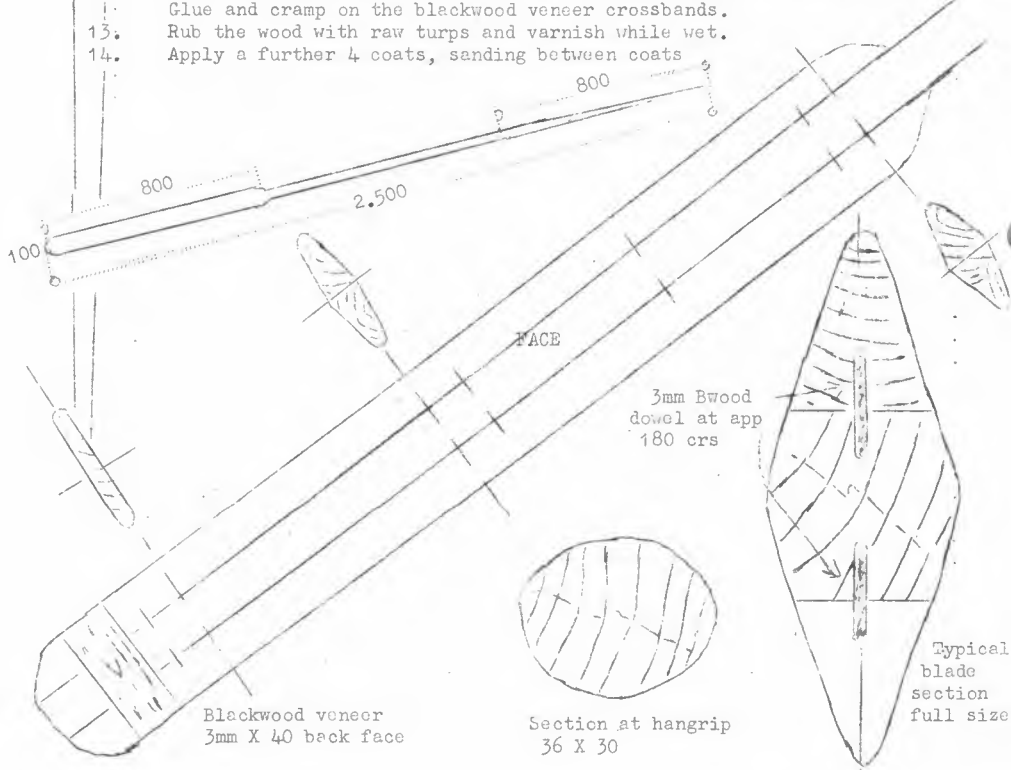
Procedure:

1. Shoot the edges of the loom straight and square.
2. Shoot the inside edges of the King William pine straight and square.
3. Mark the centre of the inside of each blade.
4. To ensure the dowel holes line up and the edge pieces lie along the centre line of the loom, square matching lines across the edges of each piece for the dowel positions, locate the centre of each line and centre-punch these, Drill them very accurately.
5. Make the dowels.
6. Before glueing, lightly sand the centre portion of each joint.
7. Mix the glue and glue in the dowels (coat both faces of the joint).
8. Assemble both blades and draw tight with a series of rubber bandages.
9. Plane the taper on the blade to the bottom of the grip.
Taper the loom the other way from the top of one grip to the shoulders of the other blade. This will leave the handgrips rectangular and the centre of the loom square.
10. Never attempt to make a square piece directly into a round, first make it octagonal, then plane it to 16 sides, then 32 sides; use a cabinet scaper to finish off the rounding. To obtain an accurate octagonal section, it is worth making a Mast Gauge:

MAST GAUGE



- (a) Draw an octagon in a 40 X 40mm square, on a piece of paper. A convenient way of doing this is to draw an arc from each corner of the square; the radius of the arc to be exactly equal to half the length of the diagonal. Join the points where the arcs cut the sides of the square. You now have an octagon contained in the square. (Call this the 'egg cup' method of drawing octagons).
 - (b) Drive two thick screws and two small nails into a piece of wood as shown, using your drawings as a template. This gauge will scribe on the loom the correct amount to plane off the corners for elliptical, cylindrical end tapered shapes to the 8 sides.
11. Round off the 8 sides and blend into the blade sections.
 12. Sand the paddle smooth, starting with 80 grit paper, then 120 then 180. Glue and cramp on the blackwood veneer crossbands.
 13. Rub the wood with raw turps and varnish while wet.
 14. Apply a further 4 coats, sanding between coats



COACHING AWARDS AND SEA KAYAKING

In this country sea kayaking has grown up along with a coaching scheme as operated by the British Canoe Union. In fact, in many ways the coaching scheme was here first, and our acceptance of this has been total.

This is not necessarily the way elsewhere in the world and arguments rage as to the merits of any coaching scheme and the possible infringements in what is a very free activity free, that is, from legislation, bureaucracy, organisation and rules and regulations. I have seen the discussions happen at first hand in countries as far apart as Australia and Alaska, and they still go on. Healthy disagreement and differences of opinion about all sorts of matters are good for any activity, sea kayaking being no exception. Below I publish varying opinion on this issue of certification for sea paddlers. WHAT DO YOU THINK

PRECIOUS CLEAR GROUND by John Down, Editor of SEA KAYAKER, Vancouver, B.C.

The problem with the pro-certification argument is that entangled in it is a lot of common sense. Who can deny that an instructor should be qualified to instruct, that a paddler should have a broad range of seamanship and paddling skills, or that a network of communication should be established to raise the level of safety in sea kayaking? Not I; but I do object to the thought of would-be regulators deciding on my behalf, who is and is not qualified to paddle, guide or instruct. Such questions are best left to personal responsibility, rather than a governing body's discretion - however well intentioned. Self responsibility is the key to sea kayaking; to remove that is to reduce it to the philosophical level of a competition sport. If certification's chief aim is to promote safety, then I view the proposal in terms of treatment as considerably worse than the malady.

For a start, let us make a distinction between the benign and hard core aspects of a sea kayaking awards system. The former consists mostly of proficiency tests - measuring oneself against other people or a standard set by others. The hard core aspect is the one which aims to control sea kayaking by setting up as the body to approve instructors and define what is and is not acceptable practice. Proficiency tests are voluntary; instructor certification is, in essence, coercive. Bureaucracies have a way of linking up with existing arms of government like fifth columnists.

There is in sea kayaking a rich diversity of style and purpose. Much of this would be lost through an attempt at standardisation. Britain is a classic example of this; some aspects of kayaking have virtually been excluded from their training schemes - indeed, their thinking. A certain pseudo elitism, and a resultant polarisation, would likely arise from it; the proficient and the certified versus the rest of us paddling quietly off in other directions. I also worry about people's motivation in spearheading such schemes. Who are they? In Canada, administrators eager to extend their influence, although they may not even be sea paddlers? In the U.S., born-again fundamentalists, heart rendingly sincere in their conviction that the answer to preventing kayak accidents, and allaying their own fears, is do do a course and become certified? They seek something more constant than the sea to measure themselves against. But the paper that reassures and gives peer approval to the novice or tentative paddler carries little weight at sea. It may even lead to a sense of false security that increases the real risk. Paddling skill and sound judgement are two different things. One can be assessed, but the other remains largely subjective. This leads me to conclude that we'd really be no further along with certification, in terms of safety assessment, than we are without it.

For now, let's accept at face value the sincerity of the evangelists, and turn our attention to the would-be power brokers (if indeed a distinction actually exists). What's in it for them? There may well be a sincere wish to reduce the accident rate, although the cynic cannot fail to see how every tragedy enhances their cause. However, it is the self-serving prestige and influence such organisations bestow upon those willing to submit to the initiation ritual (the test or exam) that bothers me. There is an unearned peer pay-off here. Where do they get this authority? We give it to them when, through indifference to their

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existence or just plain laziness, we relinquish our willingness to decide for ourselves what is legitimate and safe. You may protest that most people don't know enough about sea kayaking to decide, but I don't buy that; it does not take much critical enquiry to find out which instructor, tour group or outfitter does the best job. All the mechanisms are in place; resource centres are springing up in all major kayaking areas; symposiums are being held every season; magazines, books and newsletters provide an abundant flow of insight and information. There is amongst our paddling community an enormous wealth of practical expertise and seamanship, nurtured by North America's long standing passion for small boats and the sea. There is TASK, an association of people in the trade, within which, should a real demand for regulation occur, schools, outfitters, guides and tour operators could self-regulate by adhering to agreed guidelines and safety procedures enforced through peer pressure. Such a structure has its own built-in safeguard, simply because the industry's long term interests lies in its ability to respond to public need. Designers, manufacturers and retailers have the same opportunity for self control. Should they instead become involved in certification schemes, they would indeed face an immediate conflict of interest and abuse of privilege problem; the use of such and such boat or paddle type might conveniently become restricted, as happened elsewhere. Similarly, operators and instructors would be in a position to inhibit the activity of rivals.

Self responsibility is a precious privilege as well as a challenge. True, mine are classical anarchist arguments against encroaching government. But I happen to like sea kayaking for its freedom. I don't want it regulated and controlled, particularly by people who see in it not an avenue for escape from our insanely over-regulated existence, but a power vacuum to be moved into, with a hierarchy up whose ladder they can steadily climb by making all the right moves. What appears to them as a vacuum, I view as precious clear ground

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FREEDOM, RESPONSIBILITY AND FUTURE DECISIONS by Will Nordy writing to Blue Water Paddler, the Alaskan Magazine on ocean paddling.

Has the thought occurred to you that as a North American sea kayaker you have almost unlimited freedom in paddling? Well, we do. But what is freedom without responsibility? Precarious I submit.

As more and more people are drawn to sea kayaking, the issues of freedom and responsibility grow in importance. Nowhere is this more evident than in the implementation of current safety training programmes. Obviously, in an unregulated activity such as North American sea kayaking, there is no governing body to determine policy or set standards for training. Consequently, numerous voluntary training programmes of varying quality and effectiveness, are in place initiated by clubs, retailers and professional instructors. The effort certainly is commendable but represents responsibility by only a small number of people. It seems if overall quality and effectiveness of instruction is to improve, then we as sea kayakers have a responsibility to see that it does. No one should speak for you or presume to speak for me - certainly not vested interests. Although no official organisation has said so, we paddlers are in control of sea kayaking and it is up to us to exercise mutual responsibility for our continued freedom in it.

I was gratified with the feedback I received during my appearance at the recent Ocean Kayaking Symposium at Victoria, B.C. For the first time, I believe kayakers were given an open forum to express their ideas on training and the status of sea kayaking in general.

Since I was unable to attend the symposium at Port Townsend, I had Matt Broze hand out questionnaires for me during his lecture on safety. The Kayakers who responded were equally divided on the question of having a unified training system and certification of instructors. Unanimously, however, they indicated a willingness to be included in a national directory for the purpose of sharing trip information with other sea kayakers.

It is too early to draw any conclusions from the responses I've received. Hopefully, during the coming year I'll be able to reach more people. This information will then be used as a basis for discussing future trends in North American sea kayaking

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I tried about three times to start this article and yet, strange as it may seem- even after twenty years with the B.C.U.s Coaching Scheme - I still found it uphill going. I could'nt decide what the 'take-off' note should be and I felt like the master of the C.E.2 who had been asked to defend iron ships.

But the answer had been staring me in the face all the time. ENJOYMENT - it was all about enjoyment. It was about people who enjoyed their sport and who wanted to know more, so that they could enjoy it more. It was about men and women who enjoyed teaching and who enjoyed passing on skills and information and by so doing, helped others to gain greater satisfaction and fulfillment from paddling their kayaks.

It was also about personal challenge. It is only natural that after some time spent successfully pottering, a paddler should begin to ask himself questions about his own personal performance. "Do I do my strokes in an efficient manner and by so doing do I conserve energy?" "Do I have the skills to undertake the type of trip - not that I do, but that I want to do?" "If I travel to different areas, will my navigation and seamanship be adequate for places, say, 1,000 or 10,000 miles away?"

The competitive paddler, on the other hand, has no need for self-interrogation. If he arrives at the finish as the applause is dying down, or the tents are being dismantled, any questions he may have about his personal suitability are answered for him. Not so the ocean paddler, who has no way to compare himself with others; nor has he any way in which he can gauge the expertise of paddlers who are not personally known to him.

A proficiency award solves this and gives a yardstick of attainment. If the standards of the awards are regulated by some governing body, both for the satisfaction of the individual and the guidance of others, which ensures that all those who assess are trained to do so in the same way - considering the same points in the same order of priority - then justice is not only done but is seen to have been done by all, and the system gains respect.

Many paddlers may never wish to go further afield than their own local waters. For them, the proficiency test provides a ready-made and very personal challenge. It is a goal that can be worked towards at a speed in keeping with the abilities of each individual. Nothing succeeds like success and a paddler can be guided to excellence by a series of graded tests.

Once a proficiency standard has been accepted by everyone, there can be a number of advantages. For example, short trips or prolonged expeditions need no longer be parochial affairs and candidates or participants may be recruited from much wider areas. Everything can be concluded by telephone. No longer does an organiser have to rely upon a paddler's often colourful self-recommendation or, at best, the 'unbiased' word of his closest friends. In other words, the onus of an individual's suitability to participate in any particular activity is placed firmly on the shoulders of a governing body, which can simplify things enormously.

I remember my first group trip in North America. There were a large number of paddlers of widely differing backgrounds and experience; unfortunately, this only became apparent after the trip was well under way. Before a very short time had elapsed, the paddlers were spread over about a mile and a half of ocean and there were a number of minor calamities - all of which could have been serious had the weather not been warm. I hear talk about freedom and 'bit of paper', but would the master of an ocean-going vessel feel any more free if he were faced with a new group of crew members who announced that they didn't have any 'bits of paper' but could still fulfill their duties because they'd done it before any way? I think not.

It is strange, but I'd never heard the word 'certification' used in a sporting context until I came to North America, and then it only appeared to be used rather sneeringly to arouse emotive reactions. Of course if you pass an award, you are entitled to have it recorded - dare I say it - on a piece of paper! If this upsets people, it could be written on something else! I cannot understand how any of this restricts freedom. Surely knowledge brings freedom. Give me a set of parallel bars and tell me I'm free to do what I like on them, and you'd be

of parallel bars and tell me I'm free to do what I like on them, and you'd be disappointed. At the recent Olympics, however, we have all seen what can be achieved by a graded system of instruction. Perhaps those who are opposed to any kind of awards scheme should consider that they in turn are restricting the freedom of the rest to choose the kind of instruction they want.

What I find strange is that most of the opposition to an awards scheme comes from either dealers or manufacturers. Could it be that they would like to organise the affairs of the ocean paddlers themselves? Fortunately, manufacturers have no influence on the policy of tests or awards or on the Sea Touring Committee of the B.C.U. It is, in fact, the paddlers who dictate to the manufacturers. This is good for the manufacturers because as the requirements of the paddlers change, so new models are brought out to fulfill the demand.

When I previously mentioned a 'governing body' I almost felt the paper tremble with the vibration of a thousand screams. We must be practical, however. Once the need for a high standard of proficiency is accepted, then the fact that you need good teachers - who are in unity with what they teach - must also be accepted. There has to be liaison between all who instruct, so that the stroke or technique which is taught by one instructor is the same as that which is taught by another, perhaps a long distance away. In this way, everyone knows what everyone else is talking about. Standardisation eases communication. For example, the DRIVING face of the paddle blade should be downwards during the sculling for support stroke. Or is it called the WET face? or is the BACK of the blade the WET face, or is this called the DRY face? Perhaps the FRONT of the FACE is the DRY face, or is that the DRIVING FACE? - Confused? I don't believe it!

Once you have a large group of instructors teaching an even large number of students numerous strokes and techniques, in sequence and at different levels, together with all the necessary navigation and seamanship - which is also graded - then you need an organisation which can structure and co-ordinate everything so that students can get the best instruction at a suitable level.

Recognition is also important both on a national and local level, for any number of reasons. Any scheme that brings together and unifies ocean paddlers so that their interests and affairs are administered by responsible, caring officers, can only help in giving the sport more credibility in the eyes of the public and the government. You also have an impartial arbiter for assimilating accident information or for the testing of new equipment, rescues and other safety practices.

It is necessary for me to say one official word at this stage. Although it has been my pleasure to be involved with training and assessing a number of Canadians and Americans for the B.C.U.s Proficiency and Coaching Awards, it was a situation which came about purely by request and I must thank Geoff Good - the B.C.U.s Director of Coaching - for his support in allowing me to do this. It has never been, nor is it now, the ambition of the British Canoe Union to initiate coaching systems beyond the shores of the United Kingdom.

Having said all this, if there is any part of our system which you feel has merit enough to be used in a scheme of your own design, my colleagues and I in the B.C.U. would take it as a compliment. I certainly see nothing profitable in redesigning the wheel, so why go to the trouble of making our mistakes all over again? No system is perfect but we DO keep on trying.

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And finally, here is my 'pennyworth'

IN DEFENCE OF A COACHING SCHEME FOR SEA KAYAKISTS by John Ramwell

Why are some canoeists so wary of any test and certification scheme for their sport/activity? Is it that they feel they and their equipment won't measure up? Perhaps they have good and sound equipment but are fearful of being found wanting when it comes to using it.

It is as simple as this: - if I want health care I go to a qualified practitioner; if I want legal advice I go to a qualified practitioner; if I want to learn to hang-glide I go to a qualified practitioner and if I am enthusiastic enough I may want to become a qualified practitioner myself and take the same

qualifications as those who have taught me.

This qualification does several things for me. It gives me confidence that I have been thoroughly taught the rudiments of my subject, that I have completed the FULL syllabus including the parts I might have found tedious or difficult (every syllabus contains some). I feel that I have acquired sound knowledge and skills that will form the basis of further knowledge and skills as I progress; in other words I have been pointed in the right direction in the first place and stand a good chance of remaining on course. I can demonstrate to those who want to learn from me that I do have the RIGHT experience. I can demonstrate to an educational authority that I can safely take charge and instruct sea canoeing to students for whom that authority has responsibility and that as a consequence I am worth insuring.

So you see, there are many benefits to be gained for holding a piece of paper which shows you have bothered to learn, and then have that learning assessed by a recognised canoeing authority.

What are the drawbacks for a certification scheme? Well, it is not perfect. All we can hope to do is to work towards getting it all right. Consequently there will be incompetents who get their piece of paper and there will be competent who fail. In the latter case one needs to 'try again', in the former case, the responsible authority (in this case the B.C.U.) can always re-assess, given there is good enough reason.

Should these certificates be mandatory? The answer to this is yes and no. Yes if you intend to commercially lead or teach other canoeists and no if all you want to do is your own thing.

Last summer a man, not an experienced canoeist, set off from our south coast to paddle across the Atlantic!! Within a short time he had lost all his equipment and drowned. Crazy maybe, but I will vigourously defend his right to do it all over again should he ever be re-incarnated back from the sea.

Only those fearful of failing deny the case for certification. The greater the chance of them failing the more vociferous they are against tests and certificates.

Would you send your child to learn from an unqualified teacher? You would stand for little support from the law if something went wrong. You would be told that you got what you paid for.

There are many excellent canoeists who have never bothered with the coaching scheme. I know that I can learn much from them myself and I would paddle anywhere with them - but here I am relying on my own personal knowledge of the people concerned. Not everyone can be that well informed.

So, in summary, there are two important advantages to certification, viz:
i) Maintenance and improvement of standards
ii) Safety.

When sea canoeing, safety is such an important consideration. A sea kayak in the wrong hands in deteriorating sea conditions is a recipe for disaster. Certification goes a long way to ensure that wrong hands become right ones.

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From LINDENKRAFT, 2. Walkers Lane North, Blackfield, Southampton, SO4 1YA
Dear A.S.K.C.

In the last, most interesting A.S.K.C. Newsletter (No. 48) the new Flares Paper mentioned DAYGLO FLAG on a pole.

LINDENKRAFT supplies a similar "MAYDAY FLAG". It folds small and has two elastic loops to slip over your arms or paddle. As your article says, it is durable, takes little space and is a cheap addition to sea kayaking equipment. The "Mayday Flag" costs £1.50 plus 25p P & P.

I hope this information is of use and interest to you and your readers.

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DOLPHINS by Alistair Stewart.

No doubt the many seafarers with much more off-shore experience than I, can recount tales of dolphins and porpoises playing around their boats. The favourite trick which seems to enamour these mammals to humans is swimming through the bow wave, more often than not, in formation. This communication of joy at the meeting of their world with ours must often prompt cockpit discussion as to their 'intelligence', 'affinity with mankind' etc.

I am sure many of these impromptu animal psychology debates lead to the humans involved feeling frustrated at their inability to respond to the stimulus the dolphins have given them.

The tale I'm about to tell will hopefully encourage people to accept this frustration.

Last summer I was fortunate enough to be closely involved for a period of two weeks initially with the closest human contact with a dolphin existing at the time in British waters.

Boats to me are a means to an end. Sailing is just one of several ways of appreciating something I can't express and it goes far deeper than love of the environment. Those of you who've read Tristan Jones, "Adrift", may recall Ezra Pound's Canto 120 as the last words in it. The aptest quote I've yet to find, despite my initial dislikes of Pound's politics.

Well, down in Cornwall there had been tales of varying reliability about a friendly dolphin with the (to humans only!) distasteful "name" of Percy who'd play with any fishing boats that came near his favoured dining area.

Either side of full flood or ebb, Percy would come out to jump around anything with humans aboard. My friends who lived in this part of the world and made their living with the sea (not BY it, or FROM it) were interested and set out to uncover more, and invited me along.

Various abortive trips and the resultant despondence gave way to one of the high points in my life, after finally making contact with Percy, the dolphin not only accepted me, but showed a marked preference for my company.

Swimming and snorkling for periods of up to two hours around slack water gave me an exhaustion I didn't notice until the evenings. Like two lovers, we went further and further, discovering more and more in each other as we did so.

The base for operations was a 21' boat with exceptional capabilities not only for sailing, but also as a working platform. (Any friends of mine reading this will know what design it was, and why, and how I love these boats.)

As the bonds between Percy and I grew stronger, we ventured further and further from what was MY base, and edged closer and closer to what was HIS, a strong tidal stream through a gully off a headland, the bay before which was the boat's anchorage. Never, however, did Percy encourage me into water he knew I couldn't handle.

Other human swimmers were greeted with enthusiasm and inspected with interest initially, but there was never the same rapport, and all involved could see and feel it.

The bonds went far on both sides - Percy would at first let no one touch him - soon he would not only let me stroke him, but would push me up out of the water when coming up for air, would leap over my head and would swim the fastest and yet most carefully graceful manoeuvres around my clumsy body.

The tactile sensitivity in a dolphin's skin is obviously so different to that in a human's skin that touch does not have the same emotional content as it does for a human. One possible way they can express this is by their aquatic ballet, of which I was given an endless show.

I welcomed the moves away from the prying eyes of my friends, but somehow I felt I owed it to them to stay close to the boat. Torn between two loyalties, but with selfishness helping the call of one. Do lovers perform in front of the people who first introduced them?.

Feeling selfish after several sessions with Percy, I encouraged others to swim and play with him, and soon the situation developed into a farce, with a local character known to my friends (but not among them), getting upset. He had been watching Percy for some months, and had swum with him on previous occasions, although with limited response.

The story slowly filtered through to the National Dailys, several of whom sent reporters down to do a middle page spread. Women's magazines got on the bandwagon and the situation deteriorated into a curious sideshow.

So, all you people sitting on the foredeck, hanging through the pulpit like it's the bars of a cage, trying to touch those dolphins in the bow wave with your feet, take heed.

In my naivety I took his human dignity from Percy. He does'nt know that, he does'nt know why a close friend does'nt come anymore, nor will again. Let that pulpit be the bars that cage us, protecting the rest of this planet from our indulgences. Admire the view but don't become part of it.

Accept the frustration you feel as the price you should be prepared to pay for the people who would'nt value the display you're being shown.

In case you think I'm being rather ethereally personal about the whole thing, I'd like to make one final point. Many of the friendly dolphins around the world's shorelines that trusted man have eventaully had that trust betrayed by unbalanced humans, and have met bloody fates. Look, but don't touch. We're not fit to.

* * * * *

From Tom Smith, Burra Isle, Shetland.

Dear John,

.....I was able to spend a very enjoyable day with the Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club, paddling the spectacular coastline of the Tasman Peninsula, and came away very impressed both with the quality of sea canoeing in the State and with the Club's resourcefulness in producing most of their own equipment. The "Greenlander" which is built in the State, is a large, stable and comfortable kayak, but even in the moderate conditions we experienced I found it heavy and it would undoubtedly be difficult to handle without the rudder which is a standard fitting in Tasmania. Electric bilge pumps and sails are also standard. All have been refined through a great deal of experimentation, as you can see from their magazine, and they can certainly show us a thing or two in this area. I was also impressed by a new sea touring double with an impressive turn of speed. In addition to hatches and bulkheads fore and aft, the mid-section was sperated by bulkheads, with a third hatch between the cockpits.

I was intrigued to learn that one of my fellow paddlers, and an active member of the Club, was a minister in Tasmania's State Government. That's the same State Government which was responsible for the proposed hydro-electric scheme which would have drowned the Franklin and Lower Gordon Rovers - a proposal which was vigorously and successfully opposed by a broad cross-section of wilderness and conservation groups in Australia, including river canoeists. Life is full of surprises.

Generally I found the Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club to be a friendly, welcoming group. Like ourselves in Shetland, they have a wonderful environment for sea canoeing, but feel a bit out on a geographic limb, and very much appreciate the opportunity to compare notes with paddlers from other places.

Tom Smith

* * * * *

From Tony Cox, Billericay, Essex.

Dear John,

DURING AUGUST/SEPTEMBER TIME I WILL BE CAMPING AND CLIMBING IN AND AROUND MULL AND WOULD APPRECIATE HELP WITH PARKING MY CAR SOMEWHERE AROUND OBAN. DO WE HAVE ANY CONTACTS IN THAT AREA. (I presume you've referred to our membership list Tony) In you recent newsletter you talked about survival kits. The following I keep in a medium size BDH and take it every trip: Whistle/hacksaw blade/candle/Pot.Permang/fish line/wire saw/cotton wool/ water bag/ fish hooks/needles/ins.tape/knife/liq.soap/mini cooker/puritabs/tin opener/thread guy line/20 pence/nuts,raisons/cup-a-soup/Muesli mixed with dried milk/surv,bag/pen.

From Alan Byde, Co. Durham. (Alan is following up a letter I sent to Charley Fiala, copy of which appeared in last ASKC letter)

Dear Charley Fiala,

The latest issue of the A.S.K.C. newsletter has an extract from a letter by you concerning sea kayaking and canoeing. Although not mentioned by name, I was one of the early sea kayak paddlers in the North East of England, a quarter of a century ago.

My developing interest in sea voyaging, by small boat, has included many deviations from the notion of the 'pure' hunter's boat, or kayak. The Shetland's 'sixareen' is a sort of small Viking longship, sailed with a square sail with a loose foot; it was also rowed. It was used for fishing and men would spend a week at sea in one. It carried about 2 or 3 men and varied around 20 feet l.o.a. It crossed from Shetland to Norway many times. A racing class still exists in Shetland.

The main branch to which I cling, is the Irish canoa or curragh. The English call it the curragh, the Irish the canoa. Tim Severin made a voyage in 1973 in the "St. Brendan" to U.S.A. via Iceland and Cape Farewell off the south tip of Greenland, and proved that such a voyage was feasible. The longer I live the more convinced I am that the earliest form of sea going canoeing is the Irish canoa. It goes back to the 7th century at least, that is 1,300 years. It wasn't used for sport but for economic power.

The canoa is a lengthened form of coracle. The Welsh, Irish, Scottish and English coracles, also the North American Plains Indians' bull boat are all variations on the same themehow to encompass the greatest volume of carrying capacity for the smallest investment of material and effort to make it. The coracle is very nearly a hemisphere, so if you know your maths, you will know that the largest volume with the smallest surface is a sphere. The ancients were not stupid. Life was hard enough without carving figureheads. They made a tiny boat and used it. The constructional methods are very like the carbon fibre re-inforced resin bonded craft of today. The fibres are tiny and closely matted and bonded with synthetic resins. Then the fibres were made up into strips of wood, woven and lashed together, covered with natural fibres woven into sheet material and bonded with natural fats and waxes or tar. I doubt if they argued it this way, but they knew in their hearts that the woven framework of the coracle, later stretched into the ocean crossing canoa, was the best way to make a boat to do the work they demanded of it.

Consider Columbus. He had a great idea to explore for the westward passage to the east. He persuaded wealthy backers to part with a 'lotta loot' to finance a voyage to the west. In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue. He didn't, I guess, manage to make his sales pitch convincing without being able to produce evidence that he and his fleet would not fall off the edge of the world. This evidence probably came from the clerics who had documents, probably of Viking origin, that showed that they had sailed there half a millenia earlier, 500 years that piece of parchment had been kept in some safe place. Twenty generations had gone by and Columbus KNEW there was land to the west.

That is not the end of the argument. Tim Severin proved it was feasible for men in a leather covered canoa to work the boat and live at sea for six weeks, enough to cross the Atlantic and back again if written records for the Vikings to read were to be made available to them.

The Vikings were farmers and fishermen and were very successful around 1,000AD in Scandinavia. The population 'exploded' and pressure on available land and fishing resources grew. This resulted in contest for power, and so the Vikings had to look beyond their boundaries. North was vertical ice-bound land. East was heavily populated (from the Norwegian and Danish point of view), and would fight them. South, the fat-lands of Europe, again heavily defended. Westwards lay Britian and Ireland. They fought on the east coast, established a settlement at York but found the going tough. This being the case, they went on round. They went around the north of Britain, beyond the Orkneys, out into the Atlantic and found Ireland. They also found Brian Boru who fought them off. Resistance again. However, further down the west coast they came to settlements of learning where

the Irish saints had lived and fished and farmed and taught; where St. Brendan and St. Caoman (Kevin) had lived. The monks had the power of writing and therefore of recording events on paper and parchment. The Vikings became aware of the Irish voyages 400 years before they came to the west coast of Ireland.

All that is conjecture, you can take it or leave it. But I am firmly of the belief that the Vikings, being hard headed practical people had to be convinced that a voyage out onto the open ocean was worth it; that there was indeed land to the west, worth effort to find it. Again.

So, when you ask about evidence of sea kayaking and canoeing, I advise caution when approaching kayaking. We are not hunters when we paddle what we romantically like to call the kayak; it is the hunter's boat, and no way should we consider ourselves in the same league as the Inuit seal hunters.

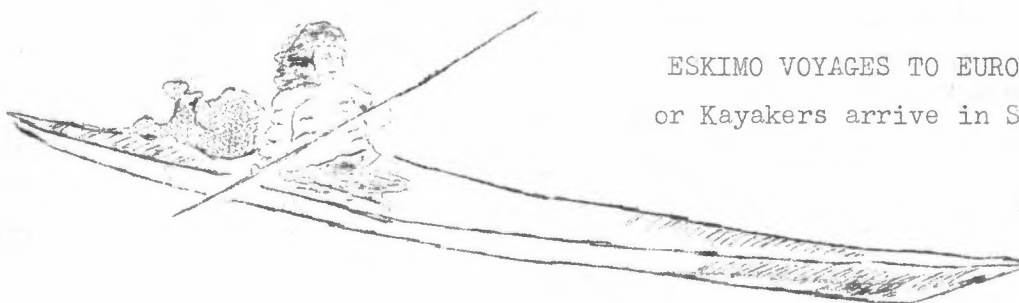
Sea canoeing? Well, how about researching the Irish canoas of the 7th century, the voyages of Brendan and Caoman, to find out who the first REAL sea canoeists were.

There is a further conjecture I would put forward. Where did the Inuit learn to build their kayaks? The structure is essentially the same as the canoa. Did they learn from the Irish? Consider the sixareen, it is a beautiful mini Viking longship and looks, for my money, like the bow shape shown in the book, "Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America" (Smithsonian Institute) page 81. 'Malecite stem profile, Old form, coastal, St. John, St. Lawrence'. That is a Shetland boat profile. It is on the right coast too to support a theory that it had a common ancestry. Did the North American Indians learn to make their birch bark canoes from seeing how the ancient British/Irish used their ocean going canoas?

Put that in you book and watch the smoke!

Alan Byde

Following on from Alan's article above I now publish an excerpt from "Arctic Policy Review" of March 1985 given to me recently whilst in Alaska.



ESKIMO VOYAGES TO EUROPE
or Kayakers arrive in Scotland.

Richard Cooper, a historian specialising in modern Britain, published an article in the September 1984 issue of OCEANS summarising the evidence pointing to early west-to-east crossings of the Atlantic Ocean by native Americans, some going back as far as the first century AD.

He points out that these early voyages were not voyages of discovery as were the voyages of Columbus, which initiated continuous contact between the two hemispheres. These were apparently accidental, one-way trips across the Northern Atlantic. The most recent ones were probably travelled by Greenlandic Inuit who made it beyond the coast-hugging Labrador Current and were caught in the Gulf Stream which like a conveyor belt soon deposited them on some European coastline.

The Inuit were certainly capable of the trip, according to Cooper. Theirs was the shortest route: 275 miles from Greenland to Iceland; 180 miles from Iceland to the Faeroes; and 200 miles from the Faeroes to the Orkney Islands off Scotland; a total of only 655 miles in the open ocean.

The earliest record of possible west-east contact dates from Roman times. Cooper records, " In the first century of the Christain era, the Roman proconsul of Gaul, Mettellus Celar, received as a gift from a barbarian king several strange people who had been blown ashore by a tempest and who had turned up in Germany".

Two independent accounts verify the story of these people who were called Indians, meaning Asiatic Indians.

Columbus was aware of these crossings, which were noted in the margin of one of his books:

Men of Cathay have come towards the east.
Of this we have many signs.
And, especially in Galway, in Ireland,
a man and a woman, of extraordinary
appearance have come to land on two
tree trunks.

In 1508 a French ship encountered a small boat containing seven men of dark complexions off the coast of England. Their boat was "a wicker frame covered with the stout bark of trees" Six of the seven died, but the survivor was eventually presented to Louis II of France.

The best evidence of the arrival by sea of aboriginal Americans in Europe dates from the 1680s and '90s. "At least five and perhaps six men in kayaks arrived in Scotland between about 1680 and 1700", according to the author. "Three of these kayaks still exist in Scottish museums. There seems to be no reasonable doubt that these travellers were Eskimos, most likely from Greenland".

The Orkney natives called them "Finnmen", and gave us this account of their boats:

Their boats being made of Fish Skins,
are so contrived that he can never sink,
but is like a Sea-gull swimming on top
of the water. His shirt he has so fastened
to the Boat, that no water can come into his
Boat to do him damage, except when he
pleases to untye it, which he never does but
to ease nature, or when he comes ashore.

Cooper writes that in the traditional lore of the Orkneys, the Finns - who have not used skin boats in historical times - were legendary seamen with magical powers. "Calling the kayakers 'Finnmen' may have simply been a way of saying that their appearance was magical, or, in other words, inexplicable".

Atlantic crossings in a kayak or a dugout seem more believable in the light of modern one-man crossings in small boats. In 1982, William Dunlop crossed from west to east in a boat only nine feet long.

The author concludes, "What the records of Atlantic crossings by native Americans suggest is that the process of cross-cultural contact between the New World and the Old was not completely one-sided. Some of the transatlantic traffic originated in America".

From Dr. P.E. Schur, 4, Carisbrooke Cl, Wistaston, Nr. Crowe, Cheshire, CW2 8JD

Dear Sir,

I am a keen canoeist and practicing doctor with an unsatisfied desire to visit foreign places and was given your address, among others, as being that of an organisation which may be able to put me in touch with expedition leaders who require medics/paddlers/drivers.

I have been canoeing for 5 years and have applied for B.C.U. proficiency. I enjoy touring and also dabble in W.W.R. (div. B), slalom (div.4), and marathon (div. 7) competitions in an effort to improve my skills and maintain fitness. I have paddled regularly on the Trewern and occasionally on other rivers in North Wales but my rolling needs to be improved although it works occasionally. Apart from canoeing, I have interests in wildlife and conservation (getting a bit rusty but could brush up), swimming and hill walking though the inactivity of general practice and a game leg have rendered me not as fit or competent in this as I used to be.

At present I work full time in general practice so it unlikely I could take leave at short notice but if there is a very good chance that I could be useful and used on expeditions, I would be prepared to pack up and go.

From Peter Lamont, Luing by Oban, Argyll, Scotland.

Dear John,

Please find enclosed a short report of a family canoeing holiday we had last year.

While the trip for us was hardly advanced, perhaps you could say it was an advanced trip for Thomas, aged 3 at the time!

This kind of trip has been done before of course; notably by the Simpsons who took their children along the Greenland coast, but perhaps our success might give some of your reader's wives ideas!

For the equipment buffs we took two tents - one to act as a play tent in case of rain and also two trolleys so that we could take to the roads if it was necessary (roads would have been more dangerous though!)

The drawing shows Thomas with a spraydeck. In fact it was held up with a plastic framework and the waist elastic removed so that Thomas had a kind of turret to look out of and could duck his head down beneath it to avoid spray.

Anyway, I hope your readers enjoy it.

Yours, Peter

oo00oo

oo00oo

THOMAS'S FIRST TRIP

The indoctrination began some days beforehand. Thomas, the youngest member of our proposed trip, had been out in our canoe on brief afternoon paddles before but had never been camping or further than a few yards from shore. Some mental preparations were felt necessary and we began to give him the 'hard sell' on the idea of a canoe/camping holiday in the hope that last minute tantrums and trauma might be avoided. The whole trip could be threatened otherwise. Thomas was a lively, active three-year-old at the time.

Departure day dawned clear and perfect, the canoes on their trollies were parked at the front of our cottage and I began to assemble and pack the gear while Thomas began to assemble (and pack) his necessities - a plastic sit-upon 'Hyman' digger, toddle truck, bear, teddy, squirrel, etc.

The heat of the July day increased rapidly along with tempers (mine), headaches (my wives) and general dissatisfaction (Thomas's on realising that were NOT going to take his digger and toddle truck). Finally all was ready and we set off trailing two canoes down the road to the pier. However, disillusioned with being deprived of his truck, my crewmember rebelled, stuck his thumb in his mouth, sat on the grass and refused to budge. A hurried conference of remaining expedition members (Anya and I) decided to institute a press gang and the reluctant sailor was forcibly captured and installed in his berth on the front cockpit seat of our Kayel double canoe, "Strangford Seal".

The water's edge at Cullipool pier saw a change of mood aided by the prospect of action at last and a tube of Smarties in the aggrieved fist. A toddle truck was forgotten as the rocky shore of N.W. Luing glided past in the still heat.

We had planned to explore the Loch Melfort area and possible Clachan Sound and Loch Feochan, taking up to a week is all went well. The first stage was to get through Cuan Sound before the tide turned.

We just managed this having started late. On Fraoch Eilean, near Torsa Island, a small cluster of willow scrub provided us with a welcome shade and Thomas with a convenient branch to swing from. All trees with such branches subsequently became known as "monkey trees" and were dilligently sought for in any woods near our campsites.

The day's paddle ended in the afternoon at an open bay on the east side of the Degnish Peninsula. Thomas and I went beachcombing for winkles and mussels while Anya unwound to "Desert Island Discs" on Radio 4! As dusk approached the stock question from the back of the tent became, "When are we going home?". No amount of explanation seemed to suffice and we felt that the full concept of an expedition commitment had not been grasped by all members of our party.

The following day, Saturday, was spent in a walk to a nearby lime kiln and Iron Age hillfort. The hillfort is in an impressive position on top of a steep, grassy hill and consists of the remains of a stone rampart encircling a flat

grassy area. From it is afforded a superb view of Loch Melfort and Shuna Island. Far below, as we looked, a small blue boat was crawling towards a little island when suddenly we realised it was a neighbour checking some mussel ropes! It felt odd to be on holiday so near to home and to see our fellow Luingites going about their daily business.

On our return to camp, Thomas found that his bulldozer had been brought with us and proceeded to churn up the undisturbed beach gravel. A teddy called, "Bear" also made an appearance; he stowed away at Cullipool!

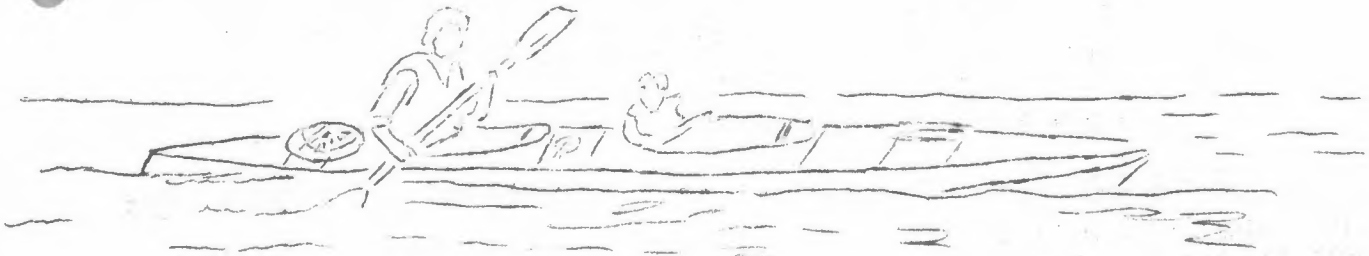


Setting off again on Sunday, the unbroken Mediterranean-style weather made it a pleasant paddle to the head of Loch Melfort where we confirmed that the Kilmelford shop was closed and retreated to set up camp at Ardanstur Point. A ramble along the shore for my crew ran off some surplus energy and he was soon asleep after the obligatory bedtime story. An amusing radio play entertained us and later in the evening we contacted a friend ('Spindrift') on the CB radio and arranged a meeting the following day. Two yachtsmen moored in Croabh Haven Marina were also on the air. They affected the customary pessimism in the middle of a fine spell and were sailing back to Glasgow the following day via Crinan, fearing a change in the weather. It always seems that no matter how long or

steadily the sun has been shining, the pessimist with his gloomy predictions of storms and winds is inevitably to be found. Such folk immediately command respect as obviously they have a deeper understanding of subtle signs or know something we don't! My barometer for the previous three days had remained rock-steady at 769 mm of mercury.

Monday morning and another foray to the Kimelford shop was made, this time successfully (we had run out of Smarties!). Our CB friend located us and we all had a good chat as it was our first meeting in person. He had very kindly noted the Inshore Forecast which confirmed that the sunny and calm conditions would remain for a day or two at least. The route that we chose took us along the south shore of Loch Melfort and one of the interesting features was Kames Fish Farm with its floating cages of salmon. There was plenty of activity from the fish as we drew alongside but after a thoughtful, thumb-sucking glance, Thomas became much more interested in the rusty crane on the pier.

The drama of the day occurred off Rubh 'a' Chnaip where we spotted a large white jellyfish (*Rizopus Octopus*) entangled in bootlace weed. Rafting up and using Thomas's paddle, we managed to free it and it pulsed gratefully (?) away. A happy, boisterous mood prevailed on the transit to Croabh Haven, (pronounced 'Croove Haven'). Thomas was in full voice shouting across the still sea to all and sundry, loud enough to be heard at Arduanie on the mainland half a mile away.



'STRANGFORD SEAL' UNDERWAY

Croabh Haven was reached about six in the evening. The official campsite is not near the sea and instead, Eilean Bhuidhe, near the marina entrance, proved a pleasant place to pitch the tent. The shore here is composed of fragile slate or shale and Thomas, deprived of gravel to gouge up with the bulldozer, spent an enjoyable hour or two smashing up rocks at the high tide line.

An after-dinner stroll took us to the floating pontoons which were fully occupied with yachts of all kinds. In the warm evening air the chink of glasses mingled with enticing aromas, the murmur of voices and the clatter of cutlery, creating the atmosphere of a Mediterranean resort. Above and behind the pontoons a row of buildings were beginning to sprout upwards beyond the dusty carpark. A portacabin office and toilets block stood at one side as if set down by helicopter. Surprisingly, despite the nearby presence of the numerous yachts and people, two curious young otters came swimming up in the seaweed to see what I was doing as I tied up the canoe for the night. Then at five the following morning we were woken by three seals hauled out on the shore line.

At this stage in our trip muscles unaccustomed to paddling were protesting and the decision was taken to head for the nearest home port of Ardinamir. Our final day, Tuesday, was as perfect as those before and paddle to Ardinamir accomplished with a brief stop in seaweed at Shuna. Boredom from long distance sea faring settled upon the crew of 'Strangford Seal' in Shuna Sound and a bunch of floating weed was fetched on board to provide interest. Some of the liberated denizens of the weed were familiar. Thomas had seen 'hoppers' (amphipods) before but when several inch-long slater-like animals (*Idotea* species) scuttled across the floorboard, panic began to take hold and the crew threatened to abandon ship or come aft to join the skipper! The situation was saved by Anya who ejected the unwelcome passengers overboard.

Just then a baby lumpsucker fish was spotted attached by its sucker to the deck. The equipment tray on Anya's Sea Tiger was hastily filled with seawater and the little fish installed. Four more lumpsuckers were found, all under one inch in length, and they too were transferred to the floating aquarium for transport

to shallow water.

Shortly afterwards a drowning bee was spotted port-sides, vainly trying to get airbourne. It was fetched out to dry off on deck at which point the error was discovered and we recoiled in a mixture of horror and surprise. On deck was one of the largest flies I had ever seen - like a bluebottle the size of a bumblebee but with the eyes of a narrow segment rather than the full quadrant of a housefly or bluebottle. Its whole appearance was menacing and repulsive and we were relieved when it flew off powerfully after a few minutes drying. Later we discovered it was a specimen of Echinomyia Grossa which feeds harmlessly on the nectar of sea shore flowers while the larval stage parasitises the caterpillars of large moths.

Ardinamir at last and a greeting bellowed from an anchored yacht - it was the harbour mistress, Irene McLachlan, waving at us with a wine glass. Paddling over, we were duly invited on board, our kind hosts being no less than the Commodore of the Clyde Cruising Club and his wife.

Wine merged into lunch and the party was joined by another large white yacht skippered by the Commodore of the Royal Highland Yacht Club! Eventually we teetered across the yacht's inflatable tender to our canoe and glided to the shore fortified by the splendid repast.

Our luck was in again at the road side as a family staying at Cullipool had arrived to collect a dinghy and offered transport back. Anya, Thomas and the Sea Tiger went back in comfort while the fully laden double, which we felt would be too heavy, was wheeled back on its trolley.

So ended Thomas's first trip.

BLUE WATER PADDLER BLUE WATER PADDLER BLUE WATER PADDLER BLUE WATER PADDLER

Blue Water Paddler is the Alaska ocean kayaking magazine. That is what they call it, but when I recently visited Alaska I discovered that it is much more.

Doug Van Etten, the editor/publisher began the publication in early 1984 in response to the growing worldwide interest in paddling in Alaska. In its first year it had a newsletter appearance. For 1985 a slick cover was added and distribution was expanded to selected outdoor shops and bookstores as well as subscriptions. Doug utilizes a very competent and dedicated staff of volunteers to illustrate and organise the magazine. All of the writers are kayakers or other persons interested in the coastal environment. Production costs are met by subscriptions and advertising revenues.

The editorial approach of Blue Water Paddler is to help sea canoeists know more about the total environment, as well as actual paddling. Articles have covered such topics as camping in the rainforests of coastal Alaska, sea mammals, pelagic as well as coastal birds, government management of coastal regions, Alaska State Marine Parks, and coastal archeology. Paddling articles have described trips to Southeast Alaska, Glacier Bay, Yakutat-Icy Bay, Prince William Sound, Kodiak and the Aleutian Islands.

Regular features in Blue Water Paddler include 'Making Your Own', 'Eating From The Beach', 'Driftwood', 'Speak Out', 'Regional Reports', and a calendar and classified ads. 'Making Your Own' has covered pogies, beach-side sauna, trip plans and logistics, and recipes for camp cooking. 'Eating From The Beach' features foraging for edibles common on many outings. 'Driftwood' and 'Speak Out' are for short writings; one for facts, the second for opinions. 'Regional Reports' provide up-to-date local information. The calendar and classified ads are a place to learn about upcoming events and outings or to sell a used boat or paddle.

Blue Water Paddler has subscribers across Alaska and around the world. Four issues per year are available for 8 dollars in the U.S.A., 10 (U.S.) in Canada and 12 dollars (U.S.) elsewhere. These prices are based on the costs of international postage.

If you are looking for information on Alaska or just want to read more about paddling and the coastal environment - then give BLUE WATER PADDLER a try.

From Peter J. Carter, Lockleys, South Australia.

AROUND PORT LINCOLN, JANUARY, 1985

In early 1802 Matthew Flinders in the 'Investigator' discovered and explored Port Lincoln and its surroundings. Sadly, he lost the ship's Master, John Thistle, and seven others of the crew who had gone to seek fresh water. Thistle Island and the others nearby are their memorials. To the north, Flinders named islands of the Sir Joseph Banks Group after places in his native Lincolnshire.

In January 1985 several of us set out to paddle some of those islands. From Taylor's Landing, Grant Cawthorne, Graham Fowler, David Price (aged 16), Phil Read and I set out in calm condition towards Thistle Island. Before long we were sailing in light conditions past the seals on Grindal Island. Along the eastern side of Thistle Island however we were fighting the gusting downdraughts, and Phil was blown over at one stage. There are supposed to be some caves in the middle of the island, but either we were lost or the cartographers had got it wrong.

Next day we planned to paddle around the southern end along the western side. We managed it, but with two cases of seasickness, one towed for a short period, and some other fun and games in 20 knot conditions. We didn't see much of the cliffs and caves while becoming the first group to circumnavigate the island by kayak. Another visit, in calm conditions, is warranted. The next two days were fairly easy runs back towards Port Lincoln, sailing most of the way.

With the addition of Jim Kellie and Alan Banks, we then launched from Tumby Bay for Reevesby Island, a compass crossing with headwind. Second day out saw us heading via Blyth and Roxby Islands for Spilsby. Tourists go to Spilsby Island for the fishing. We could see the fish, but not catch them. We did manage to catch two of the rabbits with which the island is infested, but they weren't particularly good to eat.

Day three was all sail to Langton Island, where the seals were delighted to see us (we presume, because their performance was magnificent), and then to the north west point of Reevesby. Next day the hoped for breeze failed, and we had to paddle all the way back to Tumby.

Progress in the six and a half years since I first visited the Sir Joseph Banks Group are interesting. Then, it was all carefully researched and planned; this visit was almost routine. Then bulkheads and hatches were the exception, now they are the rule, with electric pumps, rudders and sails rapidly becoming standard equipment. But those changes haven't changed the sense of adventure; they have made it possible to concentrate on the real joys of sea canoeing.

All in all an interesting and enjoyable few days; good scenery, good company and good canoeing. I think Flinders would have approved.

SEE ADJOINING MAP

From Humphrey Murphy, Cappanalea Outdoor Education Centre, Oulagh West, Caragh Lake, Co. Kerry, Ireland.

Dear John,

I am writing to you with the Atlantic ringing in my ears. I am at the moment in an outdoor centre in Kerry. The Atlantic is on our doorstep, so naturally the centre is interested in developing the area in regards to sea canoeing. It is with this in mind that we are holding an Intermediate Sea Touring course in June (1st & 2nd & 3rd) and an advanced course in August. The latter will be based around the Blasket Islands and it is hoped to visit the most westerly point in Europe, the "Foge Rocks".

Any of your readers can contact me at the above address for further information.

From Danny Summers, 14 Neva Rd., Bitterne Pk., Southampton. SO2 4FJ

Dear John,

... I would like to paddle the Western Isle this summer but local attempts to get some thing organised have failed. Would be glad to hear from members

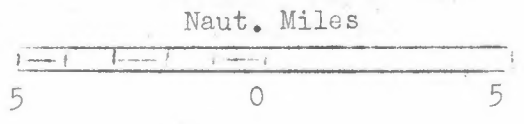
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EXPEDITIONS, JANUARY 1985



x x Dangerous reef Sharks



35°S

From Nigel Dennis, Anglesey School of Sea Canoeing, Trearddur Bay, Gwynedd.

Dear John,

Please find enclosed a letter from the Royal Society Protection Birds Warden at South Stack. He would like the letter publishing in the canoe mags and any other publications which we organise.

The only comment I have to make is that canoeists cannot obviously stay 100 metres offshore when passing between South Stack Island and the main cliffs. Perhaps we should just mention that we would expect all canoeists to pass between the Island and mainland as quickly and as quietly as possible.

With the cooperation of the B.C.U. I am sure that we can keep canoeing in this area and satisfy the R.S.P.B. as well.

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CANOEING AT SOUTH STACK, HOLYHEAD, ANGLESEY.

The South Stack bird reserve is leased to the R.S.P.B. by the Isle of Anglesey Borough Council and is in two separate parts. Two miles to the west of Holyhead, it includes the highest part of Anglesey (Holyhead Mountain, 260 metres above sea level), the magnificent westward-facing seacliffs of Gogarth Bay and South Stack area, and the low-lying headland of Penrhosfeilw Common, which is of special botanical interest.

The coastal cliff scenery is some of the finest in Wales, with precipitous rock faces up to 120 metres in height and the sea has eaten into the cliffs to form deep chasms, sea caves and offshore stacks.

The seacliffs from Ellin's Tower to North Stack are the most important part of the reserve for birds. Nine species of seabird breed here and the colonies of Guillemots, Razorbills and Puffins are of particular significance. Approximately 2,000 pairs of Guillemots, 600 pairs of Razorbills and 150 pairs of Puffins nest here annually, making this one of the largest auk colonies in Wales.

The towering precipices between Ellin's Tower and North Stack are very popular climbing grounds and voluntary bans have been agreed with the British Mountaineering Council and the Nature Conservancy Council to protect nesting auks from disturbance by rock climbers; the ban covers the period from 1st February to the third week of July, and the area from the lighthouse to Ellin's Tower.

Sea canoeing in the area has seen a great surge in popularity in recent years and although most organised groups have behaved very responsibly, several incidents of disturbance to the nesting auks have occurred, culminating in a massive loss of eggs and young in 1983.

The interests of the nesting seabirds and the activities of visiting canoeists can be reconciled by canoes staying at least 100 metres offshore from the breeding ledges between the lighthouse and Ellin's Tower for the period 1st February to the third week of July. I would be very grateful for the co-operation and help of all canoeists in keeping the seabird colonies free from disturbance in this way.

Additional information on canoeing arrangements may be obtained from Nigel Dennis. Anglesey School of Sea Canoeing, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey.

SNOWDONIA VIEW IS SAVED from the 'Times' 24.4.85

About 300 acres on the mainland side of the Menai Strait, including one-and-a-half miles of coastline have been acquired by the National Trust, it was announced yesterday.

The acquisition safeguards one of the most spectacular views in Britain; that of Snowdonia from Plas Newydd, the former home of the Anglesey family, which is owned by the Trust, although the present marquess lives there.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the launching of Enterprise Neptune, the campaign to safeguard the most important stretches of Britain's remaining unspoilt coastline for the nation. The Trust is about half way to its target of 900 miles including Northumbria, Yorkshire, East Anglia and S. coast.

From Derek Hutchinson, South Shields, Tyne & Wear.

Dear John,

I've enclosed the draft of a short letter and a newspaper article that came for me through the post. I tend to get all sorts of weird and wonderful letters from paddlers telling me of their exploits - however, this must surely be a first.

--better him than me!

oo00oo

oo00oo

Dear Derek,

I finally got my 'Ice Floe' and here it is in the paper! I loaned it to this chap while he is waiting delivery of his Ice Floe from England.

This lad actually landed on the whales back and then was hurled up and out of the water - was preparing for a landing in the water all prepared to brace, rattle and roll, but instead his paddle planted on the whale's back, broke and can you imagine being out of your boat on the back of a thirty foot gray whale, who appears to be out-of-sorts???

NEWSPAPER CUTTING

The 'Monterey Peninsula Herald' tells the story of the encounter.

Bill Almand had spent Sunday morning paddling in a borrowed kayak off Point Pinos to observe migrating gray whales. He was returning to the Monterey Marina shortly after noon when a whale, presumably one of the migrating grays, rammed the lightweight craft from behind.

"The whales were running (migrating) and I was right in their track. I was heading back to the wharf and I got hit by him", Almand said. "It hit me like a freight train".

The incident occurred about a mile off shore from Point Pinos while Almand was paddling a 16 foot Ice Floe ocean kayak that he had borrowed from a friend.

"I managed to stay upright", in the fibreglass kayak, Almand said, until the whale struck again, this time lifting the 56 pound boat and the 170 lb Almand on the animal's back and tossing them into the air.

"I remember getting hit from behind," Almand said. "The next thing I know, blam! it knocked the hell out of me."

The second collision came, Almand said, as "I was just thinking of getting my butt out of there".

The impact of the second collision flipped the kayak, cracking the hull in several places and snapping Almand's paddle. Almand himself was shaken but unhurt.

Fearful of yet another battering, Almand said he swam from the boat and fired a flare that attracted the attention of a Santa Cruz couple in a small motor boat.

KEEP CIRCLING

"They pulled me out of the water while the whale kept circling the kayak and smashing his tail in the water," Almand said.

Almand could not identify the type of whale that rammed the kayak, but the most prevalent whale now in California coastal waters is the California Gray Whale, which is in the midst of its annual migration from summer feeding grounds in Alaskan waters to the winter breeding ground in Baja, California.

The adult gray whale can grow to 40 ft long and weigh 40 tons. "He was playing with me for some reason," Almand said. "I don't know why he picked on me."

Peninsula naturalist, Judson Vandervere, said he could not recall a similar incident in which a whale had battered a small boat in the Monterey Bay, although there have been reported attacks on whale watching excursion boats in Mexican lagoons when a tour boat came between a mother whale and her calf. One woman was killed when she was struck by the flukes of a mother whale when the woman's boat came between the mother whale and her calf.

Almand said he could not see any evidence of a calf during Sunday's incident. It could have been the actions of a playful young whale.

From Derek Hutchinson, South Shields, Tyne & Wear.

Dear John,

WASH CROSSING 5th MAY 1985

May I use the newsletter to thank and congratulate Trevor Riches for his courage in dreaming up and organising a kayaking event as ambitious as the crossing of the Wash which occurred on Sunday 5th May.

For those who did not have their experience broadened by this get-together, as I did, perhaps a brief resume would not be out of place.

The event was a charity affair in aid of the Zip Club, (Zip marks the spot on the chests of those who have undergone open heart surgery) and the 40 or so paddlers met on the beach at Hunstanton at 0830 hrs. This rather anti-social time was to ensure that all the sand banks would be covered by water. The 15 mile crossing was a physical and social success. The sky was overcast and the sea calm. We had been split up into groups of six and our humorous conversation was punctuated regularly by the wail of the South Well buoy. It took us only three hours to land in glassy conditions on the beach at Skegness and once there we had plenty of time to combine lunch with a walk round the local flesh-pots and icecream-parlours.

Things changed on the return journey. Now, I would like to say that the 15 miles back presented me with no problems, but that would be naughty! Of the three different weather forecasts we received prior to take off, one of them had to be right and the correct one was the one which gave us headwinds of approx. 20 knots.

Conversation deteriorated to zero. My Ice Flow reared and plunged and my hair got wet!! For at least an hour, I felt as if I was going backwards rather than forwards and my only consolation was the knowledge that, nearby, Dave Evans was also having water shot up his nose and that he, too, must be standing still.

Three hours after launching and still about three miles from the beach at Hunstanton, the sky darkened and the wind blew a little harder. A squall looked imminent and I confess I was apprehensive about the increase in the wind that would result. Luckily the blast never came and I landed on the beach at the base of the promenade trying to appear nonchalant - when I really felt like kissing the sand.

Various other groups were strung out behind for three or four miles and it must be to everyone's credit that outside assistance was not required, although I heard afterwards that Trevor Riches towed someone for the last five miles.

On the other hand, a number of windsurfers had to be assisted by the rescue services. It was good to hear that the Coastguards congratulated Trevor on the responsible way in which the kayakers had conducted themselves during the crossing and that of all the various water sports, kayaking was considered the safest by the rescue services.

Now that my nerves and aching muscles are back to normal again, might this be a good time to suggest that the Wash Crossing becomes an annual event?

Cheers,

Ed's note: I have just received a full

account of this event from Trevor

Derek Hutchinson.

Riches. It will appear in the next issue of this newsletter.

A.S.K.C. SHOP

ALL PRICES INCLUDE POST & PACKAGE.

Ties @ £2.50 each

Stickers @ 30 pence each

Letter-headed paper @ 50 pence per 10 sheets

4th National Sea Canoeing Symposium Report @ 75 pence each

5th International Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ £2.50 each

T shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £3.50 each (in yellow or black)

Sweat shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £6.50 each (in yellow or black)

Information Sheets on Tide & Buoyage @ 75 pence each

Expedition Report on Circumnavigation Nunivak Island, Alaska @ 75 pence each

NOTICE OF AN A.S.K.C. WEEKEND

This event may be the first of many. We have organised symposiums and Sea Touring Committee meets in the past, but this will be the first A.S.K.C. event as such. Does this mean no more symposiums on sea kayaking? NO, it does not. In the Spring of '86 the A.S.K.C. and the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee will stage the 6th. International Sea Kayaking Symposium. Details of this in due course.

Meanwhile we will stage an A.S.K.C. weekend.

WHERE? Anglesey School of Sea Canoeing, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey, North Wales.

WHEN? From Friday evening of the 25th October through to Sunday afternoon of 27 October.

WHY? To bring together a few members of the A.S.K.C. to enjoy a sea kayaking meet at the ideal venue mentioned above.

HOW MUCH? £15.50 per head which includes accommodation and grub as well as fees for our guest speaker/s.
There are some flats available - tell me if you are interested.

AND WHAT SHALL WE BE DOING? Those of you who know the area will already be aware of the fantastic potential for sea kayakers around Anglesey. We shall arrange a few trips and a few guest speakers to entertain us. Given the venue, the assembled company and some decent weather (out of even my control!!) and some good food, we should enjoy a pleasant weekend.

HOW DO I APPLY? Simply complete the application form below and send it to me with £5.00 deposit.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATION. 1st October, 1985

*If you have any good ideas for this weekend - please let me know

*Send a stamped addressed envelope for a list of those attending should you care to make shared travel arrangements.

*****APPLICATION FORM FOR A.S.K.C. WEEKEND, 1985*****

Send to John J. Ramwell. 4, Wavell Garth, Sandal, Wakefield, W. Yorkshire, WF2 6JP before 1st October, 1985 - together with £5.00 deposit. The balance being payable over the weekend itself.

NAME (please print).....

ADDRESS.....

.....;

.....

Being a competent and safe sea kayaker I wish to join the A.S.K.C. weekend.

I do not hold the organiser responsible for my safety or that of my equipment.

Dated

Signed
