

# NEWSLETTER

of the

# ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB



## Advanced Sea Kayak Club

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



John J Ramwell  
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Isle of Wight  
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ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER NO.59

JANUARY 1987

EDITORIAL

John J. Ramwell  
7 Miller Close  
NEWPORT  
Isle of Wight  
PO30 5PS

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL. HERE'S HOPING YOU HAVE A FULFILLING ONE AND ACHIEVE YOUR ASPIRATIONS, WHATEVER THEY MAY BE. As for me, I'm looking forward to the SECOND ALASKAN AEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM and to THIRD GREAT LAKES KAYAK TOURING SYMPOSIUM at Michigan. The first is scheduled for May 12th, 13th and 14th and the second June 19th, 20th and 21st.

1. CLUB RENEWALS - The vast majority of you have already renewed and for this I thank you. I have enclosed a renewal form for those of you needing this reminder. Please ignore (or pass to a friend) the renewal form if you have already subscribed for 1987.

2. THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM 1987, scheduled for 6th, 7th and 8th NOVEMBER to be held at Lakeside should now feature in your 1987 diary. Details and Application Form are with this Newsletter.

3. I am frequently being asked for secondhand sea kayaks. Should you have any for sale then please let me publish details.

4. Having found a new supplier of ASKC sweaters, T-shirts, etc., I am fulfilling outstanding orders. If you wish any item from the ASKC shop now is your chance.

5. The 1987 CANOE EXHIBITION is scheduled for 21st and 22nd February - see you at the ASKC stand, in its usual place.

APPLICATION FORM FOR  
THE 1987 INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM

\*SEND TO: CHAIRMAN OF THE B.C.U. S.T.C.  
7 MILLER CLOSE,  
NEWPORT,  
ISLE OF WIGHT, PO30 5PS

\*BEFORE SEPTEMBER 25TH 1987

\*WITH A DEPOSIT OF £15.00

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED £ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

AS DEPOSIT FOR \_\_\_\_\_  
PLACES FOR THE 1987 SEA  
KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ POST CODE \_\_\_\_\_

IF YOU ARE PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE OR SHOULD YOU PARTICULARLY WISH ANY SPECIFIC SUBJECT(S) TO BE COVERED THEN PLEASE COMMENT

## THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM 1987

Organised by the Sea Touring Committee of  
the British Canoe Union

### INTRODUCTION

This event is open to all with an interest in sea kayaking. It represents an opportunity to meet with others of like interest in comfortable surroundings to gain from formal lectures/discussions and to swap ideas. The central theme will be expeditions by sea kayak with emphasis on general preparation and equipment.

### DATE

From Friday evening of 6th November 1987 through to Sunday tea-time of 8th November 1987.

### VENUE

YMCA National Centre, Lakeside, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 8BD

### COST

£38. This includes full board accommodation and lecture costs.

### PROGRAMME

A wide range of sea kayaking related subjects will be covered by specialists in their chosen interests.

Friday evening will be devoted to reception and registration. There may be some form of entertainment. Saturday and Sunday will be taken up with organised presentations and discussion groups. A more precise programme showing details of speakers, subjects and timing will be sent to all applicants.

The A.G.M. of the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee will be convened on the Saturday evening.

### APPLICATIONS

Places are limited and we are hopeful of reaching maximum capacity, so do please apply early. CLOSING DATE for applications must be September 25th 1987. A £15.00 deposit with name and address should be sent to:-

The Chairman S.T.C., 7 Miller Close, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO305PS

From: Roy Spicer, Vancouver, British Columbia

I am glad to hear that Alan Byde is going ahead with the pod as it is a very worthwhile and safe idea whose time has come. I think this is the way to go. The pod being supported on the bottom and around cockpit rim so as to relieve as much strain on seals in heavy manoeuvres.

There is a test report in the Sea Kayaker Magazine (Winter '86) on the three plastic kayaks for ocean paddling that are sold in North America.

The most interesting part of the text is that as you paddle harder the PUFFIN goes faster. The others start to bog down after four knots.

I made a speedometer for my kayak a few years ago, that was very big, highly accurate and tried out all kayaks and paddles I could get. The results were, to say the least, surprising. I finally got John Dowd to rent the test tank at UBC Research after he got a marine engineer, John Dawson, interested. John Dawson, Matt Booze and I discussed the effort required to paddle a kayak.

The measurement needs to be finer and I am sure John will come up with something different. I think of it as how much work I have done after a 20-mile paddle.

The testing I did of the Puffin was because Joe knew I would look at it from a novice standpoint and provide feed-back in that area which was incorporated into the design.

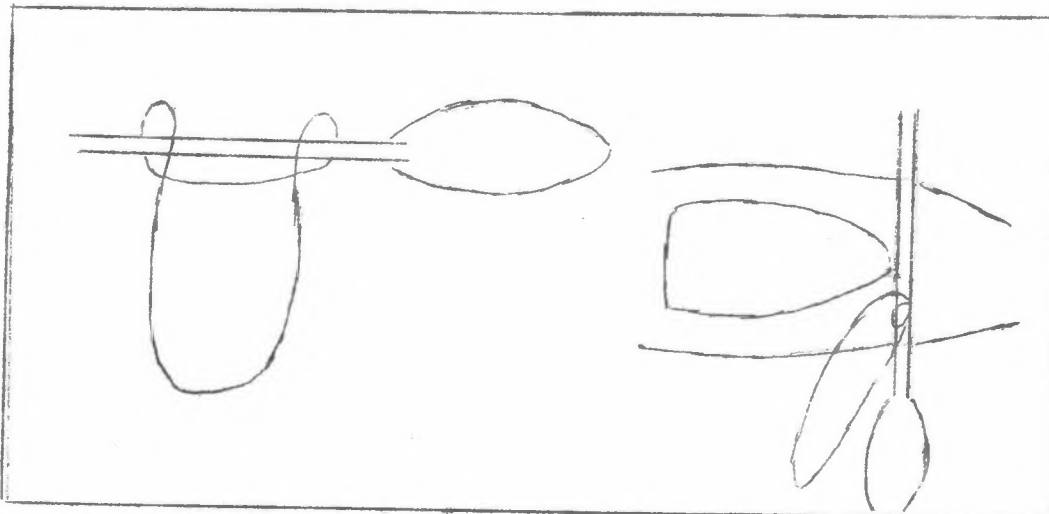
As for 1987.. I hope to do the Scott Islands off the northwest tip of Vancouver Island which can be one week up depending on the weather. Overfalls and rips are bad in spate and fishing boats are lost there once in a while.

#### H<sub>1</sub> Rescues with heavy kayaks

Using the last rescues in all three of Derek's books adding loop made out of one inch flat webbing. Length of loop to be your height plus 1/12 overlapped one to two inches and sewn together.

Loop around paddle as in a barrel sling and keep very close to boat. Paddler steps in sling and raises himself up using one hand on back of cockpit rim and other on front of cockpit rim but not on paddle shaft outboard of boat (broken shaft). This is the rescue that can get a totally exhausted person out of the water when no other will.

If too long will still work but if too short then will not work, as knee will bind under paddle shaft.



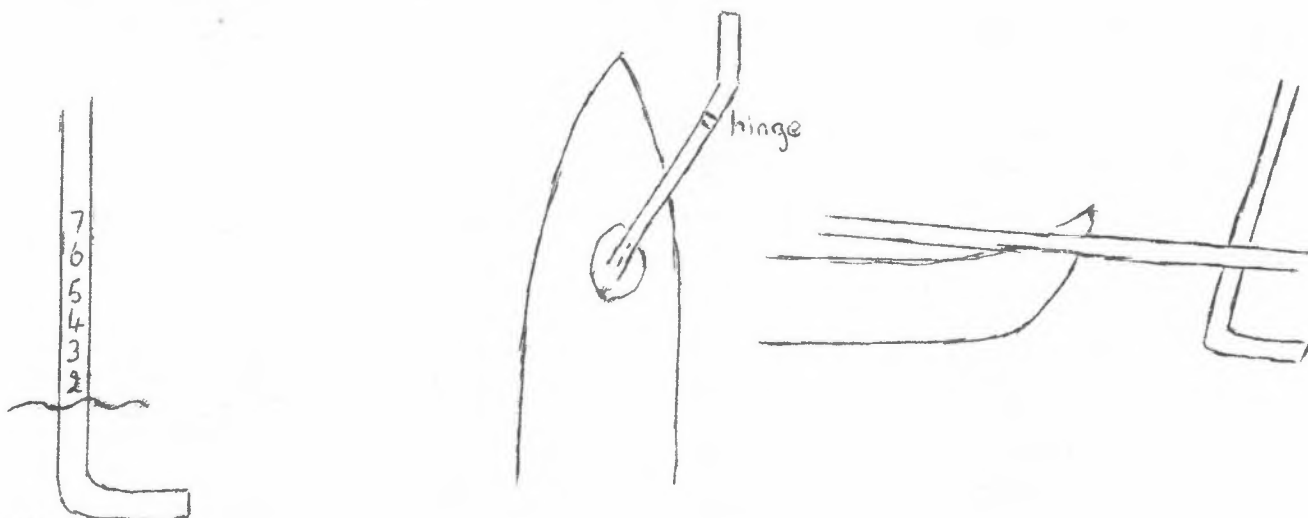
Using sling to do an H1 rescue of a heavy kayak, rescuers should face each other and the person with sling should face opposite direction to normal. Both persons will have kayak on same side as opposed to ordinary rescues.

If boat to be rescued is on the right side the sling will go across back, under left arm pit and across chest to boat and over right shoulder to your back forming a loop. The loop goes under kayak and is lifted using much stronger muscles than tired arms and slipped across paddles in usual manner.

#### The Speedometer

This speedo may possibly be purchased for £5 from chandlers who cater for small sail boats. It is a  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch diameter plastic tube  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet long and measures up to seven knots.

It is very accurate and reliable. It is attached to either a Henderson 7 inch hatch lid or a UCP 7 inch hatch lid by two bolts and a length of 3 inch by 3 feet playwood with a hinge in it so it can be folded back when not wanted. I have bolts in my hatch already for other purposes so use the ones and the changeover for testing is very quick.



It is now easy to tell how fast you really paddle and with which paddle you really go faster with. This apparatus should only be used locally, not on any expedition.

#### \*\*\*\*\* INFORMATION PLEASE - A CANOE WITH A PAST.

An all-orange, three hatch Nordcapp H.M., with a forward deck pump. Number 1916 and built for "Geoff".  
Came to me with lots of black tape successfully protecting her vulnerable bits; and a white disc with No 28" on foredeck.  
Reputed to be c.3 years old and to have had two previous owners.

I would very much like to find out where she has been, with whom and whether she is already named. I would be very grateful for information and will certainly reply.

I hope her official launch will be in mid March, so need to know about the name by then.

Fair winds and prosperous voyages in 1987.

Chris Carter,  
Pentycuar,  
Off High Street,  
Clun,  
Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 8JB

From: D. R. Winning, 22 Brisbane Glen Road, Largs, Ayrshire, KA30 8QX

Dear John,

I was interested in John Chamberlin's comments on the different navigational methods used in the two crossings of the Irish Sea being discussed. The one based on keeping on a straight line "over the ground" and the other at 90° to the flow.

While personally not particularly attracted to long sea crossings I presume that, all other things being equal, the safest approach is to chose a course which will offer the quickest passage time. This is certainly not achieved by the "straight line over the ground" method and while 90° to the flow will certainly cross the flow fastest it is, in many cases, unlikely to give the desired landfall.

I was taught that the method which gave the fastest passage was to average out the stream strengths and directions for the projected passage time and allow an overall course correction based on the average obtained. Allowances for leeway would have to be made to the "course to steer" depending on the conditions met during the passage and only experience will dictate how much to allow.

As I have indicated long crossings are not my scene, so I would be pleased to hear the comments of those whose scene it is.

Turning to John Brand's letter, I sincerely wish his proposed kayak research group every success. I have great sympathy for his views and only wish that I could devote enough time to be meaningfully involved.

Having read George Dysons book "Baidarka" I have to agree that there seems to be good reasons for believing that some of the Aleut kayaks were very fast, even by todays racing canoe standards. It is a great pity that it appears from the book that no examples of such craft exist as the "Baidarkas" extant in the museums of the world are of the variety developed at a later period when the Russian sea otter hunting requirement had a retrograde influence on the designs resulting in larger, heavier and slower vessels. It is to be hoped that further research comes up with details of the older superior types.

I feel that John is unreasonably critical of the Greenland kayak. Having said that, I agree that most canoeists in the U.K. quite wrongly equate Greenland kayaks as "Eskimo kayaks" to the exclusion of the many other types of Eskimo craft.

Refererence to M. C. Petersens "Skinboats of Greenland" reveals quite a variety within the Greenland type, e.g., from the very lightly built portable kayak or QAJAQ MAQITTAGAG which was varried on a sledge or the shoulders and used to cross cracks in the ice or recovering seals, to the hunting kayak some of which were strongly built and used on the open sea in bad weather with a different style of paddle. Finally, I would refer to the storm kayak "KUJAAGINNALIK" of which there are no examples left; it is said to have been very strong, very narrow and very low in the water and used only by the most expert hunters in storm conditions. It was also said to have no bottom which I understand to mean that it had no bottom stringers, i e., it was of a deep V section This does not tie in with Greenland kayaks being ... "a beauty which shatters at our touch"

Perhaps if the kayak research group gets under way we might learn more about the Greenland "Storm" kayak as well as the Aleut "Baidarka".

Yours sincerely,

Duncan R. Winning

THE ASKC WEEK, BALLACHULISH, SCOTLAND - AUGUST 1986  
WRITTEN BY PETER GARRARD

2nd to 8th August 1986, Coalasmoan Campsite,  
Kinlochleven, Scotland

Saturday was arrival day for most participants, and a chance to meet old friends and make new friends. A small group did paddle from the campsite to Kinlochleven and played about in the small rapids of the River Leven. Saturday was also a time to find out some of the requirements of groups with regard to coaching for the week; this results in five for sea proficiency, two one-star awards amongst the juniors and an assessment for senior instructor, also the whereabouts of a good pub for the social and theory side of the week.

Sunday was used for a casual shakedown cruise, all the group, that is the paddlers, being involved. We paddled from the campsite down Loch Leven to Ballachulish Bridge. It was a rather overcast day though conditions were mild. We watched seals and landed on Eilean Munda Island; this Island is just a burial ground, with the remains of what was some type of chapel on it and there were some interesting epitaphs. It was a very casual day with plenty of time to talk and ponder; we paddled back to the campsite.

Monday was used really as a planning day for the expedition, a time to check equipment and boats and to see what we had forgotten. Also some practical coaching was done with regard to the sea proficiency requirements. It was proposed mutually that there be a three day expedition, living out of the boats for two nights and returning Thursday evening for a barbecue. Final details of the planning was done over a few beers in the evenings. There was to be two groups, one group the one I was with paddling from the campsite down Loch Leven into Loch Linnhe as far as Shuna Island, there to meet up with the second group who were to begin their travels at a point on Loch Etive to take in the Falls of Lora, paddle round Rubha Fion and take in Port Appin and meet us at about 5 p.m. Tuesday on Shuna Island, that was the plan for the first day.

Tuesday brought excellent weather and sea conditions for the day's paddle; an early start was required by the group I was with for favourable tide conditions, so 8 a.m. found us on our way down Loch Leven. We paddled in clear sunny conditions with little or no wind giving us an uneventful trip, where all were able to enjoy excellent company and discussions on a wide range of topics, also some unsuccessful fishing from the kayaks. On our arrival at Shuna Island we could not find anybody to ask for permission to camp, so an alternative site was found on the mainland near to Castle Stalker. The site was not ideal but we had permission to use it for two nights if we wanted. We did successfully meet up with the other group and all made camp. As we were on the mainland the call of the brown god got to some of the group and directions were given by John as to how to get to the hotel at Port Appin. A wrong turn was taken which meant a seven mile walk and just on time, before time was called and last orders, instead of a two mile walk. There was some complaints of blisters as wet suit boots are not very good for walking in and a 14 mile round trip is a bit much for one drink; still all was taken in good humour.

Wednesday - The weather forecast was not very favourable for us there being gales coming for the south-west promising Force 6-7 winds. The plan had been for the whole group to circumnavigate Lismore, but due to promised weather conditions two groups again were formed, the more adventurous and stronger circumnavigating Lismore and the second group, the group I was with, staying in the shelter of the east side of Lismore for the day, both groups returning to the present campsite.

We paddled from our campsite to Lismore and down the east coast of the Island, going out to Eilean Dubh round the Island and landed for dinner at

Achnacroish on Lismore. The promised wind conditions did not really materialise and we had shelter from the Island so although the weather was overcast we had a pleasant morning's paddle with nothing too testing. Dinner was taken in the ferry shelter at Achnacroish, there having the luxury of toilets and running water. After dinner we decided to cross to Port Appin and try to catch the tea house before they closed at 3.30 p.m. The wind had risen somewhat and the crossing was choppy bringing some more interest to the paddling. We arrived at Port Appin at 3.15 p.m. and were refused service in the tea house, to which we promptly protested but to no avail. So we descended onto the Port Appin hotel, where they kindly served us tea and scones in their foyer, a touch of civilization, this much to the surprise I think of the residents, as we were in our dripping canoeing gear caked in salt. After this very pleasant interlude we relaunched and paddled back to our campsite; a very pleasant day. Our other group returned from their circumnavigation of Lismore reporting an excellent day's paddling with some excitement. Needless to say the correct hostelry was found much easier for those in need that night.

Thursday - The forecast for our last day and return trip to the campsite was not favourable, wind promised Force 6-7 south-westerly coming round to north-westerly. We had decided to leave the campsite at about 10 a.m. even though general tidal flow was against us, this because it was not really to be in our favour until around 3 p.m. and we had a long way to go. Again we had two groups, the stronger group pushing on ahead which also meant of course that if anybody wanted to drop out they could join the slower, more leisurely, band. It was a very hard paddle for all, the wind swung north-westerly, more or less in our faces, and as the day wore on the wind strengthened providing some very interesting wave conditions in places and a very hard slog. We were all very glad to see Ballachulish Bridge where now the tidal flow was in our favour; we passed under the bridge and pushed on up Loch Leven with an awkward, but what was now a quartering wind which made paddling still hard work and very bad for one or two paddlers who were by now tiring. But with some encouragement we all succeeded in arriving back at the campsite, tired, but very happy.

While we had been away Jenny Ramwell and some very staunch helpers had been preparing for the traditional barbecue, and after a hot shower, or cold, depending on how quick you were into the shower block, we had a really tremendous spread of food and wine, and this was topped off by Jenny's special pancakes. After we had wine and dined we had a sing song around the fire and Sandy, one of our group, played the bagpipes for us; others also tried to play but with limited success. It was a really enjoyable evening which really rounded off the three day expedition well.

Friday - The last day of the holiday was a mixed day, some rested at the campsite, a small group and John went off to paddle the Falls of Lora. Some final theory was done for the proficiency and senior instructor award and two of the youngsters took one star awards. Friday evening was a time for some goodbyes, I for one had to leave Friday night. This is always a bad time as all good things I suppose must come to an end and it had been a really tremendous week, good paddling, good company and that marvellous Scottish scenery; what more could one want.

I should like to thank John and Jenny for again making this all possible.

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P & H Iceflow sea kayak. Orange deck/white hull. Full exp. kit includes bulkheads and hatches, pump, recessed fittings, deck lines and elastics, spare paddles and neoprene spray cover. Good condition and value at £235.  
Telephone: DRAYcott (03317) 3119.



The Inaugural Paddle of the  
Salz Wasser Union at Whitsuntide, 1986

Twenty-five members of the newly-formed Salz Wasser Union of Germany met at Mesmersiel on the North Sea and set off at 4 p.m. under the leadership of Wolfgang Half to paddle 8 km to the Friesien island of Baltrum. Although high water should have been at Baltrum at 5.57 p.m., the wind and water were not co-operating and as a result we all waded for a couple of kilometres to the track leading through mudflats to the campsite administered by the Nieder Saxon Athletic Union. Now I knew why everybody had large trolleys strapped to their decks. We struggled with loaded boats through thick mud and soft sand to the campsite where we much appreciated the excellent shower facilities.

George Hartwig, founder of the Salz Wasser Union, had paddled with three companions from Horumersiel on the mainland to the lighthouse of Rote Sand, a distance of about 30 kilometres, and thence to Baltrum.

The following day we had an hour's trolley walk from the campsite to Baltrum Harbour where we paddled under the leadership of Dieter Becker to the neighbouring island of Langeog. Seals came to inspect us, and Jens and Andreas climbed the mast of a wrecked fishing boat.

We landed at 1.30 p.m. on a wide sandy beach and had until 5 p.m. to explore Langeog. With the exception of Nordeney, powered vehicles are forbidden on the German Friesien islands and people enjoy sauntering along the roads and paths making way only for horse-drawn carts. There is a very small railway which runs from the town centre to the harbour, a distance of five kilometres. Each carriage is painted a different colour and the little train is a great tourist attraction.

When we re-assembled on the beach a westerly wind had got up and there were quite high waves. Care had to be taken when launching through the white waves. One member was having difficulties with his new Nordkapp and, after he had capsized three times, he wisely and unselfishly decided not to hold up the rest of the party. George Hartwig towed the Nordkapp back to Baltrum and our unfortunate swimmer found a most elegant solution on how to rejoin us. He hired a light aircraft and flew back, circling us as he speeded across!

Once again we had to contend with the long portage of sand and mud and some trolley collapsed under the strain.

The following day some people took advantage of the early tide to return to the mainland, while others enjoyed a lazy day in the sun on Baltrum, leaving on the evening.

At times I wondered whether this was a walking or a canoeing weekend. Certainly we did a lot of 'paddling'!

The Salz Wasser Union has made a good start. It already has over 100 members, publishes an informative and interesting magazine, and is whipping up great enthusiasm for sea paddling, a rather neglected facet of German canoeing.

I urge as many people as possible to join the Union. There is a full canoeing programme, the members speak excellent English and - the greatest incentive of all - George Hartwig has promised that when the membership reaches 1000 he will fill the compartments of his Nordkapp with rum and throw a party!

Ann-Marie Booth

From: Bill Taylor, 58 Higham Road, Wamscott, Rochester, Kent, ME3 8BB  
Tel : MEDway 727168 17th November 1986

Gillingham Canoe Club -  
Sea Kayaks round Britain and Ireland -  
April- October 1986

Dear John,

I am pleased to say that our expedition successfully completed the first circumnavigation of both mainland Britain and Ireland when we re-crossed our original course off Garrison Point, Sheerness, Kent, on the afternoon of Monday, 22nd September, just 154 days after setting out on 19th April and having logged just over 2,600 miles.

You kindly printed the full report of our crossing to Ireland on 14th June. After this we pushed very hard to make the best of the slack and thundery air-stream of mid-summer. We lost only four days in bad weather, took one rest day and cut all corners (including a crossing of Donegal Bay from Lachan to Teelin). Consequently we completed our traverse of the Irish coast to cross the North Channel from Rathlin to Machrihanish on the Mull of Kintyre on 15th July - 31 days for the 799 miles from St David's.

We made one more big effort to get from Machrihanish to Arisaig in three and a half days so that we could meet our friends from Gillingham Canoe Club, who had arranged to see us while we took a week off. With the objectivity of hindsight, I can now see our efforts had taken a considerable toll - not just physically but mentally, for we had been under sustained pressure because of the nature of the coast and the weather in which we had paddled it. Suffice to say I had lost a stone in weight which I didn't think I had to lose!

Beverley joined us to paddle the next 300 miles and we reverted to our more usual style of paddling, taking more time to look at points of interest and cooking on open fires. By the time Bev left us at Helmsdale on the east coast we had "recharged our batteries" for our 'downhill' push for home.

The blown-out tail of 'Hurricane Charlie' confined us to Dunbar for five days, but apart from this we made good time. To be fair, however, the east coast was both more interesting and more problematic than we had anticipated. We were also swamped by hospitality. For most of the time, however, we had onshore northerly winds which sustained the air of seriousness we would happily have done without.

Ironically, the best weather of the whole expedition was to be reserved for the last few days. We had pushed hard for over five months, fearing to be caught in the gales of the autumn equinox, only to finish as the most settled weather pattern of the entire summer started to establish itself. Sod's law had the last laugh!

We made our 'official' finish on Saturday, 27th September, to keep our sponsors, media and our friends happy. It turned out to be a beautiful, calm, sunny morning and we were given an overwhelming welcome at Gillingham Strand by a fleet of local paddlers, yachts in bunting, TVS, deputy mayor, etc., etc. Messrs Catchlove and Bourne even provided a generous champagne reception! Human nature being as it is, there had inevitably been some moments in the trip when it seemed no one appreciated how hard our task had been. The hundreds of well wishers who now turned out to see us in now put that idea back in the rubbish bin where it belonged and our months of effort seemed more worthwhile.

Should you print any of this letter, I should like to acknowledge the debt Mick, Richard and I owe to all those who encouraged us and gave their moral support, both before and during the expedition. In particular, we owe much to our friends in Gillingham Canoe Club. No expedition could have been better supported by their club mates and fellow paddlers.

On the attached sheet I have provided some interesting facts and figures for the fanatics. No doubt they will encourage some debate and pub discussion.

I have put together a slide show/lecture on the trip if you can give it a plug. Any taken to contact me by letter or phone. I am also completing a full report which I will be happy to duplicate and supply at a small fee to cover the reprographic costs. I have also started to put a book together.

Thanks go to our sponsors:- Wild Water Centre, Helby Hansen U.K. Ltd., Warm 'n Dry, Kent Water Sports, Wavesports, Cody Electorinics, Thanet Electronics, Pyranha (Hot Can), AK20 Chemie (U.K.) Ltd., Kodak, Gilletts (Faversham) Ltd., Snowdon Mouldings, Multiplex Medway Ltd., "The Yacht Cabin", Ocean Care Services Ltd.

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Total cost of expedition, including equipment but not loss of earnings - £9,000  
Length of trip - 2,610 miles  
Time - 154 days  
Average length of paddle - 28 miles  
Number of days paddled - 93  
Days lost to bad weather - 48  
Days taken off - 13  
Departed 19th April  
Reached furthest south (The Lizard) 19th May  
Crossed Bristol Channel (Watermouth-Gower) 2nd June  
Crossed St George's Channel (St David's - Rosslare) 14th June  
Reached furthest west (Gt Blasket, Co Kerry) 25th June  
Crossed North Channel (Ruthlin-Machrihanish) 15th July  
Reached furthest north (Dunnet Head, Pentland Firth) 13th August  
Reached furthest east (Lowestoft) 19th September  
Completed circumnavigation 22nd September  
Official finish 27th September

We suffered no significant injuries.

Richard had one cold and one 24-hour 'gut bug'.

Mick and I had no health problems at all.

I kept the C.G. fully informed of all our movements except for the west and north coast of Scotland. Irish Lights monitored our progress round Ireland.

Hope to see you soon (as arranged by Ian for 29th November).

Best wishes to Jenny and family.

Bill

From: Frank Goodman, Valley Canoe Products, Private Road 4, Colwick,  
Nottingham NG4 2JT, England. Tel. 0602 614995

### SEA KAYAKING NEWS

There seems to be some uninformed views about "What is the British Isles" and "What is Great Britain" floating about at the moment. The term "Great Britain" was first used when James VI of Scotland became James I of England, and therefore of Great Britain. Northern Ireland followed much later, as did additions like Rockall.

The first circumnavigation of Great Britain was as recent as 1980 when Paul Caffyn and Nigel Dennis made the trip, although there are at least two journeys that cut through the Caledonian Can, thus missing out the dangerous northern end of Scotland.

Since then, there has been a solo navigation or maybe two ..... does anyone know the details? Chris Duff, an American, made a solo navigation this year, starting from Holme Pierrepont, and going down the Trent first. He wanted something to do while he was waiting for the slalom course to be finished! Unfortunately, his sister was badly mauled by a Grizzly Bear just as he finished the trip, and he had to shoot back to the U.S. - a sorry end to a magnificent journey.

Bill Taylor, Mick Wibrew and Richard Elliott decided to sort things out by making a full journey around both Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This tremendous achievement was completed on 27th September, when the team returned to Gillingham Canoe Club after a 154 day marathon.

After being offered a variety of boats for the trip they eventually settled for that almost inevitable choice - Nordkapps.

The difference this time was that they used their five-year old boats, the only addition was that they fitted sea-trim rudders to them. After a gruelling 2,600 miles the boats were still in great condition, so Bill Taylor reports.

After the serious bit, 1986 seems to be the silly season for Alan Byde, who has apparently written epistles to a number of people, including the National Maritime Museum, the Guinness Book of Records, several magazines and sporting bodies, including Canoeing Magazine, now defunct these several years, suggesting that the designer of the Nordkapp stole the design from the Anas Acuta and also rejecting the idea that the Nordkapp set a new precedent for the use of deck pumps, movable deck fittings, deck-hatches and bulkheads that have now become standard for sea-kayak design throughout the world.

Frank Goodman is collecting evidence such as photographs of the original wooden strip plug, two original Nordkapps and an early Anas, plus over a dozen people who were privy to the original work done on the Nordkapp, together with a group of experts who can believe the evidence of their own eyes and paddling skills and know that there are closer copies to the Nordkapp produced by other manufacturers than ever the Anas is.

Obviously, this malicious gossip is an insult to Frank together with people like Colin Mortlock, Colin Litten, Sam Cook, etc., who were tireless workers in 1974, setting up the basic requirement for a new boat to do what the Anas Acuta couldn't.

Of course it isn't so important in this country to put an end to this sort of thing, as Alan is well-known in canoeing circles and people can make

From: Frank Goodman, Valley Canoe Products Ltd., Private Road 4, Colwick,  
Nottingham, NG4 2JT, England. Tel 0602 614995

#### NEW PUBLICATIONS

Canoeists will be interested in a new patent just published that offers a very interesting development of the cockpit liner. An idea that has been around for some time now.

The cockpit liner or pod was invented by David Green of Kirton Kayaks in Crediton, Devon, back in the late seventies and was first shown to the public at the Crystal Palace Canoe Exhibition in February 1978. This was a glassfibre insert rigidly fastened into a racing kayak to keep water out of the hull of the boat, restricting any ingress of water to the cockpit area only.

The new patent from Valley Canoe Products of Nottingham covers the idea of a removable cockpit liner with several unique features which make it the answer to every canoeists prayer. It incorporates a platform footrest that can be adjusted to the canoeist's feet by the paddler while sitting in the boat, and yet there is no mechanism of any sort to catch, stab or scratch his legs if he has to slide out of his craft in a hurry. It also incorporates hip-board adjustment.

The whole idea depends on the flexible property of polyethylene and will obviously allow one cockpit liner to be fitted easily to any number of hull designs. . . . at last there is a real chance that a paddler can select a design to suit the water he wants to paddle on, just by choosing from one of several waiting on the roof-rack of his car!

Development work has not started yet, so it will be some time before it will be available. One company has already negotiated with Valley Canoe Products for a licence to manufacture the design, and two others, in separate countries are talking seriously.

The patent extends to Germany, France, the U.S.A. and Australia. Extracts from the patent are reproduced below to give canoeists an idea of what the invention is about.

Valley is applying for an innovation grant to help with the development of this project - one that could possibly revolutionize the kayak of the future.

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#### ABSTRACT

PATENT APPLICATION NUMBER 8507140

#### Removable Cockpit Liners for Kayaks, Canoes and Other Craft

A removable cockpit liner for a canoe or kayak which forms a water-tight seal at the cockpit coaming, preventing ingress of water into the craft. The surface shape of the liner provides a recessed seat for the occupant together with adjustable hip supports.

The forward end of the liner provides a shock-absorbing platform footrest together with a flexible concertina-shaped section which can be adjusted and locked to the occupants required leg length by means of lines accessible through a small waterproof hatch located in the wall of the liner, behind the seat recess.

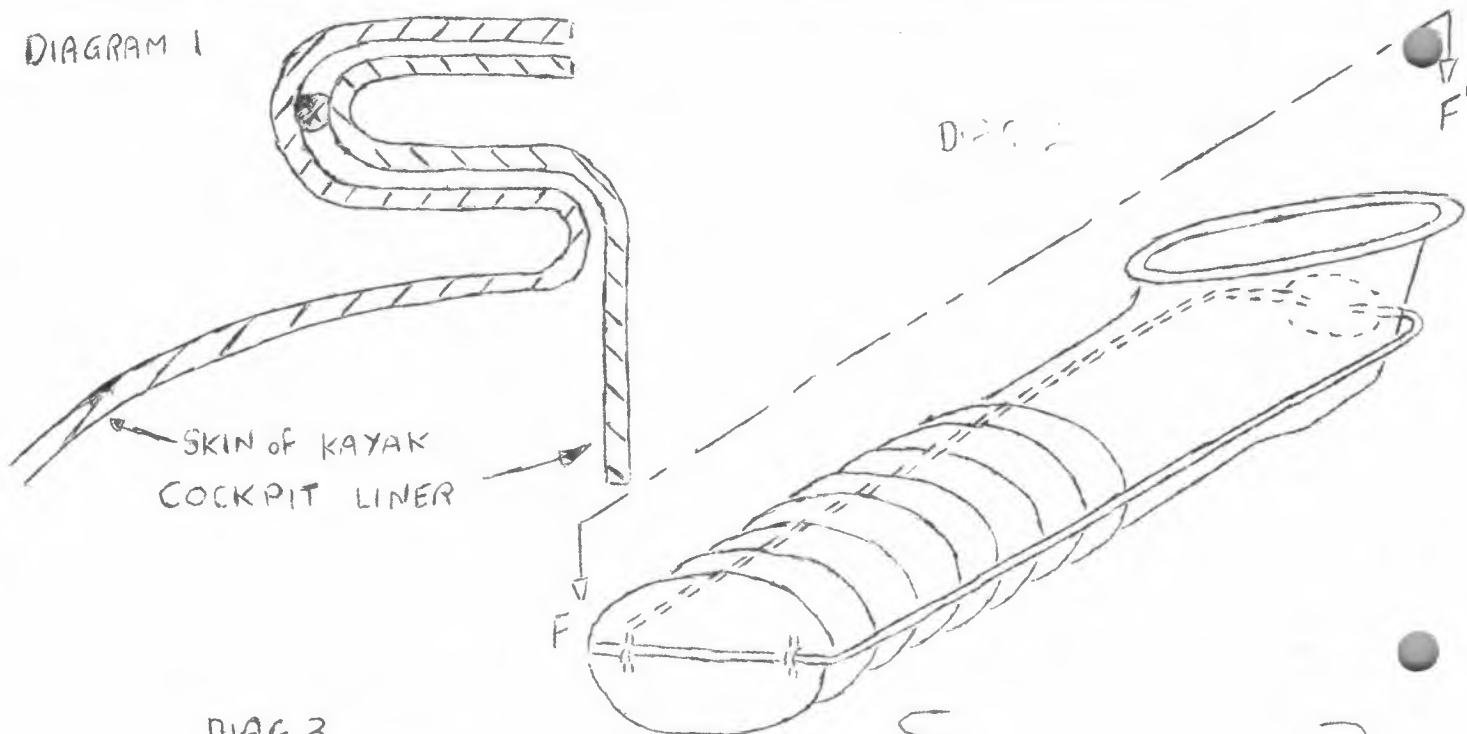
their own judgment about his outbursts. Unfortunately, in the U.S. Alan is not so well known and at least one editor of a sea kayak magazine has believed this tale and, without checking his facts, has decided that the Nordkapp should not be given credits that it deserves since the designer does not deserve credit for the design.

This story has been mouthed by Byde to many people in the States, and of course, Ken Fink, who imports Valley boats into the U.S. is not happy with what he is hearing.

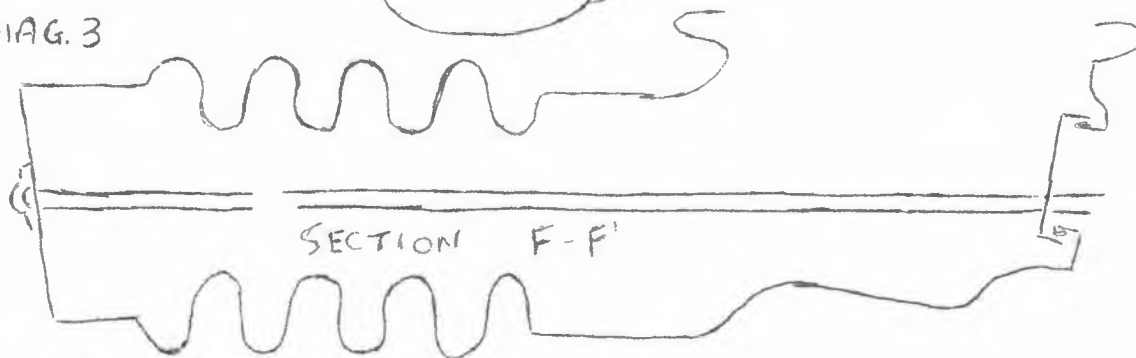
With sales of Nordkapps in the States bounding upwards by a massive 63% this year, it is clear that a sudden reversal of this figure could be a direct result of this nonsense.

Valley Canoe Products are monitoring the situation carefully after seeking legal advice and any evidence that readers can give them will be gratefully acknowledged. Making a living from canoe designing in the country is hard enough without money being snatched from the till by naughty stories.

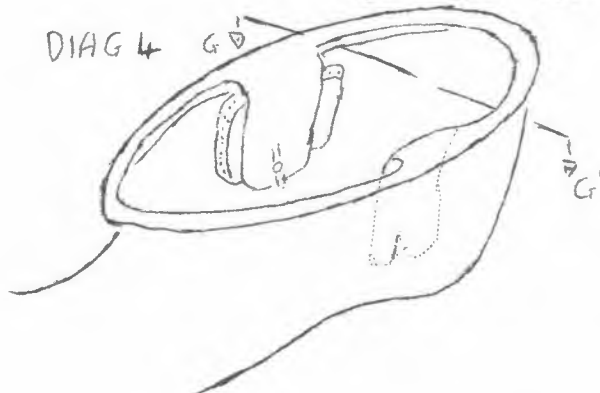
DIAGRAM 1



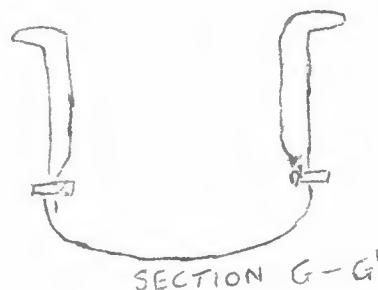
DIAG. 3



DIAG 4



DIAG 5



From: Graham Almack, Beaver Lodge, Sutton, nr Thirsk, North Yorkshire,  
YO7 2PR - 29 and 30 August 1986

Dear John

Solo Circumnavigation of Scotland

At the moment I find myself with a few days enforced rest due to the effects of the Bank Holiday "hurricane" which destroyed my tent. The expedition is (or perhaps "was"?) intended to be a solo circumnavigation of Britain, but the late start (July 12th) due to final exams at college, etc., was always going to make it extremely difficult to finish. Having said that, I will be setting off again from Amble, Northumberland, on Sunday, 31st August, and will keep going until the weather forces me to stop - if we have an Indian summer then anything is possible.

I thought that I may as well take this opportunity to send in the report of the Scotland stage of the expedition; it saves me having to do an enormous report when I finally finish.

On Saturday, 12th July, I slipped quietly into the waters of the Solway Firth at Silloth, Cumbria, and paddled off into the fog. "Action Research for the Crippled Child" had wanted me to set off in a blaze of publicity but I preferred to leave that side of things until I had proved myself - no-one likes ending up with egg on their face, and I felt that too much media involvement at this stage was tempting fate.

I soon found myself at Southerness Point on the north side of the Firth and made camp - I had not been able to start as early as I would have liked and the tide was now ebbing quickly, exposing a vast expanse of mud which I did not fancy getting stuck on.

That evening I found it quite hard to sleep, six months planning and preparation was now being put into operation and it was great to be away at last. The previous two months had been hectic, trying to get through degree finals and complete the plans and preparations for a big expedition at the same time is not easy. I also pondered long and hard over the words of various canoeists I had contacted during my feasibility study and the general consensus of opinion had been that someone with no sea kayaking experience could not possibly hope to get very far on a demanding solo expedition. However, I am the sort of person who ignores anything they don't want to hear so I had preferred to believe the comments of the minority who had said "no problem provided you plan it sensibly and always keep one eye on the weather".

Suitably encouraged I had pressed ahead with the plans and now I was underway, but it was only the third time I had ever sat in a sea kayak and I still found it strange - sort of long, thin, unstable, hard to turn and impossible to do a stern dip under a slalom pole. No doubt I would get to grips with it soon enough - I hoped so anyway!

Next day I was on the water by 4.30 a.m. so that I would get clear of the sands at high tide. It was another foggy day but visibility picked up in the afternoon and I was able to enjoy the attractive coastline. Ended up at Garlieston that night having covered 33 miles - at that stage 30+ miles left me very tired although I now regard it as a nice comfortable distance in reasonable weather.

The next day I rounded Burrow Head, searching in vain for the violent tide race mentioned in the Pilot. I decided not to cross Luce Bay that day - the fog was very dense and I did not feel confident about tackling the 20 miles over to the Mull of Galloway by compass alone - I was still very much a "greenhorn" at this stage.

Next morning the fog was even thicker and it was raining hard. This time I decided to make the crossing not wanting to waste any more time. It turned out easy enough and I found I was quite enjoying the eerie feeling of paddling over a glassy calm sea in five yard visibility. After an hour and a half of steady paddling I began to hear strange wailing noises - I realised that I must be nearing the rocks in the middle of the bay, The Scares. The noises were a bit disconcerting and I wondered if I was being lured to a watery grave by mystical sirens or banshees. I almost bumped into the Scares before I saw them and the frantic splashings all around me made the cause of the wailings apparent - the rocks are the home of many seals. Well worth a visit if you get the chance. From there onwards I adopted a cautious approach, heading north-east so as to avoid getting swept south into the Mull of Galloway race. Pulled into East Tarbet Bay to wait for slack water before rounding the Mull of Galloway. The Mull was easy enough as it turned out, the worst problem was the foghorn which caused the kayak and my stomach to resonate violently with each blast. From there I cruised up to Port Logan where I was stuck for two days due to Force 8 winds.

From Port Logan to Troon took three days and was not much fun due to strong winds and cold weather. At Troon I was joined by Mike Bibby and his rather lurid yellow Nordkapp. This made my kayak - Shoreline (North Shore designs) look tiny in comparison, but over the next week it became apparent that my shorter kayak was better equipped to cope with strong winds on the beam or from behind, although the Nordkapp had the edge in headwinds and the associated choppy seas. A case of six of one and half a dozen of the other I think.

It took four days of hard struggle against Force 5 to 6 northerly winds to get up to the Crinan Canal, although we had a few amusing incidents, the worst was at Tarbet (Loch Fyne) where we camped at the edge of a single track. All night lorries roared past from the docks, filling the tent with exhaust fumes and causing great concern - if they went a yard off course then I would be crushed (I had drawn the short straw and was on the 'road edge' of the tent.)

The Crinan Canal took a whole day - carrying fully loaded sea kayaks around 15 locks is slow and hard work.

At Crinan we got a mixed reaction to our plan to go through the Gulk of Corryvreckan but we were not going to miss this for anything, having heard so much about it, it just had to be done. It turned out to be one of the highlights of the expedition. We pulled in on the north-west coast of Jura to wait for the west stream to slacken a little before ferry gliding (rather frantic it was too) over to Scarba, just above the whirlpool. Not the sort of place you want to snap a paddle!

Bib was dropping out the next day - a little earlier than planned but the bad weather had got to him in a big way. He left Lenga before me in order to get to Easdale in time to meet his brother. I took the short route via Fladda where I had to battle against a seven knot tide race but was able to get through it because of a large following swell even though it was a little bit hairy. As it turned out I was at Easdale before Bib - he had taken the easier but longer route up the coast of Luig.

At Easdale I abandoned my karrimat in a drastic step but this meant that I no longer had a large windcatching area on the rear deck and could get everything inside the kayak except spare paddles.

From Easdale I crossed over to Mull where I made camp at the edge of a large forest - British Columbia style. Went to sleep musing about the possibility of attack by bears but survived the night with limbs intact.



On Sunday I again had to contend with strong headwinds and it was all I could manage to finish off the Sound of Mull and get to Kilchoan on the southern side of Ardnamurchan. The next day was another highlight, rounding Ardnamurchan in a large swell then crossing 25 miles to Skye with a brief stop on Eigg. The scenery here was brilliant, particularly Rhum, and then once past Eigg I was treated to a marvellous sunset behind the Cuillin Hills on Skye. The Sound of Sleat was similar to the Sound of Mull - headwinds and hard work. By the time I reached Kylerhea I was against the tide but managed to get through by carrying out three ferry glides to avoid the fastest currents.

On Wednesday, 30th July, I encountered the Britain and Ireland expedition near the Crowlin Islands and had a brief chat before landing to let them get out of range - I did not want the problem to occur where we would keep passing and counter passing each other - I preferred to be on my own if possible. However, an hour later I passed them making camp just south of Applecross. I continued to Applecross where I collected some maps from the post office before setting up camp on the edge of the village. At about 9.30 I was preparing for bed when I was told to move on by a bailiff. I argued in vain but in the end it was a case of moving or getting beaten up so I set off into the gloom. By the time I found somewhere to land it was dark and raining and I just wrapped myself in the flysheet and went to sleep on the boulder beach - not much fun!

It was after this that things started to get a bit tricky - the next stretch consisting of big lochs and rough headlands all the way up to Kinlochbervie. I was stormbound at Greenstone Point for a day with no food and had a horrific eight mile walk through the hills in torrential rain to buy some supplies

The Summer Isles provided a nice distraction before a rather problematical rounding of the Point of Stoer which was being pounded by huge surf.

The weather picked up a little after that and suitably encouraged I took the time to circle Handa Island on route to Kinlochbervie. Finding Kinlochbervie was a bit like looking for a needle in a haystack due to the many small islands which prevented me seeing it from the sea. Found it eventually and had dinner in the Seamen's Mission while waiting for Bib to arrive - he wanted to join in for the Cape Wrath section and I was quite happy to have some company on this potentially hazardous stage of the expedition.

Monday, August 4th, started badly - wet and windy but by noon things had improved and we set off for the Cape. There was a moderate northerly swell but not too big so we did not anticipate too many problems. Even so, it was a tense time as we neared the Cape, particularly as we could see a lot of turbulence on Dinster Rock and the reefs just north and west of the Cape. However, due to the "small" swell we were able to keep close in and avoid the worst races. The Cape and the area east of it was very impressive with huge cliffs and the odd stack and arch and it really was one of the best days canoeing I have ever had, or am likely to have I expect. Finished the day at Durness and posed for the celebration pictures with a few cans of beer. (A friend had said there was nothing to match the psychological high of rounding the Cape then setting up camp and having a brew on the dunes at Durness - I think he meant tea when he said brew but we preferred the devil's brew!)

Next day I was solo once more, the wind had got up and there was five foot surf at Durness. Somewhat reluctantly I set off over Loch Eriboll, to Whiten Head. Once at Whiten Head I began to regret my decision. As I

entered the tide race I suddenly realised I had big problems - what had been a five foot swell suddenly transformed itself into 10+ feet breakers which seemed to be heading in all directions completely at random. There was no possibility of landing or turning back and for one and a half hours I struggled to stay in one piece - basically there was no problem unless one of them actually broke on top of me. If that happened I would expect the spray deck to and end up with a full boat - if that happened I would have been swimming because no way could anyone pump boat dry in those seas. As it turned out I was lucky and got through it, but not without some heart-stopping moments on the way. When I finally got ashore I found myself shaking uncontrollably and did not stop for about half an hour. A feeling I had not encountered since I was trapped in an underwater cave on the River Orchy four years ago. Not to put too fine a point on it, I felt very lucky to be alive, I was also a little mad with myself for attempting Whiten Head in what I knew were risky conditions. In the long run I can only benefit from the experience, a valuable lesson learnt I think.

The bad conditions (i.e., northerly swell) continued for the next two days and restricted my mileage but I got to Dounreay by Friday and was set up for the Pentland Firth the next day provided the weather improved - which it did.

Saturday, August 9th, provided some of the best weather so far (which was not all that difficult) and I got off to an early start to make the most of the fast tides. There was heavy surf at Brimms Ness but this was avoided by entering the edge of the race and skirting round the breaking area. Holborn Head was nice - some good caves and stacks although I had to keep a wary eye on where my hands were - the sea was literally crawling with large jellyfish - the Dounreay "Mutant" variety. A few miles past Dunnet Head I had to pull in and wait for the tide to turn - it was now flowing fast against. Spent an amusing (?) two hours on a beach consisting of kelp covered boulders which were completely frictionless. The only way I could move was to shuffle around on my bum!

At 7 p m I set off again for the Men of Mey. I had been reliably informed that potentially this would be the most dangerous part of the whole expedition. It was a complete anticlimax - the sort of thing you could go down on an airbed if you wanted to. my own fault for getting there at slack water I suppose. Pulled in at John o'Groats and had a pint in the hotel before setting up camp very happy at having done the west and north coasts.

Next day I made the short trip around Duncansby Head and into Wick where I had a friend who was putting me up for the night. This was an evening of complete luxury - her Dad took us out for a massive meal in a posh hotel then I slept in a real bed for the first time in a month. It seemed a shame to leave the next morning but I forced myself down to the harbour and set off. That day I had a truly fantastic experience, and one which more than a few people refuse to believe - they will when I get the photos back. Just north of Lybster I was surprised by the noise of breaking water behind me and looked over my shoulder expecting to see a large wave bearing down on me. I was somewhat shocked to see the fin and back of a Killer Whale about ten yards away. Seconds later another huge fin appeared a little further off. They headed north and I watched the fins growing slowly smaller for about 30 seconds before they disappeared. I don't know how common Killer Whales are in north-east Scotland but I felt privileged to have seen two. Since then various people have scoffed and told me they were dolphins or porpoises but who cares - I know what they were and that's good enough for me.

On the morning of Wednesday, 13th August, I found myself at Taret Ness on the north side of the Moray Firth. The weather was not too good,

but it was not all that bad either and the forecast was for it to improve. I set off for Burghead, 17 miles south-east of Tarbet Ness on the other side of the Firth. Visibility was about one mile so I soon found myself out of sight of land with only the compass for company. After two hours I guessed I was about half-way then, very suddenly a strong wind got up and it started to rain heavily. The next ten miles took five hours of very hard effort in increasingly deteriorating conditions. After seven hours on the water I caught sight of land and soon after pulled up on the beach of Hopeman - four miles off course and three hours late - but pretty pleased to have got there so I did not complain too much.

For the next few days I had the benefit of a large following sea and made good time down to Aberdeen where I had arranged to collect some maps from the Coastguard. They were expecting me having been forewarned by the Peterhead Pilots who had been unduly concerned over my safety - only trying to be helpful I suppose! When I learned that my maps and supplies were caught up in the Aberdeen postal strike I was a little upset - each map had been carefully prepared and annotated with all necessary notes so to have this work go to waste was annoying. Usually I'm all for trade unions but not this time; perhaps I'm only a fair weather socialist after all! The coastguard gave me some out of date charts which were helpful but no real substitute. I don't know what other sea canoeists think but I prefer a 1/4-inch to 4 mile road atlas with a few notes on it than a chart of the same scale which contains all sorts of information that is not really useful to a canoeist.

The next three days were pretty boring and I was pleased to get to Fife Ness ready to cross the Firth of Forth on the 22nd August. I had a nice surprise when I called on the coastguard at Fife Ness to pick up my replacement spraydeck. The maps which had been delayed at Aberdeen had arrived the day after I left and the coastguard had brought them down to Fife Ness, for which I was very grateful.

It was my intention to cross the Firth from Fife Ness to Tantallon Castle via the Isle of May and Bass Rock. The forecast was for north-east Force 4 or 5 increasing to 6 so whilst I might get a bit cold and wet I would at least get blown in the right direction if the wind did get up. I reached the Isle of May very quickly and searched for the safe landing on the east side, without doubt it would have been easier to land on the west coast in today's conditions but I was curious to see what the "all weather landing" was like. Found it easily enough but it was a little bit tricky to actually get through the reef without hitting the large rock just under the entrance. Later found out I had used the wrong gap and should have been 20 yards or so further south. As I sat near the small quay the lighthouse keeper arrived. He was happily testing out the new tractor which had just been delivered. I was invited to the lighthouse for dinner and ended up staying there for a couple of hours and had a great laugh with the three keepers; I'm sure that 28 day shifts on the island have affected their minds a little though. Eventually set off for Bass Rock which I circled despite the constant guano fall out. The lighthouse was getting stocked up from a fairly large supply ship and I sat around watching a while before setting off for Tantallon Castle, pleased to have got another crossing out of the way and to have enjoyed it for once.

The next day I made it to Berwick on Tweed and broke out the celebration McEwans, not quite champagne but I'd finished Scotland and I was more than a little happy. It had taken 43 days - only a week longer than I had expected which I felt was reasonable considering the weather over the first three weeks in particular.

On Sunday the 24th I suffered my first capsize and roll while landing through huge surf at Bamburgh. I don't know why I bothered to land there as there was no need and I regretted the decision later when it took fully five minutes to get back out through the break.

That evening at Beadnell I discovered that my rear storage compartment had leaked. Putting two and two together I assumed that the leak had occurred when I capsized so I did not worry about it further. Next day I pulled into Craster harbour and on opening the rear hatch water virtually poured out of it. I realised that the canoe must be holed; sure enough the keel was worn through at the stern due to the constant dragging over rocks and beaches which is an unavoidable part of solo sea canoeing. I taped the hole as best I could but could not make a very good job of it in the heavy rain. Continued down the coast as far as Amble where I made camp. It was about this time that Hurricane Charley arrived and the night was quite unpleasant to say the least. By the next morning the wind was incredibly strong and getting stronger all the time. The crunch came at about 12 o'clock when the tent finally gave up its resistance and disintegrated. I had no option but to send out the S.O.S. to home and get picked up that night.

Once home I carried out temporary repairs on the tent - which now looks like a patchwork of old cagoules - and the kayak was returned to North Shore Designs at Stokesley who had kindly agreed to repair the hull free of charge. When the kayak was finished it looked as good as new again, certainly a hell of a lot better than I could have done it myself.

It is now Saturday, 30th August, and weather permitting I will set off again tomorrow. September is hardly a good time to be starting the last 1600 miles but I have nothing else to occupy my time so I may as well give it a try.

I think that about sums it up for now; can I take the opportunity to thank all of you who answered some of my initial queries, Whitewater Sports and North Shore Designs in particular for making a first class kayak at an amazingly cheap price and for their recent help.

Finally, if any of you have any spare cash floating around you might consider making a donation - cheques payable "Action Research for the Crippled Child" and send to my address. Thanks.

BOOK REVIEW by JOHN RAMWELL

BLUE WATER SUMMER by David Johnston and Krista Nicholson  
ISBN 0951184202 Published by ORCA PUBLICATIONS

Soft back, 167 pages, many black and white photographs and maps. Retailing at £3 95 (includes post and package)

I remember reading and subsequently publishing in this newsletter accounts of David and Krista's sea kayaking expedition along the west coast of Canada and South-east Alaska.

Now that the full account has been published in book form we have available an excellent blow by blow story of their exploits last summer.

Such expedition reports are first rate sources of general expedition information. This book is no exception and at the same time it provides an enthralling read.

No sea kayakers book shelf is complete without this book and I heartily recommend it to you. Read it during the winter months and I guarantee you'll be inspired to get packing and be off yourself before the Spring produces the first leaf bud.

John Ramwell

From: Alan Byde, 5 Masterman Place, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Co. Durham, DL12 0ST  
6th October 1986

Dear John,

Some info for the newsletter. I have just been to Vancouver and attended the 3rd Annual West Coast Sea Kayaking Symposium there. John Dowd, the editor of the Sea Kayaker magazine suggested that my impressions might be interesting.

Paddles - I was fascinated to see the range of paddles there. I used one that was fully nine feet tip to tip, with the narrow blade typical of the Inuit practice. It felt heavy to use, although light in weight, about 2 lbs. The majority of the paddles are joined in the middle. A few one-piece wood-laminated paddles are available of the usual spade blade, feathered variety. Many have asymmetrical blades. The long shafts are necessary for the many very wide double kayaks in use there.

The reason for the very large kayaks seems to be the practice of going out for a barbecue, for example, and taking the barbecue 'machine' with them. It is bulky and needs volume under the decks to pack it. One woman told me she had been out in the wilderness and living out of the kayak for three months this summer. You need lots of stowage to do that. When it comes to wilderness there is a lot of it still there on the west coast.

Up the coast from Washington, or Oregon northwards, a chain of islands protects the inner mainland shores from big swells and ocean breakers. Large craft can be handled in small waves. Stern-hung rudders are the norm and the problem of rudder blades being ineffective in following seas is not common.

The weather there seems usually to be calm, not subject to screaming gales. A young woman (from Spennymoor near where I live) who lives there now, says that one thing she misses is going for a walk on a windy day with the rain lashing down and everything blowing this way and that. She knows nothing about kayaks, but her comment seems true for Vancouver, it is not very windy.

The consequence is that problems of directional control are not very great. Windage is not a serious problem, so big and bulky 'kayaks' do not demand great power to control them. Their plastic replicas of traditional 'Inuit'\* kayaks are larger than the British counterpart.

The design of hatches is also affected. The need to pack bulky items requires large hatches. I did not measure the sizes but it is usual to fit a rectangular hatch about a foot by eighteen inches not far behind the cockpit. There are several ways of sealing them, but one that seemed a good method was to stretch a neoprene cover like a spraydeck over the opening. That was covered by a moulded plastic cover which was strapped down with cords or webbing straps. It formed a firm rigid casing over the flexible and soft neoprene cover.

The VCP hatch is popular there although problems caused by them popping up are reported. It seems that the overcentre catch, unless further secured by an elastic that wraps right round the cover after fitting, can go under-centre and slacken off. People have lost their elastic security loops and the hatches have slackened off at sea. John Dowd reports taking a kayak fitted with a VCP hatch

\*The word "Eskimo" is derived from the word "Eskimantsik" meaning those who eat raw meat. It is derogatory in tone. The people of the far north call themselves Inuit, which is the plural of Inuk, meaning man. ("Man's Rise to Civilization", Peter Farb, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1968.1)

out of storage in a cool place, putting it in the hot sun, and seeing the hatch pop off with internal pressure as the contained air warmed up.

One chap suggested a simple solution, punch a hole with a spike through the hatch cover rubber, so that the air can get out if pressurised. It whistles as the air squeezes out. The torn edges press together so that it doesn't make the hatch less waterproof and it does prevent sudden pop-offs.

It reminds me of the problem with cracked rings that the TCL4 had. The Channel Islands group that circumnavigated Ireland reported that and how it could have had serious consequences with total flooding of the rear hold. I did not see any TCL4 hatches there.

The deck mounted "Chimp" pump is seen on some craft. The problem of retaining hold on a paddle for very life in bad conditions whilst operating a pump by hand seems not to have hit them hard. Of those I saw the handle was mounted aft of the cockpit and facing aft. Not easy to get at from the cockpit. I put to the groups to which I spoke the idea of foot operated pumps, on general principles of safety and practicality only.

Another kayak of British make in a showroom had a pump mounted to one side and just aft of the cockpit, but on using vigorous pumping action it was not possible to avoid crunching the knuckles against the deck surface. Give it some thrutch and the deck distorts, the pump body tilts and crunch go your knuckles on the deck.

Nick Padwick reported that problem when pumping out a kayak on the Shetland trip three or four years ago. A deeper hollow in the deck surface to accept the knuckles under the handle should be provided for deck mounted pumps. In any case in my opinion deck mounted pumps are not good in principle.

The footrest systems are usually linked to stern mounted rudders. Lifting skegs seemed a new concept, although some knew about them. The usual footrest comprises a lug that is attached to a slider in a track. The track is mounted to the side of the cockpit. Those without rudder controls are simply fixed in place with a securing screw. Those with rudder controls are allowed to slide and the rudder cables themselves form the stops against which the feet press. O.K. for paddling pressures, but on forward impact the feet fly forwards to the bulkhead.

British kayaks are still on offer but there are now many very good alternatives of North American design now available. For example the "Arluk" is a lengthened version with echoes of a British design.

In some ways history repeats itself. Those who have the book "Rushton and his Times in American Canoeing" will see on page 31, chapter 4, the story of how Rushton first laid hands on an English "Rob Roy" in 1879. Rob Roys were in America in 1873. Rushton developed his own copies of the "Rob Roy" by 1880 and by 1881 it appeared in his catalogues under the title "The American Traveller". It was not an exact copy, but it was an improvement on the English boat for American purposes, showing its lineage. Modern American copies of British copies of Inuit craft is a nice story with an up to date twist to it.

Their rescue techniques are usually over-stern re-entries. This needs support from others to be successful, and in rough conditions seems likely to fail. I have always recommended the over-side re-entry method which I demonstrated on the floor of a school hall in Vancouver. Out of this episode I found a piece of advice which seems likely to improve upon that old one which says "Upon the sea there should never be less than three".

It is as follows: "Always practice as your first technique that which may be your last chance." To which it is necessary to add, "When the going in really tough, you will be all alone." That means that self rescue methods should always be practised as first choice and resort. Over stern re-entry does not lend itself to successful self rescues on rough water.

At one point I was rather labouring one of the nastier experiences and some people looked unhappy about it. I suggested to them that if they want to pack up, do it here, now, in the comfort of this hall. You can't out there.

On the last afternoon there I was able to watch some comparative tests of kayaks in the hydraulic engineering division of the University of British Columbia. The tank is long and a carriage containing an engineering scientist and banks of recording instruments travels on a track beside it. The full size kayak being tested in the tank is attached to the trolley by arms and sensors.

At one end of the test tank a VDU shows the test results as a graph, speed through the water against drag. It is fascinating to see the curve developing as run follows run. Most of the sea kayak results were pretty well parallel and close together. On an earlier test a white water racing kayak was tested for comparison. It seems that there is a noticeable proportion of sea kayakers who use the W/W craft as a sea kayak. The drag curve for that steepened very rapidly toward the top end of the range, compared with any of the sea kayaks tested. (I remember using a KW6 in 1966 The Big Swim at Blackrock started for me when I capsized it.) I think that most sea paddlers in Britain would not now use a W/W competition kayak on the sea?

There may have been tank tests of British kayaks in Britain, but I am unaware of any Manufacturers and designers can now have comparative scientifically accurate drag curves provided for them for their designs. The magazine "Sea Kayaker" is financing these tests.

John Dawson, a Yorkshireman, is conducting the test programme. The search for truth is in competent hands. I would like to see tests conducted on the drag of various rudders vs skegs in order to settle some doubts in my mind and in those of others.

One question which frequently occurred was this "Alan, what do you think of the difference in cost of the kayaks here and in Britain?" Ours are much cheaper apparently than theirs. The top of the range is over \$2,000 and the medium range is close on \$1,000. Anything cheaper than \$700 is not seriously a kayak. \$2 = £1 approx.

One manufacturer explained it as follows. "The rate of exchange of money is only one factor to be considered. The rate of exchange of labour is a much closer marker. Rates of pay in the States and Canada are typically higher than in Britain, job for job. The better way to examine it is to count the number of hours one must work at average rates of pay to gain the money necessary to buy the kayak. 100 hours seems standard in Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand. By the time the British kayak has been exported and put on sale there is no advantage."

From: F. R. Wondre, Riverside Canoe Club, Riverside Centre, Donnington  
Bridge, Oxford. Tel. Oxford 248673 13th November 1986

Why do we have a coaching scheme? To me there is only one answer. The coaching scheme exists because there are people who want to learn about canoeing. Its nothing to do with insurance companies or education authorities. If you remove the people who want to learn the scheme would cease to exist.

So the coaching scheme is an attempt to teach canoeing in a safe and enjoyable way at all levels of ability in a reasonably uniform way.

Involvement in the scheme is, initially, a process of learning: basic skills, a rudimentary understanding of the natural forces shaping the sea, basic equipment and its use, finding out what is dangerous or safe at one's particular level of ability and becoming aware of potential dangers.

These things could be learnt without a coaching scheme but the risks in learning on the sea while you are without good help are immense. "We who do be afraid only die sometimes." We try not to be without a towline in the middle of the sea when we need one, we try not to lose our buoyancy aids by waving them at passing ships. We try to provide instructors who not only think they are good but are competent to teach. The good people will pass the assessments, the others perhaps need more training.

The desire to reach the next rung on the coaching ladder can be a powerful stimulus to improving one's paddling technique, widening one's knowledge and attempting to reach beyond one's present experience.

Gradually the coaching scheme becomes a way of passing on some of the pleasure and satisfaction we derive from our sport. It can be very rewarding to see the satisfaction others gain from emulating the skills you have demonstrated. Then there is the urge to stay ahead. The more you know the more you can pass on.

The coaching scheme is not an unchanging set of regulations. It does respond to the cumulative pressure of those of its members who chose to participate in the decision making process. No power hungry committee men here but some of our best and most experienced paddlers attempting to codify their experience for our benefit. A thankless task sometimes entailing considerable abuse. The coaching scheme does not regulate sea canoeing. It does not attempt to tell me where, when and with whom I may or may not paddle.

There are some rugged individualists who will never feel at ease in any organisation but who contribute by pushing back the frontiers of our sport. There are some who are prepared to spend their time guiding others along well explored paths to a multitude of enjoyable canoeing experiences. No power or glory here but a lot of satisfaction from seeing novices develop into good paddlers emulating the deeds of their teachers and perhaps surpassing them.