

NEWSLETTER

OF THE ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB



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ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER NO. 71

JANUARY 1989

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EDITORIAL

And a Happy New Year to you all. May you have tides in your direction and wind and waves to suit. Remember the ASKC when you have completed (or even tried to complete) your sea kayak journey no matter how short. We particularly enjoy reading about the unexpected, the novel, the interesting - but most trips contain some of these ingredients, so let us be hearing from you.

On the subject of expedition reports - send to Tony Ford (address in ASKC members list) for the excellent British Army Report on their expedition to British Columbia in June/July 1988. Send large S.A.E. with your request.

Last September Peter Garrard and I spent a week on Island of Vlieland off the north-west coast of Holland at the invitation of the N.K.B., the Dutch Canoe Organisation. We were to assist other Dutch instructors in coaching 50 enthusiastic kayakers of varying competence and experience. The week was marked by high winds throughout, to the extent that many were blown from their tents during one night of a Force 9. The winds were from the northerly aspects and so the surf was quite huge but basic coaching and practice had to be completed in the lee of the Island. By Thursday evening the advanced paddlers were decidedly frustrated by the high winds denying them a decent paddle. The forecast was for the wind to drop so they 'conned' me to accompany them on a trip to another Island some 12Ks to the north-east of us. I must have had one too many as we discussed this in the well appointed club house at the camp site so I foolishly agreed to meet them on the beach the following morning. I was certainly not encouraged by Ger de Bruijn who questioned our sanity and warned us of imminent Force 7s just before we left. The first hurdle was the surf. I just managed to break through, as did seven others. The rest were jet propelled back to the beach. Things were not that much better beyond the surf - to me it was a very heavy and confused sea. None the less we paddled hard into the northerly wind, the two girls with us doing really well. After a couple of hours there was some confusion over navigation. They tried to bring me into the debate, but the language difference and the wind prevented no other response from me than "If we have an escape route let's go for it!!" Several times we were picked up by a surfing wave and dumped several metres away. I looked up at one stage to see a wall of white water with a kayak perched perilously on the top whilst moving away at great speed. I was thinking that there are other places I would rather be right now. Very soon a decision was taken and after a while the sea became more manageable and we sighted our destination through the gloom. It was then that I thought we might survive after all. I really do not know how we would ever have managed a rescue had we needed to. In the event we only had one capsized and assisted rescue but the conditions were tolerable at the time.

Lunch tasted good and our return was south westerly with the tide now ebbing. Some good surf rides were enjoyed and we soon landed back on our Island in time to ready ourselves for the last night celebrations.

A lot of people worked hard to make this week a success. Ger's wife and Mieno Faber looked after us all very well and their cooking (with me preparing the salad!!) was excellent.

I have discovered (thanks to Nick Hodson) who wrote the article on paddles that appeared in the last (November '88) Newsletter - it was PETER LAMONT - thanks Peter, and apologies for not remembering in the first place. Incidentally it was Nick Hodson who translated the FRENCH REGULATIONS on sea kayaking directly from French. This appeared on the back page of the November Newsletter. Thanks Nick.

The AGM of the BCU Sea Touring Committee held at Harwich on the east coast over the weekend of 1st and 2nd October was a great success due mainly to the enthusiasm of those who turned up and to the glorious weather, particularly welcome after such a bad summer. We enjoyed two good days on the water, the second one marked by very officious harbour officials who demanded to know why and where we were going when we were simply cruising around the harbour as were many other small boaters. D.C.H. put them right though and we had no more trouble from them!!

As for the business of the AGM itself - it was routine focusing on the various interests of the Committee such as marine restricted areas, coaching aspects, safety and monitoring of all issues affecting sea kayakers.

Thanks are due to our hosts, the Old Fire Station Centre in Harwich Old Town. The food and accommodation was very good indeed.

Dick Whitehouse of 8 Cranworth Crescent, Chingford, London E4 7HN (01 529 1988) is intending to paddle around Mull next May and is asking whether anyone out there has any useful information to contact him. He hopes to circumnavigate Mull from Oban and a few pointers on camp sites would be useful.

From: John Chambers, 14 Appledore Road, Orchard Hills, Walsall WS3 5DT

FOR SALE

SEAKING (TRYLON) SEA KAYAK, DIOLINE HULL HATCHES, SUNTO YACHT COMPASS, DECK LINES, SPLIT PADDLES, DECK PUMP, ELECTRIC PUMP, SKEG AND UNDERSLUNG RUDDER, SPRAY DECK, £200. WALSALL (0922) 640731 evenings.

WEATHERWISE

Official weather forecasting really began in this country in 1859 as a direct consequence of a disastrous October gale. On October 25 that year, the sailing ship Royal Charter foundered off the coast of Anglesey in a ferocious north-easterly storm. It was on the final leg of a journey from Australia and it took its cargo of £500,000 worth of gold bullion as well as 400 passengers to a watery grave.

The Meteorological Department of the Board of Trade had been set up in 1855 under the leadership of Admiral Robert FitzRoy. But its job then was only to encourage, collate and study weather observations.

However, the loss of the Royal Charter led the British Association to recommend to the Board of Trade that FitzRoy should use the new fangled telegraph to issue storm warnings to threatened coasts when a storm had started. FitzRoy was not satisfied. As an experienced mariner he knew that weatherwise sailors could spot the signs of a distant storm long before it arrived and he thought that, with a scientific training he could do the same for Britain.

Before long his forecasts began appearing in the Times. But FitzRoy's efforts became the subject of much public ridicule, his editor lost faith and under intense pressure in April 1865 he took his own life.

From: Roy Spicer, Vancouver, Canada

John,

I was forced to write this letter when I received two ASKC Newsletters in the same week, Nos 69 and 70. In 69 a member was asking about fishing from a kayak. The book reviewed at the end of the Newsletter has a lot of good advice and is used successfully by kayakers including Lee Moyer. Pages 100 and 123 of this book show a simple hand line rig that can be made in the shop and all it needs is the addition of a clip to attach it to the boat so it is not lost. You can use it for trolling, jigging and casting. A most popular and very successful line is a 'buzz bomb' which sinks and attracts fish by wobbling and spinning. If you troll you need to paddle until it comes to the surface then glide while it sinks; or you can jig it or cast it by cliffs or rocks and let it settle before pulling hard to the surface and allowing it to sink again.

Another good book on "How to Cook Your Catch" is by Jean Challenger from Satlaine Pub. Ltd., P.O. Box 2003, Sidney, B.C., Canada V8L 753.

Another way to fish is to attach a chrome flag pole holder to your kayak of the correct diameter to hold your fishing rod.

I have a cleat mounted on my Baidark about a foot behind the cockpit rim for towing and have mounted said holder on the top of it. The holder is one that is angled back at about 10° so it stays out of my way and the rod is attached to a deck line by shock cord so I don't lose it. I have a telescopic rod and it is suitable for trolling, jigging or casting.

In reply to the WHALE SLAUGHTER, tell it to GREENPEACE and they will look after it. (I wish it was that simple, Ed.)

Used my long awaited Nordkapp HMC in Kevlar at the Castain Show. Weighs a ton. Lovely workmanship though - in transparent green.

Really liked the article on paddles in issue No.70. That is why I went to the long narrow blade - 9 feet long overall - 6 feet being my height plus half. I used the Mackenzie Eskimo and Aleut design. The Mackenzie is 5 inches wide and the Aleut is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. Both are 36 inches in blade length and 36 inches in loom.

I believe I have previously mentioned that the zig-zag caused by water shedding was eliminated by skieving the leading edge 15° . I have also gone to red cedar as it is much lighter than spruce (as well as cheaper) and has a lot of spring to it making it very easy to paddle long distances with. I did find, however, contrary to the article, that the advantage of a long narrow blade was a much longer stroke for the same hand distance travelled and that my paddle was out of the water for a much shorter time.

In regard to feathering, I agree heartily as I have found the same thing to be true in all the classes I have taught and when checking on former students have found that the 'featherers' are the ones having trouble whilst those with unfeathered paddles are doing great.

I have 'bent your ear' enough so will sign off wishing you all Happy Christmas and light winds for 1989.

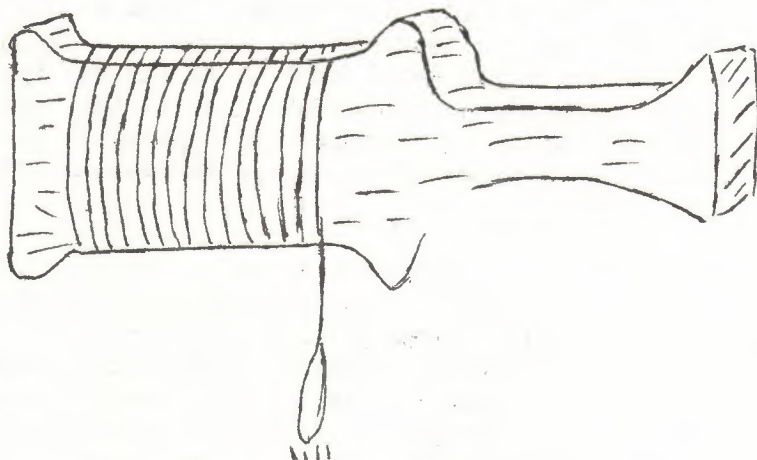
Sincerely,

Roy Spicer

Sea Fishing from Kayaks by Tony Ford

The last three summers have been spent off the British Columbian coast 'carrying my carbohydrates and catching my protein'. During this time fishing techniques have been refined resulting in a modicum of efficiency at catching bottom fish. The more proficient at fishing one becomes, the less one needs to carry at the outset of a trip. In real terms, we were obliged to carry supplies to last a month; that is a lot of food on top of other essentials such as sleeping bags, tents, camp gear, charts and clothing. Savings could be made both in food to be carried and total cost of such an expedition.

The key to fishing is minimum of effort with minimum equipment to provide sufficient fish for one, or possibly two, meals a day. There is little point in reducing the amount of food to be carried only to fill the space saved with a large amount of fishing gear. A 20 pound monofilament line and an assortment of lures is all that is needed. Lighter line can be used, but it is more difficult to handle. The line (Dacron non-stretch is said to be the best) is secured to a piece of wood, a piece about 40cm x 10cm x 2cm, shaped and chamfered to hold the line and incorporating a hand hold is shown in the diagram below. Such a stock can be whittled from a piece of driftwood; two hand lines of an 'improved' design are shown at the end of this article.



HAND LINE STOCK

This stock acts both as the 'rod and reel' and as a cudgel when turning the catch. Lures may be a 'buzz bomb' which is designed to slide up and down the end of the line, near the hook, an imitation sprat or other small fish, a spinner, a plastic octopus or a worm. It is best to try a variety of lures to establish which is the most suitable for any particular area or fish. Three barbed hooks, kept sharp by cleaning the points with a stone, give a greater chance of holding a fish once it has taken the lure, however, these are usually much more difficult to remove.

Although swivels with fastening clips can be useful when trying out different lures, there is no need for sophisticated gadgetry. With simple equipment it is possible to catch a variety of rockfish and flatfish. Just drop the lure over the side of the kayak and pay out line until the sea bed is reached. Now take in a couple of inches of line and jig the line up and down about a foot at a time in deliberate strokes every three to five seconds. You may feel it best to secure the stock under the chart bungee and jig with the hand to increase the sensitivity between lure and hand; this ensures that the stock is out of the way when taking in a fish, at a time when both hands are needed.

Test the bottom from time to time to ensure that the lure drops to within an inch or so of the sea bed, paying out or taking in line as necessary. It does not seem to matter if the hook hits the bottom now and then, however,

being too close to the bottom increases the chances of a snag. If the hook does become snagged, do not pull from your immediate position but check that you are not drifting; then hold the line (between the teeth will do) and paddle until you are directly over the hook or have just passed over it; from either of these positions it should normally be possible to break free using a steady pull on the line. Seldom should one lose a lure but do check that you have not bent the hook in pulling it free.

That then is the theory of fishing for the pot; once having a fish take the lure, give the line a tug to ensure that the hook will hold and haul the line in - it usually takes too long winding the line in round the stock, so lay the line out neatly on the foredeck well clear of the cockpit area. Once the fish is just below the surface, take the lure in the right hand and hold on to the fish with the left, using a glove or some other form of protection from the sharp (and sometimes **poisonous**) spines on some fish (I use a nylon cockpit cover). Now lay the fish on the foredeck just in front of the cockpit, gripping the lure tightly with the right hand and giving it a swift tap with the stock to stun it, once stunned, hold the fish in the left hand and attempt to remove the hook. Carry a small sharp serrated edged stainless kitchen knife (in a polystyrene sheath) under your chart bungees for the odd occasion it is necessary to cut the hook away from the jaw or gill area. Once the hook is removed, it is an easy matter to slip the fish into a small sack with a closure at the neck or to slip it down between the knees in the cockpit. Should the fish be too big to handle on the deck - you don't want to be injured by either hook or spines - then it may be necessary to secure the line to the kayak and tow your catch ashore and deal with it on the beach. If fishing as a group activity, then assistance from other members of the group in dealing with fish larger than 60cm is wise.

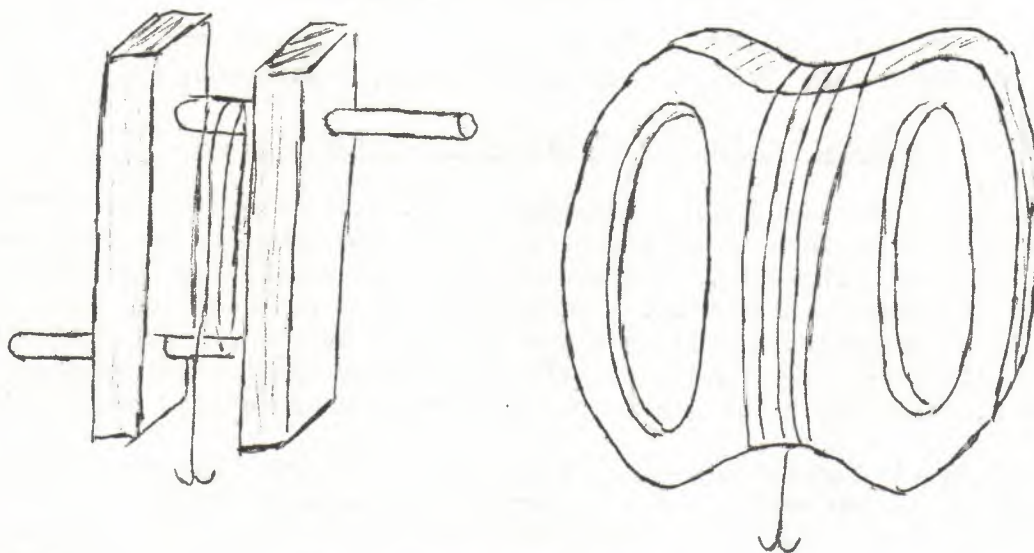
The greatest skill comes not so much from catching the fish but knowing where the best places are to find them. With rockfish the best places appear to be in very small bays and coves protected from the wind (to avoid drifting with the wind), and in the lee of headlands and along rocky shores, usually within 50 yards of the shore. Rockfish may also congregate near rocky outcrops or at the edge of weed beds. If nothing is caught within ten minutes of lowering a lure then move on; rockfish will normally have a go at anything which looks like a meal. If drifting caused by the wind is a problem then try a drogue or anchor, attempt to secure the kayak to seaweed, or take a line around a rock on shore: if drift is too swift the lure will be lifted off the bottom and drag behind the boat wiping out any chance of catching bottom fish.

Flat fish can be taken using the same lures as rockfish; however, one could also try some form of bait such as a small fish or piece of fish offal. Flat fish favour a mud bottom and lie in wait, partly submerged in the hope of catching any unwary morsel passing by. Once a shoal of flatfish has been located (usually at a depth of not less than 15-20 feet) then slowly drift over the area, taking bearings to make a fix should you frequently paddle the area. With flatfish it is best to let the hook hit the bottom and jerk it upwards to maximise bite. Flatfish, possibly because of the way they take the bait or lure, often manage to jump or thrash themselves off the hook as they were being landed. Quickly secure any flatfish to the deck and stun it to reduce the chances of losing your catch. Flatfish are stronger and put up far more fight than rockfish. Flatfish can be taken on multiple hooked lines; however the risk of injury through flying fish hooks as one deals with the catch should be taken into consideration.

Mackerel can be caught using multi hooked mackerel lines. Mackerel often shoal near sewer outfalls; however if fishing in such an area beware of the risk of pollution.

Trolling can be successful; however for this to be effective a heavily weighted line is required to attain depth and the kayaking speed needs to be reduced considerably. In view of this, it is hardly recommended as something to try during a days normal trip where miles count for more than the offchance of catching a fish in this manner. Better results are likely to come from slowly paddling up and down an area with a well weighted spinner at a depth of 50 feet or more. There should be a number of swivels on the line to prevent it from being twisted as the spinner revolves.

All in all, using a jigging line produces good results and can be carried out during any break in paddling, be it at the start of the day whilst waiting for others to get on the water, during a short break in paddling, or just prior to going ashore at the end of a day's trip. It is essential to find sheltered water from which to fish to allow the line to sink to the bottom and stay there. To control drift, it is possible to jig with one hand and to make paddle strokes with the other, with the loom crooked in the arm holding the jig. In stiffer breezes, bottom fishing can be difficult as one loses some control over the kayak - try using a drogue, or other form of anchor, or tie on to a piece of floating seaweed, or even pass a line ashore if the wind is offshore. Two improved hand lines designs are illustrated below. These will allow you fish at a greater depth than about 50 feet with less effort; both these designs require a little more skill than whittling a piece of driftwood, but could be made by anyone using a few simple tools. Finally, the pleasure of success as one sits by a driftwood fire, cooking the day's catch, gives the satisfaction of limited self sufficiency. Try it for yourself.



TWO IMPROVED HAND LINES

Extract from the Daily Telegraph of 28th October 1988

Boy's beacon scrambles air-sea rescue
by Toby Moore

A major air and sea rescue was launched yesterday after a schoolboy set off a distress beacon in his lounge.

John Wallace, 10, who found the device on a bus, was unaware he had activated it until an RAF Sea King hovered over his home in Newhey Road, Woodchurch, Birkenhead.

The signal, on a distress frequency, had been intercepted by a satellite which alerted the rescue services.

Mr Pat Coffey, a spokesman for the Northern Air Sea Rescue headquarters in Edinburgh, said: "As we were investigating the signal it was picked up by RAF Valley who scrambled a helicopter.

"They homed in on it and found that it was coming from a house on an estate. The helicopter would have been hovering over the area at about 500ft."

John, who activated the beacon by pulling a toggle on the top, said that even when the Sea King hovered overhead he had no idea why.

It was really low and I thought it was going to land on the roof. I had no idea why it was there until a policeman arrived and took the beacon away."

The Sea King landed in a school playground nearby having identified the source of the distress call and told the police.

The offending device, known to seamen as a personal location beacon, was taken back to RAF Valley, Anglesey, in a sealed container.

THE SHALLOW WATER KAYAKERS ASSOCIATION.

Reprinted from 'The North Sounder', newsletter of
The North Sound Sea Kayakers Association, Washington, USA

"Never Over Our Heads" by Lerek H. Clutchingson

I have never liked long crossings, but occasionally they have to be made. Last Sunday on Lake Union I finally got up the gumption to cross the Ship Canal from Gas Works Park. It was no mean achievement for a member of the Shallow Water Kayakers Association. Perhaps you have not heard of our organization. Our membership is vast but secret. We are a group dedicated to the proposition that if you cannot walk to shore or float a few feet and then walk to shore, your life is in dire peril and you could lose your membership.

Our Club's safety record is flawless and we never destroy our sinuses learning awkward Eskimo rolls. We discourage such macho dramatics for fear of burying our noggins in the sand. Remember all those hours in the pool trying to mount a slippery kayak full of water as it bobbed and rolled beneath you? There are no foolish re-entry procedures for our members. You simply stand up, walk to shore (don't forget your kayak and paddle), empty your boat and boots, climb in, blow your nose and push off. (Blowing your nose can take place immediately upon standing up.)

Now I don't want you to get the impression that we are a bunch of namby-pambies. It is just that we are strong believers in ferry boats and airplanes. For instance, I just read about a fellow who kayaked across the Pacific. Aside from wanting to ask him what we are all dying to know - like when, where and how he went potty - I also wanted to ask him why he did not take an airplane. There are no nice sunny beaches or tide pools in the middle of the Pacific.

Long crossings are boring. Not much to see or do except paddle, paddle, paddle. Shallow water kayakers are always yacking about a certain rock formation or excitedly pointing to a Hermit crab scooting along the bottom, and they are always stopping for lunch snacks. You never see any tanned beach boys or bikinied blonds on long crossings.

I tell you, shallow water kayakers just have more fun. So if you're out kayaking and see a fellow boater, just place your paddle vertically into the water until one end touches bottom and the other end sticks two feet out of the water. This will indicate that you are within five feet of Terra Firma. Your fellow kayakers will immediately recognise you as a proud member of the Shallow Water Kayakers Association. Our motto is "Ne aborium su cabasa", or "Never over our heads".

By Dick Asia

'STEALING A QUICK ONE' - A DAY IN THE LIFE OF
A FORCES SEA KAYAKING COURSE RUN N.W. SCOTLAND

By Rowland Woollven (Major, RE)

When someone asks the question "You have got the charts - haven't you?" the answer is usually the same - no-one has! Which explains why we didn't catch the ferry, didn't go to the Orkneys and didn't circumnavigate Hoy. It also explains why nine of us ended up crouched round a radio listening to the 1750 hours forecast for the Scottish north coast. We'd planned a two day trip around Cape Wrath and transport complications meant that an east-west trip would be preferable, with an overnight stop planned for Sandwood Bay. The winds had been westerly all week and, frankly, we'd had enough of blatting head-long into it! The joker in the pack was the RAF, who were due to use the bombing range on the Cape in two days time - it had to be 'go' tomorrow, or the trip wouldn't be on. The forecast was kind - easterly 5-7, which promised excitements of a different sort! Next morning's forecast was the same, but Sumergh was reporting only an easterly 3. A quick look out to see confirmed only a respectable number of whitecaps so it was off to Durness and the usual chaos of embarkation. As is usual as soon as we'd got going and rounded the edge of the bay, committing ourselves to a 4 knot current, the sky darkened and the wind got up! It became a wild, atmospheric 8 mile ride with wind and springtides to Cape Wrath. Thousands of seabirds of all sorts came to inspect us, competing with the squalls to hide the views of the cliffs and sea stacks. Our plan was to arrive at the Cape at slack water - after reading the pilot it seemed the wisest thing to do (apart from not be there at all!) We got there 30 minutes early and sneaked in close to the cliffs. The only problems were the size of the swell and the resultant clapotis - it would not have done to get washed onto rocks at the base of 300ft cliffs! As soon as we rounded the Cape, the weather brightened and the swell decreased. We eventually got ashore about 2 miles south of Cape Wrath on an evil, midge infested boulder beach for lunch. About 6 minutes later all 9 of us were afloat again - midge sandwiches not being to anyone's liking. As we had been in the boats for about 3 hours at this stage several strange antics and contortions were used to regain some feeling in the lower regions - and also to answer the inevitable calls of nature. Paddle jackets were removed and we set off into the sun on a glassy sea towards Sandwood Bay. The Law of Murphy clicked into action at about the halfway stage - headwinds, Force 3, over tide. The calm ride became very wet indeed. By now we had decided not to bother with stopping at Sandwood - Kinlochbervie was only 10 miles away and it was only 2 in the afternoon. It was a very damp bunch of paddlers who stopped for a break under Am Buchaille. This stack started fantasies of 'first pitch belayed from Nordkapp' amongst all the climber/canoists present! The remaining 8 miles into Kinlochbervie passed in a welter of spray, continuously impressive sea cliffs, several colonies of seals (are they still there?) and some hair raising rock-hopping moments - the swell not being entirely predictable or regular. The final moments of paddling - with the end in sight - became an unpleasant slog with a rising wind and squalls hitting us square on the beam. Unfortunately the rain seemed not to deter the midges and the voracious little beasts seemed set for a good meal as we changed at the roadside. Until, that is, a door opened and the welcome

words 'would you like to come in to change and have a cup of tea?' were heard. Sooner than you could say 'paddle' the 9 of us were inside getting warm and dry - many thanks indeed to the local fisherman!

That seemed the end of it - apart from a considerable glow of satisfaction - until the weather dawned next day - westerly Force 9! Had we stopped in Sandwood Bay we would have been there for at least a day and a half trying to break out through the surf! As it was, we went and frightened ourselves looking at the not so 'Merry Men of Mey' - we really had stolen a quick one around Cape Wrath!

A VISIT TO ALASKA

I spent six weeks in Alaska as part of an exchange between Alaskan and Tasmanian paddlers, organised by Doug van Etten, editor of 'Blue Water Paddler'. I spent almost all of that time on the water or taking part in the second Alaskan Sea Kayak Symposium in a most exciting - and hectic - introduction to their conditions.

Alaskan sea paddling differs from ours in many ways. The equipment I brought with me - tent, waterproof clothing - was inadequate for their conditions. Doug confiscated my sleeping bag as soon as he saw it. One rain storm lasted 30 hours with few interruptions, and rain continued intermittently for a week. Summer water temperature is claimed to be around 5°C, but must be below zero when paddling amongst floating ice. The snow line was only a few metres above sea level when I began in mid-May; it had risen perhaps 100 or 200 metres by late June. (On our first trip we took skis strapped to our rear decks.) The tidal variation is enormous - it can be around 10 metres - there are long lengths of coast line with nowhere to land, and when one can land it is often on a steep "beach" of coarse shingle with dumping surf. Sand beaches are very rare (the locals got into ecstasies when we found one) and the occasional little shingle beaches often back onto vertical cliffs and are submerged at high tide or during an on-shore wind: campsites are selected with great care and in conjunction with frequent and careful use of tide tables. The terrain usually makes it impossible to walk out from a campsite. Precautions must be taken against visits by bears - food is never cooked in sleeping tents and is supposed to be stored in trees out of bears reach (such trees often don't exist).

In addition there is very little club structure within the sport, many sea canoeists are individuals or people who know one or two other participants. Their only way of getting advice on boats, preparation and techniques is from the little that might be passed to them by hearsay, unless they buy a book on the subject or attend a commercial course. There is a wide range of boats available (some in stock in Anchorage, others to order) with many competing claims by manufacturers and advertisers. One Alaskan pointed out to me that the advertisements for new kayaks often glamourize solo paddling at sea. Yet of the five current designs that I used more than superficially, there were only two that really impressed me: there were two more that I hesitate to call seaworthy.

As if that is not enough, the only road/rail access to the Alaskan coast is to the head of a handful of fjords, so there is a strong temptation to the beginner, having paddled the length of one accessible (and relatively sheltered) fjord, to plan to round the very exposed headland to reach the next.

On the other hand, the scenery is spectacular, the wild life fascinating and having 24 hours of daylight is a real joy. On my first day in

Resurrection Bay I found what I took to be an old pylon projecting from the water, surprisingly far from the shore. Approaching it, I found it was a sea lion treading water and watching me, quite motionless. When he had satisfied his curiosity he just sank down backwards without a splash. I saw that several times, then my confidence was shattered by a loud roar from behind. A sea lion had decided I was intruding on his territory and was telling me what he thought of me - from about three metres behind my boat. But they came no closer than that, and it was hilarious when I saw them do the same to other paddlers!; the sea lions always came in from behind and always surfaced without a sound. They never came closer than that and I soon regarded them as harmless. The sea otters too were curious, and would also stand up motionless in the water watching us approach, but once they were satisfied, instead of sinking backwards they would give an extra flick with their tails, do a "U" turn in mid-air and re-enter headfirst. When they hadn't seen us, they would swim slowly on their backs with all four paws sticking up vertically, occasionally holding a fish between their front paws and feeding on it unhurriedly, as if they had all the time in the world. Often they were in groups, three or four swimming gently along together, all on their backs - they reminded me of little groups of retired people wandering along a footpath, chatting, with all day to fill in. When they are on their backs, they can't see where they are going, so every 30 seconds or so one would roll over onto his stomach, glance ahead then roll back into the more comfortable position.

I was taken on four trips during my stay, to Rugged Island in Resurrection Bay, to Granite Island and Aialik Bay, to Harris Bay and to Prince William Sound. In addition I took part in the Open Ocean Workshop and the Symposium which I will cover in a separate article. What follows is a description of the trip to Granite Island based on notes I wrote at the time. On the accompanying map, Seward at the head of Resurrection Bay is the only settlement; it is a small town and terminal for the Alaskan Railway in the Kenai Fjords area shown on the two maps. It is very roughly in the middle of the Alaskan south coast.

Six of us hired a tourist launch to take us and our kayaks from Seward to a bay on the western side of Harris peninsula with the intention of spending a week exploring Aialik Bay and paddling back to Seward.

The launch dropped us in this narrow northward facing bay: it was flanked by two forested hills but on one side a long shingle beach was separated from the hillside by a strip of flat land and a maze of mature dead trees - some fallen over, but the majority standing like the skeletons we associate with major bushfires. I was to see several such dead forests and was told they all died in the '64 earthquake when they were drowned by a temporary subsidence of the ground.

We pitched our tents on the ridge of shingle that ran along the back of the beach, a narrow level strip apparently formed by wave action during storms, and a tarpaulin was set up elsewhere as a kitchen. The afternoon was spent exploring the head of the bay from the water and by foot; we found a small open area of short lush grass surrounded by bushes and forest, a little creek trickling through it, embellished with scattered blooms of bright yellow skunk grass. To me it was a perfect campsite but the locals new better - the water squirted from under our shoes as we walked across it, and the skunk grass, a thick stemmed succulent grass about 50cm tall is a favourite food of the bears.

In the morning we had a severe hail storm while sitting under the kitchen fly. To my dismay, no one seemed concerned, they continued with their preparations for the day's paddle. Again they had judged correctly. By the time we departed the weather was settled again, if overcast.

The plan was to paddle out to Granite Island, circumnavigate it if weather conditions permitted, explore Taz Basin and return to our campsite. Mike and Burrell paddled a pair of Mariners, Doug an Enehai, John Page a Wind Dancer, and I shared a Tofino with John Ramwell from Britain's Advanced Sea Kayak Club. The Tofino is a little shorter than the Greenlander Double and the cockpits are closer together - there is no storage compartment between them. The bow is somewhat large and bulbous, looks a little ungainly, but the boat behaved faultlessly during the entire trip, very fast, dry and stable under all conditions. The deck was a bit too high above the seats for my liking, but I soon adjusted to that.

We paddled southwards towards the tip of Harris Peninsula, mostly cliffs falling straight into the sea, not unlike some of our coastline around Tasman Peninsula. Paddling very close to one of the small islands we spotted a sea otter swimming on her back, back legs pointing up in the air, front ones holding a pup to her stomach. I had already seen many otters and they always dived when we came too close; this one didn't, she merely tried to swim away from us on her back (and we could easily out-paddle her). Then she found herself cornered in a cleft with our boat blocking the entrance, she became agitated and we backed off; she swam away peacefully. Later we surprised another mother with her pup in the open sea, the pup watching us curiously as we approached while mum gazed up at the sky (or perhaps she was asleep?). She stirred suddenly, took a firm bite into the nape of the pup's neck and dived, with much squealing from the pup. She resurfaced 30 metres away with the pup still squealing. It was explained to me later that the pup's fur is much finer than the parent's and holds more air, so the pups can't dive of their own accord.

The relatively open crossing to the southern tip of Granite Island was uneventful, and the west coast of the island was magnificent - one long cliff covered in bird rookeries and broken only by the narrow entrance to Taz Basin. The birds were mostly seagulls but wherever there was a cave or slight overhang there were other species crowded together with their nests. We watched an eagle trying to steal seagull's eggs and being driven away by their concerted action; we paddled up quietly to a big colony of sea lions basking on rocks - one enormous blubbery male and about 30 or so females (they're about half the weight). We came quite close before he sent some angry grunts in our direction and slipped into the water - we backed off quickly.

Taz Basin was a beautiful place, an enclosed bay nearly a kilometer long backed by very high cliffs on three sides and an arm of low granite hills across the front through which a narrow channel provided the only access. Some forests and much snow above the cliffs, copses of trees amongst the granite, bright patches of green grass, little calm coves amongst the granite fingers on the inside, the crash and gurgle of swells breaking on the rocks on the outside. The earlier hail was now replaced with sunshine reflecting off the snow above us. None of the party had been before, Doug thought very few canoeists would ever have visited the cove. We spent a couple of hours pottering, I felt very much at home amongst the granite boulders.

We rounded the northern end of the island then paddled back along the western coast of Harris Peninsula. With our speed advantage, John and I were able to follow the indented shore while the others cut straight down the channel. I wanted to see a bear - preferably from the safety of the canoe - and just as I was saying so John spotted one, probably a cub, running up through the trees. We stopped to watch but he didn't reappear. We saw several more otters, then while paddling in some open water with the other canoes out of sight behind us, we were startled by three sea lions that surfaced simultaneously in a tight group only three or four metres from our side. A couple of seconds passed before they realised we were there - presumably it took that long for the water to drain from their eyes - and they crash dived in synchronism.

We returned to the camp late - probably 7 or 8 p.m. - and it was well after midnight before we stopped talking and went to bed, with a correspondingly late start the following morning. What does it matter when one has 24 hours of daylight?

The next day, Thursday, we paddled to Quicksand Cove, stopped at a small backwater on the way, disturbed an enormous flock of Harlequin ducks; they took off across our bows with much effort. (The Puffins too found flying hard work; usually they dived when we came too close but occasionally they took off, wings flapping furiously, bodies rising very slowly from the water.) In the same bay I watched a landslide in action. A long chute of loose rock ran several hundred metres down the mountain side to the water. I heard a gentle clattering sound that I couldn't fathom, then saw a single rock rolling slowly down the chute, knocking off one or two more, they each knocked off another one or two. The whole thing happened in slow motion, no drama, some rocks splashing into the sea, others stopping of their own accord, never more than half a dozen rocks moving at one time, yet the action went on for five minutes before all was quiet again. We landed, threw up a fly against a sudden shower, and sat in a neat row on a log beneath it eating our lunch.

The shingle beach at Quicksand Cove was steep as is common, with surf dumping straight onto the stones - there was no band of soup between the break and the shore as we are used to. The Tofino broached just before the wave broke, John and I supported into it and at the same instant we hit the shingle. We leapt out without incident, but a couple of the others had less luck. Although the surf was small - around a half metre - there was a very strong undertow immediately after each break and getting out of the boat before one was sucked back into the next dumper wasn't easy.

There was a big lagoon behind the beach (real black sand this time), a substantial creek, some marshland and copses of forest, and surrounding us a horse-shoe of steep mountains under snow. As we unloaded, a small bird made some obvious pretences at nesting; when we ignored her she jumped up, ran in front of us again and repeated the performance. We found her nest some distance away in the other direction, three mottled eggs in a faint depression surrounded by scattered stones.

Friday morning showed up the only problem we found with the Tofino - because the cockpits are close together, the paddlers have to stay in unison, and that's not easy when you're trying to launch through dumping surf. We got out of step and tangled paddles at the crucial moment as we poised nose up on a breaking wave. But we regained our balance and continued happily northwards along the cliffs, playing around an arch at the mouth of the Hólgate Fjord and the stacks scattered along the coast. We enjoyed a sunny lunch break and the briefest of swims, then paddled up to the Pederson Glacier.

Maps show the glacier coming down to the sea, but they were printed a few years ago and the glacier has since retreated about a kilometer. Now there is a long shingle bank across the end of the valley with a single gap where the melting water runs out, and there was a bit of surf over a bar. The others were delighted - non-dumping surf is such a rarity - I preferred not to risk capsizing in that cold water! We paddled up river against the current, a long winding channel very shallow in places, blocks of ice stranded from previous high tides. Around another corner and we were in the lake at the foot of the glacier, small bergs floating around us, the big cliff of ice shining in the sunlight. We paddled up towards it gingerly, watched lumps of ice fall off setting up echoes from the valley sides. When the others arrived we got bolder, paddling through the brash ice, pushing a route with the nose of the kayak, inspecting the sculptured towers of ice in the heavily crevassed face. It was an eerie place, with the intermittent thunders, crashes and plops as pieces broke off and avalanches ran, interspersed by periods of complete silence and

peace. Above the glacier was a long snow field sweeping up to a beautiful double summit on the horizon, around us were the small icebergs in some weird and unlikely shapes: a slender stalk projecting from a floating block, swept into a large "S" with all the grace of a swan's neck, thin sheets with serrated edges standing up out of the water like wings. When a single block fell cleanly into the water, the sound was a single sharp report, but at other times avalanches of broken ice slid down chutes to hit the water with a drawn out rumble and a plume of ice and splash rose from the spot. When a big chunk fell off, it was followed by a gentle tinkling sound that continued for a minute or more and came from all around us, not from the direction of the face, like standing in the middle of a swarm of tinkling bees. It puzzled me for a long time, until I noticed that each piece of floating ice had a narrow groove or shoulder around it at water level (presumably worn by wave action), and whenever a block fell, the resultant ripples spread across the lake and splashed gently against the grooves.

My two strongest impressions of Alaska are the abundance of wild life - the otters, seals, sea lions, whales, bears and many varieties of birds - and of seeing geology alive - of seeing the mountains crumbling, the glaciers falling, the dead trees due to earthquakes, the maps that can't keep up with the changing landscape.

We paddled on toward the Aialik Glacier through much floating ice, looking for open leads, gently pushing the small floes aside to minimise scratching of the boats, wary of any change in wind that might blow the ice towards us; all good fun. We circumnavigated a narrow island opposite the glacier looking for a campsite - I very much wanted to camp on the island because of the superb view it gave of the glacier - the others wanted more shelter! A number of seals were sleeping on the bigger ice slabs with their young, they were suspicious and shy, jumped into the water as we noisily pushed aside the lumps of ice. But some - perhaps the ones without pups - were more curious, I caught one peeping at me from behind a floating ice block. When he saw me notice him, he quickly pulled his head back out of sight, then after 30 seconds very carefully peeped again to see if I was still looking.

A campsite was chosen on shingle next to the southern edge of the glacier and we listened to the rumblings and cracklings through the night. In the morning we swapped boats, paddled out into the fjord and watched the glacier performance again. It was much larger than the Pederson, a high wide wall of broken fissured ice stretching from one valley side to the other. The glacier ended directly in the fjord rather than a separate lake. I felt the same thrill again, of nature active on a grand scale; I sat there for a couple of hours watching, noting the diverse characters of the different parts of the face - the parts that avalanched with a loud roar and a plume of fine ice particles, the chutes that dropped clean blocks silently but with a big splash, the wave of water that swept towards us after a large block had fallen in, only to be dampened down to a gentle swell by the floating ice by the time it reached us

As we left we spotted a herd of mountain sheep, much to everybody's excitement, about 15 of them scattered widely over the mountainside, many of them with young. A couple were close to the water's edge, on little grassed shelves on the rocks above us, and we were able to watch them closely without their becoming agitated.

We crossed the head of Aialik Bay to a small inlet under an enormous vertical slab cliff, a waterfall running down it, a long snow avalanche gulley coming straight down from a high saddle on the left, a promontory of boulders under it and a shingle beach to the right. The water was calm, we had left the floating ice behind. We all disappeared into different nooks and holes exploring individually. Then Doug and Burrell passed me excitedly in the

double, they had watched a bear walking down the avalanche chute (I would guess a thousand foot descent). He had first been seen about halfway down, picking his way, glissading a bit at one stage; now he had disappeared behind the boulder promontory.

We paddled around the corner and soon found him ambling between the boulders. He saw us, gave us a disinterested look then ignored us. He walked slowly into the water and began swimming across the bay, under the cliff toward the shingle. We paddled towards him circumspectly, then followed about 20 metres to one side, confident we could out paddle him should he get cross. He swam with just his head above water, with no apparent effort but quite slowly. He reached the shore, disappeared behind a mound then wandered along the beach. We followed in shallow water, he stopped to look in our direction a couple of times, munched some grass, then sauntered upwards across a steep snow slope. He disappeared into a thicket for a while and I wondered if we were making him feel uneasy, but he reappeared on a prominent boulder, looking down on us with a large clump of grass dangling from both sides of his jaws. He continued on up a very steep slope of rock and dirt, taking care as to where he put his paws but otherwise not hesitating - I would have been checking every foot and handhold on that slope - then vanished into some forest. We must have been watching him for some 20 minutes, and when he was closest we could see the detail in his black fur.

We landed on the beach and ate our lunch. I was munching happily when Doug suddenly burst into laughter. He had noticed that I had turned my kayak round so that the bow was to the water. No one else had bothered.

The boat I was paddling was a kevlar "Mariner", a long narrow boat with a high upswept bow and a long open cockpit. Crossing the head of the bay it was a delight, very easy to accelerate, little effort required to move it at a good speed. At rest, it was very tippy, to the extent that putting the paddle down and using binoculars to watch the mountain sheep had been a fairly hazardous occupation. Earlier when we were watching the ice falls off the Aialik Glacier, sitting in water that was ice free but completely calm, there had been a light breeze blowing off the glacier towards us. Every time I put down the paddle and raised the camera, the wind caught the high bow and swung me away from the view, so I was reduced to grab shots; careful composition became impossible. But the real problem came later that day, paddling southwards down the western side of the Aialik Peninsula towards Three Hole Bay. This shore is deeply indented, and a brisk north-easterly was blowing out of each of these inlets onto our rear quarters, with a short choppy sea. Under these conditions I had great difficulty staying on course as we crossed the mouth of each inlet - the boat had an intense desire to swing into the wind, and I was paddling entirely with sweep strokes on the windward side. Mike was paddling his own "Mariner", and aware of the problem, deliberately stayed further out in the main fjord than I did, and made a point of applying his sweep strokes when his boat was on top of a swell to increase its effectiveness - and still had difficulty. The conditions were far from severe, and it left me with little confidence in the boat's seaworthiness. The other paddlers had no trouble.

I will not describe the rest of the trip in detail; it was more like what we are used to around Tasman Peninsula, with otters, sea lions and snow topped cliffs thrown in. We (thankfully) had calm weather while rounding Aialik Cape, a couple of 8 or 9 hour days without getting out of the kayaks, together with a good sprinkling of arches, caves, slots, sea stacks and numerous waterfalls. We spent one day under dense low cloud, cloud well below the tops of the cliffs along which we paddled; I was startled by stones falling from the clifftop and splashing nearby, and was told it was almost certainly a bear out of sight above us - they have no fear of heights but also have no consideration for anyone who might be below them!

I would like to thank Doug van Etten and Marsha Hodson and their many friends for their hospitality and for the many arrangements they made for me, including this trip.

Mike Emery

From: Dick Edie, 47 Cairns Gardens, Balerno, Midlothian EH14 7HJ

Dear John,

I feel that the letter in the last ASKC newsletter regarding the island of Rhum cannot go unanswered. It would be all too easy to give way to emotion when faced with such aggressive ignorance but I will try to resist the temptation.

If I could point out a few facts perhaps someone of such narrow views would realise that there is more going on in the world than his little canoe trip.

The law of trespass in Scotland is a civil law rather than a criminal one. This does not actually give anyone any more right to be in a place but makes it much harder to prevent trespass. There is access to the foreshore between the high and the low water marks in most places with a few exceptions of which Rhum is not one. This means that we have every right to land at Kilmory but there is a law against camping on private land (and Rhum is private land) which can be enforced by the Police.

The N.C.C. allow canoeists and walkers fairly wide scope regarding camping and have the right to expect that in exchange the canoeist will respect their request regarding the beaches near the north of the island.

The writer of the rather silly letter launches into rhetoric regarding his rights in his country. This brings me on to my second point. Rhum is not in his country but in mine. Scotland is another country and paddlers from the south should respect this. I once saw written in a bothy book "aren't the English lucky to have Scotland" and I'm still not able to work out whether this was written by a wry Scot or someone from the ASKC.

The almost ranting comments about the Guinness yuppie seem a bit silly from someone who does not know her but I'll not defend her as I don't know her either; however I doubt that such comments will improve the situation. Only with canoeists working up to a system of equal tolerance can we hope to progress.

The comment on the nature of the deer experiments are really put into perspective when we consider what our sport looks like to an outsider (just (just pushing water with fibreglass to move another bit of fibreglass with a bum on board).

It would help if members of the ASKC and all tourers from the urban areas try to remember that a lot of people's livelihoods depend on research such as that done on Rhum and that by taking an entrenched attitude we will be the losers.

BOOK REVIEW

by Martin Meling - Sec. to BCU STC

"ESKIMO ROLLING FOR SURVIVAL" by DEREK HUTCHINSON

published by A. & C. Black

One reaction that I encountered to this book was "What! a whole book about rolling?" However it is not long after browsing through this volume before you realise how extensive the subject is.

The first part of the manuscript deals with the foundation skills and lead-in exercises that are so important in paving the way to the skill itself. The author then proceeds to analyse and describe an extensive variety of rolls.

The descriptions are often enhanced by excellent drawings the like of which have characterised previous books by the same writer. The technical tenor of the book is nicely relieved by the insertion of Rolling anecdotes which add both interest and entertainment, though occasionally it is necessary to read between the lines to get full value.

We are reminded of the historical perspective of this study by the inclusion of some superb illustrations taken from the works of the great Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen. The modern photographs are good, if somewhat repetitive, perhaps some underwater shots and a decent portrait of the author would have given greater variety. There are some irritating minor errors which I suspect are typographical rather than of authorship but you have to look closely to spot them.

Altogether I found this an eminently readable, entertaining and informative book. I suspect that it will find its way on to the bookshelves of most kayak paddlers and canoeists, especially those who are interested in teaching the sport to others.

From: Phil Eccles, "Faith", Ralph Street, Borth-y-Gest, Porthmadog, Gwynedd

Dear John,

After a wonderful summer, which has left a hatful of memories, I thought I'd drop this line just to let readers know about a most spectacular little island which Jo (my wife) and I had the pleasure to circumnavigate this July. We spent a marvellous two weeks in the Shetland Isles at the beginning of July and although the weather was mixed it was possible to get on the water on all but two days. After great discussion and a worry about the possibility of a second mortgage we decided to take the car which in retrospect was a good decision for us because it meant that we could dodge the weather to some extent and get the maximum time on the water.

On the west coast of Mainland the scenery is typical of many a Scottish island with open moors, peat cutting, sheep grazing, small lochans, scattered isolated communities connected by "A" roads which are single track with the occasional passing place. Sat in a rare tearoom watching the drizzle drift down. We thought about taking the ferry, an 18ft former lifeboat, out to Foula, Britain's "most isolated inhabited island" (according to the Tourist Information Centre in Lerwick) but the chances of taking the kayaks were minimal. The ferry departed. The next would be who knows. There we were in a town called Walls. No sausages visible but only a few miles from an island called Papa Stour which had been recommended to us by members of the A.S.K.C. living in Shetland. The decision was made and as if by magic just as the island came into view the sun broke through the grey skies casting shafts of light across the distant skerries producing colours you only see in the north.

The sound between Mainland and Papa Stour has a notorious reputation and we were keen to catch it towards slack mainly because this was the first paddle of the holiday and the grey seas had an ominous feel to them. With this in mind I don't think I've ever packed a boat so quickly and before we knew it we were three quarters of the way across and in the turbulence of the small overfalls.

On the island the coastline was immediately spectacular and we experienced the first of many "subterranean passages" which is how the Ordnance Survey describes "through caves". Brilliant. Combine these passages with stacks, arches, collapsed roofs all littered with a magnificent array of wild life and for me you have a sea kayaking paradise. Camped up that night on a

lonely beach was idyllic until the torrential rain and strong wind began and kept us pinned there until late the following afternoon. Paddling so far north at that time of year brings the advantage that it never really goes dark so you don't have to plan a trip around daylight but around the weather, given favourable tidal conditions, of course. So at 5 p.m. we left the beach and continued on our anti clockwise circumnavigation confident that that evening we would more or less complete the trip. Not a bit of it. We had been forewarned of the fickle nature of the weather in these islands and within an hour of leaving our camp in warm, calm almost balmy conditions we were in a thick drizzle, losing each other in the troughs of a romping swell and unable to see the next headland as the cloud enveloped us. Part of the great excitement of canoeing in the Shetlands is, like a lot of other places, the commitment, knowing that landing spots are few and far between. The boulder strewn cove with its ankle deep rotting seaweed and its scattering of wooden fish boxes was a welcome place to pull ashore for a few hours.

Almost unbelievably, at 5 o'clock in the morning, with the sun quite high in the sky, the sea was almost calm, the wind non existent and in a shot we were back on the water. The next three hours provided some of the most memorable canoeing I've ever had. Caves and subterranean passages abound. On Lyra Skerry there is an incredible formation where two passages both over 100 yards long and about 5 yards wide intersect at perfect right angles. We sat amazed at this underground crossroads watching guillemots and razorbills waft along to this junction to turn or go straight on as they wanted. Outside the skies were speckled with puffins, skuas, shearwaters, terns and all types of gull.

Ashore near here for a coffee and a quick explore we found the remains of old millstones next to small buildings - apparently the remains of the island's flour producing mills powered by the water of a small inland loch where the remains of a sluice gate can be found. The millstones had to be imported as the local stone wasn't hard enough.

This would have made an ideal campsite but as it was still only 9 o'clock in the morning we moved on. Within 30 minutes Jo twice came close to tears. The first was at the sight of an adult common seal close to death due to the several square metres of polypropylene netting fastened around its neck, chafing its skin producing a raw and bloody scar. Despite an attempt to land and cut it free the poor seal unfortunately had enough life left in it to escape my efforts and slither into the kelp. Minutes later we were entering Christie's Hole, as it is called on the O.S. map, and if we were advertising for Bounty bars then this must have been paradise. An archway leads through to where the roof has collapsed and at the back of this area another arch leads into a 15ft. wide passage some 80 feet high. This becomes a cave with one main passage and several options off to the side.

Unlike the majority of caves there is light at the back of this one and as we glided past the sleeping seals it became clear that the passage opened up into a cavern. A shaft of golden sunshine broke through a hole in the ceiling creating a warm green light, illuminating the sizeable cavern and the water inside. Moreover, a small burn runs off the hillside above and cascades in silver droplets into the pool below. It was magical and we pondered how few people could have had the privilege of being there.

The next couple of miles would have been spectacular beyond belief had it not been for what we had just seen. And sadly it was all too soon time to cross the sound again back to the Mainland leaving behind countless memories. As we crossed we were glad our circumnavigation had been spread over three days instead of one as it had forced us ashore where we found the heart of the island and not just its peripheries.

There are some lovely people, eager to help and interested in what we were doing. We had an interesting hour with Andy and Sabrina who, like most islanders here, are English exiles. They work a self sufficient smallholding epitomising all we longed for in the mid-sixties. These two self labelled "hippies" made us more than welcome with decaffeinated coffee and E-number free carrot cake. And when we asked their son his name the shy 14 year old replied "Thor - isn't it embarrassing?" This lad has to commute to Lerwick for schooling and, weather permitting, returns home for weekends.

Inside the island's church the First World War memorial remembers 14 lost lives - an incredible amount which must have devastated the community. The island's history goes back to prehistoric times and there are several chambered cairns. If you're paddling in Shetland it's worth a visit especially if the sea allows you access to the caves and passages. Jo and I have certainly left part of ourselves there.

Rallye de Bretagne Sud by Jan van Doren

The eighth rallye of South Brittany didn't count any British paddlers this year. So I'll endeavour to write about it in English. Michel Guillotin (don't say his wife must be the guillotine) is the organiser and leader of this rally, which is not meant to be a race but an eight days opportunity for sea kayakers from wherever to meet and practise their sport and fine new friends. This year the group consisted of 14 paddlers. There were three people from Holland and two Germans. The youngest lady was 29, the oldest man a very fit 61.

On Saturday afternoon, 30th July, we went to Quimper to have our equipment and insurances checked, as the French law dictates, and to get to know our comrades for this trip. The occasion was finished off with a "reception" where the paddlers finished off quite a few bottles, the favourite drink being "Kir", a good measure of creme de cassis topped up with a sparkling white wine.

On Sunday we started at 10 o'clock. We paddled down the beautiful estuary of the River Odet to Benodet. There we stopped for lunch before really taking to the sea to reach Fle Tudy. The normal lunch hour this week stretched from 12 to 2.30 at least. The weather was Mediterranean all week, so the water was not very exciting. In the following days we rounded the Cape of Pen Marc'h twice. There we had an eight foot swell against a very rocky coast strewn with boulders and rocky islets. There was excitement in trying to get in and out through the gaps and passages. At this stage we were accompanied by a rescue team in a powered rubber dinghy, who for their own safety stayed much further out to sea than we did. The views of the coast were marvellous. Many evenings there was a "reception" by local authorities, with speeches I could not understand and bottles of cider and such like.

On the Wednesday we made the crossing to the Glenans, a group of small islands some 12 miles from the coast. The water was so clear that someone said it was like paddling on a giant fish tank. The next day we could do our own thing, make a tour around the islands or potter about among them or even lie on the beach. Then we went to the coast again to scenic Pointe de Trevignon. Nobody seemed to bother about currents and tides. We started with the leader was ready and if it happened to be low tide when we arrived we had to carry the boats a lot further to where we could tent. We camped in rather unlikely places, by the way. On a volleyball field annexe playground just behind the beach, in the grounds of a centre nautic, i.e., holiday centre, surf and sailing school, and even once in a rather vulnerable place in the dunes where the sands were so soft that all the tents would have come down had there been any wind. Sometimes there were showers, sometimes the nearest watertap was half a mile away.

On the Saturday we had a grand farewell supper in spite of the fact that we paddled together on the next Sunday. That was because half of the group were from Paris and they had to go to work on Monday. Sunday at 3 o'clock we said goodbye to each other at Quimperle. That was the end of a very enjoyable week. Not too tiring either, under these conditions, if you kept your distance to the bottles, that is. Only communication in French complicated things somewhat at times. Why don't these Frenchies speak English like all the rest of us I sometimes wonder.

FOREWORD

The following transcript was made from cuttings pasted into a battered old pocket notebook which in the mid-1940s stood for many years on a book-shelf in Clyde Canoe Club room. The only alterations which have been made are to typographical errors and spelling where in doubt.

Knowing well most of the waters covered by these intrepid adventurers, it is amazing how much they accomplished so early in the history of canoeing.

A. G. C. Dunn, 1983

Summer Cruise of the Clyde Canoe Club, Roseneath - July 1874

All the members who intended to join the cruise being assembled at the clubhouse, Roseneath, by 9 a.m. on Friday morning, 17th July, each and all were actively engaged in packing their canoes, every spare corner being found for use. As each captain got his boat ready, he at once floated off and was inspected as regards trim, fore and aft, altering his baggage to balance his boat. One by one all were ready, when - Hullo! what's that?

Hark I hear the bugle sounding -
'Tis the signal all must start!

but why is the Captain's voice superseded by a brazen one? The fleet numbered 10 in all - Captain, Mr George Whitelaw (Rambler); North Briton; Annie; Jorsa; Bowieknives; Bothnia; Shirrtails; Hermit; Lark; and one canoe of the Rob Roy class. The morning was wonderful and calm and it was a case of paddling round Roseneath Point. The first object of interest which was met with was the sunken yacht Bull Pup. After sailing round, it was concluded best to let sleeping dogs lie, so away paddled the fleet towards Kilcreggan, the first resting place given out by the Captain. The crews having rested, the Captain gave out the Cloch as the next rest, then Inverskip, and to camp out for the night at Toward.

As the wind and sea rose against us, it was another paddle; about half-a-mile from the shore, a tug-boat passed towing several mud barges. It soon left us and with it went the Hermit. Only four arrived at the Cloch - Rambler, Bowieknives, Shirrtails and Bothnia. Waiting for the others, and a sail being contemplated, the rigging was looked to and every rope was found perfect, except the main brace, which was voted bad. As there were no new ones, it was considered advisable to splice the old one. There being no appearance of the other canoes, the four started for Dunoon, and thence to Inverskip, where they were joined by Monsoon, who had sailed from Ardrossan. A biscuit having been broken, they started for Innellan where the others joined. Five members put up in the hotel and five camped out at Toward. The night passed quietly, all the party sleeping as soundly as the snoring of their companions would permit. Breakfast having been discussed, the boats were floated and packed anew on the rising tide. In five minutes the hotel five were alongside and the course was given out by the gallant Captain to be Tighnabruaich for the night. The horn of plenty was again blown and once more the fleet pursued its course.

A gentle steady wind now sprang up and, canvas having been spread, the fleet steered its course for the Kyles. The weather was again all that could be desired. This being Fair Friday, steamers began to be seen going towards Rothesay crowded to Board of Trade regulations, and perhaps a little

more Passing the mouth of Loch Striven with the wind dead astern, the canoes were seen as so many white specks doing their six to seven miles an hour. A rest for a few minutes was taken near South Hall - a mansion with wooded grounds so planted to represent the French and British armies at Waterloo. Colintrave was reached in time for lunch. Ellan Dherrig, an island in the mouth of Loch Riddan, is one of four rocky islets which appear to block up the channel of the Kyles at a sudden bend. On it are the ruins of a castle built in 1685 by the then Earl of Argyll. It is as lovely a spot as is in the Kyles, and thither the fleet sailed. Getting ashore was a difficulty, especially for those who arrived last, as the rocks rose right out of the water. A club bathe being proposed, about half-a-dozen stripped for the sport and rare sport it was. The rock went straight down for 12 or 15 feet and being on the lee of the island, the water was calm and as clear as crystal. Dinner being discussed, the members, after a rest, moved off, one by one, for Tighnabruaich, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles S.S.W.

A stiff breeze blowing from that quarter, some preferred to beat to windward, while three took the shortest route by paddling a straight course past Stephenson's Highland retreat. The wind here fell dead calm and it was a pleasure to be all alone in one's boat in such splendid scenery. The "Iona" is all very well, but goes too quickly to allow one to enjoy the scenery. To appreciate it properly, go in a canoe, for one can sail, paddle, or go ashore as inclination prompts.

Tighnabruaich reached, the five campers, after a few purchases at the baker's, said goodbye to their hotel brethren and paddled across to the Bute shore. A suitable camp having been fixed on, while the evening was still young, some went to a farmhouse for milk, while one fished and had success enough to try his hand at a fry next morning. In camp, Rambler, Jorsa and Rob Roy occupied one tent and Monsoon and Bothnia enjoyed solitary repose.

Next morning, Rob Roy prepared for church at Tighnabruaich, he being the only "dressed for church" man in the camp. About 11 o'clock, Bowieknives and Shirttails came over from the hotel to make a morning call. Rambler, Jorsa, Monsoon and Bothnia went up the hill in search of a loch, but found none. Returning to the shore, they met a club member who had followed the cruise in his yacht. Jorsa went on board the yacht, the others going in for a dip. On the way to camp, a shower came down which made them run for it. After dinner, the yacht appeared rounding a point, and anchored opposite the camp, Jorsa coming ashore. The club cruise ended on the Monday morning, private cruises were arranged to follow. The Captain, Lark and Monsoon settled for Iona via West Loch Tarbet, Loch Sween, Oban, Tobermory and Staffa. North Briton and Annie went in for "round Bute". Jorsa, Bowieknives and Shirttails preferred Arran, and Rob Roy returned to Glasgow. Jorsa, seduced by the pleasures of yachting, left the other three. Early to bed in camp was the word.

On Monday morning at 6 it was up, breakfast, launch and pack. At the Royal Hotel Tighnabruaich, the members bade adieu and went on their separate cruises. Rambler, Monsoon and Lark, accompanied by North Briton and Annie, started about 9.45 down the Kyles. Bowieknives, Bothnia and Shirttails paddled straight for Ardlamont point. The "Iona" passed them off Blindman's Bay and they were stared at as if they were in a museum. Lunch, prefaced by a dip, was taken at Ardlamont Point. After enjoying the scenery at leisure for some time, the three started for Arran. The wind being ahead, sail was lowered and canoes paddled for Loch Ranza.

Leaving Ardlamont Point at 2, Loch Ranza was expected to be reached at 4. Keeping up the speed of 4 miles an hour, the shores on either side

seemed about halfway distant after an hour's work. At Loch Ranza three young ladies greeted them - "Will you kindly gratify the curiosity of three ladies and tell us how far you have come in those small boats?"

"We left Tighnabruaich this morning."

"Oh dear," said the youngest and prettiest.

At 9 next morning a walk to Corrie was agreed on and the Cock of Arran was looked for with diligence on the way round, but the only living objects met with were several sheep and two or three hens. When Corrie was reached, the walkers were soaked with rain and after a dry at the hotel fire and a good lunch, returned to Loch Ranza by Glen Road - Bowieknives and Shirttails having arranged to be in Helensburgh on Wednesday evening. Their route for the next day lay by Garrochhead. Starting in company, a small gale was encountered outside the loch and the three canoes being joined and jiggers used as mainsails, a speed of 7 knots was attained. A parting lunch was taken at Corrie, after which Bowieknives and Shirttails steered for Garrochhead, and Bothnia for Brodick. The two in company reached Helensburgh about 10.30 p.m., while Bothnia made Brodick about 1.30 p.m.

Our Iona correspondent reports the arrival there of three canoes from the Clyde, each 'paddled' by its solitary occupant all the way from the Careloch with the exception of a trifling bit of land journey performed across the narrow neck of land at Tarbet. The daring voyagers had experience of pretty rough weather, but notwithstanding, were in excellent spirits and seemed to enjoy the trip thoroughly. They left for the Clyde after a day's rest.

Martin Meling is hoping to run a weekend course sometime in May, at NEAT, Craster, entitled "Sea Fishing from a Kayak". The course will obviously be mainly practical covering:

- a. making lures and rigging traces
- b. fishing techniques including - jigging, trolling, spinning, baiting and set-lining.
- c. handling fish including - gutting, cleaning, filleting, salting, drying, smoking and cooking.
- d. basic fish anatomy and identifying fish.

Further details will appear in this newsletter as they come available. Meanwhile you can write to Martin at 20, Windermere, Cleadon Village, SUNDERLAND, SR6 7QQ

ASKC CLUB RENEWALS

Although many of you have renewed I have placed a Renewal Form in every newsletter I am sending out. Ignore this form (or pass to a friend) if you have already renewed. If you have yet to renew then hopefully you will put the form to good use. Many thanks, John R.

Watch this space in the next Newsletter when I will be including another review of Derek Hutchinson's book "ESKIMO ROLLING FOR SURVIVAL" and also letting you know where you can obtain your copy.
